

Donnish Journal of Agricultural Extension And Rural Development
Vol 1(1) pp. 001-004 July, 2015
<http://www.donnishjournals.org/djaerd>
Copyright © 2015 Donnish Journals

Original Research Article

Repositioning Vocational And Technical Education In Nigeria

Saidu, S. G^{1*}, Abba, K. Z¹ and J. B. Malgwa²

¹Department of Agricultural Education, Federal College Of Education, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

²Department of Christian Religious Studies, Federal College Of Education, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

Accepted 24th February, 2015.

The study was conducted to appraise Vocational and Technical education in Nigeria, which has been identified as the only sector that has varieties of developmental benefits. For instance, it has been identified as the bedrock of economic growth of any nation. Some countries like Singapore, Japan and India, among others, are good examples of where technical education has achieved its aim. This, perhaps, is the reason for the study so that the government will turn its attention to that sector - to breathe life into the life wire of the country (youths).

Keywords: Vocational, Technical, Education, Development, Economic growth.

INTRODUCTION

Vocational and Technical Education as defined by UNESCO's Revised Recommendation on Vocational and Technical Education and Training (2001) as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. This refers to the formal setting of TVE provided in educational institutions such as Basic, Secondary Schools, Colleges and Polytechnics. Vocational Training is usually referred to as any skill or training provided in the informal setting regardless of age or location of the training facility or training centers.

The National Policy on Education, (FGN, 2004) viewed Vocational and Technical Education as a training or retraining program, which is given in schools or classes under public supervision and control. Vocational Education is a system of education, which is predicated upon the teaching of skills and also demanding the professional or expert use of hands. The teaching of skills at a formal sector existed in two types of institution initially established in Nigeria; these are technical colleges and trade centers. Vocational and Technical Education is a continuous process of adaptation of the worker's training towards acquiring the minimum knowledge required. However, the purpose of this paper is aimed at re-engineering Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria and the way forward.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The main concept of the study is that Vocational and Technical Education form the basis that will adequately equip students to be more effective in this age of science and technology and to raise a generation of people who can think for themselves and respect the dignity of labour and propel its citizenry into a blossom economy. What is needed today and tomorrow are workers with a good technical skill background, rugged enough to transform Nigeria into a positive technological breakthrough with the ability to meet its immediate demand. A bright future is possible if we are willing and able to re-examine the vocational Program and its value in our educational system. As the world around us is changing fast, there must be an increased emphasis on vocational education.

Technical and Vocational Education institutions differ from country to country and are delivered at different levels in different types of institutions, including technical and vocational schools, polytechnics training centers, etc. In Nigeria, traditional apprenticeship offers the largest opportunity for the acquisition of employable skills in the informal sector. The informal sector accounts for more than 80 percent of all skills training in the country (Middleton and Dempsey, 1989). Vocational and Technical Education is the acquisition of skills and techniques in a chosen occupation or profession to enable an individual earn a living.

RE-ENGINEERING TVE INSTITUTIONS

A very clear guidance on effective policy, planning and administration should be in place for the attainment of functional TVE going by the recommendation of UNESCO, (2001). Policy should be formulated on Vocational and Technical Education administered in support of the general objectives adopted for the Educational process, as well as, for Nigeria's social and economic requirements of the present and the future, and an appropriate legislative and financial framework to be adopted.

The policy should be directed to both the structural and the qualitative improvement of Vocational and Technical Education. Although governments carry the primary responsibility for technical and vocational education, in a modern market economy, technical and vocational education policy design and delivery should be achieved through a new partnership between government, employers, professional associations, industry, employees and their representatives, the local community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Vocational and Technical Education is best served by a variety of public and private providers. The appropriate blend can be found in many ways, with the responsibility of government being to facilitate choice while ensuring quality. The Government and the private sector should recognize that vocational and technical education is an investment, not a cost, with significant returns, including the well-being of workers, enhanced productivity and international competitiveness. Therefore, funding of vocational and technical education should be shared to the maximum extent possible between government, industry, the community and the learner, with government providing appropriate financial incentives. (Joseph, 2010). Particular attention should be given to planning the development and expansion of technical and vocational education by:

- establishing a national body responsible for coordinating planning in Vocational and Technical education based on analysis of statistical data and projections to facilitate complementarities between educational policy planning and employment policy.
- giving high priority to Vocational and Technical education in national development as well as in plans for educational reform;
- evaluating national short-term and long-term needs.
- providing appropriate current and future allocations of financial resources;

Planners should respond to national economic and social trends, to venture changes in demand for different classes of goods and services, and for different types of skills and knowledge in such a way that Vocational and Technical Education may easily adapt to the growing scientific, technological and socio-economic changes.

This planning should also be coordinated with current and projected training action and the evolution of the world of work in both urban and rural areas such as the introduction of a multi-purpose secondary education, offering diversified curricula, linking education to the world of work; Institutions of higher learning to provide flexible programmes ranging from short-term to longer full-time programmes of integrated studies and professional specialization; establishing a system of uniformity whereby credit is given for completion of any approved programme, and recognition is granted to

educational and/or professional qualifications and work experience; provide articulated pathways between Vocational and Technical Education and programmes of higher education for the benefit of those learners who may wish to continue their education. Policies should be directed to ensuring high quality so as to exclude discrimination between the different educational streams. In this respect, special efforts should be made to ensure that national Technical and Vocational Education seeks to meet international standards.

In order to ensure quality, responsible national authorities should establish criteria and standards, subject to periodic review and evaluation, applying to all aspects of Vocational and Technical education. National policy should enforce research related to Technical and Vocational Education, with particular emphasis on its potential within lifelong learning, and directed to its improvement and relevance to the prevailing socio-economic context. Research should be encouraged in the areas of curriculum development, financial resources and physical facilities from public and/or private sources.

Specialized research institutes and professional organizations should apply the results of such research on an experimental basis in representatively selected institutions for Vocational and Technical Education; Such effectiveness of Vocational and Technical Education should be evaluated using, data of relevant statistics including those concerning part-time enrolments, drop-out rates and placement in wage and self employment. Administrative structures should provide for evaluation of services as a whole to ensure the quality and smooth operation of Vocational and Technical Education by continuous review and monitoring standards through constant improvement of staff, facilities, programmes and, most importantly, student achievement. (John and Watanabe, 2002)

THE NEW VOCATIONALISM

Vocationalism is defined as the method used by schools, particularly, high schools, to organize their curricula so that the students may develop skills, both vocational and academic, that will give them the strategic labor market advantages needed to compete for good jobs. Overall enrollment in vocational courses has fallen. However, an incoming current has brought a growing number of participants into new programs and curricula.

While traditional vocational offerings have been geared toward immediate entry into specific occupations, new programs and course sequences are intended to prepare students for both colleges and careers, by combining a challenging academic curriculum with development of work-related knowledge skill. The new combination aims to keep students' options open after high school. They can go to a two-year or four-year college and then work, go to work full-time and then back to college, or engage in paid employment and further education simultaneously.

The overall decline in high school vocational enrollment is evident from student transcript data. Between 1982 and 1994 the average number of vocational credits completed by high school graduates declined from 4.7 to 4.0 or from 22 percent to 16 percent of total credits earned in all subjects. The number of students who completed three or more courses in a single vocational program area slipped from 34 percent to 25 percent (Benson, 1997). Furthermore, students with disabilities, or with low grades, accounted for a growing proportion of vocational course-taking in high schools during this period. Combining a vocational sequence with college-prep academic courses seems to yield positive results. Several studies have found that high school students who combine a substantial academic

curriculum with a set of vocational courses do better than students who omit either one of these two components. (Benson, 1997).

CHALLENGES OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), responsible for supervision of all Federal, State and Private polytechnics, accreditation of programmes, curriculum development and staff development has not been given its rightful position in the educational system, as the only sure way of addressing unemployment in the Country. (Tilak, 1988)

On the other hand, there are Departments for Science and Technology Education, responsible for Federal Technical Colleges, State Departments of Education, responsible for Vocational Schools in the States, The National Business and Technical Examination Board, NABTEB, responsible for Examinations for Secondary level TVE provided by Technical Colleges, yet there is no National Body responsible for TVE Policy in Nigeria. Equally, there is no National Qualification Framework and Quality Assurance in TVET. (Maclean and Wilson, 2009)

In fact, it is really alarming to note that, less than 1% of secondary education was oriented towards Vocational and Technical skills in Nigeria (Uwaifo, 2001). Despite the fact that the situations of TVET in other African countries give us hope that the outlook is not all that gloomy. In South Africa, a National Qualification Framework (NQF) has been established to provide a mechanism for awarding qualifications based on achievement of specified learning outcomes. While the introduction of the NQF has been slow, we must underscore it as a significant step towards making the TVET system more coherent and responsive to the needs for competencies as indicated by employers and professional organizations.

Similarly, in Tanzania, the Vocational Training Authority that has overall responsibility for coordinating education and training has developed and tested new training approaches for the informal sector. The concept involved designing an integrated training programme and finding local training providers for implementation – while linking up trainees with credit and business development providers (Commonwealth Association for Polytechnics in Africa, 2007) (CAPA).

CONCLUSION

It is very clear, that Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria is the axle of any national developmental strategy, but the effects of improper policy formulation, planning and administration in our TVET programmes do not translate into any meaningful development. It will be an impossible task to plan and develop any economy in which Vocational and Technical Education is not developed. Since the traditional “chalk and talk” school system was clearly not effective in preparing workers for the jobs required by modern industry in Nigeria, government should look toward Vocational and Technical Education as a means of providing the work force needed in industries.

Therefore, Vocational and Technical Education is the life-wire of technology and it is no exaggeration to assert that it constitutes the only means through which the system of country economy and standard of living could be improved and sustained.

RECOMMENDATION

The paper recommends that for the Country's TVET to develop, effective and efficient management of these institutions should be based on:

- Clear National Policies & Commitment to TVE;
- Regulatory bodies for Qualifications, Quality Assurance are established.
- National bodies for supervision and management of TVE Institutions at secondary and post-secondary levels are strengthened.
- Full academic and administrative autonomy for TVE be institutionalized.
- There should be strong linkages with industry, private sector and the community. For sustained TVET.
- All technical and vocational education programmes, including those offered by private bodies, should be subject to approval by the public authorities.
- Higher Institutions of Vocational and Technical Education should be given greater autonomy in their administration and financial management.
- Institutional planning should be directed to ensuring maximum efficiency and flexibility in use.
- Planning, construction and provision of facilities should be carried out in collaboration with specialists from industry, teachers and educational experts.
- Adequate funds should be made available for maintenance, repair of equipment and supplies of consumable by government by meeting their budgetary requirements.
- Individual institutions should have the autonomy to design their programmes with the involvement of business and industry to suit local needs.
- Supervisory services for the staff should encourage improvement in the quality of teaching by providing guidance and recommending continuing education.
- Particular attention should be given to the material resources required for technical and vocational education. Priorities should be carefully established with due regard for immediate needs and the probable directions of future expansion in consultation with stakeholders of industries:

REFERENCES

- African Union (2007). Strategy to revitalise Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Africa. Addis Ababa: African Union.
- Benson, C. S. (1997). "New vocationalism in the United States: Potential Problems and outlook." *Economics of Education Review*. 16(3),201 - 212.
- Commonwealth Association for Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA) (2007) Invitation Letter for International Conference on "Globalisation and TVET in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities": 3rd-7th December, 2007. Nairobi:
- Maclean, R., and Wilson D. (eds.), (2009), *International Handbook of Education for the Changing World of Work*. DOI 10.1007/798-I-4020 5281-1_VI.8, Springer Science + Business Media.
- Middleton, J., and Demsky, T. (1989). *Vocational Education and training: A Review of World Bank Investment*. Discussion Paper 51. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Tilak, J.B.G. (1988) Vocational Education in South Asia: Problems and prospects. *International Review of Education* 34 (2), 244-57
- Tilak, J. B. G. (2002). Vocational Education and training in Asia (To appear in *The Handbook on Educational Research in the*

- Asia Pacific Region (eds. John P Keeves and Rye Watanabe (2002), Kluwer Academic Publishers
- UNESCO,(2001) Revised recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education. Paris: UNESCO.
- Uwaifo. V.O., (2001). Vocational Education and General Education, Conflict or Convergence. Nigerian Journal of Education Research. Institute of Education; Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. Vol. 4.1.
- Joseph, (2010) Global Best Practices in the Management of TVE Institutions, Ever-blessed publishers, Benin City