

## ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS THROUGH A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR CHANGING COMMUNITIES

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### **Abstract**

*The societal problems which have put the masses in perpetual poverty and hunger are diseases, gender inequality, illiteracy and unemployment. Those problems have caused a lot of hazards in the communities and even the generations yet unborn. This development caught the attention of United Nations which made it to come up with Millennium Development Goals(MDGs) which ended in 2015 and another Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targeted to be achieved in 2030. This paper presented a synopsis of the 17 SDGs as well as discussed the role of business education in achieving SDG target in education. Some constraints that could hinder the use of Business Education in achieving SDG target in education were enumerated. Based on the identified constraints, a call for an aggressive business education training program to solve the problems of shortage and lack of qualified business education teachers is one of the recommendations of the paper.*

**Key Words:** Business Education, Sustainable Development Goal, Education, Poverty and Employment

In Nigeria poverty has been an alarming and devastating issue. Up to 80 percent of Nigerians experience poverty despite the nation's wealth (Sam, 2012). Poverty is a state of deprivation where one cannot afford the basic necessities of life. This sounds ironical because Nigeria is regarded as one of the wealthiest countries in the continent of Africa but they occupy the poorest people. The extremeness of poverty renders life unworthy with characteristics starvation, diseases and death. Population growth for communities and nation increases, the socio-economic development continues to deteriorate and this leads to drop in the standard of living of

the masses. Poverty alleviation referred to as the effort aimed at reducing the rate of "poverty" by removing the root causes of the problem. Poverty breeds social inequality, illiteracy, poor health etc. Central to poverty alleviation is the issue of unemployment which is the mother of almost all other social problems such as criminality, social unrest, prostitution and unethical behavior in the society. Poverty is high in rural areas where social services and infrastructure are limited. The majorities of those who live in rural areas are poor and depend on agriculture for food and income. Millions of their teenage girls enter into early marriages while many of them take up jobs as waiters in restaurants and hotels while some girls are sent to hawk on the high way, to work as a maids or to assist their mothers in child bearing and home management to earn a living. Most of these young girls are victims of sexual harassment, rape and at last they end-up with unwanted pregnancies and contraction of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS

The effect of poverty is so grave that if nothing is done to reverse the ugly situation urgently, the future of our youths will be in jeopardy. It is against this background that the fight against poverty, illiteracy, gender, inequality HIV/AIDS etc becomes vital at the level of individual, society, government and the international community.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established by the United Nation in the 1990s to help underdeveloped countries to overcome problems of illiteracy, poverty, low health, status and quality of life. Much

emphasis was placed on attainment of MDG targets in education because of its pivotal role in achieving of goals and the year 2015 was chosen as an important milestone at which point a comprehensive assessment of goal achievement would be made. At the end of 2015, a score card on the achievement of the MDGs was not a savoury one. Many factors was attributed to this including lack of total commitment on the part of the government to implement the program. Other challenges are corruption, gross inefficiency, wastefulness and duplication projects in the same areas by the government and donor agencies (Okeshola, 2012).

As a follow up to the MDGs, the world leaders at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in 25 September 2015 adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure qualitative education, and poverty, fight inequality and injustice and tackle climate change by 2030. This paper presented a synopsis of the 17 SDGs and discusses the role of business education in achieving the SDGs in education in particular as well as the likely constraints that will hinder this achievement.

#### **Synopsis of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

- **No poverty:** End poverty in all its forms every where
- **Zero Hunger:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition ad promote sustainable agriculture
- **Good Health and Well-being:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- **Quality Education:** Ensure inclusive and qualitative education
- **Gender Equality:** Ensure gender equality and empower all women and girls
- **Clean Water and Sanitation:** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

➤ **Affordable and Clean Energy:** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

➤ **Decent Work and Economic Growth:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable employment and decent work for all.

➤ **Industry Innovation and Infrastructure:** Built resilient infrastructure, promotes inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

➤ **Reduce Inequalities:** Reduce inequality within and among countries

➤ **Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

➤ **Responsible Consumption and Production:** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

➤ **Climate Action:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact.

➤ **Life Below Water:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and mineral resources for sustainable development.

➤ **Life on Land:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of territorial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reserve land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

➤ **Peace Justice and Strong Institutions:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build affective accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

➤ **Partnerships for Goals:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

#### **The Need for Sustainable Business Education Programme**

The attainment of sustainable development goal in education sector is a sine-qua-non if we hope to accomplish the goals in other segments such as ending hunger and

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poverty, ensuring quality healthy lives and gender equality among others. This makes it imperative for government at all levels to promote the attainment of quality business education programme.

Business Education is a broad discipline that is included in all types of educational delivery systems, elementary, secondary and post secondary. It includes education for office occupation, business teaching, business administration and economic understanding (Aliyu, 2002). It is an integral part of general education which involves the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge of occupations in various sectors of the economy. Business education plays a dual role of preparing the individual for general and useful employment after leaving school as well as educating them to be intelligent consumers of the goods and services of business. If business education is pursued deeply, all other segments of the economy will be equally improved due to the facts that business education exposes all students to various business strategies that have sustainable economic development. This will help business education graduates to create jobs instead of looking for white collar jobs.

Sustainability is perceived to be a major issue for thinking about a future in which environmental, social and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of development and improve quality of life if a developing nation wants to come out of their cycle of deprivation and poverty. Sustainable business education programme must be fully recognized to tackle the challenges of poverty and unemployment. Business education is the key to national development. It is a programme of activities that include the economic potentials of a people, empowers and equips them to participate in and benefit from the national economy, facilitate economic development and also provides the basis for transformation.

**Roles of Business Education Programme in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals**

Business education is diverse in achieving development goals in communities by focusing on four key techniques:

➤ **Generate Employment:** Business education is a job oriented programme with the primary aim of preparing students for self-reliance through the acquisition of marketable skills and right attitude that will enable them handle their own business affairs and to function intelligently as consumers and employers of labour after graduating from the school thereby reducing poverty in the society. It is through this type of education that we can provide ourselves with essential experience needed to meet life challenges.

➤ **Value Re-orientation:** The role of business education programme in this age of moral decadence cannot be over emphasized. Now a lot of youths are engaging in indecent dressing, cultism, prostitution, financial crimes, examination malpractices, sexual harassment, ethnic militancy, etc. All these unholy acts result in economic and political insecurity capable of undermining the progress of the country. Youth should be given the appropriate quality academic training and an environment that would enable them to reach their full potential. Most of these habits and tendencies are eating deeply into the philosophy and moral foundation of education in the country. A society without moral is a dead society. One of the goals of business education is to protect and guide business students in the pursuit of knowledge and skills that will help them to develop healthy attitudes which will enable them to become happy, useful and responsible citizens not for themselves alone but for the nation at large. For the nation to fully tap the potential that abound in her youths there is the need for a comprehensive national policy on youth empowerment. Our students should according to Agbai (2008), be the product of

the type of education offered to them. If we train our students to be honest, they shall be honest but if we train them to be lazy, they shall be lazy, if we train them to be self-reliant, they shall be self-reliant. Best legacy for a future generation is well groomed, educated, trained and polished youth who has future prospects socially, economically, politically and educationally.

➤ **Wealth Creation:** Wealth creation is a systematic approach of making the business students or graduates productive through judicious use of both their brain and hands to achieve self-reliance. It involves translating thought into action. These attributes will go a long way in pushing students out of enclave of local market to the global market. Agbai (2008) opines that educational system must be geared towards the practical, as students must be taught not only the use of their minds but also the use of their hands as well. The goal of wealth creation can be efficiently pursued, attained, and sustained only through an efficient reliant and functional business education programme. This development will have a dramatic impact on the availability of job opportunities as well as the production or provision of various goods and services by the various enterprises in the communities as well as in the nation.

➤ **Poverty Reduction:** Poverty is one of the social problems not only for developing societies like Nigeria. Poverty manifests in widespread hunger, disease, malnutrition, illiteracy and hopelessness. Governments all over the world are serious facing challenge from their citizens to match words with actions in a true demonstration of their commitment to fight against poverty. In order to make poverty history and also remain competitive in the world economy, education for and about business is a major link between people and productivity (Oyedele 2002). It is a sustainable instrument that can bail people out of poverty. The role of business education is to empower individuals with the skills to survive in all ramifications.

Their skills are inherent in all areas of business education like office education, distributive and accounting education will enable business education students to think out of the box, learn to take entrepreneurial risks and effectively utilize their potentials in creating wealth rather than seeking jobs. A self-reliant business education graduate has the potential to create jobs thereby avoid sharing in this burden of poverty in Nigeria. Where people are given the right education according to the needs of the country, there is a tendency for poverty to be alleviated. The concept of business education programme is to keep young men and women off the streets and empower them to be gainfully employed.

### **Constraints in Achieving Sustainable Development Goal through Business Education Programme**

Business education programme in tertiary institutions have been saddled with many problems which keep incapacitating it in achieving its mandate of imparting entrepreneurial skills. They include:

**1. Over Enrolment of Students for the Programme:** The major problem associated with business education is over population leading to serious congestion of our classes. There is increase in the number of the students admitted for the programme without a corresponding increase in the equipment and other necessary facilities to support training and development. The class size and teacher-student ratio is above the recommended 1:30 (FRN, 2012) thereby resulting to crowded classrooms, and finally deterioration in teaching and learning which can affect the success of the Sustainable Development Goal in education.

**2. Lack of Qualified Business Education Teachers:** Teachers are considered to be the moulders of students who wish to become somebody in the future. They are the

builders of tomorrow's leaders, the transmitter of social virtues, models, and innovators and directors of learning and instruction. Most business education teachers have no educational training and as such they are not adequately professionally trained and qualified to handle business education courses. The more qualified and better trained teachers are the greater success would be recorded in the achievement of educational objectives as well as the development goals.

**3. Lack of and Inadequacy of Necessary Facilities:** Vital facilities such as laboratory equipment, well equipped library, well constructed class rooms and constant power supply etc. are needed before quality education can take place. A nation without adequate power will end up powerless. Lack of constant power supply has castrated the programme to the extent that some of the available gadgets cannot be put to frequent use because of the epileptic power supply. Inadequacy or total absence of these facilities can affect the capacity of business education programme to produce worthy graduates who can compete favourably in the labour market.

**4. Inadequate Funding:** The biggest problem of education generally and business education in particular is inadequate funding for instance, enough fund is needed to purchase equipment, to constantly service the machines, to replace out-dated accessories and to purchase necessary materials that can aid the teaching and learning process. This financial involvement scares a lot of institutions from establishing business education programmes in their institutions. The government budgetary allocation to education in Nigeria is paltry.

### **Conclusion**

In order to make poverty a thing of history and also to remain competitive in the world economy, education for and about business is a major link between people with the necessary

skills to fight poverty and eradicate disease among others and realize the Sustainable Development Goal target in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations if adopted will help to reduce poverty and achieve development goals in communities as well as in nations.

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria through its educational agencies should strengthen its Monitoring and Quality Assurance Units to ensure that institutions adhere strictly to admission guidelines in order to solve the problem of over enrolment of students.

2. An aggressive business education training programmes especially at post graduates level will help solve the problem of shortage and lack of qualified business education teachers.

3. The Federal Government should increase its budgetary allocation to education to at least 15% of the total budget with a target of increasing it to 26% by the year 2030.

4. Quality education should be provided for the masses.

5. Provision of employment opportunities: through large-scale industrialization backed with adequate provision of essential activities to reduce the number of people roaming the streets jobless. Industrialization can help in solving problems of unemployment. If the country is industrially based with many industries spread across the country, the unemployed will definitely find employment opportunities with these industries.

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