

# **METHODS OF TEACHING SCIENCE, BASIC TECHNOLOGY AND COMPUTER STUDIES**



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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

**K.O.Afolabi**

Agricultural science is one of the core vocational curricular subjects taught at both junior and senior secondary schools in Nigeria. Vocational agriculture is an aspect of vocational education which emphasizes skills, knowledge and attitude required in all areas of agricultural education for proficiency in agricultural production ( Olajide et al, 2015) Agriculture education is instruction about crop production, livestock managements, soil and water conservation and other various aspects of agriculture (Schultz, Wiekert, Howard and Dickson ,2008).

Egbule (2004) defines agricultural education as a process of training learners in the process of Agricultural productivity as well as the techniques for teaching of agriculture. Wikipedia (2009) describes Agricultural education as a broad multidisciplinary field that deals with the selection, breeding and management of crops and domestic animals for economic production. It is a subject taught in secondary schools as a means for self-reliance and preparation for further studies. Agricultural science is therefore designed for inculcation of the necessary skills for the practice of agriculture for effective citizenship and contribution to food security for national sustainability.

The educational objectives of post – primary agricultural education as quoted by National Policy of Education (FRN, 2004) and National Education Research and Development Council ( NERDC, 2004) include :

1. ability to stimulate students interest in agriculture
2. Ability to enable students acquires basic knowledge of agriculture.
3. Ability to develop basic agricultural skills in students.
4. Ability to enable students integrate knowledge with skills in agriculture
5. Ability to expose students to opportunities in the field of agriculture
6. Ability to prepare students for further studies in agriculture and
7. Ability to prepare students for occupations in Agriculture.

#### **Problems of Agricultural Education in Nigeria.**

Studies have shown that agricultural sciences have not been given the right and necessary attention it deserved. For instance, teachers who are the implementers of curriculum are faced with numerous problems, which include poor conditions of services, lack of incentives, frequent

industrial actions, dearth of qualified agricultural teachers; inadequate agricultural science facilities; insufficient fund and poor attitude of teachers in the class which hampers effective teaching and learning of agricultural science ( Olajide et al, 2015)

Mbaba , (2000) highlighted problems of teaching agricultural science at secondary schools as follows:

1. Agricultural education at various levels of education is not being given the desired status and priority as a vocational based subject. Some people still consider agricultural education as an area of drop-outs and the never do-wells. Students in the schools view Agricultural Science as not important as Mathematics and English Language which they view as core subjects. Also, students are of the perception that studying agricultural science has no future prospects for them. These notions affected the teaching of agricultural science negatively in the schools (Egbule ,2004; Olajide *et al* 2015)
2. The curriculums are grossly underfunded by stakeholders.
3. Agricultural education programmes lack modern and innovative facilities like equipment and materials for practical work. Therefore, students learn on theory basis and cannot perform after graduation.
4. The curriculum is inadequate and does not accommodate the diversity interest and needs of individuals, industry and society.
5. There is lack of interest in the sphere of agricultural education due to wrong and poor perception of the vocation by our youths, parents and the society in general. People assumptions are derogatory and students try to walk away from the vocation. For instance, parents want their wards and children to study more “ prestigious and glamorous” courses such as medicine, law and engineering than agriculture in tertiary institutions.
6. There is lack of monitoring and evaluation of agricultural education programme by ministry of education to ensure that learning in this aspect of education is more of practical for skills acquisition.
7. The teaching of agricultural science is handled by graduates from institution of higher learning without practical experience, poor working condition, no proper understanding of roles and requirement of the world of work. Such teachers impact to the student the skills; attitude and knowledge that are inadequate and irrelevant to the areas in which graduate of the school system subsequently seek employment.

8. There is no textual and instructional material in our schools, the dearth of students' texts, instructional materials and teacher's guide is detrimental to the acquisition of skills in agricultural training in our schools.

9. There is ineffective control especially where heads of agricultural education departments are appointed without regards to their area of specialization.

### **Prospects of Agricultural Education.**

1. Agricultural education will provide both old and young people with a sound knowledge of basic principles and techniques of agriculture and the motivation with which they can translate this knowledge into real improvements in agricultural productivity.

2. Agricultural education will help rural farmers to develop an understanding of the interrelationship of urban and rural life and provide counseling about agricultural occupations and the means of preparing for them.

3. It will provide training for specialists in agricultural occupations such as livestock and plant breeding, food processing, preservation and storage techniques as well as agricultural financing and insurance to help reduce uncertainties for those producing in the future (Olaitan, 1984).

4. There will be increase in job opportunity for those interested in agricultural production as the continuous success of Agricultural education will attract many people into the profession.

5. The knowledge of Agricultural education will help to increase export trade. This will definitely influence the exportation of output to other countries for use thereby creating more jobs for people and increasing the economy of the country through foreign exchange earnings. This will help to diversity the earnings of the nation and boost our economy tremendously thereby reducing poverty.

6. There are many industries that could have been established to produce goods and offer employment to many people but this could not happen due to acute shortage of raw materials and infrastructures that prevented many investors from establishing industries in rural areas for the fear of failure. If agricultural education is encouraged, there will be sufficient raw materials to feed into the industries which can produce finished goods or partially finished goods that can serve as raw materials into other industries. (Olaitan, 2009)

7. Agriculture as a profession provides wide range of career opportunities to as many as are interested. Such careers opportunities include:

i. **Research:**

Agricultural education graduates may be employed at different levels in national and international agricultural research institutions. Examples of such research institutions include National Animal Production Research Institute (N.A.P.R.I), A.B.U., Shika, Zaria, , International Institute for Tropical Agriculture ( ITTA) Ibadan and the Nigeria Institute for Trypanosomiasis Research, Vom near Jos among others.

ii. **Teaching:**

Graduates of agricultural education can also be employed to teach at various levels of our educational institutions i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

iii. **Civil Services:**

Opportunities for employment equally exist for career agriculturists at Local Government, State, and Federal levels in the various agricultural boards, agencies and parastatals.

iv. **Private Sectors:**

Graduates of agriculture can be employed in agro-allied industries such as the breweries, food processing factories, private farms, pharmaceutical industry, commercial banks and agricultural credit and cooperatives etc.

## **8. Sources of Entrepreneurial skills**

Agricultural education opens wide opportunities for many people to be employed because it is skill-oriented. Therefore, avenues are created for the youths to be trained in productive agricultural skills such as: crop production, horticulture. Poultry keeping, fish farming, Bee keeping, grass cutter farming, feed formulation industry and manufacture of agro-allied products- chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, fertilizers) among others.