

Technical and vocational education, a tool for national development in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Vocational and Technical Education is the form of education that comprises of the training in skills necessary for gainful employment as well as acquisition of basic educational foundation in both sciences, applied sciences and humanity, all aimed at developing individuals with the right attitude to work and the competency necessary to compete favorably in a global society. This paper discussed the significance of Vocational and Technical Education for national development and productivity, highlighting its problems in Nigeria which among others include poor implementation of the TVE programmed which affect national growth and development. Suggestions raised include re-branding the Technical and Vocational Education programme at the basic education level.

Keywords: technical education; vocational education; Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

National development is the exploitation and utilization of both human and material resources to improve the lots of a nation. It involves the improvement of the social welfare of the people of the nation. Education on the other hand, is particularly acknowledged as the cornerstone to all form of development as well as democratic processes. In Nigeria, Vocational and Technical Education is the form of education perceived to be the greatest weapon that can be used to bring or achieve a quick desirable changes or development in the country economic, political, sociological and human resources.

Technology unarguably emerged as the dominant factor in determining the wealth of a nation. The technology applied in Nigeria today has been imported which impact negatively to the development of our indigenous technology (Habibu, 2007). No nation can be self reliant without developing and utilizing her indigenous talents and technologies. According to Abdullahi (1993), development in Technical and Vocational Education are intimately linked to the general trends in the economy and labour markets which are particularly susceptible to the effects of technology changes.

It is believed that the promotion of technical and vocational education would enable an individual to be better, more useful and productive citizen of the society for a sustainable development in Nigeria. To clarify issues raised here, the paper seeks to examine the following:

- Technical and vocational education overview.
- Goals of technical and vocational education in Nigeria.
- Concept of National development.
- Technical and vocational education and productivity.
- Constraints of effective TVE development in Nigeria.
- Recommendation towards further development of TVE in Nigeria.

2. TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OVERVIEW

Technical and Vocational Education is a planned programme of courses and learning experiences that begins with exploration of career options, supports basic academic and life skills and enables achievement of high academic standards, leadership qualities, preparation for industry define work and advanced and continuing education. Adele and Olukayode (2007) described TVE as a programme with various branches that can transform Nigeria into a producer/manufactures nation from its present status of a consumer /importer nation. Its various courses are career oriented and thus arms graduates with skills to work in the choose trade or profession. The current Nigeria National Policy on Education places great emphasis on technical and vocational education as an integral part of national development strategy. National Policy on Education (2004) described Technical and Vocational Education as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the education process involving in addition to general education the study of technology and related science and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life. For a country to advance both socially economically and technologically, its citizens must be productive and creative. It must have a productive citizen majority of which can be job creators rather than job seekers. Lawal (2010) describe vocational and technical education as that types of education that prepare people who could apply relevant practical skills to make positive changes within their society and afford a self dependent life. This form of education has been attest severally as an education that provides self employment, enhance productivity and self reliance. It seduce the over dependence of school graduates on government own jobs. Vocational and technical education gives individuals the skills to live learn and work as productive citizen in a global society.

3. GOALS OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The goals of technical and vocational as costive in the national policy on education (2004) shall be to.

- Provide trained manpower in the applied science and technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical level.
- Provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agriculture, commercial and economic development.
- Give training and impact the necessary skills to individual who shall be self-reliant economically.

4. CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

Development has been defined in different forms, from physical development to mental development which include social and economical well being of an individual as well as that of a nation and the world at large. Development in human society is a complex, many sided phenomenon and means different situation and to different thinkers. (Adenle and Olukayode, 2007). It can mean development of infrastructures such as road, hospital, airports, dams, school etc, as well as development of people in terms of education and health care, even sport and likes. Agbionu (1994), define development in term of education in the levels of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment and income inequality perhaps at the individual level growth in knowledge, skills attitude and enhance ability to service are example of development. At a society level, development is associated with modernization, material advancement, industrialization, scientific and industrial progress, new knowledge about men and the universal improvement in standard of living, decrease in lots of living and social security management towards social tribal and gender equality, decrease in unemployment and availability of job opportunities. Aghenta in Adenle and Olukayode (2007) opined that development is any position changes, which bring about desirable benefit to the individual and the society. From the aforementioned definitions, the role of technical and vocational education in the development of Nigeria are evidenced.

5. TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity is the ratio of output to inputs in production; it is a measure of the efficiency of production. Productivity measure the economic growth of a country. This cannot be achieved without growing the labor productivity which depends on three main factors, investment and saving in physical, capital, new technology and human capital. Higher productivity is a means to better levels of economic well-being and greater national strength. Technical and Vocational Education is often seen as a product of human resourcefulness. This is to say that the technological progress of any nation depend on the level of resourcefulness by her people which in turn is the direct reflection of the quality of training and meaningful development in education of the nation. Agbionu (1994) argues that training development of manpower to provide the skills that will enable the worker to work more efficiently is an important part of productivity improvement. He explained further that, whichever process a nation wants to adopt in the development of its technology, the system of technical and vocational education provides the bedrock on which the activities of technology development have to be founded. This is because any technology system involves specific arrangement of labour and capital in the production process, and capital parse, is a product of human knowledge. The mere fact that technical/vocational education is indispensable for productivity growth is a key factor for national development implies that technical and vocational education plays a vital role in national development.

On the other hand, to attain great achievement of productivity and sustainable economic environment and natural development in this modern world, appropriate attention and optimum recognition are to be given to the promotion of Technical and Vocational Education in Nigeria.

6. THE ROLE OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As earlier highlighted, the primary purpose of technology education is useful employment for adults and young who are preparing to enter occupations in agriculture, business, home-making, industrial and technical fields. Technical and vocational education played a vital role in national development, especially in areas which include the following:

1. **Generation of employment/creation of job opportunities:** Technical and vocational education helps to reduce the rate of drop outs or unemployment in the society. Technical/vocational education could be used to developed marketable skills to students/youths so that they can become easily employable. It makes an individual to become an asset to him and the nation and also prevent him from being a liability to the society.
2. **Industrial development:** Technical and vocational education helps a nation develop technologically and industrially by producing people competent and capable of developing and utilizing technologies for industrial and economic development. It is a tool that can be used to develop and sustain the manpower needs of any nation.
3. **Entrepreneurship strategy:** Technical and vocational education offers the beneficiary the ability to be self-reliant, to be job creators and employer's of labour.
4. **Poverty alleviation:** Many who are fortunate to graduate in a regular school system and excel in various fields of learning fall back to the skills acquired in technical and vocational institutions in time of employment crisis. This has been proven right in recent times when workers of various categories were retrenched in both public and private sectors due to the deteriorating state of our economy. Such workers who possessed skills other than that for which they were previously employed had something else to fall back on and better off financially than those who had no other skills.
5. **Promotion of the Nigerian Economy:** It promotes the national economy through foreign exchange by exporting our products. The knowledge of technical and vocational education helps in the conversion of local raw materials, this reduces the importation of foreign goods which lessen our import dependency and encourage exportation of our local products.
6. **Promotion of Nigerian Culture and Value:** Technical and vocational education helps to promote the Nigerian culture and cause us to value what we have. This can be seen in the national and international appreciation of Aso-Oke work in Okene and other south western part of Nigeria.

7. CONSTRAINTS OF EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

As Technical and Vocational Education is expected to meet the aspiration of Nigerian society, to shape its future and provide solutions to some of its social, political and economic issues. The development of this educational system has been identified with some constraints, which serve as hindrances to its development. The problems may not be far different from what the system has experienced in the last three decades, but many of which are in the increase as stated by Habibu (2007). The following are some of the constraints militating against effective Technical and Vocational Education in Nigeria:

- Misconception of the definition and meaning of the programme.
- Wrong societal perception of the Technical and Vocational Education programme.
- Weak government policy and poor implementation.
- Inadequate funding of the programme.
- Lack of basic facilities and workshops.
- Inadequate qualified personnel, leaders and administrators.
- Lack of power supply in existing workshops which limit the conduct of practical.
- Problems related to curriculum of the programme.
- Influence of politics on Technical and Vocational Education programme.

8. RECOMMENDATION TOWARDS FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The need for technical and vocational education cannot be over emphasized because it is the bedrock of a stable and dynamic nation. For technology education to play its definite role for effective productivity and sustainable development in Nigeria, the following recommendations are hereby raised.

1. Nigeria must cultivate a certain standard of scientific and technological culture. Federal Government should provide adequate education for all Nigerian citizens. In fact, the National Policy on Science and Technology 1986 recognizes that one important means of having National Development is to have strong technical and vocational education programmes at all levels of education system. Hence the re-branding of technical and vocational education programme at the Universal Basic Education level in Nigeria.
Government should provide proper and adequate funding technology education. Most problems are as a result of poor funding.
3. Technical and vocational subject should be made compulsory and not elective at all level of learning.
4. Adequate and modern facilities should be provided in our schools, college and universities. Equipment and facilities for training technology students should be the replica of what is obtained in the industries. Regular maintenance of the equipment should also be ensured.

5. It is also recommended that enough staff should be provided to our school at all levels. This can be achieved by providing competitive salaries and other incentives. Upgrading opportunities for technology and vocational teachers should be provided through workshops, seminar and conferences. It is also required for technology and vocational education teachers to obtain highest qualification possible in their field.
6. Multinational companies/public liabilities companies should support the learning of technical and vocational subjects by providing infrastructure and equipment to school and award scholarship to deserving students.
7. Policies concerning technical and vocational education should be left to those in the field to formulate and implement. Formulation and implementation of technology education policies by the general educators has been a serious obstacle to development and productivity in this country.

9. CONCLUSION

Recognizing the fact that technical and vocational education is the bedrock of any national development. The problems of this form of education should be addressed and see how vocational and technical education can be maximized towards productivity and sustainable development in Nigeria. It calls for re-branding and repositioning of the technical and vocational education programme to optimally utilize the human and material resources. Nigeria is a country blessed with abundant human and material resources for instance, the third Nigeria economic summit (1996) reports that the country has abundant human and mineral resources, good geographic position, good climate and relatively free from disasters. What remains for Nigeria is to utilize these resources effectively to produce goods and services require for general development through effective technical and vocational education.

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