

---

## Factors Affecting Curriculum Development in Early Childhood Centers in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**OBIAMAKA, ONYEANWUNA(Ph.D)**

Department of Early Childhood/Primary Education Studies  
Faculty of Education  
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,  
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt  
obiamakaonyeanwuna@gmail.com

**NLEMCHI-UCHE ROSEMARY MMACHI**

Department of Educational Management and Administration  
Faculty of Education  
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,  
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt  
mmachinlemchi@gmail.com

---

### Abstract

This paper focused on the factors affecting curriculum development which borders on the issues considered when a curriculum is planned in the education of the children in Rivers state, Nigeria such as socio-cultural, economic and political factors. These factors were highlighted in this paper. It extensively discussed concepts, effects, and challenges which includes the underfunding of the curriculum process and lack of manpower. This paper also x-rays their implications in early childhood curriculum which includes the content of education that integrates the culture of the society in which it operates. Thereafter, solutions were proffered including better curriculum planning and implementation, proper funding of curriculum planning, regular review of the curriculum to meet the dynamism of knowledge from time to time etc. Conclusions were made, with their proper references.

**Keywords:** Socio-cultural, Implementation, Political, Economic, Curriculum, Society

---

### INTRODUCTION

Education has been considered as the key to effective development strategies, and as such most countries like Nigeria has adopted education as the instrument par excellence for achieving national objectives. It is through a well designed and implemented curriculum and instruction. Owing to the critical position of curriculum and instruction in driving national objectives, the political, socio-cultural and economic interest and commitment in curriculum and instruction determine the success or failure of the curriculum objectives. According to Ominyi and

Odoemenam (2011), any nation that decides to gamble with her educational programs stands the risk of under development, poverty and socio-economic destitution.

Arthur (2017) has regarded curriculum as the life wire and the heart of every educational program. It is an embodiment of all the knowledge, skills and attitudes which a nation, through her schools, imparts to her citizens. He also viewed curriculum as the vehicle through which the school strives to achieve educational ends be they, those of the nation, state, local government or even community, which makes curriculum a planned and unplanned experiences which learners receive in the process of their formal or semi-formal education for the purpose of becoming rounded persons who can make meaningful contributions to the betterment of their society and the world. To assert to this, therefore is the blue-print or instrument by which school seeks to translate the hope and values of the society in which it operates into a concrete reality.

However, according to Ogar and Awhen (2015) the term curriculum implementation is the process of putting the curriculum into work for the achievement of the goals for which the curriculum is designed. It is also the translation of the objectives of the curriculum from paper to practice as well as the translation of “theory into practice”, or “proposal into action”, the actual engagement of learners with planned learning opportunities, meaning that the actual carrying-out of societal culture and/or government policies is spelt out in the curriculum.

The development of curriculum and its implementation have a lot of mediating factors which includes the socio-cultural, economic and political factors, which will be taken one by one. The following are the economic factors:

### **Economic Factors**

In the early childhood curriculum, a lot of factors are considered economically in planning the curriculum. This comes in the provision of the child based curriculum where the child is the core and the basis of the curriculum. The government should come in integration with the parents and the caregivers to actually know what are the materials that are needed for instructing the children. It comes in with adequate funding both in human and materials resources. The school curriculum has become estranged from the challenge of corruption in educating children because of government intervention in the school curriculum, for teachers are no longer free to impart a body of academic knowledge to their students and that the school curriculum has become a battleground for zealous campaigners and entrepreneurs keen to promote their message, meanwhile, the content of the curriculum is not determined by its academic weight, but according to whether it promotes particular values about what it means to be a good citizen Lambert and Morgan (2009). To agree to this, it is as a result of the government coming out with any curriculum development according to their periodic tenure, no continuity, just for their pocket interest. The curriculum that is quality in terms of having economic value should cater for the general development of the child in what the child needs to learn with which should be provided by government and the responsible agencies.

Corruption that has eaten deep into the Nigerian politics and society has been a major challenge to effective curriculum implementation. The curriculum planners, do they really look out for the parents to find out their views on the development of curriculum? Also owing to the

economic hardship in the country, do the parents who send their children to early childhood schools provide the much needed instructional materials for which they use to achieve the desired educational objective, looking at the fact that these children will become the leaders of tomorrow when given the proper educational training.

According to Okorafor and Wogu (2017), Nigeria like most countries has adopted education as the instrument par excellence for achieving national objectives which the goal can only be realized through a well designed and implemented curriculum. Owing to the critical position of curriculum in driving sustainable development in early childhood educational centers, commitment in curriculum determines the success or failure of such objectives. It is so when the issues of educational problems today are raised, the strands of thought that comes to peoples' mind are; decline in curriculum standard and deterioration of facilities before any other thing else. These calls into the corruptive actions that have individually and collectively contributed to the collapsing state of educational curriculum in Nigeria. Thereby resulting to poor curriculum implementation and making many children not to have access to education which is their fundamental human right as a spring board for their empowerment. The inability of the people to have access to education systematically rendered them useless, and provides the access into national development asseverations that left the citizens produced from schools with frustration, disgruntled and disenchanted and in addition they manifest those terrible immorality in the forms of militancy and insurgency in the country.

When it is looked into in the Nigerian case, the poor state of the economy of the country does not give room for the allocation of enough resources into the educational sector with regards to curriculum development and implementation hence according to Durojaiye (2017), lack of facilities in our educational sector with regards to the early childhood centers in Nigeria is the major cause of poverty. It is associated with lower levels of economic development, slower economic growth and conflicts from educational institutions to other sectors. Embezzlement of the funds that are allocated to the educational centers is a vice that is literally belittling Nigerian curriculum when compared to other country's educational certificates. It has become a deep-rooted norm in every sector, occurring in different forms, giving the so called "egunje" a local parlance for bribes, being favoured at the expense of a more qualified and experienced educators, nepotism or giving favours in exchange for gratifications in the curriculum planning.

### **Implications**

In the curriculum planning, when there is lack of funds and the menace of corruption in diverting the resources that are allocated to the sector, there is bound to be failure to the provision of the necessary conditions for proper implementation of the curriculum in the early childhood sector. When these failures are recoded, the educational sector will be in shambles because the instructional objectives will not be met. Wale (2011) lamented that Nigeria does not seem to have learned her lessons with education budget share still below expectation at all levels and a drop in the ocean when compared with the numerous challenges confronting the sector. In the same vein, Dike, (2011) questioned, with everybody chasing the shadow of money and with the pittance sum invested yearly on education especially with so much neglect in the early childhood

centers, how could the system produce the critical and creative minds Nigeria needs to guide and manage democratic system and survive as a viable nation? Worse still is the very low implementation of much needed capital projects in the sector. Corruption and the misuse of public funds have yet added to the bastardization of the curriculum and its development and implementation. Classrooms and play pen are ill-equipped, shortage and lack of trained personnel in early childhood education frequent strike and the present fees increase, now characterize the Nigerian early childhood educational sector. The result of which is the production of children that lack moral values, dishonest and a nuisance to the society at large. No matter what the curriculum holds, if the instructional process is not adequately executed, the objectives of the curriculum will remain elusive.

### **Political Factors**

Curriculum is the map that guides education in realizing national objectives. This makes curriculum a very vital issue in instruction and learning also for any enduring political dispensation. The approach adopted by any political dispensation in power, therefore reflects also in its curriculum and instructional program. The unstable political system that characterized Nigerian politics has not been favourable to its curriculum development. Developing good curriculum has not been the problem of Nigeria rather implementing the curriculum adequately during the instructional process.

Curriculum issues either in an explicit or an implicit manner are inextricably linked to current thinking and action on educational concerns and reforms around the world. Experiences of educational reform almost all over the world have shown that curriculum is at the same time a policy and a technical issue, a process and a product, involving a wide range of institutions and actors (Ajibola, 2008). According to Kahne and Middangh (2008), the ultimate goal of curriculum is the production of the type of citizens desired by the society and so Nigeria being in a democratic dispensation, curriculum and instruction should produce citizens who are active and informed voters with tolerance and respect for diversity. Lewis and Schnupp–Harris (2006) noted as the society becomes ever more divers and complex, it is increasingly essential that the youths are educated to be active and informed citizens who understand that tolerance and respect for diversity as key to a successful democracy. Dee (2004) had opined that increased cognitive ability makes it easier to process complex political information, to make decisions and circumvent the various bureaucratic and technological impediments to civic participation.

In Africa and many other post-colonial societies including Nigeria, research evidence suggest that ongoing efforts at deploying education for nation building and national development are mostly driven by political considerations (Woolman, 2001). Hence the 6-3-3-4 educational policy was introduced in 1977. The curriculum of this educational policy sought to introduce a functional technology-based education, which could sustain the economy. Subsequent developments however suggest that the patriotic fervor of the 1960s and 1970s soon whittled away especially with the dominant presence of military autocrats on the political landscape until 1999. In this light, U.S. Department of States (2011) buttressed that for many years Nigeria has been under military rule, during which the educational institutions were plagued with riots and strikes resulting in a decline in quality of the educational system.

The formulation of an educational policy in 1977 was seen by many as a step in the right direction. The policy was tailored towards reconstructing the curriculum “to reflect indigenous traditions, social change and empowerment, which was advocated by African critical theorists from the late 19th century” (Woolman, 2001). However, its implementation soon became a major source of worry as education turned a theatre of ideological combat. The case in point was the “quality versus quantity” education debate among political party leaders of Nigeria’s second republic (1979-83). Little was it realized that quantitative and qualitative education must not remain an idle dream, a vain election promise to collect votes and establish a conspiracy to rule as was evident in the ensuing activities of the politicians (Awokoya, 2001). Candidates campaigned on education platforms they believe will gain voters’ approval. The debate indeed triggered a chain of event which adversely affected the implementation of the educational policy even long after the collapse of the second republic in December 1983.

### **Implications**

Decision making within the education system is in large part a political process, involving a number of key players. Powerful sponsors adept at persuading local school boards, state legislatures, state departments of education and accrediting agencies are central in institutionalizing reforms. Elected leaders and other government officials make decisions within the context of political realities in which they operate. They use their position to influence others and advance particular reforms. The question is, has Nigerian educational policy been capable of providing the needed manpower development to stir that nation’s socio-economic exigencies left by the colonial masters? The non-directional policy issue has been the main bane of the educational system particularly with reference to the curriculum structure. So far Nigeria has had three different systems borne out of incessant changes in policies. It has become a tradition to abandon policy in mid-stream. The effect of this policy somersault cannot be overemphasized.

Most people would agree that education is well-positioned to positively shape the intellects and the ethics of the youth – and consequently strengthen democracy; the ideas of education have been lost in the noisy political battles raging over who should be allowed to influence education. Ogunyemi (2010) noted that politics could do more harm than good to the contents and process of curriculum and instruction if not well handled. Unless national interest are placed above individual or sectional interest, the ultimate goal of promoting the greatest good for the greatest number, which must necessarily underline every enduring political decisions would be lost. Falling standard of education has largely been blamed on the political dispensation in Nigeria. Frequent changes in educational policies and the consequent innovations in the curriculum and instruction have left both teachers and students confused. No nation striving for development can afford to neglect its educational system. This is because the interest and commitment a nation accords to her educational system, greatly affects its curriculum development. Politic can greatly affect and even change educational philosophies, and consequently the curriculum development and instruction. For instance, the “Race to the Top” bill for educational funding and development from the United States Government has lead her

states to rewriting their educational philosophies to earn funding to implement the new strategies based on the program's requirement (New Jersey Board of Education, 2010).

Education institutions are still in the process of recuperation from the neglect of former governments. Available evidence points to the Nigerian curriculum development process as "a site of struggle" in post-independence Nigeria. In particular, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed the introduction of several policies which many Nigerians regarded as too political (Awokoya, 1981; Ogunyemi, 1998). For instance, government proposed to equalize educational opportunities through such measures like education of the gifted, education of women, and nomadic education. However, the desperation with which these policies were introduced and the passion with which they were equally resisted in some parts of the country pointed to how much the conscious segments of the Nigerian public were prepared to sacrifice national interests for personal or sectional gains. Here, Nigeria saw an extensive manifestation of conflicting interests: "professionals versus bureaucratic agendas, political interests versus educational processes and outcomes, social versus political needs, and so on" (Ogunyemi, 2010).

The curriculum planning and implementation is not supposed to be politicized, why? Politics generally and especially in Nigeria involves so many issues which could arise from sectionalism to tribalism and hence becomes so complicated in taking decisions which will not be beneficial to the entire educational system. Besides, as rightly claimed by Cookey (2002) citizens are made, not born and citizenship can be taught. Thus the understanding and practice of citizenship among any nation is a true measure of such nation's educational system. From the global perspective, economic and social developments are increasingly driven by the advancement and application of knowledge. No doubt Nigerian government regards education as instrument par excellence for effecting national development. Her philosophy on education is based on development of individuals into a sound and effective citizen and the provision of equal educational opportunities for all citizens (U.S. Department of States, 2011; Federal Republic of Nigeria-FRN, 2004). This means that the citizens will not be sound and effective citizens.

The educational programs to achieve the National desired goals is usually transformed and driven through curriculum and instruction. When this is not realized, what will be the effect of our educational institutions that will eventually produce the future leaders of tomorrow? This will bring about poor leaders which will actually distort the leadership structure and brings about poor decisions making as they are not well grounded in management and leadership roles.

### **Socio-Cultural Factors**

In Nigeria and generally, curriculum development in the schools is greatly influenced by the culture in which the school situates. It is a process and a flow from theory to practice and the feed of curriculum stands on the trench hold of becoming ordered. Every culture has different ideas about what young children suppose to know. It is also very important that even young children are learning about the world in which they live and the people they meet. From a very young age, they are beginning to build the cultural layers which will give them knowledge and understanding. When we sing songs to babies, they are learning about the rhymes and rhythms of their culture, the language of their culture, whether people are angry with them or happy about

them. They are beginning to identify shapes and patterns, and to understand about objects moving and staying still

Also these programmes of activities involve actual children's activities on practical experiences which are wide ranging and would include group activities such as singing, theatre and cultural activities. It is important to note that in all cases, the programme of activities is an integral part of the curriculum, complementing the programme of studies. The activities are expected to mould the character of the children and assist in their personal development (Ovwata, 2000).

Although curriculum is seen as response to social forces and expectations for the schools in cultural context, the process of curriculum development has remained constant. Thus, curriculum development is oriented towards providing school programs and is basically a plan of structuring the environment to coordinate in an orderly manner the element of time, space, materials, equipment, personnel and language.

Culture is maintained or modified through education by way of curriculum development. This is because where educational institutions discharge their duties well; they influence the total life of the society. This is the society's culture; and curriculum is a reflection of what people in the society feel, believe and do. What people feel, believe and do is their culture. Also, it is believed that curriculum is an inevitable aspect of education. Therefore, there is no way in which culture can exist without some curriculum, particularly in formal setting in education. Formal education demands the posing of some simple but fundamental questions such as "What? To whom? When? and How?". These are curriculum questions. In order to answer these questions, the curriculum planner must be "compelled to survey and interpret the nature of his own society, its basic stable values and the areas in which it is changing. He must then be very familiar with the culture of the society being served.

The fundamental aspects of culture include beliefs, values, routines and customs which are considered in curriculum planning (Itedjere, 1993). Every culture has some beliefs which are accepted as true. These beliefs are sometimes called superstitious beliefs because of lack of empirical knowledge or lack of scientific proof. These beliefs are valued and so are accepted by majority of people in the community. For instance, the Isoko people of Delta State, Nigeria, believe that when an owl perches on the roof of a house, it portrays death. Also, the Yoruba believe that if a child sits at the entrance to a room when it is raining, thunder would strike the child. Also, among the Urhobos of Delta State, Nigeria, people believe that when you itch your right palm, it shows you will receive a gift or lose money. These beliefs are accepted by majority of the people in these societies or communities but the basis of commitment on these beliefs varies from individual to individual. These are some beliefs, which are accepted by individuals irrespective of the general beliefs of the community. Such beliefs that are accepted by individuals are referred to as private beliefs as against the general beliefs which are regarded as declared beliefs held by a majority of the people in the community.

Values are those aspects of cultural practices, actions or objects that are valued in high esteem in the society. The values of a society are also those aspects of the culture that society wants to preserve because they are traditionally valued and they want to pass it from generation to

generation. The values of the society are the aspect of the culture, which is needed in the society. These aspects of the culture that are valued should be passed from generation to generation so as to maintain a particular valid aspect of the culture. For instance, every society expects adults to get married for procreation to keep the society moving. An individual in the society being a man is expected to marry a woman for that reason unlike their counterparts in the western countries that are homosexuals and do not place value on procreation. Values and judgments are not only important elements of culture but they are also relevant to modern society.

Routines and customs are also very important aspects of culture. Arthur (2017) explained that three concepts are interrelated - recipes, routines and customs. Recipes are the ideas and the understanding about how things should be done as prescribed by the culture in question. For instance, different societies have different ways prescribed by their culture in performing naming, burial, marriage ceremonies and so on. The above mentioned ceremonies are performed differently by Isoko, Urhobo and Ijaws of Delta State. The Hausa, Yorubas and Igbos perform theirs differently as no two societies are identical in terms of the culture of the people. Routines and customs refer to the actual doings and the regularities of those cultural actions or elements. Customs serve as recipes and routines to which people regularly resort for recurring purposes. From the foregoing, it seems obvious that curriculum has (and must have) a firm basis on culture. Indeed, culture is the substance of education. Culture is to education what current is to electricity. Any society whose education (and so its curriculum) is not based on its culture is in danger of being unrooted and estranged by the social institution on which it should depend for its survival.

**The Social Institution** is the school. In discharging its duties, the school (including all categories of educational institutions) must pay special attention to the different classes of culture; and educators themselves must be familiar with how culture is classified. In effect, culture traits were understood as representing one of a series of stages of mental and moral progress culminating in the rational society of industrializing. To agree with the issues above, the usefulness of curriculum to the school, community and individuals cannot be over emphasized, hence the question that comes to mind therefore is how effective is this curriculum planning and implementation in Nigeria? How does the curriculum planner go about the process and what are the factors that will affect the development of curriculum to regards to the socio-cultural factors being taken into account. These factors for example like the culture of a community, does it really affect this curriculum development having the fact that are tied to the norms and values of the society and hence affect the development of morals which are incorporated in the curriculum of the schools. It is based on these that the following social institutions are discussed.

**The Home** is still the main institution affecting the life and growth of the child. The family exerts significant influence on the social, emotional and moral development of the child as they are the first educators of their children. His personality and values are affected by the family. In planning any relevant curriculum for the learners, the planner should be familiar with the family and home conditions of the learner. The intellectual climate of the home and attitudes of the

parents towards education affects the individual's behaviour and accomplishment in schools. The family at close range reveals much information for a more complete and sympathetic understanding of children. From the child's earliest age, the feelings of oneness, identification with the family group, is naturally instilled. Even before he begins the first transition class from home to school at the kindergarten, many of his patterns of living, of conduct, of emotions and attitudes, and of ideals are already set. In one family, swift and sure obedience is absolutely required; in another home it is understood that the occupation of the son or the daughter shall be decided by the parents; in still another, much freedom and choice may be permitted the child. Neatness and cleanliness in the home are likely to be reflected in the appearance and dress of the child; and the language habits of the parents appear in marked form in their children. Respect for and obedience to adults, respect for the property and rights of others, race prejudice, social stratification-these are but a few of the mores and attitudes that the child absorbs more frequently and fundamentally outside school walls than within them. The Nigerian family is changing in its size, its stability, its mobility, and its neighbourhood culture. Several factors are causing these changes and are putting more pressures on children and youth. One factor is the growing complexity of life in a modern world of automation. Another is the rapid urbanization of our society, which takes children from a simpler rural situation into a more tense and complex urban style of living. Another factor is the tremendous problem of maintaining satisfactory family living in slum and low-income city areas and child care are often centered around family life.

**The Church/Mosque** are public worship centers for Christians and Moslems respectively. However, apart from these two worship centers where people go to worship God in order to satisfy their spiritual needs, there are other worship centers in the society to satisfy the spiritual needs of the people. Religion itself is a social institution. Although religion is a human is a human society it is not necessarily accepted by everyone and even those who accept religion do not accept it in the same degree. The major role of the church and the mosque is in moulding the character of the child and the people in general. Similarly, the church and the mosque are also agencies of intellectual development in the society. The Sunday schools and adult literacy classes introduced in churches have helped to teach the people how to read, interpret and even write out verses in the bible and other learned works. The Islamic religion also encourages the art of reading, interpreting and writing out short verses in the Sura. The church and the mosque teach the virtue of obedience to the law of God Almighty and the constitutional laws of the society. This is because both religions teach peace in the society. There are rules in these societies that could bring peace. Such rules include 'love your neighbour as yourself', 'do unto others, as you would want them to do unto you'. These are two golden rules that could bring peace to the society because if you love your neighbour as yourself, you will not kill, steal, bear false witness against your neighbour, and so on. Although, clashes and conflicts have been recorded between these two religions in Nigeria, recently they still play a very significant role in socialization of the child and the education of the child in the society which is a factor to be considered in the curriculum planning.

## **Implications**

Emphasis in the curriculum is placed on the children's needs and moral responsibility to search for and recognize the truth which is found in the culture of the environment where the school is situated. Such recognition must inevitably lead the children to apply that truth in all aspects of their lives such as the spirituality in the religion. This also implies that curriculum must encourage the children to find principles that can serve as the basis for their lives and culture. These principles will serve as a driving force for their decisions and actions in future which the failure in doing this will produce out the children that are involved in the social vices in the society such as stealing, killing, cultism, dishonesty etc.

Therefore, the cultural bases of curriculum should be also examined and the influence it has on culture and curriculum development in Nigerian early childhood education is very important. The school does not work in a vacuum, but has to operate in co-operation with the home, church and all other agencies of society that influence the development of the child. One of the primary tasks of the caregiver is to use the culture and school curriculum in helping the children to make satisfactory adjustments as regards curriculum components and programs designed. In the absence of this, there will be lack of cultural awareness and our culture will gradually and eventually die.

## **The Implication of Curriculum Development in the Early Childhood Centers**

The content of education includes those forms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which motivate and control conduct of children in the school community. The context of the curriculum contains many different types of people who are all important for example, the parents who are the first educators of their children. Early childhood educators need a good understanding of the children and how they develop and learn. In this way they need exchange of ideas which will help them to work well together in a spirit of trust and genuine exchange of information and knowledge.

The curriculum when it is developed and well implemented encourages the self-esteem. The value of the child is enhanced by the adult. It creates a learning environment where the children are valued and appreciated, with this a positive self-image is built, where everyone gains, both the parents, the child and the early childhood worker. It also helps the children to learn from things going badly as well as from things going well. This helps the children to be highly motivated and interested in learning.

In the early childhood centers, space when provided for learning makes it safe and predictable environment is enhanced. This will help the children to sort out differences in what is allowed and what is not allowed for example, if a child is allowed to sit on the tables, others should too, otherwise it leads to boundary testing by children. So a safe environment removes rigidity and improves exploration, responsibility and cooperation. Certain standards and activities for the children are definitely fixed and rigidly required. Through the curriculum, the growing child seeks escape from a restricted home environment, the routine of everyday life, or the authority of agencies that he thinks are too cramping or dominant.

The schools take the initiative in organizing group activity for children in their out-of-school life and at other times schools are given the opportunity to participate under the

leadership of others interested in improving the quality of living in a particular community. In either situation, the school has a significant contribution to make by creating a good climate for child society to flourish. The Parents Teacher Association in various communities provides funds for the services of a recreation and sometimes school facilities and equipment which are used in schools. With the curriculum, it fosters the good relationship between principals and P.T.A. leaders assure continuity of experience for children but no duplication of the usual in-school activities. There are but a sampling of the variety of programs and various agencies in the community provided for children. In all of them, the school must play an important role if it is to meet its responsibility adequately. Infact, a school is part of the structure of community life. It understands its responsibility for fostering the best interests of the community, looks at its children in the context of their families, sees its children in terms of their cultural environments and helps its children to understand their world. It also demonstrates through living with children the values it hopes to foster and recognizes that human relations are learned.

The child-centered curriculum which emerged from the extensive research carried on in the early twentieth century by John Dewey became the spur to the establishment of a number of kindergarten schools committed to the child centered philosophy. It brought about the views and commitment which became committed to whole-heartedly to the new experimental approach in the education of children, which vitally influenced the child centered philosophy. Nailed-down furniture began to be replaced by movable furniture; learning by doing rather than passive absorption of subject matter assumed new significance. First-hand experiences in neighbourhood and community enlarged the book-bound world of the child.

The “activity program”, the “unit of work”, the recognition of need for using and exploring many media for self-discovery and self-direction became common characteristics of programs founded upon the new philosophy. Most of all, a new respect for the child, a new freedom of action, were incorporated into curriculum building in the child-centered school. And, of course, teachers with the “new look” became the objective of teacher-education institutions. This was the period of experimental teacher-education programs, focusing upon the personal development of the students’ as well as her professional equipment. The imaginative, interest-shifting, neighbourhood play group of early childhood was based primarily on individual activity. Also, in addition to their steadfastness to their adopted principles, the curriculum must teach children to remain open to the investigation of new principles for example, in the area of play way method and Montessori which when adopted becomes a driving force in the achievement of the learning objectives.

### **Challenges of Curriculum Implementation on Nigeria**

The curriculum development and planning of course like every other discipline has its own challenges and according to Mkandawire (2010), it is very difficult to implement a curriculum successfully if the educational system has limited funding capacities. Under funding raise a lot of other implications on the part of curriculum. The economy of a nation will determine the success of curriculum implementation. In developing countries, like Nigeria the numbers of children in early childhood centers and teachers have kept on rising but government money available for

education is less. Since manpower in the education sector has increased, the bulk of money allocated to education is absorbed by salaries of both teachers and ghost workers, leaving very little for curriculum planners in the area of early childhood education and education at large. And also teaching materials, books, in-service training, monitoring and other things needed for the smooth implementation of the curriculum are insufficient. In the absence of teaching and learning materials, the teaching and learning processes will be hampered and if standard officers do not go out to evaluate, it will be difficult to know whether the curriculum is being effectively implemented or not. Although the government introduced free education for the entire primary schools of learning to cushion the illiteracy level, the move has had little impact as most schools are still experiencing liquidity problems as a result of corruption in the system. This has had a negative effect on curriculum implementation.

In Nigeria, poor curriculum implementation is a major problem. There is a great disparity between policies formulated by government and the actual implementation of these policies. Policy makers often vary from policy implementers, hence, this gap becomes a problem in course of implementation. Arthur (2016) supported that the quality of educational curriculum in any country is one of the major keys to sustainable national development. He sees curriculum as a setoff courses, course work and topics, offered in schools. It is the aggregate of subjects/courses and topics that are being or should be offered in schools.

To add to the above assertion, it is not just restricted to the implementation phase, but also curriculum development in general. Having proper curriculum makes for a sound educational and academic sector because the children will be taught with respect to recent happenings and developments. However, Nigeria is laddened by a number of problems when curriculum implementation is concerned. Some of its challenges in the implementation of curriculum in Nigeria are as follows:

**Lack of teacher participation in decision making and curriculum planning:** The teacher has a crucial role to play in the success of any educational programme in the nation and as such should be in the center and take an active part in the planning and development of the curriculum. When teachers are not actively involved in the planning of the curriculum, a problem builds up since it is these teachers that interact with the children, know what they need and in what proportion, and actually make use of the curriculum.

**Lack of sufficient finance:** Curriculum implementation is greatly drawn back by the lack of finance because workshops and seminars that are necessary to sensitize teachers and educationists across the country cost a lot of money. Hence the teachers are not properly tutored on every corner of the curriculum.

**Frequent turnover of teachers:** The frequent turnover of teachers is caused by so many factors. One factor that plays a primary role is the excessive number of temporary and or part time teachers. For example, Youth Corpers are posted to the early childhood centers of the public schools across the country. They teach for less than a year and a new set of core members

replace them. There is no time to settle into the system and work with the curriculum properly. Also, a host of these temporary teachers are usually not dedicated, while others don't have the zeal and skill to teach the children.

**Policy changes:** Another factor that affects curriculum development is the frequent changes in educational policies. An example is the universal primary education (UPE) which was launched in 1976 to ensure that every child who had attained such age that he or she is ripe for school, should be enrolled in school. Then how effective has it been?

**Rapid increase in knowledge:** The world is growing at a tremendous rate when knowledge is concerned. Due to the development of science and technology, it become more tasking for the curriculum development process as knowledge becomes obsolete quickly hence the need for constant review for the curriculum, the method and materials of instruction. It therefore becomes difficult to stay in line with these continuous changes. For example, we were used to rote learning for the kindergarten where as there is an advanced method of teaching in Montessori and play way method

**Review when needed:** The curriculum in Nigeria is only reviewed when there is an obvious problem observed. This is wrong, and the curriculum should be constantly reviewed to keep the country in line with the rest of the world as knowledge is dynamic.

**Poor ICT:** The world is developing at a rapid rate and therefore, even when the curriculum is updated, a new problem of meeting the requirements of the new elements added to the curriculum develops. Since the world is advancing technologically, the new trend of curriculum require children to be familiar with computers and toys and make use of them.

**Lack of trained and well informed early childhood specialists:** you cannot give what you do not have. Hence, when the teachers and facilitators of the curriculum do not have the required skill level to teach correctly in accordance with the growing technology. Then the children cannot learn. This makes the curriculum useless.

**Inflexibility due to cultural differences:** the inflexibility of curriculum in Nigeria makes it difficult for teachers and children to properly optimize them. Different regions have different cultures and when the curriculum cannot work in any of them, a problem starts up as they varies.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the curriculum development when not well made and implemented in the educational system of early childhood and Nigerian society at a large is condemnable as it does not leave any positive impressions on the economic, social and political of the country. Meaning that corruption in the implementation of curriculum process of the children is more dreaded and dangerous as it short changes members of the society in the provision of an essential social services, thereby placing Nigeria's educational system of the children into areas where they

cannot make sustainable contributions to the development of the Nigerian as a whole. Forgetting the fact that the school curriculum is the vehicle for arranging the introduction of coherent educational encounters and experiences for young people to understand that ‘the curriculum’ and its components should be uncorrupted, more complicated than partly because it passes through the hands (and heads) of teachers and young people. Therefore, emphasis should be universally agreed upon the involvement of families, culture, teachers, curriculum experts (planners) and stakeholders of the educational system in the planning of the curriculum in order to make it a great success as the saying goes that children of today are the future leaders of tomorrow.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is a need for a way out from the above challenges and hence, the following recommendations were made:

1. consultation of stakeholders like teachers and parents should be used as a tool for decision making in the areas of funding;
2. ethical and moral principles should be used as guides for actions by the curriculum planners;
3. the curriculum in the early childhood centers should not be expert based but rather it should be child centered
4. there should be creative and disciplined initiatives for the common good of the children in the curriculum;
5. The relevant agencies in the curriculum planning should be made to incorporate the task of monitoring of the centers to the administrative task. With this heavy monitoring, implementation of the curriculum becomes an easy task and should not be abandoned half way.
6. Caregivers and minders of the early childhood centers should be sufficiently motivated for noble role, hence be paid well which will motivate them to implement the curriculum to the letter as the learning objectives will be achieved. To get education right we must attract the best brains and pay them adequately. Meaning that Government should make teaching attractive so that people with a passion to teach will come on board.
7. There should be a review of the curriculum to meet contemporary need of the society, with the provision of more qualified and competent teachers to meet the challenges of the envisaged curriculum with improved innovation and technology.
8. Both Infrastructure and Curriculum should be adequately funded as we cannot have a good educational system without infrastructure.
9. Caregivers and teachers of early childhood centers should be employed based on qualification not on connection, because a lot of unqualified children teachers roam our early childhood centers because of corruption, Nepotism and Politics influence. A poor teacher can't produce good graduates. Therefore, nationwide screening be conducted to wipe out quack lecturers in all tertiary institutions.
10. There should be opportunities for training and retraining to upgrade the knowledge of caregivers.

11. Cultural differences should be integrated in the curriculum development of the children as there is cultural diversity amongst different tribes of Nigeria as well as the family value system.
12. The Parents' Teachers Association and various community agencies should also be involved in the curriculum development.

## REFERENCES

- Arthur E. (2017). *Problems and Prospects of Curriculum Implementation in Nigeria*. Retrieved from, 2016. <https://infoguidenigeria.com>. 1/11/2017
- Awokoya, S. O. (2001). Futuristic perspectives of the quantity and quality of Nigerian education. *Education and Development*.1(2), 80-89.
- Cookey, S. J. (2002). Keynote Address. In A. Adaralegbe (Ed) *A philosophy for Nigeria education*. Ibadan: Heinemann education Books (Nig.) Ltd xxi – xxxii
- Dike, V. (2011). *The state of education in Nigeria and the health of the nation*. Owerri. Africa Economic Analysis Publishers.
- Durojaiye F. (2017). *Corruption and Education in Nigeria*. Retrieved from sunnewsonline.com, on 31/10/17.
- Itedjere P. O. (1993). *Society, Culture and Education*. Warri: Klass publishers.
- Kahne, J., & Middaugh, E. (2008). High quality civic education: what is it and who gets it? *Social Education*, 72 (1) 34 –39.
- Lambert D, Morgan J. (2009). *Corrupting the Curriculum? The Case of Geography*: London review of education, 2009, 7(2). Retrieved from [www.ingentacooect.com](http://www.ingentacooect.com). 1/11/2017.
- Lewis, G. & Schnupp-Harris, N. (2006). *The influence of politics on education and religion: How much is Too much?* Forum on Public Policy Ibadan: Evans Brothers Nigeria Limited.
- Mkandawire S.B. *Challenges of curriculum implementation in learning institutions*. Retrieved from, 2010, <https://site we.wordpress.com>. 2/11/2017.
- New Jersey Board of Education (2010). *State of New Jersey*. <http://www.nj.gov/education/news/2010/060/rttt.htm> Retrieved 25 September, 2018.
- Ogar O. E.; Awhen O.F. (2015). Teachers Perceived Problems of Curriculum Implementation in Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State of Nigeria: *Journal of Education and Practice*, 2015, 6(19). ISSN 2222-1735. Retrieved from [www.iisite.org](http://www.iisite.org). 2/11/2017
- Ogunu, M. (2000) Introduction to educational management. Benin City: Mabogun Publishers
- Ogunyemi, B. (2010) Curriculum politics in the changing fortunes of Nigerian Social Studies. *International Journal of Education* 2 (2) [www.Macrothink.Org/ije](http://www.Macrothink.Org/ije).
- Ogunyemi, B. (2015). Social studies curriculum under the 6-3-3-4 system: Conceptual and implementation issues revisited. *Nigerian Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Special, 88-95.
- Okorafor A.O., Okorafor P.N, Wogu S.N. (2017). *Effects of Nigerian Political Dispensation on Curriculum and Instruction at the Tertiary Level*. Retrieved from, 2017. <https://www.researchgate.net> on 24/10/2017.
- Ominyi, C. N. & Odoemenam I. R. (2011). Developing teacher education curriculum for quality teacher production. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 18 (3) 99 –106.
- Ovwata B. B. (2000). *A Modern Sociology of Education*. (2nd Ed.) Warri, COEWA Publishers.
- U. S. Department of States (2011). *Nigerian education profile*. <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/>Retrieved 25 September, 2011
- Wale, S. (2011). *In search of political agenda for education*. <http://www.csacefa.org/index.php>retrieved 25 September, 2011
- Woolman, D. C. (2001) Educational reconstruction and Post-Colonial curriculum development: A comparative study of four African countries. *International Education Journal*2 (5) 27 –46.