

MAKING EDUCATION SERVICES WORK FOR RURAL POPULATION: A CASE STUDY OF EGBEDORE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF OSUN STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

This paper is premised on the fact that learning usually occurs both inside and outside the school. The objectives of the paper is to find out whether students in the rural areas are ready to reinforce and complement their formal education with skill training and also to identify the areas of school community partnership in students' vocational and skill oriented interest.

Literature agrees generally that education of the rural community should take cognizance of the rural environment of the students and should be such that will sustain them in the absence of white collar jobs. The study took place in Egbedore Local Government Area which is one of the Local Government Areas in Osun State.

Four sets of questionnaires were designed for the four target groups in the population. These are teachers, parents, students and the policymakers. The questionnaire was supported by a secondary data collected from the Federal Ministry of Education, State Ministry of Information, and the Local Government Authority. Results showed that generally all stakeholders are opposed to a separate ruralized curriculum for the schools. They all however, agreed for alternative complementary education inform of extra curricular activities which is expected to complement the regular uniform Nigerian school curriculum. On this issue the stakeholders generally agreed that the community can be made a teaching and learning laboratory for vocational and technical skills of the students.

The study concluded that if at all there is to be a change in the rural curriculum it should cut across both rural and urban and this in itself will become a policy issue.

Key Words: rural population, education services, Osun State

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Since modern formal education was introduced in developing countries, efforts have been made by various countries including Nigeria to universalize basic education. However, important gaps in universal coverage still remain particularly in rural areas as some challenges are not yet met. Such challenges include making education relevant to the rural communities and some countries' coverage is wanting and exclusion is high, capacity to compensate for the cultural deficit of children and youth from underprivileged homes is scant. There have also been complaints that education was too academic, not preparing children for life. The relevance of education was challenged, particularly so, for rural areas (Bergman, 2002). This is not limited to primary education only, but also touched on secondary education. In view of this, the Education For All Program for Sub-Saharan Africa identifies the need to consider accelerated and non-formal alternative approach for teaching underserved children particularly in remote and deprived environments. The bricks and mortar systems of education appear not to have given desired results in terms of individual achievements and skill development. Observations in Nigeria is that schooling in rural areas often has little to offer and has produced unemployable and unemployed citizens without any marketable skills. Moreover the pre-service training of teachers, the curricula and textbooks in primary and secondary schools are often urban-based and irrelevant to the needs of rural people and seldom focused on crucial skills for life.

One of the six Education For All (EFA) goals agreed upon at Dakar in year 2000 stipulates that learning needs of all young people and adults are to be met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skill programs. This is important because of some identified gaps in the education of the underserved rural population. Although rural communities are often unnoticed and most education policies do not address their unique problems, they constitute 70% of the population in Nigeria. The rural schools operate the same syllabus and the same curriculum with the urban schools without addressing the common problems of the rural dwellers. The danger here is that a large number of learners in rural communities are subjected to curricula that are incapable of nurturing their individual potentials. Rural people are also caught in the vicious cycle of having no access to quality education, to gainful employment and to other services that might lift them out of poverty.

Thirty-six point four (36.4) percent of the rural population and 30.4% of the urban population in Nigeria live below poverty line (World Bank, 2003). Since education is a major determinant of poverty, any education given therefore must not only be qualitative, but must also address the needs of the people and guarantee sustainable livelihood. The National Policy on Education (2005 revised) Federal Republic of Nigeria section 1 (d) stipulates that there is need for functional education

for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria .Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2005) The National Policy on prescribes two major goals.

- To civilize and enlighten every individual to lead the good life in society as a citizen of Nigeria while harmonizing with and sharing in words' cultural heritage.
- To equip every individual with skills and job competencies for gainful employment.

According to the Education Sector Status Report, Federal Ministry of Education, (2003) employment in Nigeria is public sector driven. About 60% of those employed are in the public service. With the on going privatization and inability of the public sector to employ, the rate of unemployment has been rising till date. To this end, school programs need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive. In consequence, the quality of instruction at all levels has to be oriented towards acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance as indicated in section 18(c) of the National Policy on Education.

Pre-Independence Nigerian Education System

The African education is an integrated experience, which combined manual activities with intellectual training (Fafunwa 1975). In short, the education was not compartmentalized as the formal western education that operates now it is basically skill-oriented. One of the merits of the traditional education system is that it hardly creates drop-outs or unemployment. It prepared the youths for useful and sustainable living particularly in their adult life. This is not to say this system is no more in use but the combination of the formal education system with manual training is no more attractive to secondary school students who see manual work as degrading and meant for illiterates or the poor.

The Present Nigerian Educational Structure

The National Policy on Education first published in 1977 stipulates a 6-3-3-4 system of education that is 6 years primary, 3 years junior secondary school (JSS), 3 years senior secondary school (SSS) and 4 years university. The curriculum of junior secondary school is both pre-vocational and academic. It is designed to generate the interest of students in pre-vocational skills early in life. The emphasis on these subjects is to be practice oriented. The specific objectives of the JSS are to develop in the students manipulative skills, respect for dignity of labour and above all healthy

attitude towards things technical. At the same time students are to be exposed to the usual basic academic courses. Students who complete junior secondary schools are streamlined into the following, based on the results of tests to determine their ability.

1. The Senior Secondary School
2. The Technical College
3. Out of school vocational training centers.
4. An apprenticeship scheme.

However in spite of this, transition to technical colleges and out of school vocational training centers have not been successful. As indicated in the National Policy on Education, enrolment in technical and vocational education is expected to be high and 20% of students transiting from the junior secondary school would enter technical colleges. However, this expectation does not seem to have been met, since only 90,038 were enrolled in the 2000/2001 academic year in the nation's 117 technical colleges, as against 7,351,000 in the over seven thousand secondary schools. Thus, only 1.2% of the total for the secondary level were in technical colleges*. The senior secondary school has diversified curriculum, but with less emphasis on vocational subjects. Every student in addition to offering the core subjects is expected to take a minimum of one and a maximum of two from the lists of elective subjects under vocational and non-vocational subjects.

The advantage of technical and vocational education is that it would have been an viable instrument for employment particularly with the high unemployment rate in the country. The 6-3-3-4 education system makes technical colleges the only alternative (i.e. alternative to secondary education) route to further formal education whereby graduates of secondary schools at least can sustain themselves without government employment. Unfortunately, the vocational and technical schools are one option that is unpopular with both parents and their children. Thus, the low capacity of vocational skills and entrepreneurial abilities have not helped the rural youth to get out of poverty since they could not sustain themselves unless they are employed either by government or by the private sector. Based on the identified gaps above, there is need to fashion out such education program that will meet the yearnings and needs of the rural communities.

* Details available from the Federal Ministry of Education meeting of National Council of Education held in Yenagoa in November 2003.

Statement of the Problem

The problem with rural education is not only with the content of the curriculum but also with the relevance. Obviously, the provision of pre-vocational, vocational and technical education content of the curriculum would have been relevant in the rural areas, unfortunately both human resources and physical infrastructure to support this are not available in the rural communities. Evidences also support the fact that the students themselves are not interested in vocational education. The crucial problem therefore is how to make the curriculum relevant to the rural people by combining the core content of the present curriculum with local content and also link the school with the community so that they can work together to provide resources and application of the knowledge and skills students would have learnt.

Objectives of the Study

This study sets out to investigate:

- (i) Whether students will reinforce their formal education with skill training.
- (ii) Areas of school community partnership in students skill training development.
- (iii) Perception of parents and policy makers to a combination of formal and skill training in the education of the rural students.
- (iv) Future career aspirations of rural students.
- (v) Areas of vocational interests of students and finally,
- (vi) to suggest appropriate policy intervention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As far back as 1922, the Phelps Stokes commission, which studied education in West Africa, produced a report which elaborated on the adaptation of education to the needs of individuals and the community. Hitherto, the educated Africans themselves had on several occasions criticized the colonial education system, which was too literally and too classical to be useful, and which resulted in overproduction of those who could write and talk and an undersupply of those who could till and repair. The commission further stated that since Africans live both in rural and urban areas, they required education suited to their life needs (that is agriculture for those in rural areas and industrial and technical skills for those in urban areas). Specifically, the

commission stipulates that rural education should be organized to blend intimately with the lives of the groups from which the pupils come.

Towards this, the present Nigerian education system advocated for the education that will both be pre-vocational and academic. This seems to be one of the aims of the junior secondary school curriculum thus agreeing with the view of Akyeampong (2005) while writing on Ghana experience, that widening the range of subjects to include vocational studies would definitely cater for a wider range of talent and prepare students for a wider range of future activity.

The largest segment of the world's poor are the 800 million poor women, children and men who live in rural environments. More than one billion people in the world live on less than US\$1 a day and 2.7 billion struggle to survive on less than US\$2 per day (<http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/English/topics/index.htm> 31/8/07). In Nigeria rural poverty has worsened since the late 1990s, to the extent that the country is now considered one of the 20 poorest countries in the world. Over 70 per cent of the population is classified as poor, with 35 per cent living in absolute poverty. (<http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/English/regions/Africa/nga/index.htm>31/8/07). Although poverty is not peculiar to the developing countries, but its incidence in developing countries has continued to rise and continues to be strongly felt in the rural areas. This is more so because rural infrastructure are often neglected, while investments in health, education and water supply have largely been focused on the cities. Limited education opportunities and poor health perpetuate the poverty cycle. Poverty is a rural phenomenon. In Nigeria, both incidence and depth of poverty were higher in rural areas than in urban (Ogwumike 2001) while Adelabu (2001) found poverty to be widespread among people with low education, unstable employment, unemployment, low status job and absence of material possession. All these factors are prevalent in and typical of rural areas.

The marginalization of the rural areas through urban biased development policies and distribution of values such as education is also largely responsible for high incidence of poverty in the rural areas. This state of inequity and social exclusion is compounded by such education that cannot attract the job market.

Table 1: Poverty level in Tropical Sub-Saharan Africa in the 2000s

Country	Rural %	Urban %
Ethiopia	45	37
Ghana	34.3	26.7

Kenya	46.4	29.3
Mozambique	71.3	62
Madagascar	76.7	52.1
Malawi	66.5	54.9
Nigeria	36.4	30.4
Tanzania	49.7	24.4
Zimbabwe	48.0	7.9
Zambia	83.1	56.0

Source: World Bank, 2003.

As shown in the table above, the poverty ratio for both the urban and rural communities in Nigeria is close. In spite of this there are more rural poor than urban poor. A likely explanation for the closeness could be the unsolicited migration from the rural to the urban communities, particularly by young graduates in search of employment which unfortunately is also not available in the cities. This has obviously compounded urban poverty. Rural dwellers' migration constitutes another dimension of dysfunctional rural education which offers few job opportunities. According to Omideyi (2003), the decisions of rural dwellers to migrate are usually informed primarily by economic considerations particularly when they are unable to satisfy their aspirations within the existing opportunity structure in their locality. She continues that rural-urban migration still persists even in the face of worsening urban unemployment and prospects of better living in the rural agricultural areas. Currently, that is, in spite of Table 1 above, the number of the rural poor is said to be roughly twice that of the urban poor while the depth of poverty is more than double in rural areas.

One of the broad aims of secondary education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education is "preparation" for useful living, but there is no evidence that the curriculum and training in the secondary schools have fulfilled this aim. The secondary curriculum has been criticized for being "over ambitious, resulting in overload and insufficiently attuned to the needs of the labor market" particularly in pre-vocational and vocational/technical courses (NPC/UNICEF, 2001). The educational system seems

to be turning out graduates faster than the economy can give them job, hence a large scale unemployment of the graduates (Baiké 2002). The education of both the urban and rural students is to make them dependent on being employed as workers or job seekers. The consequences of this is a rural-urban exodus which shifted the burden of poverty to the urban areas. Yet, according to Adelabu (2001) the cycle of poverty seems unbroken among the rural population where poverty is passed from generation to generation. Where job is available, the education of the rural dwellers is inadequate. Given the deplorable conditions under which rural pupils learn, it will be too much to expect them to attain a level of performance comparable to that of children of urban schools (Junaid and Umar, 1991). Studies have also shown that parents in rural communities because of their limited resources, level of poverty and inability to finance the cost of their children's education often withdraw their children to contribute to the household economy (Adelabu, 1992). The withdrawals are common during planting and harvesting seasons particularly in the rural agrarian communities. The present scenario therefore vindicates Nikolaus Vander Pas (2003) that there is need to search for a more relevant and sustainable link between out-of-school experience on the one hand, and organized learning experiences on the other. To effect this, Nigeria had to meet her commitment to take lots of challenges one of which is enhancing the social prestige of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) programmes, through creating an enabling psycho-pedagogical environments in the schools as well as enables socio-economic environment in the wider society (Obanya, 2002). It is strongly believed that active involvements of families and the wider community in the teaching and learning process of children is fundamental to the development of an effective inclusive learning community (Christenson and Sheridan, 2001; Simon and Epstein, 2001). This appears to be the message of this study. The community can provide physical and human resources to support a child's learning particularly in a quest to diversify the education system. This would create the opportunity to provide young men and women with skills training (in addition to general education) in order to enable them fulfil the country's technical manpower needs including self-employment up to middle level in the field of industry, business, and agriculture (Baiden 1996, see also Akyeampong 2005)

Literature supports that an important area that needs a focus in rural needs is the training needs of teachers in rural areas. Most pre-service education programs do not differentiate between urban and rural issues in terms of personnel preparation. In developed countries awareness has increased a body of unique needs of rural communities. In response, a growing number of special education pre-service training programs have recognized that the education of exceptional children in rural environments requires additional specialised instruction (Reiff and Anderson, 1989). Unfortunately teacher preparation programs across the country have not prepared

teachers for rural education. One tends to agree with Trentham and Schaer (1989) that there is a need for 'matching' teachers and districts to promote good teaching and satisfied teachers, students, parents and administrators. Obviously teachers in rural areas are not motivated or encouraged to cope with life in isolated and remote areas of the country. Working in rural schools is widely regarded as being considerably more difficult and thus more de-motivated than in urban schools due mainly to poor learning conditions. In a recent study, on teacher motivation and incentives in Nigeria, Adelabu (2005) finds that the Nigerian educational system is staffed by teachers with poor morale and low levels of commitment to their work. Some of the factors that contribute to these problems include overcrowding and high teaching burdens with higher teacher-student ratios in rural areas, and failure to pay incentive for teaching in rural areas. The study also found that pre-service training of teachers is inadequate for dealing with the practical aspects of real life teaching. The challenge of teacher training in Nigeria cuts across board especially in areas of technical and vocational education. All levels of education face varying degrees of scarcity of professionally trained technical and vocational educational teachers.

Lack of social amenities in rural areas impinges on the education services. Such amenities are electricity, pipe borne water, technical resources, safe and secure facilities that are essential to successful educational programmes. In a recent study by the Federal Ministry of Education, a checklist was provided to give information on tools and equipment for the subjects and the activities that students engage in while in school. Table 2 below reviews the state of supply or availability of such tools and equipments in the schools. This cuts across selected urban and rural schools.

Table 2 Equipment Available for Prevocational Subjects in Schools.

Item Description	N.E.	NIS	NF	NIHQ	NNA	NNA
						Ratio
Layout tools	2824	789	404	295	1187	42%
Sawing and bench tools	1977	797	463	207	841	42.5%
Drilling machines	2232	713	74	71	308	13.8%

Hand forging tools	1457	446	108	94	373	25.6%
Machine tools	1982	735	299	217	462	23.3%
Electrical tools	2031	597	343	186	711	35.0%
Electrical meters	1746	303	81	52	610	34.95%
Drawing equipment	4908	1262	536	228	1519	30.9%
Auto-mechanics equipment	2009	629	177	143	525	26.1%
Woodwork tools	2464	955	544	255	941	38.2%
Welding equipment	953	190	67	42	252	26.4%
Food preservation equipment	974	627	27	9	221	22.7%
Metalwork materials	2680	566	131	73	1237	46.2%
Cutting fluids and lubricants	1380	481	21	18	321	23.3%
Electrical materials	3089	504	170	116	1017	32.9%
Building materials	2256	445	127	106	468	20.7%
Woodwork materials	2875	838	212	160	727	24.35%
Drawing materials	5083	1078	237	182	1284	25.35%
Welding materials	1966	693	63	54	347	17.7%
Cutting tools	2847	1327	911	178	586	20.6%
Digging tools	1874	350	103	80	555	29.6%

Bans	1079	341	20	14	125	11.6%
Typewriters	1841	1074	170	91	265	14.4%
Typewriting materials	1697	1263	159	136	111	6.5%
Cookers, stoves and ovens	1628	973	39	36	163	10%
Grinders	1343	542	30	13	90	6.7%
Sink	1204	627	11	10	94	7.8%
Sewing materials	1506	771	39	27	144	9.6%
Laundry equipment	2017	1347	526	528	201	10%
Beds and beddings	8428	1273	913	71	1390	16.5%
Table accessories	1761	844	26	11	228	12.9%
Computer sets and accessories	2647	987	159	142	178	6.7%
Computer software	1845	976	59	53	218	11.8%
Local crafts tools	1924	916	86	74	375	19.5%
Local crafts materials	3417	927	86	83	1551	45.4%
TOTAL	81942	27086	7421	4055	19637	24.0%

Source: Nigeria Education Sector Diagnosis Report Federal Ministry of Education May, 2005.

Key for Table 2:

NE: Number Expected

NIS: Number in Stock

NF: Number Functioning

NIHQ: Number in High Quality

NNA: Number not Available

NNA Ratio: Ratio of Number not Available

From this table, nine sets of equipment are in poor state of supply, 21 in fair state of supply, while only five enjoyed the status of good state of supply. As can be seen from the table, items of equipment for Introductory Technology and Local Crafts dominated the state of poor supply. Considering this situation it is obvious that the facilities for training are inadequate whereas some of these facilities e.g. local crafts exist in the community. This is why the community should be encouraged to participate in the school life by serving as teaching and learning laboratory for students and teachers.

Study Methodology

This study was carried out in Egbedore Local Government Area (LGA) of Osun State, Osun State is in the Southwestern zone of Nigeria with 30 local governments. The population of the state is estimated at 2,200,000 (National Population Commission, 1991). More than 80% of this population lives in rural areas. A rural population for the purpose of this study is identified as communities with fewer than 3,000 people and where some of these basic infrastructures like electricity, pipe borne water, motorable roads, hospitals and post office are absent. The prevalent occupation in the state is farming and trading with few artisans.

Egbedore Local Government (LG) one of the LGs in the state was chosen due to its proximity to the base of the researcher and the state capital. The population of the study consisted of 56 rural communities in the local government with an estimated inhabitants of 40,283. Less than 3% of the community members are wage earners mainly teachers and civil servants. As at time of study, there are 5 secondary schools, one technical college and 31 primary schools. Five communities were purposively selected. The target groups were household heads (114), teachers (42) and students (210) and policy maker (1). The policy maker in this study is the chairman of the local government under study. In Nigeria there are three tiers of government. The federal, the state and the local governments. The local government is the nearest government to the masses and it is headed by an elective chairman who heads the decision making process in the local government.

Two data were collected for the study. The first one is primary data using four sets of questionnaire while the second one is a secondary data collected from

- i. Osun State Ministry of Information
- ii. Federal Ministry of Education (FME)
- iii. Egbedore Local Government Authority (LGA)

Measures

Four sets of questionnaire were designed for each target group. These are the Teachers Questionnaires; the “Policy maker Questionnaire”; the “Parents Questionnaire” and the “Students Questionnaire”. These questionnaires have some commonalities bordering on bio-data of the respondents, prevalent works in the community, absenteeism in schools. Other common items to the four questionnaires are on attitude towards vocational training. The questionnaire for students further elicited information on the curriculum preference of the students that is, whether they would prefer the present curriculum or a localized curriculum that has inbuilt into it, vocational skills training. Apart from these, ‘Students Questionnaire’ and ‘Parents Questionnaire’ both enquired on the type of job the parents and students would want after leaving schools. ‘Students Questionnaire’ and ‘Teachers Questionnaire’ jointly enquired on the state of vocational training in the schools.

Procedure

The instruments were administered through 2 field assistants who had previously been trained. The data collection spanned a period of five weeks. About 451 copies of questionnaire (Household heads/Parents 150, Teachers 50, Students 250, Policy maker 1) were administered in all out of which 367 were analyzed for the study. The 367 formed the sample as stated above. The administration of questionnaire was complemented with oral discussion with the respondents. It should be noted that the discussions came up as a result of issues raised in the questionnaires. The Households were chosen randomly using the Primary Health Care (PHC) numbering. The shortfalls include those that were incorrectly filled or not returned. The resulting data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Result

Descriptive analysis (percentages and frequency tables) were used to present the qualitative and quantitative data. Oral interviews were also summarized. All the 114 household heads were male. This might be as a result of the traditional under-reporting of female headship. The age of household heads ranged between 30-70 years with the majority in the 50-60 years bracket.

All the household heads were married with about 50% in polygamous marriages. Majority of the household heads have between 5-7 children with 56% of them being farmers and 21% are traders, 18% artisans and 4% in other menial jobs while 10% are salary earners. The household heads derived their income from their various occupations occasionally complemented with child labor such as farming, hawking of goods and farm products in cities and other neighboring towns.

Although it is difficult to calculate the average income of household heads but a rough estimate shows that it is around ₦16,578 (about \$102). The average monthly expenditure is ₦9,994.8 (about \$80). This expenditure is mainly on food items leaving a paltry balance of ₦4,586 that is \$22. It is from this balance that they buy clothes for the family, provide for the children's school needs and purchase some other basic materials. This indicates that the general standard of living is low. The situation is more critical in a polygamous setup. Polygamy in the African setting is to the disadvantage of the women and children because in a lot of cases the women are often left to cater for their children.

The socio-economic characteristics of the policymaker in the study i.e. the chairman of the local government is on the high side. All local government chairmen, whether urban or rural earn the same salary.

Only 42 secondary school teachers were in the sample. They were few because the sizes of the schools themselves were also small. All the teachers in the sample had the requisite qualifications for their jobs. The minimum of which is National Certificate in Education (NCE). Unfortunately the teacher education curriculum has not focused directly on special needs of the rural areas. Their teaching experiences ranged between 3-10 years and above. However, only three of the teachers are graduates of the polytechnic with some vocational and technical training, hence majority of the teachers are not competent to train students in their desired vocational skills. There were 210 students in the sample, their age range from the 11-20 years with the mean age of 17 years. The students were made up of 114 males (55.77%) and 93 females (44.23%).

On students' absenteeism, the findings revealed 25% to 41% absenteeism as shown in Table 3 below is quite high for any student in a particular school year and it is bound to affect quality of education.

Table 3: Students Absenteeism and Reasons for Absenteeism

Period/Time of absence from school	Per cent of time absent (%)
Anytime	41
Planting and harvesting season	34
Market days	25
Reasons for absenteeism	Per cent of absenteeism (%)
Sickness	13
Truancy	29
Lack other school materials provision	32
Farm Activities	26
Total	200

Generally in all, 41% have been absence one time or the other for a variety of reasons.

Various reasons were given for students' absenteeism, the highest reason being lack of school materials (32%) followed by mere truancy (29%), farming activities (26%) and health reasons (13%). However, majority of the reasons clustered around poverty which also contributes to withdrawal of children from school for work in order to support the household economy (Adelabu, 1992). On rural and urban migration, a preponderant majority of respondents, household heads (64.2%) and students (71.43%) prefer to go to the urban centres for employment after school as shown in Table 4 below.

Table4: Rural or Urban Preferences

Respondents	Stay in village	Go to cities for employment
Household heads	40 (35.08%)	74 (64.92%)
Students	60 (28.57%)	150 (71.43%)
Policy maker	1 (100%)	-

This finding corroborates that of Omideyi (2003) that migration of rural dwellers evolved principally by economic considerations particularly if they cannot meet their job aspirations in their local communities. As stated earlier in this paper, the labor market in Nigeria is found mainly in the cities and employment in Nigeria is public-sector driven but the absorption capacity of the economy is weak as it can barely accommodate university graduates.

Table 5 below shows the capacity of the universities to absorb would-be students most students who apply through the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) are secondary school graduates.

Table 5

Year	Applications	Admissions	(%) Admission
1995/96	508,280	32,473	6.4
1996/97	472,362	76,430	16.2
1997/98	419,807	72,791	17.3
2000/2001	550,399	60,718	11.0
2003/2004	876,024	65,233	13.49

From the table above only 65,233 of 876,024 gained admission into higher institutions. The implication is that 810,791 would probably be job seekers or go to monotechnics and polytechnics which are often secondary options. For instance, according to FME (2003) the ratio of polytechnic outputs to that of university is about 1:7. This is an unhealthy relationship from the point of view of economic development. Unfortunately the jobs students are seeking for in the cities are not often available. Over 70% of the unemployed in Nigeria are youths between 15-25 years of age. Table 4 above shows that only the policymaker is against rural-urban migration. Being the political head of the local government he believes that it is to the advantage of the local government if the youths stay back and develop their communities.

Investigating whether the rural education can be revisited to incorporate skill training that will complement the existing curriculum, findings show that the respondents are opposed to a specialized curriculum meant for rural dwellers alone (Table 6 below). The respondent were ask whether they will like the a curriculum meant only for rural schools (ruralized curriculum with mainly vocational and skill training) or the present curriculum complemented with rural contents such as skills and manual labor and vocational training. The third option was whether the rural schools should continue with the present school curriculum as stated in the National Policy on Education. The result shows that the majority household heads 71%, students 91%, teachers 95% indicated preference for the present curriculum. This finding is consistent with the trend of the findings of this research. A rural curriculum that is intended to prepare learners for future work especially in the rural community is therefore unacceptable.

Table 6: Curriculum Content

Respondents	Rural curriculum (mainly vocational skills)	Present education curriculum/rural specification	Present education curriculum	Total
Household heads	3.5%	26%	71%	114
Students	1%	8.1%	91%	210
Teachers	-	4.8%	95.2%	42
Policy maker	-	100%	-	1

On future career aspiration of students respondents chose from 18 options as shown in table 7 below:

Table7: Future Career Aspirations of Students

Careers	Number	%
Accountant	58	27.62
Economist	4	1.90
Pastor	4	1.90
Doctor	30	14.28
Nursing	28	13.33
Lawyer	18	8.57
Engineering	16	7.62
Teaching	20	9.52
Barbing	10	4.77
Lecturer	2	0.95
Tailor	6	2.86
Hairdressing	2	0.95
Civil service	4	1.90
Armed forces	2	0.95
Trading	2	0.95

Diplomat	2	0.95
Others	2	0.95

It is found that students' career aspirations can only be met either in the urban centres or in the public sector. For instance, professions like Accountancy which have (27.62%), followed by Medicine (14.28%), Nursing (13.33%), Teaching (9.52%) and Law (8.57%) can only enjoy high patronage in the urban centres. Evidences and literature also support that even teachers prefer to work or live in urban setting because the rural communities lack basic infrastructure and therefore unattractive. This demotivates teachers (Adelabu, 2005).

Very few of the students aspired for craft-based practices such as Tailoring (2.86%), Hairdressing (0.95%) and Barbing (4.77%). Another .95% of the respondents preferred Trading. This result shows that the students' career aspiration may not be dramatically different from urban students' aspirations as they have inclination for white collar jobs instead of craft-based and technical-based jobs needed for self-employment especially in rural communities where white collar jobs may not be available. From this finding it becomes difficult to advocate a completely different curriculum for students in the community, otherwise they will be denied access to their future careers. Thus it is considered better to design an education experience for the rural dwellers that will complement the present regular curriculum in the country. Such alternatives can be in form of extra-curricular activities either during the school term or on holidays.

On skills preference of students six prevalent skills were listed Table 8 below. The respondents all agreed that they will like skill training but as an extra curricular school activity:

Table 8: Preference of Skill Training.

Skills	Respondents(male)	Respondent(female)	Total	%
Hairdressing	7	24	31	14.76
Farming	28	-	28	13.33

Tailoring/sowing	18	38	56	26.67
Catering services	16	68	84	40.00
Capentary	6	-	6	2.86
Auto-mechanic	5	-	5	2.38

Forty percent of the respondents preferred catering services while 2.38% and 2.86% preferred Auto-mechanic and carpentry respectively. Greater percentage of the men about 25%, though 13.33% of the sample preferred farming. The reason for high preference of catering service is due to the fact that the respondents were more of females than males and catering service seemed to be more of females domain. Surprisingly only 13.33% (all males) indicate farming, one would be expect that being an agrarian community the students will like to follow in their fathers foot steps as farmers. The low response can be an evidence that the students might have had enough experience in the farm or they may feel that farming should be left for those who did not go to school. However, all the vocations identified by the respondents will sustain them and could make them independent economically both in the urban and rural communities if the skills are practicalized using the community farms and workshops as the learning laboratories.

The view that the community should be used as a learning laboratory was buttressed by the National Policy on Education when it stated that the emphasis on pre-vocational subjects at the JSS level is on practice. The community can therefore be used for students for such practices. To identify areas of school community partnership in students skill training development, questions were asked from students, teachers, policy makers and parents on whether they would want to partner with the community using community resources for skill training. The respondents particularly, household heads and teachers and majority of the students support the community and its resources as learning centers. This study revealed that the pre-service training of teachers is deficient or totally lacking in vocational and skill training, but a lot of physical and human resources abound in the communities. The household heads especially farmers and artisans expressed their readiness to serve as resource persons to students and teachers alike and are equally ready to release their farmlands and workshops as learning laboratories. This view is also supported by the policy maker, but, according to him, this would also require a change in the school calendar and

school time table hence it will become a policy issue which cannot be implemented independently but through parliamentary procedures. Obviously the benefits of parental involvement in schools are immense (Bermudez, 1994; Epstein & Dauber, 1991) Prater, Doris, Bermudez, and Owens (1997), also suggested that schools and agencies alike should develop strategies to increase community and parental involvement in rural schools. However, according to them it is obvious that there is still a lack of knowledge as to how parental (and community) involvement may be shaped by the school setting.

As regards policy issue, although secondary education is on the concurrent legislative list neither the state nor local government could legislate solely on public school curriculum or school calendar. A departure from the national policy on the contents and process of school system is a federal government prerogative. Thus the local government which is the third tier of government and nearest to the communities could not alter the curriculum neither could it change the school calendar to suit the rural preferences.

If the need arises to make skill training as part of the general curriculum, evidences must show that the secondary school graduate would make use of these skills. Then one can ask whether the students are mature enough to be self employed. Another question is whether the economy of the communities would support whatever job they want to do after graduation, or whether the scale of potential work opportunities in the occupational segment for which the skill training will prepare the students is attractive enough. To make complementary education a policy in the rural areas, the policy makers would need to satisfy the stakeholders by finding answers to these questions.

Summary

The findings of this study show that although it is important to make the education on the rural dwellers relevant to their environment there is a strong disagreement that the content of such education programme should be done through an "isolated" curriculum that will exclude the rural students from having the same experience with other students in the country. This is confirmed in the sense that the study found that the job aspiration of rural students are not different from what prevailed among other students be it urban or rural hence there is unanimity that the curriculum content of the students should not be different irrespective of the environment. This is hinged on the belief that a separate curriculum for rural dwellers is likely to forestall the students' future ambition of white collar job, and transition to higher institutions. The importance of the community as a learning centre is also

acknowledged in this study. However, the role of the community or parents in students learning experience need to be properly articulated. It is also important to design a strategy on the issue of school community partnership that will be acceptable to all stakeholders in line with the observation of Prater et al (1997).

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the education enterprise in Nigeria has experienced some troubles that today Nigeria is enmeshed in a hotchpotch system of education that leads to the acquisition of certificates and qualifications which are sources of frustration to the recipients because of their irrelevance to their environments (Baikie, 2002). What is on ground now particularly in the rural areas is a dysfunctional education system because it certainly would not solve the problems of the rural dwellers particularly after the students graduation. The need of the rural community is a shift from purely knowledge-based education system to a skill oriented education system. This will promote the appreciation of dignity of labour and alleviate the problems of crises in education. The situation in the secondary schools is critical because of the lack of employment after graduation, more so since only few of them will transit from secondary schools to university. For instance, Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) sources revealed that in year 2003/2004 only 65,233 students gained admission into the university leaving 876,024 to face job market or remain at home and increase the poverty level of their parents. This is because their education has not addressed their needs thus leading to youths seeking employments outside the community. The curriculum structure and the experiences which the students in the rural community have were at variance with their immediate and future needs. Therefore, there is need to review the existing school curriculum in such a way that it will address students' need for out-of-school vocational and skill training in line with the view of Atchoanena (2005). To actualize this skill training, there exist in the rural communities untapped rich and diversified learning resources with the potential to address the deficiencies identified in the curriculum of the formal school system. Obviously, the curriculum and the experiences which the students in the rural communities have were at variance with their immediate and future needs. The rural community members themselves are yet to realize this gap.

Recommendations

To make education relevant to the needs of rural dwellers;

- the secondary school curriculum should incorporate vocational and occupational training initiative with basic education and there should be a device to ensure that students in training may at the same time complement their basic education with vocational skills. This type of curriculum should cut across rural and urban areas if it is to be acceptable to all stakeholders.
- the curriculum content should be adapted to the realities of rural areas such as adapting the school year to local and regional agricultural cycles and their labor requirements and including practical activities such as school gardening and animal husbandry. This has been an approach provided by UNESCO in the sixties and seventies (Buchlz, 1986).

This has become necessary for three reasons:

- i. Parents are reluctant to send their children to purely technical colleges which they regard as inferior
 - ii. Dearth of teachers who are trained in the vocational skills
 - iii. Inadequate learning laboratory for TVE and facilities.
- in the alternative, vocational skills could be incorporated as an extra curricular activity in the school system in line with the findings of this study. However just as this is done for rural dwellers the urban dwellers should also be exposed to similar procedure particularly on the use of modern technology such as computer.
 - where vocational out-of-school skills are learned this should be examined and certificated and it must be of equal value to the education in urban areas e.g. computer education
 - the daily or weekly timetable of the secondary schools should be designed to accommodate out-of-school vocational and skill training activities.
 - government to legislate on out-of-school skill training and incorporate such into the Nigerian school curriculum.
 - teacher pre-service training should be tailored to incorporate the peculiar needs of rural areas.

In conclusion according to FME (2003)

Diversifying opportunities for senior secondary school education is critical as learners' needs do vary across time, space, gender, socio-economic conditions, generation, etc. Attention must be paid to the following: "rural, far-flung communities, urban ghettos and urban poor, girls in all places, boys in some places, adolescence already engaged in economic activities and a wide variety of persons with special learning needs" (World Bank, 2002).

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