

## **Vocational Education: A Tool for Self-Sustenance and Youths Development**

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### **Abstract**

*Technical and Vocational Education are pre-requisites for effective implementation of a whole range of occupational subjects offered at the Primary and Junior Secondary School levels of the Educational System. Technical Vocational Education empowers the Nigeria children to use their hands to be self-reliant in the society. The aim of this paper is to discuss how Technical Vocational Education in Nigeria will enable Nigerian children to be self-reliant and to enumerate the problems of Technical Vocational Education in Nigeria and wage increase of science teachers, training of artisans and provision of training facilities.*

**Keywords:** *Technical, Vocational, Tool, Self-reliance, Youth*

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### **I. Introduction**

It is universally accepted that the purpose of a worthwhile education is to prepare prospective graduate, to fit in the work roles required of them in their respective specialization (Abba, Saidu and Buba, 2015). In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (N.P.E. 1995) acknowledged this purpose and specified functional knowledge and skills as the cordial goals of education which targets the Nigerian child. Technical Vocational Education prepares the teachers to transmit knowledge, skills and values in areas of Agriculture, Business Education, Home Economics Education and Fine and Applied Arts etc, leading to self-empowerment of the child. The day to day life of the child should relate to the occupation related to their training. The Minimum Standard for National Commission for College of Education( NCCE) programme (2012) states that education in the TVE areas should equip NCE teachers with necessary skills that would assist them to fight unemployment, vice habits and drop-out rates among the pupils that they teach by providing required entrepreneurial skills relevant for self-reliance in the society, it is also similar in all institution(Abba, Saidu and Buba, 2015 and Akombe,2000).

### **History of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria**

When the Western Education was introduced in Nigeria beginning with the arrival of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission at Badagry in 1842, the Christian Missionaries did not come with the objective of giving a liberal education. The government on the other hand, was not unaware of the needs for a system of education in which the general knowledge and the instruction are balanced by progressive development of Technical and Vocational Education. However, up to the end of the Second World War the Nigerian Government continued to neglect Technical Education. This aspect of the Education was thrown out on grounds that doubtful whether a big trade school or Technical College was not necessary at that time, because such schools will be expensive to build and equip, immediately after the second world war the smoke screen removed government could no longer pretend that Technical and Vocational Education was not important to the life and progressive development of nation. Shortly after the Independence, the regional government made recommendation towards the development of Technical Education. Subsequently, the government laid down those things that education could help Nigeria to accomplish in its bid for Technological development. This means restructuring of Nigerian School System and curricula to reflect the prescription of the new National Policy on Technical Education (Birgen. 2011)

Abelega ,2004, SAIDU and AJUJI ,2016 opined that Vocational in general term means one's work, occupation or means of livelihood. While Technical Education comprises both theoretical and practical instruction given to those who are going to be employed in commerce and industry or a type of enterprise using tools and machinery or the operation, production, presentation, distribution of goods and services.

Odeyemi (2000) observed that provision of Technical and Vocational Education to youth can make them self-reliant to contribute to national development.

### **Technical Vocational Education**

Walton (2014) defines Technical Vocational Education as an integral part of general education that enables trainers to use their hands. Though, the education is practical, more functional and technical. Keeping abreast with modern technology is the major challenge facing the Technical Vocational teacher. The educator must cope with the rapid changes and introduce the new technologies into the classroom. However, to carry out this role, the educator is forced to gain expertise in the new technology and relates same to the students (Matanga1992; Dogo, 2002). In order to carry this task, the educator must watch out students at work, read professional journals, and join professional association. Above all the curriculum of all levels and types of education should include the acquisition of Vocational skills and competence as appropriate for employment. At Primary and Junior Secondary School levels, Technical Education is given in the form of crafts, work practical Agriculture, introductory Technology and Business Students are pre-vocational in nature. It mainly introduces, the Youngsters to the world of work and appreciates the dignity of labour and basic production processes (Ukachi and Ejiko, 2018).

The National Policy on Education requires that at the very early phases of the education system; elementary technology should be introduced into the school curricula so that pupils should be exposed to using their hands in making, repairing and assembling things. However, in the present day Technical Colleges and Tertiary Institutions should be oriented to provide general education in both the scientific knowledge and practical skills required for trade, employment or progression as artisans, craftsmen, technical teachers and similar levels of business manpower in the society. While in the non-formal sector, a lot of vocational training is also taking place, various organizations like the Breweries, Roadside apprenticeship, vehicle assembling plants etc have their own organized training centres (Abba, Saidu and Buba, 2015). For example the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in its derive to create jobs and increase self-employment among youths has introduced various schemes like the National Open Apprentice Scheme (NOAS), the School on Wheels Programme (SWP). Modern Technology can influence the habit formation of the child. The expansion of electronics and aerospace lead to both negative and positive habit which could result in modeling the future generation of the society. Some programme in the television often present incidence of murder, gun fighting and other forms of physical violence aggressive citizens. While on the other hand when good programme are shown affect the child positively. These are forces reshaping the manpower structure of the nation (Makoju 2002).

### **Role of Technical Vocational Education**

The role of Technical Vocational Education (TVE) in nation building can never be overemphasized. No nation they say can perform over the quality of her teachers. The Nation Policy on Education (NPE 1995) defines TVE as that aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. The aim of TVE is identified as follows:

- To provide trained manpower in applied Sciences, Technology and Commerce particularly at sub-professional levels
- To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge and vocational skills for agriculture, industrial, commercial and economic development
- To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for use and convenience of man
- To give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant and to the young men and women to have intelligent understanding of the increasing complexities of technology.

The dynamic of changes in the business industry and technology are such that teachers must be very creative in developing learning materials and experiences that result in student learning complex technological concepts, its applications and use in labor market (UNESCO (2017)).

### **Potentials of Youth as agents of change**

According to United Nations, youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group. The Commonwealth defines youth as 15-29 years of age, while the African Youth Charter defines youth as any individual between 15-35 years of age and seeks to resolve longstanding debates about defining youth within the African context and based on Africa's development realities. Nigerian National Youth Policy defines youth as anyone between the age of 18 and 35.

(Fredrick *et al*, 2014, Burrow *et al*, 2018). Collectively, youth can equally be defined as person within the ages that require special attention for the actualization of community development.

Young people are the most dynamic, creative, innovative, strong; and highly instrumental in the growth process and development of any community, nation, state or society. Today, there are more young people in the world than ever before, creating unprecedented opportunities for political, economic and societal prosperity (Asaju *et al*, 2014).

The Global Youth Forum 2014 has aimed to move the youth agenda forward by building a sustainable Global Partnership for Youth in Development using cutting-edge research required to understand how to overcome the enormously complex constraints and problems facing young people today to be entrepreneurs. This Partnership will be the source for evidence, diagnostic and analytical tools for effective program design to build business leaders, policymakers, and civil society organizations who understand that young people are central to the development process (Falusi, 2014).

Youth are agents of change, young people's inclusion in the peace and security agenda and society more broadly, is a key to building and sustaining peace. Their role in the workforce and economic development of our nation is critical as they represent, at any given moment, one-third of the workforce in our country. In these times of change and conflict, young people also have an important role in deterring and solving conflicts and are key constituents in ensuring the success of both peacekeeping and peace building efforts (Abba,Saidu and Malgwa ,2015).

A nation finds her motivation in young people's dreams and hopes; a community develops through their participation and involvement; through their creative talents and power, a society makes giant strides, and experience economic development and overall advancement."

Young people must be given a seat at the decision making purviews of policy and governance. A world shaped for young people without youth involvement and consultation is a futile effort United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2012).

Time and resources must be deployed to the training and capacity development of today's young people. There is a good reason for investment; we need not look far to see the phenomenal feats and impact of young social change leaders globally- they live and work everywhere: in local communities, global platforms especially in politics, academics, entrepreneurship, development, innovation and technology, environmental sustainability amongst others. Some are running start-ups that solve some of the world's most pressing problems. Some are building systems, some improving processes and others influencing policies and creating change "from their corner" (Iwayemi, 2013).

### **Effects of unemployment among youths**

Youth unemployment appears to be shooting up the sky because many of them lack "employability" skills that are often acquired from vocational schools. As Vanguard, (2004) noted that youth unemployment moved from 4.3% in 1985 to 5.3% in 1986, to 7.0% in 1987 and jumped to 60% in 1997. The report shows that in 2003 primary school accounted for 14.7% unemployment, secondary school 53.6%, and tertiary schools constituted 12.4%. The nation's poverty level was put at 70% and more than 91 million Nigerians are said to live on less than one dollar per day. Also it has been well documented that Nigeria's higher institutions lack the tools to give students the skill employers need. There should therefore be some form of school-work-based learning incorporated in studies in higher institutions across the land as an integral part of national development strategy as this could reduce the burden of unemployment and poverty on the people (Arubayi and Akobo, 2018).

Evidently, Nigeria is lagging behind in preparing her workforce for the challenges of the rapidly changing global economy. For that, the nation must invest heavily in education with particular attention given to Vocational and Technical Education. No nation would make any meaningful socioeconomic stride without viable educational institutions. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and teachers in this area should take up the campaign for more funds for vocational education and to launder its image in the society. It has been this way in many societies. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have noted that revitalizing this sector is among the ways to improve economic opportunities for the youths (Evon and Agu, 2015).

The Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC) and the affiliated unions could also help in this regard by setting up vocational training centers in local government areas from where the people could acquire some job skills. Upgrading the workers' skills would improve their productivity and advance their values (wages/salaries and benefits) and voices on the job; calling out the workers for strike actions is not the only way to fight for their welfare. The National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS) program should include vocational education and job training program in its economic growth and development strategies as part of poverty alleviation and assist the unemployed in job search. This is the way things are set up in many societies, and Nigeria should adopt and adapt the system if she wants to move forward. Political rhetoric without action will not solve Nigeria's problems.

The progress of Nigeria lies in the productivity of its citizens and quality education and genuine vocational programs hold the key! But because of weak institutions and structure, inadequate power supply bad roads, and obsolete machinery, bad governance and poor labor-relations, corruption etc which led to low productivity of workers. Dogo,(2002) opined that Vocational Education has continued to thrive in many societies but Nigeria is not taking it seriously. Although vocational and technical education seem deficient in 'citizenship or leadership training, they could provide students the skills to become productive entrepreneurs and

engender creative and innovative ideas that would enlarge the nation's economic opportunities and personal freedom. Thus, the neglect of vocational education is socially injurious as it is rubbing the nation of the contribution the graduates would make on national development (Peter, 2013). The current pre-occupation with University education in Nigeria reduces economic opportunities of those who are more oriented toward work than academic. Not everyone needs a university education. But who would employ them if everyone became a university graduate? As mentioned earlier, graduates of vocational and technical institutions are highly skilled entrepreneurs. Many of the so-called "expatriate engineers" who are being paid huge sum of money in dollars to build the roads and bridges in Nigeria are graduates of vocational colleges; yet, Nigeria is not taking this sector seriously (Mohammed et al:2013).

### **Youth Unemployment: A Global Problem**

- 621 million young people aged 15-24 years old are not in education, employment or training.
- 75 million young people are trained but have no job.
- In the next decade, one billion young people will enter the labour market, and large numbers of young people face a future of irregular and informal employment.
- Almost 90% of all young people live in developing countries.
- Youth are approximately three times more likely to be unemployed than adults (2.7).
- The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that the global youth unemployment rate is expected to reach 13.1% in 2016 (71 million young people) and remain at that level through to 2017 (up from 12.9% in 2015).
- It is estimated that 23% of young people currently employed in the world earn less than \$1.25US a day. International Labor Congress (I.L.C.,2012, SAYE, 2015)

### **The Problems of Technical Vocational Education in Nigeria**

Technical Vocational Education is necessary in the growth and technological development of any nation (Dogo, 2002, Adeosun and Osoba, 2018). The issue of teacher supply and demand for Vocational Technological programme has been problematic, both socially and economically. Many schools of thought believe that it is very expensive to establish and maintain technical programmes when infrastructural equipment and cost of training technical teachers are considered.

- There is inadequate of consistency in national policies and programs on Technical Vocational Education on a long run basis
- Structures for proper implementation of the programs are not adequate even where they exist
- There is difficulty of integrating general Education and occupational
- The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Curriculum for Colleges of Education is stated in general objectives only. There is the need for a well-articulated specific or performance objective sections as in the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) 1995 syllabus which makes for identifying skills to be attained.
- Technical Vocational Education is capital intensive and hence very expensive; training equipment such as machines, hand tools, or well still, operate at their old sites as they are vulnerable to put up appropriate infrastructure and equip the new site for training facilities.
- Generally the instructional material used in the developing nations is foreign base which are out of reach, and the indigenous Technology is not forthcoming. There is low patronage of Vocational and Technical Education that support the production of local teaching materials.

## **II. Conclusion**

The role of Technical Vocational Education (TVE) in molding the Nigerian youth to be self-reliant is evident if attention will be given to the youth and programmes well developed. The TVE should be kept abreast with modern technology for them to transmit the information to learners in the classroom. The constraints of TVE are inadequate funding, negative influence of some modern technologies on the child, inconsistency of government policies and lack of trained teachers on the use of indigenous instructional materials. It was suggested that the child should realize his/her self-reliance potentials through TVE, if the teacher should be up to date and the National Policies on Education should enshrine performance objective in school curriculum and most importantly sustaining the laid down foundation to reach its logical conclusion.

## **III. Recommendations**

In order to have a viral Technical Vocational Education operational system, the following recommendations are put forward for consideration;

- ❖ Science and Vocational Education teachers should be given higher wages than their counterparts in the Arts and Social Sciences to serve as incentive by Government and other stallholders.

- ❖ Teaching of Mathematics, Integrated Science and Agriculture etc shall be made compulsory by Government at the Primary School level so that a Nigerian child will develop with culture of science.
- ❖ Government shall take over the training of artisans, roadside mechanics, vulcanize, brick layers, etc through the Technical Colleges. This is because since most of these set of people are not educated, special training to be organized for them and certificates of attendance be issued to them
- ❖ There is need for government to establish more Technical Schools to actually develop our indigenous technologies through the use of local raw materials
- ❖ The National Policy on Education should be refrained to; address the present technological need of Nigeria and should be balanced up with appropriate implementation measures.
- ❖ Women should be encouraged to be scientifically trained to be in tune with changing times. Emphasis should be put on the need to ensure full participation of women in the planning, orientation, conduct and assessment of research activities.
- ❖ The Technical Vocational Education teachers should be kept abreast with modern technological development for industrial and pedagogical purposes institutions
- ❖ Syllabus should state both general and performance objectives clearly, this will make for easy teaching/learning and adequate syllabus coverage.

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