

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) TOWARDS SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEEDS OF NIGERIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

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Abstract

Nigeria is experiencing myriad of challenges in educational administration and policy implementation. These challenges seem to be more pronounced in technical and vocational education sector which is unfortunately capital-intensive in nature whose aim is directed towards a national pool of skilled and self-reliant craftsmen, technicians and technologists in technical and vocational education fields. The neglect of technical and vocational education in Nigeria is making it difficult for the country to meet the desired manpower needs for technological growth and socio- economic development. The training of technical personnel has witnessed many challenges ranging from policies which have no bearing with our problem, curriculum that has no relationship with workplace and social needs, embezzlement of funds meant for education development purposes, lack of teacher motivation, inadequate facilities, inadequate funding, brain drain, poor staff training, bribery and corruption. This paper focused on issues relating to challenges and prospects of TVET in Nigeria and to suggest ways of improving the teaching of technical and vocational education with great interest and enthusiasm.

Introduction

Nigeria is going through economic depression. The history of TVET in Nigeria dates many decades back from 1995. TVET is a complex and multi-dimensional field that is of paramount importance in developing competitive economies and better societies.

TVET is defined by UNESCO (2016) as 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

when it comes to implementation of programme policies especially in Technical, Vocational Technical Education and Training (TVET), some factors usually surface thereby incapacitating it. Some of the factors usually come as a result of improper planning or could be a reflection of the human behavior.

Vocational education is a functional form of education, training or retraining designed to prepare persons to enter or continue in paid employment in any recognized occupations and in an emerging occupations. Technical education on the other hand is concerned with the body of knowledge in a planned sequence of classroom and laboratory experiences for preparing persons for a cluster of job in a specialized field of technology. Regrettably, the concept of this form of Technical and Vocational education is rarely understood by most people. Besides,

Ali, C. C., Okwo, C. R., Nwakile, T. C. & Ejiofor, T. E.

there is misconception that this type of education is meant for people who are academically backward and the never do well. These wrong notions about vocational technical education appear to be contributory factors to its poor funding and general administration.

Again, the national policy on education (2013), points out that technical and vocational education can make many Nigeria youths to be self-reliant thereby contributing to the growth of the country's economy. To achieve this,

technical and vocational education (TVE) should be funded adequately. This is because adequate funding is a veritable tool, if the goals of TVET are to be achieved.

The role of technical and vocational education as an instrument for national development and empowerment is so compelling. It is responsible for the renewed emphasis many countries have placed on this form of education. According to Oranu (2002),

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Ali, C. C., Okwo, C. R., Nwakile, T. C. & Ejiofor, T. E.

vocational education is globally perceived as the means of ensuring the production of adequate and appropriate productive manpower. In countries like Britain, USA, Japan, France etc. the study, research and development and entrepreneurship in technical and vocational education have led to the creation of personal wealth, material, progress, resource base development and national empowerment.

The tasks before Nigeria is to translate the well thought out policy and objectives of technical and vocational education so as to achieve functional education, self-reliance and the desired resource base for wealth creation, effective participation in the world for work, human enrichment and national development. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to bring into focus the poor state of technical and vocational education which makes it difficult in actualizing Nigeria's desired manpower for technological growth and socio-economic needs in the 21st century.

Purpose of study

The study was carried out to:

- a. Look into the concept, mission and purpose of TVET.
- b. Look into the implementation of TVET in Nigeria today.
- c. Investigate into the challenges and prospects of TVET, and make necessary recommendations.

Missions of Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The mission of Technical and Vocational Education and Training can be regarded as having definite activities that are to be carried out judiciously. Some of the missions of TVET are:

- Provision of trained manpower in applied science, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels.
- Provision of technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial, industrial and economic development.
- To groom people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solutions of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man.
- To give training and impart necessary skills to individuals for self-reliance economically.
- To enable graduates secure employment or set up their own businesses and become selfemployed and able to employ others.
- To foster rapid national development.
- Production of sufficient trained manpower in technology and science.

The TVET principal objective is to train youths and adults alike, preparing them for the ever changing labour market. With technical revolutions and innovations in science and technology, labour market has evolved significantly new challenges that must be met in order to match the education proposed with vocational demands. In that regard, several countries are in the process of reforming their educational system with a view to train youths to meet national, regional and international market needs. (UNESCO, UNEVOC 2006).

Issues in the implementation of technical and vocational education policy

Since Nigeria's appears ready to move forward technologically and has put in place, laudable policies on Technical Vocational education, efforts should be geared towards effective implementation of the policy. According to Aina (2006), the federal ministry of education in 2000 for the first time set up a committee on TVE specifically to:

- ❖ Reform and re-position technical and vocational education for optimum performance in Nigeria.
- ❖ Evolve strategies to market the reengineered project

Unfortunately, the federal ministry of education committee report of 2000 was haphazardly implemented due to certain challenges.

Issues of funding technical and vocational education programmes in Nigeria

Today, funding of Technical and Vocational Education seems to be the sole responsibility of the government. Although the government has made tremendous effort in this area, there is still need for adequate funding of TVET. Nwaogu (2006) notes that finance is a militating factor in educational development of this country. Olaitan (1990) opined that the sole dependence of technical teacher education on government for all her needs is a major reason for poor funding of technical and vocation programmes in Nigeria.

Similarly, Nzelum (2001) posited that inadequate funding of technical and vocational education constitutes a serious problem to the successful implementation of the programme. He further stated that adequate funding is a pre-requisite for successes in any training programme most especially technical teacher education which involves expensive equipment and materials. Prior to the formulation of the new policy on education, there has been discriminatory approach as to funding of technical and vocational education and the situation appears not changed even after the implementation. Adejo (2003) again remarked that Nigeria may be reaching a crises situation if effort is not geared towards finding ways to effectively funding of technical and vocational education. The author asserted that adequate funding will guarantee qualified teachers, good equipment, quality materials, good infrastructural facilities and conducive environment. Inadequate funding is therefore a major challenge to the implementation of TVET policy.

Issues of technical and vocational teachers training

Technical and Vocational teachers training is one of the fundamental issues in TVET administration. Osioma (2005), states that the need for technical education arises because the economy depends largely on the ability of educational institutions to produce the right caliber of skilled manpower for industries. In line with the philosophy behind the new national policy on education (2013), the need for professional technical teachers cannot be overemphasized. In Nigeria today, evidence of acute shortage of technical teachers is glaring. It appears as if the government did not do thorough planning before embarking on the implementation of the policy. Ehiometalor (2007) stated that there is dearth of

Ali, C. C., Okwo, C. R., Nwakile, T. C. & Ejiofor, T. E.

technical and vocational teachers trained with the requisite skills to teach in the junior secondary schools. For instance, science teachers are made to teach introductory technology in some schools. While agreeing with the view expressed, it should be noted that the inadequacies of technical teachers affect both the secondary schools and tertiary institutions.

According to Olaitan (1990), the federal government had planned to train over 50,000 technicians, technical and vocational teachers within a period of 5 years, so that the 6-3-3-4 system would take off effectively. Unfortunately, the plan did not materialize. Today, the technical teachers training programme (TTTP) is run by some Universities, polytechnics, and colleges of Technology in Nigeria. The question is; what are the numbers and quality of technical teachers trained in these institution?

The UNESCO/NBTE (2006) also identified some major issues facing Nigeria in Technical and Vocational Education and training which include: low quality of teaching and learning, low staff motivation, outdated curricula for some programmes for polytechnics and technical colleges, inadequate skills of graduating students, lack of textbooks and teaching materials, ineffective monitoring and evaluation system, lack of integration of adequate entrepreneurial and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in TVET curricula and lack of recognition for the non-formal TVET.

One area of concern with regards to the acute shortage of technical teachers is the government lack of monitoring service and the inability to retain the few produced. In this regard, Sofolahan (2006) opined that in spite of the shortage, many serving technical teachers leave the job to join industries and commerce where their services attract better positions and remuneration. Sofolahan stated further that some of the technical teachers produced at polytechnics and other tertiary institutions ended up working in banks, oil companies, immigration and other non-related establishments. Government should device a mechanism to ensure that the teachers they train remain on the job for which they are trained even for a long period of time so as to remove the impediment being created to the effective implementation of the policy.

Other challenges facing TVET in Nigeria TVET in the face of advancement in technological innovation is vehemently challenged in the 21st century. Ogbazi (2004) identified the following as some of the challenges facing technical and vocational education in Nigeria.

- Inadequate technical and vocational education teachers
- Poor image given to technical and vocational courses
- Lack of guidance services for students.

The challenges also include;

- Poor planning and poor implementation of the curriculum by people from general education.
- Inadequate funding of TVET in Nigeria
- Brain drain which is the movement of technical education teachers to greener pastures or other profession where they offer them better condition of service.
- Attitude of people towards TVET in Nigeria.
- Use of obsolete facilities for training TVET teachers and students in Nigeria.

Ali, C. C., Okwo, C. R., Nwakile, T. C. & Ejiofor, T. E.

- Facilities and equipment challenges: there are inadequate facilities like tractors, workshops, laboratory etc. as students are half-baked.

Prospects of TVET in Nigeria:

Effective and efficient administration of TVET has the following prospective advantages for Nigeria:

- i. TVET reduces unemployment by creation of job opportunities.
- ii. TVET develop both the individual and the society capacity through the acquisition of skills which enable the individual to explore his environment and harness the resources within the environment.
- iii. TVET prepares individual for the world of work, thus facilitating industrial development.
- iv. It equips the individual with the skills and materials that influence his behavior in an environment in any particular time.
- v. TVET provides individuals and nations with the ability to develop leadership and followership qualities required for sustainable national development.
- vi. TVET helps in poverty reduction
- vii. TVET reduces societal vices for example robbery, kidnapping, political violence etc as the youth acquire skills and use it to earn a living.
- viii. TVET provides alternative path ways for students and youths to acquire the needed skills to become self-reliant and self-employed.

Ways to enhance TVET's Contribution or potentials:

The challenges to TVET programme administration can be ameliorated in the following ways:

1. The removal of discrimination between graduates of polytechnic and university.
2. The curriculum should be demand- based and not supply- based by teaching the students what they will go out to do at the work place.
3. Adequate provision and Improvising of materials for effective teaching and administration of programme.
4. Creation of awareness about the relevance of TVET.
5. Integrating career and vocational guidance in TVET administration.
6. Poverty reduction and empowerment effort of government and individuals, NGO's should integrate skill training in addition to providing the tools and machines required for the acquisition of the skills.
7. Fostering partnership between TVET and the world of work, to link skills acquisition with needs of industries.
8. Fostering linkages between TVET systems in different countries.

Conclusion

Some of the issues and challenges facing technical, vocational education and training have been identified. These issues and challenges can be resolved by Nigerians when the policies are effectively and efficiently implemented. Therefore, the implication of our system of education as it concerns technical and vocational education is to emphasize those areas of education which will help an individual to be gainfully employed, to be self-reliant or selfemployed and help the country attain higher national productivity. Therefore, Nigeria will meet her socioeconomic needs through sound

Ali, C. C., Okwo, C. R., Nwakile, T. C. & Ejiofor, T. E.

technical, vocational education and training (TVET) in the 21st century if the above stated prospects and recommendations are considered.

Recommendations

To move technical and vocational education forward for producing the desired manpower to meet the socio-economic needs of the country, the following recommendations are suggested for implementation by those who have TVET background.

1. The new national policy on education which is a well-intended document that will meet the needs of Nigeria's educational requirements technologically should be properly and sincerely implemented.
2. There should be orientation on the importance and values of TVET. This will change people's negative attitude towards it thereby encouraging more participation.
3. Adequate funding, (15% of educational share of federal budget) should be worked out for proper implementation of technical and vocational education in Nigeria.
4. There should be continued teachers' quality training and preparation of teachers.
5. Improvement of the quality of content of TVET, by reviewing and updating TVE curricula and preparing curricula for new disciplines and other target groups. The immediate review of curriculum for all courses offered at the technical colleges and tertiary institutions should be accelerated.
6. Strengthening linkages of non-formal employment opportunities of unskilled and illiterate youths. A national qualification framework (NVQF) should be developed as an important step towards linking the formal and non-formal TVET systems in Nigeria.
7. Integrating information and communication technology (ICT) education to all aspects of TVET.

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