

The Role of Nigerian Teachers and Parents: A Prerequisite for Efficient and Dynamic Curriculum Development (pp. 362-372)

Adebile, Ruth Foluke - Department of Special Education and Curriculum Studies, School of Education, Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo.

Abstract

The non-challant attitudes of the Nigerian teachers and parents to the challenges of curriculum development and educational achievement have created a great gap between the school-teaching-learning programme and the achievement of educational goals. The instrument and strength of change for sustainable development, stable educational policies, and viable educational achievement depends on the virtues of competent professionally dynamic teachers, parental sensitivity to the child's academic needs and the government concern about the dynamic nature of the society and the curriculum that will satisfy the aims and the goals of education. The Nigerian teachers and parents have strategic roles to play, being the prime executors of the government policies on education, through the curriculum. As such, the operational performance of teachers and parents could make or mar the future of Nigeria learners. Efficient and dynamic curriculum development for functional and qualitative teaching outcome will bring new challenges and improvement in the production of self-reliant citizens.

Introduction

It is an obvious fact that efficient learning is borne out of curiosity especially at the first stage of intellectual development. An environment that is relatively rich in satisfying the curiosity of children is indirectly enhancing the cognitive development of the child (Folorunso, 2006:37).

The interaction of the Nigerian parents with the changes in the wider society necessitates that they should play their major roles and contributions to enhance efficient learning. Parental pressures have a strong influence on the behaviour and attitudes of learners, especially when one consider the learning rate of learners both in the classroom and out-of-school activities (Igwe, 2000:5). Parental roles and contributions for efficient learning should among others include; encouragement, support, counseling, appreciation, motivation and provision of condusive environment for the learner both at home and in the school.

Realization of educational goals is attainable through effective teaching and learning of useful knowledge, practical skills and desirable habits within and outside the school (Oyekan, 2000; pp. 296). However, teachers are the prime executors of government policies on education and, as such, a number of sterling qualities are expected of them for effective visionary as this could assist him/her to enhance teaching effectiveness, productivity, conceptual understanding of the curriculum content, professional growth and educational excellence in schools. On this premise, parents and the entire society should put all hands on deck, to expend lots of efforts, money and time in preparing their young ones for meaningful life contributions to the society. The profitable academic goals would not be attainable without an efficient and dynamic curriculum development. Therefore, it is important to note that curriculum has become a subject of professional work, study and innovation, since the beginning of organized education (Caswell, 1996) quoted by (Oyekan, 2000, pp. 184) in our quest for curricular relevance to real life situations, curriculum development has become a continuous process of study and improvement through a revision and redesigning of the school curriculum; as such Nigerian teachers and parents have sensitive roles to play.

Nigerian Teachers and Curriculum Development

Two groups of Nigerian teachers could easily be identified. These are teachers who are academically qualified and those that are professionally qualified. These two groups are employed to carry out instruction in the classroom. The academically qualified are non-professional teachers, that is, teachers who have academic training as a result of enrolment into higher educational institution. While professionally qualified teachers, are teachers who get professional teacher training that gives them professional

knowledge, skills, techniques, aptitude as different from the general education (Ololube, 2008:1).

The erroneous notion of teachers as people who stand in front of the classroom and teach children has been at odds for many years now (Dada 1999:5). In reality, teaching in Nigerian context involves the task of assisting students to make worthwhile and satisfying adjustments to school work, to social groups, and to their occupations. If these areas are not taken care of by the Nigerian teachers, efficient learning cannot take place and in fact, it will be difficult for learners to appreciate progress towards his or her learning (Ololube, 2008:1).

More importantly, it should be recognized that the major duties of the Nigerian teachers is to get the individual students to learn, remove obstacles to learning and identify to resolve cases of friction and frustration in learning, in order to achieve successful learning (Stones, 1966, pp. 381-389).

Further still, the Nigerian secondary schools operate according to the guidelines stipulated by the National Policy on Education (NPE) and it is the content of this document that stipulates the objectives of secondary education, the caliber of teachers to teach them and their qualifications, as well as the curriculum content and methodology to be employed. In spite of these guidelines by the NPE, lots of problems still hinder secondary school education development in Nigeria. These include among others: acute shortage of employment of professionally trained teachers and recruitment of untrained individuals into teaching (Osokoya, 1887:111).

In a rapidly developing nation like Nigeria, education is essentially a social process in the maintenance of the society. It has become the paramount groundwork for sustainable human development, peace, progress, and prosperity.

Further still, schools are the great democratic engines that could identify endowed talents and match them with relevant opportunities irrespective of the children's gender, social class, tribe and ideology. It is therefore necessary for a progressive nation to adopt efficient and dynamic curriculum development as a means of making the children, youths, and adults to acquire

fundamental knowledge, practical skills and good habits for survival strategy in the modern world (Oyekan, 2000, pp. 399).

The term "curriculum" as defined by different educators implies the totality of the learning experiences offered by an institution of learning. It includes subjects for study as well as out of class activities, all of which are geared towards the physical, intellectual, emotional and effective development of the child. Curriculum is thus seen as a combination of the objectives of instruction, the various learning experiences offered to the learner, and the evaluation of everything involved in the planning and execution of a school teaching-learning programmes (Fayemi 1986:85).

Gudging from the characteristics presented above, one might say: A curriculum is a programme of learning planned for a target group of learners for a specific period of time in order to achieve certain pre-determined educational goals (Dada, 1999:12).

Curriculum as it relates to education is defined as all the planned experiences provided by the school to assist the pupils in attaining the desired learning outcomes (Neegly and Evan, 1987).

However, the curriculum needs continuous revision which looks at the objectives to ensure that they are appropriate to the needs of the learner, the society and that they are in consonance with changing educational policies. The revision involves continuously adjusting content, materials, instructional and evaluation strategies, and learning experiences to meet changing needs and times. This continuous process of adjusting every aspect of the curriculum to meet the dynamic demands of the changing times is usually referred to as the process of curriculum innovation and development (Fayemi, 1986:85).

Oyekan (2000) opined that curriculum development is a process of producing a comprehensive plan of studies for educating individuals in the society.

On the premise, "a comprehensive plan of studies for educating individuals..." is prone to constant changes since the society itself changes from time to time. This calls for a change in the curriculum development to

meet up with the current practices in the society. As such, a dynamic and efficient curriculum development is the means by which educational institutions endeavour to realize the intended educational goals. It is not a surprise to observe that the comprehensive plan of studies in curriculum development consists of four interrelated stages:

- specification of curriculum goals and objectives;
- selection of learning experiences (content);
- organization and integration of learning experiences (method); and
- evaluation (Dada, 1999, pp. 102).

Therefore, adequate internalization of a coherent and dynamic development of the curriculum would equip the teacher with professional competence and zeal to plan comprehensive lessons.

On the other hand, the Nigerian teachers have strategic roles to play in maintaining the dynamism nature of the society and the curriculum development through their professional training.

Professional teachers, through their professional strategic efficient training and competence should be able to use the schools to prepare the children, youths and adults for effective citizenship, creative leadership and accountable stewardship at all educational strata.

As such, the Nigerian teachers are supposed to be the propeller towards efficient and dynamic curriculum. They should always promote democracy, harmony, competence and professionalism in the conduct of their teaching/ learning activities in order to meet the prospects of efficient and dynamic curriculum development and challenges of modernization.

Parental Roles and Contributions to Efficient Learning

The importance of parental roles in the child's education cannot be handled with levity because a child's mental capabilities and motivation is greatly influenced by the nature of the family or home and school into which a child belongs.

It should be observed that well educated parents with good background are capable of providing sufficiently for the education of their children while their poor counterpart finds it extremely difficult to do so. This may be due to low income and the non-challant attitude of some parents towards the education of their children.

On a general note, it could be observed also that the value which parents attached to education of the child determines the kind of motivation with which their children pursue such.

However, families do not attach the same degree of importance of education, this affects the type of encouragement a child receives from his parents and it brings about differences in their performance.

Therefore, parents and the others in entire society are the determinants of curriculum development. As such, it is needful to understand that the nature of the learner is constantly changing and schools themselves as agents of formal education are constantly changing. Therefore, changes in the wider society, whether demographic, economic or psychological, affect the school curriculum especially its dynamic development. Therefore, parents should constantly provide for the academic needs of the child as occasion demands, so as to satisfy the child's need for the constant changing nature of curriculum development.

The Dynamic Nature of the Curriculum and the Nigerian Teachers

There must be a change in curriculum from time to time within society as the needs arise. The changes in the society from time to time call for a change in the curriculum to meet up with the current practices in the society. The changes in technology and knowledge explosion daily revolutionize the curriculum. Therefore there is the need to continue to revise and develop the curriculum so as to enhance the standard of practice.

However, efforts to improve, revise and re-develop curriculum standard requires understanding of the sources of curriculum. Igwe (2000; pp. 3-4), enumerated such sources to include subject matter, teacher, the parents, the learner and the society. Also, some factors that are responsible for curriculum change should be mentioned at this juncture. A curriculum change is defined as the alteration of some element of the curriculum which affects the

structure of the whole curriculum in important ways such that at least there is a major difference between the original and the new (Dada, 1999, pp. 104).

Therefore, some factors are relevant to the dynamic nature of the curriculum, for instance, when a curriculum is not fulfilling the aims and goals of education, when there is a change in the type of learner or there is a change generally in the educational thinking; definitely there must be a change in the curriculum planning and development and these situations are most relevant to the dynamic nature of both the society as well as the curriculum.

Further still, as the curriculum changes for various reasons, the Nigerian professional teachers must change alongside with it, if only they would be effective and efficient implementers of the curriculum. A static professional Nigerian teacher is a clog in the wheels of the teaching profession. No profession must be static; there must be room for creativity and improvement.

The Nigerian teachers therefore must be as dynamic as the society and the curriculum as well. This is very necessary for functionality, relevancy, efficiency and fulfillment of educational aims and goals as stated in the National Policy on Education. The dynamism of Nigerian teachers lies major on their interest in self-improvement and re-training programme.

These could only be achieved by creating avenues for and interest in academic self-improvement, self-actualization and self-fulfillment for teacher's productivity, value-aided ideas and effective usability of resources that are relevant and could bring quality to the teaching-learning process. It then goes that in-service training is essential if Nigerian professional teachers will keep abreast of development and thus improve the quality of teaching and learning as a result. It should be observed that the quality of education will depend, to a large measure, on the quality of teachers, as the development and maintenance of a dynamic curriculum development will be highly motivated by skilled teaching force (Gidado, 1999; pp. 26-32).

Therefore, further training and professional development, and provision of opportunity to meet these needs will be highly welcomed from the government.

In a nutshell, Nigerian teachers as dynamic agents for curriculum implementation should be constantly on ground for professional development, hence the need for professional training on knowledge of the subject, teaching techniques and organizational changes are very necessary and this could be brilliantly achieved through workshops, seminars, internet browsing and extensive reading for personal development.

Curriculum Development and the Societal Factor

Changes in the wider society, whether demographic, economic or psychological affect the school curriculum and generally, curriculum development. Societal pressures also have a strong influence on the behaviour and attitudes of teachers and pupils especially on what teachers do in schools and out-of-schools.

In Nigeria, there is an increased shift towards urbanization and this poses curricula challenges. There is also a great shift towards town-based occupations, as a result of the drift of people from rural to the cities. (Igwe, 2000; pp. 4).

As such, it should be observed that a socio-cultural dimension in curriculum development explains the link or relationship between society and culture (Ehinder, 1986; pp. 123). The link or relationship between the two determines the stability of curriculum development.

On the other hand, a functional curriculum must have direct contribution to an individual's life and play strategic roles in the society. It must be able to satisfy the individual's needs and interest in terms of motives, readiness, capacity, aptitude e.t.c. and this serves as a major determinant of curriculum development, because to fulfill the above goals, the curriculum must be dynamic alongside with the constant changing nature of the society (Ehinder 1986; pp. 5).

Fulfilling the Goals of Education through Dynamic Curriculum Development

Dynamic curriculum development has a marked influence on the life- styles of Nigerian learners and teachers. Various challenges could be received through the mass media; societies get to know about various curricula developments in the outside world. This will help in a greater measure to

help Nigerians teachers, parents, learners and the government to work towards the functionality, relevancy and development of curriculum and fulfillment of educational goals.

Curricular challenges are not to destroy the already existing curriculum but to improve curriculum development efficiently and dynamically.

The major point of functionality is curriculum development in the fulfillment of educational policies and goals.

In actual terms, the aims of secondary education should be specified more precisely to ensure more concentration of efforts towards their attainment by teachers in Nigerian schools.

Hence, some of the objectives of secondary education are to:

- Provide an increasing number of primary school pupils with the opportunity for education of a higher quality, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background.
- Equip students to live effectively in our modern age of science, and technology and commerce.
- Develop and project Nigerian culture, art, and languages in the context of world's cultural heritage e.t.c. (NPE, 1989).

The realization of these, laudable objectives shall produce energetic educated youths that can make use of their brain and hands as a result of their acquired creative knowledge and employable skills (Oyekan, 1999: pp. 69).

Therefore, Nigerian teachers, parents and a functional and dynamic curriculum is the key to the fulfillment of all educational goals.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the various roles of Nigerian teachers in curriculum development, parental contributions for effective learning and means of obtaining a functional curriculum and dynamic society for the fulfillment of educational goals.

It should be borne in mind that Nigerian teachers and parents constitute a critical factor in the success of any educational system.. Many laudable educational initiatives have failed mainly because the "teacher and parental factors" were not given due consideration. The functionality of a curriculum depends largely on both the users and the implementers of the curriculum. The quality of the Nigerian teachers and parental roles and contributions to learning, to a large extent, determines the productivity, functionality and the achievement of educational goals. It is thereby recommended that:

- Problems hindering the production of quality teachers in Nigeria, such as funding, poor quality of training, low motivation, lack of quality control and in-service training programmes, should be seriously considered for urgent attention.
- Problem of inadequate provision of human, material and financial resources and lack of social recognition of teachers' status should be discharged.
- Parents should be enlightened concerning their regular contributions towards efficient learning.
- Education should be revitalized through effective teacher production, regular payment of teacher's salaries, allowances, pensions, and gratuities.
- Seminars, conferences and workshops should be organized for teachers on the job for functionality in curriculum development, innovations and implementation.

It is hoped that when curriculum is being enriched and standardized with due consideration of the dynamic nature of the society, and the learner, and Nigerian teachers and parents play their strategic roles, there will be improvement in the quality of education in Nigeria.

References

- Dada (1999): *The Teacher and the Curriculum*, Ibadan, Tejema Enterprises.
- Ehindero (1986): *Curriculum Foundations and Development*, Lagos, Concepts Pub. Ltd.
- Fayemi (1986): Problems and Issues in Implementing the National Curriculum: The Nigerian Experience. *Nigerian Journal of Research in Curriculum*, Vol. (4) 1, pp. 85.
- Folorunso, I. (2006): Relationship Between Learning and Motivation at Different Stages of the Child's Cognitive Development, *Sokoto Educational Review*. Vol. 8 (22), pp. 35.
- Gidado, T. and Junaid, M. (1999): Educational Crises in Nigeria and Implications for National Development. *The Nigerian Teachers*. Vol. 1 (1), pp. 26-32.
- Igwe, R. (2000): *Fundamentals of Curriculum and Instruction*, Lagos. Sunshine Publishers (Nig.) Ltd.
- Neegly and Evan, N.D. (1967): *Handbook for Effective Curriculum Development*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall.
- Ololube (2007): Methodological Competencies of Teachers: A study of Nigeria. *Empirical Research*, Vol. 4 (2), pp. 20.
- Osokoya (1997): *6-3-3-4 Education in Nigeria*, Ibadan. Laurel Pub. Ltd.
- Oyekan (2000): *Foundations of Teacher Education*. Ibadan. Ben Quality Prints.
- Stones, E. (1966): *An Introduction to Educational Psychology*, London: Menthuen.