

# SCIENCE EDUCATION FOR POWER OF EMPLOYMENT FOR CHANGING COMMUNITIES

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## **Abstract**

*Education is an instrument of survival, growth and development of any society. Education in communities today face serious challenges because the system turned out graduates that are educated but not employable because the vacancies are few and most of them lacked the necessary employability skills, aptitude and work attitude. According to Okenwa and Onaga (2011), the reluctant effects of these were extreme poverty, unemployment, terrorism, kidnapping, institutionalized corruption, over dependent on other nations for assistance, weak economy and other anti social vices. Presently, Nigeria's economy is in chaos, industries, companies, government and its agencies at all levels are downsizing their workforce as her educational institutions are turning out graduates yearly with a slim hope of securing employments. The implication is that social vices continue to be on the increase. Communities in Nigeria are in desperate search for measures to reduce these turbulent times. The answer lies on redirecting the education system towards job-creation rather than job seeking, employability skills, competency and performance base for its graduates. This paper recommends that science education curriculum should be restructured to emphasize training on employability skills and competencies, teachers should be provided with in-service training with pay, workshops, seminar etc to enable them refresh and update their knowledge and implement curriculum changes.*

Education is an instrument of survival, growth and development of any society. Ibrahim and Bossa (2010) opined that education is the fundamental pillar of any progress and construction of knowledge of economy of any society. Education in communities today faces serious challenge because, the system turned out graduates that are educated but not employable because the vacancies are few and most of them lacked the necessary employability skills, aptitude and work attitude. Again, those who were employed were not performing optimally either that they were trained with obsolete and ill-maintained facilities, workshops and laboratories for practical skill acquisition were not properly equipped. The resultant effects of these were extreme poverty, unemployment, terrorism, kidnapping, institutionalized corruption, over dependent on other nations for assistance, weak economy and other anti social vices

(Okenwa and Onaga, 2011). They also pointed out that education for the future in Nigeria communities should emphasize on employability skills, job-creation, competency, performance, capacity building training, retraining and retention. This call underscores the need for entrepreneurship education programmes. According to Nwagbo (2011), this call underscores the need for entrepreneurship education programmes with vocational and technical education for equipping the individuals with skills and science education skills for empowering them with abilities in application of practical knowledge for real life situation. These skills in technology and science education will enable the beneficiaries to acquire specific skills that will enable them fit well in changing communities as self employed and job generators. Entrepreneurship in science education will create entrepreneurs who will not only be self employed but will be imaginative in thinking, innovative, confident responsible, perseverance and ability to calculate and take risks. Integrating entrepreneurship education into Nigerian education system especially science tide of unemployment, youth restiveness and other anti-social vices in our communities. Okenwa (2012), noted that integration of entrepreneurship in science education should be seen as an agent of transformation and change that need well equipped infrastructural facilities such as workshops, laboratories, tools, equipment, machinery, materials, regularly supply of power (electricity) and water, good learning environments with well equipped libraries and sufficient quality teachers to utilize these educational facilities for teaching and learning in our communities.

This new transformation agenda should de-emphasize spending much time in theories without practical. It is suggested here that time-sharing should be 40% or less for theories while skill acquisition in form of practical should be 60% or more in science vocational and technical institutions like Enugu State College of Education (Technical), Enugu and other institutions. For Nigerian communities to attain the vision 20, 2020 since that of 20, 2015 has elapsed without appreciable achievement, it requires a functional qualitative and timely education to prepare her citizenry in communities with adequate entrepreneurial skills and competencies to meet and face the global challenges (Ibrahim and Agah, 2011).

The development and survival of any nation depends on what the citizenry in communities will be able to contribute and not necessarily what the nation will do for the citizens. The nation will only provide enabling environment to enable the communities perform optimally. Nigeria growth and survival depends largely on how it will be able to utilize her local contents and resources to advance her technology. Entrepreneurship in science education will empower the youths and communities and make them job creators rather than job seekers which in-turn will help to move the country forward.

### **Education**

The concept of education has been variously defined in by various scholars and researchers. Attah (1997) cited in Mgbada (2010) perceived education as a liberating force which is an essential ingredient for national economic progress. She stressed that education ensures the mobility and development of one potential. Individually, it provides its possessor with a mental capacity and intellectual preparedness for carrying out major tasks.

Ocho (2010) opined that education is an instrument for survival, growth and development of the society. Further, he explained that education cannot understood, expect in the context of society, which educates the individual for its own sake. The individual is not the end while society is the end in education, he explained. Nwangwu (2010) was of the opinion that education is a means of social mobility, achieving social status and economic returns. Okenwa and Onaga (2011) described education as an agent of socialization, vehicle for transmitting the goals, aims, aspirations, desires, cultural norms and the heritage of any given society to its young ones. Through it, the culture of the society is being perceived and prevented from extinction.

Education is a process rather than product, the quality of the knowledge and skills one acquired that will enable one achieve higher levels of moral judgement, decency, integrity and a better service to the society.

### **Science Education**

Science is the study of nature and natural phenomena. This study operates on physical, measurable and observable realm (Mbajiorgu, 2003). The field of investigation may be the formal school laboratories or natural environment such as forest, farm, river, fields and open space (Igwe, 2003). Nwana, Bajah and Obioha (2000) stated that it is impossible to develop such professions as agriculture, biology, architecture, dentistry, medicine, engineering, Astronomy, Space, exploration, geology, pharmacy or develop such advance technologies like GSM, computer without science. A high level of students participation is advocated in the teaching of science if our students are to develop in those areas (Adigun, 1999). This participation takes place mostly in the formal science, laboratories where equipments and material that may expose students to acquisition of skills are used.

Science plays a major role in all human activities in everyday living in order to cope and adapt to the demands of the environment. Ugwu and Ozioko (2010), quoting Iloputaife (1993) stressed that “science education is education given to an individual to enable him fit into the operational system of science either as a body of knowledge or as an inquiry process. Thus, science educational gives equal importance to the development of knowledge and understanding on one hand and the acquisition of

process and procedural skills on the other. The importance of science is in line with the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), which states in her National Policy on Education, that education has to be geared towards self realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress, and transformation. Cirfat (2011) pointed that modern science education improves national, political and economy decision, health, nutrition, industry, sanitation, transportation, communication technology and so many systems.

### **Issues of Power of Employment**

Employment could be described as state of being employed, that is working, able to get work whether or not one possesses employability skills. Hornby (2010) described employment as work, especially when it is done to earn money, the state of being employed to be in paid employment fulltime or part-time or both Nigeria requires a functional, qualitative and timely education to prepare her citizenry with adequate scientific skills, entrepreneurial skills and competencies to meet and face unemployment that is eating deep into our society. Ibeneme (2007) opined that people who have nothing doing for a living will gradually slide into poverty and hunger which is dangerous for economic and social development of any nation. Gross unemployment in Nigeria could be linked to deficiencies and unwillingness of youths to embrace science education and entrepreneurship education for skills acquisition in different occupations.

### **Issues of Unemployment in a Changing Community**

According to Okenwa (2012), Nigeria labour market are since over-saturated. Older ones refuse to retire from the jobs they are holding to give way for younger ones with new ideas, visions, excitements and adventures. No efforts are made to create new jobs either in our changing communities. The education system is deficient because it does not prepare and equip many of its graduates to be job creators and employers. Then the consequences are high rates of unemployment, poverty and low productivity.

Albert, Emah and Ezeano (2009) noted that unemployment neither gives power nor authority to act. The dilemma of high rate of unemployment has brought the Gross National Product (GNP), Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and the communities development at cross roads. According to them, a country or community desiring to take its place among the committee of developed nations is unable to get its ventures together in stimulating a national consciousness that can propel self motivated development.

Akande (2011) pointed out that unemployment deprives its victims the economic power and denies the nation the opportunity to utilize young manpower

trained over the years. The purchasing power of the unemployed is affected which reflects on the economy of the country. According to Onyia (2010), unemployment has created jobs for the youths that are vulnerable to illegal means of livelihood, such as violent crimes, suicide bombings, kidnapping, militancy, ethnic/communal violence, drug addition, raping, thuggery, armed robbery, cultism, oil-bunkering and prostitution. These group of people cluster around in the slums and ghettos of communities. They are social misfits. The side effect is that the security, peace, stability, pride and the over-all community development is threatened. In Nigeria, police and prison cells are stocked with youths who were nabbed for one petty crimes or the other out of necessity to provide their immediate needs and relieve their boredom. These incapacitated young energies would have been useful to the economy of this country if they were properly engaged into active production.

Albert, Emah and Ezeano (2009) were of the opinion that many Nigerian youths were idle and eager to fend for themselves after graduating from school. This tendency has driven them to seek ways to earn a living whether by conventional or unconventional means. This ugly means have cumulative effect of ending previous gains made. Until government redirect efforts in tackling and solving the problems of chronic unemployment, the dreams of Nigeria to be seated among the comity of industrialized nations of the world by 20, 2020 will be a mirage.

### **Conclusion**

Education in communities today face serious challenge, because the system turned out graduates that are educated but not employable and most of them lack employability skills. Therefore, Nigeria as a matter of urgency should be in desperate search of means of solving or providing solutions to her army of unemployed youths who are rooming the streets of major cities in search of none existing jobs. If majority of them are provided with means of livelihood, the high rate of poverty, crimes and insecurity would have been reduced for a better Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made;

1. Science education curriculum should be restructured to emphasis training on employability skills and competencies.
2. Government should create stimulating programmes that will reduce to the barest minimum high rate of unemployment
3. Government should provide science education teacher with substantial teaching allowances to enable them perform their pedagogical duties effectively.
4. Institutions teaching science education and technology education should devote more time to practical work than theory.

5. Institution teaching science and technology education should be provided with workshops and laboratories equipped with standard state of art instructional facilities.
6. Their teachers should be provided with in-service training with pay, workshops, seminars etc. The training will enable them to refresh and update their knowledge and implement curriculum changes.
7. Recruitment of more professional teachers into school system to teach is recommended. They will integrate all the skills acquired during training period to make teaching and learning a success.

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