

## Re-Structuring Nigeria Educational System for Economy Recession Recovery

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### Abstract

*This paper x-rays the need for re-structuring Nigeria educational system for the realisation of improved economy. Recognising the place of technical and vocational education in the attainment of this objective, the paper advocates intensification of quality of instruction of vocational technical education, diversification of professional areas of learning, integration of entrepreneurship education into courses of learning and emphasis on acquisition of practical skills as some of the measures for restructuring the educational system for the intensification of blue collar jobs through various strategies suggested.*

**Keywords:**Re-structuring, educational system, economy recession.

### Introduction

The development of any nation to a great extent is hinged on the social and economic contributions of her citizens. Nigeria as a nation is rapidly growing in population with the available white collar jobs inadequate to accommodate its youths after graduation from various tertiary institutions. This challenging situation, by implication, exacerbates unemployment rate among the youths. This high unemployment rate has consequently led to the proliferation of social vices among the youths. These vices are not limited to armed robbery, prostitution, human trafficking, kidnapping, raping, child abuse, assassinations, economic instability and insecurity, hence promoting poverty vis-à-vis economic recession in the country.

The economic recession in the country is not unconnected with the structure of the Nigeria educational system which emphasises paper qualifications without necessarily acquiring practical skills. The lapses in the educational system call for its re-structuring to accommodate acquisition of both practical and applied skills for economy recession discovery. To this end, this paper attempts to provide insight on the previous educational system in Nigeria. It looks at recession and Nigeria economy and strategies for re-structuring the Nigeria educational system for recession recovery. The paper concluded by making some suggestions as way forward.

### Previous Educational System in Nigeria

Nigeria educational system is characterised by liberal education. This education which is also seen as general education only prepares individual for white-collar jobs, with little or no attention to technical and vocational education. May (2007)posited that the

neglect of technical and vocational education in the area of adequate personnel, financial support and facilities to encourage vocational and technical education is robbing the nation of some contributions their graduates would have made to the economy. Hence, studying vocational courses was considered as the second option, after senior high school. Ayodele (2006), further indentified irrelevant education to be bookish, theoretical and “white collar job” oriented.

In recognition of the importance of education, the Federal Government of Nigeria (2014) identified goals and objectives of education in the development of Nigerians to become sound citizens who will integrate fully in their communities; and to enable the citizens to have equal opportunities to access education at all levels. These goals are premised on the fact that affording the relevant skills to the individuals, positive contribution to the development of the community as well as the nation is achievable. The realisation of these goals is informed by the effective implementation of policies at the various levels of the educational system. For instance, at the secondary school level, students were taught introductory technology courses usually at the junior secondary level. This skill affords the opportunity to be employable.

At Technical Colleges, craftsmen and master craftsmen were also trained. The relevance of this education corroborates with Ojidu (2011), that vocational and technical education exposes the learners towards the acquisition of demonstrative skills which could be transformed into economic benefit. However, Ojidu noted that the Federal Ministry of Education of Nigeria that is responsible for policy formulation, curriculum design, inspection, examination and management of all Federal owned Technical schools from secondary to the tertiary level ( Ojidu, 2011) failed in her enforcement and implementation of this all encompassing type of education (Technical and Vocational Education). This invariably suggests that government programmes are not designed to promote vocational and Technical education following the non-provision of infrastructure.

The poor provision of infrastructural development by the federal government has adversely affected the level of skills acquisition by learners in Nigeria. Apart from the non-provision of facilities, Newhouse and Suryadarma (2011),observed that unemployed graduating from vocational education is much lower than the ones graduating from general education. This is because general education has to do with rote/stereotype learning which is traditional and conventional way of learning. This general education is concerned with memorisation, mechanical repetition by hearing without full attention to comprehension and practical. It advocates the acquisition of knowledge for man’s survival involving non-dependence on practical and manipulative skills. The enrichment of the capabilities of individual to influence the effective, cognitive, psycho-motor and perceptual domains of individual is centred on abstract or theoretical teaching and learning. This mode of learning does not encourage effective economic development.

The economic development of any nation depends solely on the interrelatedness of learners on entrepreneurship, vocational and technical education and training which advocates experiential learning, learning by encounter and skills. It encourages the enrichment of the capabilities of individual to influence the effective, cognitive, psycho-motor and perceptual domains of individual for the acquisition of blue collar jobs.

### **Restructuring Nigeria Education System for Economy Recession Recovery**

Discourse is presented on the following measures of restructuring the Nigeria educational system: intensification of quality of instruction of vocational technical education,

diversification of professional areas of learning, integration of entrepreneurship education into courses of learning and emphasis on acquisition of skills

### **Intensification of Quality of Instruction of Vocational and Technical Education**

Vocational and Technical Education and Training in Nigeria is identified using the areas of training which area; school-based via the formal education system and non-formal system which is concerned with the training given and received outside the school system. In the present economic situation, self employment is the most viable option for mass employment and poverty reduction. This self employment is attained through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Hence, the importance of quality of instruction at all levels of education with Vocational Technical Education need to be revigorated and revitalised by training and imparting the necessary skills to individuals with youths and women for self-reliance. According to Olowe (2008), Vocational and Technical Education is an inclined education that should be effectively catered for through improved methodology in the process of transmitting knowledge which is goal directed entrepreneurially as a way of becoming self-employed.

### **Diversification of Professional Areas in Technical Training**

This education deals with manpower training in professional areas as engineering, agriculture, business, home economics, health occupations, trade and industrial, distributive, computer among others. Okorie (2001), asserted that vocational education can be conceived as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of educational process involving the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. This implies that for technology education to gain globalisation, it should be entrepreneurship oriented. Globalisation in this context, refers to the quick and significant technological process in the field of communication that permits entrepreneurs to have access and exchange information anytime and from any place in the world. Entrepreneurship can be described as the process of producing something new with value using enough effort, taking risk resulting to rewards, monetary and personal satisfaction. Suffice it to say that entrepreneurship education is highly needed in Nigeria Education System.

### **Integration of Entrepreneurship Education into Courses of Learning**

Entrepreneurship education, according to Adah (2008), is the art of organising a business opportunity, mobilising resources. This education increases entrepreneurial self-efficacy, self employment, risk-taking attitude to entrepreneur that creates business opportunities and train people with innovative skills to take the opportunities for starting new or managing already existing entrepreneurial activities. It helps individuals to acquire business idea. This invariably implies that it is an educational process and training that helps individual to be empowered and escape from poverty through the acquisition of skills and knowledge to raise their business income and create wealth. Entrepreneurship education is embedded in business education and business education as an aspect of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Admittedly, entrepreneurship education is capable of building good human personal relations, which address social, personal and nation's economic challenges. It is not unlikely that entrepreneurship education is a right type of education for re-engineering the Nigeria Education System for economy recession recovery. Entrepreneurship education has the

capacity to empower the youths with functional skills while helping them to attain financial independence, personal and professional growth and profit making which further promotes economic security for themselves as well as the nation.

### **Emphasis on Acquisition of Practical Skills**

Skills are the economic tools needed by individuals to solve societal problems; skills guarantee empowerment to the individual, society and the nation to live useful and production life, rather than, a life of consumption and dependence. According to Ihimekpen, Crossdale-Ovvido and Amaefule in Onajite and Adah (2008), business skills are practical activities which make individuals employable, self-reliant, self-employed and relevant to the society. The growth of the economy can be higher if entrepreneurship is implemented at all school levels. Suffice it to say that, since education in Nigeria is regarded as the single most important industry for the production of high-level manpower and the capstan of the entire society, the provision of necessary resource for effective delivery will help in the fight against Nigeria Economy recession.

### **Recession and Nigeria Economy**

Recession is a term used to describe shortage of economic activities in a given place. Nigeria Economy is undergoing recession (shortage of economic activities) characterised by hunger, starvation, frustration, aggression, high cost of living, hardship, abject poverty, income inequality among others. Nigeria is highly depending on other nations for economic sustenance. She is a consuming nation where virtually every product consumed is imported including tooth pick. Nwogu (2009) observed that the well being of any nation largely depends on its suitable economic development. However, the absence of this development is the widespread of social and economic vices such as; arm robbery, unemployment, restiveness, prostitution, raping, fake products production, killing, human trafficking, child abuse, political instability, high rate of insecurity as exemplified in kidnapping among others. The presence of these factors in a nation is an indication of economy insecurity. This insecurity has the potential of exposing citizens directly or indirectly to avoidable dangers of social crises and violence. Nwogu (2009), emphasised that economic development is the attainment of a number of ideas of modernisation such as a rise in productivity, social and economic equity, improvement institutions and values. Hence, Nigeria economy recession is a product of Nigeria economy underdevelopment. Economic development is an important part of general development, in any society with its objectives to raise the standard of living and the general well being of the citizens in an economy where almost everybody can be self-reliant.

### **Strategies for Re-Structuring Nigeria Education System for Recession Recovery**

- 1. Adequate provision of fund by the Government and Non-government organisations:** Vocational Technical Education is costly in term of equipment procurement and maintenance. For efficient and effective implementation of its programmes, adequate financial provision from government at all levels and non-governmental organisations should be made for the realisation of its objectives. Amoor (2008) highlighted funding of vocational and technical education programme as inadequate. This implies that financial sustainability is essential for the development of knowledge which requires creativity and innovative measures to

ensure that vocational and technical education institutions are not deprived of needed resources for effective training of manpower.

2. **Procurement and Effective Utilisation of Adequate Facilities:** Teaching and learning of vocational and technical education requires adequate facilities for experimental, practical knowledge and technological innovations. Ekpenyong (2008) identified inadequate training facilities and stressed that about 50% of the institution running vocational and technical education in Nigeria are yet to meet approved standards. This implies that basic facilities such as, laboratories, furniture, running water, electricity, machines, computers among others are not in adequate forms where they are even available. Hence, technological facilities should be in good supply in technical and vocational institutions at all levels by government and non-governmental bodies for teaching and learning of this technical and technological oriented education programme.
3. **Effective Policy Formation on Curriculum Relevance, Innovation and Implementation:** Addressing the issues of Nigeria Economy recession, the curriculum that would meet the objectives of Technical Vocational Education and Training should be effectively implemented through concerted efforts of the government, teachers/instructors, policy makers, the learners and others. The curricula need to reflect learning by practice for acquisition of practical skills. The skills subjects, if not made compulsory be given enough time in the time-table for delivery. This will further creates possibilities for present and future development of Nigeria, and steady supply of highly creative citizens who can help improve the living standard of the general masses via proper utilisation of innovative and practical skills to address the existential recession problem that has persisted in Nigeria.
4. **Recruitment of Technological Oriented Teachers/Instructors:** No school system can be better than the quality of its teachers (FRN, 2014). No matter the appropriateness of the learning experiences and facilities selected, it is the teacher that determines the corresponding learning outcome. Therefore, restructuring Nigeria Education system for economy recession recovery, technological oriented teachers who possess the needed skills, knowledge and competence in the training of learners is imperative. Training and re-training of those teachers already in the academic system in the area of needed skills will also improve the educational system.
5. **Effective Instructional Method:** Effective instructional method of Vocational Technical Education learners is one of the strategies for re-structuring Nigeria Education System. Vocational and technical education is a programme with the psychomotor domain whose teacher should not only have good mastery of the theoretical knowledge, but also the competence in practical demonstration as a method of teaching. Hence, teachers at all levels, should have better understanding of effective method of teaching for competence in entrepreneurial development of students. Where necessary, members of staff should be recommended for re-training in areas where technological advancement has rendered few acquired skills. Soley (2000) indicated that lack of instructional facilities affects the training of vocational technical subjects including business education in the country.
6. **Absolute Intensification of Awareness Creation of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Programme:** To improve Nigeria Education System, it is imperative to improve vocational business education status by creating more awareness among the people in the academic environment and beyond in the widest

perspective. Nwanaka and Amaefule (2011), identified lack of awareness of vocational business education programmes at various levels of school as a shortcoming. Sensitisation of citizenry through seminars workshops, conferences, among others are essential to raising the awareness level of the citizen. This will further raise the intellectual tone of the society, cultivating the public mind, purifying the national taste, supplying the right mix of human resources and giving enlargement and understanding of the ideas of the age.

7. **Adequate Supervision and Evaluation of the Nigeria Educational System and the Students Performance:** Thorough supervision/evaluation of Nigeria Educational system is needed to ascertain whether the objectives of the vocational technical education are achieved. Moreover, follow-up studies to monitor the performance of programme products (the graduates) in the school system and the world of work cannot be overlooked (Kalak, 2008).
8. **Equality in Career Choice:** Giving all gender of school age equal opportunity in career choice making without undue pressure from parents, relatives and neighbours (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).
9. **Gender Equality:** Giving, adult men and women equal opportunity in policy/decision making participation relating to Nigeria Education system for nation building, community development and family life that will to review Nigeria education system for economy recession recovery (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).

## Conclusion

The application of the right type of education is central to the development of any nation. Job creation is only vital if vocational and technical education is carefully conducted in the schools. This education provides occupational skills which enables one to achieve blue collar jobs, rather than the conventional white collar job. Achieving these blue collar jobs demands the re-structuring of the Nigeria educational system for economy recession recovery through the effective teaching of vocational and technical education.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made;

1. Funds should adequately be provided by both the government and non-governmental organisations for vocational technical education programmes.
2. Vocational technical education should be accorded a separate legal recognition for its role in the national economic development rather than being covered under the umbrella of science and technology.
3. Federal Government through the Ministry of Education should exert concerted efforts to ensure steady power and water supply in all technical vocational institutions at all levels for the operation of machines and tools involved in skills acquisition.
4. Vocational technical teachers training and re-training service should be redesigned for competency-based for effective skills in teaching/learning delivery.
5. Entrepreneurship education be pursued with vigor at all technical education.
6. Both government and private sectors should provide facilities in vocational technical schools at all levels for effecting skills acquisition.

7. Technical and vocational educators should comprise technological, technical and business organisations, the government, NGOs and successful industrialists in their service delivery to the students.
8. Ministries of Education and other education stakeholders should ensure that education programmes at all levels are made relevant to provide youth and graduates' needed vocational technical skills to meet societal needs and national development.
9. Curriculum of technical vocational education should clearly be stated by policy makers to address relevant issues capable of promoting national economic development.

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