GLOBALIZING THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR NATIONAL GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

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Abstract

Education is an instrument for social mobility, an instrument per excellence for effecting national growth and productivity and a dynamic instrument for change. The development of a nation is always in consonance with her education system. The world today is connected economically, politically and socially due to technological advancement which is why the world is being referred to as a "global village". Today's world of intense global competition and rapid technological change demands problem solving, communication and language skills, which calls for globalizing the school curriculum at all levels of our education. This paper reviews some of the demands of globalization on the school curriculum, such as connectivity, culture, media literacy, etc especially at the Universal Basic Education level. The paper concludes that growth and productivity of any Nation depends on education, therefore globalizing the curriculum is inevitable, and made some recommendations amongst which is that for globalization to be meaningful and contribute to the growth and productivity of nation, adequate funding of the educational sector should be enhanced.

Introduction

Education describes the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained and skills developed (Farrant, 1980). Education it is said, is a total part of human existence, it is the wheel of progress and means of social change. Every society simple or complex has its own system of training and educating its youth's ad education for good life has been one of the most persistent concerns of man throughout history. It is a truism that no nation can develop beyond the progress made in education. Education makes a man a useful member of the society and therefore the man sees himself as one who has a sacred duty to protect, sustain and serve the society, even when he is serving himself. An educated man has an unselfish devotion to public interest, an uncommon commitment to the sustenance of the society's value systems and inform and intelligent understanding of public affairs.

Globalization according to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary is "the fact that different cultures and economic systems around the world are becoming connected and similar to each other because of the influence of large multinational companies and improved communication". Globalization has been seen by many to be the underlying structural dynamics that drives social, political, economic and cultural processes around the world. Globalization brought about through advancement in technology has made it possible for people in different parts of the world to interact through technologies such as the DVD, laptop computers, storage media internet, satellite, TV, cellular telephones and video conferencing. Globalization therefore creates spectacular opportunities for increasing the dissemination of information and dialogues which contributes toward a more interactive word, one in which communication and transaction can emerge between people who may never meet. There is also a shift towards the compression of time and space with today's information and transportation technologies. For instances, the internet permits instantaneous personal dialogue and communication. This is why the world is referred to as a global village".

Universal Basic Education

Universal Basic Education (UBE) as a universal concept was established to ensure that every citizen of the world enjoys the right to education. Basic education according to the Jomtain Declaration and framework of Action on Education for All is not defined in terms of years of schooling. It is not limited to formal schooling but sees basic education as dynamic rather than static. The culture of reform within the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) context, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Government declaration for the 9 year Basic education in Nigeria. Basic education is that level, type and form of learning needed to build firm roots for literacy and numeracy, to inculcate basic iife skills and more importantly, to consolidate the skills of learning how to Icarn (Obayan, 2000).
The mission statement on Universal Basic Education in Nigeria observed that at the end of the nine years of compulsory education, every child should have acquired appropriate level of literacy and other skills which include numeracy, communication, manipulation of life skills, be employable, and above all be useful to himself and the society at large, by possessing relevant ethical, moral and civic values.

Considering the mission statement, Nigerian Universal Basic Education is conceived as a people's program with emphasis on all-round development of its beneficiaries.

The UBE program is aimed at reaching the unreached, adolescent, and illiterate adults in all social conditions and geographical locations irrespective of sex, be they in or out of the formal schools system, the special needs children and adults inclusive (Nnana, 2007). One of the cardinal objectives of the UBE program in Nigeria is the provision of free compulsory and accessible Universal Basic Education for every child. In order to prepare learners for the various demands of the society, it is imperative for the learner to pass through series of planned educational activities known as the curriculum. The curriculum thus constitutes the means through which educational goals are achieved.

Features of the 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum

Following the decision of the government of Nigeria to introduce 9-year Basic education program and the need to attain the Millennium Goals (MDGs) by 2020 and the critical targets of the national Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS), it has therefore become imperative that the existing curricula for primary ad JSS should be reviewed, re-structured and realigned to fit into a 9-year Basic education program.

The National Council on Education (NCE) directed the NERDE to carry out the assignment, after its meeting in Ibadan in 2005. A new curriculum structure was also approved. This includes Lower Basic Education Curriculum (Primary 1-3), Middle Upper Basic Education Curriculum (Primary 4-6) and Upper Basic Education Curriculum (JSS 1-3) and also listed relevant subjects for each level.

The renewed curriculum reflects depth, appropriateness etc. Also issues such as value re-orientation, peace and dialogue, human right education, family life/HIV and AIDS education, entrepreneurial skills etc were infused into the relevant contents of the curriculum.

The Need of a Global Curriculum

The world is changing in ways never imagined before. Globalization has for instance made it possible for people to get higher education online, talking to people across the globe on video phones, small business owners doing business with the world community on the internet. All these were unthinkable some years back. Also, cooperation is using labor forces as well as technology professionals from other countries to lower cost and increase profits. Globalization of job markets has changed the demands of the workforce of future economy. In order for us to be able to work in the globalize world, our children must be provided with an understanding of the role they will be playing in this new world and provide them the needed tools to work in this globalize world. Thus, the need to globalize the school curriculum at all levels of our educational sector especially at the UBE level.

It should be emphasized that Nations developed through definite and systematic inputs into their socio-political and economic situations. Such inputs are usually generated directly or indirectly through the educational system. The implication of this is that the pace of growth and productivity in a country relates closely with its education system. Therefore, for Nigeria to be among the 20 developed economies by year 2020, the curriculum needs to be globalized to produce people who are adequately prepare to play their role in the society, According to Peters (1963) "productivity, the measure of the efficiency with which a nation's resources are transformed into commodities and services, is not simply a function of the amount of raw materials, physical capital and equipment available and in use. Productivity also depends heavily on the attitudes, knowledge and skills of people, which in turn reflect the educational training r.:ld complex organization which modern technology requires".

The educational training being offered in various schools should take cognizance of the prevailing circumstances the world over. Today's world of intense global competition and rapid technological change demands problems solving, communication and language skills. The school curriculum must be enriched to deliver new skills necessary to excel in a more competitive global environment.

Demands of Globalization on the School Curriculum

Globalization has made the world as a single entity in economic, political terms this has therefore, placed some demands on the school curriculum. Such demand includes:

Global Connections: Globalization demands that students should learn how they are connected
to others in the world socially, politically, economically and ecologically. All ideas should be taught as inter connected and related to the world outside our own microcosm.

**Global issues:** understanding of the issues that affect their personal lives. Environmental issues such as global warming, energy resources and waste. Understand the relationship of the World Bank and the IMF and developing economies. Help make connections with world system such as water cycle, energy consumption, weather pattern across the world and impact of biotechnical waste, wars and human conditions of the oppressed etc.

**Global Culture:** Learning about the facts of ethnic and racial disparities across the globe, understanding of believe systems, understanding of similarities and differences in values of other cultures,. role and place of women in society across the globe, role and place of the disabled across the globe, nature of immigration and pattern of migration across the globe. Cross cultural awareness is necessary to communicate with others and find new solutions. A basic idea of acceptance and respect does not mean we should reject our ideas, rather it is the acceptance of the fact that people of other cultures may offer solutions that we have not consider. Learn from that and adapt it to our lives to solve problems. Take what works and ignore what does not work.

**Media Literacy:** This is the understanding and using the different forms of internet media in a way that it allows active participation in society and in the public sphere. The curriculum should foster in the students’ knowledge of computer system and basis of connectivity. Using ever-growing new vocabulary on technology education etc.

Change: children should be taught how to learn new skills and knowledge to get along successfully as the time changes. Schools teach students to seek out unique and creative solutions to solving problems, therefore, it is a the task of our school system to get our children to constantly be abreast of the constant changes the world over by enriching the curriculum at the basic education level being the foundation of our educational system. In globalizing the curriculum, efforts should be made not to over stretch the teachers therefore; the new demands should be subsumed in the existing curriculum.

**Conclusion**

From the foregoing, it is obvious that globalizing the curriculum at the UBE and other levels of our education system is inevitable, for we cannot afford to lag behind in the scheme of events of the world, we can also not afford to allow our youths who are the leaders of tomorrow waste away. Growth and productivity depends on education. The education sector should be rejuvenated to give the best of education to the vast majority of our youths for “education is the most important instrument of change”.

Globalization of the school curriculum does not mean that the local and national needs and realities of the country should be compromised, but that issues of localization of the curriculum learning in the mother language especially at the lower levels of the UBE, and maintaining a balance agencies.

**Recommendations**

Education is a serious business that cannot be played with, therefore, curriculum planners and various stakeholders of the UBE should be involved in the globalization process of the curriculum.

For globalization to be meaningful and contribute to the growth and productivity of the
nation, adequate funding of the educational sector should be enhanced.

References


