



HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR ACHIEVING BASIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Home Economics Education plays a vital role in national development especially with the view to providing requisite skills for graduates in order to enable them fit into the industrialized society. Furthermore, through Home Economics, students are able to learn practical skills that can help them in their daily lives. By incorporating Home Economics Education into the curriculum, Nigerian students would be able to develop important life skills that are essential for their future success. In view of the preceding, this paper highlighted the philosophy of Home Economics and its objectives in Nigeria. It also discussed the concept of Universal Basic Education programme of the government, the demand it has placed on the nation's philosophy, objectives of Home Economics Education and how Home Economics Education can be an instrument for achieving the Universal Basic Education goals. By incorporating Home Economics into the

curriculum, schools can help students develop permanent literacy and numeracy, lay a strong foundation for scientific and reflective thinking, provide citizenship education, mold character

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and morals, foster adaptability, develop manipulative skills, and prepare students for further educational advancement. The paper therefore, concluded that Home Economics is a vital tool in effecting and achieving basic education in Nigeria, and recommended among others, that Government should assist by providing adequate fund to support the students.

Introduction

Education can be described as the process in its entirety through which children, young and even adults are helped to contribute and grow their abilities, attitudes, values and other forms of behavioural attributes that represent positive value aimed at changing the individual to enable him /her contribute to the well-being of himself/herself and other members of the society and of course the society (Amadioha and Akor 2018) They further explained that education grows, advances and have the capacity to induce a person with characteristics that would make the person function properly, and besides that the capacity so developed are usually of value and that which could make the person contribute properly to the development of the society that the people live in.

Nigeria has had a fairly long history of non-formal and informal education. The National Policy on Education guides the educational development in Nigeria. The country has acknowledged education as the bedrock of any democratic process. The philosophy, goals, structure, management and delivery of Nigerian education are clearly spelt out in the National Policy of Education and other documents relevant to education in the country. The National Policy on Education provides for formal and non-formal modes for educational delivery with main key strategy as to achieve qualitative education as an effective instrument for eradication of poverty and illiteracy. The National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004) stated that “Every Nigerian child enrolls for primary education will remain in school until the end of the years of junior secondary education.”

Consequently, basic education in Nigeria which consists of 9 years should be understood as education aimed at adult with knowledge and skills as fullest capacity derive maximum social, economic and cultural benefits for his membership of society and fulfill civil obligations. Since Basic Education programme was set to assist in attainment of wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation, Home Economics education could be one of the best instruments for achieving these goals.

Home Economics education is a crucial component of basic education in Nigeria, as it equips individuals with essential skills and knowledge for managing households, promoting healthy living, and fostering economic independence. Home Economics education plays a vital role in empowering individuals with practical skills for everyday living. According to Anumudu (2017), Home Economics education teaches students how to cook nutritious meals, practice good hygiene, manage household finances, and maintain a clean and orderly home. These skills are essential for promoting health and well-being, as well as for fostering a sense of responsibility and independence in individuals. These skills help individuals become more self-reliant and economically independent. As noted by Ofoegbu (2019), learning how to cook, sew, budget, and manage household resources can help individuals save money, create employment opportunities, and become more self-sufficient. This is particularly important in a country

like Nigeria, where poverty and unemployment are pervasive, and many individuals struggle to meet their basic needs.

In addition to empowering individuals, Home Economics education also has a positive impact on families and communities. According to Aina (2016), individuals who receive Home Economics education are more likely to create healthy and supportive home environments, promote positive family relationships, and contribute to the well-being of their communities. By teaching individuals how to cook nutritious meals, practice good hygiene, and manage household resources, Home Economics education helps improve the overall quality of life for families and communities in Nigeria. This shows that Home Economics education is a powerful instrument for achieving basic education in Nigeria. By equipping individuals with essential skills and knowledge for managing households, promoting healthy living, and fostering economic independence, Home Economics education helps empower individuals, promote gender equality, and enhance the overall well-being of families and communities. As Nigeria continues to strive towards achieving basic education for all, investing in Home Economics education is essential for building a healthy, prosperous, and sustainable society.

The Concept of Basic Education in Nigeria

The desire of the nations of the world to reduce illiteracy, combat ignorance and encourage access to education even to the grassroots necessitated Education for All (EFA) as stated above in the Jomtien Declaration which was a treaty launched and signed in Jomtien Thailand in March 1990 (Egbe & Eze, 2009). The intent was to ensure that education gets to every member of the world societies. This declaration though as a reinforcer but it was not the first Education for All. The first call could be traced back to 1948 which came with the Universal Declaration for Human Rights and because education is perceived as a human right, it became imperative for its inclusion as one of the rights to be enjoyed by man (Maduabuchi, 2008). But for Nigeria, according to Amadioha and Akor (2018) the original advances made at making education universal to her people could be traced to the 1950s and 1960s when the Nigerian regional government brought to light Universal Primary Education (UPE) under the leadership of Late Pa Obafemi Awolowo and directed by Chief S.O. Awokoya as minister of education in the Western region as at the time specifically between 1952 and 1954. The Eastern region also made an attempt at institutionalizing their own UPE programme too in 1957 under Late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, but this particular attempt failed woefully due to lack of manpower and funds (Jeremiah & Alamina, 2017), for the Northern region, their attempt at carrying out the same programme did not see the dawn of light because of a lot of problems that the region faced then and the programme was completely stalled as the nation woke up to war in late 1960s.

When the government took over schools just in 1973 after the Civil War, the Federal Military Government on 6th September 1976 under the leadership of the then head of

states General Olusegun Obasanjo reintroduced the UPE programme but at this second attempt of the UPE programme in 1976, it failed again as a result of poor planning, unavailability of demographic statistics, poor funding and corruption in the governmental and educational system (Jeremiah and Alamina, 2017). Again, with the National Policy on Education in 1977 document publication and launching which resulted from 1969 National Curriculum Conference, this then set the ball rolling for UPE to take its foothold, few years later in 1981, the document was revised, (Amadioha, 2016).

The mandate so placed on the UPE programme was mandatorily to go on and produce qualitative educational outcomes. But this goal of a qualitative universal education for the citizenry of Nigeria never really took root until the 1990 declaration of education for all because the programme within the period under consideration encountered so many difficulties that the government of the day was not really able to manage effectively and efficiently or even surmount. These pitfalls as enumerated included political instability, inconsistent policy formulation and implementation, and sustenance, lack of sincerity on the part of the programme implementers, unavailability of statistical records, uncoordinated planning and execution practices, low institutional capacity, poor technical competence, poor logistic support system and neglect of available teachers.

The foregoing clearly is indicative of what could be described as a hill-valley state for the UPE programme and the arrangement of primary education particularly Education for All in Nigeria over those years because of instability appearing in all its forms and dimensions leading to disequilibrium in actualizing the intent of educating and producing citizens that would make useful contributions to the society (Benson, 2008). However, at the return of democracy government with President Olesegun Obasanjo again on the saddle of leadership in 1999, specifically in September and in Sokoto State, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) was launched still with the intention to pursue the treaty of Education for All (EFA).

Objectives of the UBE Programme

According to Amadioha and Akor (2018), in the speech of Mr. President, he unequivocally stated that the educational system would be free and compulsory for every Nigerian child who is of school age and this bold declaration actually supports and agrees with the dictates of the National Policy on Education which is to achieve the goals of Education for All through the following objectives of the UBE programme:

- a. Develop permanent literacy and numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively.
- b. Lay a strong foundation base for scientific and reflective thinking.
- c. Give citizenship education as a ground for effective participation and contribution to social life.
- d. Mould character and bind sound attitude and morals in the child.
- e. Develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child's environment.

- f. Give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child to function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity.
- g. Provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

The major essence of the UBE programme from the stated objectives and possibly its effective and proper implementation of the intents is to ensure that each child is built up with marketable skills that would enhance self-employment as well as reduce the dependence on paper qualification (Fowowe, Akinkuotu & Shittu, 2009). This definitely confirms what the world was aiming for when the EFA declaration was pronounced, launched and signed in Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990.

Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme

Lawal (2003) revealed that UBE is a programme meant to cater for all school children. It is the foundation for sustainable lifelong learning. It comprises a wide variety of both formal and informal programme designed to enable learners to achieve functional literacy.

The Universal Basic Education programme was launched by the government of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in Sokoto on the 30th September, 1999, was established by an act of the National Assembly in 2004. The act was known as the Compulsory, Free, Universal Basic Education Act, 2004. The act according to Tahir (2006) provides for compulsory, free universal basic education for all children of primary and secondary school age in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Ossoma (2017) said that UBE is a child of circumstances whose intervention was as a result of inadequate funding, low level of participation and the declining quality and efficiency in Nigeria's educational system. The main thrust of establishing the UBE scheme therefore, was to arrest the decline and decay in education as well as to expand and improve on the previous efforts aimed at achieving basic education and national development in Nigeria. In line with the National Policy on Education (2004), the goals of the UBE are to:

- i. Provide the child with diverse knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship, wealth generation and educational advancement.
- ii. Inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking and who appreciate the dignity of labour.
- iii. Provide opportunities for the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child to function effectively in the society and realize his or her full potentials.

The non-formal programme other UBE consists of functional literacy, remedial, continuing, vocational, aesthetic and culture, political and environmental education for youth and adult outside the formal sector. The UBE in the educational reform agenda of the nation is explained in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) are as follows:

- i. Basic education shall be of 9 years duration comprising of 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education. It shall also include adult and non-formal education programmes at primary and junior secondary education levels for the adult and out of school youths.
- ii. The specific goals of basic education shall be the same as the goals of the levels of education to which it applies (e.g. primary education, junior secondary education and adult and non-formal education). The UBE demands that all Nigerian children should be in school for 9 years basic education. The implication of this for successful UBE calls for provision of:
 - Adequate classroom facilities
 - Adequate numbers and quality of teachers
 - Adequate instructional materials and facilities
 - Easy access to school for every Nigerians
 - More functional education than now obtains

Philosophy of Home Economics Education

Okeke (2019) defined Home Economics Education as a field of study that provides the necessary knowledge for guiding and assisting individuals towards a more self rewarding and fulfilled life, compatible with the society. Philosophy is a tool which helps individuals understand and evaluate their relationship with other persons in order to enable them solve problems emerging from life confronting them. International Confederation for Home Economics (2018) stressed that philosophy of Home Economics enables the individuals make intelligent decisions to resolve a problem satisfactorily. Some of the philosophies of Home Economics in Nigeria include:

- i. Helping individuals developing necessary competency for effective living.
- ii. Establishing fruitful and happy family relationship among family members.
- iii. Making every Nigerian a worthy member of the large Nigerian family.
- iv. Educating the Nigerian youths on the danger and consequence of drug abuse.

Importance of Home Economics to National Development

Home Economics helps individuals in developing knowledge, skills and attitude, for managing self and the household. The following major areas make up Home Economics: Family Living, Clothing and Textiles, Housing and Interior Decoration, Consumer Education and Home Management (Anyakoha, 2009). Philosophy is a set of values, ideas, laws, beliefs and norms which guide one's behaviour. The philosophy of Home Economics is basic to the improvement of the quality of life of individuals, families and the society at large through:

- a. The utilization of modern science to improve home living,
- b. The study of humanities to improve family life,
- c. The development of a sound education to promote intellectual thinking,

- d. The use of research to increase information on the facts of life and
- e. The use of all resources to make home and family life effective parts of the world at large (Anyakoha, 2009).

Objectives of Home Economics Education

Olaitan (2016) pointed out the following as objectives of Home Economics Education.

- a. To give satisfaction of biological and social needs of the individual members of the family.
- b. To provide professional training for maximum achievement in the society. It prepares students for occupation.
- c. To improve the services and goods used by the family.
- d. To create a home and community conducive to healthy living. The students acquire and develop skills and techniques useful to earn living.
- e. It stimulates and encourages creativity.

The conscious reawakening in the realm of education by the introduction of UBE is of a great importance in the development of Home Economics Education in our school system. The main objectives of Home Economics Education are contained in the National Policy of Education (2004) is to:

- i. Give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self independent economically
- ii. Provide knowledge and skills necessary for economic and commercial development
- iii. Train man power in applied science, technology, and commerce, particularly craft.
- iv. One of the primary goals of Home Economics Education is to promote good nutrition and health through the teaching of proper food preparation and balanced diets. Students learn about the nutritional value of different foods, food safety practices, and how to plan and prepare healthy meals. They also learn about the importance of physical activity and overall well-being, which are crucial for maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- v. Another objective of Home Economics Education is to educate students on clothing and textiles, teaching those skills such as sewing, pattern making, and fabric selection. This allows students to develop their creativity and problem-solving abilities, while also encouraging sustainable practices in the fashion industry.
- vi. Additionally, Home Economics Education aims to teach students about housing and interior design, providing them with the knowledge to create functional and aesthetically pleasing living spaces. Students learn about space planning, color theory, and budgeting, enabling them to make informed decisions when designing their own homes or working in the interior design field.

- vii. Home Economics Education focuses on child development, teaching students about parenting skills, child psychology, and early childhood education. This helps students understand the physical, emotional, and social needs of children, preparing them for future roles as parents, teachers, or caregivers.

For effective use of Home Economics Education as an instrument to achieving Universal Basic Education scheme the teaching and learning of Home Economics should start right from the primary school level. The teachers who are to teach Home Economics aspect of Universal Basic Education are expected to be well trained and prepared. The teachers should have sound knowledge of Home Economics. The objectives of Home Economics Education and the necessary experience may go a long way to helping them select teaching, learning experience capable of developing skills, abilities, understanding, habits, attitudes and appreciations amongst students which they will need to meaningfully enter and progress in employment or further their studies.

One of the main objectives as stated in the National Policy on Education is to build a united, strong and self-reliant nation (FGN, 2004). For any country to be strong, Home Economics education must have the upper hand in the educational system. This is because skill acquisition is the focus in Home Economics and it is the same skill acquired that is being applied in whatever situation to solve our problems thereby making oneself reliant. The National Policy on Education stresses the need for acquisition of appropriate skills as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

Home Economics and UBE Goals in Nigeria

Home Economics encompasses various aspects of daily life such as cooking, sewing, budgeting, and child care, can be a powerful tool in achieving the Universal Basic Education (UBE) goals and objectives (Aina, 2016). By incorporating Home Economics into the curriculum, students can develop essential skills and knowledge that will serve them well throughout their lives. In this study, we will explore how Home Economics can contribute to achieving the UBE goals and objectives of developing permanent literacy and numeracy, laying a strong foundation for scientific and reflective thinking, providing citizenship education, molding character and morals, fostering adaptability, developing manipulative skills, and preparing students for further educational advancement.

According to Ossoma (2017), one of the key goals of UBE is to develop permanent literacy and numeracy, as well as the ability to communicate effectively. Home Economics can play a crucial role in achieving this goal by teaching students practical skills such as reading recipes, measuring ingredients, and following directions. By engaging in cooking and sewing projects, students are able to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a real-world context, helping to reinforce their learning and make it more meaningful. Additionally, Home Economics classes often involve group work and presentations, which

help students to improve their communication skills and build confidence in expressing their ideas and opinions.

Ossoma (2017) furthermore stated that Home Economics lays a strong foundation for scientific and reflective thinking by teaching students about nutrition, food safety, and hygiene. Students learn how to make informed decisions about their diet and lifestyle, as well as how to critically evaluate the information they receive from various sources. By conducting experiments in the kitchen and reflecting on their results, students develop a deeper understanding of scientific principles and develop their critical thinking skills. These skills are essential for success in both academic and professional settings, making Home Economics a valuable tool for achieving the UBE goal of promoting scientific and reflective thinking (IFHE, 2018).

Citizenship education is another important aspect of UBE, as it prepares students to actively participate in and contribute to society. Home Economics can provide students with a practical understanding of how to be responsible and engaged citizens by teaching them about nutrition, food security, and sustainability. By learning how to grow their own food, plan healthy meals, and manage household resources effectively, students gain a greater appreciation for the interconnectedness of their actions and the world around them. Additionally, Home Economics classes often incorporate discussions about ethical and social issues related to food production and consumption, helping students develop a sense of social responsibility and empathy for others.

In addition to academic and civic skills, Aina (2016) suggests that Home Economics also play a crucial role in molding character and instilling sound attitudes and morals in students. By emphasizing values such as responsibility, respect, and perseverance, Home Economics classes help students develop a strong moral compass and a sense of integrity. Through hands-on activities such as cooking for others, organizing community events, and volunteering in local organizations, students learn the importance of empathy, compassion, and generosity. These experiences help shape their character and build their confidence, preparing them to face challenges and make ethical decisions in their daily lives.

Home Economics also helps students develop the ability to adapt to their environment by teaching them practical life skills such as budgeting, time management, and problem-solving. By learning how to plan and prepare meals, manage household chores, and handle unexpected situations, students gain the confidence and resilience to navigate the complexities of modern life. Home Economics also emphasizes the importance of creativity, resourcefulness, and innovation, encouraging students to think outside the box and come up with unique solutions to everyday problems. These skills are essential for adapting to a changing world and thriving in diverse social and cultural contexts, making Home Economics a valuable tool for promoting adaptability and resilience in students (Anyakoha, 2009).

Furthermore, Home Economics provides students with opportunities to develop manipulative skills that will enable them to function effectively in society within the limits of their capacity. By learning how to sew, knit, cook, and clean, students acquire practical skills that are essential for maintaining a healthy and productive lifestyle. These hands-on activities not only help students build confidence and self-esteem but also enable them to contribute to their families and communities in meaningful ways. By mastering basic household tasks and learning how to use tools and equipment safely and efficiently, students develop the skills and confidence to pursue further educational opportunities and explore trades and crafts that align with their interests and abilities.

Ayo (2018), puts it that Home Economics is a valuable tool for achieving the UBE goals and objectives by equipping students with essential skills and knowledge that will serve them well throughout their lives. By incorporating Home Economics into the curriculum, schools can help students develop permanent literacy and numeracy, lay a strong foundation for scientific and reflective thinking, provide citizenship education, mold character and morals, foster adaptability, develop manipulative skills, and prepare students for further educational advancement. By emphasizing practical skills, critical thinking, and social responsibility, and adaptability, Home Economics empowers students to become active and engage citizens who are well-prepared to succeed in a complex and rapidly changing world.

Conclusion

As nations seek closer ties, the improvement of basic quality of life, learning to live together, respect for the rule of law and basic human rights, it has been realized that poverty and hunger, gender inequality, diseases and unemployment have become the order of the day. Hence the teaching of Home Economics in the schools is to eradicate poverty, and promote sustained economic growth. Home Economics has been planned and developed to give the necessary knowledge and skills needed to the students through the UBE. For Nigeria to be able to achieve UBE and create an entrepreneurial class that will take the burden of job creation off the government, Home Economics Education must be taught right from the primary school level.

Recommendations

- i. Government should assist by providing adequate fund to support the students.
- ii. Home Economics teachers should be encouraged to develop positive attitude towards their responsibilities.
- iii. Government should construct more classrooms and laboratories for effective teaching and learning.
- iv. Greater investment should be at all levels of UBE programme.

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