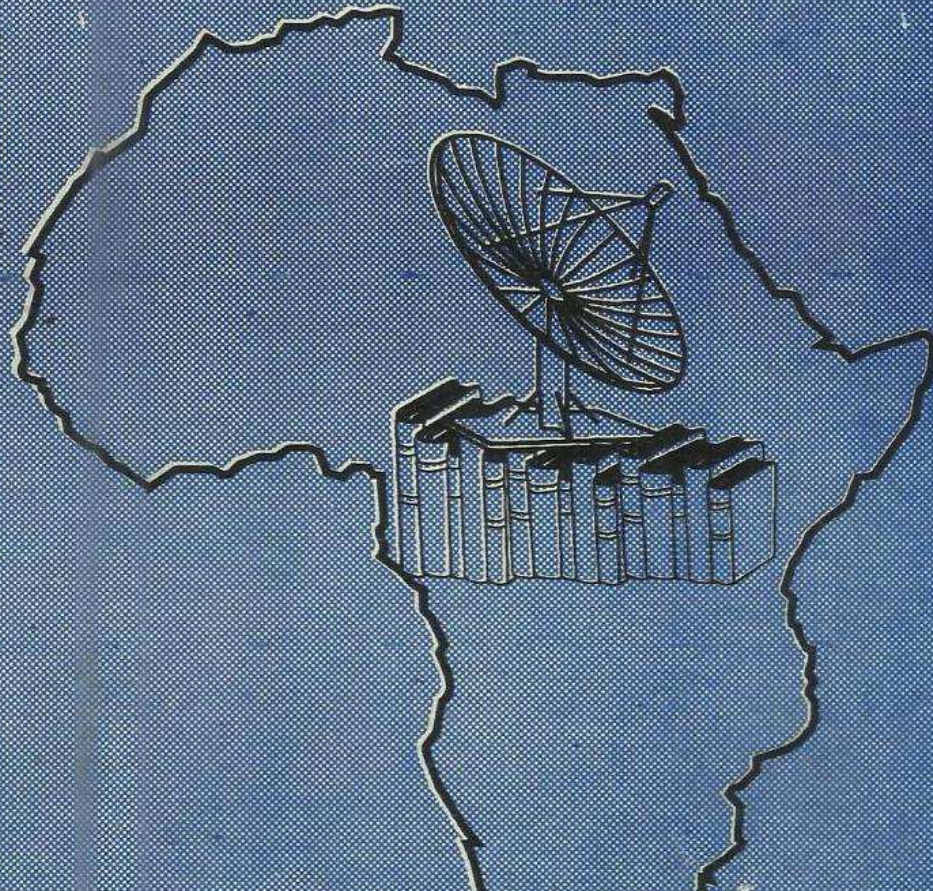


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THE INCLUSION OF TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION EDUCATION IN GENERAL STUDY PROGRAMMES OF NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Universities in Nigeria are increasingly producing educated individuals in diversified areas of specialization but the general ignorance of technology culture seems to manifest among them. The inclusion of Technology Information Education in the Curriculum of Universities where necessary will help to improve the awareness and economic consciousness in the elites on how to save cost on technologies in every day life.

Keywords: Technology, Technology Information, Curriculum, Information

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental assumption underlying the realization of the focus of a civilized and technologically enlightened society in the decades to come is the utilitarian adoption of technology information education in creating awareness and economic consciousness in the individuals. The society is rapidly producing a great number of educated people. But it appears that in a decade or two to come, more educated people may still remain technologically ignorant if nothing is done to reverse the trend. The reason may be that the current orientation of course offerings in the universities are devoid of technology information content.

The General Studies programmes provides for the Use of English as a compulsory course for all the students, while the choice of other courses depend on the students major departments. Students in the Arts oriented disciplines are required on the General Study Courses to take courses

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in Natural and Applied Sciences while those in Engineering and the Natural and Applied Sciences are required to offer theirs in Humanities. The Social Sciences cut across all the units (University of Nigeria, Nsukka 1992). In such a structure a gap exists in terms of students having awareness in the proper utilization of modern technology facilities for domestic, business and industrial purposes.

Many little things that cost much money due to inadequate technology information can be avoided by the elites if adequate technology information education constitutes an integral component of the Universities curriculum in Nigeria.

The wise saying that a stitch-in-time -saves-nine forms the underlying principle for technology information. This paper attempts to explain the concept of technology Information and to propose the need for the development and implementation of technology information education programmes in the Nigerian University system.

THE CONCEPT OF TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION

Technology has been defined in various ways by different individuals and authorities. It is defined by Adeyanju (1987) as the expert application of scientific knowledge to what bothers the sustenance of man. In his view Ogalanya (1992) explained technology to be the knowledge created by man for his survival, and deals with the application of knowledge in the production and use of tools, power, instrumentation and services. Ekong (1999) defined technology as an integrated strategy derived from scientific knowledge and the principles for improving practices. In the context of this paper, technology is seen as the study, mastery and utilization of tools, equipment and other provisions for man's survival. Information explains the knowledge of, about or of the manipulation and usage of some aid facility or input. Information is also defined by Olaitan and Ekong (1998) as the facts, data, content of document, verbal or telecommunicated materials inputs visually perceived or audio-visually received that are interpreted to decipher meanings.

Technology information therefore refers to knowledge dissemination concerning the application and utilization of tools, equipment and other provisions for prudent daily usage.

APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION

The application of technology information in daily living spans through the human homes, offices, hospitals, laboratories, workshops, the farms, classrooms and a host of related environment in the prudent use of tools, equipment and other provisions. Technology information education provides the guidelines on the operation and preventive maintenance of tools equipment and other provisions to save costs, reduce wastage and the risk of loss of life. For instance, in the home, the use of electricity and electrical appliances should be discontinued when the electricity supply is too low or too high. In the offices, the use of computers, telephones, typewriters and other electronic gadgets should follow strictly the operational manuals. In the hospitals, the use of technology information on drugs and other chemicals allow for correct dosage. In the farms, the use of incubator, heating and lighting systems, processing and storage facilities require a good knowledge of the manipulations for optimum benefits. In the classroom, the wiring system should be known, exposed wires should be insulated, all lightings should be put-off when students are leaving the classes or lecture laboratories or theatres. The installations should not be tampered with indiscriminately. The use of technology information is known to cover all the spectrum of life. Technology information education could therefore serve as a relevant programme in the Universities in Nigeria.

MIS-APPLICATION AND NON-UTILIZATION OF TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION.

Technology information is said to be misapplied when the provided information is not followed strictly in the prudent use of the tools, equipment and other provisions in daily life activities. The misapplication could result in various kinds of losses (money and life) as well as other consequences, for example, the haphazard adherence to motor vehicle operation manual.

The non-utilization of technology information could be due to ignorance or negligence which can also lead to serious consequences. The non-utilization due to ignorance explains a situation where individuals have no knowledge of the relevant technology information and therefore could not use it. The ignorance could be associated with the non-transfer of the technology information to the individuals probably while in training.

The expected effects are of course losses and other serious consequences. Such a situation can be reduced through the provision of appropriate technology information education in the curriculum of Universities.

The non-utilization of technology information due to negligence is the situation in which the individual does not attach importance to the technology information provided for each of the modern technologically operated gadgets. This also leads to losses and serious consequences, for instance, operating an airconditioner in an open system does not only result in poor performance of the machine but complete breakdown.

CONSEQUENCE OF INADEQUATE UTILIZATION OF TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION

There are numerous consequences of inadequate utilization of technology information which have economic, social and political implications on the individuals and society. Such consequences include

- Wastage of facilities
- Dangers to life through accidents in the homes, on the roads, in the farms, in the schools and so on
- Losses of money
- Losses of salvage value.
- Damages of equipment, tools and other facilities
- Continuous dependence on advanced countries through importation of tools and equipment
- Importation of equipment for social purposes rather than for economic benefits.

IMPLICATIONS OF TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM OF UNIVERSITIES

Curriculum is the planned and developed learning activities derived from the individuals and societal needs for the development of the individual. Incorporating of technology information into the curriculum of the Universities will go a long way to expand the frontiers of the programme in the Universities. It will help in making the entire programme in Nigerian

Universities comprehensive and relevant to the needs of the time based on technological development.

Technology information education programme will provide the students with the required basic knowledge of operation and preventive maintenance of the modern technology gadgets. Such knowledge will also help in reducing wastage, economic losses and threats to life which could have cost a lot of money.

Little things in terms of proper operations, utilization and maintenance of modern technology facilities which could cost money can be made known to students in the universities in Nigeria through the development of relevant technology information courses. In the long run, technology information education programme if developed and implemented, would save a lot of financial waste and ginger economic consciousness in the citizen.

SUGGESTED CONTENTS OF TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN THE CURRICULUM OF UNIVERSITIES

The following content of technology information education are hereby proposed for development as a programme of the Universities in Nigeria.

Technology Information About the Home

- Electricity supply
- Electricity/Electronics gadgets
- Cooking facilities (Cookers, electric stove, blenders)
- Home heating gadgets

Technology Information About Automobiles

- Motor-vehicles
- Motorcycles
- Bicycles and tricycles

Technology Information About Food

- Storage and preservation of raw food items
- Storage and preservation of processed food

Technology Information About Agriculture

- Animal production facilities
- Use of chemicals in production, processing and preservation

Technology Information on Drugs and Chemicals

- Overdosage
- Underdosage
- Abuse
- Storage
- Expiration

Technology Information on Clothing

- Sewing
- Laundry
- Safe keeping of Clothing

Technology Information About Electricity

- Overloading
- Fused Circuit
- Use of Stabilizers

CONCLUSION

With the explanation of the concept of technology information and the contents proposed, the authors have no doubt about the importance and relevance of the Curriculum of the Universities. It can be run concurrently with the existing General Studies Courses namely the Use of English, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Humanities. It should be mounted as a general course for all students of the Universities, intended area of specialization notwithstanding. The authors recommend that the University authorities should consider the possibility of developing the proposed technology information education programme for Nigerian Universities.

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