

# Constraints Towards the Efficacy of Competency Based Curriculum Implementation in Kenya, A Case Study of Chesumei Sub-County, Kenya

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doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bje.2013/vol13n3115>

Published February 11, 2025

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**Citation:** Ronguno S.K. (2025) Constraints Towards the Efficacy of Competency Based Curriculum Implementation in Kenya, A Case Study of Chesumei Sub-County, Kenya, *British Journal of Education*, Vol.13, Issue 3,1-15

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**Abstract:** *The current study was set to find out the challenges affecting the efficacy of implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). The study focused on availability of teaching and learning materials, teaching staff preparedness in competency Based Curriculum pedagogy, policy framework and learner assessment. The study was necessitated by public outcry over mismatch in policy formulation and curriculum implementation. Mixed methodological approach involving both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Questionnaires and class observations were used. Forty-Five schools were randomly selected to participate in the study. The head teacher of the school and one teacher per school in the selected schools were allowed to respond to the questionnaire. Document analysis was done to ascertain level of learner assessment. The findings shows that the implementation of CBC still faces some constrains like inadequate resources, incompetency among teachers and lack of clear policies to guide the assessment of learners.*

**Key words.** competency based curriculum, teacher preparedness, learner assessment and CBC pedagogy.

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## INTRODUCTION

Each and every nation spends sizable resources on education with an aim of achieving social, political and economic transformation. This is because Education has democracy, freedom and sustained human development at its base (UNICEF,1999). Taba (1962) and Tyler (1969) suggests directed learning experiences towards specific goals. Education encompasses the development of capacities in the individual which will enable him or her to control and fulfill personal responsibilities in continued stages as observed by John Dewey. Elizabeth (2012) observes that education is a key component of National development.

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Kenya was forced to adopt competency-based curriculum after 8-4-4 failed to address the problem of rising rate of un-employment. Low employment rate prompted the government of Kenya to adopt CBC since unemployment hits the highest number of young generation aged 15-24 an equivalent of 75% of Kenya's population (KNBS, 2019). If the trend is not put under check and balance, then it will continue impacting negatively on countries economy (Hall, 2022). Kim et al points out to the need to adopt a new learning model in Kenya, that unemployment among the graduating youths prompted the government of Kenya to adopt CBC as most preferred in equipping the population with skills and knowledge through talent identification and development. Many studies have been done and presented empirically thus suggesting that learner centered teaching and learning approaches are effective in content delivery. This is so because it utilizes pedagogical approaches which call for learner collaboration, menthol enquiry, analytical and effective thinking, creativity and problem solving (Vavrus et al 2011). These skills are pertinent to learners of all abilities guiding them towards managerial or labor requirements. When learners are equipped with such skills, they develop an insight into the content. These learners are then well equipped to compete in the technological and dynamic 21<sup>st</sup> century shaping them to be responsible citizens as noted by Kabita and Ji in Muchira (2023). For a Nation to develop and remain economically viable, it must keep on evolving constantly that it can march itself to the changing trends globally (Breen, 2015).

The 21<sup>st</sup> century skills brought about a shift in sociological concerns in technology and global dimensions. This has necessitated a shift in teaching and learning in order for countries to have her citizens acquire a new set of abilities for individual and social development (Pedreno, 2017). Curriculum change is necessary since generations differ in technological advances by way of storage, retrieving and sharing knowledge (Wolfinger,2014). Learners who are taken through CBC exhibit skills in problem solving, lifelong learning, critical thinking, self- efficacy, peer engagement and deeper conceptual understanding (Choi and Woo, 2020). (KICD 2017,2019) presents CBC as best in equipping learners with values, skills and attitudes that enables them to solve problems hence get adopted to and able to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> C which presents shifting technological needs and advancements. (Moon, 2007) notes that the best characteristic of CBC Pedagogical approach is that it encourages learners to optimize their potentials and abilities according to their talents.

To achieve its goals, CBC embraces the use of continuous formative assessments as opposed to traditional summative (Imana, 2020). National Education Support Program of 2015 acknowledged CBC as suitable since all learners are given equal opportunities to succeed in their chosen pathways. This happens as they position themselves as they undergo these curriculum frameworks. The competency term in CBC was first mentioned in Kenya in 2013 in the basic Education Act during the establishment of National Education Qualification Frameworks in order to rationalize Kenyan Education to the world. The required standards were based on qualification and competencies in knowledge, skills and attitudes (ROK 2013).The CBC was rolled out in 2017 followed by series of retooling workshops for practicing teachers. The CBC adopts a learner centre

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pedagogy and make good use of authentic assessment which is largely formative. CBC as a new pedagogical approach to teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is an approach where learners study at individualized pace while demonstrating mastery towards what they learn. According to Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD, 2021), such mastery would be developed through CBC competencies which include: critical thinking and problem solving, digital literacy, self-efficacy, communication and collaboration, creativity and imagination, learning to learn and citizenship. The structure of CBC depends on learner ability (Sur and Pedding 2019).It also centres on real life skills and competencies development as observed by Cunningham and Bral (2016).The rolling out of the new system of education in Kenya is being faced with a number of constraints more so in the their specialized field (Grube, 2015).

**Statement of the problem.** The sessional paper number two of 2015 made recommendations towards adoption of a new curriculum which could ensure execution of national assessment and continuous identification, nurturing and instilling of values. UNESCO (2017) reported low level of acceptance of CBC in Kenya particularly at Mount Kenya region. The Education stakeholders have since identified loopholes in CBC implementation. The parents and teachers' organization, Ministry of Education (MOE) and the teachers unions identified certain setbacks in the implementation process. Such set backs are always expected as Shiundu in Dibisa (2010) notes that, a new curriculum implementation is always expected to present challenges. The current study was therefore timely in establishing factors affecting implementation of CBC in Kenya.

**Purpose of the study.** The main aim of conducting the study was to investigate the challenges affecting the efficacy toward implementation of competency based curriculum in Chesumei su-county in Kenya.

**Objectives of the study.**

1. To ascertain influence of assessment process on implementation of CBC.
2. To establish level of teacher preparedness towards implementation of CBC.
3. To ascertain the influence of resource mobilization towards implementation of CBC
4. To examine the influence of government policies on effective implementation of CBC.

**Research questions.**

- 1) In what ways does curriculum implementation, monitoring and evaluation influence implementation of CBC?
- 2) To what extend is teacher preparedness influencing CBC implementation?
- 3) How adequate are teaching and learning resources in CBC implementation?
- 4) How effective are Government policies towards implementation of CBC?

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### **Significance of the study**

Study was conducted with an aim of finding out the constraints towards the efficacy of CBC implementation. The findings will be useful in the effective delivery of the curriculum. The findings will also inform policy development and implementation.

### **Limitations to the current study.**

The current study experienced some limitations which included some head teachers not finding time to respond to questionnaires. This limitation was encountered by allowing the head teachers to respond to the questionnaire at their appropriate time and collection of filled questionnaires was done later. Some head teachers too were not willing to share their challenging experiences during the course of CBC implementation. This was because implementation process involved the intervention from the government and therefore feared victimization. This limitation was countered by anonymity assurance-no school name was indicated nor respondents name. With confidential assurance they gave their responds. Piloting which involved two schools not part of the study allowed the researcher to clean the questionnaire off any unclear parts.

### **Delimitations of the study.**

The current study was limited to selected public primary schools in Chesumei sub- county.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The chapter reviews the works done by other researchers on Competency Based Curriculums.

### **The Competency Based Curriculum**

The history of competency based curriculum can be traced back to 1971 when it was first tried and researched in the United States of America (Richard and Rogers, 2001).The key pillar in CBC is the attainment of Educational goals through descriptive perspective in skill, behavior and knowledge. To enhance such, CBC focuses on Education attainment and evaluation at every completion stage. Since its adoption, trial and functionality, other Nations have since adopted making it spread like a revolutionary movement in Europe.(Wolf,2001).By 1990 Australia introduced it to its citizens. USA first implemented CBC in 1970s as a recommendation for K-12.Schools implemented aspects of CBC. The call for curriculum change came as a result of bloom publishing his book entitled concept of learning through mastery in 1968.The implementation process was slowed due to various reasons which included lack of proper policy formulation and varying term definitions (Spady, 1977). Learner placement and graduation in secondary schools in USA was based on content mastery (Deya, 2018) and also deeper pedagogical learning, student centered learning and personalized learning(Hemandez Derling, Hamod ,2019).The USA adopted CBC using different approaches and succeeded (Evans, et al 2019).South Korea adopted CBC following an education reform plan(Soo et al 2017).This plan shifted from exam orient to skill based(Mullis ,2018)

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The first country to adopt CBC in Africa was South Africa in 1998. It had become industrialized and was in dire need of such form of education which could help speed up human labor production which was urgently needed to address industrial needs, global market demand and technological reformation. (Sabbir, 2014) observes that the young graduates in the UK did not display relevant skills to march their profession and therefore suggest an adoption of CBC which seems good in identification and nurturing of individual abilities.

As a move towards educational reforms, Kenya adopted 8.4.4 system of education in 1985 following recommendation from presidential working party on education which recommended the establishment of a second university in 1981. Constant reviews have since been done since the main focus was on content delivery work load, assessment methods and emerging trends. According to KICD, this has not been achieved by the 8.4.4 system of education which has been concerned with academic and examination excellence. Kenya is in the process of implementing CBC as a move to adopt a global trending Competency Based Curriculum as opposed to old forms of curriculum like 8-4-4 content based. Kabita D.N and Ji in Gichuru (2021) explains that curriculum as a medium which countries use to equip its population with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in education in order to socialize them and be economically viable.

Curriculum change and innovation is always being dictated by the global trends in knowledge growth and technological advances, This necessitates change in skill acquisition (Stabback P 2016). For any curriculum to remain relevant, constant evaluation enables a country to detect problems and thus is able to modify (Oluoch G.P 2011). Curriculum evaluation therefore is good since new curriculums and their implementations are expected to present challenges as said by Shiundu .J.J.Omulando 1992 in Dibisa 2011). Educational reforms in Kenya can be traced back to 1985 when 8.4.4 system was introduced replacing the colonial system of education. This was done in responds to the growing demand for the skilled man power. To date there is a continued reforms and reviews (Republic of Kenya 2017). Such constant reviews and engagements have risen to curriculum change and consequently the adoption of CBC. The CBC was adopted because of its adaptability to current trends in education. This is because it focuses on doing but not just knowing. This approach is seen as able to equip children with skills necessary for knowledge application, skill mastery, attitude and values building. These are good in problem solving (Republic of Kenya 2017).

**Theoretical construct.**

According to Overton (2015), the best theoretical construct is that which describe transitional changes harboring testable ability through observations. The current study was guided by the Vygotskys theory which holds that for a curriculum to succeed learners, need to be guided by instructors and facilitators towards self- discovery which yield a powerful insight into learning. The social part of the theory enables us to know how humans socialize and learnt through each other. It also points out the impact of learning environment on learning- believing that learners need to personally find out and transform complex ideas that they may be their own (Batram,

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK (2005). The relevance of the theory to the current study is explained by the fact that facilitators play key role in the final stage of curriculum change and innovation. Success and failure rests on teachers.

**Conceptual framework.**

**Independent variable variables**

- CBC assessment process.
- Teacher preparedness.
- Resource mobilization.
- Intervening policies.

**intervening variables**

- Adequate funding.
- Training

**Dependent**

- Efficacy in CBC implementation process

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This section contains methodology, target population instruments and data analysis. Kassu (2019) states that, research methodology entails the path through which the researcher plans to carry out his or her research. The current study being a descriptive survey utilized a mixed methodological approach involving both qualitative and quantitative methods. Questionnaires, class observations and document analysis were used.

**Target population.** The current study targeted all 125 public primary schools in Chesumei sub-county in Kenya. The current study targeted to obtain data from the head teacher and one class teacher per school.

**Sample Size.** The study was conducted in 45 schools which represent 36% of the target population. Stratified sampling technique was used to ensure schools of all categories were included in the sample size. A total of 45(42%) classroom teachers and 45 headteachers (36%) participated.

**Data collection instruments.** Both open ended and closed questionnaires were used during the study. This was particularly appropriate since it helped in getting first-hand information from the head teachers and class teachers. Documentary analysis and face to face interviews were also carried out.

### **Data analysis and interpretation.**

The current study being descriptive involved qualitative data analysis. The process involved manipulation of large numerical data which was best handled using Statistical social package for social science (SPSS).

## **DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

The chapter presents response rate, background information and demographic information of the respondents. It also presents descriptive statistical findings on challenges towards effective implementation of CBC in Kenya. The findings had sought to address the objectives which were stated as. To ascertain influence of CBC assessment process on implementation of the curriculum ,To establish level of teacher preparedness towards implementation of CBC ,To ascertain the influence of resource mobilization towards implementation of CBC,To examine the influence of government policies on effective implementation of CBC. The study had intended to address research questions stated as ,in what ways does curriculum implementation, monitoring and evaluation influence implementation of CBC?,To what extend is teacher preparedness influencing CBC implementation?,How adequate are teaching and learning resources in cbc implementation?, finally how effective are Government policies towards implementation of CBC? Since descriptive statistics was used, the frequencies were tabulated and expressed in percentages. Frequency tables and charts were used to present the findings of the study.

### **Response Rate.**

Pandey and Pandey (2021), response rate is the actual number of respondents divided by the sample size. From the data collected, out of the 90 questionnaires administered to the respondents 79 were filled and returned. The rate represents 87 %, which is considered satisfactory to make conclusion for the study. Bell and Bryman (2007) too asserts that a response rate higher than 60% is satisfactory to make a conclusion. The participants were asked to indicate their designation either as head teacher or class teacher. Their responses were as follows: Out of 45 targeted head-teachers, 37 responded representing 82.2 %. In the category of classroom teachers, the response was 42 (93%) out of a target of 45.

### **Background information**

This part covers respondents' information based on gender, age, length of service and length of stay at the current station.

### **Teachers' response by gender distribution.**

Out of the 79 valid responses, male was 33 (41.8%) while female were 46 (58.2%). This indicates that majority of the respondents were female. There is a notable drop in male representation in the teaching profession. From multiple sources, it is clear that there is a consistent increase in the number of females in all sectors. For example, in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary education (KCSE) results released by the Minister of Education on January, 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, for the first time since

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK independent, the total number of female candidates was 482,202 (50.1%) compared to their male counterparts 480,310 (49.9%). Male empowerment need to be done in order to maintain a gender balance in the teaching profession. This is particularly good towards learner motivation

### Teachers Length of service.

The study showed that majority of the respondents had been in service for a period less than 20 years. The specific figures were 1-10 years 31(39.2%), 11-20 (24.1%), 21-30 (20.2%) and more than 30 (16.5%). The finding indicates that majority of teacher respondents had served for less than 10 years (39.2%). This is a score to the government and CBC implementation process. CBC is at its infant stages and requires teachers who can follow through till it is fully implemented. Training a teacher who is to retire in due course wastes the limited resources.

### Teachers Output.

While attempting to analyze the Constraints towards effective implementation of CBC in Kenya, the respondents were asked to rate four of CBC elements namely: **assessment, resource mobilization, teacher preparedness and influence of policy framework**. They were to rate using Likert Scale: 1.strongly agree, 2. agree, 3.not sure, 4. disagree or 5.strongly disagree. The responses were presented in form of percentages then interpreted to give meaning. The results of the distribution are as shown in the tables below;

### Assessment

To ascertain influence of assessment process on implementation of CBC curriculum, the respondents were asked to rate their perceptions and their responses were summarized and presented in table 4.1

Table 4.1: Assessment of CBC

Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	4	5.1	5.1	5.1
Disagree	17	21.5	21.5	26.6
not sure	3	3.8	3.8	30.4
Agree	47	59.5	59.5	89.9
strongly agree	8	10.1	10.1	100
Total	79	100	100	100%

From the responses obtained, the respondents strongly agreed at 5.1%, disagreed at 21.5%, were not sure at 3.8%, agreed at 59.5%, and strongly agreed at 10.1%. The decision therefore is that the respondents agreed to teachers carrying out assessment process at 69.6%. Teachers conduct the assessment according to given guidelines. It is worth to note that 26.6% strongly disagree indicating the assessment process has some challenges. Through oral interviews, it was apparent that the challenges were attributed to unclear assessment guidelines. This is in agreement with



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Ogar (2015) who notes that, the main challenges influencing the implementation of CBC are absence of Curriculum implementation and evaluation strategies. Odey and Opoh (2015) notes that a wide range of assessment strategies require adequate staffing to enhance quality assessment. The assessment strategies in CBC requires that every learners' potentials should be identified and nurtured. However, large classes brought about by 100% transition policy presents a huge crisis in identification of individual learner potentialities.

### Availability of resources to enable effective implementation CBC

To determine the availability of resources to support effective implementation and assessment of CBC, the respondents were asked to rate the same based on Likert scale. Summary of their responses are provided in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Availability of resources

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	7	8.9	8.9	8.9
Disagree	4	5.1	5.1	14.0
Not sure	2	2.5	2.5	16.5
Agree	39	49.4	49.4	65.9
Strongly agree	27	34.1	34.1	100.0
Total	79	100.0	100.0	

The respondents were able to give their responses as strongly disagree at 8.9%, disagree at 5.1%, not sure at 2.5% and they agreed and strongly agreed to the variable at 83.5% cumulatively. The decision therefore was that the CBC curriculum being practical oriented required that stakeholders provide substantial amount of funds to sustain the program. Zoba (2011) observes that financial implication compromises the assessment process since learners are expected to meet costs on practical assessment. This is compromised since majority of the population live below poverty level. ICT integration process is faced with challenges because of technological challenges. Not every part of the country has access to internet connectivity. Assessments and learning process are accompanied by web searches which disadvantages parents not skillful on ICT or may not have smart phones. CBC being a highly practical and skill based requires more teaching and learning resources for it to meet the objectives of being compliant with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The findings and decision concurs with KICD 2016 examination and report that the current state of CBC implementation is affected by scarcity of resources, poor infrastructures, inadequate staff and schools. This has impacted negatively on curriculum delivery. The Kenya National Bureau of statistics (KNBS) of 2011 reported that more than 348250 people live below poverty line in Nandi

County. This impacts on implementation process since the curriculum requires constant parental engagement.

Though the ministry has tried to avail the materials, the learners experience inadequacy of textbooks, learning aids and writing materials. This compromises content delivery. CBC requires that the learning environment to be rich enough to facilitate learning. Schools are often being faced with absence of fields for various disciplines require training, lack of qualified coaches, no swimming pools, no fields for agricultural practice and absence of computer labs. Inadequate teaching and learning resources impacts negatively on teaching and learning process (Orodho et al,2013). The teaching and learning resources are sometimes printed and disseminated in a hurry this makes them to have shallow content with many errors.

### Teacher preparedness towards implementation of CBC curriculum.

To ascertain whether or not teachers are adequately retooled to deliver CBC program, they were asked to rate their level of preparedness. Summary of their responses are provided in table 4.3

**Table 4.3: Teacher preparedness**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	10	12.7	12.7	12.7
Disagree	14	17.7	17.7	30.4
not sure	8	10.1	10.1	40.5
Agree	40	50.7	50.7	91.2
strongly agree	7	8.8	8.8	100.0
Total	79	100.0	100.0	

In summary, they responded as strongly disagree and disagreed at 30.4%, not sure at 10.1% the agreed and strongly agreed at 59.5%. The decision follows that teachers are equipped with prior skills on curriculum implementation processes. Therefore, they were in a position to interpret the new CBC programme. It is important to note the 30.4% who disagreed that CBC being a new curriculum therefore required that teachers be equipped adequately as they implement the new curriculum. This indicates that teachers need to be further engaged through constant seminars at the course of implementation process. This finding concurs with recommendations made by Chatoupis (2021) who notes that how well a teacher is trained impacts on content delivery and therefore teachers training colleges should collaborate with all stakeholders in education for adequate collaboration and deliberation over curriculum delivery. Similarly, Commission for University Education too should share data on practices and peer review with an aim of curriculum review. Teacher trainees need to be prepared in appropriate methodology, skills and culturally

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK (Chatoupis, 2019). The ministry of education has since organized a series of seminars aimed at re-tooling practicing teachers in order to facilitate the implementation of CBC. These seminars rely on projected work which is often not clear because of technological challenges. The content often compressed and rushed because of time frame-a week utmost to complete a whole content and master.

### **The influence of government policies on effective implementation of CBC.**

The participants were asked if there is clear communication from the ministry to the classroom level. Their responses were summarized and presented in table 4.4

Table 4.4: Influence of government policies

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
strongly disagree	22	27.9	26.9	26.9
Disagree	29	36.7	37.2	64.1
not sure	4	5.1	5.1	69.2
Agree	21	26.6	26.9	96.2
strongly agree	3	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	79	100.00	100.0	

While responding to effectiveness on communication efficiency, the respondents strongly disagreed to and disagree to presence of clear communication. This gives an impression that not all stakeholders are adequately engaged in the implementation process. Communication is a very powerful tool towards effective curriculum change and innovation. Poor communication disengages the whole course.

The findings concurs with that of Moyahaba (2018) who states, for best performance, teachers need to be made to feel free not being overwhelmed by enforced changes in curriculum. In Tanzania, inadequacy of teacher preparedness adversely affected the implementation of competency-based curriculum, lack of training, overcrowding in classes, limited teaching and learning resources, poor learner readiness to adopt to new curriculum Muasya in Mutua (2023). Hong (2012) observes that, Kenyan government seems to have hurriedly implemented the new CBC curriculum and he suggests an early teacher training for their preparedness. Lack of teacher preparedness impeded effective implementation of CBC in Korea. (Hong and Lee 2012). The governments should therefore work closely with examination bodies such as KNEC and state departments of curriculum reforms to come up with frameworks for assessments in line with labor market. The summative and formative assessments should be standardized (Evans et al 2019). Noninvolvement of teachers in the curriculum development process impacts negatively in the

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implementation process. The teachers in Korea are engaged in CBC research making them to own and be part of the process (So et al, 2017)

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section presents summary of the findings from the study. It also gives conclusion and recommendations based on the study. The study had sought to find out the constraints towards effective implementation of CBC. The study was anchored on four objectives.

### **To ascertain influence of assessment process on implementation of CBC**

The study found out that though teachers conduct the assessment process as required it was noted that teachers experienced a numbers of assessment hitches attributed to unclear assessment process. Secondly, it was found out that cost related to assessment process presented some constraints. That parents and teachers incurred some costs during the assessment process and uploading the results into the KNEC portal. The respondents agreed to CBC and its assessment as best in placement of learners towards their pathways. This will be made possible if the assessment process is carefully streamlined by way of the laid down summative and formative assessment.

### **To establish level of teacher preparedness towards implementation of CBC**

The study found out that teachers are not adequately trained and required that they be more equipped though more in-service and seminars. Teachers who have been in service for less than ten years need to be trained since they have an advantage of seeing though the new curriculum towards its full implementation. Teachers Training Colleges must work very closely with the teacher employment body, the TSC so that relevant skills are imparted to the teacher trainees. The study also found out that the schools are not well staffed. This affects curriculum delivery. Teacher and learner ratio need to be constantly maintained at (1:40) as the national policy to avoid straining the available human resource which ends up compromising the teaching and learning process.

### **To ascertain the influence of resource mobilization towards implementation of CBC**

The findings from the objective three indicate that CBC implementation process is affected by limited resources. Some areas end up not being attended to or are not attended to adequately for lack of relevant teaching and learning aids. The study recommends that financial allocation towards implementation of CBC be increased at these early stages of implementation. All education stakeholders should work together towards the realization of this noble course of giving the young generation a suitable education.

### **To examine the influence of government policies on effective implementation of CBC**

The study found out that the communication channels were not efficient. That crucial information relating to CBC implementation was not properly relayed. This threatens to cripple the process. It was also found out that teachers faced challenges with the implementation of new curriculum

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because of inadequate training. Working under such condition requires proper guidance and understanding from government and the employer. It too requires proper motivation in their line of duty.

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British Journal of Education

Vol.13, Issue 3,1-15, 2025

Online ISSN: 2054-636X (Online)

Print ISSN: 2054-6351(Print)

Website: <https://www.eajournals.org/>

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK

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