

The Nigerian Educational System

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Introduction:

The Nigerian government has been given active participation, competition and powerful intervention to people through the Nigerian education system and this education system is more like a public enterprise. Until 1984 the Nigerian education system consist of; 6 years of primary schools, 5 to 7 years of post-primary schools (i.e. Secondary school, Teacher Training College and sixth form) and 4 to 6 years of tertiary education (i.e. College of education, polytechnics, College of Technology and University education).

In 1985, new education system emerged that can be classified as **pre-primary** or **kindergarten** education (which is 2 to 3 years), for the children of ages 3 to 5 years, the **primary school education** which is 6 years for children of age 6 to 11 years, the primary school curriculum typically includes subjects areas like English, Mathematics, Agriculture, Home economics and social studies. **Primary school leaving certificate** is awarded to the students who complete their primary school education.

The post-primary education is divided into two halves of 6 years duration (that is 3 years of Junior Secondary School and 3 years of Senior Secondary School). The most important curriculum for the junior secondary school includes English, Mathematics, social studies, French, introduction to technology, and social studies. The Pre-vocational electives include business studies, craft, computer education, and Agriculture. Non-prevocational electives include Arabic, creative arts, religious and moral education. Students must at least take ten subjects including core subjects. The **Junior Secondary School Certificate (JSSC)/Certificate of Basic Education** is awarded to the students who complete their junior secondary school education.

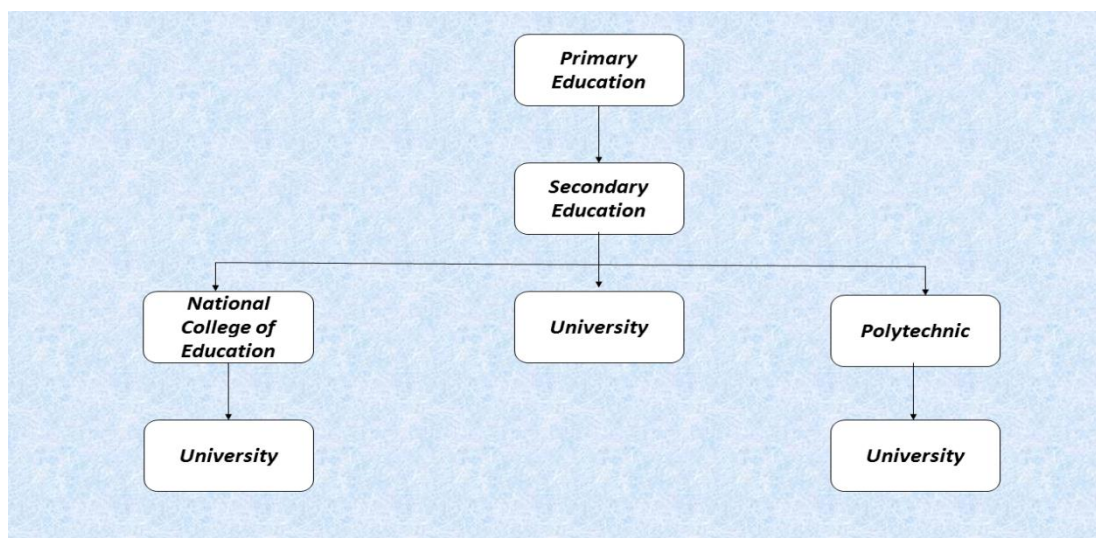
The cycle for senior secondary lasts for three years and each student takes eight subjects from a diversified curriculum that include six core subjects: Mathematics; English; one major Nigerian language; and one elective out of biology, physics, chemistry, or integrated science; one elective out of history, geography, English literature, or social studies, agricultural science or a vocational subject. **Senior School Certificate (SSC)** which is issued by the West African Examination Council and/or National Examination Council is awarded to the students that complete their senior secondary school education. The SSC is one of the requirements for undergraduate admission into Nigerian University. The second requirement for entry to tertiary education is the **Universities Matriculation Examination (UME)** which was first conducted in 1978 by the joint admission and matriculation board. Students taking the UME must register for three subjects based on their particular major and English language. A fifty percent total score is considered a pass for the UME. However, the tertiary education institutions based on the nature of specific undergraduate programs specify the minimum score.

The Tertiary Education (i.e. College of education, polytechnics, College of Technology and University education) last for 4 to 6 years. This is called the 6-3-3-4 system. A Universal Basic Education Scheme was launched in 1999 by the Ubasannjo administration. The specific targets of the scheme are; total eradication of illiteracy by the year 2010 and an increase in adult literacy rate from 57% to 70% by 2003.

A sequence of Higher Educational Levels in Nigeria

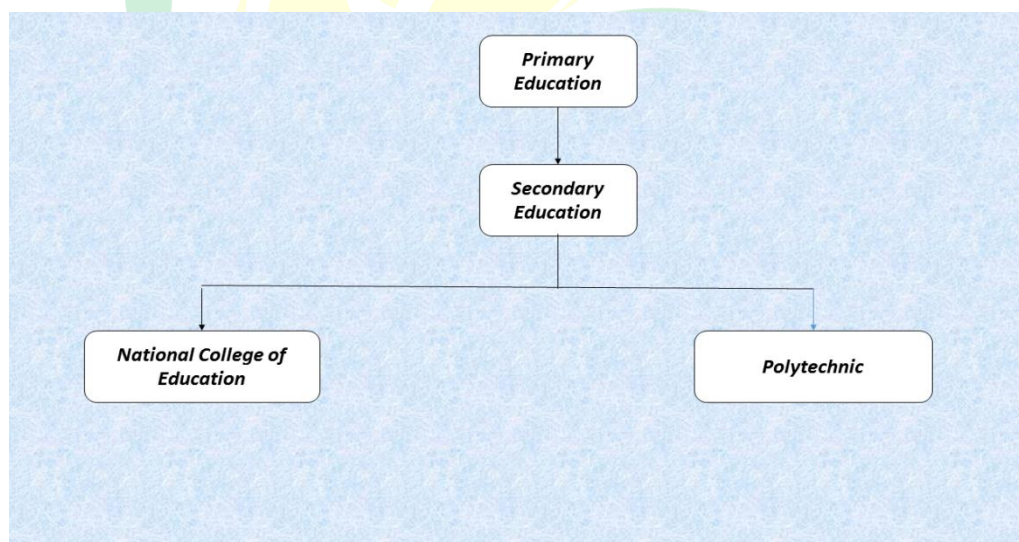
In Nigeria, there is a sequence of higher educational levels. Chart 1 illustrated three possible channels. The first channel indicates that a graduate went through NCE and then to the university. The other two channels are the more common ones, i.e. those who went directly from secondary school to university and those who went through polytechnics to university. This assumption is predicated on experience from the years of schooling involved in each higher education level and labour markets, which place a higher value on university, polytechnics, and NCE, in that order.

Chart 1.



Second and as an alternative, the other higher levels of education (i.e. the Nigerian colleges of education and the polytechnics) are alternative routes after secondary education (chart 2).

Chart 2.



Conclusively, the Nigerian Education system also known as the 6-3-3-4 system includes 6 years primary, post-primary (3 years of junior and 3 years senior secondary schools), 4 to 6years tertiary level.