

# PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HOME ECONOMIC PROGRAMME IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

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## Abstract

Home economic education is a vocation-orientated course that demands adequate facilities for its effectiveness in an institution. However, there is an inadequate provision of these facilities in most of the schools in Nigeria. This leads to undesirable consequences that affect rapid implementation of this programme. This paper posits that adequate provision of home economics basic facilities in tertiary institutions would lead to technological breakthrough and national development. Hence the paper brings to line, problems militating against the effective implementation of the programme. Based on the above, recommendations such as adequate provision of home economics facilities basic requirements of NCCCE accreditation should be met for effective teaching and learning of the course etc., were made.

## Introduction

The 6-3-3-4 system of education is an innovation designed to make education functional and more responsive in terms of diversity, number and adequacy in manpower resource development.

Formal education in Nigeria consists of three levels namely: primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Tertiary education is the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics monotechnics etc. education at the tertiary levels, according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004 p.30), should, among other things, aim at:

- a. Contributing to national development through high-level relevant manpower training.
- b. Acquiring physical and intellectual skills, which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.

The form of education, which seeks to satisfy the above stated aims, is vocational education. Vocational education according to Okoro (1993), is any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in recognized occupation. It provides skill, knowledge and attitudes necessary for effective employment in specific occupations. Skills development is very important in harnessing nation's natural resources. This is because; skill acquisition helps in developing intrinsic potentials in individuals.

Skill, is the ability to do something expertly and well. It is an organized sequence of actions. According to Njoku (2002), to possess skill is to demonstrate the habit of acting, thinking and behaving in a specific activity in such a way that the process becomes natural to the individual through repetition or practice. The development of skill is an important function of educational institutions, especially among tertiary institution students. To this effect, the National Policy on Education opined that, there is roles vocational can play in individual in satisfying the manpower needs of the nation, hence the inclusion of vocational subject like Home Economics.

Home Economics education, which is one of the arms of vocational and technical education, is a multi-disciplinary subject that embraces a very large area and draws from other disciplines such as arts and sciences in solving physical, social, economic and political problems of families, individuals and society (Suara and Dairo 1997). It is therefore, a very comprehensive and all embracing discipline whose contributions to humanity and politics are unquantifiable. Osuala(1981 p. 42), viewed Home Economic as:

...education which is concerned with improvement of the family and its environment. The knowledge skills and attitudes identify in the course contents are derived from the job analysis of the useful vocation of Home making, and designed to help individuals and families towards more meaningful and community living.

The programme of Home Economics is actually prepared to help youths and adults to develop competencies and apply the knowledge on the community to improve the quality of family living and enhances self-reliance. Therefore, the need for standard infrastructure to enable effective teaching and learning of this course is paramount.

Since, it has become obvious that in Nigeria, the tertiary level of education produces the greater proportion of nation's workforce. Skill oriented subjects as Home Economics should be encouraged through proper provisions of infrastructure, to enable both youths and adults fit into modern world of science and technology and to foster manpower development in the nation. The aim of Home Economics at this level of education is to expose the students to various career and train them to have diverse abilities in choosing their occupation to avoid dropout in choice of career. To that effect, the following subjects are highlighted thus: Food and Nutrition clothing and textiles, Home management and child development.

Each of this subject's title is thought separately with their unique methodology and technicality that demand

their own separate laboratory and equipment. When a student is not good in a certain occupation he or she could be good in another, thereby reducing some of the anti-social voices that threaten the survival and advancement in technology and national development. Hence, there is need for adequate infrastructure in Home Economics at this level of education.

### **Problems Confronting the implementation of the Home Economics Programme**

There are myriad of problems confronting functional implementation of Home Economics programmes such as: infrastructural facilities, lack of qualified teachers, inadequate funding and public apathy towards Home Economics education.

### **Infrastructural Facilities**

Hornby (2006), defines infrastructure as " the basic systems and services that are necessary for a country or an organization to run smoothly, for example buildings, transport, water and power supplies". In other words, infrastructure could be explained as the basic structures and facilities necessary for an organization to function efficiently. According to Mbuk (2005), educational infrastructure embraces the basic structures (facilities) and non structural type (ie equipment and Materials) necessary for any academic institution to operate efficiently.

School facilities and equipment are the bedrock in conducting any educational programmes. The present Nigerian educational system calls for adequate provision and utilization of instructional materials especially in science and vocational subjects such as Home Economics education. Examples of these basic infrastructural facilities are: standard classroom blocks, laboratories, equipment and instructional materials.

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### **The Laboratory**

The Laboratory is seen as the focal point for science oriented course as Home Economics education. According to Awodi (2005), the realities of school laboratories in this country have been that there is either no laboratories or the few available are ill-equipped. This problem is also applicable to Home Economics education. Most tertiary institutions in Nigeria, particularly Benue State that offers Home Economics have acute shortage of laboratory. In some schools there are no specified Home Economics Laboratories. All that one sees is a common classroom labeled as Home Economics laboratory. There is no specific laboratory assigned for Clothing and Textiles, Food and Nutrition, Home Management and Child Development. Due to this inadequacy of lack of laboratories, majority of these institutions have problem of inadequate equipment and instructional materials. This is because, if an institution lacks a laboratory for such a vocational course as Home Economics, how then would such challenged to equip the department, how and where would such equipment be installed for use and safety?

This fact corroborates with a research carried out by Maduabum (1986), which showed that the realities of the situation of inadequate infrastructure range from no science laboratories at all to one microscopic science laboratory. He observed that what obtained was the existence of 'well equipped laboratories', only on paper. Other researches by Soyibo (1986), Ezike (1986) and Olayiwola (1999), confirmed this shortage of laboratories in Nigerian secondary school. In some tertiary institutions the available Home Economics and encourage ventilation for conducive practical. This hinders the effective teaching and learning of Home Economics education in Nigeria.

### **Classroom**

Classrooms are very important infrastructure in an educational system (Awodi 2005). But one of the problems Home Economics programme is facing in some of the present tertiary institutions in Nigeria today, is lack of adequate classroom blocks. Despite the demands of N.C.C.E to meet accreditation requirement of standard floating classroom blocks, for every functional Home Economics programme in tertiary institutions, the reverse is still the case. Most tertiary institutions combine the laboratory and classroom together for both teaching and practical. It is difficult to differentiate a classroom from laboratory in an institution these days. All you will see is just the name Home Economics labeled on the block of the building to show that Home Economics is also existing in that school. The block cannot be identified to be neither classroom nor a laboratory. This affects effective teaching and learning of this course-Home Economics.

### **Instructional Materials**

The present Nigerian educational system calls for adequate provision and utilization of instructional materials, especially science and vocational subjects as Home Economics education. Instructional aids have astonishing power of attracting and holding students attention. Colley (1982, p. 42), supported this fact when he said 'students' interest can be captured and learning is facilitated when appropriate facilities are used in conjunction with the teachers' presentation'. Writing on the importance of instructional materials in teaching, Colley (1982) stated that it can help the students grasp relationships pick out similarities and differences so that they are led to generalize, discriminate and organize their knowledge. According to him, the teacher who makes a balance appeal to the sense by using verbal, visual and practical methods is accommodating students' individual differences. Richard (1981, p. 24), relates the suggestion that 'we remember 10% of what we hear, 50% of what we hear and see, and over 80% of what we hear and do'. Adaja, cited in Anyakoha (1994),

stresses that instructional materials reduce the difficulty in understanding of the skill and facilitate practice.

Nevertheless, the issue of adequacy and relevance of Home Economics facilities is still neglected in most of our tertiary institutions to day. In some higher institutions, home economics laboratories just bear these labels only on the blocks of buildings earmarked for such facilities. The relevant and adequate equipment, tools, instructional material are not there. There are no department libraries adequately stocked with current Home Economics books and magazines to upgrade the knowledge of both teachers and students. This gross lack of materials/facilities demoralizes the individual teacher who is ready to put forth effort towards achieving the goals of this subject.

### **The Need for Educational Infrastructure**

The need for educational infrastructure such as classroom blocks, laboratory etc in teaching and learning of a science-oriented course, as Home Economics cannot be over emphasized. Undoubtedly, these facilities make learning and teaching easy, lively and productive. They also, provide direct experience and content between the learners and the materials, ensuring a better grasp of the concept that is learned. Such a medium used for teaching/learning create lasting impression. Education infrastructure is an inevitable instrument in our educational process, if we must advance scientifically and technologically to meet up with the challenges of the modern world. According to Eshiet (1996), laboratories are work houses for scientific practices, for search of new ideas and information.

Edem (1987), states that whatever resources are available are not often utilized due to poor planning and maintenance. If the quality of education is to be maintained in Home Economics subjects, there should be adequate supply of equipment, instructional materials and professional teachers. Ozigi (1977), supports this fact by saying that items of school equipment are essential aids to effective teaching and learning. They are the teachers' trade tools. An institution that lacks essential equipment cannot reasonably expect to achieve its main objective in students' performance, hence poor performance.

### **The Teacher**

Educational infrastructure! facilities cannot be completed and effective in an institution without a human resources facility (the teacher). Every educational system at every level depends heavily on the quality of its teacher. Appropriate use of equipment, its maintenance and improving standards of education is only through them. If there are not trained, managed and equipped to do so, however, good the facilities are, they will not be effective in the academic, pursuit of the students.

In other words, physical and monetary resources alone cannot impact the much needed knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and competencies into the ever-increasing number of our academic attainment - seeking youths. It is through the combined and concerted efforts of the teacher that the material resources (facilities) are harnessed to achieve the tertiary school objectives. Therefore, the teacher should be most carefully selected, trained, maintained and supported in the field financially and morally. In this regard, Nnabuo (1996,p.64), pointed out that the quality of education depends on the quality of teachers: what they know. He went on, to confirm his assertion with ashby's report which states that no educational system can be stronger than its teachers. (Fafunwa 194, p.61), upholds the above view when he said that all the educational problems that be set Africa countries today, non is as persistent or as compelling as the one relating to the training of a competent teacher. If there are competent Home Economics teachers in our tertiary institutions today, they will be able to effectively teach and demonstrate the practical aspects of the course fluently to the students.

Home Economics teachers need to be efficient in handling the equipment and instructional materials in the laboratories. This will help them in engaging the students in the usage of these facilities for effective teaching and learning of this subject. But the reverse is the case due to the quality of teachers we have in our institutions these days.

The policy whereby the teaching profession is made open to all classes of people as a very huge hindrance to the profession. Some Home Economics teachers are not professionals in the field clothing and textiles as an aspect of Home Economics for instance, was neglected and ineffective in many schools because of this problem. Some Home Economics teachers lacked the psychomotor skill of demonstrating sewing practically before the students. Nwaigwe (1977), observed that, children could be interested in handwork, but teacher might not be competent in teaching them. The above statement made by Nwaigwe has highlighted some of the problems that are militating against the development of Home Economics education in the tertiary institutions, in Nigeria.

### **Inadequate Funding**

The colonialist legacy denounces jobs that require the usage of hands in favour of while-colar jobs imposes a negative attitude in many administrators,. Thus, the first area of attach is to feel that science and technology (Home Economics) equipment are too costly to afford. The outcome of this is that Home Economics is no longer an area of priority for funding by the State Government. Majority of the institutions in Nigeria especially Benue State that offer Home Economics have problem of basic instructional facilities. Even gas cookers and sewing machines which for most people constitute the mental picture of Home Economics department are lacking. Unfunctionable equipment such as refrigerator, gas institutions. The most common

and available resources in most of our institutions is dining table and side cupboards.

In spite of all these, Home Economics teachers resort to teaching Home Economics teachers resort to teaching Home Economic using only theory and the students attempt to learn the course by rote. These make many students to perform poorly in their practical works because of their inability to learn sufficiently as a result of acute shortage of instructional materials. A situation whereby every requisition for basic instructional materials in Home Economics education is answered in one line no funds, is a serious inhibition to effective teaching and learning of a creative course as Home Economics.

### **Public Apathy Towards Home Economics Education**

Several Nigerians fail to realize that Home Economics education is one of the components of vocational and technical education. This makes many people to have misconception about the value of Home Economics in our educational system. Majority of Nigerian have little or no interest in the subject. Olaitan and Augosiobo (1981), observed that, Home Economics were regarded as a subject that could be taught by every mother.

The above observation made by Olaitan and Augosiobo (1981), is very true, because parents seem to look down on this course in the society and thought it was mere waste of time and money to include it in the school curriculum. In some post-primary institutions for instance, Home Economics subjects for the General certificate in Education (G.C.E). Subsequently, some people have wrong notion that Home Economics is for those who cannot cope with literacy subjects.

These ugly trends have adversely affected students' enrolment for Home Economics in senior secondary schools and admission of intending students into the department of Home Economics in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The society failed to realize that the course - Home Economics is a vocational subject that also has the capacity to produce various creative product, and has various areas of career that can reduce the problems of unemployment in the nation.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the above, the researcher therefore, recommends as follows:

1. There should be adequate provision of Home Economics facilities such as laboratories, equipment and instructional materials.
2. All the four aspects of Home Economic (Clothing & Textiles, Food and Nutrition, Home Management and Child Development) should have a separate laboratory with equipment.
3. Qualified teachers that can teach all the aspects of Home Economics should be employed.
4. Staff and students should be careful with the facilities to ensure proper management and maintenance of available tools and equipment.
5. Proprietors or the administrators should support Home Economics programmes financially.
6. The basic requirements of N.C.C.E accreditation should be met for effective teaching and learning of the course.

### **Conclusion**

Home Economics is a skill acquisition that demands adequate infrastructures for its effectiveness in an institution. However, the issue of adequacy and relevance of Home Economics facilities is still neglected in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria today. Since no nation can develop meaningfully, without infrastructural facilities in her institution of learning. This paper advises that, sufficient provisions of Home Economics infrastructural facilities should be made in our tertiary institutions of learning. The paper hence, establishes the facts, that investment in a vocation oriented course as Home Economics is an investment on individual, family and the society at large, which enhances technological advancement in the nation.

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