

EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A PANACEA FOR VALUE RE-ORIENTATION, POVERTY ERADICATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Sustainable National development could be achieved through the value re-orientation of education in Nigeria, thereby eradicating poverty in the nation. It is on this premise that this paper examines how the Re-orientation of education in Nigeria could help in the eradication of poverty and equally enhance National development. In this paper the curriculum of Nigerian education should be re-valued and examined as, that is the only way through which the national development could be reached. The contention of this paper is that, it is only when the educational system of Nigeria has fashioned out a functional curriculum that is relevant to their needs and aspirations that the much desired development could be realized and sustained. However, there is conclusion and recommendations to that affect.

In recent times Global changes has called for value re-orientation and innovations in the schools curriculum Nigeria, like other nations of the world has been experiencing changes in the education system in other to meet with the challenges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The issue is how to eradicate illiteracy poverty and have National development by the year 2020. As it is noted to be the hallmark of Universal Basic Education (UBE). The concern of curriculum experts as observed by Ogunkule (2009) is not just providing Education at these levels alone, rather providing the right type of Education that is befitting for the needs and aspirations of the society. Invariably this hinges on curriculum which is the instrument which education uses to achieve such aspiration of the society. Unachukwu (2010) sees curriculum as all courses offered at school. It is a prescribed course of studies, which students must fulfill in order to pass a certain level of education.

Offorma (2002) sees curriculum as a planned learning experience offered to a learner in school adding that it is a programme of studies made up of three components, programme of studies, programme of activities, and programme of guidance. Obanya (2004) sees curriculum as a body of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes consciously and systematically promoted under the guidance of educational goals decided by the society. Therefore, having seen curriculum and its dynamic nature, needs to be changed after a period or number of years to meet the needs of the learner and the society at large. The latest in education need to be inculcated into the learner to meet the changing society and the world. Functional curriculum of education is very vital and equally necessary. Obanya (2004) says that a 21st century curriculum for secondary education in particular should be an integral curriculum that aims at full personality development of the adolescent and emphasizing three areas.

- ❖ Personality development
- ❖ Preparation for life
- ❖ Preparation for formal higher education

Apparently, there is global competitiveness, the capability of every nation of the world to remain internationally competitive in the global knowledge based economy is requirement of the accelerated history of the present era.

Education and Curriculum

Particular is expected to be the prime contributor to a nation's capacity for global competitiveness. It is pertinent to note that globally nations are experiencing an unprecedented changes, so many nations are going through challenge, and societal problems, poverty and societal problems, poverty and unemployment is on the increase such nations are depending and looking upto school to render a helping hand in tackling the societal problems. The only way schools can achieve this is through re-valuing education, through the curriculum.

Re-valuing Education in Nigeria

Re-valuing education through the curriculum is one of the conditions for Nigeria to be a member of the global community of the 21st century. Obanya (2004) emphasizes that there is no way in which Nigeria can escape working toward achieving the development goals set by the international community. The young ones of today are the civil society of the future Nigeria. The major responsibility of the young ones of today is to make sure that Nigeria falls in line with the global forward moving of the 21st century. Education is seen as a veritable means of bringing about socio-cultural, political and economic growth. Education all over the world in seen and assumed to be the most valuable instrument of change in the social outlook of the world. There must be an educational revolution for a positive change to be achieved in the society.

Nzerem (2000) opined that education is a life long process which enables the individual to develop his potentials in order to give service not only to himself but to the community to large. It is therefore important that any educational system be programmed in a way that the beneficiaries will live up to the expectations of the society. Education is expected to inculcate in an individual the right type of values and attitudes for survival, as well as enable him acquire appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mental, physical, and equipment for him to live in and contribute to the development of his society. Having noted this, it is important to take an over view of the tertiary education in Nigeria goals of tertiary education in Nigeria. According to the National Policy on Education (FRN 2004:36) is the education given after secondary education in University, Colleges of education, monotechnics including those institutions offering correspondence course.

The goals of tertiary (FRN, 2004:36) are to:

- Contribution to national development through his level relevant manpower training.
- Develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society
- Develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.
- Acquire both intectual and physical skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society
- Promote and encourage scholarship and community service
- Forget and cement national unity; and
- Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

The goals of tertiary education are very laudable but seems to have been faced with many problems affecting implementation and realization of national objectives of education in Nigeria (Omotayo,

2008). Olutala (1983:24) also noted that, “Nigeria is not deficient in elegant philosophy and policy formulation on education, what is needed is a matching zeal and devotion to policy implementation. Unfortunately, this matching zeal appears to be lacking (Ngerem, 2000). One of the objectives of the National Policy on University Education is that, University Education shall make optimum contributions to national development by:

- (a) Intensifying and diversifying its programmes for the development of high level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation.
- (b) Making professional course contents to reflect our national requirement
- (c) Making all students as part of a general programme for all round improvement in university education, to offer general study courses such as history of ideas, philosophy of knowledge and nationalism.

However, what is seen on the spot is contrary to the above aims and objectives of university education. Proper investigation will show that the beneficiaries of university education have not been able to meet this objective, both physically and intellectually. Intellectual competence will keep them functional and useful, so that they become productive members of the society. It should be noted that the development of any society depends largely on the creative capacity of the citizens, so that they can explore the natural resources of the country. This will equally expose them on how to transform the natural resources harnessed into a finished product and provide services that could elevate the standard of living of the masses in the country (Nwangwu, 2007).

In line with these, Harbison (1973:63) opined that “Human resources, not capital, not income or material resources constitute the ultimate basis for wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization and carry forward national development.

The general opinion is that the education offered at the tertiary level is not functional because the system has failed to equip the beneficiaries with the required skills necessary for economic, scientific and technological development. The development of any nation depends on the quantity and quality of the skills offered by the school system to the citizens of that country.

Re-valued Education: A Conceptual Overview

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines Re-valued as, “usually passive”. To examine something again in order to calculate its present value. Secondly, to increase the value of a country’s money in relation to that of other countries”. Therefore, the re-value of Nigeria’s education is very necessary for it to be practical and useful. It should be made functional. Ali (2000) opined that functional education will ensure and produce food for people, create jobs, provide services and led to democracy. Idowu (1999) stated that functional education as the total process of bring up individuals to develop their potentials (cognitive effective and psychomotor) to the fullest and consequently to be able to contribute meaningfully to the development of the society and equally eradicated poverty.

Fafunwa (1974) cited in Aliyu and Ngadda (2000) referred to functional education as the aggregate of all the process by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he or she lives. He also noted that when evaluating among educational system, one must determine the extent to which it is meeting the needs of a particular society at any given time.

Nwokolo (2012) stated that the education of our dream in the year 2010 should be capable of producing Nigerians who can manufacture raw materials, machines and tools needed for our industries, produce enough food for local and international markets, invent new designs, discover drugs capable of curing diseases hitherto incurable and transform the nation from consuming one to a manufacturing one.

From the above view, functional education comes out of re-valued education which will in turn lead to the realization of the potentials of an individual as well as maximizing his contribution towards the development of his community and the society at large. Therefore, functional or re-valued education should be able to re-orientation of mind sets. Based on the re-orientation of education, this is the need for the up liftment of the goals of Education for All (EFA) and millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as educational re-orientation strategy. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) The goals of Education for All (EFA) and millennium Development Goals (EFA) and indeed the most significant re-orientation strategy to meet the demands of the international community. As explained by Obanya (2002) United Nations Millennium Declaration Conveying the MDGs adopted in January 2000 and the Dakar EFA Goals of April, that same year can be said to have elaborated on its education dimensions. The eight millennium development Goals set targets to be met in areas considered basic for building a solid foundation for sustainable human development. Obanya (2009) explains that nations of the world are expected to work in realizing. The set targets by the year, 2015, the same target date for the realization of the DakarEFA Goals. Education is needed to varying degrees in realizing every one of the eight MDGs. Every MDGs has a strong education component, especially when taking into consideration the expanding vision of the jointies Declaration.

The goals of MDGs as prerequisite which Nigeria must comply are:

1. Eradicate poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternity health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop global partnerships for development

Education for All (EFA) is an international endeavour to which Nigeria is committed. It foresees quality basic education for all by the year 2020. It also foresees the provision of opportunities for life long learning for all citizens, young or old, in and out of school.

Improving the Quality of Nigerian Education

Institutional and system planning is very vital for the restoration of quality in the educational system. The plans developed must be linked to realistic budget plans. Through planning issues of uncontrolled growth in number of students, programmes and institutions could be addressed. The National development needs could be met through regional and National Collaboration as well as by improvement of efficiency of the system. Nevertheless, it could be promoted through cost sharing activities and quality improvement that will allow institutions to collaborate effectively. Other forms of academic cooperation used internationally need to be explored.

Staff Quality and Quantity

Since no education system can rise above the quality of its Teachers (FRN, 2004). The quality of teachers employed to educational institutions should be of a great importance. Adegoke (2002) mentioned quality of teachers in charge of training as one of the indicators of standards in teacher Education. For Ikejiaku (2002) the morale of teachers and status of the teaching profession in Nigeria are among the factors that affect the quality of education in the country. It was concluded that only those who are qualified and with positive perception of the profession can inspire new entrants into the profession.

Value-Re-orientation in Facilities and Curriculum in Nigerian Education

The link between available faculties, the programme curriculum and quality of education is very strong. If, we must address the issue of re-orientation in education. This link must be adequately maintained. This is to say that no curriculum can be properly covered without adequate facilities to work the curriculum out and no mention of standard if the curriculum is not adequately covered.

Salihu (2001) in a study of the influence of school physical resources on students' academic performance concluded that there is significant difference in the academic performance of students in the schools with adequate facilities than those with in adequate facilities. The finding mechanisms for education must be re-thought. In recent livings the Federal Government has invested Treasury Single Account (TSA) in other to check corruptions in institutions and parastals but on the other hand, it seems as if it is a cog in the wheel of progress. The heads of institutions can no longer long their hands on funds to run institutions thereby making administration very difficult for them. A sustainable financing arrangement must be developed if Nigeria is to regain the ground it has already lost and become a serious player in the new global economic social and political order. Financial efficiency is critical and could be attained though the improvement of administrative and management practices, rationalization, much better and more realistic planning.

Value-re-orientation could be maintained through the evaluation of the curriculum at all levels. Making sure that the curriculum tailors entrepreneurial studies so that students graduating from the school should be self-reliant and be able to sustain themselves and help the society at large. Through this process, the National development will be effected. Eradication of poverty in the society will be sure. Another way by which school administration could maintain quality assurance is through educational assessments. Education and training in any society are central to sustainable development. In fact, education should be an indispensable requirement for all programmes. For instance, through programmes in Agriculture and sciences, poverty could be eradicated with this in mind, the curricula for schools and syllable must be a comprehensive and broad raging multivariate package and multi-cultural.

The UNESCO education for sustainable development" (ESD) clearly stipulated interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary methodologies in education and as Patrick Hanley notes "The challenge them is to agree on an epistemology that in inclusive of all domains of knowledge while being practical for education initiatives in the field. (Patrick H. 2005). Therefore, it becomes imperative that Nigeria educators designing the curricula must at least employ the following approach.

- To integrate education for sustainable development into all lend of planning, consideration and practice.
- Map out sustainable development Action Plan

- Create a section on education for sustainable development on the institutional website
- Design an interdisciplinary development study module
- Find resources to promote and endorse sustainability in education
- Organize lectures and seminars given by sustainable development experts
- Promoting research on sustainable development.

With these steps taken, much will be achieved through the re-orientation of education in Nigeria.

Introduction of Entrepreneurship Education as a Means of Value- Re-orientation

This proposed programme of study is designed for training and equipping Nigerian graduates from monotechnic, polytechnic colleges of technologies, colleges of education, university and all other tertiary institutions with a trade, vocation and particular skill or job such as computer operation masonry, carpenter, barbing/hair dressing tidying and dyeing, fashion designing. Cell phone repairing, among others through which to earn a living after federation, the nature or level of degree, diploma etc. certificate to be acquired notwithstanding. This would move us above a step forward in actualization/achieving one of the nation's philosophies of education production of self reliant citizenry and nations. It is evident that if all necessary efforts and machineries are put in place to pursue the laudable objectives of the programme, majority of Nigerian graduates would have turned employers of labour after a few years of graduation and not job seekers as the case is at present.

What is Entrepreneurship Education

Hisch and Peters (2008) states that entrepreneurial education is the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence. Dellinger (2006) perceive entrepreneurship as the creation of an innovative economic organization for the purpose of gain and growth and conditions of risk and uncertainty. Odusina (2005) stated that entrepreneurship is the process of using available capital in any form for business endeavours in an open and free market economy for the sole purpose of making profits.

Lonaga (2002) opines that an entrepreneur is someone who brings things like money, materials and labour together in new business, productive process or improved organization to ensure business success by perhaps creating something new. It now becomes clear that entrepreneurship could be regarded as the process by which economic and commercial activities necessary for the improvement of the standard of living of the society are created by entrepreneurs. Risk in involved and creating profit is also essential. With the increased population and the subsequent economic meltdown, Nigerians were now faced with the realistic ways of designing several strategies to be able to cope with the existing excruciating situation to eradicate poverty is people re-oriented in-terms of education. It is hoped that with the study of entrepreneurial knowledge, the Nigerian undergraduate will be well equipped to face the economic challenges of the time, he will be creative and innovative to produce wealth, he will be able to use his wealth of experience in school to create, manage and produce wealth. Entrepreneurship then becomes core course in the General Studies Unit of the various universities.

Ifechukwu (2000) stated that entrepreneurial education which was designed to equip students with practical economic realities of the time and how to cope with challenges has become a theoretical course which students scramble to pass just to obtain a degree in their respective field of study with

little or no practical exposure to any entrepreneurial studies is taught only in a semester in most universities as a general studies course. The students are exposed to the theories of entrepreneur just for about thirteen weeks after which he is made to write an examination qualifying him as a student that has undergone entrepreneurial studies.

Ikeagwu (2006) however suggested that entrepreneurial studies should be part and parcel of the course work the student must register for throughout his number of year in the university and not just a course for one. Entrepreneurial education is just skill acquisition training as it is often misconstrued. It is a form of training that will bring out the business acumen in the individual.

Asuka (2013) advised that teachers should design a course of study relating it to the specialized field for survival. The school curriculum should be designed in a way that the education to be received must match with the realities in the society in such a way that the sustaining elements of the course of study should be highlighted. This entails that some subjects which are not relevant to the present day realities should be scrapped and the existing ones should highlight the sustaining elements. A graduate of physics or chemistry should be innovative since education is intended for living. That an educated man cannot live well means that there is a problem with the educational system (Asuka, 2013). The average Nigerian undergraduate student is more concerned about his certificate. He ensures that he passes his course without any carry-over or failure. He is quite hopeful that the credentials will fetch his daily meals and handles entrepreneurship with levity. Kibby (2001) noted that very many undergraduate students have positive desire for wealth but with little or no sweat attached to it.

Conclusion

Education is the surest antidote to poverty, ignorance and morbidity. It is the surest path to the good life and the upliftment of the human person cum society. The programmes of basic education must therefore be pursued with utmost vigour for the benefit of not just the citizenry, but the society as a whole. The inclusion of entrepreneurial education in the curriculum at all levels of education will go a long way to eradicate poverty, enhance employment and boost national development.

Recommendations

1. The government should make sure that all funds budgeted for the implementation of entrepreneurial programmes are judiciously utilized.
2. Entrepreneurial studies should not be taught as a general course but as core course in all levels of Education
3. The curriculum of entrepreneurial education should be reviewed to include practicals.
4. Entrepreneurial villages should be established to enable students acquire desired skills.
5. The re-orientation or education relevant to the needs and aspiration of the society.

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