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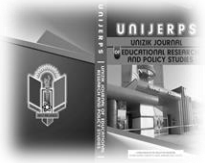
ADDRESSING THE INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICIT IN SECONDARY SCHOOL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION DELIVERY

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Abstract

Agriculture is the bedrock for the sustenance of any society due to the fact that food for human survival is supply through agriculture. In order to encourage massive participation in agriculture so as to ensure food security and sustainability the various governments have introduced several programmes, police and schemes. Among these agricultural programmes, polices and scheme are the back to land, operation feed in nation, directorate of food road and rural infrastructures, river basin development authority, farm settlement scheme, supervised agricultural credit and loan scheme, agriculture extension programme and a host of others. These programmes or schemes aim generally at capacity building in agriculture, input provision, marketing of products and the supply of products, and the supply or making available the various productive resources for agriculture and enhancing conductive atmosphere for agricultural investment in the country. To foster agricultural productivity, the issue of agricultural education should be well attended to. This study examined the scope of agriculture education, identified the objectives of agricultural education, the principles of agricultural education. The concept of infrastructure was also discussed. The infrastructure constraints in agricultural education delivery were also discussed. Recommendations were also made. Part of the recommendations was that the various stakeholders such as the government, the parents, agricultural agencies and proprietors of private schools should provide the facilities such as well-equipped functional agricultural laboratories for all schools.

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Introduction

Agricultural education according to Ulewu, (2002) is one of the most important of all the programmes aimed at fostering agricultural productivity as it develops and improves people's knowledge, skills and attitude in agriculture Osanema, (2006) defined agricultural education as a process of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes in agriculture to the learner at any level. Nnadi, (2000) described it as education and training given in agriculture from primary school through secondary and special schools to the university. Oviasyi, (2003) noted that agricultural education is an important school programme that is offered at all levels of education ranging from home to the school and the community. This implies that it can be formal, informal and non-formal.

However, Abdulahi, (1991) observed agricultural experiences. It emphasizes skill development in all aspects of agribusiness such as planning, management, safety, finances and leadership. Egun, (2010) furnishes learners with necessary communication and interpersonal skills as well as knowledge to would be teachers at all levels. Noting further that it makes learners to be self-employed or work in agricultural establishment as employee.

The Scope of Agriculture Education

The scope of agriculture education according to Thumbs, (2001) includes; the areas of teaching research and public outreach programmes. It also designed to prepare students for employment in various occupations such as horticulture, agribusiness, agricultural mechanization, crop production, animal husbandry and landscaping. In order to prepare learners for successful careers in agricultural education focuses should generally be on providing learning experiences that enable them to;

- Demonstrate desirable work ethics and habits
- Apply the basic agricultural competencies and background knowledge in agriculture and related occupation.
- Analyse entrepreneurial skills necessary for the development of productive citizens in our democratic society.
- Gain effective social and interpersonal communication skills.

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- Be aware of career opportunities in agriculture and set career objectives
- Acquire job seeking employability and job retention skills
- Advance a career through a programme of continuing education and lifelong learning.
- Recognize the interaction of agriculture with government and economic systems at the local, state and national and international levels.
- Recognize how new technologies impact agriculture and how agriculture impacts the environment

The Objectives of Agricultural Education

Meanwhile, the objectives of agricultural education at the secondary school level according to Iwuanyanwu, (2010) are;

- To stimulate students interest in agriculture
- To enable students to acquire knowledge of agriculture
- To develop basic agriculture skill in agriculture
- To enable students integrate knowledge with skills in agriculture
- To expose students to opportunities in the field of agriculture
- To prepare students for further studies in agriculture
- To prepare students for occupations in agriculture.

The Principles of Agricultural Education

There are three basic principles underlying agricultural education delivery as explained by Bonem. (2008). these principles are;

- Structure and organized instruction by which learners are presented with relevant content and concepts that are systematically embedded in a planned curriculum is executed in a variety of ways in classroom, laboratory, shop, green house, school farm, or on field trips.
- Supervised agricultural experience, by which students are allowed to display their experience under supervision in activities that align whit their interests and career goals such as the one year intensive farm projects or supervised industrial works experience scheme, home and farm stead improvement projects.
- Career development support activities, activities, by which students are opportune to exhibit the

training acquired through publicly oriented activities such as community projects, school improvement projects, livestock show projects, leadership camps, conferences etc.

Udeandye, (2002) noted that agricultural education methodology are used based on maturity level of learners couples with the objectives of the lesson or instruction and the instructional environment as well. However, lecture method, homework, task instructional sheet, agricultural competitions, agricultural shows are good methods of agricultural education delivery.
Information, concepts and ideas offered through these are presently, becoming technologically and multimedia driven, applying computer and multimedia equipment to offer points lessons and giving coloured demonstration to learners via the internet using synchronous, asynchronous and interactive models.

Osilama, (2001) observed that to achieve the objectives of agricultural education at the secondary school level, the urriculum emphasizes on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and good attitudes to agriculture. Theory is supplemented with practical and all areas of agricultural productions are treated in the schools. However, Okonjo, (2003) and Alagamba, (2004) opined that to ensure the effective implementation of the agricultural education curriculum, the necessary infrastructures should be put in place in adequate quantity and quality. It is on this premise that this study rests.

The Concept of Infrastructure

Osbert, (2008) defined infrastructure as basic physical and organizational structure needed for the operation of a society or an enterprise. Woods, (2001) viewed it as the services and facilities necessary for an economy to function. Tailors (1999) stated that the term infrastructure typically refers to the technical structures that support a society, such as road, water supply, sewers, electrical grids, telecommunications and so forth and thus defined it as the physical components of interrelated systems providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance societal living condition or the operational conditions of an enterprise. Viewed functionally, infrastructure facilities involve the production of goods and services, and also the distribution of

finished products as well as basic social services such as schools and hospitals.

Agricultural education which is an important programme in the educational system has certain infrastructure requirements for its effective and smooth operation (Igala, 2007). Some of the infrastructure needs that must be provided if agricultural education curriculum would implemented in all its ramification are;

- Functional agricultural laboratory
- Farm houses for the various farm animals like piggery, poultry, rabbitry, snairly, farm plots for the various crops such as maize, millets, beans, yam.
- Processing facilities
- Storage facilities
- Good road networks leading to the various farm units
- Machines for hatchery, breeding pest and diseases control and weeding
- Facilities for water supply and water regulation
- Facilities for power supply.

Infrastructure Constraints in Agricultural Education Delivery

Bayode, Obiora and Oyana, (2012) lamented that most Secondary Schools are grossly inadequate in these areas of infrastructure namely;

- Non Functional laboratory
- Poor Pig farm houses
- Poor Poultry houses
- Poor Snailry
- Poor Goat, cattle and sheep
- Poor Crop plots
- Poor Processing facilities
- Poor Storage facilities
- Poor Breeding facilities
- Poor Disease & pest regulation facilities
- Poor Power supply and regulation facilities
- Poor Power supply generation facilities
- Inadequate farm road network
- Poor communication/information facilities

Conclusion

The general low level of seriousness in the subject agriculture could be as a result of poor interest which could arise from inadequate supply and non-use of infrastructure for the teaching and learning of the subject. This is due to the fact that the effective teaching and learning of agriculture depends on the quality of supplementation of theory and practice which require field and

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laboratory works. This will bring the abstract concepts into real life for better understanding and clarity.

Recommendations

To correct the infrastructure deficit in agricultural education delivery the following should be done;

- That the various stakeholders such as the government, the parents, agricultural agencies and proprietors of private schools should provide the facilities such as well-equipped functional agricultural laboratories for all schools.
- That communities should provide enough land to schools for farm projects.
- That agricultural science teachers and school heads should broaden the scope of practical, to include livestock units.
- The government should supply the relevant processing and storage facilities to all schools.
- That power generating plants should be provided to school, no matter the capacity.
- That water bore-hole or water reservoirs should be constructed in each school, for irrigation and other agricultural purposes.
- That the various examination bodies should ensure that these conditions are satisfied before the subjects will be accredited in any school
- Information and communication technology facilities should be provided in various secondary schools to bring about ease in accessing agricultural information and knowledge from various parts of the world through Internet System.

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