



## Reconsidering Policy Implementation of Vocational Technical Education using 6-3-3-4 System of Education in Curbing Societal Problems

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### Abstract

Vocational and Technical education as preserved in the Nigerian national policy on education, is connected with producing adequate and qualitative technological human resources directed towards a producing of trained, experienced and self-reliant craftsmen, technologists and technicians in the field of technical and vocational education for the general development of the country and its citizenry. However, the training of technical personnel has witnessed many hindrances and challenges originating from unrealistic policies, unclear curriculum that has little correlation with the needs of the society. In addition, misappropriation of fund meant for education development purposes, lack of qualified teachers, inadequate funding and cases of bribery and corruption are all connected to the poor implementation of the policy. This paper is aimed at providing a rethink in the implementation of 6-3-3-4 system of education by examining the issues, challenges and the way forward in curbing out societal problems through Vocational and Technical Education.

**Keywords:** Education Policy, Vocational and Technical Education, 6-3-3-4 System of Education, Societal Problems

### Introduction

The Nigerian education system has experienced a lot of changes in her educational policy. Education policy is directed towards increasing the quality of people's life. Education is a potent tool for all round development of an individual or a nation. Ebete., (2014) stressed that, education is a great investment of any nation economy. It increases the quality of the individuals in a nation and this helps to speed up the race for economic development. For this reason, the Federal government of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument per excellence for effecting national development. In view of this, the government has reviewed the national policy severally in order to make it more functional and to meet up with the changes in the world of technology. One of Nigeria's national goals is to build a great and dynamic economy. The federal government came up with these policies that aim at transforming the economics standing of citizens and would want to use education to actualize these objectives. Various policies have been formulated but not well implemented or given enough time to evaluate the result. Unfortunately, not much has been achieved. (Eru, et al., 2019).

Prior to 1977 Nigeria functioned an educational policy inherited from British government at independence. The failure of this policy to satisfy the national aspiration of the country render it unpopular. In 1969 a national curriculum conference was organized which reviewed the inherited curriculum and identified new national goals for Nigerians education. A national seminar was organized by the National Education Research and Development Council (NERDC) in 1973 under the chairmanship of Chief S.O. Adebayo. This gave rise to the National Policy on Education in 1977 which is derived from the National philosophy of the country (Mba & Ugulashi, 2022).

The national policy is anchored on Nigerian policy on education as expressed through the nation's objectives. Nigeria has five (5) main national objectives as provided by the second National Development Plan and accepted as the necessary foundation for the national policy on education. They are the building of: a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; a united strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).



## **Concept of Education Policy**

The education policy of Nigeria is a general statement containing principles, regulations and rules, that govern many of the decisions on how to educate children, where to get them educated, where to get them employed, who to teach them, how to finance their education, what to teach, how to impact skills, goals, objectives and even the philosophy (Irhue.,2016). Okoye, and Arimonu., (2006) described policy as, a fundamental process through which an institution attains stability and undertakes changes as part of its ultimate goal. Policies are written or unwritten statement that guides the present and future thinking initiatives. It directs the decision of management. They are written when there are documents for reference purposes and are unwritten when made in form of pronouncements, that is, policy statement by people in power and authority (Babalola, 2019). In other words, policies are guides that usually provide latitude for operations. (Nwalado and Nwalado,2015). There should be a check in frequent changes in the system because policy inconsistency affects standards. Policies that followed the due process of law and public acceptability should not be thrown to the wind, by succeeding administration; instead areas of amendment could be identified and addressed for the purpose of continuity. Improvement on policy implementation in education is a noticeable national problem that has taken centre stage in Nigeria. Okoroma., (2006) observed that, there is a gap between educational policies and goal attainment due to inadequate implementation of policies. Formulation of policy sets the stage for implementation which according to (Irhue, 2016) is the most important aspect of planning.

In Nigeria, policy making at times is a mere attempt to rationalize political decisions. Actions are hastily and expediently conceived. The consequence of this is that many of Nigeria's educational policies are not reduced to those goals and objectives which can easily be attained given the range of problems and feasibilities involved in the allocation and utilization of available human and material resources.

## **Brief History of Policy Implementation from Pre-Independence Era to Date**

### **Pre-Independence Era 1842-1960:**

In 1883, the Portuguese missionaries are the sole providers of education in Nigeria. In 1892 Phelps Stokes (a philanthropic organization in America) presented a report which leads to the issuance of memorandum on education in British colonial territory in 1925. In 1952 the then director of education approves the opening of standard schools and the closure of sub-standard one. When political parties come on board in the North, East and west, they had their education policies, this resulted in the formation of Universal Primary Education (UPE), free primary education in the west in 1955 and in the eastern region in 1957 with an attempt to increase access to formal education (Oladeji.,2018).

### **Education Policy During the First Republic 1960-1966:**

The remarkable education policy of this era followed Eric Ashby report in 1960 which investigate Nigerians need in the field of post primary school certificate and higher education over the next 20 years. Four (4) universities were established and developed, they are Nsukka, Lagos, Ile-Ife and Zaria (Asiwaju, 1972).

### **Education Policy During Military Era 1966-1979:**

After the civil war, the federal colleges were called UNITY SCHOOLS in all the states of the federation in a bid to encourage national reconciliation after the civil war. In addition, there is a policy to take over schools in which government exercised more control over the education system. A one-week national curriculum conference involving the entire cross-section of Nigerian populace was held in 1969. This was done bearing in mind the need of youths and adults in the task of nation building. After the acceptance of the white paper recommendation of the conference, a seven-man implementation committee was set up in 1977 as well as the establishment of NERC (National Education Research Council), introduction of Universal Primary Education and the number of universities in the country was increased to thirteen (13). Another great achievement is the establishment of JAMB to boost admission in to universities as well as setting up of NTI (National Teachers Institute) and NBTE (National Board for Technical Education) (Oladeji.,2018).

### **Education Policy During Second Republic to Second Military Era (1979-1999):**

During this era, the NPE (National Policy on Education) was revised in 1981 and the introduction of 6-3-3-4 system of education in 1984. (Okoroma,2006). During this time, there is serious harsh economic condition and education system suffered a serious set-back. Oyeranmi., (2010) observed that, between 1983-1999 the country had five different regimes, and ministers of Education. The states were not exonerated from these changes. Each of the presidents, ministers, Governors and commissioners had different conceptions and policies on education for implementation during their tenure. With such instability in the system of governance most of the policies were abandoned half way probably because funds were not provided. The political and administrative inconsistencies were so much that they affected both policies and programs in the educational sector. Oyeranmi, (2010) noted the incessant changes and paucity of technocrats within the government. These resulted to lack



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of continuity of programs, fallen standards, and inconsistency. Nigeria has not earned a pass mark in this regard. In the light of these objectives there is needed to re-assess the steps taken by government to realize these noble objectives in education. For this reason, educational planners need to examine these fundamental problems in education.

**Education Policy from 1999- Date:**

The important features of Nigeria's Education policy as at 1998 is that of a philosophy for the country's education, which promotes teaching of Nigerian languages, and the introduction of prevocational and vocational technical subjects (FRN, 2014). This policy was also characterized by a 6-3-3-4 educational structure, which required a Nigerian child would spend a minimum of 6 years primary education, 3 years in both junior and senior secondary school and a minimum of 4 years in the university. In 2004, the policy on education was revised. Despite the latest policy incorporated the features of the previous one, the 2004 policy had a few new additions being 9-3-4 education structure. The 9-3-4 structure requires 9 years of basic education (which combines 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education) 3 years of senior secondary education and a minimum of 4 years of university education (Oranu.,2004).

**6-3-3-4 System of Education:**

It is believed that the 6-3-3-4 objectives was geared towards self-realization, better human relationship, national consciousness, national unity as well as social, cultural, economic, political scientific and technological progress. (Fabunmi., 1986). The 6-3-3-4 system of education has helped in the following areas:

1. It has assisted in the attainment of some of the objectives of National Policy on education, i.e. emphasis is now placed on yearning and aspirations of Nigerian society.
2. Students (both boys and girls) to some extents are now staying longer in schools.
3. The system has produced more matured youths who are able to take decisions on their own.
4. The system has reduced to some extent the rate of dropout in schools as opportunities are made available for students to develop their talents to the fullest.
5. The system has helped Nigeria nation to develop technologically as we have various Technical Colleges, Polytechnics and Universities of Technology in the country today that have produced more technicians and technologists.
6. The system to some extent has helped in catering for individual differences which pre-supposes differences in intelligence, physical ability and interest, and individual achievement-oriented goal and aspirations. This affords the individual learner the opportunity to develop his/her potentials.

However, with all these lofty achievements, the system has failed. It is an understatement that, the system of education being implemented in Nigeria today has lost the quality of 6-3-3-4 (Fabunmi,1986). If not for a handful of Nigerians who through dent of handwork, still reflects the indices of being educated, we should be taking of a total collapse of the sector.

**Problems Associated with Policy Implementation**

For more than thirty years the nation has not been able to successfully implement National policy on Education. The problem of policy implementation is traceable to the planning stage which according to (Marah.,2006) comes immediately after policy formulation. For policies and programmes to achieve desired result there should be proper planning. Most policies in education require long term planning and monitoring. For policies and programs to succeed, there should be stable government funds available, all the structures and facilities that will facilitate its implementation should be readily available. Adesina., (2012) noted that, planned implementation is constrained by the following factors.

1. Over estimation of available resources: This is a situation where estimated resources are greater than the actual available resources to implement programme.
2. Under estimation of cost implementing a plan: this happens when cost estimated does not make adequate provisions for inflation and actual implementation costs becomes unmanageable.
3. Over reliance upon external assistance: plans that substantially rely upon assistance from foreign sources for their implementation run into hitches when such aid fails to comes.
4. Inaccurate statistical data: planning education requires accurate and up-to-date data plan, this is usually not available and it leads to implementation problems. Ability to implement policies and programmes can be hindered by these additional factors such as; incompetent staff, insufficient information, distortions in the communication process, inconsistencies in the channel of communication, lack of political support Insubordination and Conflict (Reko & Maxwell., 2016).



## **Rethink in the Implementation of Vocational Technical Policy on Education in Nigeria through 6-3-3-4 system of Education**

Nigeria, being a developing country, has been in continuous search for ways to become a developed country. This explains the reason why the government came up with the 6-3-3-4 policy on education. The 6-3-3-4 concept of education allows the child to spend six years at the primary level, three years at the junior secondary school level, another three years at the senior secondary level, and four years at the tertiary level.

1. Primary education with regard to the 6-3-3-4 system of education is the elementary type of education for children between ages 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.
2. According to the FGN, (1984) “the broad aims of secondary education with the overall education policy are:
  - a) Preparation for useful living within the society and
  - b) Preparation for higher education
3. 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 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” (Egugbo & Salami, 2021).

The 6-3-3-4 system of education was introduced in 1988 to replace the 6-5-4 system of education. This educational system was structured and designed to bring functionality in the system by producing graduates that make use of their head, heart and hands. The 6-3-3-4 system of education is job oriented because its emphasis is on manual activities, technical proficiency, and respect for dignity of labour and economic efficiency. It aimed at providing the child with basic tools to prepare him for local craft (Habeeb.,2022). In the secondary stage emphasis is on the acquisition of vocational skills; while it is professionally oriented at the tertiary stage. From the foregoing, it is very clear that the 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria was introduced to cater for the needs of the individuals as well as the country. The world is dynamic and as such much emphasis is laid on Science and Technology. The nature of the present world shows that, the countries that are very serious with science and technology are far more developed than countries that have low level of science and technology development. Science and technology no doubt helps in the economic diversification with its attendant benefits such as employment generation, low level of poverty as well as reduction in the level of insecurity (Ibukun & Aboluwodi.,2010).

The 6-3-3-4 policy on education has encountered a surplus of challenges which made it not to achieve its desired objectives. A policy can be said to be successful if it achieves the desired goals. The 6-3-3-4 policy on education was formulated to ensure that students particularly in the secondary level acquire skills through vocational training that would enable them to be self-reliant upon graduation at different levels of their education. This is to say that, students who were unable to get to the senior secondary level would have acquired some skills at the junior secondary level which they can use to start their own job. Same with those who are able to finish the senior secondary education but are not able to proceed to tertiary institutions would have also acquired skills that would enable them to be self-reliant. Those who are able to get to tertiary institutions and graduate would have also acquired skills that would enable them to be self-reliant (Agbakosi & Akande., 2019).

The essence of the policy is that graduates from different educational levels have skills that would enable them to start their own job and not waiting for government to provide them with white collar jobs. If the policy had succeeded, the high level of unemployment and poverty as we have in Nigeria today would not have been the order of the day (Egugbo & Salami.,2021).

### **Challenges of 6-3-3-4 Educational Policy**

The challenges facing the 6-3-3-4 policy on education include but not limited to the following:

1. **Inadequate skilled manpower.** As at the time the 6-3-3-4 policy on education was introduced, the country lacked and still lacks enough skilled manpower to train the students in various vocations as visualized by the policy-makers. The end result of this is that the vocational aspect of the policy did not succeed as expected (Egugbo & Salami, 2021).
2. **Lack of necessary instructional and infrastructural facilities.** Vocational training cannot be possible where there is shortage of instructional and infrastructural facilities such as well-equipped laboratories and workshops, and vocational equipment. Since the 6-3-3-4 policy on education emphasizes vocational training, there is no way the policy would have succeeded in an environment with inadequate or total lack of the necessary equipment needed for such vocational training (Okoye & Udoudo. 2015).



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3. **Epileptic power supply.** This is also another major challenge of the 6-3-3-4 policy on education. Issue of power has been a recurring challenge in Nigeria since the inception of the Nigerian state. Nigeria over the years has been experiencing epileptic power supply. Even in places where there is the availability of equipment, epileptic power supply serves as impediment to efficient and effective use of the available equipment (Egugbo & Salami.,2021).
4. **Lack of adequate funding.** It is very obvious that the education sector is not properly funded. The 6-3-3-4 policy on education requires proper funding to make it to succeed. The budgetary provision for education over the years has been very poor and nothing to write home about. There is no way the 6-3-3-4 educational policy would achieve its goals in the midst of poor funding (Nwafor et al., 2015)
5. **Lack of proper planning.** Dimock. *et al*, (1983) argued that, in its broadest sense: “Planning is thinking before acting, establishing goals before setting out, and appreciating the limitations of planning as well as the essential need for it”. The terrible failure of the 6-3-3-4 educational policy shows that, proper planning was not done before the formulation of the policy. According to Fafunwa (1982) “the training and procurement of teachers must precede all other considerations”. Fafunwa say that “the development of any educational level pre-supposes the availability of teachers in sufficient number to man the institutes. Widespread of curriculum reforms in schools to introduce technical education will be useless, unless qualified teachers are procured”.

### **Curbing Societal Problems through VTE**

Unemployment and poverty among Nigerians, especially the youth is a major cause of insecurity and violent crimes in Nigeria (Ewetan & Urhie., 2014). Youth unemployment have contributed to the rising cases of violent conflict in Nigeria. According to the Nigeria Bureau of statistics, the rate of unemployment in Nigeria increased from 16.18% in the third quarter of 2017 to 17.72% in fourth the quarter of 2018. As of 2021, the rate of youth unemployment is 19.61% and it is as a result of this geometric increase in unemployment that has plunged Nigeria further into poverty. To confirm this, the result from world poverty clock in June 2018, shows that, Nigeria has the highest number of extremely poor individuals in the whole world above India. It is said that idle hands are the devil’s workshop, energetic youth who have nothing worthwhile to do will likely think of something bad or evil to do and this is the situation of millions of Nigerian youths today (Ewetan, & Urhie., (2014); Yang, Jin (2008).

Nigeria should be one of the countries where foreign investors are willing to invest because of its numerous natural resources and large population. However, Insecurity in Nigeria is on an increasing rate and it’s very worrisome to the extent that even the Nigerian security men that should protect the citizens have been attacked in their base several times and also government official has become victims of kidnapping and abduction. Countries around the globe are enthusiastically implementing technical and vocational education in order to provide employable skill to its citizens so as to ensure national integration and cohesion. It is believed that the more people are self-employed, the stronger the economy, the higher the standard of living, the more cohesive and well-integrated the citizenry of a nation. It is in this direction that (Habeeb., 2022) posits that the present democratic government is vigorously pursuing vocational and technical education towards providing employable skills to its citizens so as to ensure national integration and cohesion. This is because it follows that the more citizens of a nation are self-employed, the stronger the economy and the higher the standard of living.

Furthermore, Sadiq, et al. (2006) lamented that, nation building does not only lie on how best our natural resources are harnessed or managed, but lies more or less on how best the human assets of the nation are progressively educated. Furthermore, this is where vocational and technical education play a vital role. In addition, it was assert that, education is capable of bringing about change of negative attitude and values of a people and can be used to inculcate in them positive attitude of cooperation and national consciousness which cuts across regional and state boundaries. Nigeria is seen as a nation of division, conflict and diversity, which ranges from indiscipline, poor attitude to work, robbery, arson, bomb blast, religious and ethnic bigotry, all of which are evidence of national disintegration and lack of cohesion. Vocational/Technical education is capable of eradicating such social vices in the society which will bring about the desired national amalgamation and unity.

### **Conclusion**

A careful examination of the 6-3-3-4 policy on education shows that, it is not only in the area of trained teachers the policy-makers did not consider appropriately but also in the area of power supply, availability of instructional materials and other infrastructure to support the policy as well as funding. All these factors are supposed to have been put into consideration before the 6-3-3-4 policy on education is made. The solution to the aforementioned problems is for the government of the day to have a rethink in the proper implementation of 6-3-3-4 system of education. This will help in curbing out our present societal



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problem as well as national progress and cohesion. In addition, a body should be established to oversee the affairs of schools and the learning environment; more funds should be budgeted to schools and universities for research. Teachers should be trained constantly; this will give room to pass across new ideas and means of bringing effective teaching and learning processes in the various fields of learning. More funds, grants and other forms of monetary support should be made available by the government for educational purposes.

## Recommendations

After thorough review of the literature in relation to Vocational Technical Education using 6-3-3-4 System of Education in Curbing Societal Problems the paper suggests the following points as recommendation:

1. Government should struggle hard to have a stable policy in respects to education in the country.
2. There is need for constant training and retraining of teachers in an attempt to handle the Technical and Vocational trade in our Vocational and Technical Colleges in the country.
3. The Federal government of Nigeria should improve in the provision of funds for educational policies and programmes.
4. As a matter of urgency, Government should come up with policies and schemes in relation to vocationalisation in order to absorb the teeming unemployed youth to have something doing, this will help a lot in curbing out societal problems.
5. Stable electricity will help a lot in job creation in the country.

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