

Implementation Of the Revised 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) In the Northcentral Nigeria: A Monitor of Benue State

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Abstract: *This study was designed to monitor the Revised 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) with the aim of establishing the level of implementation in terms of the level of awareness, the accessibility to and the training on the use of the 9-Year BEC and the Teachers' Guide (TG). The study is of descriptive survey. One Official each from the State Ministry of Education, (SMOE), and the State Universal Basic Education Board, (SUBEB); and Head Teachers of 8 Basic Education Schools in one Local Government Area each of the three Senatorial Districts/Zones in Benue State were sampled for the study. From the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that on-the-job trainings should be organized for the teachers of in the schools to update their knowledge on the implementation of the Revised 9-Year BEC and there is need for adequate provisions of the Curricula, TG and relevant textbooks.*

Keywords: *Implementation, Revised 9-Year BEC, Curricula, Teachers' Guides.*

I. Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) positioned Universal Primary Education (UPE) as one of the eight major goals. As the second goal of the MDGs, it anticipates achieving universal primary education by 2015. It stipulates that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. The goal also recommends eliminating disparity in primary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education not later than 2015. The inclusion of primary education in the MDGs must have been prompted by the 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (EFA), as well as the New Delhi Declaration (1991), which requires strict efforts by the E-9 countries (nine countries of the world with the largest concentration of illiterate adults) to drastically reduce illiteracy within the shortest possible time frame. It is also a demonstration of commitment to the Durban statement of commitment (1998) and Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) Decade of Education for Africa (1997-2006), which also requires African states to generalize access to quality basic education as a keystone for sustainable socio-economic (FRN 2000).

The introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) brought remarkable change in classroom management techniques, supervision and curriculum development in Nigeria (Ayo & Adebisi, 2008; Ajibola, 2008), as cited in (Moyinoluwa, 2015). However, following the decision of the Federal Government to introduce UBE programme, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), re-structured and re-aligned all extant Primary and Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) curricula into a 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum for implementation in Nigerian Schools. (FRN, 2004).

The implementation of the 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum which according to Obioma (2012), was developed for the attainment of Education for All (EFA) goals, the critical targets of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), commenced nationwide in September 2008 in Primary one and Junior Secondary one (JSS 1) respectively. The Curriculum produced its first batch of JSS graduates in 2011 and the first set of the beneficiaries at the Primary school level entered the Junior Secondary Schools in 2014. This curriculum has the following subjects: Mathematics, English, Basic Science and Technology and Social Studies as core subjects in the Primary Schools. Other subjects are Christian Religion Studies, Islamic Studies, and Home Economics.

The philosophy of the 9-year Basic Education Curriculum is centered on the understanding that every learner who has gone through the 9 years of basic education should have acquired appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life-skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values required for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning as a basis for scientific and reflective thinking. It is pertinent to highlight the three components of the curriculum according to the corresponding levels and the age of the pupils and students from primary 1-3, 4-6 and JS 1-3. The 9 years Basic Education Curriculum (Basic 1-9) has three components namely:

- Lower Basic Education Curriculum for primary 1-3 (age 6-8 years)
- Middle Basic Education Curriculum for primary 4-6 (age 9-11)
- Upper Basic Education Curriculum of Junior Secondary School (JSS) 1-3 (age 12-14)

- Thus, the framework of the Basic Education Curriculum reflects the following:
- The curriculum is designed to properly target pupils and students needs and interests to make provision for appropriate core and elective subjects for a well rounded education at the different age levels
- Implementation of the 9 year Basic Education Curriculum commenced concurrently in primary 1 and JS1 in September 2008 nationwide. It is noteworthy that primary 2-6 and JS 2-3 in 2008/2009 school year continued to use the existing Primary and Junior Secondary Curricula. The old curricula have been gradually and systematically phased out.
- The Lower and Middle Basic Education Curricula (for primary 1-6) will be in full use by the year 2014 and the Upper Basic Education Curriculum (for JSS 1-3) was achieved by the year 2011
- Every child is expected to complete primary 6 before being placed in Junior Secondary School, (FRN, 2008).

However, within the period the curriculum has been implemented some lapses were observed particularly in the number of subjects. This and other factors led to the review of the curriculum. The new curriculum is aimed at improving upon the existing one and it is geared towards meeting the social dynamics of Nigeria, growth in science and technology and making up for the lapses that may have been observed in the existing curriculum. Reviews are always necessitated by changes in the society it serves and in line with global best practices. Upon the feedback on the implementation of the 9-Year BEC, the National Council on Education (NCE) in 2010 mandated the NERDC to carry out a comprehensive review and restructure of the 2007 Basic Education Curriculum for more effective curriculum delivery. (NERDC, 2013b).

The NERDC revised and restructured the 9-Year BEC into 10 teachable, functional and practical oriented subjects that eliminated redundancy without compromising the quality of education received by learners and in line with the global best practices which has been approved by the NCE. The Council also developed the Teachers' Guides (TG) in each of the Subjects, as well as trained master trainers drawn from each of the 36 States and the FCT. Copies of the Revised 9-Year BEC as well as the Teachers' Guides were then distributed to all the States and the FCT.

According to Obioma (2012), in the process of the review, particular efforts have been made to further reduce the overload within and across subjects without compromising depth, appropriateness and interrelatedness of the curricula contents. The curriculum provided for the contents, performance objectives, and activities for both teachers and learners, teaching and learning materials and evaluation guides. In order to ensure the availability of critical mass of teachers with relevant strategies and uniform techniques for effective teaching of the contents of the Revised 9-Year BEC for the full and smooth take-off of the BEC, NERDC has trained Master Trainers for each of the 36 states and the FCT on the use of the Revised 9-Year BEC and its Teachers' Guides (TG). The states and FCT are then expected to cascade the training to other teachers using the master trainers. As part of the strategies to ensuring full compliance to the implementation plan, NERDC carried out a nationwide monitoring of the implementation of the Revised 9-Year BEC. It is in the light of the foregoing that this study was designed to follow up the monitor of the Revised 9-Year BEC with the aim of establishing the level of implementation as well as its appropriateness in terms of resources availability.

1.1 The Subjects in the Revised 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum

The Revised 9-Year BEC which has been approved by the NCE comprised the following subjects: English language, Mathematics, Basic Science and Technology, Religion and National Values Education, Cultural and Creative Arts, Business Studies, Nigerian languages, Pre-Vocational Studies, French and Arabic presented in the table below.

Table 1 Basic Education Subjects by Level and Status

BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM LEVELS	CORE/COMPULSORY SUBJECTS
LOWER BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM (Primary 1 – 3)	1. English Studies 2. Mathematics 3. One major Nigerian Language (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba) 4. Basic Science and Technology: - Basic Science - Basic Technology - Information Technology -Physical & Health Education (PHE) 5. Religion and National Values Education: -Social Studies -Civic Education -Religious Studies (CRS/IRK) - Security Education 6. Cultural & Creative Arts (CCA) 7. Arabic Studies (Optional)

<p>MIDDLE BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM (Primary 4 – 6)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. English Studies 2. Mathematics 3. One major Nigerian Language (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba) 4. Basic Science and Technology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Basic Science -Basic Technology -Information Technology -Physical & Health Education (PHE) 5. Pre-Vocational Studies (PVS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Agriculture -Home Economics -Entrepreneurship Education 6. Religion and National Values Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social Studies -Civic Education -Security Education -Religious Studies (CRS/IRK) 7. Cultural & Creative Arts (CCA) 8. French Language 9. Arabic Studies (Optional)
<p>UPPER BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM (JSS 1 – 3)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. English Studies 2. Mathematics 3. One Nigerian Language (Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba) 4. Basic Science & Technology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Basic Science -Basic Technology -Information Technology -Physical & Health Education (PHE) 5. Prevocational Studies (PVS): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Agriculture -Home Economics -Entrepreneurship Education 6. Religious and national Values Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Civic Education -Religion Studies (CRS/IRS) -Security Education -Social Studies 7. Cultural & Creative Arts (CCA) 8. Business Studies 9. French Language 10. Arabic Studies (Optional)

(Source: NERDC, 2014).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Babalola (2004) and Mkpa (2005) remarked that, it is at the implementation stage that many excellently planned curriculum and other educational policies are marred without any trace. Objectives of education cannot be attained if the planned programme for such a level of education is not well implemented. And in the same light, no matter how well a subject curriculum is planned, designed and documented, it is important that it is properly implemented. An essential component in the scheme of curriculum development is curriculum evaluation in the form of pilot testing of a new one in the process of implementation. A periodic process of reviewing a curriculum is very crucial, normal and necessary.

The Revised 9-Year BEC in an attempt to actualize this issue of workload reduction had brought about the condensation of subject content while new innovations were introduced with emerging global issues. For example, Religion and National Values Education is a single subject in which five subjects in the old curriculum (i.e. Christian Religion Knowledge, Islamic Religion Knowledge, Security education, Civic Education and Social Studies) were integrated, while Basic Science and Technology as a subject replaces 4 subjects in the old Curriculum, (i.e. Basic Science, Basic Technology, Physical & Health Education (PHE); and Information & Communication Technology, (ICT)) were also integrated. Now that the workload has been reduced by condensing subject contexts and in some cases some groups of subjects have been integrated, are there enough resources to use for the effective delivery of the Revised 9-Year BEC? This study therefore seeks to determine the level of implementation of the Revised 9-Year BEC against the background of the review and innovations alluded to above.

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of the study are to:

- (i) ascertain the level of awareness of the teachers and other major stakeholders in implementing the Revised 9-Year BEC;

- (ii) ascertain how well equipped the teachers are in implementing the Revised 9-Yr BEC;
- (iii) ascertain the difficulties encountered by teachers in implementing the Revised 9-Year BEC and the TG;
- (iv) identify ways of improving the in implementation of the Revised 9-Year BEC.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of the teachers and other major stakeholders in implementing the Revised 9-Year BEC?
2. How well prepared or trained in the use of the Revised 9-Year BEC and the TGs are the teachers in implementing the revised 9-Year BEC?
3. To what extent is the availability of the Revised 9-Year BEC and the TG?
4. What are the difficulties encountered by teachers in implementing the Revised 9-Year BEC?
5. What actions are to be taken to improve the implementation of the curriculum and make it more effective?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Generally, monitoring of the implementation of the Revised 9-Year BEC is essential among others to stakeholders in:

- ensuring full compliance to the implementation plan.
- ascertaining the availability the Revised 9-Year BEC and the Teachers' Guide.
- remedying weaknesses observed in curriculum implementation
- providing information on the quality of human resources available for revised Basic Education Curriculum implementation and
- providing information on the quality and quantity of material resources available for implementation of the Basic Education Curriculum.

Thus enhancing the effective implementation of the basic education curriculum and thereby leading to the achievement of the proposed objectives of education at this level.

II. Research Design

2.1 Population, Sample and Sample Techniques

The study is of descriptive survey. The population was the Education Stakeholders in Benue of which the State Ministry of Education, (SMoE) Officials, the State Universal Basic Education Board, (SUBEB) Officials, Teachers of 8 Basic Education Schools in one Local Government Area of the three Senatorial Districts/Zones in Benue State were sampled by the purposive stratified sampling technique for the study. Benue state is in the North Central geopolitical zone of the country and among the states visited for the monitoring exercise. Benue state is made up of three Senatorial Districts usually referred to in the state as Zones; (Zones A, B and C). The state is made up 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs) - 7 LGAs in zone A, 7 LGAs in zone B and 9 LGAs in zone C with 1,572 public Schools under the supervision of the State Ministry of Education, (SMoE) and State Universal Education Board, (SUBEB). (SMoE, Benue 2015)

2.2 Instruments

The three instruments used for this study were: SMOE/SUBEB Officials' Questionnaire (SOQ); Principals'/Teachers' Questionnaire (PTQ) and BEC-TG Checklist.

The first questionnaire was designed by the researcher to solicit for SMOE/SUBEB Officials' opinions about the availability of the BEC, TG, Teachers' training and on the difficulties encountered in course of the distribution and monitoring. The second questionnaire was designed by the researcher to solicit for teachers' opinions about the awareness of the BEC, TG, Teachers' training and on the difficulties encountered in course of the implementation of the BEC. And the third- The BEC and the TG's checklist was also developed by the researcher to solicit information on the available BEC and the TG's in the school. It contained the list of BEC and the TG's in the selected subjects in the curriculum.

2.3 Validation of Instruments and the Administrative Procedure

The Instruments were face and content validated by experts in NERDC. Comments and recommendations were made and used to ensure the face and content validities of these instruments. The Questionnaires were used to solicit information from Officials and Headteachers in the FCT and an inter-rater reliability coefficient of 0.81 and 0.72 were obtained for the SMOE/SUBEB Officials' Questionnaire and the Principal/Teachers Questionnaires respectively.

This instrument was therefore, considered adequate for the study. There was the debriefing of State Ministry of Education Officials on purpose of exercise and administration of questionnaire, then the visit to State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) office in company of officers assigned by State Ministry of Education also, the debriefing of SUBEB Officials on purpose of exercise and administration of questionnaire.

Thereafter, the strategies for selection of schools and administration of questionnaire were mapped out, after which the field trip to the selected schools in the zones for briefing and administration of questionnaire was carried out. The data collected were analyzed using Frequency Count and Percentage.

III. Results And Discussions

3.1 Research Question One

What is the level of awareness of the teachers and other major stakeholders in implementing the Revised 9-Year BEC?

This Research Question is answered in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Percentage of Awareness, Accessibility & Training in the use of the Revised 9-Yr BEC

S/N	Awareness, Accessibility & Training	Yes (%)	No (%)	Remarks
1	Awareness of the revised 9-Year BEC	70	30	Adequate
2	Accessibility to the revised 9-Year BEC	50	50	Fairly Adequate
3	Training on the use of the revised 9-Year BEC	30	70	Not Adequate

Table 1 shows that the level of awareness of Education Stakeholders is adequate, 70% of the sampled responses are aware of the revised 9-Year BEC and the accompany Teachers' Guide which the percentage of awareness is 50%

3.2 Research Question Two

How well prepared or trained are the teachers in the use of the Revised 9-Year BEC and the TGs are the teachers in implementing the revised 9-Year BEC? This Research Question is answered in Table 1 and Table 2

Table 2. Percentage of Awareness, Accessibility & Training in the use of the Teachers' Guide (TG)

S/N	Awareness, Accessibility & Training	Yes (%)	No (%)	Remarks
1	Awareness of the TG	50	50	Fairly Adequate
2	Accessibility to the TG	20	80	Not Adequate
3	Training on the use of the TG	20	80	Not Adequate

It is also revealed in Tables 1 and 2 that the BEC and the TG are not accessible to the Teachers and they have not been trained in the use of the BEC and the TG, over 75% of the teachers are neither trained on the use of the Revised 9-Year BEC nor on the use of the accompany TG.

3.3 Research Question Three

To what extent is the availability of the Revised 9-Year BEC and the TG?

Table 3. Distribution and Percentages of responses from sampled schools on the availability of BEC & TG

Subjects	% of Schools' responses on availability of TG	% of Schools' responses on non-availability of TG	Remarks	% of Schools' responses on availability of BEC	% of Schools' responses on non-availability of BEC	Remarks
English Studies	10	90	Highly Inadequate	50	50	Moderately Adequate
Mathematics	10	90	Highly Inadequate	30	70	Highly Inadequate
Religion and National Values Education	10	90	Highly Inadequate	10	90	Highly Inadequate
Basic Science and Technology	10	90	Highly Inadequate	20	80	Highly Inadequate
Total	10	90	Highly Inadequate	27.5	72.5	Highly Inadequate

Table 3 revealed that the Revised 9-Year BEC for effective implementation of the programme were not readily available in the various subjects in the sampled schools. An overall average of 72.5% of the selected schools indicated not available, while just 27.5% of the schools indicated the availability for use in this study. On subject basis, English Language ranked highest in terms of availability with 50% while Religion and National Values Education ranked lowest with 10%.

3.4 Research Question Four

What are the difficulties encountered by teachers in implementing the Revised 9-Year BEC?

Responses of the participating Headteachers are listed in descending order of their challenges

1. Time allocated for teaching the subjects (especially Religion and National Values Education) is inadequate.
2. There are no textbooks addressing or covering the various aspects of the Religion and National Values Education.

IV. Summary of Findings and Observations

The observations and findings of this study include the following:

- Most of the schools (about 80%) in Benue state are owned or run by individuals or organizations and usually faith based.
- Lack of effective synergy and proper communication between SMOE and SUBEB which is affecting effective distribution and the implementation of the Revised 9-Year BEC.
- Copies of the curriculum supplied to the state were inadequate so some of the schools (JSS) were yet to receive copies.
- Some copies of the curriculum supplied to the state are for subjects not taught in the state e.g Arabic studies, Yoruba language, Igbo language and Hausa language.
- Most of the primary schools in the state do not have copies of the revised 9-Year BEC and in one of the primary schools visited in Makurdi, the school was using primary school curriculum modules prepared by National Primary Education Commission (NPEC).
- Copies of the Teachers' Guides were supplied to the state on 2nd December 2014, they were about to be distributed to schools as the schools just resumed.
- The Federal Government Colleges had a complete set of the Teachers' Guide, but not a single copy of the revised 9-Year BEC.

V. Recommendations

Following the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

- The SMOE and SUBEB, should endeavour to monitor the distribution and the implementation of the Revised BEC in the Nigerian Basic Education Schools.
- They should also organize on-the-job training, workshops, seminars, conferences, etc, for schools teachers to update their knowledge on the implementation of the BEC.
- The school principals and headteachers should give necessary support to teachers to attend trainings.
- Enough time should be provided for Religion and National Value as well as Basic Science and Technology because of their integrated nature, more time is required for their efficient and effective delivery.
- Because of the integrated nature of Religion and National Values education, there is a need for specialist teachers to handle each of the integral parts of the subject.
- There is need for adequate provisions of relevant textbooks by relevant sources.

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