CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND NIGERIA EDUCATION: A BEEP INTO THE PAST AND PROJECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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Abstract
This paper x-rays curriculum development and Nigeria Education looking into the past and projecting to the future. Specifically the paper touches the following areas: the introduction of curriculum, it traces the history of curriculum in Nigeria, the agencies involved in curriculum development, challenges and way forward for curriculum and educational development in Nigeria and finally the conclusion is drawn that there is need for a paradigm shift of faulty policies to result-oriented policies that would meet the challenges of curriculum processes. Stakeholders should take up the challenges and genuinely join hands together towards building a strong and formidable world class education system in Nigeria.

Keywords: Curriculum, Curriculum development, Policies, Curriculum agencies

Introduction
A Curriculum is regarded as a planned sequence of what students are to learn, how students acquire that learning, and how students’ learning is verified (Akpan, 2010). It refers to the means and materials with which students will interact for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes. Curriculum according to Moronkola, Akinsola and Abe (2000) must be seen as the reconstruction of knowledge and experience, systematically developed with the guidance of the school or relevant agencies which will enable the learner to have better mastery of learning experiences for the learners’ and society’s well-being. Alieme & Osiesi, (2015) contend that the curriculum must be based on the level of appreciation of the physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of the learners in their various stages of growth and development and upon their curiosity and interests. In broad and simple terms, the curriculum is an educational proposal tailored towards achieving educational goals.

Having thrown insight into the meaning of the concept of curriculum, curriculum development entails the evaluation of a student’s needs and the development of a course of study that will achieve the educational goal (Akpan, 2010). The goals are achieved through sound education; the medium for transmission of knowledge and worthwhile values from a person to another and it transcends generations. Education encompasses teaching and learning specific skills to the transmission of knowledge, good judgment and wisdom. Education has as one of its fundamental goals the impartation of culture from generation to generation, thereby giving cognizance to the need for a synergy between traditional and formal education. Traditional education operates
through the informal and undocumented curriculum while formal education utilizes the formal and documented curriculum. Formal education occurs when society or group sets up a curriculum to educate people, both young and adult and it is life-long. The curriculum thus plays central role in the educational programme and educational development of any country.

**History of Curriculum Development in Nigeria**

The curriculum is meant to serve individuals and society at large, just as it has its roots in the culture and history of the society it serves. It is pertinent to emphasize that the relevance or otherwise of the curriculum is determined by what the people and policy makers regard as desirable skills, as well as knowledge and values the school should be promoting at every particular time. In this section, a beep is made into the historical background of curriculum development in Nigeria with particular reference to the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods.

The pre-colonial period was marked majorly by the absence of formal schooling and hence unwritten curriculum. Before colonialism in Nigeria, Africans underwent training such that in a sense they were educated, albeit not in western sense (Oyeleke & Akinyeye, 2013). There was training going on, operating as education to inspire competence, develop skills and foster acquisition of knowledge, although crude. Fafunwa (1974) listed the following as the goals of Traditional African education in Nigeria;

i. to develop the child’s latent physical skill
ii. to develop character
iii. to inculcate in the child respect for elders and those in position of authority
iv. to develop intellectual skills
v. to acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour
vi. to develop a sense of belonging and to participate actively in family and community affairs
vii. to understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large.

Ehindero (1986), cited by Oyeleke and Akinyeye, (2013) further identified the following as the purposes of pre-colonial education and functions of its curriculum.

i. total development of the child intellectually, physically and morally.
ii. introduction of the child to the community and inculcating in him respect for elders and others in position of authority.
iii. acquisition of specific vocational skills and training to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labour.
iv. developing and nurturing a strong sense of belonging.
v. development, understanding, appreciation and promotion of the cultural heritage of the community at large.

Education during the pre-colonial period was going on within the framework in which it was understood to be until missionaries hijacked the system that translated into the colonial period. Between 1842 when formal education started and 1960 when Nigeria became politically
independent, was the colonial period. The objective of the education as was introduced by the
missionaries influenced the type of curriculum operated, and the primary intention was
evangelization and Christianization of Africans. School programmes were mainly geared towards
the production of clerks for offices and missionaries to carry out the work of evangelization and
the curriculum targeted at achieving these. There was a narrow conception of the scope of
education for Nigerians and it determined the structure of the school and the curriculum.

Surprisingly, this period was seen to have delivered a system of education that cannot be described
as the most successful system in the annals of educational developments in Nigeria and among
other African societies (Akinlua, 2008). For example, Read (1956), Cameron and Dodd (1976),
Lewis (1964), Ashby (1968) and a host of others were vehemently critical of the colonial masters
who they believed brought the African communities they met to a great ruin by substituting their
enterprising pragmatic educational system with their own ‘strange’ and irrelevant system. The
general opinion from these researchers is that the pre-colonial educational system was the best.
Some other views however, though they did not disagree with the fact that the pre-colonial system
of ‘learning on the job’ (as it is described) was the best, faulted the lack of documentation and
some other shortcomings of the pre-colonial era.

The colonial period presented a system of education that was summarily described as irrelevant to
the needs and aspirations of developing nations. The content of education offered was said to be
bookish (Castle, 1972; UNESCO, 1974), irrelevant (Cameron & Dodd, 1970) and incoherent
(Castle, 1972). Ashby (1964) and Sinclair (1976) summarised the content of the colonial education
as the “3Rs” which they contended was merely training the African beneficiaries to be
shopkeepers, interpreters for the white men and village catechists. Fafunwa (1974) highlighted
some of the imperfections associated with the system as follows; lack of common syllabus,
standard textbooks and regular school hours; lack of adequate supervision of schools, buildings,
teachers, pupils and facilities; lack of control in examination system; lack of uniformity in the
condition of service of teachers, lack of adequate financial support and control, and the
inaccessibility of the north to education. There was a lot of hue and cry from well-meaning
Nigerians about the inadequacies of the curriculum.

It was well noted that there was a wide gap between the needs and aspirations of the people and
the type of education provided by the British in Nigeria. For instance Cameron and Dodd (1970)
wished that the post-colonial period was the beginning of formal education in Nigeria because it
could have offered the African the opportunity to transit with reasonable modification directly
from the effective pragmatic pre-colonial system to a manageable and more effective one. In the
submissions of Fafunwa (1974), “the educational system in Nigeria, instead of developing positive
knowledge, attitudes, values and skills in the society in which the African child lives, it tended to
alienate him from the cultural environment”. However, educators and researchers would in view
of the avalanche of criticisms from both European and African scholars not to regard this period
as a colossal waste. One notable and fundamental fact that will not allow such total dismissal is
that the period was the beginning of documentation and formal schooling. Without the period, the
post-colonial period would have been a beginning of everything from the scratch and not a consolidation period.

Although, the curriculum was purely under the control of missionaries and founded on unrealistic philosophical principles, there were landmark developments. Schools like those established by the likes of Methodist, Baptist and Roman Catholic missions and other grammar schools sprang up, while subjects like basics of Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic formed the core of the Curriculum other subjects ranging from Geometry, English Grammar and Composition, Latin and Greek, History, Geography, Hebrew, Logic, Physiology to Drawing and Rhetoric were gradually being offered. This trend continued with a mix of achievements and inadequacies. The period dovetailed into the period of Industrial Revolution in Europe, in which colonial powers engaged in trading activities in Africa to source for raw materials to develop their home industries between late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. After about five decades of missionaries’ sole control of school, the colonial interest began to be noticeable in 1882 when an Education Ordinance was put in place. It was to serve as regulatory tools for schools in British West African Countries – Gold coast, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Lagos colony. In 1886, Lagos was separated from Gold Coast and it led to the promulgation of the first Education Ordinance in Nigeria in 1887 (Oyeleke & Akinyeye, 2013).

There were dramatic changes in the curriculum and the education system such as substantial improvement in school subjects, establishment of technical and vocational schools and institutions, emergence of examination bodies and evolution of committees that inspired curriculum changes. There was the promotion of tertiary education with establishment of schools like, St. Andrew College, Oyo in 1896, Wesley College, Ibadan in 1905, the Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar in 1946, and the University College, Ibadan – a West African outpost of the London University in 1948 to cater for University education.

However, many of these institutions according to Ashby (1964), Combs (1968) and some others, were established hurriedly to patch up “the leaking roof and collapsed walls” of the dented colonial tertiary education policies. Phelp-Stoke (1923), had earlier criticized the bookish education being offered to a people who according to her “are predominantly agrarian” and so also were Ashby (1962) and Mutua (1975) later on. The content and practice of University Education was seen as alienating the people from the rich tradition of manual labour, recognition of the dignity of labour and sound hard work that characterized the pre-colonial Africa. Ashby (1964), Mboya (1970), and Lewis (1976) indicated that the recipient of such education “were becoming strangers and aliens” to a community of hard working and disciplined people. University training was said to be completely supporting and producing job seeking elites who were described as ‘scavenging white collar job dependent robots’ rather than assisting the development of creative self-reliant people that are much needed to consolidate meaningful economic and technological development in the country.
The post-colonial period extends to the present time beginning from 1960 when Nigeria gained independence. The period after Nigeria political independence marked a huge change in the course of education system and curriculum development in Nigeria. There was a phenomenal increase in schools and school enrolment. This was partly due to free educational programme introduced in Western and Eastern regions. Education eventually became an avenue for obtaining greater influence, affluence and access to political power in Nigeria (Oyeleke & Akinyeye, 2013). Brilliant African scholars emerged and they orchestrated the inadequacies of the colonial education system especially because of its British visible domination both in content and outlook. Eventually, in 1969, the first National Conference on Curriculum took place in Lagos. As observed earlier, the bad precedents, the poor foundations and the huge irrelevancies acquired from the colonial period continued to deal great retarding blows on the educational enterprise but the conference gave a tremendous push to the advancement of education and implementation of a functional curriculum in Nigeria.

Subsequent to the 1969 conference, a seminar attended by various bodies such as Nigerian Union of Teachers, subject associations, scholars of teacher training colleges, primary school administrators, officials of State and Federal Ministries of Education, UNESCO team and so forth was organized. The focus was to come up with a National Policy of Education for Nigeria. Consequently, the conference under the chairmanship of Chief S. O. Adebo in 1973 modified the 1969 conference papers and evolved and a National Policy on Education (NPE), which adopted the 6-3-3-4 system of education. Ehindero (1986) cited by Oyeleke and Akinyeye (2013) asserted that the policy marked the end of 135 years of colonial domination and influences on our curriculum. The NPE continued to undergo reviews in order to meet the aspirations and needs of the society. It was first printed in 1977, reprinted in 1981 and 1998, with 4th edition in 2004, 5th edition in 2007, and the 6th edition in 2013. The NPE is the national guideline for the effective administration, management and implementation of education at all tiers of government (FRN, 2013). Specifically the beliefs for the philosophy of education in Nigeria, and the specific goals of education were clearly spelt out in the document. These according to the National Policy on Education, 6th edition (FRN, 2013) are as follows;

Set of beliefs for the Philosophy of Education in Nigeria:
- Education is an instrument for national development, and social change
- Education is vital for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria.
- Education maximizes the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self- fulfillment and general development of the society.
- Education is compulsory and a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion, colour, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges.
- Education is to be qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the needs of the society.

The Specific Goals of Education in Nigeria are:

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• ensure and sustain unfettered access and equity to education for the total development of the individual
• ensure the quality of education delivery at all levels
• promote functional education for skill acquisition, job creation and poverty reduction
• ensure periodic review, effectiveness and relevance of the curriculum at all levels to meet the needs of the society and the world of work.
• collaborate with development partners, the private sector, non–governmental organisations, and local communities to support and fund education, and
• promote information technology capability at all levels.

After the emergence of unified education policy, agencies of curriculum development started to emerge with missions and visions tailored towards the implementation of the policy statements and achievement of the national educational goals.

Agencies of Curriculum Development
Curriculum planning, development and implementation in Nigeria involve the participation, support and contribution of various agencies, professional groups and associations. These agencies and bodies emerged in Nigeria with specific focus on the curriculum for either the primary, secondary and or tertiary level of education. Some of these agencies roles, functions and contributions to curriculum development in Nigeria include; The Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), Federal and State Ministries of Education, West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), National Teachers’ Institute (NTI), National Universities Commission (NUC), Teachers’ Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB) and so forth.

The Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC)
The Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) serves as a think tank of the Nigerian education system that continually provides the nation with building blocks for strategic educational planning and development, policy formulation and implementation and education quality assurance. The vision of NERDC is “Building and sustaining a culture of strategic educational research and development that will inform the formulation and effective implementation of policies in education as well as other related sectors of the economy.

The Mission is in creating the enabling environment in which educational research and development activities will thrive and in the process not only encourage collaboration with international development partners but also foster public-private partnerships. The core objective of NERDC is to become a regional centre of excellence in educational research and development in Africa by 2010 and expand to an international status by 2015. The Council operates a team of over 500 personnel. Among them are academic staff who are essentially teacher educators and researchers who graduated from outstanding indigenous and foreign universities.
Federal and State Ministries of Education
The Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education is the government body that directs education in Nigeria. It was established in 1988. Functions of the ministries include:
(i). Formulating a national policy on education.
(ii). Collecting and collating data for purposes of educational planning and financing.
(iii). Maintaining uniform standards of education throughout the country.
(iv). Controlling the quality of education in the country through the supervisory role of the inspectorate services department within the ministry.
(v). Harmonizing educational policies and procedures of all the states of the federation through the instrumentality of the National Council on Education.
(vi). Effecting co-operation in educational matters on an international scale.
(vii). Developing curricula and syllabuses at the national level in conjunction with other bodies.
Mission statement of the ministries is “to reform and restructure the education sector to empower and develop the citizenry to acquire skills and knowledge that would prepare them for the world of work”, while the vision statement is “to establish an enabling and sustainable environment for education to achieve the desired national reforms and human development objectives”.

The Federal Ministry of Education however, works in conjunction with all other state ministries of education. The state coordinates the development in their domain, while the federal ministry provides the guideline.

The West African Examination Council
The West African Examination Council (WAEC) was set up in 1952 as a corporate body charged with the responsibility of conducting examinations in the public interest in West Africa. WAEC’s vision is to be a world-class examining body, adding value to the educational goals of its stakeholders. WAEC mission is “to remain Africa’s foremost examining body, providing qualitative and reliable educational assessment, encouraging academic and moral excellence and promoting sustainable human resource development and international cooperation. In its over sixty years of existence; the Council has achieved its mission in very large measure.” For instance it has over the years developed a team of well-trained and highly motivated staff and has administered examinations that are both valid and relevant to the educational aspirations of member countries. Its certificates enjoy international recognition. WAEC has also been promoting the ideals of hard work and honesty in the youth through its awards for outstanding performance in its examinations.

The Council conducts several international and national examinations in all member countries except Nigeria where it has shed all but one of its examinations, The West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) for school candidates in May/June and private candidates in November/December.

The National Examination Council
National Examination Council (NECO) was created by former Head of State Abdulsalami Abubaker in April 1999. It was the first Federal organization to offer subsidized registration to
academic candidates in Nigeria. NECO was mandated to take over the responsibilities of the National Board of Education Measurement (NBEM). Its maiden examination took place in mid-2000. It is headed by a Registrar, usually appointed by the President under section 9(1) of its establishing Act. It has six departments, each headed by a director. Each department has divisions, composed of units. NECO is charged with the responsibilities to conduct Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (internal and external), Junior Secondary Certificate Examination (JSCE), and National Common Entrance Examination.

The National Teachers’ Institute
The National Teachers’ Institute (NTI), Kaduna is a single mode distance education institution dedicated to teacher training. It was established in 1976 by the Federal Government primarily because of the pressing needs in the country for trained and qualified teaching staff at all levels of the educational system. Act No. 7 of 10th April 1978 establishing the institute charged it among others with the responsibility of: providing courses of instruction leading to the development, upgrading and certification of teachers as specified in the relevant syllabus using distance education techniques.

The vision of the institute is to enhance the professional skills of serving teachers for high quality education delivery at primary and secondary education levels with a view to uplifting the standard of the education system of the country. The mission of NTI include to upgrade/update teachers knowledge and skills in curriculum implementation while instilling in them the virtues of dedication, loyalty, commitment, discipline and resourcefulness. The institute’s vision as stated in the establishing documents shall be realized through the pursuit of the following goals:

- Producing teachers trained and oriented to meet the challenges of twenty first century Nigerian society;
- Nurturing a commitment to lifelong learning that is creative, innovative, and responsive to changes in the world of knowledge and the changing needs;
- Designing and enriching subject content to ensure that the teacher-trainees attain a high level of mastery of the subject matter;
- Building the capacity of teacher-trainees in the use of effective communication skills and relevant technologies for the delivery of quality education;
- Strengthening the Institute’s monitoring, evaluation and feedback mechanism to ensure effective and efficient service delivery;
- Developing capacity for effective selection and deployment of relevant technology including Information and Communication Technology for effective Distance learning delivery;
- Establishing effective research capability in order to ensure that all the institute’s programmes are based on scientifically established grounds in terms of who needs training and the content of training required;
- Reviewing and revitalizing in-service training and retraining programme for all categories of teachers, school administrators and school supervisors;
• Regularly reviewing and restructuring curricula of all the institute’s programmes to bring them in line with changing realities.

**National Universities Commission**

The National Universities Commission (NUC) was established in 1962 as an advisory agency in the Cabinet Office. However in 1974, it became a statutory body and the first Executive Secretary was appointed. The National Universities Commission is a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Education (FME). The commission has a Governing Council and in its over 54 years of existence, the Commission has transformed from a small office in the cabinet office to an important arm of government in the area of development and management of university education in Nigeria. The main functions of the Commission are outlined as follows:

i. Granting approval for all academic programmes run in Nigerian universities;

ii. Granting approval for the establishment of all higher educational institutions offering degree programmes in Nigerian universities;

iii. Ensure quality assurance of all academic programmes offered in Nigerian universities;

iv. Channel for all external support to the Nigerian universities.

The Commission has fourteen Departments and each of the Departments is headed by a Director. The Commission has recorded a number of successes since its inception. These successes can be attributed to quality of leadership, dedication and commitment of the staff, the quality of its Board members, cooperation received from Universities and support from the Federal Government. As a coordinating body, the Commission ensures it discharges its responsibilities by recruiting adequate and relevant man power and appeals to the Universities for their sustained support and understanding. The commission also relies on support from the Federal Government, State Governments and other stakeholders in its bid to improve on the quality of tertiary education and graduates of the nation’s university system.

**Teacher Registration Council of Nigeria**

Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) is an agency of the Federal Ministry of Education. It was established by the TRCN Decree No. 31 of 1993 (now TRCN Act CAP T3 of 2004) with the major mandate of regulation and control of the Teaching Profession at all levels of the Nigerian education system, both in the public and private sectors. Several decades of agitation by professional teachers and other stakeholders for the establishment of a regulatory agency led to the enactment of the Act. The Act in section 1(1) charged the Council with the following responsibilities:

• Determining who are teachers for the purpose of this Act;

• Determining what standards of knowledge and skills are to be attained by persons seeking to become registered as teachers under this Act and raising those standards from time to time as circumstances may permit;

• Securing in accordance with the provision of this Act the establishment and maintenance of a register of teachers and the publication from time to time of the list of those persons;

• Regulating and controlling the teaching profession in all its aspects and ramifications;
• Classifying from time to time members of the teaching profession according to their level of training and qualification;
• Performing through the Council established under this Act the functions conferred on it by this Act.

In accordance with TRCN legal provisions and conventions common to the professional regulatory agencies, the Council laid out the systematic implementation of the following programmes and activities:

i. Registration and licensing of qualified teachers;

ii. Accreditation, monitoring and supervision of the courses and programmes of teacher training institutions in Nigeria to ensure that they meet national and international minimum standards. The institutions include the Colleges of Education, Faculties and Institutes of Education in Nigeria Universities, Schools of Education in the Polytechnics, and the National Teachers’ Institute.

iii. Organisation of internship schemes for fresh education graduates to equip them with the necessary professional skills before licensing them for full professional practice;

iv. Conduct of professional examinations and interviews to determine teachers suitable for registration.

v. Execution of Mandatory Continuing Professional Education (MCPE) to guarantee that teachers keep abreast of developments in the theory and practice of the profession;

vi. Organisation of Annual Conference of Registered Teachers which is the first of its kind in Nigeria and intended to unite all teachers irrespective of social class or the level of education system to which they belong;

vii. Publication of a register of qualified and licensed teachers in Nigeria which will be a public document displayed and obtainable from the Local Government through State to the Federal offices. The register will also be on the World Wide Web for the consumption of the international community;

viii. Enforcement of ethical conduct among teachers and the prosecution of erring ones using the teachers tribunal which has powers under law to award punishments;

ix. Prosecution in the law court of unqualified persons performing the job of teachers in contravention of the TRCN Act section 17(2); and

x. Act as the voice of the voiceless teachers and continuously initiate/actualize public policies and practices that will reposition teaching profession in Nigeria as first among equals.

The Universal Basic Education Commission

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme was introduced in 1999 by the Federal Government of Nigeria as a reform programme aimed at providing greater access to, and ensuring quality of basic education throughout Nigeria. The UBE Programme objectives include:

• Ensuring an uninterrupted access to 9-year formal education by providing FREE, and COMPULSORY basic education for every child of school-going age under.
  i. Six years of Primary Education
ii. Three years of Junior Secondary education providing Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE)
- Reducing school drop-out and improving relevance, quality and efficiency; and
- Acquisition of literacy, numeracy, life skills and values for lifelong education and useful living.

Basic Features of the UBE Programme include:

i. Free Formal Basic Education

ii. Compulsory, uninterrupted nine years of primary and junior secondary school education.

iii. Emphasis on curriculum diversification and relevance to effectively and adequately cover individual and community needs and aspirations.

iv. Disarticulation of junior secondary schools from senior secondary schools.

v. Introduction of rudiments of computer literacy.

vi. Appropriate continuous teacher professional development.

vii. Community ownership of schools including participation in decision-making process in schools.

**Joint Admission and Matriculation Board**

The legal instrument establishing the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) was promulgated by the Act (No. 2 of 1978) of the Federal Military Government on 13th February, 1978. By August 1988, the Federal Executive Council amended Decree No. 2 of 1978. The Board is headed by a Registrar of Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). The amendments have since been codified into Decree No. 33 of 1989, which took effect from 7th December, 1989.

Decree No. 2 of 1978 (amended by Decree No. 33 of 1989) empowered the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board to:

a. conduct matriculation examination for entry into all Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education (by whatever name called) in Nigeria

b. appoint examiners, moderators, invigilators, members of the subject panels and committees and other persons with respect to matriculation examinations and any other matters incidental thereto or connected therewith.

c. place suitably qualified candidates in the tertiary institutions after having taken into account:

   (i) the vacancies available in each tertiary institution

   (ii) the guidelines approved for each tertiary institution by its proprietors or other competent authorities

   (iii) the preference expressed or otherwise indicated by the candidates for certain tertiary institutions and courses

   (iv) such other matters as the Board may be directed by the Honorable Minister to consider or the Board itself may consider appropriate in the circumstances.

d. collate and disseminate information on all matters relating to admissions into tertiary institutions or any other matter relevant to the discharge of functions of the board.
e. carry out other activities as are necessary or expedient for the full discharge of all or any of the functions conferred on it under or pursuant to the Decree.

Science Teachers’ Association of Nigeria
The Science Teachers’ Association of Nigeria is a not-for-profit making professional association of science, technology, engineering and mathematics teachers. Membership is drawn primary, secondary, and technical schools as well as Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities. The goal of STAN is to improve science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) teacher effectiveness.

The Science Teachers Association of Nigeria as the following aims:
- To promote co-operation among science teachers in Nigeria with a view to raising the standard of science education in the country.
- To provide a forum for discussion by science teachers on matters of common interest
- To help science teachers keep in touch with developments in science and its application to industry and commerce.
- To popularize science
- To co-operate with and affiliate to other societies and bodies with related interests
- To do or perform such other functions incidental to or necessary for the realization of these objectives.

Challenges and Way Forward for Curriculum and Educational Development in Nigeria
The problems in the Nigeria education system today are almost innumerable. Ige-Akindele and Fasakin (2014) highlighted constraints to education development in Nigeria to include: insufficient access to schools, insufficient funding, insufficient and decayed infrastructural facilities, insufficient, low quality and low commitment of teachers, poor academic performance of pupils/students, inappropriate curriculum, indiscipline of pupils and students, examination malpractice, inappropriate planning and implementation, wastage and corruption. These catalogues of factors suggest that there is no significant departure from the poor past, even despite the evolution of curriculum development agencies. Okujagu (2013) submitted that the education sector is bedeviled with a myriad of challenges and the quality of education offered remains doubtful. The major step towards robust and quality education is having a functional, dynamic and responsive curriculum. The curriculum at the different levels of the education system must be subjected to reforms, innovations and re-engineering processes that will accommodate emergent issues in the society and thus pave way for educational development. Down to earth implementation of the curriculum is also most essential.

If education at all levels including University education in the past had been producing white collar job seekers according to Ashby (1964) and scavenging government dependent crowds (Lewis, 1976), it is even doing more today despite all the post independent attempts at curricula improvement, innovations and adjustments. The Nigerian state over time had come with different education policies starting from 6-5-6 system of education to that of 6-3-3-4 system up to the
present education system of 9-3-4. The curricula restructuring of the 6-3-3-4 system translated into the basic, post basic and tertiary categories (FRN, 2013), but the major problem is implementation.

There is a great disparity between policies formulated by government and the actual implementation of these policies. Policy makers often vary from policy implementers, hence, this gap becomes a problem in the course of implementation and it catapults into more problems that hinder curriculum and educational development. Odey and Opoh (2015) asserted that the quality of curriculum implementation of any society is the bedrock of its political, economic, scientific and technological well-being. This factor and others are the reasons why scholars and researchers are skeptical about the success of the new curriculum. (Ige-Akindele & Fasakin, 2014; Odey & Opoh, 2015; Okujaku, 2013). Major curricular adjustments and review efforts and procedures have rarely succeeded (Ige-Akindele & Fasakin, 2014).

In summary, the issues confronting curriculum and educational development in Nigeria pointed out via researches include:

1. Most curricular content and practice since the colonial period to the present are deeply seated in European cultures and hence are still alien to the traditional African culture. The salient ingredients that can make them work are conspicuously missing in the African Context. Curriculum must be flexible and targeted at the culture.

2. Curricular changes and adjustments have been generated and driven by extraneous and selfish motives generated by greed, corruption, lack of vision and so forth.

3. Politicization of Education is another factor that seriously affects the development of education. Many educational institutions are opened and run in many states on political ground or other flimsy reasons.

4. Many curricular adjustments and innovations were merely ‘ink and paper’ masterpieces but mere ‘shadows’ and ‘ghosts’ in execution. To this end many changes and innovations in paperwork were never accompanied by concrete physical adjustments, constructions and changes in the school system.

5. Government policies on education and the functioning of it are not sincerely dynamic over the years. Illegitimate new governments keep destroying previous governments’ creativity in order to win supports from antagonists.

6. Poor parenting and home guidance is another factor. There is poor parental contribution and parental interference to the extent that homes have failed and are still failing in their duties and responsibilities. Many parents lack caring, protection and guidance, they fail to provide basic needs for their children to be adequately equipped to meet the challenges of life in accordance with national and global laws.

7. Indiscipline is a factor that has eaten deep into the fabric of teenagers and youths. It manifests in examination malpractices, secret cult, laziness, corruption, sexual harassment and so forth. Students are no longer interested in academic excellence, but are desperate to pass out of school and would do anything to pass.

8. Inadequate care for teachers leading to ineffectiveness and lack of dedication. There is the absence of motivation and incentives, poor infrastructures and teaching aids and
instability in the system. The poor condition of service leads to academic compromise and job dissatisfaction which is gradually crippling the education industry.

9. Inadequate funding of the education industry caused by lack of focus, politics, greed, mismanagement and diversion of funds at all levels of government and administration.

The Way Forward
There is dire need to have an indigenous curriculum that is critically relevant to the Nigerian situation, and is relevant to both individual learner’s needs and societal needs. To meet the aspiration of Nigerians and Nigeria, especially in this era of global economic competitiveness and values re-orientation, the educational curriculum need to be revised to reflect and accommodate societal issues that are emerging on a daily basis. (Kolo, 2007; Mbachu, 2011; Okoro & Afurobi, 2011). ‘Relevance’ is the keyword that should drive the ideology of any curriculum content and practice that can benefit a society. According to Okujagu (2013), current societal issues include climate change and greenhouse effect, political intolerance, cyber-crime, militancy, senseless bombing and killings, kidnapping, unemployment, corruption, insecurity armed robbery and other social vices. The absence of a realistic curriculum re-engineering process has further exacerbated these issues. Without relevance, an instrument designed to engineer progress and development stands invalid and of course unreliable.

What is needed today apart from enriching the contents of curricular activities for relevance are numerous and could be summarized as follows:

1. Construction of meaningful physical structure in schools most especially at the tertiary institutions. These include buildings, workshops, conference rooms, entrepreneurship mini-industries, beautiful lawns and layouts, hostels, etc.
2. Employment of professional (qualified teaching staff) without bias or favouratism.
3. The gap between curriculum planning and implementation must be filled.
4. Adequate teacher education training with adequate provision of resources.
5. Putting in place genuine and effective quality assurance mechanisms that would include areas like class size, number of teachers and instructional materials and so forth.
6. Formulation of policies that could make learning in schools and especially at the universities and other tertiary institutions more pragmatic, meaningful and effective.
7. Education today, world over is moving with the moving trend of technology, Nigerian education system cannot be exempted. Establishment of computer centres, information communication centres and other modern facilities for teaching as well as fast processing and assessing of information globally is important.
8. The duration for courses could be extended where it is found to be inadequate, but machineries should be put in place to see that students spend maximum time for meaningful study.
9. Constant review of curriculum content and practice with comparative studies to balance and update with standards and benchmarks obtained all over the world.
10. Encouragement of homes to support sincere academic activities totally devoid of distractions.

Conclusion
Much has been done over the years within the context of curriculum dynamics, but we are yet to witness outstanding and stable improvement, development, innovations and adjustment. The standard of education has failed to improve fantastically such that there is hardly any difference noticeable among the three levels of education; primary, secondary and tertiary. There is need for a paradigm shift of faulty policies to result-oriented policies that would meet the challenges of curriculum processes. Stakeholders should take up the challenge and genuinely join hands together towards building a strong and formidable world class education system in Nigeria.

References


