

CURRICULUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL STABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Education is regarded as a veritable tool for cultural and behavioural modification and at times outright changes. The curriculum of any educational system is the single most important determinant of the success of a given educational system. An educational system could be termed successful if it meets the needs of the larger society by transferring the norms, ideals and value system of the people from one generation to the other. In this way a given society gets integrated to the larger society and contributes its quota to the overall development of the larger society. In this paper a review of the role of curriculum is attempted against the background of instructional process as a means of ensuring sustainable democracy, which is the bedrock of political stability in any given society, Nigeria inclusive. The paper is an outcome of library survey of relevant literature on curriculum implementation and political development in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum: An Overview

Curriculum has been variously described by many scholars of the discipline one can think of, from the famous Tyler (1949), Wheeler (1967) Kerr (1975) and to Lawton (1975) just to mention but a few. In as much as one observed some slight differences in their various conception of curriculum, it is glaringly observed also that curriculum is basically conceptualized as the instrument or means for formal education. This notion, Okoli (1998) citing Ukeje (1966) maintained that it is implicit in Ukeje's paradigm of "Education for Social Construction" and added that curriculum encompasses all the learning that are planned and guided by the School. Curriculum in its different facets of study - theory, evaluation practice and development is to ensure relevance of effectiveness of educational process in the face of significant social change(s).

The observable differences in the conceptualization of curriculum stem from the fact that views held by people about the nature of knowledge, nature of learning and how learning takes place as well as the nature of human development differ from one period to the other. Similarly people have different opinions as to what the actual roles of schools should be in achieving the educational goals of the society.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESSES

Curriculum as a means of behavioural change and (or) modification anchors on a proper instructional process. This process is a means of breaking down the curriculum into its component parts in order to impart the learning experiences that are embedded in each of the components. It is the learning experience that is intended to effect the desired behavioural change and (or) modification as they are being imparted to the learners.

The entire instructional process begins with the curriculum itself. This includes the theory, practice, evaluation and development. The instructional process brings into focus all the learning experiences that are intended to influence the learner's view of life, his aspirations and expectations. For any curriculum planning to succeed and achieve its desired objective, the instructional process must be clearly defined and strictly adhere to. Gane (1916) outlines the stages of instructional design as shown below:

Stages in Designing Instructional System

LEVELS	ACTIVITIES
System Level (initial)	Analysis of needs, Goals and Priorities Analysis of Resources, Constraints and Alternate Delivery Systems Determination of Scope and Sequence of Curriculum and Courses i.e. Delivery System designs.
Course level	Determining, Course Structures and Sequence. - Analysis of Course Objectives.
Lesson Level	Definition of Performance Objectives. Preparing lesson plan or modules. Developing, Selecting Materials and media. Assessing Student performance i.e. (performance measures).
System Level (Final)	Teacher preparation. - Formative Evaluation. Field-testing, Revision. Summative Evaluation. - Installation and Diffusion

Arising from the above outline of Gane (1916) which is still valid for today and even in the next millennium is the issue of Teacher preparation and the School environment. Sustainable democracy thrives in a literate society. Without a super teaching force and a conducive school environment, political stability will continue to be an illusion in Nigeria. As long as the Nigerian teacher is not a priority and Public School which is within the reach of the common man still remain a shadow of itself, no nation can dream of political stability when her teachers' welfare are not only neglected but abused.

The teachers in all levels of our educational system are the instrument of behavioural modification and (or) change, translating the curriculum to learning experience so as to influence the learner. Thus to achieve a sustainable democracy in Nigeria vis-a-vis political stability, the curriculum must be reappraised on a continuous basis. The various curricula across the level of Nigeria's educational system are above average and good but the problem has been in the implementation of the curriculum.

The implementation of any curriculum is the responsibility of educational practitioners ranging from the administrators of educational institutions to the teachers. The sincerity and commitments of individuals to their responsibilities depend on the welfare and the security of the practitioners offered by the job. Regrettably, the welfare of the teachers and the educational practitioners generally has been grossly abused not only neglected.

It is the opinion of this presenter to reiterate that proper Teacher' Education is the taproot of academic excellence, and academic excellency is the springboard for technological development and advancement. Sustainable democracy vis-a-vis political development is dependent on the extent of human development in a given society and the surest way of human development is education and the teacher is the pivot of societal development.

CURRICULUM AND SOCIETY CHANGE

Review of Nigerian education under the colonial masters mirrors the power of the curriculum . behavioural change. The once hostile, nonchalant and unincorporating rural African I communities were converted to Christianity by the colonial masters through the colonial masters' leaching using the Bible as the master text. Underneath this conversion the colonial masters were able to produce clerks and other forms of non-professional workers who helped them in the

exploitation of the continent and country's economy. The cheating in the name of Christian missionary activities continued unabated until the struggle for independence and subsequent dependence.

The role of Education in societal change has never been in dispute and for any educational system to fulfil this role it must be built on an acceptable curriculum. The national system to fulfil this role it must be built on an acceptable curriculum. The National Policy on Education (1981) has clearly articulated skills for individual development, the aggregate of which will usher in sustainable democracy and political stability. In his own view Usoro (1994) reaffirms the role of education in societal change. Also, writing on social justice and political stability, the Nigerian experience Nnonyelu (1997) traced the political instability in Nigeria to the lopsided educational system of the colonial master. In attempting to establish the dialectical relationship between social justice and political instability, he further opines that colonialism though not solely responsible for all our political sins, but there is no doubt that much of the roots of our political sins can be traced to the loss of innocence of after colonialism.

The curriculum of Nigerian education over the years have been all right but for the lopsided emphasis on science and technology to the detriment of arts and the humanities. This in effect has corrupted our moral values towards the role of the arts and humanities as a means of achieving political stability in Nigeria.

CURRICULUM AND NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE NEXT DECADE 2010

The curriculum of the Nigerian educational system had undergone several scrutinies by experts starting from Curriculum Conference of 1969 and many others. Apart from the orchestrated and lopsided emphasis on science and technology without the corresponding political will to implement the lofty curriculum in the area of science and technology, the nation's curricula could be described without fear of contradiction as a balance curriculum.

It would be observed that if the enabling academic environment were put in place and jobs created for deserving school leavers, the issue of unemployment and under-employment would not arise.

The geometric economic consequences of this joblessness create room for a number of issues, which have often disrupted the political stability of the country. Such issues span through economic, social and cultural problems. These have led to the obnoxious experience of the various military regimes that have succeeded in ruining the country and further worsen and bastardize the nation's economy, the country's value system, morality and ethics but the philosophy of the populace.

These maggots and devilish tendencies have so gone deep into the very nerves and bone marrow of the present generation to the extent that it would be transmitted into children yet to be born with the present decade. The obnoxious edifice of corruption, mal-administration, rape of excellence and the enthronement of mediocrity to the extent that honest virtues like hard-work, commitment, etc become vices are so glaring in the country that it could not be wiped away in a couple of years.

The way out therefore, the presenter opines, is a review of the nation's curriculum at the Primary, Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary to include these learning experiences that would spur aggressive patriotism and the reshaping of the nation's moral values in the younger generation.

THE CURRICULUM, NIGERIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AND POLITICAL STABILITY.

Political stability donates systematic and progressive governance of a given state. It should be devoid of frequent disruptions and change of government. Unfortunately Nigeria has been plagued by this hydra-headed monster-political instability.

Political instability in Nigeria has caused a number of set backs in the country.

These include: -

- Low or outright absence of foreign investment in the country which often lead to frequent loss of resources.
Frequent change in personnel, policies, programme and structures in the country. Loss of confidence in the political system by the populace. In Nigeria the aftermath of the annulled June 12, 1993 presidential election is a monumental testimony of our political life.
- Disintegration of the component parts of the political entity actively or passively given the stress, social and economic hardship it elicits on the populace.
The constitutional crisis and consequence political instability that has plagued Nigeria is traceable to colonialism (Odili) 1996. He sees colonialism as an economically motivated development, which had bequeathed to Nigerian power elite the following obnoxious legacies: -
The use of military force as a viable instrument strategy for political succession and change.
Corruption perpetrated by exploitation, alienation and marginalization.
Cultured imperialism, which seeks to destroy the pre-colonial cultural value system.
- Divide and rule and winner take all policies, ethnicity and segregation.
The abuse of governmental apparatuses as instruments of personal economic accumulation.
Lack of accountability, consensus and respect for the rule of law.
Amalgamation of different nationalists into one political entity as a means of deriving their political and economic gains.

Having established the basis for the political instability in Nigeria, it is now pertinent to advocate the kind of curriculum vis-a-vis education that reverses the trend. A functional educational system that will not alienate Nigerians through some kind of intellectual decolonization of Nigerians. This will free students and teachers and indeed all Nigerians from all - pervasive mentality of the colonizers and the neo-colonizer particularly the military despot. The curriculum for the kind of education envisages above should consider modeling education toward achieving the following:

-i) Economic Development: -

Nigeria educational system in the year 2000 and beyond should aim at producing well educated people who will use their talents, knowledge, skills and experience to turn round the economy of the nation. It could be recalled that the first was as a result of accumulated economic dislocation in the country. Economic prudence, equal distribution of natural resources, a virile and healthy academic environment

would create an enabling environment for sustainable democracy. This would be long - lasting if an acceptable derivation formula rather than forced derivation formula is arrived at.

ii) Political Development:

Education based on a humanistic and essentialist curriculum for political emancipation, which involves the development of free and democratic society. Democracy thrives in a literate society where individuals can analyse situations, critically examine policies and take fairly independent decisions.

iii) Rural and Environmental Development:

The education required for political stability should take into consideration the development of the rural areas and the protection of the environment. The criminal neglect of the rural areas and the seeming deliberate degradation of the environment are many sources of conflict that have jeopardized Nigerian political stability.

iv) Social Development:

Education is indisputably an important agent of socialization; it shapes the value and attitude to the need of contemporary society. Such social development should take into consideration ethnic balancing in all sectors of our polity particularly the army. Besides, the need for a Federal Constitution that will ensure and protect devolution of power should as a matter of priority be given a significant place in the curriculum.

v) **Cultural Development:**

Cultural education helps to adjust individuals to cultural changes in the society. By so doing conflicts and tension are minimized thereby creating an enabling environment for sustainable democracy and political stability.

vi) **Technological Development:**

Technology is the application of scientific discoveries for the satisfaction of human needs, Ndem (1998). The curriculum required for political stability should be able to expose to Nigerians what technology is relevant to National Development hence political stability.

CONCLUSION

So far, the paper has attempted an overview of the role of curriculum in providing an educational system that can generate sustainable democracy and political stability. The paper calls for an aggressive re-orientation of Nigerians particularly the young generation to imbibe progressive values that will shape and sharpen their attitude towards patriotic roles.

Also there is need to create an enabling academic environment through the immediate upward review of teachers welfare if education should fulfil the role of ushering in sustainable democracy and political stability. Such school subject as Civics, History, Social and Community and Social Study and Political Science is emphasised in our schools.

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