

This study is a conceptual and operational exploration of the disciplines Educational Planning and Development, Policy Studies and Educational Evaluation. It is Evaluation of the Policy and Programme implemented in New Secondary Schools introduced in Jamaica in 1974, through an analysis of the Productivity and Socio-economic and Socio-political Impact of the schools. It proposes a plan for reform.

Productivity was defined as the Performance of Students in Language, Mathematics, Pre-Vocational subjects and Work Experience, on the SSC examinations. Impact was the change effected in society as a result of the implementation of the policy. Goals articulated by policy makers for these schools, were preparing students for higher education, employment, citizenship and promoting equality of opportunity through simultaneous academic, vocational and remedial education programmes.

The theory was that the Productivity and Impact of New Secondary Schools have functional relationships with antecedent factors and to the policy and programme being implemented.

The main issues were derived from the interplay of forces infringing on the policy. Firstly, there was evident contradiction between the double track educational system and the social goal of equality. There was differences of student selection, programmes, teacher qualifications, examinations, financing and facilities between the prestigious high schools and low status new secondary schools. Secondly, policy aims and the rate of growth of the economy showed dynamic interdependence. Thirdly, inescapable socio-economic problems in the background of students were conspicuous.

The data showed a receding economy involving high unemployment and limited and competitive access to higher education. The vocational and academic orientation of the programme thus found dubious acceptance with students. Both the productivity and impact

were linked to the socio-economic context, teacher and school material factors, the level of literacy, attendance and work habits of students, the programme itself and the manner of its implementation and the unequal system.

The results of the study indicated that the Productivity of New Secondary schools was low, in that only a small percentage of students performed satisfactorily on the SSC examinations. Also there was minimal Impact on higher education, unemployment and equality of educational outcomes.

In essence, the Productivity and Impact of New Secondary schools are so inextricably linked with powerful socio-economic, political and institutional antecedents, that the goals and operations of the programme in its present form are not seen to be effective, efficient or significant as an instrument or policy. The system needs to be reformed.