

POLICY ANALYSIS OF THE 6-3-3-4 POLICY ON EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Public policies are made and implemented to satisfy the needs of the citizens. Public policies can as well contribute to a very large extent in the achievement of sustainable development which is highly desirable by virtually all countries of the world because of its potential to bring about the well-being of present and future generations. This paper examined the 6-3-3-4 policy on education in Nigeria from the perspective of the analysis for it and analysis of it. The effectiveness of public policy lies in proper analysis for it and of it. This is because there are certain basic pre-requisites that should be in place for a policy to be successful. In other words, public policy needs certain ingredients to be successful to the extent that if the necessary ingredients are not put in place before a policy is made its success would be a mirage. The 6-3-3-4 educational policy was meant to ensure that in the secondary school levels which constitutes the 3-3- meaning the first three years of junior secondary school and the second three years of senior secondary. Students are made to learn vocational training that would make them to be self-employed and self-reliant at that level if they are not able to proceed to the university. One of the objectives is to reduce unemployment with its attendant negative effects in the society. The paper is a qualitative one in the sense that data for the paper were sourced through secondary means and analysis of the data collected was done using the historical method. The theoretical framework adopted in this paper is structural functionalism. The paper found out that the 6-3-3-4 system of education did not achieve the desired objective due to some internal factors such as epileptic power supply, lack of adequate home grown technology, lack of adequate skilled man power to see the students through the vocational training, corruption, etc. This paper recommended amongst others that for a policy to be made in order to achieve the desired objectives, proper analysis and planning should precede the policy in order to ensure that the enablers of the policy are put in place.

Keywords: Public Policies, Vocational Training, Technology, Unemployment, Self-Reliance.

INTRODUCTION

The 6-3-3-4 policy on education if well implemented can lead to the achievement of sustainable development. This explains why Oladeji (2018:3) opined that “sustainable development has, no doubt, become an expressed objective of public policy. It is pursued with a view to improving people’s overall well-being and surrounding without destroying the life supporting systems on which current and future generations of human beings depend”. The high level of poverty, unemployment and insecurity ravaging Nigeria presently would not have been the order of the day if the 6-3-3-4 educational policy was effectively implemented. One thing is to make policy; the other is to get the policy effectively implemented. Public policies can only achieve their intended goals when they are efficiently and effectively implemented. Nigeria has been noted to be a country not in short of policies but her problem has been that of poor policies implementation.

The initiators of the 6-3-3-4 educational policy believed that through that system of education, Nigeria would be able to compete with any country anywhere in the world in virtually every area of human endeavour. This is because the policy was intended to make Nigerian youths to inculcate the spirit of hard-work very early in life by exposing them to vocational training which would enable them to be self-reliant and not depend much on white collar jobs. With this, virtually every school leaver at any level would have had himself or herself equipped to fend for themselves.

When this is the order of the day as envisaged by the 6-3-3-4 educational policy makers, there would not be unemployment problem as well as high level of poverty and this condition would make it difficult if not impossible for the country to witness high level of insecurity as the country is experiencing today. Terrorism, kidnapping and armed banditry are now ravaging Nigeria, according to the 2019 Global Terrorism Index, Nigeria is the 3rd most unsafe and terrorism prone country in the world, ranking behind only two war-torn countries, Iraq and Afghanistan. This condition together with poverty and unemployment has made the country to be in dire straits. The fabric of the country’s existence is being threatened by these factors. Every sector of the country is adversely affected by them. In the area of poverty, over 50percent of Nigerians live in extreme poverty, while over 7million Nigerians are in urgent need of life-saving assistance. No wonder Nigeria has been said to be the poverty capital of the world by the world poverty clock. Employment in the country is nothing to write home about. Many graduates and non-graduates in Nigeria now roam the streets without job. According to the report published by Nigeria’s Bureau of Statistics, more than 27% of Nigerians are unemployed. One in every two Nigerians is either unemployed or underemployed.

It was in order to avoid this situation that the 6-3-3-4 policy on education was made but failure to put all necessary machineries in place to ensure its effective and efficient implementation made the policy not to achieve its intended results and this has resulted to what the country is witnessing today.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this paper is structural-functionalism. The theory of structural functionalism was popularized by Herbert Spencer. According to Ndoh (2003:22) “the structural-functionalism approach is an offshoot of the general systems theory of David Easton”. The basic thrust of the structural-functionalism is on political structures and the functions they are meant to perform. Every political structure exists to perform some functions. The nature of the political system is dependent on the way and manner the structures perform their functions.

In making and implementing the 6-3-3-4 policy on education many government structures and institutions were involved such as the federal and state governments as well as the various ministries of education. The federal government in conjunction with the state governments have the responsibility of making provisions for funds to enable the various ministries of education to procure suitable men and materials for the success of the policy. No policy can succeed without adequate ingredients to support it. The failure of the 6-3-3-4 policy on education stems from poor budgetary provisions for the necessary factors needed for the policy to succeed. The problem with the structural functionalism theory which is part of the traditional approach to the study of political science is that it didn't place emphasis on the individuals who are to occupy those structures. It is important to state that structures on their own cannot perform any functions. This explains why the behavioural approach came into being as an approach to the study of political science and places emphasis on the individuals. Therefore, apart from the existence of different structures meant to perform functions as far as the 6-3-3-4 system of education is concerned, it is also important we examine the individuals who were, and still, in-charge of the structures concerning the 6-3-3-4 policy on education because their personality traits and idiosyncrasies one way or the other have affected the policy.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

It is very imperative and germane at this juncture to clarify very important concepts in this paper. The concepts to be so clarified are: public policy, policy analysis and education.

The centrality of public policy in the governance system of every country has made it to attract the attention of many scholars across the globe and as such given a plethora of definitions. According to Dye (1981:1) "public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do". It can be said to be a deliberate intent and action of government on issues arising from the environment with a bid to addressing them in such a way as to satisfy the wishes and aspirations of the citizens who are the major reason government exists. This explains why Mabogunje cited in Irhue (2016:68) opined that "public policy are those definite acts or actions of government geared towards the fulfilment of the obligation of government on the citizens, which are the maintenance of law and order, the provision of social and economic facilities needed for an enhanced standard of living of the people, etc. To Ikelegbe (1996:4) "public policy is simply governmental actions, or proposed actions or course of proposed actions directed at achieving certain goals". Olaniyi (2016:13) sees public policy as "the management of human and material resources by policy actors to address a policy problem identified in a polity at any point in time". Chandler and Plano (1988:107) defined public policy as "the strategic use of resources to alleviate national problems or governmental concerns". Government exists to provide essential services to the citizens and public policy is one of the ways of achieving that. That is why public policy has been seen as an activity that takes place at the governmental level. In this vein, Dimock et al cited in Olaniyi (2016:10) opined that "public policy is deciding at any time or place what objectives and substantive measures should be chosen in order to deal with a particular problem issue or innovation. It also includes the reasons they should be chosen". Public policy can bring about the achievement of sustainable development if properly implemented. What is sustainable development? According to Aina cited in Ogu and Adeniji (1998) "Sustainable development seeks the incorporation of the environment and human needs in the pursuit of economic growth and development". To Brundtland Commission Report of 1987,

“Sustainable development is the kind of development which satisfies the current need without endangering the future generations to satisfy their own”.

Having considered the concept of public policy the next concept to be explained and clarified is policy analysis. Without public policy there cannot be policy analysis. It means that policy analysis exists because of the existence of public policy. One can therefore opine that policy analysis is all about issues concerning public policy and also about ensuring the success of public policy. This is because public policy is meant to achieve specific goals; it is policy analysis that contributes to the success or otherwise of public policy. What then is policy analysis? According Shafritz (1968:409) policy analysis is “a set of techniques that seeks to answer the question of what the probable effect of a policy will be before they actually occur”. The Dictionary of Public Administration cited in Sapru (2006:51) defines policy analysis as “a systematic and data-based alternative to intuitive judgements about the effects of policy or policy options. It is used “(a.) for problem assessment and monitoring, (b.) as a ‘before the fact’ decision tool, and (c.) evaluation.

We have analysis for policy and analysis of policy. Analysis for policy denotes the examination of a policy option before they are made to find out the necessary ingredients that would make a particular policy to work and the possibility of getting those ingredients in place before making the policy. This is because going ahead to make policies without considering those factors needed for its success may end up being effort in futility. This explains why Ericson cited in Egonmwan (2014:25) asserted that policy analysis is “a future oriented inquiry into the optimum means of achieving a given set of social objectives”.

Analysis of policy denotes the critical examination and monitoring of a particular policy particularly during the implementation stage to ensure effective and efficient implementation. Policy analysis is also done to find out the impact of policy on the citizens as well as other intended beneficiaries. This is because when a policy is not properly implemented it cannot achieve its desired result. The view was corroborated by Eliagwu (2005:225) when he asserted that “policy analysis is a very important aspect of policy-making. After analysis, the original policy idea may be abandoned or amended or refined, or it may trigger the imitation of other policies to cope with the unforeseen impact of the original policy issue. Similarly, outcomes of analysis may affect the implementation process and even the mode of implementation and monitoring”. It is in this vein that Dror cited in Sapru (2006:9) opined that “policy analysis” deals with the substantive examination of policy issues and the identification of preferable alternatives in part with the help of systematic approaches and explicit methods. Dye cited in Egonmwan (2014:21) stated that policy analysis is “the description and explanation of the causes and consequences of government activity”. To Quade, policy analysis is “any type of analysis that generates and presents information in such a way as to improve the basis for policy-makers to exercise their judgement. According to Eliagwu (2005:225), “there is very little practical distinction between formulation and analysis. In fact, the process of analysis begins with formulation, through implementation and monitoring. Here, not only are information collated and relevant data sifted, very often intelligent assessment of data are made for the provision of options (and their implications) to higher actors in the policy process. The process of analysis requires experts and professionals with relevant skills, depending on the policy issue”.

The next concept to be clarified is Education. What is Education? Education as a concept has been defined in various ways by various scholars across the globe; this means that education has been given various definitions. According to Nwagwu cited in Amaele (2005:18) “Education does not lend itself easily to definitions because it changes with people, place and time”. The word “education” was derived from the latin words ‘educare’ or ‘educere’. Educare means “to

mould or make” in which case, the individual is seen or perceived as one who should be made from nothing to something. Educere means ‘to lead out, ‘to uphold’, ‘to build’. Plato, Aristotle and Rousseau cited in Ezewu (1993:29) have their various definitions of education. Plato defined education as “that training which is given by suitable habits to the first instinct of virtue in children when pleasure and pain are rightly implanted in rational souls”. To Aristotle, “education is the development of a sound mind in a sound body”. According to Rousseau, “education is the development of the individual from within (Educere), by interacting with the natural environment with the aim of fitting him properly into the society”. Kanu cited in Abraham (2010:127) advanced education as all the conscious processes and activities both institutionalized and un-institutionalized, organized and un-organized, graded and un-graded, literate and non-literate which are made to assist succeeding generations of members of a society to acquire the corpus of knowledge - values, attitudes, beliefs, mindset, skills, central tendencies, worldview, and orientations - which are seen as representing the proper way of life in the given time and place. Education is associated with development both of the individual and society. That is to say that development is the goal of education. Therefore, government policy on education is geared towards achieving all round development of the country. According to Bamisaye (1991:7) “A policy of education is a statement of the actions to be taken by the government in order to achieve some goals of Education”. This view was corroborated by Okoroma (2000:190) when he asserted that “Educational policies are initiatives mostly by governments that determine the direction of an educational system”.

According to Awokoye cited in Okoroma (2006:247), “the following considerations are considered necessary to guide the formulation of adequate educational policy:

1. It should be formulated and adopted through a political process which acknowledges the reality and legitimacy of conflicting interests and desires among its participants.
2. It should portray some elements of guidance for properly directed and coordinated action towards the attainment of the desired goals.
3. It should contain information on the broad objectives that should be reached.
4. It should be a binding guide on the actions of those implementing it.
5. It should be enforceable and enforced by the society which formulates it”.

NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The centrality of education in the development of the country has made successive government to come up with the national policy on education. The national policy on education is expected to put the country in the pedestal of development. This is because Nigeria as a country has not attained the status of a developed country.

The national objectives of Nigeria as stated in the national policy on education include the following:

- a) A free and democratic society
- b) A just and egalitarian society
- c) A united, strong and self-reliant nation
- d) A great and dynamic economy and
- e) A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

The national policy on education provides that the quality of education at all levels would be channelled towards inculcating the following values:

1. Respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals

2. Faith in man's ability to make decisions
3. Moral and spiritual values in inter-personal and human relations.
4. Shared responsibility for common good of society.
5. Respect for the dignity of labour and
6. Promotion of emotional, physical and psychological health of all children, (NPE, 1981:1)

The importance of democracy as a governance system has made many countries including Nigeria to aspire to be democratic. This explains why a free and democratic society is the number one objective of the National Policy on Education. Democracy offers the citizens the opportunity to participate in the political as well as governance processes. The involvement of the citizens enables them to make their input in the governance system. When the principles of democracy are applied the people have the opportunity to hold those in power accountable. Accountability would not only improve governance but also can make the country to achieve the much needed development.

The second objective of the national policy on education which is "a just and egalitarian society" is also very important for the growth and development of Nigeria. Justice, equity and fairness are necessary pre-conditions for a peaceful and progressive society. This is because the people would have the feeling of sense of belonging which would make them to be patriotic and loyal to constituted authority. It also gives people the zeal and motivation to contribute their quota to national development.

Nigeria is a country that has many ethnic and religious groups. For these ethnic groups to be able to come together for the purpose of national development there is need for them to be united. This is one of the reasons the country adopted federalism as a governance system in 1954 by virtue of Lyttleton Constitution. Unity in diversity is achieved when the principles of federalism are made to thrive in Nigeria. The autonomy inherent in federalism would make the constituent units to be able to harness properly the resources found in their areas for purposes of growth and development. Unfortunately in Nigeria, this has been bastardized partly because of long period of military rule. This manifests in the centralization of revenue and power making the constituent units to be weak and lazy. This condition cannot lead to a united strong and self-reliant country which is the objective three of the National Policy on Education.

A great and dynamic economy is the objective four of the National Policy on Education. A mono-product economy such as Nigeria that relies heavily on revenue from crude oil cannot be a great and dynamic economy. This explains why there has been continuous admonition for the Nigerian government to diversify the economy. When there is diversification of the economy Nigeria would have optimum benefit from the revenue that would accrue from different resources that abound in Nigeria. Nigeria has rich arable land that is favourable for agriculture, aquatic resources and other solid minerals apart from crude oil. There should be concerted effort on the part of government at all levels to adequately harness these resources for the benefit of mankind and the country at large. Diversification of the economy would go a long way in solving the problem of unemployment, poverty and insecurity as well as general low level of development.

Objective five of the National Policy on Education is an offshoot of objective four. Objective five says that Nigeria should be a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens. This objective can only be achieved when other objectives have been achieved particularly objective four. In Nigeria presently, there is high level of unemployment, poverty and insecurity. This has made the citizens to be in despair, confused and frustrated.

The five cardinal objectives of Nigeria as stated in the National Policy on Education are interrelated in the sense that achieving one is a stepping stone to achieving the rest. It is one thing to state objectives and the other is to work assiduously to achieving the stated objectives. With the way Nigeria is today, where there is ethnic conflict, centralization of power and resources, high level of unemployment, poverty, insecurity and wide gap between the rich and poor leading to inequality and injustice, one can comfortably say that Nigeria is far from achieving the objectives embedded in the National Policy on Education.

EXAMINATION OF THE 6-3-3-4 POLICY ON EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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.

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.

According to the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1981:22) “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

Tertiary education which is the post-secondary education given in the higher institution aims at:

1. “The acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society at large
2. The development of the intellectual capabilities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments
3. The acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop, and
4. The acquisition of the objective view of local and external environments”.

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. 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.

CHALLENGES OF 6-3-3-4 EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The 6-3-3-4 policy on education has encountered a plethora 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. That 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. 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 wait 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 presently would not have been the order of the day.

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 envisaged by the policy-makers. The end result of this is that the vocational aspect of the policy did not succeed as expected.
2. **Lack of necessary instructional and infrastructural facilities.** Vocational training cannot be possible where there is dearth 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.
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.
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.
5. **Lack of proper planning.** Dimock et al (1983:141) 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 abysmal 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". He went further to 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". A careful examination of the 6-3-3-4 policy on education would show 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.

CONCLUSION

No doubt the 6-3-3-4 policy on education is a laudable one which would have launched the country into a technological advanced one with massive industrialization and employment generation for sustainable development. The place of sustainable development in the well-being of present and future generations of Nigerians cannot be over-emphasized. This explains why it is very imperative for government to ensure it does everything within its power to bring it about. The 6-3-3-4 policy on education could have been one way of achieving that but unfortunately; the necessary factors that could have made the policy to succeed were not made adequately available leading to the failure of the policy. It is very important for policy-makers to consider necessary factors that can make the policy to succeed before formulating them, because if the factors are not considered and made available, the policies to be made would not succeed. Government should as much as possible take a critical look at the 6-3-3-4 educational policy and make provision for those factors that can make it succeed. When this is done it will go a long way in making the country to be among the technologically developed countries with massive industrialization and employment generation which eventually could make the country achieve sustainable development.

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