

The Role of Home Economics Education in Alleviating Poverty for Sustainable Development and Human Capacity Building in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper defines poverty as illiteracy, social exclusion and insufficient material means to improve family living condition. It stresses the importance of poverty alleviation in curbing the menace of poverty. However, the development of any nation hinges on the social and economic contribution of her citizens. The height at which poverty has reached across the six geo-political zones in Nigeria shown by literature cannot be over emphasized. The paper examines the various poverty alleviation programmes initiated by past and present governments. The study defines the concept of Home economics education, the role it can play in alleviating poverty with various career opportunity within the course content. Thereby preparing learners for entry into employment and advancement in a choosing career. This paper is based on a desk, literature review and a web based research. It concludes that education is indispensable to economic development and no country would experience any advancement without education. Recommendations were made based on findings.

Keywords: home economics, education, poverty, poverty alleviation, human development.

INTRODUCTION

The development of any nation hinges on the social and economic contributions of her citizens. All attributes of sustainable development are deprived by poverty. Poverty causes hunger it brings about poor/low education, low self-esteem, lack of adequate health facilities, housing, land and inability to cloth oneself/family. Abject poverty, wide spread hunger and illiteracy are the main problems which the Nigerian governments past & present has not been able to address. Various programmes were initiated and implemented by the governments, billions of Naira were spent on these programmes, yet Nigerians have been increasingly living in a sorry situation of poverty hunger and illiteracy.

However, the national policy on education places much emphasis on inculcation of National consciousness and unity in diversity on the acquisition of appropriate knowledge, ability, skills, competence and self-reliance.

To achieve these, focus must be shifted to families' development participation in sustainable capacity building which can be attained through Home Economics Education.

Home economics is a vocational subject that passes knowledge and skills from the grass root home/family. Molokwu (2007) stresses that the knowledge and skills which Homes Economics provides can be taught in school, formally organised or even in a non-formal settings and skills, individuals involves in these skills acquisition can become self-reliant or employers of labour. Therefore

sustainable human development can be achieved through home economics. Career opportunities available in home economics include teaching, textile design, fashion design, dietetic, nursery day-care management, interior design, clothing, food and beverage production and service.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In Nigeria, In spite of government's alleviation programmes, National development plans and sessional papers, Poverty is still a dominant challenge. It has also been identified by all and sundry as a major threat to the very existence of Nigeria as a nation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Time immemorial, Education has remained the panacea for ignorance and its attaching problems. This study is set to bring fore and assess the contributions or the role Home Economics Education can play in alleviating poverty and stay relevant in sustainable development. The scope and emphasis of Home Economics Education have shifted from ordinary home making to paid employment in various entrepreneurial trade and business areas. This study is meant to be an eye opener to the Nigerian youths and adults especially Women and Girls who constitute huge population for the government to incorporate this type of course in its poverty alleviation programmes

POVERTY

The word poverty comes from old French poverty' (modern French *pauvrete'*) from Latin *paupestas* from *pauper* (poor). Poverty means illiteracy, social

exclusion and insufficient lack of materials meant to improve family living condition. Wikipedia defines poverty as a general scarcity or dearth, or the state of one who lacks a certain amount of materials possession or money.

World Bank also defines poverty as pronounced deprivation in wellbeing, and inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, in adequate physical security, lack of voice and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life. World bank (2008) similarly Molokwo (2010) defines poverty as lack of job, poverty is hunger poor health, low education, low self-esteem, lack of adequate housing, land inability to cloth oneself Humanity low economics status.

Maduagwu 2007 posited that poverty creates frustration, loss of hope/prospect and value for life, loss of meaning for life and purpose of living. Shola (2012) asserted that poverty is the inability to attain a minimal standard of living measured in terms of basic consumption needs or income required to satisfy them.

International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) 2003 stresses that "poverty is not only inadequate income, it is also lack of access to basic service and amenities, the lack of security and exclusion from community life. The recommendation made by IFHE is to focus efforts to uproot the causes of poverty and to achieve the involvement of the poor themselves taking in the elaboration of policies which concern them"

The relationship between poverty, hunger, illiteracy and human development is very important. However, poverty, hunger and illiteracy are detrimental to human development. All the attributes of human development are denied by poverty. The success or failure of any government is measured by the degree of attainment of human development or the level of poverty prevalent among the people asserted Okafor (2014). Poverty is the inability to obtain the basic necessities of life (food, shelter, clothing, education and access to health facilities).

Adebayo (2007) opined that 40-45% of African population lives in absolute poverty and 30% belong to the extreme poor. Oyeokum observed that 70% of Nigerians live below poverty line and survive on less than 1dollar a day

In view of the above definitions, poverty is a major problem that should be reduced, alleviated or eradicated completely by any concerned government. Obasigie and Orumweuse (2009) opined that when the human and natural resources of a nation are not

sufficiently developed, poverty becomes the order of the day.

Usman (2010) opined that Home economics aims at improving the quality of family life through effective development and utilization of human, material and natural resources of a society. Primarily this paper is set to relate the home economics education skills acquisition that can bring about limited resource utilization to certify the basic needs of life which include shelter, food, clothing and other aspects of lively living thereby reducing/alleviating poverty.

POVERTY ERADICATION POLICY

The issue of poverty and measures to tackle the incidence of poverty have remained at the fore front of government policies in the country. Government at different levels have introduced various poverty alleviation programmes. From independence (1960) to date, successive governments initiated different programs and policies. On virtually every aspect of the national life. Ukpong (1999) is of the view that the programmes were intended to ensure food self-sufficiency and provide necessary infrastructure to stimulate economic activities, enhance incomes and improve living condition of the poor.

The poverty eradication programmes introduced by the government include the following.

- Family support program and family economic advancement program 1993
- Poverty Alleviation program & micro credit scheme in 2000.
- National poverty eradication program (NAPEP) which replaced the previously failed poverty Alleviation program 2000.

The intentions of government in initiating the programmes have, however, only succeeded partially in improving the living conditions of some Nigerians. Thus the poor in the country are still widely considered worse off as many indicators, reflecting the ability to provide for physical subsistence for the upliftment of human dignity are below expectations Ogwumike (2001). These poverty reduction projects were initiated by governments to alleviate the effects of poverty in Nigeria. Fabusuyi (2012) is also of the view that poverty reduction strategies are actuated by government to reduce the effects of wants on the poor.

HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION

You are no one until someone trains you:-

Formal education be it academic or technical is often presented as a guaranteed way to change the life of an individual. Education as an empowering tool would help people to change their living condition by taking action while having knowledge and skills of a trade that will make them become competitive in the

productive field. Education is the best path to poverty eradication. Educated people are able to achieve their goals in a much better way.

Wikipedia defines education in general sense as a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching training, or research. The best means of eradicating poverty among youth and adults in our country and improving sustainability is to create self-employment programmes such as skill acquisition, jobs. Education provides a foundation for eradicating poverty and fostering economics development .it is the groundwork on which much of economics and social wellbeing of the citizens is built omoniyi (2013)

However, the Home economics institute of Australia views Home economics education as the central focus of the wellbeing of people within the context of their personal, family communication & work roles. The institute also observed that Home economics education is about becoming independent connecting with others and taking action towards preferred future that support individuals and family wellbeing. It further states that through home economics education students become empowered, active and informed member of the society.

Furthermore the focal point of Home economics education is to equip young people and adults with sustainable skills, relevant knowledge and attitudes for work in chosen occupation and career opportunity. In 2004 the federal government of Nigeria in its national policy on education categorically spelt out the broad aims and objectives of home economics education under vocational and technical education to include: To give training and impart the necessary skills, teaching to the production of craftsmen, fashion design, interior decoration, event planning and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant.

IFHE defines Home economics as a field of study and a profession, situated in the human science that draws from a range of disciplines to achieve optimal and sustainable living for individuals, families, and communities. Home economics is concerned with empowerment and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities and facilitating the development of attributes for lifelong learning for paid, unpaid and voluntary work, and living situation IFHE (2007). McGregor (2006) opined that Home economics is inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary. It is a field of knowledge with numerous marketable skills that make for self-reliance and self-employment. Osuala (2001) is also of the view that for greater emphasis on vocational education in which Home Economics is inclusive has its goal as the preparation of the learner for entry into

employment and advancement in his/her career, meeting the manpower needs of the society increasing the option available to students, adults and also to enable learners to wisely select a career.

Ene-obong (2006) gave a more elaborate definition of home economics as a field of study evolved out of the concern for the family and raised by the condition of a society becoming increasingly dominated by commercial and industrial interest, Ene –obang further asserted that it is concerned with ways in which the quality and family life can be enhanced maximally through optimum utilization of its human and material resources. Home economics education /training can be said to be a means through which young people and adult may be led to a stronger growth and development, thereby enabling him/her to take responsibilities in the home, and the society at large.

THE ROLE OF HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION IN ALLEVIATING POVERTY

Households and the individuals living in the society are the main focus of Home economics .Education and knowledge in Home economics empowers individuals to fulfil their fundamental needs and to manage everyday life scarce resources. Education in home economics skills, like resource management and household finances in combination with psychosocial stabilization of the family leads to productive and regeneration capacity of the otherwise poverty disenfranchised individual. The well-being and the regeneration of the private home is a basic social goal for a full use of one's potential for education and paid work. Home economics education provides knowledge in food production, poultry and animal rearing nutrition skills. Home economics education does not only ensures self-sufficiency for the individual, families and communities but also to income generating opportunities. By selling the excess food produced, animals reared, eggs and birds from poultry in the family setting from a sustainable income generation activity. Opportunity is opened for families and individuals. When the availability of food combined with nutritional and health skills then it leads to an adequate nutrition for the young ones and youth in the family which will make them physically fit and mentally sound to use educational opportunity at their disposal.

IFHE (2012) stated that Home economics education can improve skills and competencies of families and individuals in a changing world, education and best practice in home economics includes gender equality, safe sanitation and water use, generation skills, sustainable household production and resources management as well as food production, nutrition skills and health. Olaitan (1996) opined that organised vocational education is concerned with the

development of skills and success in any useful occupation.

Home economics is a field of study that offers various occupations for individuals. It is a skill base course which has the capacity of equipping young people and adult with sustainable skills, for self-reliance, employment and wealth creation thereby reducing or eliminating poverty.

The knowledge and skills which home economics provides can be taught in school formally, organised apprenticeship and or even in a non-formal setting, individuals involved in these skills acquisition can become self-reliant and an employer of labour. Molkw (2007).

Home economics education prepares students for the acquisition and development of skills, competencies and attributes which are necessary for efficiency of the economics systems. It makes individuals to be job providers rather than job seekers. Audu and Abdulkadir (2009)

Home economics education at all perimeters of life is aimed at improving and providing knowledge and skills to individuals for family living. The success of any nation is dependent on the happiness, health and comfort of its families. Roberts (2011) also assert that the primary determinant of a country's standard of living is how well it succeeds in developing, utilizing skills, furthering the health and educating the majority of its population.

In view of the above Nkwako (2004) opined that the basic mission of Home economics education is helping individuals and families to improve their lives through

- Training for necessary manpower in entrepreneurship
- Training and imparting of necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.
- Provision of technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for national development of improved skills, capabilities, and utilization of workers employed in government and private sectors.

Education in general is indispensable to economic development and poverty eradication, no economic development is possible without education.

Audu and Abdulkadir (2009) observed educational goals as follows and come in live with the objectives of Home Education.

Helping the individual to appreciate the world around and contribute meaningfully to the socio-economics development of a nation.

Empowering individual with desirable skills knowledge and value to perform specific functions so as to become self-reliant.

Helping individuals to develop and build his/her capacity for meaningful decision making in all spheres of life.

Molokwo (2007) opined that poverty is the exact opposite of human development. Home economics education provides knowledge, skills and competencies that are directly opposite to poverty. This type of education emphasizes that after training, the trainee would be self-employed and self-reliant thereby producing goods and services for the benefits of the society.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION

Numerous business opportunities and entrepreneurial skills exist in Home economics education Lemechi (2005) and Uko-Ayima (2006) identified a catalogue of Home economics related business opportunities grouped under the following areas

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Under this group the following business related opportunities are available.

- Processed - flour- - from different source like Yam, Cassava, Plantain, Coin (maize) etc.
- Starch production for laundry
- Production species and condiments.
- Production Jam and jellies, Ice cream, Popcorn, Yoghurt
- Snack production like cave, pies, burns, doughnuts
- Outdoor catering services
- Nutrition and deities
- Event planning
- Poultry, fish and other animal rearing.

CLOTHING AND TEXTILES

The business opportunities could be found under this group.

- Tie and dye production
- Batik production
- Production of handmade embroidery materials.
- Toys production.
- Tailoring training services.
- Knitting and crocheting
- Laundry and dry cleaning services.
- Jewelleries production

FAMILY AND CHILDCARE

The following business opportunity exist under this group

- Operation of day-care centres and nursery schools.

- Operation of teaching and learning aids.
- Operation of old people homes
- Operating nutritional advise centre for under or malnutrition children
- Handling children with disabilities

HOME MANAGEMENT/HOUSING AND FURNISHING RELATED BUSINESS

The following business opportunity exist under this group

- Interior decoration.
- Hall and venues decorations for events.
- Main Services
- Rental services.
- Production of artificial/natural flowers and soup making (shampoo, liquid soap, abrasive)
- Cream and pomade making

For any individual to be gainfully employed and fight poverty, he/she must acquire some skills, knowledge and relevant attribute. Home economics students who undergo a training in the field will find one more of the above skills if well interpreted in everyday life to be a remedy to poverty, unemployment and any other of life.

CONCLUSION

Education is indispensable to economic development and poverty alleviation. No country would experience economic development without education. Conclusively, this study emphasized on Home Economics education as an important tool for family survival and general towards acquisition of sustainable skills for human capacity building. This can only be achieved if young people and adult are exposed to the knowledge of technical and vocational training necessary for human development which accelerate job opportunities and alleviate poverty amongst Nigerians

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the foregoing discussion the following recommendation were made.

Corporate bodies and non-governmental organisation should adopt and implement Home economics training as part of their social responsibility program.

Government should establish more vocational centres across the county where informal instructions be given to those that could not afford formal education. To tackle poverty at all levels.

Graduates of Home economics should be given soft loan to enable them establish their own business.

Women should embrace the program/training as much of the program is more of women oriented course. This will make women self-employed

thereby, making the country to accelerate its human development.

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