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# ENRICHMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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By

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examines primary education curriculum enrichment for improving the nation's development through addressing the problems of unemployment and technological development. The concept of primary education was discussed with its old goals and three new goals added which among others include acquisition of skills for productivity and self employment for lifelong living. Meaning of curriculum enrichment, reasons for curriculum enrichment as well as factors to be considered in enriching the curriculum are discussed with emphasis on resources ( human, finance and material) , implementation (methods, skills), evaluation and monitoring. Based on the discussion, the researcher recommends among others that, Head teachers should ensure for effective implementation of the enriched curriculum with adequate materials, making the instruction a practical oriented one, through the use of concrete objects.*

## **Academic Excellence**

In Nigeria today, unemployment and underemployment are gaining ground especially among the youths. This condition has helped to trigger up some anti- moral tendencies such as armed robbery, kidnapping, rape, arson, obtaining by tricks, dropping out of schools, prostitution, terrorism, cultism among others. This is really an ugly situation being experienced in Nigeria. This situation is uncalled for due to the fact that Nigeria is blessed with many and varied natural and human resources. Nigeria has many higher institutions ranging from colleges of education and polytechnics to universities graduating people from many fields of study.

That notwithstanding, Nigeria is known as one of the poorest countries in the world with her abundant blessings. Based on this, if one poses that Nigerian primary education curriculum needs to be reconsidered and enriched since its products are not coming up to expectation in the society, will there be a blame on the person? It is based on this that Badmus(2006:222) observed that;

*School curriculum needs to change at the primary school level to enable learners to learn for life in our present day and future Society. A curriculum for life is to be reconsidered as an alternative to present primary school curriculum both national and non-national to eliminate the problems such as unemployment, underemployment and many other things affecting our youths in the society.*

The above statement tends to identify that enrichment of curriculum of primary education needs to embrace some factors for consideration which will aim at improving the pupils at this level and beyond. Factors like 'lifelong education, entrepreneurial education, self reliant education, apprenticeship education, computer training, creativity, innovativeness and inventive education need to be added in the curriculum for its effectiveness to be recorded. It is based on this that this topic is set to capture the following subheadings:

1. The concept of primary education and its goals.
2. Meaning of curriculum enrichment
3. Reasons for primary education curriculum enrichment
4. Enrichment curriculum elements.
5. Factors that can affect enriched curriculum
6. Conclusion and recommendations.

### **The Concept of Primary Education and its Goals**

Primary education is the education that fortifies the child for other levels of education. It is experienced after pre-primary education. Primary education is subsumed into a 9year basic education programme and it is the beginning stage. Being the beginning stage shows that the teaching of every primary school subject is for acquisition of basic knowledge, skills, principles, concepts, etc. Government's direct involvement manifests here with the aim of achieving success in the rest of other levels of education. National policy on education (2004; 14) clarified that,

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*Primary education is referred to as the education given to institutions for children aged 6-11years plus. Since the rest of education is built upon it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system. The duration shall be six years.*

This shows that the rest of educational system is built upon it, and experiences gained here form the bases for building other experiences at other levels of education. Suffice it to say that solid development of any organisation is strongly dependant on its strong foundation. An enriched curriculum in consideration with relevant factors for the acquisition of competent skills leads to the realisation of primary education goals in particular and growth of other educational levels in general.

### **Goals of Primary Education**

The goals of primary education among others, include;

- a. Inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively.
- b. Laying a sound bases for scientific and reflective thinking.
- c. Giving citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.
- d. Moulding the character and developing sound attitude and morals in the child, and
- e. Developing in the child, the ability to adapt to the child's changing environment, (NPE, 2004; 14).

For solving the problem of unemployment in the country as well as enhancing technological development, primary education goals need to be enriched with the following goals;

- a. Laying the foundation of creativity, problem solving, and self reliance;

- b. Acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities, and competences for the child's survival in his/her environment.
- c. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for productivity and employment for lifelong living and societal development.

Achievement of the above goals requires the present primary education curriculum to be well enriched. The curriculum in question concerns the following;

- i. (a)Language of the environment. (b)English. (c)French. (d)Arabic.
- ii. Mathematics (iii) Science (iv)Physical and Health Education (v)Religious knowledge (vi)Agriculture/Home Economics (vii)Social Studies and Citizenship Education (viii)Cultural and Creative Arts(Drawing, Handicraft, Music, and Cultural Activities) (ix)Computer Education (NPE, 2004:15).

The above curriculum of primary education needs enrichment for the achievements of the needs of our present day Nigeria. What then is curriculum enrichment?

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#### **Meaning of Curriculum Enrichment**

Curriculum enrichment means addition of items into curriculum to fortify or strengthen it further for improvement on the development that already exists. Okeke (1996:252) called it curriculum revision and observed that;

*The idea of adding or removing items in the curriculum implies revision or renewal. To renew a curriculum is to revise or modify an existing curriculum with the hope of providing a better programme. Whenever any change occurs in any stage of the curriculum process, or in the entire curriculum, and when the learning experiences that pupils are exposed to are affected, we conclude that new life has been given to the existing curriculum. Such is curriculum renewal.*

The idea is to renew a curriculum through some modifications for the purpose of achieving a programme that is better than the former. Curriculum planning process has a model with different phases, and evaluation being the last which tends to relate to objectives for modifications if need be. Curriculum enrichment can occur at any stage of curriculum process. For example, when there is a change in the desire and aspiration of the society, undoubtedly, it will affect the curriculum by bringing changes in the contents that will be taught for the realisation of the needed desires and aspirations in the learners. Again, now that Nigerian society is experiencing unemployment and problem of technological development, the solution of this problem calls for curriculum enrichment where new contents will be added. Desired contents/subjects/courses for this, among others, include; apprenticeship education, entrepreneurial education, and creativity, and productivity education.

#### **Reasons for Curriculum Enrichment**

A nation's desires and aspirations are subsumed into her educational curriculum in the form of knowledge, skills, attitudes values, etc. to be learned. These desires and aspirations will be met only if the curriculum is comprehensively enriched with necessary information required.

Notably the type of curriculum that existed many years ago is not the one that is in vogue today. This is because the society in which we live is very volatile and dynamic so that it affects the educational curriculum. Curriculum is considered to be highly effective in meeting the educational goals when there is, almost, a high quality curriculum enrichment for the provision of fundamental changes and tools desired for meeting the goals of the society. There are good schools in the nation but when good schools operate with inadequate curricula, their production impacts negatively on the society.

Presently, a change in Nigerian primary education curriculum is what is needed to improve primary school learners in particular and the society at large. This improvement among others include training in new existing career skills to enable the learners to be well grounded in acquiring occupational skills that will help them to integrate well into the ever changing world. In order words, addressing skills requirements in modern societal trends and development, particularly in acquiring suitable desired skills the society demands become the focus of the curriculum.

The problem of unemployment is gaining ground in Nigeria today. Most graduates of Nigerian universities and other higher institutions are left with jobless condition, talk less of secondary school graduates. Some of them who are employed are not enjoying gainful employments but meagre jobs without job satisfaction. This condition frustrates not only the youths but also their parents that suffered to train them. Supporting this, Okoro(2003;314) observed that,

*The rate of growth of unemployment among school leavers has the major source of concern to the leadership of this country. Attention has been focused for sometime upon the shortage of skilled manpower. There has always been a tendency to disregard early signals about the growing competition for employment among the less qualified school leavers and about the rate which they migrate to urban cities in search of work.*

The above condition calls for enrichment of primary education curriculum for the curriculum to be strengthened with relevant skills. Primary school curriculum should be oriented not to emphasize paper qualification that gives room to white collar jobs but to encourage self employment and actualization of good morals.

Innovation solidifies educational experiences, and therefore should be embraced by any ideal curriculum, primary education curriculum inclusive. This gives room for providing learners with adequate skills, information, capabilities among others which primarily aim at empowering the youths economically.

Technological developments and changes bring new knowledge. The new knowledge requires training which can only be successfully achieved through utilization of curriculum that is very adequate. This condition, therefore, compels primary education curriculum to embrace new subjects/courses that are channelled towards the direction of world of work.

## **Considerable Factors for the Curriculum Enrichment**

### **a) Needs Analysis**

Analysis of needs here includes that of the learner and the nation. Five items in the hierarchy of needs as identified by Maslow (1954) come into play, together with the needs of the society. The individual and society now become prime factors of consideration and thus gain more attention than before. It is on this that Amadi and Obiefuna(2005:51) observed that;

*Societal demands dictate the type of experiences the school should offer children. Society wants school to inculcate its culture in the learners and the learners have their basic needs which they expect from schools. They need to be able to provide food, shelter and clothing for themselves and their dependants and ultimately become self-actualized.*

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Furthermore, they identify that curriculum planners should therefore study the needs of the society and those of the learners. By doing so, they identify concepts, behaviours, values, and skills they consider worthwhile to be included in the curriculum of primary education for laying basic foundation of the needed experiences. Stressing further, Dike and Eze (2009:43) added that,

*It is for this singular reason that nations that want to remain competitive in any cutting edge technology always invest a substantial chunk of their national budgets on education. To achieve this, such nations come up with a vision/mission. This is equivalent to developing an anticipatory*

*curriculum. Needs analysis is an instrument that can assist a nation to develop a relevant curriculum.*

Thus, the above summarizes the relevance of needs analysis in enriching curriculum of primary education. For a situation where a nation's problem is unemployment, the analysis should assess this and know that the need for employment not only be addressed by the government offering employment to the deserving youths but rather to make the youths become self-employed and reliant as enunciated in the national policy on education (2004).

### **Creativity, Inventiveness and Productivity Education**

The present primary education curriculum in Nigeria is weak and does not embrace creativity. Creativity gives room to productivity, meaning that the education produces little or nothing when it comes to creativity. This condition completely blocks the way for inventiveness in the curriculum of primary education.

Advanced countries like Japan, Europe, United States of America, Britain, among others, have greatly made their curricular to embrace creativity and productivity which has greatly been helping them in economical and technological advancement. To address the present situation in Nigeria, creativity, inventiveness and productivity education in primary education curriculum will go a long way in helping to establish many industries in the country.

### **Entrepreneurial Education**

Entrepreneurial education is the act of teaching and training given to people for the purpose of acquiring certain valuable occupational skills that will enable them gain self-employment, (Okoro and Afurobi, 2010). This education instils in the learner, the ability to coordinate, make decision, bear risks, being able to manage, become an innovator, organizer, initiator, among others, (Iloeje, 1999). Osiala(2003) observed entrepreneurial education as a productive agent that employs other factors for the creation of goods. In essence, it equips programme recipients with required knowledge and skills towards production of goods and services. The above idea on the concept of entrepreneurial education shows that when integrated into primary education curriculum, it will prepare the learners early in life for business ventures, both as employers of labour and self employed. This will undoubtedly reduce the risk of

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#### **Apprenticeship Education**

Apprenticeship education is initiated through agreement for a younger person or less experienced person in a particular skill to work under skilled employer for a fixed period of time. Uwameiye, R (in Badmus) sees apprenticeship education as;

A work place learning in which arrangement is entered into by the school, business and employee where each is distinctive, each has independent role, yet each is working towards the same result of producing a trained, skilled and valuable employee.

This education focuses on skill acquisition which is derived from theory to practise. Future learnings of basic knowledge and attitude are guaranteed. He/she gains high rate of maturity which manifests through high rational reasoning and thinking skills. To crown it all, the learner gains insight into professional duties. All these put together, form the integral part of an enriched primary education curriculum that addresses the problem of unemployment.

#### **Self Reliant Education**

Self reliance means relying on one's own abilities and efforts, being independent and not relying on anybody for assistance. Self reliance means that, the programme recipients are expected to make proper use of their hands to produce vital instrument rather than searching for the white collar jobs, (Badmus,2000). Primary education curriculum needs to contain skill acquisition subjects that need to

equip learners for effective contribution for the development of not only the learner herself/himself but also the nation at large. What is the issue that will solve the problem of unemployment more than when one is reliant upon oneself? Ability to create ideas for problem solving that earns one a source of livelihood, is effectively projecting and sustaining in terms of unemployment. All these center around self-reliance which emanates from learners to the entire nation. The answer is enrichment of primary education curriculum, with practical work as a prime factor of consideration.

### **Computer Training**

We are now in a world where computer aids greatly for performance and rendering of services. Yet computer education is yet to be effective in our primary schools (Salou: 2007). Almost everywhere, computer services are needed; in our schools, industries, hospitals, government and non-governmental establishments. Very soon nobody without computer literacy will be offered employment. Those who are already on the job but have no knowledge of computer will be thrown out of jobs. What will the fate of the nation be like when primary education curriculum is developed without considering computer education? Certainly, this will help to increase the problem of unemployment. It is based on this that Omolayole (2000) observed that in addition to formal education, and skill acquisition, computer education will in the near future become a compelling factor for everybody seeking employment in a large corporate organization. This makes it necessary, if not mandatory for computer training to be made an element of primary education curriculum. Though it is in the curriculum but the implementation is farfetched.

### **Factors That Can Affect an Enriched Curriculum**

It is important to note that when a curriculum is reviewed, a lot of factors need to be checked to avoid affecting the curriculum negatively, these factors among others include;

- a) Resources (financial, human and material)
- b) Implementation (methods and skills)
- c) Evaluation
- d) Monitoring

#### **a) Resources:**

Coming to resources, we have financial, human and material resources. Human resource refers to human beings which teachers are the most important in curriculum implementation. They are at the center of curriculum implementation and therefore need to be well cared for by paying their salaries, allowances and other incentives on time. They should be given the opportunity for in-service training for updating their knowledge which leads to effective implementation of the curriculum. When these are lacking, positive results will not be achieved.

Again, is financial resource which is funding, funds are needed particularly now the curriculum is well oriented. Materials for practicals are provided using funds. The new subjects incorporated into the curriculum are also capital intensive. These require enough funds and for this to be effectively funded, the government should not be left alone to do it. The funding should be cooperatively done from peoples' donations, community participation, stake holders, PTA, etc.

Another is material resource which is instructional materials for teaching. They are information carriers designed specifically to accomplish objectives in a teaching-learning-situation. This needs to be adequately provided in its different forms and sizes for effective impartation of knowledge.

#### **b) Implementation:**

This refers to the actual teaching. Instruction here should be made to embrace practical works with many and varied materials. Methods used should be practical oriented with different instructional skills utilized. The concepts taught should be brought home for learners who are to be taught both in the class and outside the class environment, using concrete and real life examples.

**c) Evaluation:**

Evaluation refers to assessment on the concepts taught. It is carried out during instruction and each ~~stage of implementation (formative evaluation) and at the end of the programme (summative evaluation)~~. Emphasis on this should be on making the learner to construct, create, build, and manipulate tangible objects in their measurable and precise terms. This helps to know the strength and weakness of the curriculum; for probable amendments. Evaluation should be comprehensive enough to cover the three domains of educational objectives.

**d) Monitoring**

This is referred to as a way of handling a project (i.e the reviewed curriculum) for effective achievements of the objectives with little or no wastage experienced. In monitoring, effective implementers are rewarded while defaulters are blamed for improvement. A review curriculum requires to be monitored by well trained personnel of high integrity selected from federal, state and local levels from time to time. This will make the staff concerned to put in their maximum efforts for implementing the activities of the curriculum.

**Conclusion**

We live in a dynamic society which changes from time to time. This change affects curriculum that is being used to transmit societal culture, values, norms, etc. to the learners. This calls for a review of the curriculum particularly at primary education level that transmits basic knowledge, ideas, values, information, attitude, etc to the learners, for the success of other educational levels.

The society is faced with problem of unemployment coupled with technological development. Reviewing the primary education curriculum means that emphasis is laid on production of individuals for technological development and solution of the problem of unemployment. This condition calls for the inclusion of some concepts/subjects such as creativity, inventiveness and productivity education, entrepreneurial education, self-reliant education, among others in the curriculum. These subjects, it is hoped, will instil in the learners, the desirable skills for self employment and technological development.

**Recommendations**

1. Head teachers should ensure that enriched primary education curriculum is effectively implemented with instructional materials required for its implementation. This will make the learners interact effectively with the materials for positive learning to be registered.
2. Instruction should be practical oriented and carried out both in the class and outside the class using concrete objects of real life situation to bring the concept home.
3. Funds should be made available for payment of teachers' salaries and allowances. This will help to raise their morale.
4. The government should employ the services of competent supervisors to monitor the implementation of the curriculum.
5. Head-teachers should make sure that computers are made available in their schools and that computer training is effectively carried out.

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