

## State of Implementation of Senior Secondary Schools Curriculum in Nigerian Schools

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### Abstract

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This paper examined the state of implementation of Senior Secondary School Curriculum in Nigeria, a case study of Katsina metropolis. The paper therefore, portrays education in the 21st century as a total departure from the factory-model education of the first. It is the abandonment of teacher-centered. The paper argues that society institutionalize education as a tool to reform society and create change for betterment. Hence, authentic education addresses the whole child, and does not limit our professional development and curriculum design. To this end, there is every need to review the status of secondary school curriculum in Nigeria so as to consolidate the new curriculum program in Nigeria and to ensure the actualization of the Federal Government National Development Program especially in the area of human capital development. Consequently, the paper recommends massive sensitization and advocacy of parents, teachers, students and school administrators as well as supervisors who are the end-users of the new curriculum so as to achieve its effectiveness in the implementation processes.

**Keywords:** *Implementation, Curriculum, Senior Secondary School*

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### **Background to the Study**

The basis of this study is centred on the view which bears on the certainty of effective implementation curriculum in Nigeria. Educationist generally endorses the view that curriculum constitutes the basis of morality. The scholars also advance the view that the ideals of morality are rooted all through the components of the curriculum design if effectively implemented (Ben, 2008). These curriculum design perspectives are geared for the purpose of making secondary school students morally behaved and effective citizens so as to contribute meaningfully in the task of nation-building and national development in Nigeria. There is a general consensus of opinion the world over that curriculum constitute the life-wire of morality (Qasim, 2016, Ben, 2008, Nworgu, 2012, Nasiru, 2015). These scholars hold that without these moralities established in curriculum content, the subject might not constitute a worthwhile subject area worthy of pursuit.

According to NERDC (2008) senior secondary schools' curriculum has been designed to inculcate true and balanced values in the young Nigerian at an age when his or her mental and moral development are at a formative stage, with a view that the inner stability so obtained and guiding principles so learned will help him or her stand in midst of the cross-currents of ideas and rapid social change which are features of our age. Qasim (2012) submits that the objectives curriculum is rooted in the tasks that are beneficial to society in terms of contributing to national development. As observed by Qasim, curriculum is tailored at developing in a person the following basic social qualities: Respect for law and order, respect for the customs and traditions, recognition of one's right, duties and obligations, recognition of what it takes to earn one's livelihood in an honest way and, recognition of what it takes to be emotionally and mentally sound. In the implementation of new curriculum, a variety of new concepts were introduced, while the scope was also widened to bring in a number of vital topics which are rooted in the following; Religious understanding and tolerance, environmental sanitation, healthy living, avoidance of drug abuse, issues of value orientation, poverty alleviation, job creation and decent, fruitful and harmonious life based on peaceful co-existence with other people regardless of faith, gender and ethnic background. (Deepa, 2014)

### **Statement of the Problem**

Researchers such as Qasim (2012) and Ben (2008) have observed that, curriculum implementation is still ineffective due to some of the factors which include over-loaded curriculum, lack of interest for the study, lack of curiosity and commitment to study, lack of variety of instructional materials, insufficient number of teachers, inadequate facilities, non-existence of trained teachers, lack of administrative support from some of the principals, lack of fund and some other issues. As a result of ineffective implementation of the curriculum, teaching and learning is done in a hurry so as to meet the examination deadline without recognizing the level of mastery among the learners (Priyona 2017). Curriculum implementation is the actualization of curriculum plans. It is the process of translating curriculum plans into reality. The manner in which a curriculum is implemented determines the success or otherwise of a curriculum plan. Notwithstanding how well articulated the philosophy and objectives of a curriculum are, how well selected and organized the content, regardless of how carefully selected the methods of instruction

and instructional materials are, if the implementation and its process are poorly carried out, the success of the curriculum may remain a mirage.

### **Curriculum and its Implementation**

Curriculum is the vehicle for facilitating education in Nigeria (Ben, 2008). It is the planned and guided learning experiences and intended learning outcomes, formulated and provided under the auspices of the school for learners continued and willful growth in cognitive, affective and psychomotor competences (Ivowi, 2003). It is a program of studies and activities designed so that learners will attain, as far as possible, certain educational goals and objectives. According to Olibie and Ehiamentalor (2011), curriculum comprises of the courses and subjects and their contents to be studied by learners at all levels of education. Prescriptive view of a curriculum is defined as a plan for action or written document that includes strategies for achieving desired goals or ends. In other words, curriculum means a written description of what happens in the course of study. Considering curriculum as the course of experiences that form human beings into persons, Kelly (2008) affirmed curriculum as those things which students learn because of the way in which the work of the school is planned and organized but which are not in themselves overtly included in the planning or even in the consciousness of those responsible for the school arrangement.

Curriculum is all about experience required of a child for all round development since the organization of schooling and further education had long been associated with the idea of curriculum. Curriculum is a particular form of specification about the practice of teaching. It is not a package of materials or syllabus of ground to be covered rather it is a way of translating any educational idea into a hypothesis testable in practice. It invites critical testing rather than acceptance (Stenhouse, 2015). Furthermore, curriculum is said to be a specification about the practice of teaching which involves pragmatic efficacy of the learners' experiences. Experience as a general concept comprises knowledge of or skill of something or some events gained through involvement in or exposure to that thing or event. In this wise, curriculum is an important element of education in which overall objectives of education depend largely on the nature of the curriculum (NERDC, 2008).

Curriculum experts have argued that curriculum making either at the level of development, design, implementation or reformation needs the inputs of critical stakeholders if it is to be relevant, speaking and adequate to meet the needs of the people for whom it has been put together. In his opinion, Dewey (1897) contends that education is a social construct which is a part of society and should reflect the community. In this sense, curriculum is the thrust of education vested with force thereby integrating societal trends, traditional values and individual expression.

In his conception of curriculum, Bobbitt (2008), affirmed that curriculum is the course of deeds and experiences through which learners become the adults they should be for success in adult society. In other words, curriculum encourages the entire scope of formative deed and experience occurring both within and outside school for the

purposeful formation of adult members of society. However, curriculum may refer to a well-defined and prescribed course of studies, which students must fulfill in order to pass a certain level of education. That is, curriculum is being construed as learning activities that make up a particular system of education. Ackerman (2008) in his examination of cognitive development theory explained in details how the curriculum is sequenced in schools. In Nigeria for instance, secondary school curriculum is designed to encourage all students to achieve their spiritual, intellectual and social potential as well as to understand the relevance of learning in their daily lives. It is important to note that, it is one thing to develop/design curriculum, it is another thing to implement it effectively. Objectives of any level of education cannot be achieved if the planned programme for such level of education is not well implemented (Shulma, 2008). Onyeachu (2008) observed that no matter how well a curriculum of any subject is planned, designed and documented, implementation is important. It could be true that the establishment of educational institutions was in pursuit of meeting the global requirements of producing manpower that will serve in different capacities and contribute positively toward national development and nation building.

Curriculum implementation has been noted earlier to involve the interaction of human and material resources with methods and content. It entails the coordination of content, and resources using varying methods in such a way that learners derive required or desired benefit. But because implementation vary in their experience, orientation, philosophy and understanding, they are liable to attach different interpretations to curricular implement. Curriculum implementation as the task of translating the curriculum document into the operating curriculum by the combined efforts of the students, teachers and others concerned, that is, curriculum implementation demands concerted efforts of end-users of the curriculum for its effective implementation at all levels in order to achieve the desired goals. Garba (2004) described curriculum implementation as putting the curriculum into work for the achievement of the goals for which the curriculum is designed. In his conception of curriculum implementation, Okebukola (2004) defined curriculum implementation as the transition of the objectives of the curriculum from paper to practice. That is, only effective curriculum implementation ensures achievement of the objectives for which the curriculum was designed to attain. Ivowi (2004) supported the assertion by defining curriculum implementation as the translation of theory into practice, or proposal into action.

According to Onyeachu (2008), "Curriculum implementation is the process of putting all that have been planned as a curriculum document into practice in the classroom through the combined efforts of teachers, learners, school administrators, parents as well as interaction with physical facilities, instructional materials, psychological and social environments". At this juncture, it could be said that putting the curriculum into operation requires an implementation agent. The teacher is identified as the agent in the curriculum implementation process. Curriculum implementation therefore refers to how the planned or officially designed course of study is translated by the teacher into syllabus, scheme of work and lessons to be delivered to students. The above definitions show that effective curriculum implementation involves interaction within the teachers,

learners and other stakeholders in education geared towards achieving the objectives of education. Obanya (2004) defined implementation of curriculum as day-to-day activities which school management and classroom teachers undertake in the pursuit of the objective of any given curriculum. Obanya (2007) contends that effective curriculum is the one that reflects what “the learner” eventually takes away from an educational experience. Obanya (2004) noted that in many cases, there would be gap between the intended curriculum and the learned curriculum and defined effective curriculum implementation as concerned with narrowing such a gap as much as possible.

Of course, this is the focus of this study. The adequacy of qualified teacher and infrastructural facilities are reviewed to see how they influence curriculum implementation in Nigeria secondary education. The importance of teacher in curriculum planning, development and most importantly implementation cannot be over-emphasized. Teachers most at times are not involved during policy formulation even though they are expected to implement this curriculum. A major setback in effective curriculum implementation is the problem of unqualified teachers especially specialist teacher in area like ICT and technical subjects. In recent times, curriculum is designed up to implementation without adequate manpower to translate these documents into reality. Ajibola (2008) pointed out that most of the teachers are not qualified to teach the subject introduced in the curriculum. Amugo (2007) studied the relationship between availability of expert teacher and implementation of secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. Her study consisted of 50 secondary school teachers who were randomly selected from the population of teachers in Lagos and Imo state. She hypothesized that there will be no significant relationship between availability of teachers and curriculum implementation in Nigeria and that available specialist teacher only use theory methods in their classroom work without the practical aspect. The result of the study shows that there exists a significant relationship between the availability of subject teacher and implementation of skilled based secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. Amugo (2007) therefore concluded that quality and quantity of teachers in Nigerian schools significantly affect the implementation of curriculum in Nigeria schools, especially at the secondary school level.

### **Senior Secondary School Curriculum in Nigeria**

There are three levels of education in Nigeria; primary, secondary and tertiary each with stated objectives. These objectives at any level of education cannot be achieved if the planned programme for such a level of education is not properly designed and implemented. The curriculum represents the total experience to which all learners must be exposed, the contents performance objectives, activities for teacher and learner and evaluation guide are provided. The perceptions represent the minimum contents to be taught in the school to achieve the objectives of the senior secondary school curriculum. However, Teachers are encouraged to enrich the content with relevant material and information from their immediate environment by adaptable curriculum to their need and aspiration”. In the light of the above, new secondary school curriculum was developed by the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC 2008). The restructuring of the SSS curriculum resulted in the development of 42 subjects

and 34 vocational Trades/Entrepreneurship curricula. The curriculum which was approved by the National Council of Education in 2009 would provide for a systematic connection between its contents and the learning of future contents.

The new curriculum comprises of 9-year basic education. It shall be of 9-year duration comprising 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education. While the goals of basic education shall be the same as the goals of the levels of education to which it applies. The National Policy on Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) identified the broad goals of secondary education to include; preparation of individual for useful living within the society and preparation for higher education. The structure of the new curriculum and subjects taken reflect; senior secondary school science and mathematics include: biology, chemistry, physics, further math, agricultural science, physical education, and health education. Senior secondary school technology include: technical drawing, general metal work, basic electricity, electronics, automobile, building construction, wood work, home economics, home management, food and nutrition, clothing and textiles. Senior secondary school humanities include: Nigerian languages, literature in English, geography, government, CRS/ISS, history, visual aids music, Arabic, French. Senior secondary school business studies, subjects are; accounting, store management, office practice, insurance, and commerce.

### **Problems Associated with Implementation of Senior Secondary School Curriculum in Nigeria**

Poor mastery of the subject matter; this is a serious problem militating against the effective implementation of the curriculum at all levels of education particularly in secondary schools, therefore, Ben (2008) affirmed that teachers must understand a reasonable portion that will enable students understand and comprehend so as to achieve the learning outcome, inadequate textbooks, many teachers find it difficult to prepare lesson due to inadequate textbooks, because for any curriculum to be effectively implemented there has to be relevant textbook, non-usage of modern instructional materials, for the effective preparation of curriculum implementation, teachers need adequate preparation for effective teaching through the use of instructional materials i.e. films videos, projectors, television among others.

Inadequate qualified staff, this is a crucial stage in implementing new secondary school curriculum. For any programme of the curriculum to be properly implemented, the implementer must be adequately qualified. In Nigeria, it is unheard of that most secondary schools do not have adequate qualified teachers. In most cases, teachers are compelled to teach subjects that are not their areas of specialization. How could there be adequate number of qualified teachers to handle effectively all the subjects meant for secondary education? This demands urgent attention because teachers are the major hub around which the successful implementation of new curriculum revolves.

Lassa (2007) views the teacher as the key element to proper development of the child and consequently they are needed in greater number in all the secondary schools. Teachers are the cornerstone or the hub of any educational system. The National Policy on

Education states that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers (NPE, 2004) Oguntoye (2003) expressed the qualification and experience of teacher as a prerequisite to the quality of students' performance. Adesina (1980) as cited by Nasiru (2015) therefore notes that inadequate teaching and non-teaching staff is a bane to successful implementation of curriculum in education sector. Shulman (2008) identified the teacher as a major factor in student learning. Ukeje (2006) writes that teachers are the pivot of any educational system, and that upon their number; their quality and devotion depend on the success of any educational system. Adeogun (2006) noticed high student- teacher ratio in most public schools. This is as a result of non-recruitment of additional teaching staff to meet up with the increase in the enrolment, which in turn has negative effect on effective implementation of the school curriculum.

Poor Funding Syndrome: As observed by Nwagwu (2012), one impressive feature of educational institutions in Nigeria since independence has been the phenomenal increase in number of students and students' population. For this magnitude of expansion and development to be effective, there must be massive investment of resources in the form of funds. Unfortunately, all indicators point to a chronic gross under-funding at the school system. This is a serious issue in curriculum implementation in the secondary education. Other problems associated to the implementation of the new curriculum by Nasiru (2015) include; gross under funding, lack of instructional materials and equipment, lack of adequate laboratories, lack of trained teachers, poor staff and students' motivations, lack of adequate programmes to meet students' needs, interests and abilities, Lack of clear understanding and abuse and mismanagement of resources. The implementation of senior secondary schools in Nigeria at present leaves a lot to be desired. Implementation of the curriculum is grossly undermined by a host of factors.

### **Prospects of the Problem Associated with Implementation of Senior Secondary School Curriculum in Nigeria**

The following are possibilities for effective implementation of secondary school curriculum; All stakeholders in education including PTA, Education Trust Fund and Petroleum Trust Development Fund should synergized to provide required facilities and funds to ensure effective implementation of new curriculum in secondary school. Seminars and workshops are being organized to train secondary school teachers on the production and utilization of locally made instructional materials for effective teaching of newly introduced curriculum. The government has given compliance to involvement of experienced teachers in curriculum planning and development. Teachers are being encouraged to go for in-service training to update their qualifications. It is now necessary for every teacher to have minimum qualification for teaching. The state government and NUT have started negotiation with the federal government on the implementation of Teachers Salary Structure (TSS). At this point, effective curriculum implementation could be seen as an input-throughput-output system (Ben, 2008).

### **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, the paper submits that government alone cannot provide all required facilities if the curriculum will be effectively implemented. To this end, all

stakeholders in education sector should live up to expectation by contributing towards achievement of secondary education objectives.

### **Recommendations**

Having stated the above possibility measures, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government at all level should employ adequate number of qualified teachers in order to teach all the subjects meant for secondary education. Adequate funds should be allotted for secondary education so that payment of teachers' salaries, allowances and other entitlements could be made with ease. This will as well make purchase of instructional materials and provision of facilities possible.
2. Government should ensure that ICT facilities are used in all secondary schools. This can be done by providing computers and computer accessories to all secondary schools. Awareness should be made by informing the parents on the need of ICT during PTA meetings so that everyone can contribute to successful running of ICT programs. Teachers' salaries allowances, entitlements and other remunerations should be given to them on time. Government should listen to the teachers concerning their Salary Structure (Teachers Salary Structure). This will definitely motivate teachers to do their best in implementing new curriculum effectively.
3. There is need for concerted efforts by stakeholders in education to providing instructional facilities. It is evident that government alone cannot saddle responsibilities of education. Teachers are advised to make use of improvisation where there are no instructional materials. Of course, government could help in providing both visual and audio-visual materials in all secondary schools.
4. The importance of teacher involvement in decision-making and curriculum planning cannot be over emphasized. Therefore, government should involve teachers in curriculum planning and development to give them sense of recognition as a result of their involvement.



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