

CURRICULUM: THE PANACEA FOR SUSTAINABLE SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

There is no doubt to the fact that education is an instrument of progressive change and also an agent of sustainable security and development of any nation. Curriculum on its part plays a leading role as a pointer to the direction of how educational change reflects the emerging social issues, reforms and challenges for individual security and national development. It is worthy to note that no meaningful progress can be made and sustained in the security and development of any nation, if issues and activities in education are not adequately and appropriately planned, designed, organized and developed in the curriculum. In an ideal situation, curriculum is the yardstick for ascertaining the standard of education through structured learning experiences that creates and sustains growth, security and development. Hence, curriculum is the panacea to sustainable security and development. This paper has examined educational issues that have bearing to curriculum under the following subheadings; introduction, concept of curriculum, sustainable security and development, curriculum: an educational antidote for national security and development; curriculum development and future security needs of the nation; curriculum development, security and national integration; curriculum implementation: issues and challenges in relationship to security and national development; role of teachers in curriculum implementation for the attainment of sustainable security and development in Nigeria; curriculum and appropriate teaching methods for sustainable development in Nigeria; and last but not the least, conclusion and suggestions were put forward.

Key words: Curriculum, Panacea, Sustainable Security, Development.

Introduction

It is an established truism with a sound, justifiable, reliable and verifiable evidence all over the world that creating and sustaining security, developmental goals, policies and projects can only be realized through adequate and effective utilization of the processes of education. Education is therefore the process and medium through which the acquisition of positive values, attitudes, skills and knowledge reshapes and transform individuals to not only be useful to themselves, but to the entire society (Okam, 2023). Education is presumed to be the yardstick for measuring success of individuals and nations. Education adds value and strengthens creative initiatives and reflective reasoning faculty of people. It also serves as a mechanism of change with progressive ideals for building and sustaining desired outcome.

It is evidently clear that, the strength of any nation in terms of security and social awareness, political and economic transformations, technological advancement and leadership style

largely depends on the quality of education being provided with. Invariably, human security and societal developments are dependent on the level of educational attainment of a nation. Education in this regards is the driving force, the engine room and the centre of attraction that holds and sustains, growth, security and development (Canter, 2023).

On the other hand, failure of an individual or nation to record successes in growth, security and development can simply be attributed to low standard and quality of education being provided. Hardly can there be any meaningful security and development without appropriate and functional education system being put in place. Mamman (2022) asserted that no element of national life is more worthy of attention, support and concern than education, for no element has greater impact on the career, personal growth and happiness of its citizens than education. Also, there is no element that is of greater importance at improving the knowledge for its citizens and at providing leadership to them on which the vitality of democracy, strength and national economy depends on than education.

Education is the best tool that prepares individuals and nations to anticipate events and plan ahead. Never the less, the questions that needs to be addressed here are: How do we design and structure our educational system? What are the prerequisite or criteria that determine educational success and outcome? Invariably, education requires a systematic, organized and developed plan of action which is designed with due consideration to the security needs, interests and all issues at stake for the development of individuals and nation at large. Simple answer to these questions is the curriculum. It is through the curriculum that issues of national interest, policies and goals for social, economic and political transformations are sufficiently addressed (Flinders, 2023). In addition, it is through the curriculum that issues of integrity, commitment, dedication to duty, patriotism and the overall national security interests are enshrined. Hence, this paper has examined curriculum as the panacea which without its effectiveness, the seeds of education as an agent of change for sustainable security and development will fall on a barren ground and will fail to germinate.

Concept of Curriculum, Sustainable Security and Development

The only known and authentic document of plan of action that contains and enshrined all that education entails is the curriculum. Curriculum plans, designs, organizes, develops, promotes and evaluate issues that have direct bearing to education. It contains the objectives, contents, methods and evaluation procedure (Kabir, 2024). Curriculum and education are therefore intertwined, integrated and inseparable with the former complementing the latter. The concept of “curriculum” in education plays a leading role in pointing to the direction of progressive change that reflect the emerging social issues, challenges and educational reforms. It has to do with philosophizing, anticipating, sustaining and clear understanding of the complexities of issues, paradigms for proper planning, security consciousness and national development.

In education, it is the curriculum that determines what happens, how it happens, with what it happens and how to be sure that it has happened. To this end, developing and sustaining any

idea means to look extensively on it thereby bringing out all issues at stake which can be of relevance, effects, problems, challenges and providing way forward as solutions. Wiles & Bondi (2020) expatiated that curriculum document in education provides a framework that helps prepare academics and teachers. It helps them to develop and support the focus for understanding the learners and the society. Curriculum establishes practical experiences that are consistent and thoughtful. This explains why no meaningful progress can be made on sustainable security and development if issues and activities in education are not adequately and appropriately planned, designed, organized and developed in the curriculum.

A lot of issues and challenges need to be addressed in the Nigeria education system in an attempt to promote and sustain growth, security and development. These issues include: the curriculum in terms of planning, organization, development, implementation and evaluation. Others that could supplement the curriculum issues are: teacher quality and adequacy, bureaucracy, rising demand for education, funding, productivity and innovation, human resources and capacity building, technology and skills acquisition, among others (Hall, 2020). These issues combined could help address and promote sustainable growth, development and security.

Curriculum as a Tool for Promotion of National Security and Development

Every curriculum originates from societal needs and aspirations. The curriculum in every society therefore reflects its philosophy, priorities and general mode of operations. These modes of operations are however aggregated through critical engagements among the various shades of interests or beneficiaries of the curriculum (Alan, 2023). In the Nigerian context, curriculum represents society as it clearly spells out what, how and when educational policies, philosophy and goals should be geared towards the objectives of the nation.

The enormity of social, economic and political problems confronted by society daily makes it almost imperative for relevant planning in the curriculum. Plans to develop learners and learning skills with critical thinking and analysis are enshrined in the curriculum. In view of this, curriculum thus becomes a problem solving device which is crucial in a modern society. In a nut-shell, an effective curriculum should contain contents and methods that develops problem solving capabilities in learners which will subsequently help to create and sustains growth, security and development.

Curriculum should be viewed in relation to the changes and provisions needed to ensure that an educational plan or programme remains relevant to the changing needs of the learners and the society. This development according to Oyetunde (2002) in Okam (2023) involves the processes of evaluating the objectives for appropriateness and the adjusting of contents, materials and resources, instructional methods and evaluation strategies as well as learning experiences in an attempt to meet the changing needs and times with the sole aim of sustaining security and national development.

Curriculum Development and the Future Security Needs of the Nation

One needs not to over-stress the dynamic nature of the world we live in. Things and events are never static; they do change with time and space depending on the issues at stake and environment. Over the years, the world has witnessed series of happenings and changes with some progressives and devastating consequences. These progressive changes as well as the catastrophic ones have necessitated man and the society to prepare and make plans to address them (events) in order to survive and not to succumb to, in a complex and rapidly changing society. In an attempt to address these future unforeseen events that occur as a result of the dynamism of the universe, society look upon educational system to provide an effective solution that will deal with these new future events and challenges. Ultimately, in education, it is the curriculum that pre-plans for the future.

To advance on this, Maarooft & Karami (2023) maintained that, the technologically advanced and economically prosperous countries of the world have reached the climax with their ability to utilize, develop and manage the resources in the educational sector effectively. It is believed that education is the key to any meaningful and lasting progress based on facts and scientific evidences. It will therefore be in line to assert here that a number of countries around the globe often organize and reorganize their education system that will in turn enhance their economic and social structures. It is a common expectation that, education system prepare people for the world of work and economic sustainability if meaningful security and development could be achieved.

However, the crux of the matter is on how the education system can respond to deal with these needs and challenges of the future. The approaches and strategies to be drawn in order to meet these needs and challenges can never be overemphasized. Education could help achieve these future transformations through effective curriculum development that will address all possible scenario and outcome. It is the curriculum that will plan, organize, implement and evaluate all thoughts, contents and learning experiences that are developed with the aim of addressing future security challenges and providing possible solutions (Ben-Yunusa, 2008).

It is obviously clear that there is knowledge advancement which leads to extensive changes in the economic, social and political contexts and which comes as a result of adequate planning in the curriculum. These knowledge advancements are the result of previous future plans in the curriculum. Generally, society has high expectations from the government and policy makers (of which curriculum experts are included) to undertake new responsibilities in planning the future. The current technological advancements has exposed the world to the importance of expertise, individual skills and experiences; the education system through curriculum document should continue to design approaches by which future needs and the ongoing security challenges will be met and dealt with.

Curriculum Development, Security and National Integration

The aim of any human society is to have peace and unity. Many countries in the world today including Nigeria are facing enormous degree of conflicts and challenges due to crises in the educational sector. Prior to the 1969 national curriculum conference in which a unified national curriculum document was designed and recommended, each region in the country has its own curriculum, policy and systems of education. The outcome of the conference reaffirm the commitment of the founding fathers that, security, national integration, cohesion and development could easily be realized if there exist a curriculum document in which all education policies, objectives and programmes are unified and accepted by all, for running the educational affairs of the country (Alan, 2023).

There is no doubt in this regard that curriculum has become an agent of unity of Nigeria as a nation. Curriculum has therefore become an instrument of national integration especially in the midst of compounding complexities of educational issues and challenges in Nigeria (Alao, 2024). Curriculum had fostered the spirit of togetherness and mutual tolerance based on common educational goals. In developing the curriculum, all issues at stake that are unique, be it culture, religious beliefs, entrepreneurship skills, citizenship and leadership style were adequately and effectively addressed; taking in to cognizance, the diverse demographic nature of the country. Indeed, curriculum has proved that there is strength in diversity of people and views with common educational goals (Button, 2021). This is simply because the national policy on education as contained in the curriculum is accepted by all Nigerians irrespective of socio-cultural, religious or regional backgrounds.

Curriculum Implementation: Issues and Challenges in Relationship to Security and National Development

The test of any functional and good education system is whether it can lead to growth, sustainable security and development. There is nothing more practical than a good process in curriculum implementation at the class room situation. The importance of a workable education process has long been stressed in the concept of curriculum implementation. This is in line with the fact that, it is through curriculum implementation that ideas and issues planned in the curriculum could be translated in to action and become meaningful and successful for the overall benefit of the society.

Moreover, Rikichi and Bature (2024) asserted that curriculum implementation is the actual engagement of students with planned learning opportunities. It is a crucial stage when in the midst of learning activities, the teacher and students are involved in discussions aimed at promoting learning. The teacher in view of this adopts an appropriate method and resources to guide his/her learning. The students on their part are actively involved in the process of interaction with learning activities and experiences. Alao (2024) maintained that curriculum implementation is the arrangement of the pre-planned curriculum through assessment of the facilities, resources and environment to ensure that the planned curriculum is instructionally

translated without hitches. Hence, the classroom is the teacher's clinic where curriculum implementation finally takes place in the form of lesson delivery on daily basis. Curriculum implementation is therefore a process through which all the relevant curriculum plans and inputs are brought into direct contact with learners through a wide variety of activities so that learning experiences and mastery can be maximized and sustained in the teaching-learning process.

Education system in Nigeria is in dire need of positive transformation especially in the area of curriculum planning and implementation at the class room level. This is basically the responsibility of the curriculum experts and the teacher. While curriculum experts planned and designed the document, it is the teacher who translates the objectives, concepts and topics in the curriculum into activities that are meaningful to the learners and the society (Alan, 2023). One of the developments associated with the Nigeria's curriculum is the place it has accorded activities in the implementation process. Indeed, the Nigeria's education curriculum has advocated for activities in lesson delivery through varieties of teaching approaches. It also recognizes the potentialities for translating the right type of skills and virtues through a unified view of knowledge that requires activities to support learning and nation building.

Despite this provision in the curriculum, especially at this age of knowledge construction, it is an alarming that, in the schools and institutions of learning, knowledge is more received than constructed (Dike, 2024). In other words, other domains that enable learners to use practical skills are almost relegated to the background. This is because, at the implementation level, teachers stick to conventional approaches that attached more importance to receiving and rote learning at the expense of engaging learners in to activities as enshrined in the curriculum. Going by this, no meaningful achievement can be made in addressing the emerging security and developmental challenges in Nigeria if concepts planned in the curriculum are not implemented effectively.

Role of Teachers in Curriculum Implementation for the Attainment of Sustainable Security and Development in Nigeria

One should agree with the notion that the entire education system revolves around a functional curriculum with teachers as the sole implementers. It is worthy to note that in many countries of the world (Nigeria inclusive) no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. This is because, it is the teacher who in the final analysis translates policies in-to practice and programs in to actions. Ukeje (2000) in Okam (2023) asserted that, "the teacher is the most important single factor in any teaching-learning process. Teachers are at the hub of any education system. For upon their number, their quality, their devotion and their effectiveness depend on the success of the system and no education can be stronger than its teachers."

From another perspective, Ben-Yunusa (2008) lamented that, for any curriculum plan or innovation to become fully meaningful, it must be adequately implemented. The way it is implemented influences the degree of success of the education system and the society. "Class

room teacher'', he added, forms the corner stone in curriculum implementation. He or she is the main force and the last person that ensures that any curriculum is implemented well according to specifications. It is the teacher who decides what to teach, at what time, and why some kind of teaching scheme may have been prepared in advance. The teacher interprets the syllabus and breaks it in to lesson plans; decides on what instructional materials to use; the methodology to adopt; the amount of time to spend on each aspect and space to use. Decisions of this nature determine the pace of success that can be attained in any meaningful instructional process, which will eventually be translated in to addressing security needs and national development.

What could then be made out on these assertions is that the teacher factor, with his or her expertise determines the very success of any curriculum implementation and the entire education process. On the other hand, teacher's incompetence poses a major challenge in the realization of educational objectives. Teachers are therefore instrumental in the entire education system and the development of any society and nation.

Moreover, one of the challenges of the educational system and indeed curriculum implementation in Nigeria is the continued practice of assigning classes and or subjects to non-professionals in various schools and institutions of learning. Most of these teachers received little or no training on the ideals of lesson dispensations. It is an alarming issue that many teachers have fell short on the principles of education as established in the curriculum for national development. Abebisu (2021) lamented that these categories of teachers are not committed to the successful implementation of the curricular programme. Ashraf (2022) on his part was prompted to endorse that a professional teacher is an embodiment of academic knowledge in a subject matter or related areas of subject matter, methodological knowledge and good conduct worthy of emulation for training and orientation of children and youths for a better society.

Similarly, Bediako (2023) elaborated further that, the teacher must have a good knowledge of the curriculum and be able to decide the depth to which content should be studied at different levels of education. He reflects further that, it is important that the teacher should know how to reduce the different topics of the curriculum to specific lesson plans. Doing this requires not only the knowledge of the curriculum, but also an understanding of what is involved in the teaching and learning. In other words, teachers need to see themselves as both facilitators and implementers of knowledge and learning. They are both planners and mediators of learning who teaches not only the content, but also the strategies required by the content to make learning meaningful, integrated, transferrable and implementable. In doing so, teaching and learning should be active and not passive. Learners should be allowed to strive in the implementation process, to experienced and interact with the curriculum. On the contrary, failure to implement the contents that have been planned to promote growth, development and security in the curriculum, the curriculum document could lose vitality and the necessary requirement for the actualization of a developed, prosperous and secured Nigeria.

Curriculum and Appropriate Teaching Methods for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

There are a number of methods and techniques devised from time to time to make curriculum dispensation real and effective. The concept “method” refers to the ways, approaches, procedures and the kinds of activities which teachers and students engaged in the interactive process with a view of inducing, inspiring and facilitating learning for the purpose of accomplishing a set of instructional objectives. Method also include the utilization of appropriately selected curriculum materials, contents and learning experiences, motivational strategies, embarkation of educational trips, utilization of evaluative strategies, the application of learning theories and a demonstration of a knowledge of educational psychology in the teaching-learning process (Button, 2021).

With a clearer understanding of this, it will constitute an error to suggest that one method should be strictly adhered to in teaching generally, as each method has its own merits and demerits (Bowen, 2020). A teacher can register a good degree of success in curriculum interaction if he or she employs appropriate methods depending on the situation. A method employed successfully in a given class, under certain conditions, might not be appropriate for teaching another class under the same conditions. Hence, employing the same method of teaching might be found quite unsuitable for teaching the same class under different conditions.

Nevertheless, what should be added here is that, a teacher may not achieve much success in curriculum implementation if he or she restricted his or herself to the employment of only one method while other methods are either excluded or relegated to the background. Although, all methods are relevant, applicable and effective, some methods are more effective than others in some teaching and learning situations. The choice of any method should therefore depend on the needs and aspirations of the learners, the teacher and the teaching-learning situations. In lieu of this, teachers would need to study their students, concepts, topics and objectives, if at all; they desire to be successful in lesson delivery and effective curriculum actualization.

Conclusion

With the massive demand for education among the teeming populace and the decay of educational infrastructure, coupled with the disturbing reality of the dwindling standard and quality of education, insecurity and underdevelopment in Nigeria, the concept of curriculum cannot be dispensed with. This is because; curriculum is the fulcrum upon which everything in the education process revolves around. It is the curriculum that put in place all that is required in education in terms of objectives, policies, concepts and aspirations of the nation as a plan of action which when successfully followed and adhered to will lead to growth, sustainable security and development of people and the society as a whole.

If education really needs to stand the test of time and salvage the daily worsening situations of insecurity, underdevelopment, academic inflation, unemployment, rising cost of living, decay of infrastructural facilities, to mention but just a few; then, a lot needs to be done to the

curriculum to lay concrete values of patriotism, dedication, perseverance, entrepreneurial skills, hard work, and sacrifice to the community and the country. Conclusively, issues of growth, sustainable development and national security can be addressed in the curriculum. Curriculum is therefore the panacea for sustainable security and development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions of the concepts, this paper recommends the following:

1. Government and the relevant educational statutory agencies should as a matter of national interest, work towards addressing the socio-economic, political and security challenges of the nation in the curriculum for a better future Nigeria.
2. Curriculum experts and other relevant stakeholders in education should as a matter of urgency continue to plan and developed the curriculum that is capable of anticipating and actualizing the future pathways to sustainable growth, development and security of our dear country, Nigeria.

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