

REGENERATING HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION FOR POVERTY ERADICATION, SELF-RELIANCE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

It is discovered that what Nigeria needs today is a sound, qualitative and or functional education to be able to eradicate poverty, attain self-reliance and national development. Quality and functional education can only be achieved if the country's education is regenerated. It is our belief that Home Economics Education being a practical-oriented programme can also contribute immensely to achieve Nigeria's desire to attain self-reliance and national development. The focus of this paper therefore is on regenerating Home Economic Education in Colleges of Education for poverty eradication, self-reliance, and national development. It also highlights on the objectives of Home Economics Education in Colleges of Education in Nigeria as well as the problems hindering its effective teaching and learning. Similarly, ways on how to regenerate Home Economics Education at the Colleges of Education level have been discussed. Among the recommendations proffered is the need to employ only qualified, competent, energetic and committed persons to teach Home Economics at this level.

Several years after independence, Nigeria is still faced with the problems of poverty, ineffectiveness of her educational system to bring about self-reliance and development. Poverty and non-development have been identified as factors responsible for all forms of criminality among the citizens, ranging from murder, robbery, corruption, prostitution, violence and other criminal tendencies. The nation's education system has not helped the matter as the quality of

its products has been rated low. Low in the sense that the products or graduates of our education system can hardly initiate and undertake to engage in gainful and or profitable activities to earn their living without necessarily depending on the Government. The emphasis has always been on paper qualification than practical and result-oriented education that leads to self-reliance and development.

Today, Nigeria needs quality and functional education to enable it eradicate

poverty, attain self-reliance and national development. These goals can be achieved only by the regeneration of the country's education. It is our belief that if Home Economics Education is made much more functional, can no doubt contribute to poverty eradication, self-reliance and national development. This paper therefore focuses on regenerating Home Economics Education in Colleges of Education for poverty eradication, self-reliance and national development. Equally, it examines the objectives of Home Economics teaching and learning in Colleges of Education. The problems affecting quality teaching and learning of Home Economics have as well been discussed. At the end, some recommendations are made in the view of making Home Economics teaching and learning much more effective and result-oriented.

Concept of Home Economics Education

Home Economics generally, is a field of study that offers numerous occupations for individual. As a skill-oriented discipline, it possesses the capability of equipping individuals with saleable skills that make for self-employment, self-reliance and creation of wealth. Home Economics Education therefore is education in Home Economics which generally aims at training individuals for manpower and increased productivity in order to contribute in the nation-building. In other word, Home Economics Education is the type of Education which aims at ensuring optimal quality of life for furthering community, national and world conditions favourably

to family living (Anyakoha, 1996). This form of education is an all embracing programme that focuses on the welfare of individuals and their families. It is a vocational and skill-based education which prepares one for gainful employment, self-reliance, self-employment and good family living. This is in line with the thinking of Olaitan (1996) who opines that Home Economics Education aims at equipping the individual to enable him attain and live a useful satisfying life and be self-reliant after training. This thus, can afford them the opportunity of contributing meaningfully to the development of the society in one way or the other.

Home Economics Education embraces the Following Courses

1. Clothing and Textiles

- i. Fashion and designing
- ii. Craft work
- iii. Clothing maintenance
- iv. Laundry services
- v. Tie-dyeing and batiking
- vi. Textile and clothing merchandise.

2. Food and Nutrition

- i. Catering and Hotel management
- ii. Opening snacks centre or restaurant
- iii. Baking
- iv. Food processing and preservation

3. Child Development and Family Relations

- i. Nursing school and Director

- ii. Proprietors of private primary or Secondary schools
- iii. Director of social/welfare centre

4. Home Management

- i. Interior Decorations
- ii. Day-care and Nursing management
- iii. Managing of old peoples Home extension worker
- iv. Vegetable and Flower Gathering
- v. Institutional Home Keepers

According to Audu and Abdulkadir (2009), graduates of Home Economics Education can work in any of the above mentioned fields or areas of learning. They can equally establish their own business based on one or more of the programmes.

Objectives of Home Economics Education

The National Commission for Colleges of Education has stipulated the objectives for teaching Home Economics in Colleges of Education in Nigeria as follows:

1. To train Home Economics teachers with a sound basis for professional growth and personal development in Home Economics Education who will:
 - (a). Exhibit thorough knowledge of job skills and career opportunities in Home Economics.

- (b). Equip students with entrepreneur skill for self-employment and self-reliance.
 - (c). Demonstrate positive human relationship and ability to work with people from diverse socio-cultural background.
2. To prepare teachers and to qualify them for post NCE degree programme in Home Economics.

Problems of Home Economics Education

Much has been said about Home Economics Education and its importance to individuals and the society. However, the teaching and learning of the discipline over the years in Colleges of Education is yet to be effective and functional as it is expected. The objectives of teaching and learning the course in Colleges of Education are plausible, but the attainment of the objectives remains a mirage! Several factors have been identified as being responsible for the inability to attain the educational objectives of the programme. These among others include, shortage of qualified and competent teachers, inadequate facilities, lack of adequate funding, lack of commitment to job, ineffective teaching methodologies etc. In order to achieve the objectives of teaching Home Economics and make it functional, result-oriented and to enhance its graduate to becoming self reliant so that they can contribute towards national development, there is an urgent need to regenerate the Home Economics Education in Colleges of Education.

Regenerating Home Economics Education

The term regenerating comes from the verb to generate, meaning to make something develop and grow strong again (Summers, 2005). This means that what needs regeneration now used to be strong. This presupposes that Home Economics teaching at the College of Education level used to be strong, functional and result-oriented but presently it is not. This explains why the output has been low. Thus, regenerating Home Economics Education in Colleges of Education implies transforming this type of education to enable it develop and grow again, bigger and stronger so that it performs better. This will make Nigeria and her citizenry develop and grow bigger, better and stronger socially, politically, ecumenically and otherwise. From the foregoing, therefore, Home Economic Education in Colleges of Education can be regenerated through the following ways:

Teaching Staff

It is said and it is a true saying that no education system can rise above the level of its teacher. This means that teachers play very important role in the teaching and moulding of individuals at all levels of education. In order to achieve qualitative and functional education, there must be on the ground well trained and competent teachers to handle the education industry of the country. In Colleges of Education, there is therefore, the need to have only qualified, competent, energetic,

resilient, versatile and dedicated teachers to teach Home Economics.

This can be done through competitive interviews to be conducted by a team of serious-minded academicians. The fact still remains that the present crop of teachers of Home Economics consists of persons who are old, tired, lazy and not committed to their jobs. (Though there are few who are still strong and committed). In addition, there is need to retrain the teachers on the job to enable them perform better. This can be done by exposing them to handling modern laboratory and other gadgets and or equipment such as electric and gas cookers, microwaves, hair drier, washing machines, designing machines etc. workshops/seminars should be organized for this purpose. Lecturers should endeavour to go and acquire higher degrees.

Facilities

Inadequate infrastructural facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, quality white boards, gadgets or equipment as mentioned above etc pose a serious threat to the successful implementation of Home Economic Programme in Colleges of Education. Onwunedo (1998), Uzoezie (1992) and Anyakoha (1992) have all reported acute shortage of infrastructural facilities in our institutions of learning. Associated with the above is also, the shortage of Home Economics textbooks.

The few available ones are written by foreign authors, who have little or no knowledge of our cultural background.

Apart from the fact that books are costly to procure by both lectures and students.

Effective teaching and learning cannot be achieved without infrastructural and instructional facilities. To revamp the nation's education, efforts should be made to provide adequate facilities. Remember, that Home Economics is a practical -based course, and it cannot do without the necessary facilities on the ground and in adequate number too. Again, adequate funds are needed to procure the needed facilities that are not available. The broken ones should be repaired, and the obsolete ones need to be replaced.

Teaching Methodology

Methodology of teaching Home Economics should not be taken lightly. Methodology generally, can be said to be a set of methods, principles and techniques used in teaching a practical course like Home Economics. Methodologies of teaching play vital role in the teaching-learning process and in helping to actualize educational objectives. To regenerating Home Economics Education would require effective methodology to teach the course. The methodology should be a learner-centred, participatory and altruistic whose objective is the acquisition of relevant skills and attitudes that are capable of helping individual to develop self and become self-sufficient and self-employed. In other word, the methodology to be adapted should be effective, less of theories but more of practicals. The method should as well be creative enough to motivate and encourages learners to

become creative and productive in the various areas that make up Home Economics Education. For example, in Food and Nutrition, there are several self-employed opportunities and these among others, as enumerated by Osuala (2000), include bread-making, preparation of snacks, cakes, buns, fruit and drinks. They can also engage in catering businesses or have restaurants and snacks bars. They can as well engage in confectionary production from local foods through the skills they have acquired.

Furthermore, the skills they have acquired through Home Management can be of great use in engaging in lucrative ventures such as soap and pomade making, house-keeping, baby sitting, decorations, weaving etc (Ombugadu, 2007).

Conclusion

Home Economic Education is an important field of study-in the sense that it's unique and dynamic. Its main objective is training for the purpose of improving the lives of individuals, families and the entire society. Home Economics Education is practical-based programme which is capable of making individuals who have acquired its skills and attitudes to become well-cultured, skilful, resourceful, self-reliant, self-employed and employer of labour. However, the course has been bedeviled by a number of factors that have hindered its effective teaching and learning at the Colleges of Education level. The solution therefore lies in regenerating this type of skills acquisition -based course to enable it contribute meaningful to poverty

eradication, self-reliance and national development. It is therefore, hoped that the recommendations that are to be proffered, would help to improve the quality of training and products of Home Economic Education in Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Government should as a matter of urgency recruit qualified, competent, energetic, knowledgeable and skilful teachers in adequate number. This can be done through competitive interviews to ascertain the competence of such teachers.
2. Since Home Economic is a practical-based course, a practical and creativity-based methodology be employed in teaching and learning of the course. In addition, the methodology should be learners-centred and participatory. Again, there is the need to continuously retrain the lecturers who are already in the system. This can be achieved through workshops and or seminars to be organized by the Government. Philanthropists and non-Government organizations should also be contacted to sponsor such programmes. Also, Home Economics lecturers who are in the system should go and acquire higher degrees for increased performance and productivity.
3. Creativity in the various fields that make up Home Economics should be encouraged and promoted to enable products of such programme to become self-reliant and contribute positively to the development and well-being of their society.
4. Government should provide enough funds for Home Economics Education in Colleges of Education. This is for purpose of procuring the needed relevant gadgets or equipment such as electric and gas cookers, micro-waves, electric sewing machines, designer machines, weaving machines etc. Those equipment that are obsolete could be replaced and the broken ones be repaired.
5. Adequate time, say about 4 hours per week be allocated to each practical course. This is necessary in order to ensure that students are adequately exposed to practical works and encourage creativity for optimal performance and increased productivity.

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