

**REFORMING THE NIGERIAN SCHOOL CURRICULUM FOR CONTEMPORARY
NEEDS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES:
IMPLICATIONS FOR BASIC, JUNIOR SECONDARY AND SENIOR SECONDARY
EDUCATION**

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Abstract

The school curriculum is a fundamental instrument for achieving the objectives of education and preparing learners to respond effectively to the social, economic, technological and environmental demands of society. In Nigeria, rapid technological development, changing labour-market requirements, unemployment, insecurity, climate change, entrepreneurship demands and the growing importance of digital literacy have created the need to continually review the content and structure of school education. The Federal Government, through the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) and other stakeholders, has therefore undertaken a comprehensive review of the curricula for basic and senior secondary education. The reform is intended to reduce subject overload, promote deeper learning, strengthen competency development and make education more relevant to contemporary national and global realities (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], 2025). The revised curriculum also introduces or strengthens areas such as digital technologies, citizenship and heritage, practical skills and trade education. At the senior secondary level, students are expected to combine core subjects with appropriate areas of specialisation and a trade subject (NERDC, 2025). This paper examines the need for curriculum reform in Nigerian basic, junior secondary and senior secondary schools and its implementation challenges. It argues that curriculum reform is necessary to address curriculum overload, technological change, employability and entrepreneurship, national identity and citizenship, emerging environmental challenges, and the mismatch between school learning and contemporary societal needs. The paper identified; inadequate teacher preparation and capacity building, ICT infrastructure and digital divide, instructional materials and learning facilities, funding and unequal distribution of educational resources, weak monitoring, supervision and

evaluation of curriculum implementation, resistance to curriculum change, large class sizes and high students-teachers ratio, examination-oriented education and assessment challenges as challenges facing implementation of the new curriculum in the Nigerian schools. The paper concludes that curriculum reform can improve the relevance and quality of Nigerian education if it is supported by adequate teacher training, instructional materials, infrastructure, funding, effective assessment and continuous monitoring.

Keywords: Curriculum reform, basic education, junior secondary education, senior secondary education, competency-based education, Nigeria, curriculum implementation.

1.0 Introduction

Education is expected to respond to the changing needs of society. The curriculum therefore cannot remain static while the social, economic, technological and occupational environments surrounding learners continue to change. A relevant school curriculum should provide learners not only with theoretical knowledge but also with the competencies, values, practical skills and problem-solving abilities required to participate effectively in contemporary society. In Nigeria, the need to reform the school curriculum has become increasingly important because of rapid technological development, changing employment patterns, entrepreneurship demands, environmental challenges and the need to strengthen national identity and responsible citizenship.

The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) is responsible for major curriculum development and revision activities in the country. Its official curriculum framework provides revised curricula for Primary 1–6 and Junior Secondary School 1–3, while a separate revised Senior Secondary Education Curriculum covers SSS 1–3 (NERDC, 2025). The Federal Government's curriculum reform was designed to address concerns about subject overload and improve the quality and relevance of learning. The Federal Ministry of Education explained that the review was aimed at reducing the number of subjects, promoting skill development and aligning Nigerian education with global best practices (FME, 2025).

Need to Reform the Curriculum to Meet Current Needs.

Rapid technological development

One of the strongest reasons for curriculum reform is the rapid development of technology. Digital technologies have transformed communication, business, employment, research and everyday life. Consequently, Nigerian learners need digital literacy and the ability to use technology responsibly and productively. The revised senior secondary curriculum identifies Digital Technologies among the five core and compulsory areas, demonstrating the increasing importance attached to technological competence (NERDC, 2025). The curriculum must therefore equip learners with relevant digital skills rather than preparing them primarily for an environment dominated by

traditional forms of work. This is particularly important because students leaving school without adequate digital competencies may find it difficult to participate effectively in the modern economy.

Reduction of curriculum overload

Another important reason for curriculum reform is the problem of excessive curriculum content and subject overload. When students are required to study too many subjects or cover excessive amounts of content, teachers may concentrate on completing the syllabus rather than ensuring deep understanding and mastery. The Federal Ministry of Education specifically stated that the new reform seeks to reduce subject overload and allow deeper learning (FME, 2025). The reform therefore represents a movement from simply increasing the quantity of subjects and content towards improving the quality of learning. This is particularly important at the basic and junior secondary levels, where learners require sufficient time to develop foundational competencies.

Need for practical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills

Nigeria's high level of youth unemployment and the changing requirements of the labour market make practical and entrepreneurial education increasingly important. A school curriculum that focuses predominantly on academic knowledge may not adequately prepare learners for self-employment, entrepreneurship, technical occupations and emerging industries. NERDC has historically developed trade and entrepreneurship curricula and has developed curricula for numerous senior secondary trade subjects (NERDC, n.d.). The revised curriculum also provides for a trade subject as a core component of senior secondary education, thereby strengthening the connection between school learning and practical skills (NERDC, 2025).

Strengthening national identity and citizenship

Curriculum reform is also necessary to strengthen Nigerian history, citizenship, national identity and responsible participation in society. The revised curriculum makes Nigerian History compulsory from Primary 1 through JSS 3, while Citizenship and Heritage Studies is included at the senior secondary level (FME, 2025; NERDC, 2025). This development is significant because schools have an important role in transmitting national history, values, cultural heritage and civic responsibilities. A curriculum that adequately exposes young Nigerians to their history and heritage can contribute to national consciousness, social cohesion and responsible citizenship.

Response to changing labour-market demands

The world of work is changing rapidly, with increasing demand for problem-solving, creativity, communication, digital competence, teamwork and specialised technical skills. Consequently,

curriculum content must be periodically reviewed to ensure that graduates possess competencies relevant to contemporary employment and further education. Nigeria's education-sector roadmap explicitly identified the need to review, update and enrich basic and senior secondary curricula to meet the demands of the time, using a competency-based framework (FME, 2024). This demonstrates that curriculum reform is not simply an administrative exercise but an important strategy for improving the relationship between education and national development.

Need to develop competency rather than memorisation

Contemporary education increasingly emphasises what learners can do with knowledge rather than merely what they can recall. Nigeria's curriculum reform consequently seeks to strengthen competency-based education. The Federal Government's education roadmap identifies competency-based curriculum development as a strategy for both basic and senior secondary education (FME, 2024). This requires teaching and assessment practices that develop critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, problem-solving and practical application of knowledge. Curriculum reform is therefore necessary to move Nigerian schools progressively away from excessive dependence on memorisation.

Response to environmental and social challenges

Contemporary Nigerian learners face issues such as climate change, environmental degradation, insecurity, public-health concerns and social conflict. These issues require educational responses because students need knowledge and skills that enable them to understand and respond responsibly to such challenges. The NERDC curriculum framework demonstrates this approach by integrating issues such as climate change, disaster-risk reduction, consumer education, peace and conflict resolution into relevant curriculum areas (NERDC, 2025). This illustrates why curriculum reform must continually respond to emerging social and environmental realities.

2.0 Conceptual terms

Concept of New Curriculum for Basic, Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria

Curriculum is a major instrument through which the objectives of the Nigerian education system are translated into classroom learning experiences. In Nigeria, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) is the principal agency responsible for curriculum development and review. NERDC has undertaken a major revision of the school curriculum to make learning more relevant to contemporary national needs, reduce unnecessary curriculum overload, strengthen competencies and provide learners with knowledge and practical skills needed for further education, employment and self-reliance (NERDC, 2025). The revised curriculum should, however, be understood according to the different levels of schooling. Basic

education covers Primary 1–6 and Junior Secondary School (JSS) 1–3, while Senior Secondary School (SSS) 1–3 constitutes the senior secondary level. NERDC provides separate curriculum frameworks for the Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) and Senior Secondary Education Curriculum (SSEC) (NERDC, 2025).

New Curriculum for Basic Education: Primary 1–6

The new Basic Education Curriculum covers Primary 1 to Primary 6. The revised curriculum is intended to provide children with foundational knowledge, literacy, numeracy, values, scientific awareness, creativity and basic life skills. NERDC's official curriculum portal provides separate curriculum materials for Primary 1–3 and Primary 4–6, showing that the curriculum is structured progressively according to learners' developmental stages (NERDC, 2025). At the lower primary level, emphasis is placed on foundational learning, particularly English Studies, Mathematics, Basic Science and Technology, National Values and creative learning, alongside approved language and religious/cultural learning areas. At the upper primary level, learners are progressively exposed to broader subject areas and more developed knowledge and skills (NERDC, 2025).

Summary of the Primary School Curriculum

The primary curriculum can therefore be summarised as a foundation-building curriculum. Its major purposes are to:

- develop literacy and numeracy;
- introduce pupils to basic science and technology;
- promote national values and responsible citizenship;
- develop creativity and cultural awareness;
- expose pupils to basic health and life skills;
- provide foundational knowledge for transition to junior secondary education.

The revised curriculum also seeks to respond to contemporary national and global concerns. NERDC states that the revision of the 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum was undertaken to make it responsive to contemporary global and national concerns (NERDC, 2025).

2. New Curriculum for Junior Secondary School: JSS 1–3

The Junior Secondary School (JSS 1–3) forms the second component of Nigeria's nine-year Basic Education Curriculum. The revised JSS curriculum provides learners with a combination of academic, scientific, technological, vocational, cultural and national-values education. NERDC's

official JSS curriculum portal lists subject areas including English Studies, Mathematics, Basic Science and Technology, Business Studies, History, National Values, Pre-Vocational Studies, Christian Religious Studies, Islamic Studies and Nigerian languages, among others (NERDC, 2025).

One important feature is the stronger emphasis on pre-vocational and practical learning. This orientation is intended to expose learners to skills that can contribute to self-reliance and provide a foundation for later technical, vocational and entrepreneurial education. The revised Basic Education Curriculum is explicitly described by NERDC as a competency- and outcome-based curriculum, aimed at developing essential skills and mastery among learners (NERDC, 2025).

Summary of the Junior Secondary Curriculum

The JSS curriculum can be summarised as a transition and skill-development curriculum. Its major purposes are to:

- consolidate the literacy and numeracy acquired at primary school;
- develop scientific and technological knowledge;
- strengthen national values and citizenship education;
- introduce learners to business and entrepreneurship;
- develop practical and pre-vocational competencies;
- expose students to history, culture and Nigerian languages;
- prepare learners for senior secondary education, technical education or other appropriate forms of further learning.

Thus, JSS education is not intended merely to extend theoretical classroom learning; it is also expected to provide learners with practical competencies and broader knowledge for their future educational and occupational choices (NERDC, 2025).

New Curriculum for Senior Secondary School: SSS 1–3

The Senior Secondary Education Curriculum (SSEC) covers SSS 1, SSS 2 and SSS 3. NERDC has established a dedicated revised Senior Secondary Education Curriculum portal containing the curriculum for each of the three years (NERDC, 2025). The senior secondary curriculum represents a more specialised stage of education. It is intended to prepare students for higher education, employment, entrepreneurship, technical and vocational careers and responsible participation in society. The revised curriculum places greater emphasis on making secondary education relevant to the realities of the Nigerian economy and the changing world of work. An

important component of the reform is the development and integration of trade and entrepreneurship subjects. NERDC reports that curricula were developed for 34 Senior Secondary School trade/entrepreneurship subjects, while the Council has also revised and upgraded the mainstream senior secondary subjects in accordance with the new curriculum structure (NERDC, n.d.).

Summary of the Senior Secondary Curriculum

The SSS curriculum can therefore be summarised as a specialisation, career-preparation and competency-development curriculum. Its major purposes are to:

- prepare students for tertiary education;
- develop employable and entrepreneurial skills;
- strengthen science, technology and innovation;
- provide opportunities for trade and vocational learning;
- develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
- prepare students for employment and self-reliance;
- promote responsible citizenship and national development.

The Federal Ministry of Education similarly identifies the objectives of senior school education as including preparation for further education, self-reliance, good citizenship and effective participation in democratic governance (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], n.d.).

Major Features of the New Curriculum Across the Three Levels

Although the curricula differ according to educational level, several broad principles connect the new curriculum from primary through senior secondary education.

Competency-Based Learning

A central feature is the movement towards competency and outcome-based education. Rather than concentrating exclusively on the amount of content covered, the curriculum seeks to develop what learners can understand, apply and demonstrate (NERDC, 2025).

Reduction of Curriculum Overload

The reform also seeks to address excessive curriculum content and subject overload. NERDC's curriculum development work includes the revision and reduction of the 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum and the development of teachers' guides to support implementation (NERDC, n.d.).

Practical and Vocational Education

Practical skills, trade and entrepreneurship receive greater attention, particularly at the JSS and SSS levels. NERDC's development of curricula for 34 senior secondary trade/entrepreneurship subjects demonstrates the importance attached to vocational and employability skills in the new curriculum (NERDC, n.d.).

National Values and Citizenship

National Values remains an important component of the Basic Education Curriculum. At JSS level, for example, National Values is explicitly listed among the curriculum areas provided by NERDC (NERDC, 2025).

Relevance to Contemporary Society

The curriculum revision was undertaken partly to respond to changing national and global circumstances. NERDC states that the Basic Education Curriculum was revised in line with contemporary global and national concerns (NERDC, 2025).

Summary Table 1

Level	Classes	Main orientation	Major emphasis
Basic/Primary	Primary 1–6	Foundation building	Literacy, numeracy, basic science, values, creativity and foundational life skills
Junior Secondary	JSS 1–3	Transition competency development	and Academic knowledge, science, technology, national values, business and pre-vocational skills
Senior Secondary	SSS 1–3	Specialisation and career preparation	Further education, science/technology, vocational and trade skills, entrepreneurship and employability

List of the subjects/learning areas in Nigeria's revised curriculum, based on the official NERDC curriculum framework.

Primary School (Basic Education: Primary 1–6)

The revised primary curriculum includes:

1. English Studies

2. Mathematics
3. Nigerian Languages
4. Basic Science and Technology
5. Cultural and Creative Arts
6. Physical and Health Education
7. National Values Education
8. Christian Religious Studies
9. Islamic Religious Studies
10. Pre-Vocational Studies
11. French
12. Arabic
13. Social Studies
14. Computer Studies/Digital Literacy

The precise combination can vary by class and school, and some areas are integrated rather than taught as completely separate subjects. NERDC publishes the curriculum by class and subject.

Junior Secondary School (JSS 1–3)

The major subjects/learning areas include:

1. English Studies
2. Mathematics
3. Basic Science
4. Basic Technology
5. Physical and Health Education
6. Computer Studies
7. Business Studies
8. Cultural and Creative Arts

9. Social Studies
10. Civic Education
11. Christian Religious Studies
12. Islamic Religious Studies
13. Nigerian Languages
14. French
15. Arabic
16. History
17. Pre-Vocational Studies
18. Entrepreneurship/Trade-related learning areas

NERDC's official JSS curriculum provides the approved subject curricula and outlines the learning expectations for JSS 1–3.

Senior Secondary School (SSS 1–3)

The revised Senior Secondary Education Curriculum is organised around broader subject areas, with students taking subjects appropriate to their chosen pathways. These include:

Sciences

1. Biology
2. Chemistry
3. Physics
4. Agricultural Science
5. Basic Science-related subjects

Social

- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
10. Psychology

Sciences 6.

Economics
Geography
Government
Sociology

Arts	and	Humanities 11.	Literature-in-English
12.			History
13.	Christian	Religious	Studies
14.		Islamic	Studies
15.		Nigerian	Languages
16.			French
17. Arabic			

Languages	and	Communication 18.	English	Language
19. General/Functional language and communication components				

Mathematics	and	Technology 20.	Mathematics
21.		Further	Mathematics
22. Computer/Information Technology-related subjects			

Business 23.		Financial	Accounting
24.			Commerce
25.			Marketing
26. Economics			

Trade and Vocational Education

A major feature of the revised SSS curriculum is the introduction/strengthening of trade and entrepreneurship education. NERDC reports curricula for 34 trade subjects, covering areas such as:

27. Automobile maintenance and repairs
28. Electrical installation and maintenance
29. Plumbing and pipe fitting
30. Welding and fabrication
31. Catering and hospitality
32. Garment making
33. Hairdressing and cosmetology
34. Photography
35. Solar photovoltaic installation and maintenance
36. Computer hardware and networking

37. Graphic design
38. Data processing
39. GSM/mobile device repairs
40. Printing technology
41. Furniture making
42. Refrigeration and air-conditioning
43. Painting and decoration
44. Animal husbandry
45. Fisheries
46. Crop production
47. Beauty and body care
48. Other approved trade/entrepreneurship areas.

The exact subject combination is not intended to mean that every SSS student takes all these subjects. The senior secondary framework allows students/schools to select appropriate subjects according to the approved curriculum structure, school capacity and students' pathways. NERDC provides the official revised SSS curriculum separately.

Important: Because the revised curriculum is being implemented in stages and some subjects have been merged, renamed, integrated or reorganised, the safest academic approach is to cite the specific NERDC curriculum document for each level/class rather than present an old subject list as the current 2025/2026 structure.

3.0 Result and Discussion on Challenges of Implementing the New Curriculum in Nigerian Basic, Junior and Senior Secondary Schools

The Federal Government of Nigeria introduced a revised curriculum designed to reduce subject overload, promote skills acquisition, strengthen competency and outcome-based learning, and make school education more responsive to contemporary national and global needs (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], 2025). The revised curriculum covers the basic education level, including primary and junior secondary schools, as well as the senior secondary school level. NERDC (2025) describes the revised curriculum as adopting a competency- and outcome-based approach, which represents a significant change from previous curriculum practices. Despite the potential benefits, its implementation is confronted by several challenges.

Inadequate Teacher Preparation and Capacity Building

One major challenge is inadequate preparation and capacity building of teachers for the effective implementation of the new curriculum. Curriculum reform normally requires teachers to understand new subject contents, instructional approaches, assessment procedures and expected learning outcomes. The revised Nigerian curriculum places greater emphasis on competency and outcome-based education, requiring teachers to move beyond traditional approaches that place excessive emphasis on memorisation and teacher-centred instruction (NERDC, 2025). The magnitude of this challenge is reflected in the fact that NERDC specifically identified massive state-based teacher capacity-building programmes as necessary for the implementation of the new curriculum. NERDC noted that the training required would be different from ordinary in-service training because teachers need specific preparation on the curriculum and its implementation process (NERDC, 2025). Where teachers are inadequately trained, they may continue to use old teaching methods even when the curriculum has changed. This can create a gap between the intended curriculum and the curriculum actually delivered in classrooms. NERDC's earlier curriculum implementation activities similarly included the training of master trainers nationwide and the development of teachers' guides to support effective curriculum delivery (NERDC, n.d.). Therefore, continuous professional development, orientation and practical training of teachers are essential for successful implementation.

Inadequate Instructional Materials and Learning Facilities

A second challenge is inadequate instructional materials and physical facilities required to translate the new curriculum into effective classroom practice. Curriculum implementation cannot depend solely on curriculum documents; schools require textbooks, teachers' guides, laboratories, workshops, ICT facilities, libraries, teaching aids and other learning resources. This challenge is particularly important because the revised curriculum introduces stronger competency, vocational and practical components. NERDC and UBEC recognised the need to align instructional materials with the new curriculum and indicated plans to establish an instructional-material development laboratory as part of the implementation process (Universal Basic Education Commission [UBEC], 2025). The NERDC implementation strategy also places responsibility on SUBEBs to supply instructional materials and ensure that school infrastructure is functional and available for curriculum implementation (NERDC, 2025). This indicates that inadequate materials and facilities can seriously constrain implementation. For example, a school cannot effectively teach practical or trade-related subjects where the necessary workshops, equipment and qualified personnel are unavailable. NERDC's implementation strategy therefore stipulates that schools should consider the availability of basic resources and qualified teachers when selecting trade subjects (NERDC, 2025).

Inadequate Funding and Unequal Distribution of Educational Resources

Inadequate funding constitutes another important challenge. Implementing a new curriculum requires substantial financial resources for teacher training, curriculum dissemination, instructional materials, infrastructure, ICT facilities, laboratories, workshops, supervision and monitoring. Where adequate funds are not available, schools may possess the new curriculum document without having the resources necessary to implement it effectively. NERDC's implementation strategy recognises the need for efficient mobilisation and utilisation of resources before introducing the curriculum at different levels (NERDC, 2025). Similarly, the strategy assigns responsibilities to school-based management committees and parent-teacher associations to support curriculum-related expenses, including resources, teacher training and infrastructure (NERDC, 2025). The problem is further complicated by unequal distribution of educational resources across Nigerian states and between urban and rural schools. Schools with adequate funding may be able to provide laboratories, ICT facilities, instructional materials and trained teachers, while poorly funded schools may struggle to provide basic learning resources. This situation can produce unequal implementation of the same national curriculum. Consequently, curriculum reform may be successful in some schools but weakly implemented in others because of differences in financial capacity and resource availability.

Weak Monitoring, Supervision and Evaluation of Curriculum Implementation

A fourth challenge is inadequate monitoring, supervision and evaluation of curriculum implementation. A curriculum can only achieve its intended objectives when education authorities regularly determine whether schools and teachers are implementing it according to established guidelines. Monitoring should examine issues such as teachers' understanding of the curriculum, teaching methods, availability and use of instructional materials, assessment practices and students' acquisition of expected competencies. NERDC formally recognises the monitoring and evaluation of basic and senior secondary education curricula as part of its responsibilities (NERDC, n.d.). The revised implementation strategy also assigns SUBEBs responsibility for monitoring curriculum implementation in schools (NERDC, 2025). However, Nigeria's large and geographically diverse school system makes regular supervision difficult. Where monitoring is weak, schools may interpret curriculum provisions differently, teachers may continue using old instructional practices, and shortages of instructional resources may remain unresolved. Effective implementation therefore requires regular school-level supervision, state-level monitoring and national evaluation. Without a strong feedback mechanism, policymakers may not receive timely information about the difficulties teachers and learners encounter during implementation.

Resistance to Curriculum Change

Resistance to change among teachers, school administrators, parents and other education stakeholders can constitute a significant challenge to the implementation of the new curriculum. Curriculum reform often requires stakeholders to abandon familiar practices and adopt new approaches. Teachers who have become accustomed to existing subject structures, teaching methods and assessment practices may find it difficult to adjust to the new requirements. The revised curriculum introduces changes in subject organisation, learning outcomes, skills development and instructional expectations. NERDC (2025) indicates that the implementation of the revised curriculum requires substantial orientation and capacity building for teachers and other stakeholders. This suggests that successful implementation depends not only on the availability of the curriculum document but also on stakeholders' understanding and acceptance of the reforms. Where teachers or administrators perceive the reforms as complicated, unnecessary or burdensome, implementation may become superficial. Resistance may also arise among parents who are more familiar with traditional academic subjects and examination-oriented education. Some parents may prefer conventional subjects perceived to provide better opportunities for university admission, while giving less attention to vocational, technical and entrepreneurial components. Such attitudes can weaken the practical orientation of the new curriculum.

Large Class Sizes and Teacher Shortages

Large class sizes and inadequate numbers of qualified teachers constitute another challenge to effective curriculum implementation. The new curriculum places greater emphasis on competency development, practical learning, learner participation and acquisition of skills. These approaches require teachers to interact closely with learners and provide individualised guidance and assessment. Where a teacher is responsible for a very large number of students, it becomes difficult to organise practical activities, monitor individual progress, provide timely feedback and assess students' competencies effectively. The problem can be particularly severe in public schools where teacher shortages and uneven distribution of teachers remain concerns. The Federal Government's education reform framework recognises teacher development and adequate staffing as important conditions for improving the quality of education (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], 2025). Similarly, the revised curriculum implementation strategy places emphasis on ensuring that schools have appropriately qualified teachers for curriculum delivery (NERDC, 2025). Thus, implementing a skills-oriented curriculum without addressing teacher shortages and excessive class sizes may limit the extent to which the intended learning outcomes can be achieved.

Examination-Oriented Education and Assessment Challenges

Another major challenge is the continued dominance of examination-oriented education. For many years, the Nigerian education system has placed considerable emphasis on students' performance

in high-stakes examinations. Consequently, teachers and students may prioritise examination preparation, memorisation and coverage of examinable content instead of developing practical competencies, creativity, problem-solving abilities and other skills emphasised by the revised curriculum. The new curriculum's competency- and outcome-based orientation requires assessment to examine not only what students can remember but also what they can understand, apply and demonstrate (NERDC, 2025). This creates a challenge for teachers who may lack adequate knowledge and skills in competency-based assessment. There is therefore a need to align classroom assessment, school examinations and external examinations with the objectives of the revised curriculum. If classroom teaching encourages practical and competency-based learning while external examinations continue to reward mainly memorisation, teachers may naturally concentrate on examination preparation. Such misalignment can undermine the objectives of curriculum reform.

Inadequate ICT Infrastructure and Digital Divide

Inadequate ICT infrastructure and unequal access to digital technologies also pose challenges to implementation, particularly because contemporary education increasingly requires digital literacy and technology-supported learning. Schools need computers, reliable internet connectivity, electricity, digital learning resources and teachers who possess adequate digital competencies. The challenge is more pronounced in rural and disadvantaged communities where electricity supply, internet connectivity and access to computers may be limited. Consequently, students in well-resourced urban schools may have greater opportunities to benefit from technology-supported learning than students in poorly resourced rural schools. The Federal Ministry of Education has identified digital transformation and the integration of technology into education as important components of Nigeria's education development agenda (FME, 2025). However, the existence of a policy objective does not automatically guarantee infrastructure at school level. Where schools lack adequate ICT facilities, teachers may be unable to effectively integrate digital resources into curriculum delivery. This can widen the digital divide and create disparities in the implementation of the new curriculum.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The reform of the Nigerian school curriculum is necessary because the purpose of education is not merely to preserve existing knowledge but to prepare learners for the society in which they will live and work. The recent curriculum reform seeks to address important weaknesses associated with curriculum overload while strengthening competency development, digital literacy, practical skills, entrepreneurship, national history, citizenship and relevance to contemporary needs. The reform covers the basic education level, including primary and junior secondary education, as well as senior secondary education (NERDC, 2025).

However, curriculum reform on paper does not automatically translate into effective curriculum implementation. The paper identified; inadequate teacher preparation and capacity building, ICT infrastructure and digital divide, instructional materials and learning facilities, funding and unequal distribution of educational resources, weak monitoring, supervision and evaluation of curriculum implementation, resistance to curriculum change, large class sizes and high students-teachers ratio, examination-oriented education and assessment challenges as challenges facing implementation of the new curriculum in the Nigerian schools.

The success of the reform will depend on the availability of qualified teachers, appropriate instructional materials, laboratories and workshops, digital infrastructure, adequate funding, appropriate assessment systems and continuous monitoring. The Federal Government's own implementation framework recognises the importance of teachers' guides, curriculum distribution and monitoring of implementation (FME, 2024).

Based on the findings, the paper recommends the followings:

- 1) Government should provide continuous teacher training. Teachers at primary, JSS and SSS levels should receive regular professional development on the content, pedagogy and assessment requirements of the revised curriculum.
- 2) Adequate instructional resources should be provided. Government should ensure that schools have current textbooks, teachers' guides, laboratories, workshops, ICT facilities and other resources required for effective curriculum delivery.
- 3) Curriculum implementation should be adequately funded. Federal and state governments should provide sustainable funding for teacher training, infrastructure, instructional materials and monitoring.
- 4) Assessment should be aligned with the new curriculum. WAEC, NECO, NABTEB and other assessment bodies should ensure that examinations assess competencies, application, critical thinking and practical skills rather than excessive memorisation.
- 5) Digital education should be strengthened. Schools should receive reliable electricity, internet connectivity, computers and other digital resources to enable effective implementation of Digital Technologies and technology-supported learning.
- 6) Practical and vocational education should receive greater attention. Schools should be equipped with functional workshops and trained personnel so that trade and practical components of the curriculum are actually taught rather than treated theoretically.

7) Curriculum implementation should be continuously monitored. NERDC, Federal and State Ministries of Education, UBEC, SUBEBs and school administrators should establish effective monitoring mechanisms to identify implementation gaps and provide timely solutions.

8) Stakeholders should participate continuously in curriculum review. Teachers, students, parents, employers, universities, professional associations and other stakeholders should periodically provide feedback on whether the curriculum is meeting emerging national needs. This is consistent with NERDC's earlier stakeholder-dialogue approach to curriculum review, which sought views from teachers, students, parents, policymakers and other education stakeholders (NERDC, 2020).

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