Educational System- No Child Left Behind

[Name of the Writer]

[Name of the Institution]

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**Introduction**

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act 2001 is the renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and it authorizes different federal education programs that are operated by the states. Under this Act, states are advised to test reading and math skills of the students in 3-8 grades. All students are required to meet the standards in reading and math. Moreover, it also focuses the student achievement gaps by providing rational, equal and substantial opportunities to each student so that he or she gets a quality education. The US Department of Education intends to achieve academic proficiency of disadvantaged students. It also provides flexible facilities for districts to use the federal funds for the enhancement of student achievement. In addition, it also supports programs and practices based on the effective scientific research. At the same time, the law also emphasizes on the removing the racial or ethnic achievement gaps at educational sector in the United States. The policy formularized a standard testing system to assess the improved results by 2014.

Unfortunately, the multifaceted requirements of the Act failed to achieve all of its goals. It has driven a number of unintentional and undesirable consequences that harm the students from minor ethnic and racial groups. Likewise, the paper aims to study the outcomes of NCLB Act on African-American Students. It also examines the effectiveness of the policy from when it was first created to till today. At the same time, it also identifies the reasons of that outcomes of the law.

**Discussion**

Since 2001, the NCLB Act became one of the major reforms in the provision of public education throughout the United States due to its goal of achieving 100% proficiency in reading and math in the country by 2014. Education is an essential element that is needed for development of any country, therefore, Bush Administration brought several changes under this act. It transformed the funding, testing and the test reporting of students in Public Schools.

However, it faced several challenges in implementing the policy effectively. Many of the researchers argue that the positive results of the law are impossible unless it revises the ways programs are implemented in different public schools throughout the United States (Ladd, 2017). Since its inception, it has been controversial throughout the country.

In the same policy, it was decided that schools which are unable to make progress for at least two years, then students from those Schools would change the school. Moreover, school will also provide free tuitions to its weak students in case it is incapable to improve for another year. However, Schools will be restructured after six years of continuous failure to achieve results under NCLB Act.

When it was evaluated, about 10,000 Schools were unable to achieve the required outcomes throughout the US and they had to face sanctions under the NCLB Act (Nelson, 2015). Nelson (2015) further informs that it ended up to restructure of more than 6,000 schools throughout the country by 2012 because none of these schools were showing any improvement. It illustrates that NCLB Act was not achieving any preferred goals and these schools were only facing penalties. Most of the schools in the country were facing additional problems because of the new law.

Furthermore, the findings from different researches depict that African-American students and socially disadvantaged students were influenced more by NCLB Act. A number of schools were closed because they did not meet the tests standards and most of those Schools were African American and other minority communities (Zelizer, 2015). The focus on federal testing stressed states where schools remained under-performance and it was impossible for these states to improve the quality of education without sufficient resources. They only had to face sanctions other than showing any positive results. At the same time, even penalties did not work in their case. It provides an evidence that the educational gap between white Americans and African Americans were not showing any noticeable results.

Likewise, the NCLB Act is unable to address the inequality in provision of education among the different racial and social income-class groups in the United States. The funds allocated for the Schools also varied from the wealthiest parts of the country to the poorest parts. Darling‐Hammond (2007) informs that the prosperous Public Schools of the United States spend at least 10 times more than schools with lower resources. The gap between these schools exist from$30,000 to $3000 and such inequalities increased the gap in the country (Darling‐Hammond, 2007). At the same time, the neediest students were first to get influenced by the law and Schools for low income students were first to lose funds. It is more likely to harm the disadvantaged students than to help those students. It is promoting unequal school system and the target set for test scores is unmeetable for schools with poor infra-structure.

Moreover, by analyzing the data from different students, it was found that the graduating level for African American students is decreased. According to a report by Rice University (2008) shows that about 60% of African students and 70% of Hispanic students did not graduate for five years; only 33% of overall students were able to graduate. Hence, it can be seen that the test-based accountability under the NCLB Act could not lead to improve the schools. Despite it led to lose of number of students. Instead of retaining the students to gain more education, it is making them leave the schools. The exiting of low-achievers represented the rising test scores and narrowing scoring gap between white and African American students. It means the schools started showing improved result by losing its low scorer students. This one of the unintended outcomes of the policy.

Furthermore, critiques of this Act argue that it has led the shift of resources away from more significant subjects like Arts, social studies, and Music (Ladd, 2017). It narrows down the subjects by only focusing on mathematics and reading based on relatively few set of topics. The major issue of the policy is the constricting of curriculum and achievement of genuine academic goals, by only focusing on the subjects included in test (Ladd, 2017). The goal of the policy was to improve the quality of the United States’ education system but it incapacitated its ability to bring the change.

Other than the students, the teachers are also influenced by the implication of NCLB at public schools in the United States. The Standardized Testing has caused the teachers to focus only on test syllabus and it has stifled the teaching abilities and skills of those teachers. Moreover, Standardized tests also ignore creativity and responsiveness. It is just not testing of students but it is over-testing. As a result, it has other negative consequences of on the social and emotional performance of the students. Students are over-burdened due to excessive tests conducted under the policy. Due to which teachers are raising their voices on different platforms that they did not see any improvement in their students because of the NCLB. Teachers and public education supporters throughout the United States claim that the NCLB did not work for them (Flaherty, 2015). The policy was meant to close the gaps and provide equal opportunities for all students belonging to different social backgrounds. However, it diverted the focus from learning each subject towards preparing only for the test, scoring, rating and punishing of Schools. It has negatively influenced the learning environment of the schools. Standardized Tests are introducing exam or test-oriented learning in public schools.

Although the gap between white Americans and African American was narrowed but it could not achieve the targeted results. This gap exists from very early ages ad it needs to be filled. One of the main reasons for this gap is due to poverty. The minority groups are unable to send their kids to kindergarten and it causes their children to lag behind. On the other side, kids from white community avail the opportunity. They learn vocabulary and math at very early age from the nursery schools. However, the NCLB is not focusing in root level problems that’s why it is unable to achieve its goals successfully.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the NCLB is unable to achieve its results since it was implemented in the United States. It has focused the major issues faced by the public schools. The main focus of the policy was to ensure quality education for everyone in the United States. Moreover, it also gave full flexibility to the district schools to utilize the federal funds in an effective way. However, after implementation the NCLB was unable to achieve the desirable results. There are several reasons for it. Firstly, there was unequal funding for schools in different areas. Secondly, it constricts the curriculum and achievement of genuine academic goals, by only focusing on the subjects included in test. Moreover, it is unable to address the inequality in provision of education among the different racial and social income-class groups in the United States. The Standardized Testing has caused the teachers to focus only on test syllabus and it diverted their focus from other creativity enhancing subjects.

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