

# Chronicle of Basic Education Curriculum Transformations in Pre- and Post-Independent Namibia: A Responsiveness Perspective

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## Abstract

There have been a number of curricular changes in the basic education in pre- and post-independent Namibia. These curricula transformations have been dictated by contextual purposes. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the changes in curriculum while exploring the responsive reasons for those curricular changes. The researchers used a desktop review of literature to extract the reasons for the curricular responsiveness and transformation in Namibia's basic education before and after independence. The review established that curriculum changes have been driven by socio-economic, cultural as well as political reasons. This can be aligned to curriculum responsiveness. In a nutshell, curriculum is used in different social contexts to respond to economic, political and cultural needs in a particular context.

## Keywords

Curriculum Transformation, Curriculum Responsiveness, Education Reform, Basic Education, Indigenous

## 1. Introduction

The rationale of this article is to analyse the different reasons that enabled curriculum transformation at different eras. This article focused on uncovering the significance of curriculum responsiveness to different socio-economic and cultural demands (Moll, 2004). The literature on curricula transformation in Namibia does not make any reference to any explicitly theoretical grounding that framed their analysis (Amukugo, 1993; Ellis, 1984; Hailombe, 2011; Nangula,

2013; Peters, 2016). The article intends to fill the gaps that curriculum change is driven by responsiveness towards curriculum. For example, curriculum under traditional education addresses social cohesion and solidarity among members of communal living societies. This is to promote the philosophy of *Ubuntu* which is coined from an isiZulu expression of the Nguni people of South Africa: *umuntu ngumuntu gabantu*, which promotes caring for others in our communal societies. However, the Eurocentric curriculum introduced by missionary educators was aimed at converting indigenous Africans to Christianity and the western ways of life. The curricula under the Germans as well as South African colonial regimes was crafted to produce cheap labourers to serve in menial as well as entry administrative jobs during the extractions of natural resources to serve the social, political, economic and cultural needs of these colonial powers. This article is significant by highlighting that curriculum change aims to respond to a number of senses at a particular time. It is also significant to unveil that a curriculum is a work in progress, which could change directions based on what it seeks to achieve.

We begin this paper with a discussion on Moll's (2004) theory of curriculum responsiveness which underpins this desktop analysis. Furthermore, the paper delves into the basic education curricular transformations in Namibia during the five sequential eras while relating it to curriculum responsiveness. First, we discuss the pre-independence curriculum under traditional education before the first missionary society arrived in Namibia from Europe around 1805 (Auala, 1989; Kandumbu, 2005; Shangula, 2020). Second, we discuss the curriculum of missionary education era during the pre- and post-colonialism. Third, we provide a critical account of the curriculum under the German colonialism period. Fourth, we critically articulate the curriculum under the South African colonial regime. Lastly, we wrap up the discussion with a highlight on the curricular reforms in an independent Namibia. A few recommendations for the need of research, policies and practices focused on ensuring responsive curricular paradigm shift, in the Namibian context, are provided towards the end of the paper.

## 2. Research Procedures

The desktop research procedure is used in this article, which also framed the data collection process (Msweli, 2011). The authors used the data taken from summaries of the already existing literature and aligned it to the significance of the article. The authors reviewed secondary research materials such as books, government publications and academic research reports. They followed the following steps, namely; identifying the topic, this is followed by reviewing Moll's (2004) Curriculum Responsiveness Theory to establish if the curricula at different eras in Namibia were responsive. This is followed by going back to the existing literature reviewed on curriculum transformation in Namibia to establish if the curriculum is responsive to any Moll's (2004) identified curriculum responsive areas. The authors kept refining the draft to align the content to the major

objective of the paper. The paper to exploring the responsive reasons for curricular transformation. Finally, the authors summarised the responsiveness of different curriculum in a table forms (see [Table 1](#)).

### 3. Curriculum Responsiveness Theory

This article is a result of literature review on the background of basic education curricula in Namibia from pre-colonial to post-colonial period. The analysis seeks to establish the reasons for changes in curriculum. The authors found that these changes aligned with [Moll's \(2004\)](#) theory of Curriculum Responsiveness that framed this article.

Around 2004, Ian Moll of the South African Institute for Distance Education discoursed about the new theory of curriculum responsiveness in higher education setting. Despite this theory being used in the high education context, it may as well be useful in the basic education context. [Moll \(2004\)](#) identified four dimensions of curriculum responsiveness namely; economic, cultural, disciplinary and learning related. Curriculum responsiveness, according to [Moll \(2004: p. 3\)](#) “premises some positively formulated benchmarks against which we might be able to judge whether our education programmes are meeting the needs of a transforming society”. One of the aims of education in general is to transform economic and socio-cultural dynamics of a society.

First, a curriculum should be responsive to economic dynamics. This means that it should address the questions of whether education is preparing individuals to effectively work in a particular sector of the national economy, either private or public, in a given setting. For example, the graduates should be able to use the skills and knowledge acquired from education to meet the needs and demands of the labour market including economic competitiveness.

Second, a curriculum should also be responsive to culture. The concept of culture as defined by social realist, [Archer \(1995\)](#) that it is made up of beliefs, opinions, ideas, theories, values, concepts and myths that may exist independently with or without agents being aware or unaware of them. It is found in documents or through discourses used by specific agents and actors in a particular setting. [Moll \(2004\)](#) indicated that cultural curriculum responsiveness entails that education curriculum should respond to diverse cultures of students and society by ensuring that diversity is recognised and considered alternative learning paths of a diverse body of learners.

Third, a curriculum should have disciplinary responsiveness, which is about engaging in disciplinary scholarly research, encouraged more in a high education setting in order to keep up to date with emerging disciplinary knowledge canons. Lastly, a curriculum should bear learning-related responsiveness where teaching and learning in an education setting should respond by ensuring that the learning opportunities are expanded to wider pupil catchment. [Moll's \(2004\)](#) curriculum responsiveness theory is worth exploring in the basic education context in order to establish if a curriculum is responsive to these four senses. Ac-

According to Moll, despite little theoretical depth in the theory of curriculum responsiveness, in education in general, it is worth exploring in basic education curricular transformation in Namibia. This may provide leads in terms of its responsiveness.

## 4. Pre-Independence Curriculum Transformations

### 4.1. Traditional Education Curriculum

Before the arrival of missionaries, indigenous education had ways of transmitting knowledge and skills from one generation to the other through undocumented traditional means. Although there has been education practiced in Namibia before the coming of the missionaries, it is still debated today whether that education was formal or informal. To elaborate on this, Hailombe (2011: p. 136) stated that “formal schooling was first introduced by European missionaries”, which implies that formal education was only introduced in Namibian education system by the missionaries. Prior to the era of missionaries, knowledge and skills have been transferred from one generation to the other through initiations, observations and imitation. For example, initiations have been institutionalised where boys and girls are taken out of their homes to attend sessions conducted by sage experts. In this era, there was no written curriculum for imparting knowledge but there has always been a programme. However, this does not mean that there was no formal teaching and learning taking place in the social establishments of the various communities.

Auala (1989) perceived traditional education as a collective mean used by adults to transmit cultural heritage, beliefs, norms and skills from one generation to another. The latter, was done through observation and learn-by-doing under supervision of experienced adults. This aligns more with cultural responsiveness as well as imparting skills that are relevant to economic sector of the time. Ellis (1984), on the other hand, indicates that pre-colonial traditional education was part of everyday life where adults took the responsibilities of teaching, correcting and punishing any child. Borrowing from Auala and Ellis, it is evident that indigenous communities in Namibia, before the arrival of European-modeled education, had always practiced the transferring of knowledge, norms and skills among members of their communities. These acts of education promoted social solidarity as well as cultural cohesion among the members of the society. This education curriculum was more responsive to the socio-cultural fabrics of the community. Curriculum during this era was used to instill cultural values, norms, communalism as well as social cohesion within members of a society. The Namibian sage expression, *omeya ogo omwenyo*, which translated as “water is life” was aimed at restoration of dignity and fundamental rights of people who need water (Ndeunyema, 2021). This expression promoted right to life as espoused in the Namibian Constitution. We therefore conclude that traditional education promoted through norms, values and beliefs were responsive to economic and socio-cultural dynamics of the

society of that time.

## 4.2. Missionary Education Curriculum

The first record of European, who first set their feet on the shore of Namibia was a Portuguese sailor-cum-explorer, Diogo Cao around 1485 (Katjavivi, 1988). He was followed by Bathromew Dias, who reached the cross at Angra Bequena near the current time town of Luderitz in 1486. Dias is reported to have seen indigenous people with large herds of cattle. The next recorded era of European travelers was around the seventeenth century when a contingent of Dutch sailors under the leadership of Jan van Riebeeck landed in the Cape and started moving inland around 1793 and subsequently made their way to Southern Namibia where they established themselves as farming settlers (Katjavivi, 1988; Shangula, 2020).

The first missionary introduced western-modelled education in southern Namibia, which was spearheaded by the London Missionary Society and the Wesleyans around the first decade of 1800 (Kandumbu, 2005; Katjavivi, 1988; Shangula, 2020). According to Katjavivi (1988), around 1840, the German and Finish missionaries followed suit and their education was anchored in Eurocentric beliefs of “civilisation” which promoted their cultural practices while peripherising the indigenous cultural value systems and ways of knowing. Their education was modelled around the western-centric civilisation while instilling the western cultural values and norms in the indigenous community. The Eurocentric education had also promoted the project of colonialism and subjugation of African knowledge systems, philosophy, arts, culture and religion.

When the first missionary society arrived in Namibia, they did not only concentrate on building churches in Namibia, but they also built schools to teach catechism aimed at producing royal and obedient labourers. Catechism was aimed at delivering the indigenous people from the state of “uncivilization” as well as “paganism”, which the missionaries claimed was rife at the time. This Christianisation resulted into deculturalisation as well as swaying the cultural practices towards the European ways of living, being and cognising. Nangula (2013) explains that catechism refers to the booklet that shortly describes the doctrines and principles of Christianity. The catechism was also used to convert members of indigenous communities to Christian teachings and practices.

The missionary education was also economically responsive in a way that it provided industrial education to provide skills to native blacks who were to serve the missionary settlers. This industrial education formed the basis of technical and vocational curriculum during the missionary education era. Furthermore, curriculum was used to create an army of needed labour force, which aligns with economic responsiveness in order to aid the developmental agenda of the missionaries (Moll, 2004).

The Rhenish Missionary settled in Namibia at Otjimbingwe around 1866 and the Finish Missionary followed them in 1870. Like the Wesleyan Mission Society, the curriculum for Rhenish and Finish missionaries was bordered around

Christianisation of the local indigenous communities by teaching them how to read the Bible (Hailombe, 2011; Iita, 2014). Religion teachings are about beliefs, Christian cultural doctrine as well as norms. Therefore, the missionary education transformed the culture and norms of indigenous people. Further, as expressed by Amukugo (1993) education for Africans was left in the hands of the missionaries, and hardly moved beyond basic literacy and numeracy training. These knowledge and skills were thought to be adequate for the indigenous people in order to be able to comprehend the domestic work that they were given by missionaries. This implies that the curriculum planned by the missionary educators was seemingly designed to produce royal servants for both missionaries and colonial settlers. Hence, it aligned more with political as well as economic responsiveness.

Girls, in the missionary education system, were trained in domestic chores while the boys were trained in brick making, carpentry and gardening among other vocational basic skills (Iita, 2014). This seems to have equipped the natives with a culture of servanthood and royalism towards the white missionary-based masters whom they had to serve using the functional skills obtained from the education. These skills supported indigenous blacks to work as servants and semi-skilled labourers to serve the European masters. These accounts confirm the basis of curriculum responsiveness during the era of missionary education in Namibia (Amukugo, 1993; Hailombe, 2011; Iita, 2014; Kandumbu, 2005).

After the 1884/1885 Berlin Conference, Namibia was allocated to German who led the country for a period of about thirty years. Therefore, the next part discusses about curriculum and its responsiveness during the German colonial period.

### 4.3. Curriculum during the German Colonial Era

The combined traditional and missionary education were followed by the intrusion of the territory by the Germans that came at the invitation of the missionaries. The missionaries invited them to provide security and protection against the anticipated resistance from the local communities who resisted their teachings and land occupation. The bloody conflict between indigenous Namibians led to one of the fierce genocides aimed at exterminating the Namas and Hereroes tribes' men and women around 1904 and 1906 (Katjavivi, 1988; Munalye, 2016). The Germans turned into colonisers of Namibia from 1884 to 1915 (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 2017). Unfortunately, the Germans did not bother about providing a liberating education to the native Namibians. Instead, they left the education in the hands of the missionaries but ensured that they dictated what was to be included in the curriculum to serve the interests of the community of settlers. The Germans only established a first German *Realschule* in 1906 for White children only, which marked the beginning of separate schooling for Germans and indigenous black people of Namibia.

To support the above observation, Amukugo (1993: p. 44) referring to educa-

tion for indigenous people under the German rule indicated that “the running of educational institutions was to a large extent left in the hands of missionaries”. The missionaries provided education to the indigenous Namibians aimed at imparting biblical knowledge in a curriculum prescribed by the Germans (Hailombe, 2011; Katjavivi, 1988; Peters, 2016). This supports the beginning of the culture of religious converts or evolution. This means the curriculum during the German colonial regime did not differ much from the curriculum offered during the missionaries’ era. The purpose of education was not far from producing noncritical thinkers but obedient labourers to work as livestock herders and domestic workers serving the German settlers’ families. This education responded to the labour market need of that time. This education was not intended to liberate, instill innovation and critical thinking among the indigenous beneficiaries but responded to economic dynamics of the time.

#### 4.4. Curriculum under the South African Colonial Regime

When Germany lost World War I, South African forces annexed Namibia in 1915 and ruled it under martial laws, which ended on 1 January 1921. The annexure marked the end of the German administration over Namibia and “South Africa, acting on behalf of Britain, was made responsible for Namibia under the terms of a League of Nations Mandate” (Munalye, 2016; Katjavivi, 1988: p. 13).

The South African colonial regime started around 1915 to 1990 (Shanyanana, 2011). Amukugo (1993) provided evidence that the South African colonial regime did not show much interest in developing an emancipating education for the Africans either. According to Peters (2016) both colonial occupying powers (German and South Africa) did not pay any particular attention to the educational needs of the indigenous black Namibians. Further, Peters’ study indicated that education was left in the hands of various missionary societies, which were subjected to following the government regulations. This enabled the basic education curriculum to respond to the senses; namely the economic, cultural, disciplinary and learning-related responsiveness (Moll, 2004). Unlike the Germans, the South African colonial government, however, introduced a number of education reforms. The reforms impacted the changes in curriculum in response to the context. These reforms were to enforce the policies promoting White supremacy and separateness or apartheid (Aloovi, 2016). Apartheid was a documented set of norms, values and beliefs that the South African colonial regime wanted to enforce among the African indigenous community. These curricula supported the culture that promoted the policy of apartheid or separateness.

Bantu Education was introduced soon after the National Party came to power in 1948. “The imposition of Bantu Education” (Angula, 2018: p. 5) was specifically designed for Namibian, what and South African indigenous people. It also enforced the divide and rule policy, which enabled the white settlers to control the indigenous natives economically and politically thus having economic and political responsiveness. It seems that the curriculum under the South African

colonial rule was more geared towards promoting economic and political agenda of the apartheid regime. Education for indigenous Africans was designed to produce cheap unskilled labourers to serve in subordinate positions. This refers to labour market responsiveness of the basic education curriculum (Moll, 2004). Shanyanana (2011) cemented the above by stating that the aims of education by the colonial regimes were to equip indigenous citizens with skills to have them employed as semi-skilled labourers or serve specific manual jobs. This was more about market and economic responsiveness of the basic education curriculum.

Basic education was later improved to produce semi-skilled labours that could work as administrators during the apartheid government. The Bantu Education curriculum did not encourage innovation and critical thinking either. The curriculum was planned to serve the specific purpose of producing noncritical but royal servants of the “superior” white masters while promoting dependency, culture of obedient consumerism and respect for white supremacy among indigenous community. The education offered on the basis of color, race and ethnicity cemented a legacy of the culture of separate economic benefit, education and social development.

Before independence on 21 March 1990, the administration of the education system in Namibia was based on racial segregation (Hailombe, 2011; Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993). This meant that blacks, whites and coloureds were forced through legal tools to attend school separately. Education for blacks was inferior while whites received “superior” education (Hailombe, 2011). Furthermore, added Hailombe, coloureds received an education that was inferior to whites but superior to that of the blacks. The separate schools complimented segregated socio-economic as well as cultural development. These segregated education systems based on races meant school curricular were different for these races. Upon obtaining independence, the incoming democratic government introduced a number of education reforms to redress the injustices perpetuated over a period of approximately 100 years.

## 5. Post-Independence Curriculum Transformations

When the ceasefire agreement was signed between South West Africa People Organisation’s (SWAPO) military wing, the People Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and South African apartheid government, the implementation of United Nation Resolution 435 was enforced on the 1 April 1989. This paved the way for United Nations (UN) supervised elections, which was held under the supervision of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) by the end of 1989. The SWAPO party won the first democratic elections and formed a government on 21 March 1990. As soon as independence came, new ways of equally educating a nation of different races were devised. The unified basic education system addressed the culture of separateness. Unity has discoursed in many national forums while recognising the diversity among the communities. It led to a number of post-independence education reforms aimed at undoing the



social, cultural and economic injustices created through a long period of subjugation and colonialism over ten decades. The next parts discuss some of the curricula transformations in basic education curriculum in an independent Namibia.

### 5.1. Unification of Segregated Education Systems

At Namibia's independent, the incoming SWAPO government inherited an education system, which was characterised as fragmented and unequal (Peters, 2016). This characterisation led to unequal allocation of financial, human and material resources in education, which operated as the culture during the colonial era. The education for the natives was administered by Bantustans or homelands through an education system called Bantu Education. There were eleven segregated and fragmented education systems in Namibia along the ethnical and tribal lines (Amukugo, 1993; Hailombe, 2011). However, there was no ethnic segregation among the white communities. The schools in Bantustan were characterised by nonexistence of financial resources, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of properly qualified teachers, physical facilities as well as lack of instructional or teaching and learning resources. Once again, stresses Hailombe (2011), before independence, education in Namibia was for the privileged few. Education was not declared a right especially for a black child, this means that a bulk of indigenous children of school going age had no chance to attend basic education. The post-independence basic education curricula reforms sought to address the culture that had been practiced for over a hundred years. This culture had negative impact on the socio-economic dynamics of the indigenous people in Namibia.

However, after independence, education became a basic fundamental human right as enshrined in Article 20 (1) in Chapter 3 of the Namibian Constitution which reads as "All person shall have right to education" (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1990: pp. 12-13). This constitutional declaration as well as the 2013 declaration of free education in all government schools from primary to secondary level opened chances to those that did not have the privilege to attend school. It led to mass influx of learners into schools, which may have affected the delivery of curriculum in one way or the other. This opened opportunities for many children to enroll in schools to acquire skills that make them functional citizens in labour market, economy and society as well as culture of unity among the people who previously lived in segregated social and economic systems.

### 5.2. Towards Education for All in Namibia

In 1990, Namibia sent a high-level delegation of educationists to a global education conference in Jomtien, Thailand, which discussed "Education for All". From that conference, the Namibia government in 1993 introduced a policy document called "Towards Education for All (TEFA)". For Namibia, putting education under fundamental human right and freedom in the constitution was a cultural milestone the new democratic government took.

The reform in education targeted creating a uniform and nonsegregated system of education. Shanyanana (2011: p. 5) stressed that different racial education systems were “merged into one unified, democratic, national department of education”. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Culture (1993) indicated that the commitment of this educational change aimed to bring the realisation of the policy maxim advocating for a move towards equal, equitable, access and democratic education for all. The education policy had four goals through which it could achieve the policy maxim namely access, equity, quality and democracy (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993).

The development and education level for blacks, which was fractured, drove most blacks into abject poverty due to the economic responsiveness of the education that they went through. The prolonged subjugation caused the socio-economic damage that the indigenous Namibians still dwell in at present. To arrest the underdevelopment caused by apartheid, the new democratic Namibian government amalgamated the eleven different systems of educations into one unified education system. This educational reform is premised on learner-centered approach rather than the teacher-centered approach that took center stage during colonial education. Under the learner-centered approach culture, learners are placed at the center of learning through discovery in social context. Teachers are to serve as facilitators of learning in the learner-centered approach unlike in the teacher-centered approach, which was practiced before independence, where teachers are portrayed as the only custodians of knowledge. The teacher-centered pedagogy, where teaching is offered through lecture method encouraged rote learning and memorisation. Therefore, learners may find it difficult to remember the content (Aloovi, 2016).

### **5.3. Junior Secondary Certificate and Higher/International General Certificate of Secondary Education**

Another post-independence education reform was the introduction of the Junior Secondary Examination (JSE) between 1991 and 1993. This examination covers a content for the three years of junior secondary school curriculum, which started from Grade 8 to Grade 10. However, the JSE has been blamed for enabling learners to drop out of school at an early age. This was followed by the introduction of the senior secondary school curriculum (Grade 11 - Grade 12) between 1994 and 1995. This reform marked the end of the Cape Education Department examination for Matric or Standard 10 by fulltime candidates in 1994.

The International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE) examinations were introduced in 1994. The IGCSE examinations were set and marked locally. While the HIGCSE set, marked and moderated by the University of Cambridge. Despite the reform from the Cape Education system, there were no major changes in content of subjects except the translation of teaching and learning resources from Afrikaans to English as well as the removal of the racist

remarks contained in the instructional materials (Aloovi, 2016). It seems the content in these examination papers was foreign to learners. This led to another proposal of localisation of the senior secondary school examinations branded Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC).

#### 5.4. Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate

In 2009, a Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC) was introduced. This change is made to enable the localisation of the curriculum and improve on the results of the senior secondary school examinations. The design and content remain more or less the same as the H/IGCSE. Once again, this has changed after the 2011 National Education Conference held in Namibia's Capital City, Windhoek, which started on 27 June 2011 and ended on 01 July 2011. The Conference resolved to make changes to the basic education curriculum. This culminated into the Revised Curriculum for Basic Education (RCBE), which was implemented in stages from 2015 until 2022.

#### 5.5. The Revised Curriculum for Basic Education

The Revised Curriculum for Basic Education (RCBE), under implementation from year 2015 to 2022, aims to respond to the challenges and needs of the Namibian society (Ministry of Education, 2015). It is, also, aimed at fast-tracking the realisation of the goal of Namibia Vision 2030 that seeks to increase the quality of life of Namibians to the level of their counterparts in the developed world by the year 2030 (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2004). Largely, these curricular changes in Namibia aim to fast-track the country's developmental agenda of becoming an industrialised country by the year 2030, which responds to socio-economic dynamics.

To achieve the objectives set in the Vision 2030, the government through education must produce human resources ready to function in a knowledge-based economy. In order to ensure that the Namibian society is made up of literate, skilled, articulated, innovative, informed and proactive education should be central to Vision 2030 (Katjavivi, 2016). These moves signify that the government puts education at the center of propelling socio-economic development and transformation.

The Government of the Republic of Namibia also made a commitment towards attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to realise the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, n.d.). Therefore, the newly reformed RCBE is aimed at providing equitable quality education for all subsequent bringing about the realisation of SDGs. Tubaundule (2014: p. 6) stated that "Namibia secondary school learners are not acquiring the necessary skills, values, competencies and knowledge that will enable them on a life-long basis, to understand, critique and transfer Namibia's knowledge-based economy". Lack of knowledge-based economy retards the country's performance in the worldwide economic system. Tubaundule (2014)

view curriculum as a tool to instill functional skills in graduates so that they survive in a knowledge-based economy.

Katjavivi (2016) opines that countries prosper when students are sufficiently developed for higher education landscape. Contrary to Katjavivi's position, basic education should not only produce for higher education institutions (HEIs) but should also produce self-reliant graduates. These graduates should contribute to the socio-economic development even if they did not get a chance to go to higher education institutions. This implies that the basic education curriculum should respond to labour market as well economic dynamics.

The most recent education reform was adopted in a Cabinet's 3<sup>rd</sup>/25 March 2014/001 meeting which approved curriculum reform for basic education and the eight-year implementation plan. The aim of revising curricula is to bring about socio-economic and political development of a country. We summarised the curricula transformation and responsiveness in a table form. Therefore, **Table 1** shows a tabulate summary of curricular responsiveness from pre-colonial to post-colonial era.

We close off this paper with a conclusion and by recommending way forward for both policy and practice as far as the transformation of school curriculum is concerned.

## 6. Conclusion

We now conclude that during the traditional education era, the curriculum focused more on the transfer of functional knowledge and skills from one generation to another through initiations, imitations and observations. This curriculum promoted cultural and social cohesion among members of local communities. The curriculum during this period was not documented but was told through folktales. The curriculum during the traditional education was responsive to socio-cultural as well as economic activities of the indigenous communities. When the missionaries arrived in Namibia, they introduced "formal" education with a documented curriculum. This curriculum sought to train natives, instilling in them, the culture and doctrine of Christianity to produce royal obedience. Furthermore, the missionaries focused imparting labour marked industrial skills that natives were expected to use when serving their masters, the missionaries and European settlers. The German colonialists left the education in the hands of the missionaries. This meant that the curriculum during this time was not different from the one offered in missionary schools.

The South African apartheid regime introduced a number of curriculum changes. However, these changes were mean to satisfy the socio-political and economic interest of the occupants. The curriculum was used to advance the notion of white supremacy and separateness or apartheid. Education during this era was geared to produce semi-skilled labour force. The education for black communities was segregated according to race and tribes where different quotas of funding were used for separate ethnic groups. Opposingly, the education for

**Table 1.** Curricular responsiveness from pre-colonialism to post colonial era.

| DIFFERENT CURRICULUM PERIOD   | FOCUS OF CURRICULUM   | HIGHLIGHTS OF CURRICULUM RESPONSIVENESS   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>1. PRE-INDEPENDENCE CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATIONS</b>   |   |   |
| 1.1. Traditional education curriculum (before the introduction of the European styled education system)                       | Focused on socio-cultural cohesion as well as indigenous economic activities.   | Traditional education curriculum has been responsive to social, culture and economic cohesion.  |
| 1.2. Missionary education curriculum (from 1806-1990)   | Focused on religion, imparted European domestic and industrial knowledge to create royals and domestic servants.  | Responsive to culture, through converting indigenous people to European religious beliefs, economic responsiveness to serve the missionaries.   |
| 1.3. Curriculum during the German colonialism era (1884-1915)   | Left education of indigenous people in the hands of missionaries but controlled what was to be in the curriculum.   | Like missionary education, the response was more geared towards cementing the western socio-economic and cultural superiority.  |
| 1.4. Curriculum under the South African colonial rule (1915-990)  | South Africa colonialist introduced various reforms to respond to social, political and economic activities of the time.  | The curriculum was responsive to social and culture by promoting white supremacy, apartheidness as well as economic responsive where education produced semi-skilled labourers and basic administrative personnel.                                    |
| <b>2. POST-INDEPENDENCE CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATIONS (1990-now)</b>   |   |   |
| 2.1. Unification of segregated education systems (1990-)  | After decades of socio-economic as well as cultural exclusion of indigenous people and injustice which resulted from apartheid policy, unification of education systems was introduced.   | Curriculum responded to prolonged cultural injustice as well as the policy of divide and rule. The curriculum responded to culture, social practices and economic activities were indigenous people have been structurally and systematical excluded. |
| 2.2. Towards education for all in Namibia (1990-)   | Goals of access, equit, equality and democracy were introduced to promote towards education for all.  | Responsiveness to socio-cultural and well as economic activities.   |
| 2.3. Junior Secondary Certificate (1991-1993) and Higher/International General Certificate of Secondary Education (1994-1995) | The two exit examination systems were introduced to improve the outcomes at junior as well as senior secondary level. Despite the changes in the draconial language previously used in the assessment the seem to have been no much change. |   |
| 2.4. Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate (2009-2020)   | This change was motivated by move towards indiginisation of assessment.   |   |
| 2.5. The Revised Curriculum for Basic Education (2015-2022)   | Curriculum seek to fast track relisation of Vision 2030, which seek to have Namibia industrialised in the knowledge-based economy era.  |   |

the white communities was not arranged according to ethnicity. The African received the lowest assistance from the state while the schools for the whites received better funding and resources, which gave them socio-economic and cultural competitive advantages over their black and coloured counterparts. The

education of these sequential eras was more teacher-centered than learner-centered. It did not encourage critical thinking among the indigenous recipients, to enable them to advance the socio-economic development of their communities.

From independence, a number of reforms were implemented. The learner-centered education approach was implemented, which saw learners taking the center stage of the learning process. The reforms were meant to impart the requisite skills and knowledge to address the past inequality and injustice. The JSC and subsequent H/IGCSE were introduced but the content remained the same. However, the decolonization of the racist language previously used in an apartheid literature or content was removed. The Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC) was introduced but the content remained more or less the same. The most recent curriculum transformation, the RCBE is geared to fast track the realisation of the national developmental goal stipulated in the vision 2030. This is currently being implemented and hence impact research needs to be in place early enough.

## 7. Recommendations

Using Moll's (2004) curriculum responsiveness theory, the paper made the following recommendations. First, when the European settlers (missionaries or colonialists) arrived in Namibia they were determined to do away with indigenous ways of knowing, which they substituted with the "modern" practices, it is recommended that traditional ways of knowing should be revived and added to the theories of pedagogy and ways of cognition. Second, despite the colonial curricula reforms geared towards responding to the needs of the regime of that time, it is recommended that the critical factors that emerged should be emulated. It is further, recommended that a study should be conducted to analyse whether the decolonial turn is considered in the revised curriculum for basic education. It is also recommended that a study should be conducted to assess the peripherisation of indigenous ways of knowing over the westernized knowledge systems. Finally, it is recommended that an impact research should be conducted on the newly revised curriculum so that we keep track of the impact that it is having on the society.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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