

# **BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC REHABILITATION AND RELIANCE**

*Amaka C. Egele (Mrs)*

## **Abstract**

Business Education has come to be the fastest growing educational market that delves into economic rehabilitation and reliance for gainful employment and this has become one positive instrument in the socio-economic emancipation of the individuals and the society. Business Education programme is being encouraged in polytechnics, colleges of education, technical colleges as well as primary schools in the country. This paper discusses how Business Education contributes to economic rehabilitation and reliance and however highlights hindrances to the accomplishment of the expectation. It also calls for a rethink of the operations.

## **Introduction**

Rehabilitation and reliance are things desired by all economies for their citizens. This can only be achieved through the provision of functional education. The importance of these are the recognition of the National Policy on Education (1998 :28), which states that:

Business Education is aimed at providing education/training for manpower in commerce; Provide skills necessary for commercial and economic development; Provide scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems; Give training and necessary skills leading to production of skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self reliant among others.

Government clerical training schools are also designed to inculcate relevant occupational skills needed in business education.

The Industrial Training Fund also conducts Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) and secretarial vocational training programmes aimed at developing relevant occupational skills that are needed in the effective performance of the economy.

## **Development of Business Education In Nigeria**

Business education is that part of total education aimed at developing competences needed to function effectively in an occupation, that is business world. Osuala (1998: 20), defined business education as that broad area of knowledge that deals with a nation's economic system, identifies and explains the role of business content and experiences that prepare individual for effective participation, as citizens, workers and consumers. Business Education has been in existence from the birth of man because man has always engaged himself in production, exchange, storage, transportation, etc. This education, from the early days of formal education in Nigeria was not given attention. The emphases were on arts, humanities and science. In the 1950s and 1960s it was only grammar schools that were government schools, which were aided by states and missions. Commercial schools were privately owned, poorly equipped, funded and managed. This was coupled to the fact that the colonial administrators did not encourage the education because they felt that when Nigerians are trained they will know their tricks and will secure clean jobs and compete with them.

Independence brought about the desire for this type of education, because it was realized that most activities would be unrealisable without business education. To actualise this Uzoh (2002 :391) pointed out the need for the insertion of certain practical, technical and artisan activities in the school programmes of business education.

In the 1980s, after the National Policy on Education was instituted, Vocational Education was accorded a good position towards the nation's development because it was realized that through it the required skills and knowledge to thwart the colonial ideas will be achieved, thus rehabilitation and reliance.

Nigeria had now witnessed a phenomenal growth in the number of institutions offering business education from secondary to university levels. At present all the previously prototype grammar schools offer basic business education subjects especially now with the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system of education in progress in pursuit of the reliable objectives of the National Policy on Education.

### **Contributions of Business Education Towards Economic Rehabilitation And Reliance**

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995) defines Rehabilitation and Reliance as the ability to help someone to live a healthy, useful or active life again after they have been seriously in prison; and the state of being dependent on something, respectively. Osuala (1998 :230) in his contribution said that Rehabilitation is the service of preparing disabled persons for enumerative employment through diagnosis, guidance, physical restoration, training and placement. Thus economic rehabilitation and reliance is that state of restoring an economy from serious illness or disability.

An economy is ill when it will not be able to meet the socio-economic needs'; of her citizenry. This situation is characterized by poverty, inflation, unemployment, over dependence on government jobs to mention but few. In Ugbe (2002 : 409) citing Oyiborhoro confirms the situation of economic hardship as low level of commercial activities, loss of employment opportunities, low and poor productivity, over dependence on foreign goods, high cost of input and inefficiency of public utilities and infrastructural services. In the analysis of this economic illness Egele (2002 : 70), added that the situation can bring loss of self control, insomnia, strained family relationship, domestic violence, depression, alcohol abuse and even suicide. The practical example in Nigeria can be traced to the recent riots in Nigeria [Kano May 11<sup>th</sup> 2004 riots]. If the citizens or the youths in the area were fully engaged in employment or self employed, the situation may have been minimized.

To come out of this situation Business Education has come to be the fastest educational market that delves into economic rehabilitation and reliance. Business education as it is, is that aspect of total education programme that provides the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as a producer and/or consumer of goods and service. It is this education that is functional for economic rehabilitation and reliance. Business education subjects include book-keeping and accounts, office practice, commerce, economics, business law, shorthand, typing, auditing and taxation, costing, elements of finance, principles of marketing, principles of management, computer appreciation and newly included entrepreneurship education.

Contribution of business education to economic rehabilitation and reliance is invaluable. Felix (1991 : 40) pointed out that, Business Education is essential to individual, organisation and the nation before a wise decision could be made on production and consumption in order to achieve objective of industrialization which is agent of reliance.

In areas of works, health, education, finance, co-operatives etc business education is important for different managerial and administrative posts. The knowledge of business education is important for effective execution and administration of duties. For instance presidents, governors, commissioners, etc with this functional knowledge should learn the true state of the national economy, kinds of business the federal or state governments intend to deal with and their implications.

The employers of labour need school leavers with business education to work as typists, secretaries, accounts clerks, salesmen, store keepers to mention but a few.

Having no opportunity of expanding potential capacities in the service of society is ill, Business education will give one an opportunity to tap the available opportunities, discourage mass movement of people to cities by providing people with jobs where they live.

The graduates of Business Education can be engaged as insurance broker, Advertising agents, stock exchange jobbers, public relations officers and make a living from there. Business Education graduates can establish small modern business centres, employ some hands to assist them photocopying, duplicating, scanning, typing etc, and commercial schools or ordinary typing pools, where others can be trained, thereby curtailing (he menace of economic nuisance because gone are the days when people will solely rely on government for employment.

## **Problems Militating Against Business Education**

The major deterrent to business education in Nigeria is that most of the young people in the country as well as the adults, unlike people in the advanced countries, have had no intimate association with technological age. Thus the average youth lacks the basic knowledge attitude, habit and thinking of people in an advanced business culture.

Another problem associated with business education is (he problem of misunderstanding of the status and place of business education, which has often been associated with underachievers. Many have considered it as a dumping ground for the low intelligent and drop out from the science and grammar system. With these erroneous ideas, business education has not enjoyed the same status as other arms of education. Even policy makers and parents who support business education think of it as a course of study for other people's children and not their own.

To buttress this, Onah (1997 :124) has this to say. Technical /vocational education to a good majority of the populace is education for those who could not cope with the demands of the other areas of education. He further said that this defies logic how people desire technological development of vocational education as inferior to academic subjects.

There is this problem of who is to teach business education subjects. The teachers of business subjects should not only specialize in their field or exhibit completely in general and vocational business education but they should in addition have knowledge in special methods of teaching business subjects as well as practical industrial experience in the world of business. Egele (2003 :64) opined that where these inadequacies in training arises, graduates in (his area will find it difficult to be self reliant even when capital is provided to set up their own businesses rather will rely on government and other organisations.

Osuala (1998 : 147-348) summarized the problems of vocational education which Business Education is part of as the following:

- The inability of education to achieve that status and prestige it needs to perform its proper and vital role in the Nigerian economy;

- The difficulty of integrating vocational education into the mainstream of Nigerian education for maximum individual development and preparation for work;

- The difficulty of giving vocational education equivalent educational credit due to prejudice;

- The failure of higher education to provide (he diversity and comprehensiveness of educational opportunity needed by millions of students who are entering a changing world of work;

- The inability of Nigerian universities, educational programmes to change to fulfil the occupational educational needs of the individuals and the nations;

- The failure of the Nigerian education system to establish a relationship between students' programmes and the world of work;

- Limited resources available for the programmes or redirection to enable the programme to make the greatest contribution to the economy and training needs of business and industry; The inability of the Nigerian educational system to ensure quality of vocational technical education programmes by establishing new programmes for vocational tea::her preparation.

- This has resulted in the restricted supply of competent teachers;

- The difficulty of the educational system to accept vocational education as an integral aspect of the total education system for Nigeria; and

- Lack of consistent national policies and programmes with vocational technical education emphasis.

## **Suggestions**

The government through the enlightenment campaign programme should make Nigeria's populace understand the status of business education in the socio-economic needs of the country, as the world is full of changes. The campaign should also be geared towards removing the apathy the public have on business education, that business education is for all.

In order to be business oriented, the government through its agencies and schools whether

state or privately owned emphasis on special methods of teaching business subjects and practical industrial experiences in order to make graduates have interest of setting up their business for economic rehabilitation.

The federal government through ministry of education should put in place policies that will lay foundation by integrating business education subjects into the mainstream of educational system in Nigeria right from primary school levels. This will also encourage the graduates to develop risk-taking behaviour and to perceive business opportunities in the environment.

The government should give more recognition to business education programmes by financing it and give more incentives to the programme by granting graduates loans to start their own business thereby not depending on government jobs.

The teachers of Business education should not be left behind. Special incentives should be given to them by the government. This will serve as motivator to enable them intensify effort in the imparting of the needed knowledge and skills for economic rehabilitation and reliance.

The government is also advised to be consistent in her policies and programmes towards vocational education which business education is part of for instance National Directorate of Employment, Better Life for Rural women, Family Economic Advancement Programme, Poverty Eradication Programme to mention but a few. These will continue to improve on the country's economic rehabilitation and reliance.

## **Conclusion**

The importance of business education towards the economic rehabilitation and reliance cannot be over emphasised in any socio-economic society. This paper has tried to highlight the areas in which Business Education has positively restored the disabled economy for remunerative employments. Government enlightenment campaign programmes geared towards removing the apathy on the status of business education and others were suggested. The writer therefore, is of the opinion that when these suggestions are implemented the problems militating against the achievement of economic rehabilitation and reliance will be curtailed.

## **References**

- Egele, .A. C. (2002) Managing the Effects of Unemployment in a Consumer Oriented Economy. *Vocational Renaissance*. Volume 1(1).Page 70
- Egele, A.C. (2003).Vocational Education and Self-reliance in Nigeria. Knowledge Review *NAFAK* 7 (5).Page 64.
- Federal Government of Nigeria (1998). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: Government Press. Page 28.
- Felix, L.O.(1991) Sources for Small scale Enterprise in Nigeria. *Improve Your Business*. Onitsha. Page 40.
- Osuala, E. C.(1998) *Foundations of Vocational Education*. Onitsha: Cape Publishers International Ltd
- Longman Dictionary (1995) *Dictionary of Contemporary English, the Complete Guide to Written and Spoken English*. Spain: Gyfosa Barcelona.
- Onah, P.C P (1997) General Obstacles to Technology Teacher Preparation in College of Education and Strategies for Improvement *AJES* 1(1) Page 124.
- Ugbe, A. S. (2002) The Role of Business Education Towards Creation of Employment in Nigerian Economy. *The Educator* 2(2) Page 407
- Uzoh A (2002) Society's Perception of Business Education. *The Educator* 2 (2) .Page 391.