
A Comparative Analysis of the South Africa Curriculum Provision and that of Nigeria

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Abstract

The history of education in Africa cannot be distanced from the history of the planting of church education as well as the Islamic forms of education which it has come in contact with. This development is so because the traditional education which existed earlier had no recorded history or laid down procedure for its evolution but was rather practical and was aimed at producing a functional individual who could contribute his quota to the existence and development of his community effectively as well as live to pass such life long education to the next generation. Traditional education, was part of the social order of all communities. This paper therefore takes a look at the curriculum provision of the primary and secondary education in South Africa and that of the Nigeria. The paper enumerates the similarities and dissimilarities.

Introduction

Educational development in Africa transcend the pre-colonial era, as there existed according to Fafunwa (1974) the traditional African Education. This form of education took place within the society and differed from place to place depending on the cultural, social and physical peculiarities and aspirations of the society concerned. In societies where people relied on hunting, the training was tailored towards those skills which sharpened the sense of the youth and his response to the stimuli of the environment in much the same way as in a fishing community. This education would continue from childhood punctuated by intensified tests during points of crisis in the cycle of the individual's life in accordance with his physical and psychological development.

The main tests took place at weaning. The objectives of the education in Africa according to Fafunwa include the following.

1. To develop the child's latent physical skills
2. To develop character
3. To inculcate in the individual respect for elders and those in authority
4. To develop the child's latent intellectual skills

5. To acquire specific vocational skills and to develop a healthy attitude to honest labour
6. To develop a sense of belonging and to participate in family and community affairs.
7. To understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large

This analogy is intended to point out the sharp contrast existing between aims of traditional education and the current education practices since culture should serve as the root of curriculum bearing in mind the fact that the school is established within society for the purpose of achieving certain aims and objectives paramount among which is the guidance and upbringing of her younger generation while taking into cognizance other contents of development in the outside world that directly affect them and their immediate constituency. Such education should ensure the survival of the individual and the society at every stage of their development. That was the situation before the introduction of western education in Africa.

The South African Education

An aftermath of the democratic election and the assumption of office by a democratically elected government in South Africa as observed by Lanin Samuel and Sayed (2003) was the lopsidedness of the apartheid policy of the former regime which was manifested to all sectors including the educational sector. For instance there existed different systems of education as you had – education for the “blacks”, education for the “coloured” as education for the whites, three system which as reiterated by Akinpelu (1981) was called separate but equal. This system did not emphasis any form of ideal in national objective but was meant to perpetuate the racist inclinations of the apartheid government. Certain areas courtesy of the arrangement made certain levels inaccessible to Non-Whites. This policy did create a political as well as socio-economic dichotomy that was to be addressed through the introduction of a educational policy in 1996 which attempted through deliberate effort to cater for the excluded large population in education through the inculcation of such issues as “equally” non discriminatory as well as the option of choice of language. It guaranteed rights to basic education for all and went on to assert the right to any service in order to achieve educational equality in line with the yearning of the people. The first attempts were the merger to one (1) of the Nine (9) department of education. The objectives as contained in the first white paper on Education (1995) included these goals:

- a. To ensure that all learners, adult and childhood have access to a life long education or learning process.
- b. Recognise that in South Africa massive inequalities have existed and that central to all policy developments is the need to redress these inequalities
- c. That all resources must be provided according to the principles of equity so that all learners have access to equal educational opportunities.
- d. To ensure that the provision of education is of good quality

The revision of the curriculum therefore became the most challenging initiatives of the government. This led to the introduction of the syllabi used in schools since 1996. The development around the curriculum 2005 (C2005) introduced in 1997 being implemented in gradual phase since 1998 to be fully implemented in full at all graded (levels) by the year 2005 as follows as contained in the Educational curriculum framework (1997).

Grade	Year of Implementation
1 and 7	1998
2 and 8	1999
3 and 9	2000
4 and 10	2001
5 and 11	2002
6 and 12	2003

The period between 2000 – 2005 will be devoted to an evaluation of the new curriculum with a view to improving and refining it.

The values of the new South Africa constitution according to the White paper on Education and training in South Africa include:

- (i) Marks the starting point for removing apartheid from school and it's curricula.
- (ii) Providing a platform for developing a new sense of identity based on dignity and respect for all people rather than on racial, gender and class divisions.

The new policy documents development by the government since the end of apartheid contains ideals that need to be implemented in a strategic way because the entire education system needs to be transformed from a racially based one to a non-racially based system Cohen (2002).

The goals as set forth by the South African Department of Education (DOE) which it hopes to achieve in future includes

1. That all learners have access to the learning process throughout their life time
2. To have all educational centres respond to the rise in diversity at any level through an extensive support system.
3. To achieve equality amongst geographic locations by providing each area with equal support services. Lastly it aspires to have a relationship developed amongst educators, learners, parents and community to ensure that a child receives all that is necessary to obtain the best education possible.

The working tool of the Department remains the C2005 and it hopes that by the year 2005 it would have produced a category of learners who are

1. Equipped with linguistic skills and aesthetic as well as the cultural awareness to function effectively and sensitively in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural society
2. Able to adopt to an ever changing environment recognizing human understanding is constantly challenged and hence changes and grows.

3. Able to use a variety of effective problem solving techniques, reflect different ways of thinking, while recognizing that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation
4. Able to use a variety of way to effectively gather, analyse, organize and evaluate numerical and non-numerical information and then communicate it effectively to a variety of audiences.
5. Able to make informed decisions and accept accountability as responsible citizens in an increasingly complex and technological society
6. Able to display skills necessary to work effectively with others and organize and manage oneself, one's own activities and leisure time responsibly and effectively
7. Able to understand and show respect for basic principles of human right recognising the interdependence of members of society and environment.
8. Equipped to deal with and have an understanding of the social, political and economic demands made of South Africa as a member of democratic system in the local and global community.

This document came along with the constitutional guarantee of free and period of ten years with effect and compulsory basic education spanning a period of ten years with effect from 1st January 1995 to cover the recently introduced R-grade 9(i.e. the pre-primary to the Junior secondary school levels).

Structure and Organisation

The educational system of South Africa is organized along the following structure:

- a) The foundation phase
- b) The intermediate phase
- c) The senior phase
- d) The further education and training phase

The curriculum according to Hememann South Africa (1998) specifies the following forms of education.

- i. Early Childhood Development (ECD)
- ii. General Educational Training (GET).
- iii. Further Education and Training (FET).
- iv. Education for Learners with Special Education Needs (ELSEN).
- v. Inservice Education for Teachers (INSET).

The Foundation Phase

The foundation phase covers a period of four years comprising the first year of the reception and the three subsequent years of junior primary education. The reception year was recently introduced by government to cater for the pre-primary education need of children less than 6 years. The foundation phase consequently caters for the educational need of childhood between 5-9 years of age.

The curriculum include: Literacy, Life skill and child environment

The Intermediate Phase

This phase of education caters for the need of children between 10 – 12 years of age. This translate to the fourth to sixth years of primary education.

The curriculum here includes subjects such as Language, Sciences and Technology, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Life skills, economy and society, Arts and culture. It is regarded as the senior primary school phase. It starts from grade 4 and ends at grade 6.

Senior Phase

This comprises the seventh to ninth grades and is expected to meet the educational need of children between the age 12 – 16 years. It is equivalent to the Junior secondary school level. It is the terminal phase of the free and compulsory education scheme of the government and the point at which learners leave the General Education and training (GET) band to elicit the Further Education and Training (FET) band.

One peculiar feature is that no nationally registered certificate is awarded from the R grade to the through grade. It is on completion of grade 9 which equals Grade One (1) on the National Qualification frame work (NQF) according to the Curriculum frame work that a certificate is awarded to successful learner.

The curriculum at this level is less contextualized, more abstract and more area special that the two previous phases. Emphasis here is on clearer evidence that the learners are being prepared for life after school, life in the world, at institutions for further education and adult life generally. They are able to engage in open argument and are willing to accept multiple solutions to a single problem. Learners at this stage are increasingly able to reason independently of concrete materials and experience.

The Future Education and Training

This is the nodal point for integrated approach to education. It begins with the tenth grade and terminates at grade 12. It marks the equivalent of senior secondary education. It cares for the education of children above 16 years of age. It is currently found at two types of public institutions namely the Secondary Schools and the Technical Colleges. It is mainly by attendance and achievements at these institutions that nationally recongised and accredited school leaving certificate are issued.

Subjects offered at this level include: Biology, Physical Sciences, mathematics, Accounting, Afrikaans and Geography. Successful candidates at this level choose either to work or go to higher institutions existing within the country either in academic or professional fields of endeavour. Those who choose to go further in education however have to sit the matriculation examinations conducted nationally by the Joint Matriculation Board of South Africa or attentive exemption examinations conducted internally by the concerned tertiary institutions.

The further Education and Training (FET) band serves three purposes according to the South African curriculum framework which includes:

- i) Preparation for meaningful participation in society
- ii) Preparation for work place

- iii) Preparation for higher education

The Nigeria Education System

Nigeria operates a centralized system of education where policies and regulations relating to instruction are promulgated by the government through the Federal, State and local levels respectively through various agencies. The task of providing education is mainly borne by the government as it owns more numerous educational institutions than the private and non-governmental agencies. A large chunk of public budget is dedicated to the provision of education at the primary secondary through to the tertiary levels.

The government has put in place a National Policy on Education which provides for the 6-3-3-4 structure it currently assumes in line with the development plan and the constitution of the country which aims to achieve the following objectives:-

- a) a free and democratic society
- b) a just and egalitarian society
- c) a united strong and self reliant nation
- d) a great and dynamics economy
- e) land of bright and full opportunities (FRN 2004)

Considering education as a major instrument for the achievement of these national development objectives for the more it seems the objectives are achieved, the more will the tendency be for the nation to grow. The aims and objectives of national education is consequently aligned with these objectives as follows:

- inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- inculcation of the right types of values and attitude for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- the training of the mind in understanding the world around us and
- the acquisition of appropriate skills and development of mental and physical and social abilities and competencies for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society

The 6-3-3-4 system of education translates to mean the following

1. Six years of primary education
2. Three years of Junior secondary education
3. Three years of Senior secondary education
4. Four years of Tertiary education

Primary Education

With the launching of the Universal Basic Education the government through legislation intends to make primary Education free and compulsory to every individual in the country. This policy however only affects the public schools run by government and not the private and non-governmental organization managed ones.

This phase of education comprises the following;

- a) The junior primary

b) The senior primary

Junior Primary

It makes the starting point of the centrally organized school system, being of three years duration it runs from classes 1-3 and caters for the education of children between six and nine years of age. The third year marks the end of the junior primary phase.

The school year is divided into three equal terms with terminal examination as well as continuous assessment tests in addition to session examination at the end of each year serving as a tool for assessing learners progress. Promotion to the next class or grade is based on performance in these tests.

Senior Primary

This begins with the fourth year of primary education and ends in primary six. It caters for the education of children between the ages 9 and 12 years and marks the senior phase of primary education. In addition to the continuous terminal and sessional examinations, the successful school leaving certificate are issued to the successful sixth year graduands which is a result of their individual continuous assessments as well as the terminal and sessional examinations entrance examination to enable them continue further education at Junior secondary levels if successful.

Subjects taught generally at the primary school level include:- Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Health Science, Drawing, Art and Craft Moral education among others.

Primary schools exist in the country as public and private institutions depending on who manages them. The public ones are government owned while the private ones which usually charge some fees are run by individuals and private organisations. One common feature to both is the curriculum which is planned by Government. Class Teachers are assigned to the various classes.

The general objective of primary education in Nigeria according to National Policy include the following:

- Inculcation of permanent education, numeracy and communication skills.
- Laying sound basis for scientific and reflecting thinking
- Citizenship education as a basis for participation in and contribution to life of the society
- Character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes
- Ability of the child to develop his manipulative skills that will enable him function effectively in the society within limits of his capacity.
- Providing basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation trades and crafts locally.

Secondary Education

The secondary school system admits those who have successfully completed their primary education and have qualified based on the result of the common entrance

examination. It takes for the need of children between the ages of twelve to eighteen years across the country.

Secondary schools equally exist as both public and privately owned institutions across the country and they operate a common curriculum.

This phase of education is equally divided into the junior secondary and senior secondary phases respectively.

Junior Secondary School Level

This phase runs from junior secondary school classes 1-3 spanning three years with each year divided into three equal terms.

It's elaborate curriculum incorporates the Liberal Arts subject. Technical Subjects and Vocational Subjects. The exposure of pupils to these broad area is determine their proficiency and aid the choice of viable and best suited career to their individual competencies. It involves practical work to encourage experience and the subjects taught at this level include-

- ❖ English language
- ❖ Two major Nigeria languages
- ❖ History
- ❖ Literature
- ❖ Religious knowledge
- ❖ Arts and craft
- ❖ Drawing
- ❖ Integrated Science
- ❖ Technical Drawing
- ❖ Introductory Technology shoe making an mending
- ❖ Wood Work
- ❖ Agricultural Science
- ❖ Business education among and mending

The aim of this level of education is to give the learners utilitarian and practice education that is required to transform the country (Akinpelu (1981). Methods of assessment at this level of education is through continuous, terminal as well as sessional and qualifying examinations at the third and final year. The qualifying examination for the award of the Junior Secondary Certificate is organized by the West African Examination Council (WAEC).

Successful junior secondary school graduates may choose to establish their own business depending on skills acquired in the course of training or go for further education.

Senior Secondary Level

This level comprises three years of studies and is divided into three terms per year with similar assessment feature as the Junior Secondary education level at the end of which student sit for the senior secondary school examination organized by both the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO) respectively. Subject taught at this level include:

- English language
- A local language
- Physics
- Biology
- Mathematics
- Religious education
- History
- Literature in English
- Arts and Craft
- Health Science
- Vocational and technical Subject
- Geography
- Economics
- Business studies

The Board aims of this level of Education according to Akinpelu include the following

- Preparation for useful living
- Preparation for Higher Education

Successful candidates at the end choose either to continue their education or go to work

Similarities in Education

1. The organisation of education in both countries is similar as they are both centrally controlled as depicted in the proposal of both countries with central culture as well as some level of autonomy granted the region or states in the administration of primary education
2. The structure of education comprising the 6 years of primary school, 6 years of secondary education and four years of tertiary education in agreement with each other
3. The governments of both countries encourage the existence of privately run schools though they operate these school as laid down by the government with regards only to their curriculum

Dissimilarities in Education

1. While conscious effort is made by government to encourage pre-primary education in South Africa, the same cannot be said to apply to Nigeria.
2. There are great differences in the curriculum of both countries at the levels of secondary education, the Nigeria curriculum content books bulkier than that of South Africa are both the Junior and Senior secondary level. There is equally more freedom to choice of career in the Nigerian context according to the academic process of the individual candidate.
3. There is a conscious effort in South Africa to bring in those that have previously been deprived of education by the apartheid policy of the previous government while it seems nothing is being done by the Nigerian government in this regard.

4. Free and compulsory education is constitutionally guaranteed in South Africa to the level of Junior Secondary education while that is restricted in Nigeria only to the primary school level and is not even reflected in the constitution or the national policy on education.

Conclusion

It is apparent from the comparison and discourse above that despite the peculiar political social and historical experiences of both countries, their educational aspirations are basically similar in line with their technological and socio-economic pursuits in terms of the legislative provisions as well as implementative structure. The peculiarities become more glaring when the rush with which they strive to attain these objectives is given a crummy look, especially the declaration of free and compulsory education at the primary level, the similitude transcend the levels at which the institutional experiences are provided beginning from the pre-primary to the tertiary levels.

The initiative of both governments are excellent graphic recipe that should adequately cater for the education need of these countries. What remains to be seen however is the effective workability and attainment as the problem with good policy document is not in their formulation but effective implementation. So far, the ship of education in both countries have set sail, whether they will ultimately deliver or not remains a question for time and posterity especially considering the chunk of percentage of public funds invested in these endeavours.

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