

# IMPROVISATION: A SOLUTION TO THE DEARTH OF INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES IN NIGERIA EDUCATION SYSTEM

By

CATHERINE NGOZI OBI

*School of Education,  
Federal College of Education (Technical),  
Umunze.*

## Abstract

*This paper centered on the improvisation as a solution to the dearth of infrastructural facilities in Nigeria education system. it involved highlighting of the nature, the importance, the criteria for adoption, and the problems of improvisation in Nigeria education sector. The paper also expressed the fact that improvisation is an indispensable alternatives for real/original educational facilities and thus should be taken seriously in Nigeria education system for educational and national development beyond 2020. Finally, some suggestions were made to that effect.*

The development of any nation depends to a large extent on its quality of education. This is perhaps the reason why every nation worldwide recognized and perceived education as an indispensable tool for development. Thus, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its 27<sup>th</sup> session of the general congress defined education as a tool for the development of all human potential which is the most powerful lever for shaping the future (Ajayi and Adu, 2000). To make this workable in Nigeria, the government takes up the responsibility of providing all the material resources need of education among others. The material resources include the infrastructural facilities, funds, schools equipment, etc. The government does these responsibilities to ensure a sound and qualitative education in Nigeria for its development. In line with this, the National Policy on Education (2013) emphasized on educational service, which according to the document is meant to facilitate the implementation of educational planning and objectives as well as promoting the

efficiency of education in Nigeria. For education to achieve these, the infrastructural facilities are paramount.

Given the importance of educational facilities in the development of education, it is pertinent to observe that these materials are always in short supply in Nigeria education system. In some cases, they are not available. In such cases education activities have to be done as expected by the people who are interested in the education sector. For example teachers are expected to teach and to teach well. Under this condition teachers are under a lot of pressure always to perform their duties with perfection.

It is in this consideration that this paper is of the view that there is a way out of this problem, *Vis-à-vis* the improvisation of these facilities as the alternatives for the real ones. These alternative materials may not be as good and as perfect as the real ones but they are better than nothing. In view of this therefore. This paper is centred on the improvisation a solution to the dearth of infrastructural facilities in Nigeria education system for educational and national development beyond 2020.

### **Improvisation Referred**

Improvisation is a way to use creative imaginations to create alternative materials using local resources where the real ones are not available. For Nzeribe (2009) it is the ability to put resources together to create instructional materials hitherto unavailable or unaccessible and which are useful in the teaching and learning process. It is also the provision and use of similar or near similar materials to facilitate teaching and learning outcomes in the absence of real materials. In line with this, Odor and Azake (1986) in Iwuozor (2009) noted that where the real equipment is not available, improvisation serves the function of representing the next-to-real situation and filling the instructional vacuum likely to be created, provide a frame of reference and make teaching easier by providing the context to focus instruction. For example lessons can be delivered under the shade of trees while pieces of stones and blocks are used as seats pupils use unripe oranges for football, etc. These alternatives, in addition to effecting meaningful and purposeful teaching and learning are expected to be cheaper and almost the same with the real ones.

In this way improvisation proves to have many advantages to education. It is a way to use creative imaginations to create materials which are lacking in the education system. Thus its use cuts across all subject areas such as mathematics, drama, geography, art, sciences, to mention but a few,

Most improvised materials are cost effective as they are produced with reduced cost and yet they serve the same purposes the real materials. Can serve. In this way Nigeria saves a lot of foreign exchange which would have been spent importing the materials. It develops education and enhances people's creativity including quality of education via teaching and learning.

*Catherine Ngozi Obi*

In the area of instruction, it makes teaching easy for the teachers and learning easy for the learners. Through improvisation both the teacher and the learner demonstrate their creative imaginations.

Improvisation develops in people a new attitude to demonstrate their talents and capabilities to improve their creativity and tendencies to discover new things in life. Through improvisation many activities in education system can be undertaken. For example many schools are able to encourage inclusion of certain subjects up to certain educational level.

Improvisation, apart from encouraging self-reliance to teachers and promoting the possibility of self-sustenance to schools, it also encourages hand, head and heart co-ordination in the teaching and learning process.

According to Iwuozor (2009), it has pragmatic or instrumental value since it is used in achieving specific educational goals. For him for example, making wall annotated clay model or wood carving of human heart, kidney and skeleton. On the other hand, he observed that the intrinsic values of improvisation consists of its aesthetic nature such as production which is as a result of the producer's ingenuity, creative tendencies and productivity which makes the production good in itself irrespective of the educational goals that could be achieved applying it in teaching-learning process.

**Sources of Materials for Improvisation**

The home and community can be the sources of invaluable resources for people and educational institutions who can make use of their ingenuity, creative tendencies and productivity to produce and manage such materials for optimal use.

**The Home**

As an integral part of education, the home and the school co-operate in educating the children. This being the case, they should also co-operate to see that educational objectives are achieved. Most, parents today are educated, through Parent Teachers Association (PTA) they can help in providing materials that will be used for improvisation of useful teaching and learning materials. These materials includes:

- Old blankets
- Family pictures
- Discarded home materials like pots, puckets, empty cans, bottles, cover tops, etc.
- Old or new calendars, magazines, newspapers, almanacs, etc.
- Dresses, shoes etc.

## **The Community**

The community can provide the following resources

### **1. National material resources**

These are materials made by nature because they are as the work of nature. They include cash crops, food items, hills, forests, oceans, trees, rivers, mountains, sands of all kinds, open lands, village halls, houses, etc.

These materials can serve as real objects, all the place can be visited in excursion while open lands can be used for sports and games.

### **2. Man-Made Material Resource**

These are materials resources from the community which are made by man. Examples are vehicles, factories, artworks, seaports, village halls, houses, churches, mosques, banks, hospitals schools, market squares, maternity homes, etc. these materials can provide help in areas like sports and games, offices, classrooms, environmental sanitation, transportation, communication, resource development and management, etc.

### **3. Human Resources:**

These are the professionals in special education and related fields. These professionals are the people from the community who are experts in certain areas and ready to help in the education among these are the special teachers regular teachers, doctors, psychologists, rehabilitation officers, etc. they manage other material resources and can be useful in other areas for the development of education

## **Criteria for Adoption Of Improvisation**

In adopting any form of improvisation, it is necessary to check the relevance of the improvised materials. To this effect Ajere and Eule (2000) and Usman (2000) articulated the following as the criteria for the adoption of the improvised materials:

- The device should seek to validly illustrate and provide answer to a specific science problem in principle.
- It should be simple, readily replicable, durable and attractive
- The cost of producing the improvise apparatus should be relatively low.
- It should not differ significantly in quality and reliability from industrially produced type.
- It should foster development of desirable skills and interest in the learners.

## **Problems Associated With Improvisation**

Improvisation is faced with innumerable problems which according to Balogun in Iwuzor (2009) include the technical and human factor problems. The presented the technical factor problems as challenging the degree of accuracy and precision that can

### *Catherine Ngozi Obi*

be achieved with the improvised equipment vis-à-vis the factory produced one. For him this problem is more crucial at the secondary and tertiary levels where more sensitive experiments and observations are carried out. Other technical factors are related to the problems of use. He also presented human factors as the problems associated with teacher's professional commitment, creative ability, technical skill, ingenuity and competence.

Education system in Nigeria does not include the element of improvisation in the academic programmes to teach people how to use their creative ability to produce materials where the intended ones are not available. Thus, the people are not taught not to expect that everything they need must be available. And there are circumstances where they must look around for alternatives instead of panicking.

Improvisation is a way in which people demonstrate their commitment to work. Thus in a situation where no body is actually committed to work, it becomes highly impossible for the people to creatively think of substitutes for materials talkless of how to organize them for improving the work. Effectively, and how to organize them to perform the work.

Nigerian government is not ready to support improvisation by sponsoring training programmes such as seminars, workshops, in-service training, rather people are always told by government to improvise because of austerity measure in the country. For Iwuzor (2009) the way government doles out money for other less important ventures does not reflect any commitment to dealing with austere times. For example he stated, "better reward systems are to football and musicians than for excellence in science teaching".

Improvisation of some materials requires to a large extent the use of machines and technicians to handle them. In this case Nigeria is not able to produce these machines nor the money it required talkless of the technicians to handle them.

Electricity is another problem in Nigeria. Even if something can be done in this direction, the absence of electricity will cripple every effort toward the improvisation in the country suitable source books on improvisation are still tacking in Nigeria and this makes every effort towards improvisation difficult it not inattainable.

In our education institutions at all levels learners are not given any opportunity to tap their creative and imagination potentials in constructing sample pieces of school equipments for their own and schools use. The situation in all schools is to wait for interested government to come to their aids in terms of improvisation.

No teacher training institution has included the element of improvisation in the training programmes of teachers to teach them how to use their creative potentials to create materials as alternatives to improve teaching and learning.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has highlighted the importance of using improvisation in view of its innumerable benefits to teachers, learners, the education system and the nation at large.

Presented also are the nature, sources and the problems of improvisation in Nigeria as well as the criteria for selecting materials for improvisation. Emerging from this is that improvisation is an indispensable alternatives for real educational facilities and thus should be given its rightful position in schools curriculum. To make this workable in Nigeria attempt is made to suggest ways to tackle the problem of improvisation in Nigeria for educational and national development beyond 2020.

### **Recommendations**

Regarding the importance of improvisation and the problems it faced in Nigeria education system, this recommends the following as the solution to the problem:

- Educational planners in Nigeria should make appropriate plans to include the element of improvisation in the school curriculum especially teacher training programmes. This will help to teach people to use their creative potentials to create materials as alternatives in the absence of original ones.
- Stakeholders in the education industry who exhibit the ability for creativity and resoucefulness for improvisation should be rewarded and motivated.
- Suitable source books on improvisation should be made available in Nigerian school libraries.
- Funds should be made available to sponsor people as well as teachers' attendance at seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. on regular basic including in-service orientation training. The provision of finds should also be extended to the purchase of some tools needed for the improvisation.
- Learners in our educational institutions should be provided opportunities to use their creative and imagination abilities to produce sample of materials for their own and schools use.
- P.T.A. should be involved to help schools in the provision of improvised materials in one way or the others.

*Catherine Ngozi Obi*

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