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DOUBLE-SHIFT SCHOOLING OPERATION SYSTEM AS A CHARACTERISTIC FEATURE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SIERRA LEONE: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES.

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ABSTRACT
The study examined Double shift schooling operation system as a characteristic feature of secondary schools in Sierra Leone and also discusses concepts that describes its operation in the secondary schools in Sierra Leone, such as: the meaning of Double shift schooling; the nature of Double-shift schooling operation system; prospects and challenges and suggested recommendations to key stakeholders on how it could be improved. The nature of Double shift schooling operation system in Sierra Leone is characterized by two shift schooling system that takes place in the morning and afternoon sessions in the same school but at different time interval. The pupils of these morning and afternoon sessions make use of the same available facilities of the schools. The main reason for implementing the double shift schooling operation system in Sierra Leone is to improve on access to education through the introduction free education at the primary, junior and senior secondary schools and the school feeding programme at the primary level. Though double shift schooling operation system has its advantages like ensuring that every Sierra Leonean child is given the opportunity to be educated to the best of his or her ability, aptitude and inclination by providing educational facilities at the primary and secondary levels of education; protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, such as children and the disabled in securing their educational opportunities, it also has it negative aspect that affects the pupils. Example, the curriculum is hardly covered on time and there is reduction in the instructional time on the timetable. Pupils during the afternoon session, most time get bored. It is therefore recommended that Government supports double-shift schooling system by allocating adequate funds for its operation; Government should also supply adequate teaching and learning materials such as textbooks and the necessary infrastructure such as libraries, equipped laboratories in all schools operating the double shift system. Government should also construct more schools in urban centres to reduce the congestion in schools; Government should also support the double-shift schools by employing sufficient trained and qualified teachers; Finally, government through the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Schools should publicize the need of double-shift schooling system in all the radios across the country.

Keywords: Double Shift, Operation, System, Secondary Schools, Prospect and Challenges.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Education is fundamental to the development of every nation as it serves as a bedrock in empowering individuals to develop skills and positive attitude so that they will contribute meaningfully in the society they find themselves. No country would realize its vision and mission without education. Developing nations like Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Botswana, Kenya to name but a few have put more premium on the implementation of their educational policies in order to meet the needs and aspirations of their citizens. UNESCO (2001) affirms

that, education is a fundamental right and a gateway to individual opportunity, critical for current and future challenges that a lot of effort is now directed to education.
UNESCO (1997) also confirms that educated citizens and workers have the skills to make democratic institutions function effectively to in order to meet their obligations as parents and citizens. The 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone, focused on its policy towards ensuring that equal rights and educational opportunities are given to all citizens at all levels by:
a) Ensuring that every citizen is given the opportunity to be educated to the best of his or her ability, aptitude and inclination by providing educational facilities at all levels of education such as primary, secondary, vocational and technical, college and university;
b) Protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, such as children, women and the disabled in securing educational opportunities; and
c) Provision of the necessary structures, finance and supportive facilities for education as and when practicable.
The government of Sierra Leone introduced the free school fees at the primary, junior and senior secondary school level in order to address the constitutional educational objectives of the nation.
The 6-3-3-4 education system of was also introduced in Sierra Leone in 1993 as against the backdrop of the previous educational reform measures. The present system of education focuses on issue like increased access to education, prioritization of adult and non-formal education to address the illiteracy rate, emphasis on technical and vocational education, special needs education and the education of girls and women. Increased access to, and diversification of education appears to have overriding concern. As a result of the increase access to education after the eleven year civil war, schools became overcrowded in such a way that they could not accommodate all the pupils in the schools. This increase in school enrolment brought about the introduction of the double shift schooling operation system to address the increase number of pupils in the various schools throughout the country.
As cited by Kurebwa and Lumbe (2015) in Sagyndkova (2013)**, '**Many developing countries with constrained resources have adopted a double-shift system as a way to serve more pupils.
Galiya (2013) described double shift schooling as a system in which different cohorts use the same buildings and have the same academic curriculum with some in the morning and some in the afternoon. Double shift schooling system is helpful to most administrators because it is cost effective. Bray (2008) once said, "Double shift schooling has helped many countries to move towards universal primary and secondary education."
The features of the junior and senior secondary schools in Sierra Leone are characterized by the type of school, shift operation system, governance and location. "School type" refers to gender-related composition of pupils enrolled in the schools that are either purely boys, purely girls or mixed sex. "Shift operation system' concerns with the period within which schools are in session (morning shift and afternoon shift); "Governance" pertains to proprietorship or ownership of the school and has three aspects considered; either the school is a privately owned institution, agency (mission) school governed by either (catholic, methodist, brotherhood or pentecostal or a community) or it is government owned institution that is normally called Government school. "Location" on the other hand is about where the school is situated, either in a rural setting or urban community school environment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study is to examine Double-Shift schooling operation system as a characteristic feature of secondary schools in Sierra Leone: Prospects and Challenges.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

- To highlight the definition of Double-shift schooling system
- Discuss the nature of Double-shift schooling operation system in Sierra Leone
- Determine the prospects of Double-shift schooling operation system in Sierra Leone
- Discuss the challenges of the implementation of Double-shift schooling operation system in Sierra Leone

2.0 Review of Related Literature

2.1 Meaning of Double -Shift School Operation System

London (1993) defined double shift as a system of schooling whereby the school provides education to two different categories of the school age population at different sessions that is morning and afternoon of the school day.

NYBEI, (2008) defined double shifting system as the division of teaching day into two shifts; morning session from 7.15 to 11. 45a. m, and afternoon from 12. 45 to 5.00 p. m. Both sessions are thought by the same teachers. International Institute for Educational Planning (2009) describe double shift session as schools which have different students in the morning and afternoon, with the same number of teaching hours in the two sessions as students in single sessions and with different teachers for each session

2.2 The Nature of the Double Shift School Operation System in Sierra Leone.

In Sierra Leone context, double- shift school operation system refers to a schooling system that is designed for two categories of pupils who attend school at different time intervals of the day from Monday through Friday in every week using the same available facilities of the school. These two categories of pupils use the first shift that is referred to as Morning Shift and the Second shift referred to as the afternoon shift with a prescribed curriculum for each shift. The first shift or morning shift is meant for the junior secondary school pupils while the afternoon shift is meant for the senior secondary school pupils. The Double shift operation system was introduced in Sierra Leone after the rebel war was declared finished by the then president Ahmed Tejan Kabba in 2002.This pronouncement encouraged increase in schools' enrolment in all parts of the country. The nature of the double shift operation system is a characteristic feature of Sierra Leonean schools whereby the two shift schooling use the same available facilities in the school but at different time of operation. The time scheduled for the two shift schooling include: morning shift school which starts from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm while the afternoon shift starts at 1:00 pm to 5:30 pm

There are four categories of streams of pupils in the afternoon shift schools. These include: pupils in the pure Art stream, pure sciences stream, commercial stream and pupils in the Technical and Vocational Stream. Each of these shift schooling system have independent school administration. Teachers that teach in these schools serve different pupils at different session. Depending on the governance of the school, most of these schools with two shift schooling system have one school board that comprise of twelve members. This school board manages and supervises the administration of the school. Every Board of Governors of a school have:

1.a chairman that is appointed by the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary School Education from among the twelve members;

2. five representatives of the minister to be appointed by the Minister of Education;

3.four members to be appointed by the minister on the recommendation of the proprietor of the school

4. one member nominated by the local authority of the area in which a school is situated, and appointed by the Minister;

5. one representative elected by the Ex-Pupils Association; and

6. The Principal serves as secretary to the board.

The quorum for all meetings of the Board of Governors is five so long as the total membership stays at twelve and 40% of the members present are representatives of the Minister. One of the main reason the government of Sierra Leone introduced the shift schooling operation system is due to the lack of infrastructure to accommodate the increasing number of pupils that are enrolled in the schools due to the free education at the primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools.

To address the problem of accommodation, the government has built more schools in all the district headquarter towns and also remote area of the country through donor support.

According to Bray (2000) the main reason for double shift schooling is to increase the supply of school places while limiting strain on the budget. Bray (2008,) also explained that, developing countries, which have very scarce finance for its educational sector mostly, practice the double shift system of schooling. Most countries introduce this mechanism of schooling in the urban and sub-urban areas where the school age population is very large.

Many developing and developed countries adopted the shift system to expand access and provide education of good quality to different categories of school age population at different sessions (morning and afternoon sessions). The morning sessions in most countries operate from 7:30 am - 12:30 pm; and the afternoon sessions operate from 12: 30 pm - 5: 30 pm. These five hours include breaks. (Bray, 2008, p. 24).

Bray, 2000 p.12).affirmed that the main purpose of implementing double-shift school, is to:

1. Expand more school places while avoiding serious strain on the budget.

2. Increase access and achieve social equity.

3. Use scarce human resources better: where there are shortage of teachers, staff should be encouraged to teach in more than one session.

4 teachers to be well paid by giving them opportunity to work in two sessions.

5. Cater for those who have to work during the day. 6. Minimize class congestion, class size and alleviate pressure on sports facilities, libraries, school canteens and so on.

5. Reduce opportunity costs for pupils by catering for those who have to work during the

d. The implementation of the school shift system, according to MacWilliam (1964) is as a result of the following factors:

1. Overcrowding due to high enrolment
2. As a result of the poor economic state of the country Governments could not put up more school buildings and other teaching and learning resources in most towns and villages.
3. Lack of trained and qualified teachers.

2.3 Prospects of Implementing the Double Shift Operation Schooling System

Bray (2008, p.17) contribution on the economic factor as prospect of the double shift schooling is that the system is cost effective and allows increased enrolment, allow reduction of social inequalities opportunities of double shift school system. The double shift system increases the supply of school places while a serious strain on the budget is minimized. The system makes it possible for single buildings and facilities to serve more pupils, thus, helping many countries to move towards universal primary and secondary education

Linden (2001) on the other hand emphasized that the double shift is justified on the assumption that it enhances efficient and effective use of material resources such as classrooms, desks, cupboards, sport facilities, libraries etc.

Bray (1989, p. 34) also affirms the fact that shift system gives the pupils whose socio-economic status couldn't otherwise allow them during the half of the day and at the same time use half hours each day to do some work to support their families.

Therefore, double-shift schools are often also seen as a temporary measure where financial resources (of the government and/or parents) are constrained (Nhundu, 2000). According to Athanase (2013) as cited in Kleinhans (2004), schools employ different staff for different shifts or use the same staff for all shifts. Bray (2008) also joined the idea that, 'double-shift allows the use of scarce human resources better: where there is a shortage of teachers, staff may be encouraged to teach in more than one session, the double shift system in term of salary for teachers, Kleinhans (2004, p. 14) said that teachers may get double salaries or alternatively receive an extra pay for extra work but at lower rate.

According to Katjaita (2011) as cited in Bray (2000, p. 47) double-shift system have the following prospects: it help low-income groups in different ways example some youths contribute to their family's livelihood by working part of the day; It also reduces school fees and thus allows poor children to attend school;The system thus provides a platform where responsibility is shared amongst family members

2.4 Challenges of the Double Shift Operation Schooling System

In a survey carried out by Kurebwa and Lumbe (2015) titled 'Teachers Voices: Challenges of Double-Shift Session in Gweru Urban Primary Schools', the findings of the survey showed that 100% of the teachers that were interviewed during the survey indicated that contact time was a major challenge. Teachers further highlighted that they could not cover all the curriculum subjects with the given time. Both the morning session and the afternoon session had limited time in the classroom. The survey further revealed that, 84% of the participants revealed that classroom management is affected due to lack of belonging and that furniture in these shared classrooms are easily worn out due to no proper care. Maria (2011), stated that managing and leading double-shift schools, places additional demands and challenges on schools principals (p, 30).

Maria (2011, p. 27) also reported that one of the greatest challenges experienced by the teachers of the double shift system is that in the afternoon sessions they have learners who are exhausted, dirty and hungry. The primary aim of Double – shift schooling system according to (Bray, 1989; Tsang, 1991p.181) is to extend access and minimize unit costs. But such goals are sometimes regarded to be achieved at the expense of educational quality. Thus, policy-makers are often faced with difficult choices in the design of the multiple-shift school system. Katjaita (2011) cited in Bush (2003, p. 138) refers to double shift system as "fluid participation" in the management of schools. Some double-shift sessions rotate the management functions and make it extremely difficult to attribute responsibility to those responsible for the sessions. This allows a kind of 'loose' responsibility and commitment, where the responsibility is passed on to the next person

Bray (2000, p. 38) mentions several factors which make double system inferior. According to him

Double-shift school day is shorter and as a result, its breaks are shortened and the teaching time is also reduced. The socialization factor is influenced negatively in the double-shift system, mostly when two heads are

responsible for separate shifts. Due of time constraints children miss their breakfast and have to struggle to concentrate due to hunger.

Katjaita (2011) in her thesis titled 'An investigation into the management implications of double-shift schooling in the Khomas Region in Namibia', her findings showed that the following were the key factors that affect double shift system from the responses of the participants that were involved in the study.1. Parental involvement: This according to the participants posed a very serious challenge with the lack of involvement of the parents concerning the learners. It revealed that parents do not take care of their children attending the afternoon session very seriously, as the children are left to their own devices. From the findings, most time parents are at work in the day, there is no one to send them to school in time or to see that they have a decent meal before they go to school and that they are at least dressed properly and clean.**2.** Effect on buildings and facilities:

Responses of the participants in the research indicates that most serious consequences of double-shift schooling is the fast deterioration of the school equipment such as the furniture and buildings that are used by the pupils of both sessions. According to the participants the maintenance of these facilities is a big challenge due to the fact that these facilities are used by two different groups of teachers and learners. They get worn out faster as compared to the single shift school. Another challenge is that the afternoon teachers rarely get into clean classrooms, since the classes are only cleaned in the afternoon after the afternoon session. One of the participants of the survey opined that the extra use of the school facilities by both groups creates a high maintenance cost. Bray (2000, p. 39) regards ownership affirmed this because the classrooms are shared by different teachers and everyone is reluctant to take care of the classroom in order to provide an environment that is conducive to work for the next teacher.3. Effect on the learners. Findings on the third issue mentioned reveals that learners of the afternoon shift suffer a great deal, according to the participants. They are usually exhausted when they come to school. Children also find it hard to learn and study in the afternoon because the place might be very hot. Their concentration span is short and the afternoon staff have difficult task to keep them focused during the teaching and learning process. 4. Effect on curricula and duration of instructional time Participants also revealed that the afternoon session has less instructional time to cover the curriculum. This affects the academic performance of pupils.(Ingale, 2014) identified co-curricular activities as a disadvantage of pupils that attend the afternoon session because they find it difficult to attend to co-curricular activities. According to him, Co–curricular activities aim to develop psycho motor domain of students. Bray (2000) also identified the following factors as less effectively for double shift system: the number of hours of instruction; the time available for non-core subjects and the availability of extra-curricular activities.

Conclusions

The study discussed Double-shift operation system as a characteristic feature of secondary schools in Sierra Leone: prospects and challenges. From the discussions the following conclusions are made:The nature of double shift schooling operation system is not different from other developing African countries like Nigeria, Kenya, Botswana etc. Its nature of operation is a two shift schooling system that takes place in the morning and afternoon and anchored in the same existing facilities of the schools with two different categories of pupils each with their own session. The fundamental reason for the implementation of the double shift schooling operation system in Sierra Leone, is due to the increase in enrolment in the different schools and lack of infrastructure to accommodate these students in a single shift system. The double shift schooling operation system in Sierra Leone assisted most parents with financial constraints. In a situation where there are shortage of teachers in a school, some teachers with areas of specialization would be hired to teach in both sessions thereby boosting their salaries per month.

Though double shift schooling operation system has advantages of its implementation it also has it negative aspect that affects the pupils. Example the curriculum is hardly covered and there is reduction in the instructional time. Pupils in the afternoon session get bored and do not concentrating in the teaching/learning process.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following are recommended for the improvement of the double shift operation system in Sierra Leone:

Government should support double-shift schooling system by allocating adequate funds for its operation.

Government should supply adequate teaching and learning materials such as textbooks and the necessary infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories in all the schools operating the double shift system.

Government should construct more schools in urban centres to reduce on the congestion in schools

Curriculum planners should ensure that the time table for the two sessions are designed in such a way that both sessions have equal opportunity to cater for the successful implementation of the curriculum. Government should support. The double-shift schools by employing sufficient trained and qualified teachers in all the schools at the junior and senior secondary school levels to be able to handle the challenge of shortage of teachers.

Parents in the different communities should be highly participate in the schools' operation/activities in order to address the social problems that affects the success in double-shift schooling system. The government through the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Schools should publicize the need of double-shift schooling system. Finally, school authorities should improve on the teaching methods through strengthened supervision and support systems.

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