Implementation Status of Innovative Trade Subjects' Curricula at Senior Secondary Education Level in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Historically, reforms on curricula at all levels for the economic well-being of the populace have been on for many years in Nigeria. In respect of secondary education, the agitation for a more trade-driven curriculum in the growing 21st century for wealth generation has led to the inclusion of new trade subjects' curricula in secondary schools of Nigeria. Despite this good will for a better future, criticisms abound about the curriculum reforms at secondary school level. This observation informed the study which examined the implementation status of innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study is a descriptive survey in which four research questions guided the study. Innovative Curricula Implementation Status Scale (ICISS) was used for data collection from 240 teachers. The study found out that there is was no adequate teaching personnel to implement the curricula of the innovative subjects. Also, no adequate and relevant textual materials were made available while funding problem, lack of expected supervision and monitoring were also among the weaknesses confronting senior secondary school curriculum innovations. It is recommended among others that there should be adequate sensitization on the benefits inherent in the curriculum innovations, high priority for curriculum

supervision, and monitoring for optimum actualization of the intended objectives for senior secondary education curriculum innovations in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Curricula, Implementation Status, Innovation, Trade Subjects/Subject Stream*

Introduction

Education world over remains a strong tool for human sustainable development in both developed and developing countries. It requires that people be given the opportunities necessary for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable them live happy and productive lives as individuals and discharge their social duties for the betterment of life in the society. Thus, all avenues of educating the citizenry at all levels often respond to the needs of the dynamic society for individual, national and global development.

Curriculum therefore is the medium or avenue through which educational priorities are identified and implemented. It is a planned learning experiences offered to a learner in the school (Offorma, 2005). Curriculum in fact, is an organized plan of course outlined with the objectives, content and learning experiences to be used for achieving a set of pre-determined educational objectives. Any education system and its emerging reforms rely on the planned curriculum to put the policy plan into actions. As a result, issues on curriculum, either in an explicit or an implicit manner are inextricably linked to current thinking and action on educational system around the world (Ajibola, 2008).

Earlier in 1982, Nigeria adjusted her secondary educational system to encompass diversified curriculum that integrates academic with technical and vocational subjects intended to empower the individual for self-employment (Igwe, 2000). This target reflects the two broad aims of secondary education stated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) in its National Policy on Education as:

(i) Preparation for useful living within the society and
(ii) Preparation for higher education.

However, for over three decades after the implementation of the senior secondary education curricula, majority of Nigerian youths who have passed through secondary education are obviously lacking adequate pre-vocational orientations towards trade options available in some higher institutions of learning in Nigeria and in the wider society. They do not have the required skills to either fit them into many types of jobs that are available or create jobs (Igwe, 2007).

It is no longer news that the nation's youth unemployment rate has been on the increase in recent times. Even the federal government in Nigeria sometimes acknowledged that about 80 percent of Nigerian youths are unemployed and some of the reasons are inadequate pre-vocational orientation and lack of proper career guidance in secondary schools. Likewise, up till the tertiary institutions level, the poor quality of graduates is obviously worrisome. These altogether become a critical issue in the curricula of secondary education in Nigeria and the approaches to implementation.

In response to the ongoing national and global reforms in the social, physical, economical and education sectors vis-à-vis the urgent demand of the Nigerian society for a more pragmatic curriculum, and as a way to improve the secondary school education in Nigeria, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), with curriculum development as one of its core mandates, developed the 9-year Basic Education Curriculum, and the Senior Secondary Education Curriculum having 34 Trade/Entrepreneurship Curricula for learners at both the basic and senior secondary education levels in the country. The curriculum is diversified to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles of individuals. It is developed to provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce. Technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary

for industrial and economic development are also greatly considered in the development of the secondary school curricula.

The innovative attempt by NERDC to improve secondary school curricula led to the regrouping and introduction of some new subject streams into four distinct cross-cutting areas. This effort is to give secondary education in Nigeria a face-lift. Alade (2014) puts it that when curriculum innovation is done, the conception could be a systematic adjustment or/and introduction of new novels into the content area, learning activities, methodology, evaluation techniques as well as the means of delivering the ever-changing needs of the society. He buttressed that when the curriculum responds to the dictates of the society, the education provided for members of the society would be functional and effective. These features, no doubt, reflect in the innovative subject streams integrated into secondary school curricula in Nigeria by NERDC. Similarly, Maduewesi (2007) reiterated the need for consistent change and review of Nigerian curriculum in order to integrate new areas of concern. Such innovation and integration are the four distinct subject streams which any secondary school student in Nigeria can stream into in terms of subject combination which exist in senior secondary school.

The four distinct innovative subject streams otherwise referred to as curriculum offerings in the New Senior Secondary School Education Curriculum in Nigeria are (a) Compulsory Cross-Cutting Subjects (b) Core Subjects in Specialized Field of Study-Humanities, Science, Social Studies, and Technology (c) Electives and (d) Trade/Entrepreneurship Subjects.

With the identified innovative subject streams in secondary school education, appropriate degree of comprehensiveness is brought to bear on the secondary education curriculum structure. This structure is geared towards job creation, poverty alleviation and eradication, and wealth creation by vision. Also, the curriculum is designed to drive the development of appropriate skills for social and economic transformation. It is to provide

effective foundation for higher education if well implemented. Apart from the compulsory cross cutting subjects, and core subjects in specialized field of study, it is recommended that respective secondary school should choose between three (3) and five (5) trade/entrepreneurship subjects (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2004) for their students from where they will choose one or two as the case may be. In all, students are to take a minimum of eight (8) subjects or a maximum of nine (9) subjects.

As a deliberate policy, the innovative subject streams in senior secondary education curricula is embarked upon to further consolidate the gains of the new basic education programme fostering: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy as well as become better citizens; preparation for higher education for those who desire to proceed further; and provision of entrepreneurship knowledge to drive the development of appropriate skills for social and economic transformation. Despite this ambitious innovation in Nigerian secondary education curricula reforms, there have been outcries from concerned stakeholders of education on the preparedness of the government prior to the implementation of the new innovation in senior secondary school curricula as well as the status of its implementation which has been on for some years now. It is on this thrust that this study was embarked upon by the researchers.

Statement of the Problem

As part of the efforts of government through the Nigerian Educational Research Development Council (NERDC) to provide education which is more societal needs-driven in content and coverage, secondary school education has been reformed and re-structured in terms of the cross-cutting subjects and the inclusion of new trade course/subject options. This step is with a view to making senior secondary school curricula and their recipients (school-going youths) skill-based, entrepreneurship and practical-oriented in the labour market.

Despite the above steps taken in policy terms, criticisms still abound about the cross-cutting compulsory subjects and the new subjects' curricula introduced vis-à-vis the resources put in place for their effective implementation. Similarly, some schools of thoughts on education and policy matters have been faulting the adequacy of its policy implementation in secondary schools of Nigeria, and if empirical investigation about the critisms levied against senior secondary education in policy and implementation terms was not carried out, the purpose for which the innovative trade subjects are included might be a mirage. As a result, this study examined the implementation status of innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level in Ogun State, Nigeria. This covered the implementation in terms of personnel, instructional resources, structure, workshops, facilities, fund, adequacy of supervision and programme monitoring to justify the viability and stability of the curricula which has been on implementation for quite some years in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the implementation status of innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level in Ogun State, Nigeria. The specific purposes of the study were to:

(1) Find out the availability and adequacy of personnel for the implementation of the innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level.
(2) Examine whether relevant textual and instructional materials are available for the implementation of the innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level.
(3) Find out the adequacy of fund for the implementation of the innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level.
(4) Ascertain the adequacy of supervision and monitoring of the implementation of the innovative subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of the study:

(1) Are teaching personnel available and adequate for the implementation of the innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level?
(2) Are there relevant textual and instructional materials for effective implementation of the innovative subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level?
(3) Are secondary schools adequately funded for the implementation of the innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level?
(4) How adequate is supervision and monitoring of the implementation of the innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level?

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to the implementation status of the innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary school education level. It covers the senior secondary schools and their teachers in Egba Zone of Ogun State. The study was limited to the study area because the selected schools prominently have teachers been used to teach at least some of the innovative trade subjects as expected at the senior secondary school level.

Research Methodology

The research design for this study is the descriptive survey approach. This research design is useful in gathering relevant data to be analysed and interpreted without any manipulation of the variables. A survey research design is one which entails the collection of detailed description of existing phenomena with the intent of using the data to justify existing condition and practices and make better plans or forecast for improving the phenomenon.

The population for the study covered all the male and female teaching staff in the senior secondary schools in Egba Zone of Ogun State, Nigeria. There are six (6) Local Governments in Egba Zone of Ogun State with a total number of 87 senior secondary schools. In all, the total population of the senior secondary school teachers is 450 as recorded by year 2013 Ogun State Teaching Service Commission records.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 240 teachers from the 87 senior secondary schools in Egba Zone of Ogun State where the innovative subject streams curricula are being implemented. There were 126 male teachers and 114 female teachers selected from the senior secondary schools where the innovative curricula were already in operation. Purposive sampling techniques was used because the sample was restricted to the teachers that participate in the teaching of the innovative trade subjects along with the head of units of each subject in the senior secondary schools who were considered to have more experience to respond to the content of the research instrument relevant to this study. Obviously, there were more male teachers on ground compared with female teachers in the purposively selection process.

The main instrument used for data collection was Innovative Curricula Implementation Status Scale (ICISS) which was divided into two different sections – A and B. Section A covers information on the personal data of the respondents while section B was divided into four parts with each part containing relevant items to each of the four research questions which guided the study. A four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SA) with 4, 3, 2, 1 response points categories indicated for the spread of opinions.

The validation of the instrument (ICISS) was done by vetting by education experts in terms of items relevance, phrasing, wording, content coverage (scope) and sequence upon which necessary modifications and corrections were done.

In order to determine the reliability of the research instrument (ICISS), twenty copies were given to relevant respondents outside the scope of the study within two weeks interval. Pearson Product Moment of Correlation Coefficient was then determined. A reliability value of 0.80 obtained was considered very high, and this made the research instrument to be considered reliable for this study.

The required numbers of the research instrument (240) were given out during the academic session and were well monitored for adequate collection in the study area with the assistance of some serving teachers. The data collection lasted for about two weeks.

The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency count, mean, standard deviation with the mean value of 2.50 and above as the acceptance region of respondents' opinions while less than 2.50 implies negative response which negates the item of the research instrument by the respondents upon which discussions were based.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 1: Demographic Variable of the Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	126	52.5
Female	114	47.5
Total	240	100%

As shown in table 1, there were more male teachers (52.5%) who participated in the study than their female counterpart (47.5%).

Results on Research Question 1

Teaching Personnel Availability and Adequacy for the Implementation of the Innovative Trade Subjects' Curricula at Senior Secondary Education Level.

Table 2: Availability and Adequacy of Teaching Personnel for Innovative Trade Subjects Teaching at Senior Secondary Education Level

No	Teaching Personnel	SA	A	D	SD	Mean(X)	Std Decision
1	There are enough teachers to teach all the innovative subjects stream in senior secondary school curriculum.	62 (25.8)	26 (40.0)	3 (16.3)	43 (17.9)	2.26	1.04 Rejected
2	There are qualified personnel to handle practical aspects of the innovative subjects stream in senior secondary school curriculum.	20 (8.3)	98 (40.0)	93 (28.8)	29 (12.1)	2.45	0.81 Rejected
3	The state government has employed qualified teachers for the implementation of the innovative subjects stream in senior secondary school curriculum.	48 (20.0)	88 (36.7)	64 (26.7)	40 (16.7)	2.40	0.99 Rejected
4	The State government fails to employ enough qualified teachers to for the innovative subjects streams teaching in senior secondary school curriculum.	105 (43.8)	63 (26.3)	26 (10.8)	46 (19.2)	2.51	0.90 Accepted
5	There are new qualified personnel to teach the innovative subjects' stream in senior secondary school curriculum.	34 (14.2)	114 (47.5)	76 (31.7)	16 (6.7)	2.31	0.80 Rejected
6	Some of the subject teachers on ground are being given the responsibility of teaching some of the innovative subject streams in secondary school curricula.	53 (22.1)	105 (43.8)	82 (34.2)	-	2.73	0.8 Accepted
7	The subject teachers available are up to the task ahead of teaching the innovative subject streams in secondary school curriculum	16 (6.7)	114 (47.5)	94 (29.2)	16 (6.7)	2.46	0.72 Rejected
8	Government need to recruit qualified teaching personnel to compliment the available staff for the implementation of the innovative subjects stream in senior secondary school curriculum	128 (53.3)	48 (20.0)	64 (26.7)	-	2.64	1.15 Agreed

X stands for the mean

As presented in table 2, there are short-comings on the availability and adequacy of teaching personnel for the teaching of innovative subjects' stream in senior secondary school curriculum. The respondents disagreed on the following: availability of enough teachers (Item 1, x=2.26); presence of qualified personnel to handle practical aspects of the innovative subjects' stream in senior secondary school curriculum (Item 2, x = 2.45); employment of qualified teachers by government (Item 3, x = 2.40); availability of new qualified personnel to teach the innovative subjects' stream (Item 5, x = 2.31; and that the subject teachers available are not up to the task ahead of teaching the innovative subject streams (Item 7, x = 2.46). The respondents' level of agreement showed acceptance on the fact that: the state government fails to employ enough qualified teachers for the innovative subject

streams teaching (Item 4, x = 2.51). Some of the subject teachers on ground are being given the responsibility of teaching some of the innovative subjects stream (Item 6, x = 2.73), and government need to recruit qualified teaching personnel to compliment the available staff for the implementation of the innovative subjects stream in senior secondary school curriculum (Item 8, x = 2.64).

Research Question 2:
Relevant Textual and Instructional Materials for Effective Implementation of the Innovative Trade Subjects Curricula at Senior Secondary Education Level.

Table 3: Relevant Textual and Instructional Materials for Effective Implementation of the Innovative Trade Subjects Curricula at Senior Secondary Education Level.

No	Textual and Instructional Materials	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std	Decision
	Relevant textbooks on the innovative subjects stream are available and adequate for teachers and students' use in senior secondary schools.	54 (22.5)	90 (34.5)	67 (27.9)	29 (21)	2.30	0.95	Rejected
2	There are instructional materials for innovative Subjects' stream in senior secondary schools.	61 (25.4)	95 (39.6)	62 (25.6)	22 (9.2)	2.19	0.92	Rejected
3	The instructional materials are adequate for the innovative subjects' stream in senior secondary school curriculum.	48 (8.3)	107 (44.7)	58 (24.2)	27 (11.3)	2.27	0.91	Rejected
4	There are enough classrooms, laboratories, computer rooms, and workshops for students in senior secondary schools to accommodate the implementation of the innovative subjects' stream in secondary school curriculum.	55 (22.9)	78 (32.5)	66 (27.5)	41 (17.1)	2.39	1.02	Rejected
5	There is adequate generator/power supply in the senior secondary schools for effective implementation of the innovative practical trade subjects' stream.	61 (25.4)	83 (34.8)	66 (27.5)	30 (12.5)	2.27	0.98	Rejected

The data presented in table 3 indicate that none of the mean values is equal or more than the acceptance region of 2.50. Thus, the respondents' observations show that there were no adequate relevant textbooks, instructional materials, classrooms,

laboratories, computer rooms, workshops and regular generator / power supply to implement the content of innovative subjects' stream available in senior secondary school curriculum with mean scores of 2.30, 2.19, 2.27, 2.39 and 2.27 (Item 1 – 5 respectively).

Results on Research Question 3

Funding of the Implementation of the Innovative Trade Subjects' Curricula at Senior Secondary Education Level

Table 4: Adequacy of Funds for the Effective Implementation of the Innovative Trade Subjects' Curricula at Senior Secondary Education Level.

No	Adequacy of Fund	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std	Decision
1	Inadequate fund allocation by the government for the innovative subjects' stream in secondary school curriculum.	75 (31.3)	83 (34.8)	82 (34.2)	-	2.53	0.92	Accepted
2	Inadequate funding to recruit relevant teachers for the innovative subjects stream in secondary school curriculum.	27 (11.3)	116 (48.4)	97 (40.4)	-	2.58	0.93	Accepted
3	The internally generated revenue of the state cannot take up the implementation of the innovative subjects stream in secondary school curriculum.	51 (25.4)	86 (35.8)	93 (38.8)	-	2.42	0.87	Rejected
4	The state government is ready to spend external grant on the innovative subjects stream in senior secondary school curriculum.	42 (17.5)	94 (39.2)	87 (36.3)	17 (7.1)	2.33	0.85	Rejected

The responses recorded in item 1 and 2 in table 4 denotes that there is inadequate funding of the innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary school education with mean scores of 2.53 and 2.58. Similarly, the respondents rejected items 3 that the internally generated revenue of the state could not take up the implementation of the innovative subjects' stream with a rejection mean score of 2.42 in item 4. It was also made clear from the opinions of the respondents that the state government was not ready to spend external grant on the innovative trade subjects'

curricula with a mean score of 2.33.

Results on Research Question 4:
Adequacy of Supervision and Monitoring of the Implementation of the Innovative Trade Subjects' Curricula at Senior Secondary Education Level.

Table 5: Adequacy of the Supervision and Monitoring of the Innovative Trade Subjects' Curricula at Senior Secondary Education Level.

No	Supervision and Monitoring	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std	Decision
1	State government has established monitoring unit for the innovative subjects' stream curricula implementation.	19 (7.90)	104 (43.3)	92 (38.3)	25 (10.4)	2.37	0.96	Rejected
2	Many supervisors have been recruited or deployed for adequate implementation of innovative subjects stream curricula in senior secondary schools.	30 (12.5)	108 (45.0)	89 (37.1)	13 (5.4)	2.31	0.88	Rejected
3	Supervisors have been visiting all senior secondary schools to supervise the implementation of the innovative subjects' stream curricula.	25 (10.4)	106 (43.8)	93 (38.8)	17 (7.1)	2.28	0.93	Rejected
4	Internal staff are used as secondhand experienced supervisors to monitor the effectiveness of the innovative subjects' stream curricula in secondary schools.	17 (7.1)	104 (43.3)	94 (39.2)	15 (0.4)	2.42	0.87	Rejected

From table 5, none of the items 1 – 4 has a mean score that is equal or greater than 2.50. These results imply that there is no adequate supervisors and monitoring of the innovative trade subjects' curricula implementation in the senior secondary schools surveyed. The mean rejection scores are 2.37, 2.31, 2.28 and 2.42 respectively.

Discussion of Results

The findings on the availability and adequacy of teaching personnel for the implementation of the innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level as shown in table 2

revealed that expert teachers to teach all the innovative subjects were in short supply; neither were there enough qualified personnel to handle the practicals of the innovative subjects that are practically-based; and no enough capable hands had been employed by the government. As a result, the respondents were of the opinion that there was need to recruit qualified teaching personnel to complement the available staff for effective implementation of the innovative subjects which as a result of policy reforms were installed in secondary education in Nigeria. This observation corroborates the observations of Ekwukoma (2016) who observed that even at the lower level of education, there appears to be gross inadequacy of facilities and personnel resources for the implementation of the National Policy on Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD). By implication, there is no doubt that these inadequacies would have carry over effect on the product of secondary school education reforms and their level of preparedness for useful living and higher education in the near future.

The findings on relevant textual and instructional materials for effective implementation of the innovative subjects' stream in senior secondary education curricula revealed gross inadequacy (refer to table 3) because none of the mean values of the items generated fall within or above the acceptance region of 2.50. This finding is in agreement with Olubor (2008), Uya (2013) and Odiagbe (2015) who found out that some education centres in Nigeria were characterized by gross inadequacy of learning facilities and materials. Although, depending on the location, some other researches available in literature have applauded the availability of instructional materials like textbooks for the implementation of the national policy on education in Nigeria, but not on adequate basis.

The picture of funding situation for the implementation of the innovative subjects' stream in senior secondary education curricula is presented in table 4. In all the responses recorded in table 4, it was clear that there was inadequate funding; the

internally generated revenue of the state could not take up the implementation of the innovative trade subjects' curricula; and the state government was not ready to spend external grant on the innovative subject streams. As a result, senior secondary school students could not adequately be equipped with the required knowledge, skills and capacity to enhance the quality of life expected of them at that level and at the end of their secondary school education. This funding problem being experienced in secondary education in Nigeria is also similar to the clamor for better funding of higher education which is noticed in the report of Ubogu (2011), that the source of many problems facing higher education system in Nigeria today can be traced to insufficient funding of the system. By implication, the funding short falls which have become the norms for many years in Nigerian education is still a major challenge affecting the policy reforms in Nigerian secondary school till date.

The findings of this study on the adequacy of supervisor and monitoring of the implementation of the innovative subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level showed that supervisors and monitoring team were not regularly made available (refer to table 5). As of now, if not through research reports and obvious observations of education observers and community people, the state of affairs about the activities that are crucial to the implementation of the senior secondary school reforms/innovations are not well documented. It means that the need to rejuvenate the system of school inspection and supervision in Nigeria has become important more than ever before. There is urgent need for internal and external inspection as well as supervision of schools (Jayesimi, 2016). In short, supervision and monitoring of curriculum implementation in secondary schools remains a major problem facing the emerging innovations. As a result, as found out through this research, the researchers hereby expressed concern about the implementation status of innovative subjects' stream at senior secondary education level in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This paper has delved into the trends of educational reforms which have resulted into the innovative trade subjects' curricula at senior secondary education level in Nigeria. The rationale behind such reforms in innovative terms has been to make secondary education more relevant to the learners and the nation. Although, it often takes years for any meaningful educational reform to yield fruits, this study has been able to assess the extent to which the intended plan for senior secondary education is being implemented in terms of personnel, textual materials and facilities, funding, supervision and monitoring over the years of its implementation in the study area.

The findings of this study have actually brought to the fore the strength and the challenges affecting effective implementation of innovative trade subjects in senior secondary education in Nigeria. Indeed, all hope is not lost, the findings of this study would guide the way forward. We should be revisionist in our practice to secondary education curricula reforms so that the innovations in the end would not be a form of implementation in the wrong direction which is directly opposite the expected end.

Recommendations

On the basis of the results and findings of this study as well as obvious observations in the data collection process, the researchers recommend as follows:

(1) The citizenry should be sensitized by government agencies concerning the benefits inherent in the innovations installed in senior secondary education curricula in Nigeria.
(2) Federal, state, local government and private bodies should make adequate provision and contributions towards the inputs which go into the implementation of the innovations in Nigerian secondary education and its trade subjects' curricula that are vocationally-based.
(3) There is the need to update secondary school teachers' knowledge and skills through adequate professional

development, conferences, workshops, seminars and research training in the areas of the new curriculum innovations to make the implementation a reality.

(4) Curriculum implementers who are teachers should not be kept in the dark on any on-going policy reforms as per the level of education where they work so as to get used to the innovative direction in education from the outset rather than getting the information all of a sudden in their respective schools at the point of implementation.

(5) Since qualitative implementation of senior secondary education curricula reform is desired, so that the standard of education in our schools can be improved, school supervision and monitoring of educational priorities in innovative terms must be accorded high priority – This demands ensuring qualified and experienced personnel to shoulder the responsibilities of school inspection and supervision to enhance the efficiency of the school system and ensure adherence to the strategies laid down by the government vis-à-vis reporting the areas of weaknesses which needed improvement.

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