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IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION

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Abstract

The paper was motivated by the need to review how Home Economics education was being impacted upon by various elements of globalization. It is notable that the socio-cultural, economic and political landscape of almost every community is being reshaped by the influences of communication and improved technology. Consequently, the paper aimed at reviewing:-

- *the role of globalization on the economic base of rural communities*
- *the impact of globalization in improving family living*
- *the awareness about pathogenic organisms and their prevention.*

As a methodology, it reviewed globalization and its impact on home economics using available literature.

It then concluded that globalization had improved the skill acquisition capacity of the people, introduced labour-saving home appliances as well as improved the general living standard of the people. It was recommended that home economists and women generally should embrace the positive aspects of modernization for improvement in quality of meals prepared and served to their families, as well as in skills acquisition for self-sustainability.

Introduction

Historically Home Economics is situated in the places context of the home and household, and this was extended in the 21st century to include the wider living environments as we better understand that the capacities, choices and priorities of individuals and families impact at levels, ranging from the household to the local and to the global community. Home Economics is concerned with the empowerment and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities and with facilitating the development of attributes for lifelong learning for paid, unpaid and voluntary work and living situations. In this respect the subject matter of Home Economics focuses on fundamental needs and practical concerns of individuals and families in everyday life and their importance both at the individual and community levels, and also at

societal and global levels so that wellbeing can be enhanced in an ever changing and ever challenging environment.

As a profession that is very vital to the wellbeing of humanity, Home Economics is currently enjoying renewed attention in the present era. Our contemporary world is characterized as one unprecedented transition from industrial to knowledge-based culture and globalized economy with all-encompassing effects on society and culture (International Federation for Home Economics,(IFHE), 2006).

Meaning of Home Economics

According to Okeke (2009), Home Economics is concerned with educating the individual for family living, improving the services and goods used by the families, discovering the changing needs of individuals and families, satisfying different needs of the families, as well as promoting community, national and world conditions favourable to family living. From the above, it means that Home Economics has the potential to influence all sectors of the society by intervening and transforming political, social, cultural, ecological, economic and technological systems at global level. This is driven by the ethics of the profession based on values, caring, sharing justices, responsibility, communicating, reflection and visionary foresight.

Meaning of globalization

Globalization is a complex phenomenon which can be approached from different angles and interpreted and defined in different ways. It can be defined as mainly an economic phenomenon or as a broader process encompassing a wider range of societal forces such as technology, culture and education (Ferreira, 2005). Ferreira further suggested that globalization impacts on local societies at two levels: directly and indirectly. An example of a direct impact would be a change in the international exchange rate of the local currency as a result of a global economic change. Indirect impacts are those mediated by intervening local variables such as

peoples' cognitions, values, perceptions and attitudes. According to the United Nation's Development Project Human Development Report (1999), in Ekaas (2000), globalization is the increased speed at which trade, information and capital flow takes place, creating interdependency among developed and developing countries. Interdependency can positively expand resource alternatives among and within households and nations.

Impact of globalization on Home Economics

Globalization has offered Home Economics an opportunity for expanding the knowledge base in rural communities. The interdependency between rural and urban areas has increased. Urbanization has assisted in creating a more diverse rural population, as well as more urban and peri-urban part-time farmers, many of whom are women (Ekaas,2000). Globalization has also impacted on Home Economics in the aspect of information dissemination through extension workers to rural households, thereby making them connected to the world. Ochonogor and Ewobare (2008) reported that one aspect of global influence is the introduction of continual changes and adjustment in family life due to technological advancement. This had been made possible through the development of human resources and utilization of tools and devices to improve efficiency, labour and comfort which are very vital to the home maker. The Home Economist now enjoys ease of work in the home through the use of several types of labour and time saving devices. Ezechi (2003), buttressed this point by emphasizing that globalization can be found in the home through its technological products. Portable household appliances that enhance the effective completion of household task may include dish washers, blenders, toasters, pounders, juice extractors, mixers and computers for keeping family records among others. Thus globalization has elevated Home Economics from its old method of approach towards household activities to a modernized approach, making chores less tedious with little time spent on the accomplishment of each given task.

In terms of health, women have been reported severally to be most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Globalization has created awareness of such diseases. National and International agencies and associations such as the National Committee on AIDS (NACA) and The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) have generated concerns and supports for people living with the diseases and to contain their spread (Sanders, 2006).

Through globalization, and through Home Economics outreach education programmes, women become empowered to diversify the skills of rural dwellers. Of importance is their training in the areas of market place behaviour and management of household resources. Household welfare and productivity including food security and nutritional wellbeing have been enhanced through diversified subsistence agriculture.

Globalization has equally made possible the awareness of many diets especially lesser known ones in meeting the nutritional needs of different groups of people. Eating the right proportion of food in their right mix can ensure that the individual is healthy generally, well-built physically with the right body weight. Home Economics can now administer the right essential nutrients in family diets through accurate meal planning to provide members with required daily dietary allowances that have been globally established.

Agusiogbo and Obianyoy (1998) further noted that globalization has created opportunities for small scale entrepreneurial ventures in the areas of food preparation and services like bakery and entertainment, among others. Technology has equally replaced obsolete methods of food processing such as sun-drying, smoking and salting, with much modern methods such as dehydration method (freeze drying), bottling and sterilizing (CESAC, 2002).

Through global interdependence of developed and developing nations, it has now come to be known through the World Health Organization that exclusive breast

feeding is better for the overall development of growing babies, as opposed to babies raised on artificial formulas.

Skills acquisition in Home Economics, in making of garments, fabric dying, handcraft, carving and interior decoration has further harnessed the global trends in fashion (Osia, 2002). Intensified emphasis on skill acquisition through Home Economics education is enhancing students' capabilities for self-employment and ventures. Another influence of globalization is felt in the area of consumer education. Consumer rights was traced to President J.F. Kennedy of the United States of America who, in 1962, introduced congress to the revolutionary notion of rights for consumers. Today, consumers all over the world now have a right to safety, right to be informed, right to choose, and the right to be heard (Sanders, 2006).

Globalization has exposed the Home Economists to the function of co-operative societies such as the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) and the European Economic Commission (EEC) from whom a lot of inspiration, assistance and aids are derived. The International Federation for Home Economics (IFHE) is harnessing the potentials of these co-operatives to reduce the scourge of poverty, disease and endear a sustainable development and utilization of all human and material resources for a better life for all (Sanders, 2006; Iloeje, 1999).

Challenges of globalization

As opposed to the above, globalization has negatively affected Home Economics in some areas. In the field of fashion, the cultural landscape of Nigerians have been greatly changed. Most youths now cherish fashion that exposes some vital body parts. The value system which is a crucial part of Home Economics has been eroded by the desire for quick riches. The problem of women and child trafficking is therefore a serious challenge to Home Economists. The conflicts of the Niger Delta could be ascribed to globalization. The natives, having been influenced by

globalization through exposure to the desire for foreign goods, engaged in the agitation for resource control and better national revenue sharing formula. In the process family values have shifted, while people are traumatized, and the relative peace once enjoyed by all has become a nightmare.

Conclusion

Globalization has important implications for the achievement of universal sustainable development. It is evident that the changes it brings create new opportunities and challenges for the livelihood of many people, especially those in developing countries.

Recommendations

1. There should be more aggressive enlightenment on the gains of globalization for women, both in domestic and economic empowerment.
2. The current Home Economics programmes should expand the different skill areas in the different aspects for self-sustainability.

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