

**CLOTHING AND TEXTILE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS  
FOR JOB CREATION AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

*Edith C. Nkwodimmah*  
*Department of Home Economics,*  
*College of Education Agbor,*  
*In Affiliation with*  
*Delta State University, Abraka.*

*and*

*Patricia A. Okoh*  
*Department of Home Economics,*  
*College of Education Agbor,*  
*In Affiliation with Delta State University,*  
*Abraka.*

**Abstract**

The paper focuses on the education of students on Clothing and Textile as an aspect of Home Economics in secondary schools, for job creation. Clothing and Textile is a saleable subject that offers students skills that will help them to be self – reliant and self employed on graduation. The areas of clothing that can create job opportunities are tailoring, embroidery, crocheting, knitting and so on. Emphasis is laid on the importance of practical in developing the techniques needed to acquire the skills. Also, the paper emphasizes that the schools should allocate more time for Clothing and Textile to ensure more practical work. It is recommended that qualified teachers of Clothing and Textile should be employed in secondary schools. Also school clothing laboratory should be equipped with necessary facilities to ensure that practical is carried out effectively.

**Introduction**

Education is the bed-rock of all in every nation. Educate a child and educate a nation. When a child is educated towards skill-based learning, the nation will progress because the child will be self-employed and also create job opportunities

for others. But when skills are not acquired, on graduation, the child goes about looking for employment. This is in line with the idea of Abiogu (2008) who reported that on graduation, youths roam about the street looking for employment. Nwankwo (2009) opined that Home

Economics has been identified as a field of study that can help youths off the street from searching for employment. Molokwu (2007) noted that Home Economics is both inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary and is a field of knowledge with numerous saleable skills which make for self-employment and self-reliance.

Clothing and Textile is an aspect of Home Economics which is taught in secondary schools. It is skill-oriented and noted for equipping learners with saleable skills that make for self-employment and self-reliance. When Clothing and Textile is learnt, skill is acquired and the youths gain because they will be self-employed and also create job opportunities for others.

Job is a regular employment in which a person is paid. It is a monthly payment. This helps an individual to move forward in solving everyday problems. Job could be physical or mental work. Job creation is the process whereby regular employment exists for others seeking employment. Home Economics is one of the subjects offered in secondary schools that create jobs as catering, tailoring, day care, interior decoration etc. The areas of Home Economics for course of study and skill acquisition are:

- Food and Nutrition
- Clothing and Textile
- Home Management
- Child Development and Care

The paper focuses on Clothing and Textile aspect of Home Economics in secondary schools and how it can equip the youths for job creation for sustainable national development.

### **Clothing and Textile**

Clothing and Textile is one of the subjects in Home Economics that is taught in secondary schools. It is a skill acquisition area that can create job opportunities for secondary school students when learnt. It equips students with knowledge, skills and attitudes required for programmes in Clothing and Textile. Home Economics aims at promoting personal growth. Its objectives and contents are geared towards educating individuals for family living, Clothing and Textile. An aspect of Home Economics is also geared towards educating individuals for family life and also enhancing family economy. The area of Clothing and Textile which can create job opportunity for students are numerous. They are tailoring/fashion, embroidery, crocheting, knitting, tie and dye, making of throw pillows, appliqué work. Ezeoguine (2000) emphasized that most of these skills are also used for interior decoration and household furnishing.

### **The Teaching of Practicals in Clothing and Textile**

Clothing and Textile is more of practical work. The students should be exposed to practical work so as to be well equipped with saleable skills required to enhance self-reliance and good quality of life. Olaitan and Agusiobo (1981) emphasized that any skill-oriented discipline where acquisition of skills and knowledge is needed, requires the intensive exposure of students to practical work. In the teaching of Clothing and Textile, the practical aspect should be

taught thoroughly to enable the students acquire the necessary skills. Dada (2007) opined that practical work contributes in moulding students' mind about work. It also provides chances for the learner to directly practice the theoretical knowledge gained. Ohwovoriole and Ochonogor (2008) noted that putting the theoretical knowledge into practice to increase the mastery of knowledge acquired is very important. Clothing and Textile create creativity for students, makes them to be resourceful, self-reliant. Nwankwo (2009) stressed that practical work help students to develop manipulative skills that will give them the confidence and ability to perform effectively in any given situation. Skills acquired in Clothing and Textile improve students' capabilities for job creative venture. With adequate practical work in clothing and textile on graduating, students will be competent to face the economic challenges and survive in the existing unemployment situations.

#### **The School Time Table**

Since Clothing and Textile is practical oriented, the school time table should be made to allocate more time to the practical work so that the techniques needed in the skill can be adequately taught and acquired by the students. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2004) has regarded Home Economics as a vocational subject and as such, it requires acquisition of standard skills and knowledge. Time allocated for both theory learning and practical work should be more. This will enable the teacher to cover more work in theory and during practical

work, expose different techniques available in Clothing and Textile.

#### **Possible Areas of Job Creation and Strategies to Enhance Job Promotion.**

The possible areas of Clothing and Textile that can give self-employment are called Home Economists in Business (HEIB) (Nwankwo 2009). This is in line with Weber (1990) who noted that clothing field is really made up of five interconnecting areas:

- (1) The textile industry
- (2) The apparel industry
- (3) The fashion field
- (4) The education field
- (5) The communications industry

#### **The Textile Industry**

The textile industry is made up of all the people and companies that contribute the materials that are ultimately used to make the clothes we wear, the linen we use, the upholstery we sit on and the carpeting we work on. Mills take the natural yearns produced by farmers and manufacture yarns and convert them into fabrics. Designs are dyed, printed, knitted or woven, into fabrics in endless variations. Fabrics are treated with special finishes that increase the fabrics performance, such as permanent press or stain-repellent finishes. Finished fabrics may be sold to designers in fabric stores where we can buy and sew whatever we wish. It takes many jobs to make all of these to happen. Job in textile industry includes machine operators, machine technicians, engineers, chemists, computer programmers etc. Home Economics

student who is studying Clothing and Textile can fit into any of the jobs and be self-reliant. The art of batik and tie-dye in clothing has gained popularity and has become a skill and art of many great cultures. (Adepegba, 1995; Corbman, 1983). This can also be done outside textile industry by students and be self-employed and employers of labour.

### **The Apparel Industry**

The apparel industry designs the garment, select the fabric, draft the pattern, sew the garment and sell to the stores. The process of designing, manufacturing and selling apparel offers job opportunities for people at every skill level in Clothing and Textile, from stock clerk to pattern maker to merchandise manager. Other career opportunities in the service industries that are concerned include: dry cleaners, laundries and alteration and repair services (Weber, 1990).

### **The Fashion Field**

Fashion according to Banabas and Afolabi (2008) is a particular style or mode of dressing that is acceptable by the people within a given time or period. Fashion is as old as time and also as new as they come. Fashion is dynamic, it goes and comes back after a while (Usman, 2006). Jobs in the fashion field as stated by Weber, (1990) include fashion, illustrators, display artist, photographers, models, copy writers, stylists and fashion co-ordinators. These are the people who are responsible for the “look” of newspaper and magazine advertisements, window displays, catalogues and fashion shows.

### **The Communication Industry**

They are concerned with giving information to people. A Home Economics teacher is an educator in the clothing field who instructs, who teaches pattern drafting at vocational schools etc. Through communication, people learn how to get the greatest satisfaction from goods and services they purchase. Mandatory information are given to consumers on fabric content, identification of the manufacturer, country of origin, care requirements as stipulated in Textile Fibres Product Information Act Weber, (1990).

Strategies that can promote job creation interest in Clothing and Textile aspect of Home Economics are:

(1) **Adequate knowledge of and skill in Clothing and Textile:**

To be effective in Clothing and Textile in job creation, the student has to be loaded with adequate practical work and theory. This will help the individual have confidence and also be competent to perform well. Anyakoha (2009) noted that they should keep abreast with relevant new knowledge, skill and attitude through various self-improvement programmes such as in-service training, conferences and workshops. It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that students acquire these knowledge and skills so as to be self-employed.

- (2) **Acquisition of relevant special skills:** Professionals in the area of clothing and textile need some special skills and attitude which are not usually taught in the classroom. These special skills will help them to be more competent in the construction of bodice, block or pattern. Anyakoha (2009) emphasized that the skills need to be identified and put into serious use. She enumerated them as problem solving skills, creativity, innovativeness, communication skill, social skills, writing skills, reading skills, adaptive skills, and enthusiasm and tolerance.

The issue of job creation and sustainable national development is a major concern of the government. Clothing and textile sector of national development is capable of turning around the economic fortunes of the secondary school students through job creation. Onyeneke (1996) stated that textile contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Production (GDP) of the country. Majory (1999) emphasized that textile is an essential economic sector for a good number of developing countries. Ode (1998) added that Clothing and Textile acquired by secondary school students can reduce unemployment, poverty and youth restiveness (Dike, 2009), to bring about sustainable development.

### **Problems Associated with Clothing and Textile in Secondary Schools.**

Clothing and Textile teaching has never been without problems. The problems associated with it are:

- (1) Misconception that the subject is meant for the never-do-wells, people who they feel cannot do academic works. In line with this, Olaitan (1986) noted that the Nigerian public has always seen vocational subjects as subjects meant for the never-do-wells, physical maladjusted and mentally retarded. Ogbogo (2010) observed that people believed that it is meant for drop-outs or mediocre who has no personal vision for education. People feel that the tailoring aspect of Clothing and Textile can be acquired through road-side apprenticeship.
- (2) **Students indifferent**  
Most of the students shy away from it because of the money involved in buying materials. Some because of the ways they come in contact with needle as it pierce through their hands. So they prefer to go for Food and Nutrition rather than Clothing and Textile. In line with this Olugbamigbe (2009) noted that students rush to study Food and Nutrition when they have opportunity to choose their electives.

(3) **Lack of Equipment/Clothing Laboratory**

Clothing and Textile as a skill oriented course demands a lot of equipment and tools/materials for proper acquisition of skills. Ekpenyong (1995) noted that for proper skill acquisition in Home Economics, there has to be enough sewing machines, cooking appliances and other household equipment. Sewing machines and other tools/materials are not supplied to secondary schools where they are mostly needed for practical work. Also, no labouratory allocated for Clothing and Textile for proper practical work to take place. Most teachers make use of their table/classroom desk for practical work.

**Conclusion**

This paper examined Clothing and Textile aspect of Home Economics as one of the skill acquisition subjects in secondary schools. The students should be exposed to hand work and the use of right skill in doing things. To help students on graduation, some of the courses under Clothing and Textile and job related skills in Clothing and Textile should be exposed to them in other to be self-reliant and self-employed. This will help the families and societies at large for a better quality of life.

**Recommendation**

In other to ensure that skills are acquired in clothing and textile. The following recommendations are made

- (1) It is therefore recommended that well qualified Home Economics teacher specialist in clothing and textile should be deployed to secondary schools to handle the teaching of Clothing and Textile. This is to ensure that more emphasis is laid on practical work than theory.
- (2) More time should be allocated to Clothing and Textile practical work to ensure that the techniques needed to acquire the skills are well taught. A time table of twice a week of double period can *be of good use for the practical work*.
- (3) A school Clothing and Textile labouratory should be equipped with sewing machines and other clothing tools/materials to ensure that practical work are carried out effectively.
- (4) To erase the misconception on Clothing and Textile there should be public enlightenment campaign on radio and television, explaining the importance of Clothing and Textile and its job creative nature for national development.
- (5) A well equipped laboratory has to be allocated for Clothing and Textile. They should be equipped with tables, sewing machines, embroidery machines, scissors, tape, ruler etc to make practical work easier. This will also arouse the interest of students more to go into Clothing and Textile.
- (6) Funds

Money should be released by the Federal and State Governments to Secondary Schools for running Clothing and Textile practical work. In doing this, they should monitor the heads of schools to ensure that the money given is used for what it is meant for and not diverted to another area.

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