

Transition from the 6-3-3-4 to the 9-3-4 System of Education in Nigeria: An Assessment of Its Implementation on Technology Subjects

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ABSTRACT The 6-3-3-4 system of education came into being in Nigeria in 1983 with the primary focus of meeting the educational needs of its citizenry and equipping the youths with sellable skills that will make them to be self reliant. Today, twenty-five years after, a new system of education called the Universal Basic Education (UBE) otherwise known as the 9-3-4 has been re-introduced, whose curriculum is expected to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2020. This paper specifically examines the implementation of the technology subjects' aspect of the 6-3-3-4 system of education using Ekpoma as a case study; it examined the student-teacher ratio, laboratory or workshop-student ratio and availability of instructional materials for the teaching of the technology subjects particularly at the Junior Secondary School (JSS) classes. The results indicate that the problem of implementation is partly due to non-availability of personnel, materials, funds and administrative will. This programme has failed to achieve much not solely because of lack of human and material resources but largely due to poor implementation. The paper finally proffered various options towards solving the identified problems in the 6-3-3-4 system, so that the goals of the newly introduced 9-3-4 system will be attainable.

INTRODUCTION

Societies through ages have one form of education or the other, whether indigenous or western education. This is because education is as essential to man as life itself on this planet earth. Education varies from place to place and from time to time. In fact it is a very important means of developing any nation. The term education has not lent itself to any strict consensual definition as it depends on the perspective from which one views it. It can be considered as the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, interest, abilities, competence and the cultural norms of a society by people to transmit this life to the coming generations so as to enhance perpetual development of the society. History had it that long before the advent of both Islamic and western education, Nigeria has an indigenous type of education (i.e. education for the survival of the people subsistence education). However, modern influences, at about 300 years interval to each other, robbed the country of its indigenous education to a great extent. For instance, Christian education was later promoted by the colonial administration to suit its purpose of colonization (Abdul 2002). Change in time witnessed change

in the purpose of education in Nigeria as education later changed its focus towards developing individuals to contribute to the development of the nation and ultimately in preparation for self-government at independence.

BACKGROUND OF THE 6-3-3-4 SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

A critical examination of the type of formal education in Nigeria before and after independence shows that this education was inadequate and unsatisfactory to the nation's yearnings and aspirations. In the opinion of some scholars, Nduka (1984), Fafunwa (1982) and Obayan (1982), opined that the education was parochial, elitist, regurgitate and irresponsive to the need and aspirations of the Nigerian society. In a bid to check this abnormality, therefore, the then Federal Government of Nigeria adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. Thus it is stated: "education goals in terms of its relevance to the need of the individual as well as in terms of the kind of society desired in relation to the environment and realities of the modern world and rapid social changes should be clearly set out (National Policy on Education F.R.N. 2004)".

The then Federal Government therefore made efforts to find the type of education best suited to Nigeria's development, hence the identification of "6-3-3-4 system of education". According to Omovo (2006), the history of 6-3-3-4 system of education dated back to 8th September 1969 during the (International Literacy Day) when the Federal Commissioner for Education, Wenike Briggs inaugurated a conference which formulated the ideas leading to the 6-3-3-4 programme, he further stated that the programme was conceived as an instrument of national unity, it was designed to inject functionality in to the Nigerian school system. The 6-3-3-4 was fashioned to produce graduates who would be able to make use of their hands, the head and the heart (the 3Hs of education). When it was finally introduced in 1982, there had been inputs by various sectors of Nigerian professional community. Then the 6-3-3-4 system of education was seen as a laudable programme capable of ushering in an educational revolution in Nigeria; hence step in the right direction, towards the technological development of the nation. However, the current situation on ground is far from this ideal. This system seems to be suffering from poor and shoddy implementation. This work thus examines the implementation of the technical subjects aspect of the system using Ekpoma as a case study. Particularly examined in this work are: student - teacher ratio: laboratory/workshop-student ratio, and availability of instructional facilities for teaching of the subjects in the study area.

Review of 6-3-3-4 to the New 9-3-4 System of Education

This is a type of educational system wherein the recipient of the education would spend six years in the primary school, three years in the junior secondary school, three years in the senior secondary school, and four years in the tertiary institutions. In these stages, we have primary schools, secondary schools, and tertiary institutions such as colleges of education, polytechnics and universities respectively. Primary education as regards the 6-3-3-4 system of education is the elementary type of education for children between ages of 6 to 11 years. This is the foundation of education upon which all others are built. It therefore determines the success or failure of the whole system. While junior and senior secondary schools are simply called

secondary school where secondary education is, received that is the form of education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary education (National Policy on Education 2004). The broad aims of secondary education within the overall Nigerian education policy are:

- (a) Preparation for useful living within the society and
 - (b) Preparation for higher education.
- Tertiary education, which is the post secondary education given in the higher institution aims at:
- (i) The acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society at large.
 - (ii) The development of the intellectual capabilities or capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments.
 - (iii) The acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop, and
 - (iv) The acquisition of the objective view of local and external environments.

From the previous discussion so far, one is convinced beyond a reasonable doubt the importance of 6-3-3-4 system of education. It is rather a functional education, which enables its recipients to function economically, socially, morally, intellectually and politically. This educational system in itself is a conscious effort at matching and merging academic and vocational education programmes.

The 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria is job-oriented. It places premium on manual activities, technical proficiency, and respect for dignity of labour and economic efficiency. It is to provide the child with basic tools to prepare him for local craft. At the secondary stage emphasis is on the acquisition of vocational skills; while it is professionally oriented at the tertiary stage so as to minimize unemployment and produce skilled manpower, in science and technology. In brief, it is to make individual capable economically and socially. It is also stated in the National Policy on Education that a priority of place is going to be given to religion and moral instructions for the moral and spiritual well being of individuals; but "no child will be forced to accept any religious instruction which is contrary to the wishes of his parents" (Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education 2004). This would remove any unnecessary suspicion in terms of religion and religion clashes.

The new 9-3-4 system of Education [Universal Basic Education (UBE)] which took off in 2006, has the first nine years of basic and compulsory education up to the JSSIII level, three years in the senior secondary school, and four years in the tertiary institutions. It was designed to streamline the over-crowded nature of subjects offered at the basic education level. The NCE has in its 52nd meeting in Ibadan approved a subject structure as the new 9-year basic education curriculum, which has been developed by the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). The new curriculum is expected to be realigned to meet the millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for all (EFA) goals and the National Economic Enhancement Development Strategies (NEEDS). The following implementation arrangement which are being considered by government for the new curriculum include to introduce the new curriculum only in primary 1 and JSS 1 in September 2006, provide massive orientation programmes to serving teachers on the new curriculum and begin the systematic training of teachers for basic education.

Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE) is being promoted and has thus been brought under the UBE programme. To foster this development, 5% of the UBE matching Grant has been dedicated to this level of basic education. In that direction too we advise states to encourage ECCDE by opening ECCDE centres in all public schools. The respective communities are expected to make ownership and participate fully in the development and management of the centres. The role of government is that of support in terms of infrastructure, instructional materials provision and ensuring that competent teachers and caregivers are engaged in the management of the centres.

The Implementation of 6-3-3-4 System of Education in Nigeria: Case Study of Schools in Ekpoma

The problem of implementation of 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria is hereby exemplified by a case study from Ekpoma, Edo State Nigeria. Ten schools were randomly selected for this study. This sample is considered large enough for reasonable inference to be made. List of the selected school is as follows:

- (1) Akugbe Secondary School Emuhi
- (2) Irukep Grammer School, Irukep,
- (3) Ujemen Secondary School, Ujemen
- (4) Ihumudumu Secondary School, Ihumudumu
- (5) Ujoelen Grammer School, Ujoelen
- (6) Emuado Secondary School, Emuado
- (7) Eguare Secondary School, Eguare
- (8) Illeh Secondary School, Illeh
- (9) Uhiele Secondary School, Uhiele
- (10) Ukhun Secondary School, Ukhun

In this analysis, the survey was carried out only for the technical aspect of the education (introductory technology) for the Junior Secondary School only.

The results are summarized in tables 1 and 2.

The statistical summary 'of students' population in J.S.S. classes in Ekpoma is as shown in Table 1, From this table the average number of student per class in J.S.S. 1 is 65 with a standard deviation of 19 and a range of 40-110. In J.S.S- 2, the average number of student per class is 67 with a student deviation of 15 and a range of 40-102.

Class size: The number of students per class as indicated in the above table is high by any standard. The National Policy in Education suggests forty (40) per class, which means that the standard class should have a maximum of forty (40) students. Nevertheless, many schools enrolled for greater a number than the above: the classes therefore became uncomfortably large. This creates problems of efficiency and effectiveness of teaching (i.e. implementation problem). This agrees with the view of Allison (1964) that when enrolment is not adjusted to the

Table 1: Statistical summary of student population in J.S.S. classes in Ekpoma

	<i>Average No. of students per class</i>	<i>Standard No. of students/class</i>	<i>Range</i>
J.S.S. 1	65	19	40-110
J.S.S. 2	67	15	40-102
J.S.S 3	58	13	40-90

Table 2: Statistics summary of teacher laboratory/workshop student ratio in J.S.S. classes in Ekpoma

<i>Statistics</i>	<i>Student: Teacher ratio</i>	<i>Student: Lab./workshop ratio</i>
Average (X)	465:1	630:1
Standard Deviation	523	242
Range	160:1-2111:1	130:1-1312:0

Source: Field Survey 2006

number of qualified teacher and equipment the results are failures and dropouts.

This precarious situation is more compounded when one consider student: Teacher ratio and Student: Laboratory Workshop ratio. Student: Teacher ratio for introductory technology is on the average of 465: 1 in Ekpoma with standard deviation of 523 and a range of 160- 223 to one teacher.

In addition, student: Laboratory/workshop ratio is worse still standing at 623:1 Laboratory/workshop with a standard deviation 242 and a range of 130:1 to 1312:0 as in some schools there are as many as 1250 students for introductory technology without a single laboratory/workshop.

DISCUSSION

This implementation problem of 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria cannot be divorced from the way introductory technology is being handled in schools all over the country i.e. the problem of 6-3-3-4 implementation is partly due to non availability of men, material, money and mind/culture in relation to their need in the implementation of introductory technology, specifically as-a subject in secondary schools. According to Abdul (2002), one of the greatest problems facing the implementation of the new policy on education in Nigeria is qualified personnel in quantity and quality.

- (a) Teachers in the science, technical and vocational subjects.
- (b) School inspectors and education supervisor for quality control.
- (c) School managers, administrators for the efficient and effective running of the schools programme.
- (d) Supportive staff such as laboratory assistants, library assistants, workshop attendants etc. and
- (e) Guidance counselors to guide for proper placement having the adequate knowledge of Individual's aptitude and interest.

Inadequate Men and Materials

There is no doubt that there are shortage of men and materials even at the federal level to implement the 6-3-3-4 system of education. These facts were revealed by Kusamotu (2007), who noted that in the implementation of the 6-3-3-4

system of education, the areas of emphasis are the technical and vocational, which require men and materials in science and technical disciplines. These materials were either not adequately supplied or where supplied and left outside at the mercies of weather keep beating them or to thieves who stole them in parts or in whole throughout the secondary schools all over the country.

Finance

The idea of the 6-3-3-4 system of education was conceived during the years of plenty (oil boom), and unfortunately, the implementation period falls in the period of dearth. Now that the country is in a terrible financial state, the consequence of this to or on the implementation is negative as everything virtually comes to a stand still in the absence of money.

Attitude

The 6-3-3-4 system of education is a conscious effort to effect a positive change using education as a means of bringing innovation in to the life of the nation with resultant development. But due to the natural tendency of man to resist change, the people greeted the new system with lukewarm attitude.

It is unfortunate that the government and people of Nigeria's attitude towards solving-the country's problem of development leaves much to be desired and this seems to confirm the view of some authors as to whether the present 6-3-3-4 programme is not being too ambitious for the country's level of seriousness, particularly when one sees its implementation method.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE PROBLEM OF IMPLEMENTATION

If the 9-3-4 programme must bear the fruit of success expected of it by the government and people of Nigeria, some steps must be taken. Foremost, that the need for gradual and systematic approach towards the implementation of 9-3-4 programme should be recognized and followed in the spirit of "make haste slowly", that the goals and objectives set be periodically evaluated to give room for innovations aimed at solving the emerging problems.

Naturally speaking, the horse should come before the cart, but the reverse is the case at the implementation stage of 6-3-3-4 programme in Nigeria. According to Fafunwa (1982) the training and procurement of teachers must precede all other considerations:

“the development of any education level presupposes the availability of teachers in a sufficient number to man the institutes. Widespread curriculum reforms in schools to introduce technical education will be useless, unless qualified technical teacher are prepared.”

The above was found to be true that supply of qualified technical teacher is grossly inadequate at least for full scale take off of the 6-3-3-4 programme. Steps should be taken to correct this error.

The preparation of the teachers of technical subjects is the key to the present education reform; otherwise, any reform initiated will simply remain on paper. This has been the case with 6-3-3-4 programme at the implementation stage.

Accordingly, Government may consider any of the alternatives to gradually and systematically implement the 9-3-4 programme. Due to lack of money, it might be very difficult to launch it out full swing during implementation. The first alternative therefore is to:

(1) Start on subject basis: the government could have used the huge sum of money spent on the purchase of gigantic machines and technical equipment for schools for training technical teachers in a sufficient number, since the procurement of all necessary infrastructures such as: Buildings Water, Roads, Electricity etc. might be too much of a financial burden on the government if they are to be procured at a go; less costly materials which can go round all the secondary schools in Nigeria could have been purchased, and these things are the basic technical drawing materials and equipment, with these, the single subject-technical drawing, can be taught successfully throughout the secondary schools in the country in the presence of adequate supply of qualified technical teachers, so that all the students in Nigeria would have compulsorily learnt the rudiments of technical drawing (the language of technician and engineers) at least during the first three years of their secondary school education since the year 1982 when the programme started.

In the light of the above, the writer suggested the introduction of technical drawing as a subject

in all secondary schools throughout the federation in this new 9-3-4 system, since this technical drawing is the only universal language of engineers and technicians and therefore a very important tool for national development in the hands of the users for the technological development of the country.

(2) The second alternative may therefore be based on the geographical locations. Nigeria is a large country with a lot of geographical differences from North to south, from East to West.

Emphasis in the curricula should, on the other hand, be expected to vary from zone to zone. For example, while the South-South and South-East zones will be expected to produce an adequate number of graduates employable in the oil industry, those in the North-Central will be expected to emphasize more the production of graduates to work in the field of agriculture, since these are natural peculiarities of these zones

It is observed that taking in to account the number of subjects combined together to form the present introductory technology and the practicality of successfully teaching these subjects, which include, Auto mechanics, Basic electricity, Metal work and woodwork, Food storage and preservation, Technical drawing, Ceramics, Polymers (plastic and rubbers), Building etc. and the fact that not all the raw materials are available locally in all parts of the country therefore, a suggestion is made in favor of specialisation of raw material to serve the purpose of training.

In such an arrangement, the students in the area where wood can easily be procured should specialize in wood-work, those near sources of ceramic material should specialize in ceramic and glass-work etc. This is not to the intent that any part of the country should be marginalized trade wise, but a way of saving the cost of transportation of local raw material and enhancing interdependence of the various states of the country. Moreover, the government can introduce an exchange programme to cater for the training of people in the trade of their choice which incidentally might not be available in their locality, just in the same way the unity schools operates across the country. Note that interdependence also breed unity, which is one of the goals of the new policy on education.

In addition, most of the introductory technology teachers in all parts of the country should

receive a training that would enable them to utilize effectively the local materials available in their areas, to train their students. This would enable the teachers as managers of skill learning to effectively relate learning to the local environment with its resources. For example, it would be easy for one to teach pasteurization of milk than teaching that of palm wine up in the northern part, because palm-wine is not common in the North as it is common in the southern part of the country.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that Nigeria will have a long way to go in making a success out of the "6-3-3-4" system of education due to lapses in the four aforementioned areas, namely:- men, materials, finance and attitude, attention must be paid to these areas in the new 9-3-4 system of Education.

It is a known fact that education in Nigeria of today is no longer a private enterprise, but a huge government venture that has witnessed a progressive evolution of governments' complete and dynamic intervention and active participation.

In spite of all efforts, the government has not been able to overcome the problems associated with provision of the right type of education for the citizens due to gross inadequacies in the above afore-mentioned areas. It is therefore the onerous task of all citizens in the country to cooperate with the government in providing all necessary supports to facilitate the provision of the right type of education for the development

of the society in this new system of education. The fact that the government has committed a huge sum of money to the 6-3-3-4 system of education without yielding any appreciable result shows that there is the need for moral, spiritual and financial supports of religious, social and political organizations, teachers, parents and students, educators and educationists, including all well-meaning Nigerians to reach our National Educational goals with the new 9-3-4 system of education which in the real sense is a disguised continuation of the failed 6-3-3-4 system of education.

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