

# **BUSINESS EDUCATION IN MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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## **Abstract**

Poverty alleviation is a means directed towards eradicating poverty from individuals, groups or a nation. Manpower development is a crucial factor in poverty alleviation and national development. This paper examines the issue of poverty in the country, poverty alleviation programmes in the past, which did not make much impact. The paper also highlighted the role of business education in manpower development for poverty alleviation and national development and problems confronting business education programme. Recommendations were made thereafter.

## **Introduction**

Business education is defined as that area of education, which concerns itself with the vocational and professional preparation for a career in business (Atakpa, 2000). It is also seen as a total educational programme that provide; knowledge, skills and understanding needed for performance in business world as a consumer or producer. In the view of Osuala (1996), business education is a programme of instruction, which consists of two parts - office education, which is a vocational programme for office career, and general business education, which is a programme that provides information and competencies needed for managing and using business.

Many people view business education from a very narrow perspective. They do not know that business education represents a broad and diverse discipline required in all human endeavours. That is why Nanassy (1977), defined business education as that aspect of total educational programme that provides the knowledge; skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as a producer and /or consumer of goods and services that business offers.

The above definitions depict that business education students must be well prepared for sustainable economy. Akindele (2002), pointed out that a sustainable environment is the one that attempts to satisfy the human needs of the present generation without compromising the interest of future generations of mankind in the use of the same environment. Well-prepared business education programme can provide skills and knowledge needed to cater for this. With the introduction of modern equipment in the place of work, business education should prepare students on graduation to serve productively and efficiently in tome-vow's business environment. Business education is the bedrock of manpower development and poverty alleviation of every nation.

## **Manpower Development And Poverty Alleviation**

Manpower development according to Oranu (1994), is the total supply of persons available and fitted for services. Manpower development is the production of people who are healthy and with different knowledge and skill to perform the various functions that are needed in the society.

Ezeaku, Ndinechi-and Osisioma (1986), said that manpower development can be achieved through formal education and training, informal education and training and through provision of health services. Manpower development could be described as production of training in quantity and quality of individuals who are capable of providing the needed services and consequently contribute meaningfully to poverty alleviation and national development. It is in support of the above that Falani

(2002), pointed out that sustainable national development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs.

Poverty is a state of one being deficient in social and economic needs that make for good living. According to Webster's New World Dictionary (1983), poverty in the broadest term implies lack of resources for reasonably comfortable living. Poverty in its simplest form is ones inability to acquire and use or have access to the most basic essentials of life usually because of poor income earnings or government's inability to provide such essentials (Ali 2000). He stated that in Nigeria, causes of poverty include illiteracy,

unemployment, overpopulation, disease, ignorance and massive corruption. The following could be seen as characteristics of poverty in a nation:

- Low income
- Large family size
- Low level of production
- Political instability
- High dependence.

For a successful poverty alleviation strategy in Nigeria to be effective, it requires and focus firmly on strong indicators for national growth, to reduce the number of people in poverty line, growth must not only be rapid but broad based to include export, improvement and employment generating.

Poverty alleviation is effort made in improving the condition of living by provision of social amenities like water, electricity, education etc. Ali (2000), stated that poverty alleviation involves all the various agencies initiatives made available to a person for him to use in minimizing poverty. Poverty alleviation can simply mean ways or methods of eradicating or reducing poverty level among individuals, groups or nations.

The past government has introduced the following programmes to alleviate poverty in the country.

- Operation feed the nation
- Green revolution
- Directorate for food, roads and infrastructure (DFFRI)
- Mass mobilization for social and economic recovery
- Structural adjustment programme a,
- Better life for rural dweller
  - Petroleum trust fund (RTF)
- National directorate of employment (NDE)
- Poverty alleviation programme.

All these programmes failed to achieve its aim in reduction of poverty in Nigeria because of poor implementation and management The nation's fund cannot be shared among individuals in the name of alleviating poverty but through meaningful programmes that will help to raise the standard of living of individuals. Business education is education for work. It is a type of education that will help individuals to gain meaningful employment or be self-employed and by so doing the standard of living will be raised. This will also help in reducing the level of poverty in the country and give room for manpower development and sustainable nation.

### **Role of Business Education in Manpower Development and Poverty Alleviation**

The role of business education in manpower development for poverty alleviation cannot be over-emphasized. This can be achieved through various means. One of which is by recognizing the career opportunities available in business education. The international status of a country is influenced by its technological capacity, which in turn, will accelerate the national goal of self-sufficiency without attaining a feat of technological development. Business education really is a cluster of subjects and skills, which imbibe technology and commerce. Business education plays the following roles for manpower development and poverty alleviation.

1. Business education provides people with necessary consumer education. Business education assists the individuals to become intelligent buyers of goods and services. Much money is saved when consumers buy wisely. Thus, the capacity to determine the specific goods and services needed, the quality, quantity and proper price of goods and services needed are enduring qualities capable of conserving one's lean resources and improving one's fortune.
2. Business education provides an individual with various skills needed in a place of work or to become self-reliant.
3. Business education enables one acquire managerial skill. The importance of business education was recognized at the wake of Nigeria Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1972 when the need for Nigerian managers to replace the aliens becomes an issue. Business education assists in producing managers.

4. Business education builds up the entrepreneurial competencies of students to become self-employed at graduation.
5. Business education enables one to recognize the value of resources and hence make judicious use of them. Business education prepares the individual/trainee for many purposes as a business teacher, as office worker and one who finds the training economically advantageous for self-use.

### **Problems of Business Education**

To adequately address the role of business education in manpower development and poverty alleviation, the programme business education has to be harnessed in line with the present dispensation. Business education is facing a lot of problems like poor funding, lack of modern equipment, qualified teachers and other facilities required to effectively produce the needed manpower for self sustenance. Some of the problems of business education are discussed below:

1. **Inadequate Funding:** Modern equipment and machines like computer, projector, fax, Internet etc, are lacking in business education department as a result of fund. Funds are needed to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers and purchasing of workshop materials for the programme. The fund for the above is not available to business education in various higher institutions in the country.
2. **Lack of Equipment:** The national policy on education slated that the curriculum for teaching business. students. should 'include workshop practice and industrial training/production work. This flowery policy is greatly contrasted with reality. The practical aspect of teaching business education in most schools has been relegated to the background as situation as most business organizations, to which the students are attached cannot provide them with enough exposure to the relevant modern equipment.
3. **Inadequate Teachers:** The most important asset of any nation is its human resources, there may exist the most sophisticate equipment, facilities, funds and other materials, but if they are not effectively utilized and managed by efficient, effective and dedicated teachers, the objectives for which they are meant may not be attained. The issue of inadequate number of teachers with the appropriate qualification to teach business education subjects is prevalent in most of our educational institutions offering the programme.

### **conclusion**

Nigerians should note that the world is not going backward technologically and the only way forward according to Eze (2000), is not to watch, from the sideline as we are currently doing but to join in now if we are to remain relevant in the new world order.

Business education is of great importance in improving social economic status of the country. If these problems confronting business education are tackled, it will go a long a way in poverty alleviation for national development

### **Recommendations**

1. There should be massive investment in functional business education programme to produce the required personnel.
2. Policy making for poverty alleviation is still top-down. Resources and decision-making should be concentrated more at the local government or community level where the masses come in direct contact with available educational services rather than at federal or state ministries.
3. Industrial attachment, seminars and workshops should be properly organized and supervised for effective manpower development.
4. Efforts should be geared towards establishing programmes that will give the poor the capacity to provide for their own needs in a secured and dignified manner.

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