

Trends and Issues on Curriculum Review in Nigeria and the Need for Paradigm Shift in Educational Practice

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Abstract

The dynamic nature of the society is obviously, part of the driving forces which makes curriculum review to become inevitable. The review process ensures that the eventual curriculum is not out of tune with the currency. The foregoing informal the thesis of this paper which examined the trends and issues on curriculum review in Nigeria and a call for paradigm shift in educational practice. In the literary search, a historical review of the major trends in curriculum development prior to an after independence was done. Thereafter, the paper discussed the context of educational reforms that had taken place in Nigeria till date. The paper submits the need to save Nigeria education and its curriculum from the gully of pitfalls and contemporary challenges by calling for a regular value –orientation and re-orientation vis-à-vis consistency in policy formulation, and sincere pursuance of its objectives as well as the urgent paradigm shift from theoretical curriculum implementation to better practical approaches in the theory and practice of education in Nigeria.

Keywords: curriculum, issues, paradigm, policy, trends.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of social changes and the peculiarities of educational initiatives in different settings all over the world do call for curriculum reviews with a view to meeting the emerging needs and values of the society. Arising from the need for relevance in form of education for functional living, self-sustenance, and self-reliance, in Nigeria case, sporadic educational reviews which are indeed curriculum-based have been witnessed at various times. These have re-shaped educational thoughts and practices in Nigeria. The reason being that the opinions and solutions that key stakeholders purpose for society's requests and needs for productivity and progress often make some of the components of the existing curriculum either obsolete or out of tune with currency. Whenever this happens, it sets pace for the country's review initiatives in value-orientation, poverty eradication, wealth creation and job creation among many other reasons.

Experiences have shown that curriculum review all over the world is unique to each national setting. At the same time, it is a policy and a technical issue, a process, and a product, involving a wide range of institutions, actors and accompany challenges. One positive note is that both government and the entire citizenry are seeking better ways of doing things using curriculum, that is, the anchorage of educational values, as a tool for achieving results that would benefit the country. The fact remains clear that for any educational system to adequately respond to the challenges of education for the sustainable development of a society, a virile, dynamic and living curriculum becomes very significant.

This paper therefore presents a literary search of the major trends and issues in curriculum reviews in Nigeria. In doing this, efforts are made to explore curriculum review as a form of educational reformation; the early curriculum in Nigeria and the impact of the missionary; the contributions of examining bodies, commissions reports on curriculum trends before independence; curriculum trends and development from Nigerian independence along with the emerging issues and challenges in curriculum review at various times. All put together in the end, calls for a more cautious, conscious, purposeful and directional policy formulation which are curriculum-based as well as sincerity in the implementation of educational policies in Nigeria so that the curriculum review process would not often be a fruitless undertaking.

CURRICULUM REVIEW: A FORM OF EDUCATIONAL REFORMATION

Curriculum is central to education at all levels in the world. It is indeed an instrument for possible education. Alade (2005) defines curriculum as a programme of education prepared for definite group of learners within a time frame in order to achieve the intended behavioural outcomes. Okundaye (2003) in his description of curriculum, sees it as the inner engine which propels education to achieve for both the individual and the society what they hold up as prize. Curriculum is the medium through which educational institutions seek to translate the societal values into concrete reality. Through it, educational institutions actualize what the society considers as desirable learning. Curriculum straddles all societies from the literate, pre-literate to the illiterate. It is the heartthrob of development and progress. As

education is central to society so is curriculum the heart and life wire of education (Alade, 2006). The implication is that as no society can rise above the level of its educational system, so can no educational system tower above the level of the values inherent in its curriculum. The foregoing inherently denote that curriculum should be reasonable, complete, has objectives, the subject matter, learning activities and evaluation techniques as components which unitedly are instrumental in training prospective school-going-youths for acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits approved by the society which established the educational institutions. Its review therefore from time to time is to bring it in line with current thinking or emphasis in education as demanded by the populace.

The curriculum provisions are immense and profound for teaching and learning in educational institutions at all levels. The provisions are brought about by curriculum development, viewed its reviews in the form of reforms and improvement. He puts it that "curriculum reform" can take many forms. It may be a routine "review" of existing curriculum, in which the focus is on its continual relevance and practicality. Another form is a review of the curriculum in response to a need as requested for by the concerned agents or stakeholders of education like parents, professional groups, curriculum development bodies, etc.

Moreno (2006) states that educational reform all over the world is increasingly curriculum-based as mounting pressures and demands for change tend to target and focus on both the structures and the very content of school curricula. This buttresses the fact that whenever a curriculum is reviewed, there is a corresponding reformation in education. A provision is always made for a revisional cycle by which the entire stages of review are revisited in a sequential order. The aims of this review for changes or modification are to guarantee an all-around education for the learners.

THE EARLY CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA AND THE MISSIONARY (1842-1882)

One of the valued aspects of traditional education and Nigeria curricular at large, though in an informal form, is the inculcation of productive ability in trainees for job security. Individuals are specifically prepared for self-support under the apprenticeship training in the pre-colonial days, and training was done through one-on-one inculcation of appropriate skills, attitude habits, and so on at the community level. Some skills and occupations were exclusively opened to all community members; others were kept as family secrets. Age grades and secret societies, in some areas, as recorded by Ali (2000) dominated certain occupations and so become empowered and domineering.

By and large, in a passage of time, some communities and ethnic groups known for certain skills and occupations grew in them on a broader perspective. The informal curriculum in the indigenous society emphasizes the development of occupational skills needed as preparation for work in the training given to people. The productive ability manifested by the recipients of the skills became the identity for productivity and employment security. It was the form of education Nigerians new before the arrival of the colonial missionaries and was geared towards skills acquisition with a view to fighting unemployment, and enhancing the economic well-being of the recipients.

The arrival of the Christian Missions towards the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, that is, around September 1842 marked the first major trend in formal curriculum development in Nigeria. Between 1842 and 1882, the Christian Missions were in the total control of the early and formal school curriculum in Nigeria. The curriculum objectives, the subject matter, methods of teaching the subjects, maintenance, supervision and control of the school were under their authority. Instructions were given in the areas of Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Religion (the four R's) in the primary schools established at Badagry, Abeokuta and Lagos where the missionaries' first set of schools were opened. Also, schools were later opened in Ijaye, Ogbomosho and Ibadan. Thereafter, the Christian missions with the joint efforts of the local communities established schools across the Niger in Calabar among others.

The mission of the missionaries for opening the primary schools were to train teacher –catechist, lay readers and cooks, particularly to give the new converts basic instructions in English Language as a tool very useful in the missionary work which was their major assignment in Nigeria. The early mission schools operated together with the church, and the new converts were progressively initiated into British life style as they lived together with their teachers who were at the same time pastors in the Church.

The demands of local adherents of the various Christian denominations on their agitation for the opening of secondary grammar schools in their respective environments led to the establishment of Church Missionary Society (C.M.S) Grammar School, in June 1859. later, the Methodist Boys' High School, the Methodist Girls' High School and the Baptist Academy were established. The missionaries activities were therefore extended beyond their initial focus on the provision of primary education alone. The curriculum and the subjects offered in the secondary schools were also solely controlled by the missionaries. The subjects offered included English Grammar and Composition, History, Geography, Book Keeping, Latin and Greek Grammar and

Composition, Euclid's Elements and Plain Treatises on Natural Philosophy. Hebrew and French, based on the availability of teachers were equally taught from time to time. The other subjects which also featured in the curriculum practices then are Gymnastics, Geometry, Trigonometry, Rhetoric, Drawing, Logic, Moral Philosophy, Political economy, Chemistry, Physiology, Mythology and Antiquities, Geology and Botany (Ajayi, 1963)

The subjects taught in the established primary and secondary schools during the Christian Missionary dominance of the administration and early curriculum were selected from the list of subjects taught in British Grammar schools, and this had a major British impact on the development of Secondary Grammar School Curriculum in Nigeria. The learners that passed through the curriculum which was biased towards academic and literary subjects were relatively not given the opportunities for maximum development of their innate potentials. The future needs of the learners were not adequately taken care of because the type of curriculum implementation was white-collar jobs-oriented. The training in agriculture and other manual trades which could gear the trainees towards self-employment was neither a part nor an integral part of the early curriculum.

Since there were no local examining bodies in Nigeria, and because of the dominance of the British on the early curriculum, the early grammar school leavers were prepared for various certificates of the college of preceptors of London. Pupils in class 4, for instance were prepared for the Third-Class Certificate of the College of Preceptors; primary 5 pupils were prepared for the Second-Class Certificate, while primary 6 pupils wrote the First Class Certificate examinations which was also often taken by teachers teaching in lower secondary and upper primary schools during the period. The first class certificate of the College of Preceptors was the highest academic qualification available and products with the certificate were mostly employed for highly paid jobs in the schools, the civil service and in the church, altogether under the auspices of the Christian Missions. In all, liberal education for liberal jobs came to take the pride of place in the early curriculum operated upon by the early missionaries.

Examining Bodies, Commissions Reports and the Curriculum Trends in Nigeria (1882-1959)

Another historical trend and landmark in the history of Nigerian education which in fact is curriculum based occurred in the year 1882 when the government began to show interest in the development of the school curriculum. Thus, an Education Act which provided for a Board of Education to control the development of education at all levels in English-speaking West African countries was passed. Specifically, in 1887, when the

first Nigerian Education Act was passed, a separate Board of Education was constituted for Nigeria. The Act provided for both "Assisted" and "Non Assisted" schools, and invested in the Nigerian Board of Education the authority to control and direct the development of education in the country. The Assisted Schools" received government grants, worked out the principles of "payment by results" and subjected to favourable inspection reports.

With the provision approved for the "assisted" and "non-assisted" schools in the act, most of the schools began to employ more qualified staff to teach most of the subjects in the school curriculum to record a higher percentage of passes, and with a view to attracting government grant. The teaching of English and Arithmetic plus two of the other subjects required for employment in the civil service were emphasized in the curriculum practice.

Historical records revealed that up till 1909, the only external examination available to Nigerian Grammar school candidates was that of the College of Preceptors of London. In 1892, Michael Cole and Simon Pratt of the C.M.S Grammar School, Lagos recorded the first success for Nigeria candidates with first class certificate. In December 1910, a year after establishing the first Government Secondary School, that is, King's College, Lagos, the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (U.C.L.E.S) created a centre for its local examinations in Lagos. The King's College, Lagos and some other grammar schools started presenting candidates for Cambridge Local examinations. The subjects examined by this body between 1910 and 1925 included Writing and Dictation, Arithmetic, Religious Knowledge, English, English History, Latin, Greek, Dutch, Mathematics, Biology and Physical Geography, French, Physics, Drawing, Music etc; in the preliminary, junior and senior school certificate.

These subjects significantly affected the development of Nigerian grammar school curriculum because the subjects taken by the Nigerian candidates were a reflection of the subjects included in the grammar school curriculum of the period. From the time (year 1910) when Cambridge Local Examinations were introduced into Nigeria, the Nigerian Secondary Grammar School curriculum was to a great extent determined by the Cambridge Local Examinations syndicate because they often prepared their learners for subjects normally examined by the examination body.

Moreover, the teacher institutions also operated an academic Curriculum, but also combined it with pedagogical training. The Hope Waddell Training Institutions, Calabar (established in 1846), St Andrew's College, Oyo (opened in 1905) provided

instructions in the basic Arts subjects, Elementary Science, domestic duties and infant care and teacher education in general. These institutions also paid considerable attention to the teaching of physical training and Christian Religious Knowledge, apparently to aid the physical and moral development of the students (Solaru, 1964). While primary school pupils and students in teacher training colleges were locally examined at the end of their courses, secondary school students were consistently externally examined.

The introduction of new subjects like Applied Mathematics, Experimental Science, Botany, Natural History of Animals, Needle work and Hygiene between 1916 and 1920, and changes in the syllabuses of the senior local Examination subjects played a major role in curriculum trend and development in Nigeria. Be as it may, the trend of development in secondary grammar school curriculums in Nigeria (1910-1925) still showed a clear and complete dependence of the schools on the guidance and directives of British Examining Boards. Added is that the University of London Schools Examinations Council also indirectly influenced the content of the school and colleges curricula in Nigeria. This was the situation in Nigeria before the Phelps-Stokes Commission was set up in 1922.

In 1925, the Phelps-Stokes Commission published its report on Nigeria Education from 1925 that Phelps-Stokes report was published to 1952, the curriculum trends of the period were also noteworthy. Phelps-Stokes Commission observed that the education in Nigeria was not adapted to the needs of the people due to emphasis on the academic curriculum which was a passport for attractive white-collar jobs. The commission therefore recommended that education in Nigeria should be adapted to the needs of the people. In the teaching of subjects like History, Geography, Biology and the like, emphasis was to be given to African countries other than on European countries. The subsequent attempts by the colonial masters to provide technical and agricultural education were perhaps the results of a genuine acceptance of the Phelps-Stokes recommendations. In the same year 1925, the Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical Africa made a similar observation and recommended that the content and methods of teaching various subjects in the school curriculum should be adapted to suit African life and environment.

Further influences on school curricula in Nigeria came on the provision for the rapid growth of the schools' curricula through regular inspection of the subjects taught in the schools and the registration of teachers as recommended by the Education Ordinance of 1926. The Education Ordinance also provided for the revision of the grants –in-aid system,

although the system of “payment by results” still continued. It meant that schools would continue to appoint the best qualified teachers of each subject in the schools' curriculum as much as possible so that their learners could pass well in the examinations set in the various subjects, and thereby qualifies the schools for grants-in-aid to an appreciable extent.

In spite of another significant attempt by the government to influence the development of the grammar school curriculum in 1930 by given a standard equivalent of success expected of the learners in various forms, and the previous recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes Commission, vis-à-vis the Advisory Committee's suggestions, the British examining bodies still exerted considerable influence on the grammar school curriculum in Nigeria and patterned it along the British line. The U.C.L.E.S continued to make its local examinations available to school candidates in Nigeria for quite some years while the University of London continued to make the London Matriculation Examination available to private candidates. With the abolition of the Preliminary Examination at Overseas centres after December 1939, the Junior Local Examination became the lowest external examination taken by Nigerian grammar school students. Further, with the abolition of the Junior Cambridge Examinations, the School Certificate Examination became the lowest examination taken by Nigerian candidates. By 1952, most grammar schools in Nigeria included English Language, English Literature, Religious Knowledge, History, Geography, Latin, Elementary Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, General Science, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Art and Technical Drawing in their curriculum and taught them to the school certificate level.

In March 1952, the West African Examinations Council (W.A.E.C) was established following the recommendations of Dr. G.B. Jeffrey, Director of the Institute of Education, University of London, who had earlier been asked by the British Secretary of State for the colonies to visit West Africa and advise on a proposal that a body of this kind should be established in the area. The Lagos office of the Council (WAEC, 1973) was opened at Yaba in September 1953. The major role of the WAEC in curriculum development during its early years was that of inspecting schools for purposes of approving them and accepting their learners as private candidates for Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (later West African School Certificate). They encouraged the grammar schools to teach the various subjects examined by them. its establishment, no doubt had significance impact on curriculum trend in Nigeria.

Additional influences on Nigerian curriculum resulted from the contributions of various regional

ministries of education. For example, in 1959, the former Eastern Region revised its primary school curriculum for the First School Leaving Certificate Examination and also the secondary school syllabuses in English, History and Geography. Moves were also made to revise the teacher training curriculum. The reason for this change, though political, was in preparation for political independence, and the realization by the former Eastern Region on the need to throw away part of the British type academic curriculum, and replace this with one that was more relevant to the needs of the people. Further efforts were also made in other regions of the country to bring about changes in the education system which was curriculum based. For instance, in the former Western Region, a scheme of Universal Primary Education was launched in January 1955; New primary School Syllabuses were introduced. These fixtures character development and the acquisition of literacy and manual skills. Likewise, Secondary Modern Schools were introduced in 1957. this was followed by the introduction of detailed syllabuses for Secondary Modern School subjects in 1958 as recorded in the available literature.

Suffice to say that at the national levels, various attempts were made to review the whole education system, introduce new educational programmes and new curricula into the schools as the country was preparing for her political independence. These attempts and moves were the agitations of Nigeria as a country when the Federal government set up the Ashby Commission in 1959. The Ashby Report, was presented in September 1960, and published by Federal Ministry of Education. As cited in Alade (2006), the commission wrote:

“We have already drawn attention to what we consider to be a major defect in Nigeria education, mainly the bias towards literacy and academic subjects. This is reflected in lack of respect on the part of the public for manual skills and technical achievement. We strongly believe that the most effective ways of correcting this would be to introduce manual subjects as an obligatory ingredient of all primary and secondary schooling; not as a vocational training, but because such subjects have education valued which entitles them to a place in general education (p.8)

The report of Ashby Commission, no doubt, had a profound influence on the development of school curricular in Nigeria in the years following the independence till date.

Curriculum Trends and Development in Nigeria after Independence

Specifically, on October 1st, 1960, Nigeria gained her independence from colonial rule, and the problems related to curricular became more noticeable and

prominent. Attention was therefore given to the recommendations of the Ashby Commission on the need to:

- (1) Introduce obligatory manual projects into secondary schools.
- (2) Provide different types of secondary school curricular, including commercial, vocational and agricultural courses.
- (3) Intensify both the pre-service and in-service training of teachers, and the
- (4) Introduction of Advanced Teachers' College, to be associated with universities.

By the mid-1960s, educators and educational planners were rethinking Nigeria's' education system and in particular, the curriculum being implemented in the schools. Apart from the Ashby Report, both the Banjo Report of 1961 and the Taiwo Report of 1968 in the former western region recommended the revision of the school syllabuses and the introduction of a new structure of education. The Banjo Report specifically recommended a new model for secondary education, comprising junior and senior secondary schools, and that the curriculum of senior secondary schools should be comprehensive. The Taiwo committee suggested that the primary school curriculum should be overhauled and new syllabuses prepared in such subject as mathematics and social studies. Apart from the fact that similar recommendations were made in the East, other bodies like the Nigeria Educational Research Council (NERC), the National Curriculum Conference (1969), and the National Policy on Education, (1977) which had been revised on some occasions have significantly influenced curriculum review in Nigeria since independence.

The Nigerian Educational Research Council (N.E.R.C.), though not formally established until 1972, but the move to establish it had started since 1961 and it had started co-ordinating research activities in Nigeria since 1960s. In fact the National Curriculum Conference held in Lagos in 1969 was co-ordinated under the auspices of N.E.R.C. The curriculum conference called for a well-defined philosophy of education for the Nigeria and suggested the principles that should guide the formulation of the objectives and curricula of primary, secondary, teacher and higher education in the country.

The recommendations of the 1969 National Conference on Curriculum Development formed the basis for drawing up the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1977. With specific reference to curriculum development in Nigeria, the policy advocates a 6-3-3-4 system and suggested that the secondary schools should operate a 3-3 comprehensive curriculum, in preparation for useful living and higher education. The curriculum is aimed

at permanent literacy and numeracy, and effective communication. It covered the basic needs of children including religious and moral instruction, mathematics, science and skills preparatory to trade and craft education. The medium of instruction will be principally the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community, and at a later stage, English. The government will make a special effort to promote the education of girls and provide the facilities and supervision for ensuring quality in education.

Nigeria educational scene since then has witnessed a number of changes. These changes can be given all short of names and nomenclature from various perspectives. Such changes may be classified into curricular policies, innovations in objectives, content, methods or delivery system, materials and changes in evaluation techniques. However, such changes which are indeed pressing, are discussed next as issues and challenges in education and curriculum reviews in Nigeria.

Issues and Challenges in Education and Curriculum Review in Nigeria

1. The Legal Framework in Nigeria Education

Significantly, 1969 National Curriculum Conference marked the gradual progress for the concerted efforts to transform the educational landscape in Nigeria, vis-a vis its curriculum, driven by the spirit of the provisions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as published in the National Policy on Education which was the off-shoot of the 1969 National Curriculum Conference. The policy document has undergone three revisions starting from its inception in 1977 to the latest in 2003. The following innovations are contained in the latest edition of the 2003 document.

- Integration of Citizen Education in the already existing curricula.
- Family life Education (HIV/AIDS preventive education) integrated into the physical and Health Education and Biology curricula.
- The Basic African Cultural Knowledge (Back) infused into social studies and creative arts.
- Introduction and popularization of indigenous game (e.g Langa, Damba, Abula and Ayo) in secondary schools and raising them to standard competitive levels to compare with similar games or other cultures like chess, ludo, backgammon etc.)
- A mandate to Nigerian French Language Village (NFLV) to run 9 months Diploma Programme in French.
- The establishment of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) launched in 2003 to increase access to higher education.
- The change of nomenclature and functions of the Implementation Committee on National Policy on Education (MUNDE) (ICNPE).
- The establishment of virtual library project to promote more access to latest books and journals.

- The establishment of National Commission for Polytechnics, in effect, transferring vocational functions of the former National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB) to Technical and Science Education.

- Revitalization of Technical/Vocational Education through the conversion of Technical Colleges to Science and Technical Colleges.

- The introduction of counterpart funding by the Federal Government of Nigeria, UNICEF strategy for Acceleration of Girl Education in Nigeria (SAGEN) with the sole aim of achieving gender parity in access to retention and achievement in Basic Education by 2005.

- Development of curriculum on Drug Education, which had already been infused into the existing school curriculum.

- Introduction of computer studies curriculum at both primary and junior secondary school levels.

- The incorporation or integration of local craftsmen into the curriculum delivery of technical and vocational education through hiring them for workshop practical skill demonstrations.

- The establishment of Federal Teachers corps scheme which will guarantee qualitative basic education and create opportunities for NCE graduates and enhance professionalisation of teaching.

- Intensification of efforts by employers of teachers to assist by funding unqualified teachers in the system to upgrade themselves as the year 2006 had been set as deadline for all unqualified teachers in the system to acquire National Certificate in Education (NCE) which is the minimum professional teaching qualification in Nigeria.

- Introduction of Guidance and Counselling services at the primary level.

The above innovations as contained in the 2003 policy document could be regarded as the legal framework in Nigeria education which has bearing with curriculum.

2. Curricular Policies and Structural Changes

As a reminder, the type of education imported to Nigeria under British control reflected the needs of the colonial government. The need for the change and innovation had always been prevalent in the educational systems of the country. Thus, in Nigeria, we had the 7-5-4 which represents 7 years of primary education, 5 years of secondary education and 4 years of tertiary education. In some regions, it was 6-5-4 across the three tiers respectively. This educational system was later replaced for the entire country in 1983 by the 6-3-3-4, that is, 6 years of primary education, 3 years of Junior Secondary School (JSS), 3 years of Senior Secondary School (SSS) and, 4 years of tertiary education. The splitting of the secondary education to 2 tiers: Junior and Senior Secondary is the difference. This system sought to correct the structural imbalances in the colonial system of education. Many people regarded the National Policy on Education as both an innovation

and as a reform in education (Adeniyi, 2001). It is a reform in that it introduced a 6-3-3-4 school system incorporating a nine year basic education programme as a clear departure from what existed in the past.

Also, the Universal Primary Education which was launched in Nigeria in 1976, and now Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 1999 calls for innovation in curriculum development, classroom teaching techniques, and supervision of instructional programmes in the existing schools. The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) monitors this scheme, and it is seen as a free and a right of every child. The law establishing UBEC stipulates a 9-year formal schooling, adult literacy and non-formal education, skill acquisition programmes and the education of special groups such as nomads and migrant, girl-child and women, Al-majiri street children and disabled group (Aderinoye, 2007)

However, poor implementation of the reforms inherent in the 6-3-3-4 system of education did not allow innovations and changes to have an appreciable impact on the Nigeria Society (Ajibola, 2008). Meanwhile, the UBE is regarded as the foundation for sustaining life-long learning and providing reading, writing and numeracy and life skills. On its launching in 1999 by the Nigeria President then, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, and more importantly, in May 2004, the Nigerian Legislature passed the UBE into law. The UBE Act is seen to represent the most significant reform and addressed comprehensively the lapses of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1976, as well as the issue of access, equity, inclusiveness, affordability and quality. The UBE has now become everybody's business and everybody's obligation including government.

3. Changes in Curriculum Content and Pedagogy

Arising from the revolutions in Nigeria education, some radical changes have been made in curriculum content. The content of the subjects studied at primary, secondary and tertiary institutions levels have been reviewed to that they would gear toward achieving the national objectives. The provision for a core curriculum (core subjects) and optional curriculum (for elective subjects) are to guarantee an all-round education for learners, and to bring some degree of diversity into curriculum development.

A major innovation is the requirement for technical and vocational subjects tagged as pre-vocational subjects. Also, a range of new courses and programmes/issues like HIV/AIDS, moral philosophy and gender as relevant to various levels and relevant to today's needs and problems appear prominent in the curricular content. In line with the change in focus to science and technology, so as to ensure curriculum sensitivity to regional and international issues such as gender, disability and globalization,

widespread reform of the curriculum is paramount in recent times. There has been the infusion of indigenous knowledge and technologies into the curriculum from such diverse fields as traditional arts and crafts, traditional cosmetics, traditional food systems and medicine, knowledge of the environment, and African civilization.

Curriculum restructuring has also involved the introduction of core modules on computer literacy and communication skills, and the curriculum is designed to be learner-centered, problem-based, and project-driven. There has also been corresponding reforms in the area of pedagogical practices, and these changes challenge teachers' existing practices. Nigeria educational institutions have equally change and modify their syllabuses on subject/course basis so as to meet the requirements of certain examining bodies. On language issue, a major curriculum restructuring was noticeable with regard to language curriculum development and implementation. The implicit national language policy in Nigeria takes into account four groups of languages - English, foreign languages, Nigerian languages as L1 and Nigerian Language as L2. The language policy in Nigeria stipulates the use of Nigeria language in formal and non-formal education; the study and use of the developed Nigerian languages as co-official languages with English; the study of all Nigerian languages as subject, and as media of instruction at certain levels of formal education; the study of French and classical Arabic as electives at all levels of formal education. However, a major constraint has been the inadequate numbers of teachers to teach the four groups of languages. Even where teachers are available, the methods adopted in teaching the language curricula rely mainly on a traditional grammar approach.

4. Curriculum Innovations Versus Creativity in Nigeria

The curriculum innovations have been so content-driven and examination-centred. Teachers' efforts are geared towards covering the content of the curriculum within approved timeframe of the school calendar. Both the teacher and the students work towards ensuring that the examination syllabi are covered. The implication is that there are strands of evidence of deficiency in the creativity of Nigerian child. The Nigerian children are presently faced with the challenge of the work-force of the twenty-first century which require manipulative skills and a much great ability to solve problems on their own than it has been in the past.

No positive impact whatsoever can be made with curriculum review and development that promotes theoretical knowledge and places emphasis on paper certification rather than stressing the development of innate abilities and creative potentials in a learner evolving through training and practices. The National

manpower needs may continue to suffer for it if left unaddressed.

5. Curriculum Innovations at the Tertiary Level

Tertiary education is expected to contribute to the national development through high level relevant manpower training. The individual trainees are expected to become self-reliant and useful members of the society on exposure to the emerging curriculum of the day. Education at this level includes university, colleges of education, polytechnics and monotchnics.

The major innovations resulting from curriculum reviews at the tertiary level include:

- Maintenance of uniform academic calendar for all tertiary institutions.
- Proper funding and maintenance of infrastructure;
- Introduction of virtual library;
- Introduction of Information and Communication Technology Education;
- Approval for establishment of private universities.
- The modification of Distant Learning to National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) to make education accessible to the greater population of Nigerians.

However, the thinking, altogether seems right, but there appear an aberration in policy formulation on curricular matters and implementation in Nigeria.

6. Challenges with Curriculum Implementation

In spite of the tremendous historical trends in Nigeria curriculum and reviews at various times, the implementation practices are bedeviled with challenges. For example, there is problem associated with overloading of the already comprehensive curriculum and content coupled with overcrowded classes, the recommended and modified teacher-pupil ratio 1:40 notwithstanding. Available evidence lamented that an average classroom in the primary or JSS in Nigeria contains 70 to 120 pupils at any given time. This puts added stress on school personnel, material resources, school scheduling, teacher workload, classroom management and the maintenance of order and discipline.

Curriculum implementation, despite the applauded reviews to a great extent till date, is fraught with limited amount of high-quality instructional materials. Even there is no enough funds to sustain some good materials developed in recent times. Thus technological literacy in Nigeria is struggling to survive among a broad Nigerian audience. Paucity of textbooks and other learning aids is another challenge to Nigeria curriculum at various levels. There is relevant books scarcity. The problems of book scarcity and the cost have hindered the successful implementation of many laudable educational programmes and curriculum projects (Ivowi, 1998). The true picture is that the input factors are not

sufficiently available for the kinds of curriculum innovations brought about by curriculum reviewers over the years. As a result, most of the innovations in the National Policy on Education have not been fully implemented.

The question is where do we go from here? Is hope lost? There is the need to revisit curricular policies and modes of implementation in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis of the major curriculum trends and reviews in Nigeria education in this paper have shown profound reforms in about 50 years after independence. It is crystal clear that the goals which necessitated the reviews are centred on achieving the national objectives through the instrumentality of education. However, there is a wide gap between the intended and the implemented curricula at all levels of education in Nigeria.

The author at this juncture submits the way forward below as means of saving Nigeria education and its curriculum reviews in form of reforms from the gully of pitfalls and contemporary challenges.

- i. There is the need for a regular value-orientation and re-orientation of all and sundry towards skill-oriented curriculum, and honest pursuance of curriculum policies along this direction at all levels of education in Nigeria.
- ii. The changes and innovations in the curricula in this world of globalization should give room to open ended systems which emphasize interdisciplinary approaches and discourse to curricular issues and implementation.
- iii. There is urgent need for a paradigm shift from theoretical teaching and literary application to a practical application of knowledge necessary for employment and skill development.
- iv. Modern pedagogical approaches to curriculum implementation in Nigeria educational institutions should be installed in curriculum delivery and the implementers of curriculum should update their knowledge and skills from time to time so as to keep pace with modern trends on curriculum issues and educational reforms in Nigeria, and in the wider world.
- v. There is the need for consistency in policy formulation and sincere pursuance of its objectives through the curriculum implementation.

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