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# RE-ENGINEERING SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SELF PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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By

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## Abstract

*Education is the tool for developing a full personality intellectually, morally and socially. It is also the tool for economic development. Thus, with virile acquisition of skills and knowledge, there is room for employment and self productivity. In other words, with the acquired knowledge, one can get employed in the government sector or be self reliant in the field of productivity in the societal set up. Therefore, acquisition of skills and knowledge through education processes at secondary school level is very relevant and important as far as re-engineering education is concerned. With this, the secondary school education curriculum was studied and reviewed in the paper together with re-engineering education in Islamic perspective as far as education for employment and self- productivity is concerned in Nigeria. Finally, the paper offered some recommendations, one of which is that in addition to moral instructions imparted to students at secondary school level, there is need for setting up of cottage industries in all the nooks and cranny of this country in order to encourage self productivity.*

## Definition of key concepts

- i)a. **Engineering:** It is defined as the activity of applying scientific knowledge to the design, building and control of machines, roads, bridges, electrical equipment etc.
- b. As a verb, 'engineer' means to change the genetic structure of something [Hornby, 2000]. Given this therefore, re-engineering education may mean a re-touch on the structural contents of education with a view to making some changes so as to satisfy the prevailing condition of the recipients of education in any given society.
- ii. **Education:-** Is defined as the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained and skills developed [Farrant, 1980]. In like manner, education is described as the process of bringing up individuals to develop their aptitudes, capabilities, abilities and interests so as to function effectively in the society in which they live [Abdulkareem, 1988].
- a In another perspective, the word education can be said to be an English derivative of the Latin word 'educare', which means to 'bring up, 'lead out', 'raise', or 'elevate'. Thus, education is a strong instrument for brining up individuals and

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citizens of a country or helping them to lead out or elevate their latent potentials thereby making them useful members of the society [Adeyemi, 2000].

In Islamic perspective, the aim of education is to produce a good man. This implies the inculcation of 'adab' (self-discipline) that encompasses the spiritual and material life of a man. In other words, education should include training not only for acquiring knowledge and skills in order to be fit for entering one or other careers open to educated young men for earning money and position to live comfortably and honourably in worldly life, but should also include training for fostering innate Islamic instinct which every child is born.

**ii. Employment** It is defined as

- a. Work, especially when it is done to earn money ;
- b. The situation in which people have work;
- c. The act of employing somebody;
- d. The use of something (Hornby, 2000).

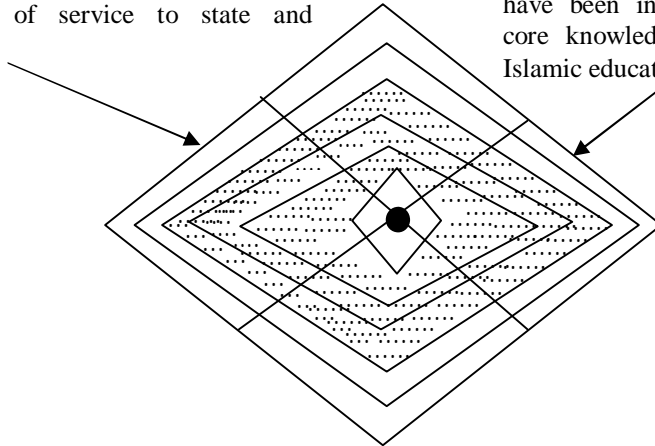
**iv. Self-productivity** When the two words are merged together, that is 'self and productivity'; it is production of goods or services by an individual, independent of the government, public sector or industry (Hornby 2000).

**v. Islam** The word 'Islam' is derived from the root word 'salam' which means 'peace'. Thus, 'Islam' means peace with Allah (God) and peace with man. Therefore for one to be in peace with God, one has to be subservient to Him absolutely and for one to be in peace with man, one has to be in good relationship with all individuals in the society irrespective of tribe, religion, colour, position or whatever difference. Islam as a religion, is not only an embodiment of mere rituals such as prayer, Zakat, Hajj, sawm etc, but it is an embodiment of all codes of knowledge. Thus, it promotes knowledge and learning. Given this therefore, the paradigm of education in Islam is depicted in the diagram below:

Re-Engineering Secondary School Education for...

a). knowledge of sciences represents the Fard Kifayah knowledge whose parts have been deployed according to priorities of service to state and society.

b). knowledge of pre-requisites to Revealed knowledge represents the Fard Ayn knowledge whose parts have been integrated to form the core knowledge of individuals in Islamic education.



**Explanation of the Figure Above**

- (a) Above: represents the natural, physical, Applied Human Sciences etc, and Aesthetics. Acquisition is obligatory to some [Fard Kifayah].
- (b) Above: represents the Holy Qur'an, exegesis, commentary – Tawhid, principles of Islam –iman, ihsan, Life of the Prophet, Sunnah, Hadith and the Religious sciences, ethnics, Arabic. Acquisition is obligatory to all (Fard' Ayn) [Al-Attas 1977].

However, contrary to above, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) states that:

- 1 Education fosters the worth and development of the individuals for each individual's sake, and for the general development of the society.
- 2 There is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria; to this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive; while interest and ability should determine the individual's direction in education.

In addition to the above, one of the national educational goals, is “the acquisition of appropriate skill and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society” (NPE, 2004). Thus, to achieve the above, the quality of instruction at all levels of education has to be oriented towards inculcating some of the following values:

- a. Moral and spiritual principle in interpersonal and human relations;
- b. Acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance (NPE, 2004).

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Given the above, there is an impetus and impulse for re-engineering education for employment and self-productivity. Since, the focus of the paper is at the secondary school level, the National Policy on Education (2004) under section five (5) outlines the following in articles 20 – 25:

**Definition of Secondary Education:** Secondary education is the education imparted to children after graduating from primary schools and before getting admission to tertiary institution. Some of the goals of secondary education are outlined below:

- i. Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of higher level irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background;
- ii. Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles;
- iii. Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- iv. Inspire students with a desire to self-improvement and achievement of excellence,
- v. raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens;
- vi. Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

The National Policy on Education (2004) categorically states that to achieve the stated goals, secondary education shall be of six year duration, given in two stages:- a junior secondary school stage and a senior secondary school stage; each shall be of three years duration. They are broadly analysed as follows:

1. The Junior secondary school shall be both pre-vocational and academic. The basic subjects to be taught at this level to enable students acquire further knowledge and skills are reviewed towards re-engineering education for employment and self-productivity as follows:

### **Group A: Core Subjects**

- i. English
- ii. Religious Knowledge
- iii. Mathematics

### **Group B: These are the Prevocational Subjects**

- i. Agriculture.
- ii. Business studies.
- iii. Home Economics.
- iv. Local crafts.
- v. Computer Education.
- vi. Fine Arts.
- vii. Music.

Given the above background, students who complete junior secondary school shall be streamed into:

- i. The senior secondary school;
- ii. The technical college;
- iii. An out-of school vocational training centre;
- iv. An apprenticeship scheme.

## **2. Senior Secondary School**

Accordingly, the senior secondary school shall be comprehensive with a core-curriculum designed to broaden students' knowledge and out-look. The curriculum is analysed as follows:

### **3. Group C – Vocational Oriented subjects**

- i. Agriculture.
- ii. Applied electricity.
- iii. Auto-Mechanics.
- iv. Book-keeping & accounting.
- v. Building construction.
- vi. Commerce.
- vii. Computer Education.
- viii. Electronics.
- ix. Clothing and textile.
- x. Food and Nutrition.
- xi. Home management.
- xii. Metal work.
- xiii. Technical drawing.
- xiv. Woodwork.
- xv. Shorthand.
- xvi. Typewriting.
- xvii. Fine Art.
- xviii. Music.
- xix. Introductory Technology.
- xx. Introduction to Poultry Farming and Management.
- xxi. Introduction to Vulcanisation.
- xxii. Introduction to Welding.
- XXiii. Introduction to Hotel catering and Management, and so on.

The above subjects as reviewed would equip secondary school graduates with the knowledge, skills and technical know-how to take different trades relevant to the skills and knowledge acquired. These trades would be listed on the subsequent pages in this paper.

Against the above background therefore, Al-Attas(1977) observed that it is an established fact that Islam as a universal religion has laid great emphasis on knowledge and the necessity for its acquisition within both the spiritual and material context. In

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this regard, the Qur'an which is the most comprehensive and authentic book of knowledge could be considered to be a book of science [ulūm] containing within its fold, diverse ideas of all sciences of the earth and the universe. In connection with this, the following verse of the Qur'an is quoted:

*.... And we sent down Iron, in which is (material for) Mighty war, as well as many benefits for mankind (Qur'an chapter 57; verse 2).*

Commenting on the above verse, Yusuf (1975) observed that the most useful metal known to man is Iron. Out of it is made steel and from steel and iron are made implements of war, such as swords, spears, guns, etc. as well as instruments of peace such as ploughshares, bricklayers, trowel, architects and engineers' instruments, etc. Iron and steel industries have also been the foundation of the prosperity and power of modern manufacturing nationals like England. Thus, the World Bank (1999), in its released, was indirectly in support of functional education that would prepare school leavers for employment and self productivity.

### **The Basis of Self-Productivity**

The Holy Qur'an is super encyclopaedic in nature and as such, has solutions to all problems whether religious, political, economic, social, educational cutting across all spiritual and material issues. On the basis of this, the Holy Qur'an states:

*Whoever recommends and helps as good cause becomes a partner therein: And whoever recommends and helps an evil cause, shares in its burden. And God has power over all things (Qur'an chapter4; verse 85).*

Commenting on the above verse, Yusuf (1975) observed that in this fleeing world's chances, God's providence and justice may not always appear plain to our eyes. But we are asked to believe that if we help and support a good cause, we share in all its credits and in its eventual victory. Consequently, we cannot support a bad cause without sharing in all its evil consequences.

With reference to the above verse, its commentary and the section 1, item ii of the National Policy on Education(2004) "the acquisition of appropriate skills and development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society", the following submission is made with a view to re-engineering education for employment and self-productivity not only at secondary school level but at all levels of social strata in Nigeria:

### **Target Beneficiaries**

- i unemployed university graduates;
- ii primary school leavers;
- iii secondary school leavers;
- iv private organisations;
- v the partially disabled;
- vi prison inmates;

vii the grown up orphans.

**Training Programmes/Trades**

- i. carpentry
- ii. bricklaying
- iii. iron-bending
- iv. electrical work
- v. Vulcanising
- vi. welding
- vii. panel beating
- viii. painting
- ix. tiling
- x. plumbing
- xi. upholstery
- xii. gardening
- xiii. poultry farming
- xiv. catering
- xv. soap making
- xvi. block making
- xvii. tailoring
- xviii. shoe making
- xix. battery charging
- xx. balancing and Alignment
- xxi. motor mechanic
- xxii. fishery
- xxiii. animal rearing
- xxiv. printing, photography, graphics and binding
- xxv. photocopying and video coverage
- xxvi. school of commercial driving
- xxvii. dyeing/artistic designs
- xxviii. rewiring
- xxix. irrigation farming
- xxx. blacksmithing
- xxxi. laundry
- xxxii. car-wash etc
- xxxiii. bakery
- xxxiv. textile designs etc
- xxxv. butchering etc.

Since the major objective of the Nation Policy on Education (2004) is the acquisition of necessary skills and inculcation of proper value orientation required for the survival of individuals and the society at large, there should be abundant jobs opportunities for secondary school leavers. Given this, therefore, the above stated

vocations provide an impetus and impulse for entrepreneurial skills for employment and self- productivity.

### **Conclusion**

The paper has to some extent, discussed on education and its re-engineering for employment and productivity in Islamic perspective. Some items in the National Policy on Education (2004) together with the paradigm of education in Islam are stated and synthesised with a view to actualising re-engineering education for employment and self productivity not only among the secondary school leavers but also other individuals in the Nigerian societies.

### **Suggestions**

- i. Local industries and crafts should be reinvigorated such that a drift from a consumer society to productivity one is ensured.
- ii. Non-governmental organisations should be officially registered and financially assisted by the government in order to boost their morale in creating self productive jobs for the Nigerian citizens.
- iii. The secondary school leavers and other individuals in the society should, after having acquired vocational skills, be financially assisted by government in order to be self productive in the society in which they are.
- iv. The President should regard his position as not just being a president but as a leader of the people, just as the prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was not only a spiritual leader but also as a temporal leader, guiding and leading the people spiritually and temporally.
- v. There is need for setting of cottage industries in all the nooks and cranny of this country in order to encourage self productivity because the Prophet (p.b.u.h) was reported to have said: “The best work for man is the one he does with his own hands every kind of honest transaction (Ismail, 2004)

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