

# FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION FOR SELF ACTUALISATION AND SUSTAIN ABILITY: THE SECONDARY EDUCATION SECTOR

*Chinyerem Uba Madumere-Obike*

## Abstract

This paper is an attempt to discuss the attainment of self-actualization and sustainability through the provision of functional education. It is of the opinion that self-actualization is a function of effective curriculum attainment. It therefore posits that effective curriculum planning, that is tailored towards the attainment of self-sufficiency, self-reliance and self-sustainability, through proper implementation, is a necessary facilitator of self-actualization. It further stressed the importance of a functional process of planning and implementing the curriculum, to ensure that the individual attains self-actualization through education. The paper also highlighted the need for constant co-ordination, motivation, supervision and evaluation as a necessary process in managing functional education for self-actualization and sustainability, and advocated for a sustainable human resources management in the management of functional education.

## Introduction

It is a known fact that one of the greatest problems in developing countries (Nigeria in particular) is laying emphasis on irrelevant and dysfunctional education. Education is expected to prepare man to face the challenges of life. It prepares man for worthwhile living. Until recently and still to some extent today, the Nigerian educational programme has largely been theoretical and academic, starting from primary school to the tertiary level. This may be due to the emphasis placed on the acquisition of certificates rather than on what one can do. Certificates are awarded on the result of public or external written examination at the end of each level of our educational system. These tenure portrays that the purpose of education is just to acquire the certificates. It then means that the process of education is primarily to prepare candidates for these examinations. That is why Obanya, P (2002:223) stated that:

We must consider the problems of education beyond classroom grooming of the young, certification through examination the development of persons through conventional subject disciplines and the inculcation of conventional technical skills, the inculcation of literacy skills etc to also, encompass a total re-skilling, re-orientation and re-tooling of the nations potentially economically active citizenry.

Education is expected to be a means to ones ultimate objectives in life. Its major concern is to make a man to live and function in the society. It is therefore imperative that education should be made functional to meet the values of man. Presently, in our present curriculum it seems that education is lacking in the function of making man meet his needs. The present process of education enables our products to acquire knowledge and facts, with little understanding, without useful skills that can lead them to attain self-actualisation. This practice has given rise to our secondary school leavers invariably alienated from their immediate environment. They go into the urban areas searching for non-existing jobs for which they are in any case ill prepared.

Nigeria is committed to providing education to its citizens to enable them develop themselves to their full potentials. In Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) (1998:7) emphasis is on the "need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria". Our education system is yet to proved inadequately the technical skills that is required in the present world of work. There is concerted effort by the government to change the curriculum to be more relevant and functional. The

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curriculum of our secondary schools should be directed to the needs and aspirations of the people, so that they will be able to develop themselves to self-actualization. If education is not functional, that means that it is lacking in certain areas that would help man to meet his needs, which implies that there is deficiency in the school curriculum. Okafor (1981:7) stated that "the functional value of education is not obsolete, but relative to place, time and circumstances, with the ultimate goal of ensuring mans happiness". Our major problem is how to implement curriculum change. Ukeje (1992:424) is of the opinion that our aim should be a first-rate educational system, well articulated and adapted to the needs of the environment and efficient in its use of human and material resources. The process requires adequate planning meticulous attention, progressive policies and systematic implementation. A study of this nature that seeks to identify processes, based on literative review for the management of functional education for self-actualization, has tremendous input to educational management. It will focus on the guidelines for managing functional education for self-actualization and sustainability with special emphasis on planning and consequently an achievable programme.

### **The Concept of Functional Education**

Functional education is that education which is geared towards developing the individual to his full potential. Dictionary of education defined functional education as "Education for which there is an anticipated application, which thus assumes that the learner has immediate meaning, translatable into action for his learning activities". This definition implies that learning experiences offered to the learner in a functional education programme must be meaningful and relevant to the learners situation. The education should be such that will meet the needs of the learner. According to Ezeocha (1988:43) "the central notion in the concept of functional education is that every experience to which the learner is exposed to, must be justified on the grounds of utility and significance". A functional education is such that the learner will be able to put into practice what he has learnt and use it to produce something meaningful.

In recent times, the world is moving into advanced technology, it is necessary that we change towards a more functional education, so that the beneficiaries of our education can develop into being self actualized. Madamere-Obike (2004:5) is of the opinion that for countries to succeed in staying abreast with competitors in the economic field, they need to succeed in maintaining standards, be conversant with technological development, adapt to changes required in the world of work and finally be able to build skilled workers. Functional education should not only be emphasized in adult education programmes, majority of our youths who are leaders of tomorrow are found in the secondary schools. It is assumed that this level is very important in our youths educational career. It is at the secondary school level that the learner is given an opportunity to demonstrate his or her inclination in education. It is therefore important that functional education, (that is education that is related to ones area of need that will enable one to attain self actualization) should be emphasized at this level. Functional educations have become not only a national issue but also a global one. All over the world, there is great awareness that functional education is the key to self-actualization. Enu (2004:21) noted that "education too often is talking about a subject" and avoiding the practice of the subject. In functional education, the practice of education is extremely important, if we are to attain self-actualization. Until Nigeria develops a curriculum that is geared towards the needs and interest of its recipients, it will be difficult attaining self-actualization. Functional education should be emphasized at every stage of our education.

### **Crisis in Secondary Education**

Our educational system has failed to meet the growing demand of our youths who form the majority in our school system. Most of our secondary school leavers are misfit in the society. The education they receive does not produce functional and practical people; Nnadozie and Nwogbo (2004:93) stressed that the bottom line of the objectives of education "is the provision of seasoned and articulate Nigerians who, not only can work and operate adequately in political, economic and social areas of the nation, but can also be self sufficient, self reliant and self sustaining". There is a saying that the youths are the fathers of tomorrow. It is important that the education that is given to them, should be such that will shape their understanding and vision in life and enable them play significant roles in making themselves and also help in the development of the society. Functional education is important for our youths because whatever they learn enables them to function in the society. It is

when they develop the feeling of success in their goals that they can be seen to have self-actualized. It is the need to achieve that ultimate realization of goals that is seen as self-actualization. Some of our youths terminate their education at the secondary level, if by the end of this level of education, they are able to achieve the skills, knowledge and abilities that they can use to sustain their living, they have attained self-actualization. With the introduction of universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme, there is bound to be increase in the population of primary school leavers who will graduate to the secondary schools. The states of the federation do not seem to have been able to provide enough secondary schools, for majority of primary school leavers. This is because, most of the states, have in fact not been able to meet the needs of increasing number of primary school leavers. There should be a drastic change in the implementation of the Junior Secondary School (JSS) curriculum, making it to be more relevant and responsive to the needs of the learners and the needs of the environment also. Students from Junior Secondary School should graduate with enough salable skills that will make them self sufficient and productive members of their communities rather than alienate them from it. With the acquisition of salable skills, the social problem of the rapidly growing number of unemployable school leavers would have been solved.

### **Management of Functional Education**

Functional management is what management does to help the group define its goals, achieve its objectives or maintain its strengths as a body. Functional education management provides a framework by which quality education can be assessed. It guides towards a more practical learner centered approach to teaching and learning. It is one in which the learners participates actively, thinking and solving problems themselves and in this way develop skills that will lead to the attainment to self actualization essential for sustainable living. Therefore to manage functional education requires adequate planning.

### **The Concept of Planning In Functional Education**

The most important requirement to ensure sustenance of improvement of any socio-economic function is the human resources development. The human need must be consciously planned, especially with the introduction of innovation in the system. This paper advocates sustainable human resources in the management of functional education.

This is because at the moment there is scarcity of qualified teachers to do the job in the schools. Enu (2004:23) is of the opinion that "manpower planning provides a realistic and implementable framework of action that will ensure the optimum development and productive utilization of all human resources of the nation"

Management of functional education, curriculum, should necessarily begin with manpower development, if the curriculum is to be sustained. Manpower planning is important to prevent poor performance or promote proper performance. Ukeje (1992:91) is of the opinion that an individual who wishes his adventure to succeed, must think of it, this pausing to think, is planning". Therefore in designing a functional curriculum for self actualization and sustainability, it is very essential that purposes, objectives and methods of achieving them are clearly outlined and understood by all those concerned before hand (planning). According to Koontz and O'Donnell (1976:129) planning is "deciding in advance what to do, how to do it, when to do it and who to do it". Planning in the management or functional education therefore involves deciding in advance what to include in our school curriculum, how it will be implemented, when it should be implemented and the human and material resources required to implement the curriculum so as to achieve the goals of self actualization and sustainability in education.

### **Elements of Planning**

There are three essential elements that a manager who is involved in planning should know. Firstly the manager of schools must know the present state of things. He must make an accurate appraisal of the present curriculum that is in use in secondary schools, whether they are actually helping the recipient to be self reliant to enable them attain self-actualization for sustainable living. The appraisal of the present state of the curriculum will help to disclose the areas of need, for which a prescription of a functional curriculum has to be made. This appraisal will also identify areas of deficiency in the curriculum.

Secondly the manager will realize that the present curriculum is not the best that will enable our secondary school leavers to attain self-actualization. The management will now decide that the best way to achieve functional education is to include this or that.

Thirdly management will try to estimate what and what it will take to implement the plan, the difficulties that might arise during the implementation process and make provisions for the best possible means of tackling the problems. That means the manager will decide the means, the resources (both human and material) that will be needed and also getting the organization to accept change.

In other words planning bridges the gap between the present and the future. It involves organizing staffing, directing, supervising and controlling all efforts for the achievement of the schools' objectives. It is this that makes planning the first and the most important function in management.

### **Planning The Curriculum (Factors To Consider)**

Curriculum includes all the learning experiences and opportunities planned and provided in the school for learning. At the secondary school level, planning will involve selection and organization of programmes, and learning experiences through a careful determination of methods of interaction and through selection and provision of resources to be used.

The most important factor to consider in planning of functional education curriculum is the need. The need will determine the failure or success of any programme. The needs include, that of the individual learner, the community and the society at large.

#### **The Individual Need**

A plan for functional education should be tailored towards the development of a self actualized individual, based on that the abilities and interests of the learners must be taken care of in curriculum offering. Ezeocha (1988:45)- stated that there should be provision made for the development of the individual to his full potential, to his personal happiness and ability to do that which he is most suited to do and thereby contribute to the development of the society. The individual should develop a sense of worth and dignity of his personality. He should realize the importance of the individual in the learning process.

#### **The Need of the Community**

The individual exists in a community of which he is part of, and so the needs of the community must fully be reflected in planning a functional education curriculum, Schools should develop the learner to enable him live an effective life in his community. The contents of the school curriculum should have definite relevance to the life of the community.

#### **The Need of the Society**

The society sees the school as an instrument for satisfying her socio-political, economic and cultural needs therefore curriculum needs most emphasis efficiency for both the individual and that of the society.

The school can provide relevant and efficient programmes of vocational guidance, be able to teach learners the importance and necessity of conserving resources and conducting research into the best way of using and conserving them, inculcate the ideals of saving wisely and wise education. The school should lay emphasis on economic efficiency: the school should be able to produce well informed citizenry on the political development of the country. In this era of democracy, we need electorates that are enlightened sufficiently to be able to play their roles well. The school should produce efficient and selfless leaders that will be eager to serve with honour, integrity and be able to enlighten the populace. All these will lead the country into achieving functional education.

Apart from the needs other factors to consider include availability of manpower and material resources. The material resources available is the determinant of the nature of the programme as well as facilities available for manpower training for effective management of the new scheme that might be adopted. Also research is another important factor which is an asset in planning. A good educational programme must be based on research results. The educational experts from research

institution give up-to-date information. They offer professional advise on the techniques to be adopted for effective planning and implementation of the programme

### **Strategies For Management Of Functional Education For Self Actualization**

1. The school administrator should always be available to assist the teachers as they perform their duties. He should supervise and evaluate the performance of his staff to see if there are areas that needs to be adjusted during the implementation of the new programme. This will help to improve the school curriculum implementation and make it functional for self-actualization and sustainability.
2. Instructional supervision should be intensified through classroom visitations, conferences and demonstration of skills to guide, and direct the teachers and also stimulate their interest to work.
3. There is need for management to co-ordinate the activities of the staff to ensure that all are working towards the stated objectives. The manager should set up an effective and acceptable communication system so that each unit knows what the others are doing and what they are expected to do.
4. The manager should develop on effective way of coordinating the efforts of the teachers so that problems concerning both staffs and students, are solved mutually through effective and good interpersonal relationship.
5. An effective way of motivating the staff should be developed by the manager to ensure that the quality of instruction given to the learners will be improved. If the staff are effectively motivated, they will put in their best to ensure that the goals are achieved.
6. To achieve functional education, there is need to plan the work, by determining the instructional objectives and instructional processes, actualizing the interaction planned and then analyzing and evaluating this interaction.
7. As the curriculum changes, the teachers will need some continuous development so that they can gain the competence and excitement to be able to implement the changes as demanded by the society. This can be achieved through in-service training, workshops, seminars and conferences.
8. With the teachers specialized knowledge, competence in the subject matter, he is qualified to participate in curriculum planning, policy formulation and other decisions about educational processes. When teachers are involved in planning and evaluation, it gives them self-fulfillment, offers them opportunity to rise in quality. They see themselves, the school curriculum and the students in the light of acquired new knowledge, new skills to meet the demands of the school and that of the society.

### **Conclusion**

This paper advocated a sustainable human resource development in the management of functional education for self-actualization. Globalization emphasizes education for self-actualization, that is, building a global citizen who is self-actualized. Education is expected to prepare man for challenges in life. Its objective is to make man function and live in the society. It is therefore imperative that our secondary school leavers achieve their ultimate goals. It is when their goals are achieved that they can be seen to have self-actualized. The task is enormous, but with adequate planning, conscientious efforts and good management the future is bright.

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*Chinyerem Uba madumere-Obike*

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