

Teaching of Family Life Education in A Developing Country: A Case Study of Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study seeks to find the extent to which family life, reproductive health, and population education are interrelated. While each one as specific focus, they also overlap. Family life education is defined by the international planned parenthood federation as an educational process designed to assist young people in their physical, emotional and moral development as they prepare for adulthood, marriage, parenthood and ageing, as well as social relationship in the socio- cultural context of the family and society. While reproductive health education is describes by UNESCO/UNPFA as education experiences aimed at developing capacity of adolescents to understand their sexuality in the context of biological, psychological, socio- cultural and reproductive dimensions and to acquire skills in managing responsible decisions and actions with regards to sexual and reproductive health behaviors'. In the same vein, population education is defined by UNFPA as the process of helping people understand the nature, causes and implications of population processes as they affect and are affected by individuals, families, communities and nations. It focuses on family and individual decisions influencing population change at the micro level, as well as on broad demographic changes Population education addresses issues as rapid population growth and scarce resources as well as population decline in light of increasingly elderly population.

Keywords:

Family, Population, Reproductive, Sexuality, Approach, Education

1. Introduction

According to the findings of the United Nations, education has been identified as one of the essential support of human development and societal progress. The right to education is proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Education for All (EFA). Recently, at the World Education Forum (Dakar, 2000), the Millennium Summit in 2000 and the special session of the General Assembly on children in 2002, the international community of nations explicitly recognized that education, especially primary schooling, is critical for achieving social and

demographic progress, sustained economic development and gender equality. Achieving universal primary education and eliminating gender disparities in education are among the key objectives of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000).

Many conferences have over emphasized the importance of education to a nation and the world at large. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1994) adopted quantitative goals related to education, endorsing the Jomtien EFA goal regarding elimination of illiteracy, and also calling for universal access to primary education before 2015 and elimination of the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2020.

In 1999, the key actions for the further implementation of the programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development further specified an intermediate goal of achieving by 2010 a net primary school enrolment ratio for children of both sexes of at least 90 per cent, and also noted a particular need for improving the retention rate of girls in primary and secondary schools.

Different NGO and social works such as the one goal initiative seize the power of football to get all children into school and learning with a target year of 2020 to achieve their goals.

Their visions goes thus; this our moment to shine we can bring millions of children in from the shadows of ignorance, and light up their lives with the legacy of education” Population education is an educational system which provides for a study of the population situation in the family, the community, the nation and the world at large with the aim of developing in the citizens a rational and responsible attitude and behavior towards improving the quality of life now and in the future. Population education is therefore, involving citizens both in school and out of school using multisectorial and intra sectorial methods to mobilize the populace into understanding the inter-relationship between population change as it affects the standard of life of the people at all levels. It is an effort made by the school to create awareness on the facts and consequences of population growth with a view to developing basic understanding and acknowledgement of the consequences if individual decisions and behavior regarding population issues.

Purpose of the study is to produce a change in attitude and values; it help people behave more responsibly and rationally; to help individuals and communities to make informed decisions, and to achieve improved quality of life for all and sundry through effective management of national resources and population related problems. In a publication by UNESCO titled population.

Education: A Contemporary Concern (UNESCO, 1978:36), some major goals of population education was identified. In summary, these are provided in any given programme plan of activities to enable learners to gain more knowledge, skills, attitudes, morals and values that will enable them to:

- (1) Understand and evaluate the persistent population situation in their community and nation;
- (2) Explore and appreciate the dynamic forces that have helped to create the present population situation and the likely future consequences of the trends;
- (3) Make conscious and informed decisions based on their understanding and evaluation of the population situation;

(4) Become aware of the relationship between the population issues and problems and the socioeconomic development of their communities and nation;

(5) Respond in a rational and responsible manner to population related issues and problems.

There are many aims and specific objectives for teaching and learning population education

But all derive from the above concept and goals.

The study is planned to discover the extent to which the teaching and management of population/ family life education has been as one of the vehicles for addressing the issues of reducing rate of population growth and also contributing to achievement of a better quality of life for all Nigerian.

2. The Objectives of the Study

Assess the level of competence of those who manage the programme.

Review, discover and discuss the attempted solutions to the problems faced by the managers of the programme.

Assess the general level of commitment among those engaged in programme.

The study seeks to discover and examine to which extent the aims and objective of population education have been achieved after the programme had been implemented for over a very long period of time, minimum of 25 years.

The aim of the programme is to contribute towards the improvement of the quality of life of Nigerians; the extent to which this aim has been achieved would also be of great concern to this research.

The general focus of the study is also to find out the extent to which population education has fulfilled or achieved its aim of providing means of promoting education relevance to the process of education in Nigeria

An important aspect of any population programme is the cultural context within it operates, the interaction between culture and innovative approaches as well as controversy, is of interest to the researcher. Amongst the issues of concern to this study also is the characteristic of the teacher educators themselves. The study posits that their demographic characteristics would be a factor in the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of population education. The study is also designed to find out how the new approach which focuses on emerging issues as against the general focus on all aspects of population/family life education is impacting on teacher education. The lack of materials affect teaching and learning its of important to the process of implementing the curriculum. The experience of teacher's educators is also of great interest, especially their ability to strategize and how they can share with others.

The following questions drive the activities of the research:

What is the level competence of those who teaches and manage population family life education programmes in Nigeria?

Does the family education in Nigeria have enough teaching/learning and other resource materials?

Does the mode of inclusion of population/ family life into the curriculum gives room for effective teaching?

What is the level of support of the relevant authorities for the teaching and learning of family life education in Nigeria?

3. Conceptual Clarification of Family Life Education

Family life education is also designated as Family Life Education which is now the most commonly used conceptualization of population Education Programmes. Using this framework UNESCO identified the characteristics of population Education/Family Life Education as programmes which; is part of a learning process that is problem centered. It is also seen as multidisciplinary, and is concerned with the improvement of the quality of life of the people.

Any population education programme that is relevant, must be therefore, relevant to the social and economic development goal of the nation, and must be consistent with educational aims of the country. To be relevant the goal must reflect the speeches of national leaders, National Development Plans, Population Policy documents, Educational Policy Development Plans. In the African contest population education is increasingly becoming a source of educational renewal, sand relevance and curriculum improvement.

Ukaegbu (1986) noted that “population education programmes began in the 1970s with a dozen Asian, Latin American, and North African countries, launching in and out of school programmes. By the mid-1980s it had taken root in about eighty countries, mainly in the developing regions, UNESCO had introduced 100 population programmes into the education system of the countries. In sub Saharan Africa over thirty countries had done the same, of these 24 had secured direct funding from United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA). Within the period also seven had requested technical assistance from United Nations.

Educational Scientific Cultural Organization has set their own population education programmes. “UNESCO 1970), defined population education from the perspectives of its two main components with population education being defined as an activity which:

Is part of a total learning process?

Is problem-centered?

Derives its content from population studies, and is concerned mainly with population related interactions of individuals, families, communities and nations: Is aimed especially at improving the present and future quality of life?

The second perspectives was that of the objectives and goals in which the general goals and objectives of population education were identified as: “To enable learner to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to:(a) understand and (b) evaluate the prevailing population situation, the dynamics forces which have shaped it and the effect it will have on the present and future welfare on themselves, their families, communities, nations and the world; (c) make conscious and informed decisions, and (d) respond either by an intention to act or by an action itself to population situation and problems in a conscious and informed manner. Similar formulations of the aim of population education were also being done in Nigeria in 1976 with the setting up of a national Population Commission in 1978.

In the formulation of population education programmes a number of important processes have to be followed. The first step in the process would involve the identification of the population problem and issues affecting the society. This should take into consideration the population formation family and family life situation in the country. This major issues and concerns of the government and the society also need to be understood before such a programme is formulated.

Another question to answer is the impact these matter and concerns would have on the ultimate goal of attaining sustainable social and economic development. To asses this requires that a baseline be established to set the parameter that would guide programme implementation.

Such a study would need to cover the following areas traditional and other forms of population education and their effectiveness, existing knowledge and attitudes of parents, teachers and students about the major core messages of the other major population and family life issues. Another set of variables to be incorporated in the study would be the ideas of key stakeholders about the content of population education, it would also speculate about what the emerging issues would be in future.

Leigh-Olotu (1998) noted that, the perception and family life education issues are viewed in the context of the country cultural, political, space and how they impinge on the problems of sustainable socio-economic and political development of the individual, the family, and the nation. Leigh-Olotu (1998). The author also went on to state the step to be taken in developing such a curriculum. The first step is to review the existing body of knowledge in term of objectives, and content of population education and other subject in the curriculum of educational institutions in the country. The next step in the process is that of formulating a definition, rationale, aims/goals and objectives of population education in the formal education sector.

In the process of preparing a conceptual framework these are the key areas to be covered:

The meaning of population family life education in the context of the society's population programme

Rationale

Aims/goals

Objectives

The core population education thematic areas and rationale for selecting them

Thematic and sub thematic areas, in an analysis of Population education programmes.

UNESCO (1985 pp.7-11) noted that overall objectives of population education is derived initially from the developmental needs of a country and its people, at both the micro and macro levels. These needs require individual action to achieve personal, family, community and national goals. The individual actions required one different from current normative behavior. The development policies explicitly and implicitly provide direction for population.

4. Research Methodology

This study is planned to examine the process of implementation of the population education programme in Nigeria with specific emphasis on the tertiary level of education sector in Nigeria. Among the issues examined are the curricula, the teaching

and learning of population education, management of population education and the mode of inclusion of population education as well as knowledge attitudes and practice survey on the competence of the three sets of respondent in the study .The study will also look at the different approaches used in past, the successes, limitation and the methodologies applied in the study will form the main thrust of this study. It will also examine the research questions of the study ,sample selection procedures the size, sources of the data both primary and secondary will also be consider and how the data is been presented and analyzed will be look into. Also described are the methods used in analysis of the study. The final component of this part is the summary in which the content of the study are summarized.

Sampling Methods:

A sampling frame was selected this frame included teacher educators at millennium school in Lagos who teach career subjects, community Development Studies, Social studies, Physical and Health Education and guidance and counseling, this frame also included teachers in secondary school in the western area of Nigeria as well as students in the career subjects.

5. Discussion and Findings

This study has discovered that significant body of knowledge, attitudes and practices exists on population related matters among teachers at the pre and in service levels. These students' teachers and teachers' educators have reveals the gaps do exist in the teaching and learning of population education in Nigeria, which needs to be addressed through variety of measures some directly via the curriculum and at the policy level. In addressing them, new directions needs to be taken, old methods discarded and new one adopted. It has been shown that population education in Nigeria has encountered many problems in its implementation; among these is the lack of capacity to fully move from the project to the next stage which will ensure sustainability. This is not to gainsay the success attained in keeping the programme going to a much more sustainable phase. Among the problems one may cite the low level of local funding provided, this has meant that the donors dictate the implementation, determine the nature of the process followed and determine the amount they are ready to spend and where they want to spend it. NPC supports population projects in six geo political zones which it has interests this may not significantly affect other programs but it may have indirect impacts on the implementation of the projects. The fact that population education is spread over a wide curriculum net brings in diseconomies of scale.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it is concluded that, there should be effective monitoring and evaluation of the project. There should also be provision for qualify personnel for the programme. Some significant respondent have gained some training in population education which was obtained from two main sources, that is, preservice and in-service training courses.

It has been noted that inadequate library services is one of the factors that affect the teaching and learning of family life education; the degree of support for the teaching and learning of family life education is considered significant and ranged from the support given to the implementation of the curriculum to the encouragement of cocurricular activities. Some of the aims of teaching of family life education can be achieved through sport, for example: HIVAIDS, gender equity, women empowerment

and other concept such as reproductive Health can be taught through sporting programme, there is also need for using special events such as world population day to organize speaking competition, quizzes and sporting event featuring young people. In the same vein the project is also engaged in the use of peer counselors to promote the use of condoms and encourage discussion on adolescent reproductive health problems affecting them.

Recommendations

There is a need for the managers and teachers of population education to consider making population education a separate subject at the tertiary level as in the case of other countries such as Nigeria .This will ensure that resources allocated to population education will be rationalized .Secondly this will also add value to the teaching and learning of population as more in depth knowledge, attitude and practices would be inculcated among student teachers and educators. The adoption of this strategy would help in ensuring that the subject would gain the respect and importance it deserves. The gain of rationalization of population education would also be transferred to other levels of educational system. Additional benefits would include the greater amount of time allocated to population education activities and better quality of instruction that would be provided for the student learners. At the in –service level teachers discussed the need to improve the training process to ensure that training for instance goes on for much longer and on a more continuous basis.

The need to provide continuous training through a process of coaching at the school level becomes paramount as a means of sustaining gains made at the time when population education programmes are introduced.

In such a programme self-instructional modules can be developed that will ensure that a larger number of teachers can be targeted on a more cost effective basis with a greater commitment being developed as well as greater competences in population education. This would also be a more rational cost and time saving measure with less disruption in the teaching programmes due to the release of teachers at times when their services are most required. For instance teachers going to workshop for one week led to a loss of 40 man hours per week if one teacher is involved if it two teachers a total of 80 man hours would have been lost to school.

In the school system it is very important that master trainers be trained in special workshops to train others. These master trainers would help to sustain the training received at workshops and would help to roll down this training at the school level. These master trainers could be used to train administrators such as principals, senior teachers, heads of departments and head teachers. These training sessions could also be arranged for senior education officers and inspectors of schools so as to ensure that they also not only develop ownership of population education programs but also become its key defenders because they now see themselves as prime beneficiaries of the programme.

Population education should be given a higher status, as it becomes a separate subject at all levels of the education system because of the above -mentioned benefits as explained earlier. The advantages are obvious. There is also need to harmonize all aspect of the curriculum. At present there are two main approaches being used to deliver population family life education, with the life skills approach which is putting a lot of emphasis on behavior change communication as its vehicle to promote the emerging population/ family education issues of HIV/AIDS, gender and reproductive

health and rights. The same process is followed at the non-formal education sector, but at the in-school level the approach used is the traditional approach which has a strong emphasis on knowledge and understanding with little emphasis on the teaching of an acquisition of values and attitudes as well as thinking skills and life skills. This is the approach used in the past that has not produced significant changes in behavior.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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