

## **Women's Participation in Curriculum Development and Implementation for Effective Teaching of Religious Education in Schools**

**OSAJIE, JUSTINA NWAZUNI**

*Department of Christian Religious Studies*

*University Of Delta, Agbor*

*justinanwazuniosajie@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

*Women's participation in curriculum development and implementation for effective teaching of religious education in schools cannot be under estimated. However, curriculum development and implementation is as planned, executed, a purposeful, progressive and systematic process to create positive improvements in the educational system. Curriculum is a guiding principle for effective teaching and learning. The method used in this study is historical which enabled the researcher to trace reasons behind the women's participation in curriculum implementation for effective teaching of religious education as curriculum plan or design is not the major challenge in the educational system. The paper discusses some challenges against the laudable goals of curriculum implementation and development for effective teaching. It also examines the concept of curriculum; meaning of curriculum implementation, curriculum implementation process which when planned enhances effective teaching of religious education. Religion if well planned, taught and imbibed, inculcates moral discipline in people, guides behavior, established rules, defines relationships and encourages social education for effective teaching. The paper among other things suggest that for religious curriculum implementation to be functional in the school system, the teacher as the final and important implementer of curriculum must necessarily change the language of curriculum into real classroom situation. That is, from curriculum down to lesson note for effective and improvement of curriculum development and implementation to enable a smooth running of the school.*

**Keywords:** Women's Participation, Curriculum, Development, Implementation, Religious Education.

### **Introduction:**

Curriculum development and implementation is as planned, executed, a purposeful, progressive and systematic process to create positive improvements in the educational system. Curriculum development according to Nwabuwe, Nwabuwe and Moemeke [2015] stated that it is a process usually involve identifying an underlying philosophy or belief about what, why and how teachers do what they do. A curriculum

acts as a changing catalyzed in the development of young children and must be reviewed periodically to stand with taste of time by making it important and effective in preparing students for life in a growing dynamic world. In other words, it is a guiding principle for effective teaching and learning without which education could hardly be planned and organized.

The Religious Education School Curriculum has to be planned and suit the uniqueness of the students as it is expressed in each student's personality, intelligence and potential for development. The curriculum should be designed in such a way that it builds the student in all areas of life like, moral, spiritual, emotional, cognitive, physical, imaginative, social and so on. It acknowledges the dignity and respect of the student's life as a person and aims at taking care of his or her welfare and abilities as they come daily. Religious curriculum, meeting up these demands, builds the student's life by laying foundations which will create fulfillment and happiness in life even in adulthood.

The Religious Education Curriculum should be planned and designed in such a way that students as we all know come from different homes and are part of the society, will assist them to live a life worthy of emulation by shunning immoral ways of living. Therefore, the curriculum should take cognizance of these aspects of the student's life in seeking to balance individual and social development, in developing an appreciation of how the different ramifications of life complement each other, and in helping the student to work co-operatively with others [Nwabuwe and Nwabuwe, 2013].

Women's participation in curriculum development and implementation as regards to religious education in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. This is due to the fact that development of any human society can hardly be attained without women's roles. If the women are co-opted in the curriculum development and implementation of religious education, they will be able to cite meaningful women in the Bible that helps in the upliftment of their nations like Deborah the Chief Judge in Israel. How she led the people to war and was victorious. Thus, women well behaved serves as a tool for positive change depending on how they are treated and the levels of opportunities given to them to actualize their potentials.

An effective religious education curriculum in which women participated in will be designed around a set of aims and purposes shared by the teaching team and the school's leadership, which of course will be broadly acceptable to, and supported by parents and students. Making sure that the rationale for the subject is clearly understood. In the National Curriculum Framework for Religious Education [NCF RE], the aim of religious education is expressed in the purpose, statement and the three aims if one is to be religiously literate. The three aims involve is that the students should know about and understand a range of religion and worldviews. They should be able to express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religion and worldviews and lastly is that the students should be able to gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously

with religion and worldviews. (The National Curriculum Framework for Religious Education (NCFRE). Therefore, effective participation of women in religious education curriculum will contribute to young student's understanding of the world in which they live and help them to develop a positive sense of human being.

**Curriculum:**

There is no precise definition of the term curriculum. A good number of various definitions of it have been proposed. However, it is an educational idea which has been seen by philosophers, researchers, practitioners or teachers and other areas of human endeavour. According to Doll [1982] Curriculum is the formal and informal content and process by which learners gain knowledge and understanding, develop skills, and alter attitudes, appreciations and values under the guidance of that school. As said earlier, many definitions move around people's concepts of the school as a socio-academic institution. Since it is based on school oriented, it therefore means that curriculum deals with the objective of the school, what is taught or should be taught, how it is been taught and to whom it is taught and the effectiveness and efficacy of what is taught in the school to the aspirations of the learners and their society.

A well planned religious curriculum supports the development of all young students emotionally, physically spiritually, socially and intellectually. The curriculum should be actively and well designed for involvement by the students in the learning activity acknowledging that the students learn very fast through influencing one another in the environment, concrete experiences, relating with their age group and even to adults. The religious curriculum should be well designed to provide different meaningful activities of role model in the Bible. A well religious planned curriculum acts as a changing force in the development of the students and must be reviewed periodically to enhance the effectiveness of their learning in order to live a life worthy of emulation.

The primary aim of religious curriculum is to provide 'master plan' of the why, what and how of care giving and teaching based on a philosophy of how students develop and learn. For the usefulness of Religious Education [RE] on students and society that Billy [2002] stated on the efficacy of development of RE curriculum in Nigerian schools that "my aim will be to permeate these students with sense of justices, righteousness, truth, purity, cleanliness and holiness [non] will not think of these qualities with those they knew as Christians" Billy's statement seems to be in line with the aims of teaching RE which builds discipline and obedience in the students. The study of well designed curriculum for RE will enable the students learn the tenets of faith and to live a life that is pleasing to God. Thus, RE is aimed at producing people who will be responsive to themselves or the society at large. In essence, the focus of well planned RE curriculum among other things is for students moral discipline and pursuance of education. Therefore, religious education is not only a subject to learn but also a way of life.

**Curriculum Implementation:**

Curriculum implementation could be seen as bringing together the planned curriculum into action or use in order to achieve the stated educational objectives. The essence of putting this curriculum; that is, the theoretical framework or content and instructional directives into usage in the classroom is known as curriculum implementation. Hence, Amadi [1993], opines that curriculum implementation is the stage in curriculum process and system whereby all the necessary curriculum inputs are brought into direct contact with the learners through a wide range of activities, so that effective learning and teaching can take place at a minimal rate.

Curriculum implementation therefore, is the actual involvement of learners with planned learning opportunities. It is a state in the learning activities where teachers and learners are engaged in the negotiations aimed at promoting learning. Thus, the learners are seen to be the main focus of implementation while the teachers to be the chief implementers. Efedu [2010], described curriculum implementation as the weaving together of the subject matter and method to produce desired learning activities which will lead to relevant outcomes. In other words, without implementation, there will be no evaluation and student's learning will not be directed and guided.

**Curriculum Implementation System in Religious Education**

Curriculum according to Offorma [1994] is the organized knowledge presented to the learners in a school in order to achieve educational goal. So, curriculum implementation is a veritable tool for the curriculum system. Every effort put in place in the course of planning will be good for nothing if the curriculum is not implemented. Therefore, in delivering this, the teacher is considered as the prominent figure in curriculum implementation system. He is the final decision maker in the learning opportunities provided to the students, how the learners are to be able to present the work, directed and evaluated for the each student involved.

The teacher as the final and important implementer of religious curriculum must necessarily change the language of it into the real classroom operation. The teacher however, should concentrate on the syllabus which is developed from the curriculum. While the religious curriculum offers the total planned programs of the school for all the school courses for some years, the syllabus contains the recommended topics and selected learning experiences sequentially arranged to be taught from year to year in a way that it suits the set educational objectives. The syllabus when prepared at the national level reaches the schools, it will then be divided into manageable parts on terms and yearly ground by the subject teachers to develop scheme of work.

The scheme of work, more or less, is an aid to the teacher. It helps in making his teaching plans effective in a sense that it spells out specific topics to be covered within a given term. The teacher closely related subject area and learning experience which identifies the unit of work meant to be taught for few weeks, say two to six weeks.

Further division of the unit makes the lesson to be organized. Thus, a lesson plan is said to be an orderly and well planned procedure of the prepared lesson. The lesson note is made of the subject matter to be taught, the teaching and learning objectives to be achieved by both the teachers and the students in the religious course of discharging the duty. These are the processes taken by the teacher to implement the curriculum. Nonetheless, its implementation system is presented below.



#### **Factors Promoting Curriculum Development/Implementation in Religious Education:**

##### **\*Constant and effective usage of instructional materials:**

For effective curriculum development/implementation of religious education to take place, there must be availability and effective usage of instructional materials. The teacher requires material support to diligently discharge his teaching processes. In other words, instructional materials are materials intended to help the teacher make lessons explicit to the students effectively and enables the students too, to learn more readily. These type of teaching aids appeal to the sense of hearing [audio], seeing [visual] and both the sense of hearing and sight [audio-visual aids]. Hence, Joshua [1995] stated that students remember 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, hear and do. This is to say that seeing and doing things will make a person to know, assimilate and remember things learnt best.

Instructional aids are necessary tools for learning. The teacher's knowledge of the subject area, though very important, is not adequate to enable him facilitate students fast in learning. For this act, it must be sought and utilized properly in the teaching and

learning process. Therefore, instructional materials enhance learning. It transmits information, ideas and notes to the students. \*

**\*Another major determinant of learning religion is teacher effectiveness:** A good religion teacher is an enlightened innovator. The religion teacher is seen "as the religion curriculum implementer" for the simple fact that if the teacher ceases to function as the school expects him to, the religious culture and knowledge which the ages have so painfully assembled would suffer a serious setback [Akubue, 1992]. In a way to prevent this from taking place, an effective religion teacher should uphold a good classroom management.

Thus, for quality and effective religious curriculum implementation, religion teacher should be encouraged to embark on regular professional development through workshops, seminars, academic conferences, in service training in order to be well acquainted with new skills and knowledge in the area. In line with this, Effanga [2001] notes that effective teacher should have a good control of classroom management, students motivation, management of materials and supplies, physical conditions for instruction, use of time, routine and a monitoring system in the classroom for efficient instruction and quality education. Further, religion teacher should have and develop good attitude towards the implementation of any current research-based practices for effectiveness and efficiency to increase his self-value.

**\*The learner is yet another factor for promotion of curriculum development and implementation in religious education.** A well planned religious education curriculum helps to meet the development of students socially, physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. In this case, learners are seen to play active role in the process of curriculum implementation because without them, learning cannot take place. Hence, Maduewesi [2003] looks at learners as the highest resources for moulding.

Since without the students, learning will be meaningless, it then boils down on the teacher to bring the learners in an active learning activities. To effectively do this, the teachers should plan their lessons properly by devising and modifying instructional techniques to meet their needs as students learn in various ways due to individual differences. Thus, for development and implementation of curriculum to take place, the teacher should find ways to help overcome students' learning problems, set obtainable goals and ensure that students are taught the necessary skills and learning strategies.

**\*Further is the school management support.** Effective religious curriculum implementation depends solely on the vital role played by the school management support. These supports could come in various forms. Thus Mbakwem (2005) reiterates this by ensuring adequate provision of school infrastructure and teaching and learning materials, ensuring resourceful personnel, time and learning resources, given out necessary information as at when due, enhancement of communication at all levels,

promoting of professional development opportunities for teachers. This of course, school managements should uphold for effective and improvement of religious curriculum development and implementation to enable a smooth running of schools.

#### **\*Factors inhibiting Effective Curriculum development and Implementation in Religious Education**

Importantly, the school exists to prepare students take their places socially, spiritually and vocationally in the adulthood. Whether they achieve this goal depends to a large extent on the quality of curriculum instruction they receive in the classroom under the effective and efficient religious teacher. So, the need to consider effective and efficient religious teacher in the class is highly imperative since poor of proper curriculum implementation hinders the promotion of curriculum development and implementation of religious education in the school system. Thus, the factors that hinders effective curriculum implementation of religious education are as follows:

**Lack of Instructional Materials:** Inadequacy of instructional materials have been a serious matter to public schools in Nigeria for over decades of years. The teaching of concepts is best accomplished by employing an aid most clearly approximates the referent of the concept.

Instructional materials according to Ughamadu [2006] affirm materials, resources or forms of media that teachers and the entire class use in the teaching learning process so as to make it more effective and productive. Of a truth, there is no curriculum that can be implemented effectively without adequate equipment and resources. The most unfortunate aspect is that Nigerian public schools are poorly funded and as such lacked instructional materials with which could have enhanced learning. However, materials when used during curriculum implementation brings about more noticeable effectiveness in the process, but this depends much on the teacher's ability to utilize them efficiently.

**Teacher Preparedness:** A major determinant of learning and religious curriculum implementation is the teacher effectiveness. No matter how good and lofty the educational goals are or how relevant the curriculum is, if the teacher is not well paid for or given his remuneration and incentives as at when due, the system will be jeopardized making the exercise to be futile. Therefore, for effective religious curriculum implementation to be adequately carried out, the good intentions of teacher education must be well complemented by the efforts of their employers to guarantee their devotion to the ethics of the teaching profession.

**Class Size:** The large population of a class affects the effective curriculum implementation. Here, National Policy on education [FGN, 2004] advised that an appropriate class role should be thirty [30] in number. But, now, due to awareness and efficacy in the education, many persons have fused themselves in thereby increasing the growth of population in a class. This awareness was launched in 1976 by the Universal

Primary Education without enough teacher production to match the school population [World Bank, 1995, Bajah, 1995 and Nwagwu, 2003]. This orientation has led to overcrowded populations in the classroom which everybody today experiences at all levels of education.

**Examination Malpractice:** This is one of the major impediments in curriculum implementation. Here, both the students, the examiners and parents aid and abate in examination malpractice. To the extent that most of the children of bourgeois who are unable to pass the examinations on their own are being aided by unjust examiners at places where most of these students call "Miracle centres". Denga [1993] discovered that the subject used for his study resorted to cheating due to pressure from significant others like parents, for a good grade. In line with this Ivowi [2005] reiterates that the number students continued to grease the palm of the examiners and because of poor implementation of curriculum in schools due to so many reasons, the cause against examination malpractice is far from start again. This day, electronic diverse are used in committing examination malpractice. As such invalid and unreliable information are given to the system, making the learners become lazy as many do not want to work hard since they know they can pass whether prepared or not for the examination [Offorma, 2006]. She equally stated that indiscipline in schools and the society at large has made the students not to perturb about their studies, rather, spent time in planning for evils, cultism, rape, absenteeism, theft and so on different from set curriculum objective and the attained goals.

**Curriculum Overload:** This is yet another factor hindering effective curriculum implementation in religious education. In our schools today, many students complain of overloaded curriculum in religious education, although, the contents are quite satisfactory. However, Offorma [2006] states that; "The issue is not only the large amount of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to be presented to the learners, but the adequate time and resources for the implementation of these content areas. The problem of the non-coverage of course content has left the students to be half-baked as some teachers rush to cover the contents thereby teaching the course anyhow, while others leave a lot of grounds uncovered".

**Learner Related Issues:** Nigeria today, many students see knowledge and skill acquisition as not important. In companionship of their friends, many are involved in all sorts of crimes, social and anti-social activities to the neglect of their studies as a result of new method of acquiring wealth easily with limited education. This behavior made some students not to resume classes especially at the commencement of each term. The effect of this is that the recommended curriculum is not always covered before examinations. As a result leads to poor performance in all levels of institutions.

**Evaluation of Learning:** Evaluation of learning is an essential measure in religious curriculum implementation. A good evaluation should possess the three domains in a



learner – the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. In evaluating a student, the evaluation information must be valid and reliable in determining merits in which processed educational objectives are obtained by students [Khauzoda 2004]. In supportive of this, Ughamadu, (2006) opines that evaluation of learning helps the teacher in determining the levels of students' performance when lapses in teaching and learning are observed, a teacher first identifies the causes of such lapses with the aim of correcting them. If it occurs, he then corrects and review his lessons. The process through which teachers assess the attainment and lapses of their students is through continuous assessment tests and examinations. If evaluation of learning is not well assimilated by the learners it then brings about inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the curriculum development and implementation.

#### **Teacher's Participation in Curriculum Implementation in Religious Education:**

Curriculum implementation is a difficult work and its success lies greatly on the hands of the classroom teacher. In otherwords, teachers are the directive agents in the teaching process. According to Ikpe [2005], one of the duties of a teacher is to assist students acquire some skills, behavior, knowledge and creates room for desirable changes in their way of life. Teaching therefore is the interaction between the teacher and the learner. This is to say that the success of the class depends solely on the teacher no matter the availability of factors such as a well designed curriculum of studies, instructional aids, infrastructural facilities, laboratories, a well equipped library, workshops and so on (Whawo, 1994). The implication of this assertion is that any meaningful discussion on learning should focus on and continually return to the work teachers do and the functions they perform, since they are the immediate agents of the teaching and learning process.

A teacher who is morally, physically and psychologically sound is also a good observer, guidance and evaluator. He employs all relevant teaching aids and methods to convey his lessons in a way that the learner can readily understand. Later, in the course of teaching, he would be required to evaluate the learners and indirectly differentiate them on the basis of intellectual skills. This enables the teachers to channel the learners' interests to relevant occupations later in life.

Another role of the teacher's work in curriculum implementation is the moral training of the students, good moral upbringing that will transform them into good citizens is needed. Elements of moral education like respect for elders and constituted authority, love for one another, respect for social norms, fear of God and the desire to do the needful would be necessary. This, therefore, leads to the utilization of knowledge acquired in school for the improvement of the society.

#### **Conclusion:**

It is an indisputable course that effective religious education curriculum implementation is highly dependent on teachers and learners self value that enhances

learning. Therefore, women's participation in curriculum development and implementation for effective teaching of religious education should be given a total effort of all persons concerned – the teachers, students, parents and the government so as to have a sound and healthy effective teaching and learning process in our educational system.

The religious teacher is expected to make students see that religious education is not based on mere pragmatic but that it can stand the pragmatic test and stand it perfectly. In a well RE curriculum implementation and in a face of value challenges, the religious teacher presents God as the value of values, knowing that all material goods possess value to the extent that they lead to God. This implies that in the hierarchy of values, religion should occupy a prominent place. In otherwords, the teachers should constantly tell students that God and His personality should dominate all school, all philosophy of life, and all education. In a nut shell, effective religious education curriculum implementation at every level of education is essential because to be well governed, a citizen must be intellectually educated. This education will prove more of significant behavior than a nefarious act if it is not translated into moral action which acknowledges our accountability to God. Thus, religion if neglected due to inefficient teacher makes man to be more or less an animal than a man and more a menace to society than a member of it.

**Recommendation:**

In view of the fact that education has been taken to mean all man's activities, which enables him to realize himself and to live fully as a human being, and effective curriculum being a special working instrument, its efficient and effective implementation should be necessary. Therefore, the following recommendations are put forward;

- The class – size should not be so over populated that it can bring about the teacher's inefficiency. In otherwords, there should be reasonable number of students in a classroom.
- Adequate instructional materials must be used to bring about effective curriculum teaching.
- Heads of schools should develop a working plan for the school to ensure reasonable and proper continuous assessment.
- Priority should be given to qualified religious teachers in the area to teach the course in all levels of the institutions for effective implementation.
- Religious education teachers should be encouraged to attend workshops, seminars, conference to broaden their knowledge in the area for effective teaching-learning process.

- There should be orientation method change in teaching religious studies. In other words, the teaching of religious studies should not be academically oriented but rather direct the students on real-live models of the supreme power. By inculcation and impacting these to the students will automatically reduced the nefarious acts in the society, thereby making the society a better place of abode.

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