

THE PLACE OF CURRICULUM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION IN THE REALIZATION OF EDUCATION FOR ALL IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Education is expected to enable an individual acquire appropriate skills, abilities and competencies to live and contribute to the development of his society. Education for all (EFA) is aimed at universalizing basic education and massively reducing illiteracy by the end of the decade. It is ment to be adapted to the needs, culture and circumstances of learners. Curriculum represents the hub around which the entire educational systems revolve. Unless the curriculum is properly planned and implemented, the dreams and hopes of providing for all may remain a mirage. This paper therefore explored the challenges of curriculum planning and implementation and their implications for attaining the goals of EFA. Some recommendations are made for improvement and achievement of the goals of EFA in Nigeria.

Education is the springboard for socio-economic growth and development of every nation. It helps equip individuals with relevant knowledge and skills to live a meaningful life. It prepares an individual to live in a dynamic or constantly changing society and contributes to such changes and constantly promotes the survival, growth and development of the society(Ojeikere, 2010). Education is the most powerful instrument in the world because no nation has ever attained fame or a particular heighth in terms of development without education as its

bedrock, which is engendered by sound educational ideals. According to Durosaro (2006), the best legacy to bequeath to a child is sound education and knowledge continues to enjoy the pride of place as greatest assest to any individual.

Education for All (EFA) is a global commitment led by UNESCO, aiming to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adult by 2015. The movement emanated from the world conference on Education for All in 1990 at Jomtien, Thailand. Then in Darkar

Senegal, in 2000, ten years later, the World Education Forum took stock and found that many countries were found far from reaching that goal. The Dakar framework for action was adopted and many countries affirmed their commitment for achieving Education for All by the year 2015. The goals are as follows:

1. Expand early childhood care and education.
2. Provide free and compulsory primary education for all.
3. Promote learning and life skills for young people and adult.
4. Increase adult literacy by 50 percent.
5. Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015.
6. Improve the quality of education.

Nigeria is one of the E-9 nations of the world that is a signatory to EFA agenda. The Federal Government of Nigeria launched the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 1999 in order to achieve EFA goals especially the universalization of access to education. The UBE programme has the 9-Year curriculum developed aimed at eradicating illiteracy, ignorance and poverty as well as stimulate and accelerate national development, political consciousness and national integration. In other words, the EFA issue brought about the UBE and that has increased the volume of students enrolment.

One major tool for dissemination of knowledge, attitude,

skills and values is curriculum. It is referred to as learning content, activities and structures as experienced by students. It is an educational plan which spells out goals and objectives to be achieved. It is also a systematic body of materials and an organized plan put together to modify the behavior of a person in his/her environment. Offorma (1994) viewed curriculum as an organized knowledge presented to the learner in a school. It is a system of planned action for instruction. It deals with the content of what is taught in schools and the overall process of how that content is to be taught. It is a document, plan, blue print or instructional guide which is used for teaching and learning to bring about positive and desirable change (Afangideh, 2009). It is the vehicle through which education is attained. Doll (1996) refers to it as learning content, activities and structures as experienced by students. He further stated that the curriculum of a school is the formal and informal content and process by which learners gain knowledge and understanding, develop skills and alter attitudes, appreciations and values under the auspices of that school.

Curriculum planning is a guide which suggests steps to be taken in the process of educating young and inexperienced members of any society. It is a process of building, constructing or developing learning experiences for a target group and ensuring that what is

planned leads to the achievement of the desired outcome. According to Mkpa (2009), it is a process of planning learning experiences for a target group taking into considerations their needs, interests, abilities as well as those of the society. It can also be referred as the process of gathering, sorting, selecting, balancing and synthesizing relevant information from sources in order to design those experiences that will assist the learners in attaining the goals of the curriculum (Hass, 1983 cited in Mkpa & Iziagba 2009). The designed learning experiences are expected to assist the learner in the achievement of immediate objectives as well as helping him contribute to the attainment of societal goals. Curriculum planning involves the consideration of goals and objectives, the choice of contents and instructional materials, appropriate methods and the type of evaluation to be used to determine the level of success of the instruction or programme.

Curriculum implementation is the way content is designed and delivered. It includes the structure, organisation, balance, presentation of this content in the classroom. The star in curriculum implementation bid is the teacher who adopts the appropriate teaching methods and resources to guide learning (Ivowi, 2008). In curriculum implementation, the learner interacts with the content and materials through the mediation of the teacher in order to acquire the necessary knowledge, skill, attitudes and abilities. Saylor, Alexander

and Lewis cited in Mkpa (2003) asserted that it is the actual engagement of learners with planned learning opportunities. Offorma (2005) saw curriculum implementation as the transmission of the planned curriculum into operational curriculum. Afangideh (2009) stated that it is the ability to put curriculum (content and instructional guide) into practice in the classroom. Curriculum implementation is a very important aspect of the curriculum process. However, when curriculum is not well implemented, all efforts in the planning are to no avail. It is obvious also that without implementation, there will be no evaluation and students learning will not be guided.

In other words, Education for All (EFA) in Nigeria requires adequate planning and implementation. In planning the curriculum it should be considered that the society that the curriculum serves is changing, therefore the curriculum need to change from time to time considering the societal interest, aspiration, expectations and value system as well as the culture of the people who will be exposed to the curriculum. The school curriculum should be responsive to the kind of behaviour, attitudes and learning experiences which the society expects the school to provide to the children in order to make them functional members of their society. Therefore the nature of the learner (his cultural home background, his personal characteristics) and the learning process requires serious

consideration. The content of instruction embedded in the curriculum must address the interest, needs and aspirations of the learners relative to the expectations of the society. The teacher that will enhance implementation and adapting it to the learners and to the local environment where the school is situated also needs to be considered. The teacher not only influences exactly what is to be learned but also exert control over the learning experiences that go on in the classroom. Teacher's educational background, professional competence and understanding of the demand of the curriculum are necessary because the success or failure of any proposed curriculum depends heavily on them.

Challenges in Curriculum Planning and Implementation

Teacher Preparation

The realization of Education for All (EFA) depends to a great extent on the skills and competencies of the teacher. Teachers are the hub of any educational system (Ukeje 1983 cited in Obi, 2010). The goal of this nation in accordance with the tenets of Education for All is to provide quality basic education to all her citizens and this depends on the teachers who are the schools change agent for satisfying this need. The main objectives of education is to expose the learner to the world as it is and to prepare him to function effectively in it. The realization of this aim depends on the teacher who must be properly trained to ensure the success of

any educational system. Unfortunately, teacher education programme in Nigeria has been considered weak and this constitute a serious threat to the achievement of Education For All. The success of any curriculum venture rests on the implementers and where they are deficient pedagogically, the curriculum goals remain "intentions". A well planned curriculum without competent and dedicated teachers is useless. To teach a new curriculum at all levels of education the teachers or instructors have to receive further training in teaching the new body of knowledge. This is hardly the case in Nigeria. The picture today is that fund is not sufficiently available for the curriculum innovation activities.

Corruption

Corrupt practices in education constitute a serious threat to the successful implementation of EFA curriculum. The educational sector is as corrupt as the public and private sectors but seem to escape critical observation regarding the conduct of educational bureaucrats and administrators. Higher corruption is found to be associated with lower educational spending. The huge money set aside in government budgets for education hardly reach its intended destination. Most government officials assigned with school construction, maintenance and school repairs engage in fraud in public tendering, manipulate data, by pass school mapping to their own interest and make provisions for ghost deliveries which is not in the

interest of our education system. At the end of the day, equipment and instructional materials for learning are said to be inadequate in our schools as well as absence of basic infrastructural facilities for successful implementation of Education For All (EFA). This is because existing infrastructures and facilities in schools have been overstretched due to increase in enrollment as a result of UBE. In other words, government commitment to give priority attention to realization of Education For All is laudable but it is not yet yielding anticipated result due to corrupt practices.

Shortage of Qualified Teachers

For effective operation of Education For All, Nigeria requires quality teachers to be available in sufficient quantity in order to meet the needs of the society. The teacher-pupil ratio is unimaginably high in primary schools and virtually all the subjects offered at the junior secondary Schools. The fact remains that a large number of professionally trained graduate teachers are roaming the streets of our major cities seeking employment. Therefore, the shortage may not necessarily be that of non-availability of such teachers but that they are not employed by government for selfish interest thereby creating artificial scarcity. Most schools do not have enough teachers for the implementation of EFA programme. Despite the fact that more teachers are needed now more than any other period

to render the required services for the achievement of EFA and UBE goals.

Teaching Methods

The success of any instructional process depends on the method of teaching. The knowledge expectations to be derived from efforts at attaining EFA stems from what the school or classroom practice alone can deliver. There is need to consider some more challenging approaches to instructions when embarking on appropriate curriculum planning and implementation for EFA such as those that are learner-centered.

Conclusion

Education is the basic force for the socio-economic and political transformation of society. It enables one to become critically aware of his/her own reality in a manner that leads to effective action upon it. That is why education should be for all. The EFA issue has brought about the UBE and that has increased the volume of students' enrollment. This increase dictates the demand for teachers, infrastructures and improved teaching method, in order to achieve high academic standard. Therefore there is the need for proper curriculum planning and implementation for the realization of EFA goals.

Recommendations

1. Learners of all categories need to be considered in planning and implementation of the new curriculum for achievement of EFA

- goals such as house helps, hawkers, mechanics, house boys, bus conductors etc.
2. Content of instruction that takes care of current societal needs must be considered in the planning of the curriculum.
 3. Teacher preparation should be paramount in the planning and implementation of the new curriculum.
 4. In-service training of teachers is necessary in order to meet up with the demands of the curriculum in achievement of high academic standard.
 5. Measures be taken to restructure teacher education programme for ultimate realization of educational objectives of EFA.
 6. More teachers to be employed to teach at various levels of educational system to meet the needs of expanding enrollment.
 7. Steps should be taken for continuous teaching method review/improvement to make the teaching method current and relevant to contemporary needs.
 8. All schools should be provided with adequate equipment and facilities for teaching and learning.

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