



Vocational and Technical Education: Nexus to Economic Contributions and Sustainable National Development

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Abstract

A developed nation with sustainable economy depends on Vocational and Technical Education (VTE). The VTE enhances the recipients with acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills for self-reliant, employment generation, enterprise development, and wealth creation. VTE facilitates a functional living, provides food on the table, eradicate unemployment and poverty. This paper focuses on the economic contributions of vocational and technical education to sustainable national development. It attempted to bridge the gap between productive and unskilled individuals towards economic contributions through VTE. It was recommended amongst others that Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) Should Be Made Mandatory to Nigerian citizens to overcome the problem of economic under development, unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.

Keyword: Vocational and Technical Education Economic Contribution, Sustainable Development

Introduction

Nigeria today is highly competitive with serious challenges of unemployment, poverty shanking economic and unproductive citizenry. There lies the need for the provision of infrastructures by the three tie of government, NGOS and other stake holders to proffer a solution in terms of training of the citizens to enhance creativity, innovation and self-reliance. Vocational and Technical Education is education for work, valued or worth-while education, education for life or for a living (Ekpenyong 2011). Vocational and Technical Education is the bedrock for industrialization of a nation and a means for solving social, economic, challenges in the society.

Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria Today

The state of vocational technical education (VTE) now in the society shows that the level of one's education does not have any significant effect no one's growth rather the effect is more pronounced on the level of skills possessed and the ability to apply the skills in the real world of work Possession of requisite vocational technical education (VTE) skills

and its applicability will help to enhance, practices, growth and technological innovation in Nigeria.

Most nations of the world had developed and implemented VTE policies and practices which has facilitated their development and industrialization. Nigeria cannot be left out, in this trend; its has formulated viable policies on VTE, but the implementation of the national policy on education has been the major bane to VTE development.

Nigeria is facing a serious threat and challenges of unemployment government and other stake holders of this country need to rise up and make contributions towards ameliorating this problem. Detol (2002) asserted that to reposition vocational and technical education serious attention should be given proper funding to provision of adequate policies and legislations. This, Detol noted will immensely contribute to the development of a true spirit and culture of acquisition of skills and this would enhance economic development and growth of the nation.

UNESCO in Ekpenyong 2011, defined vocational and technical education as an aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical skills, Basic scientific skills, knowledge which involves specific manipulative skills, creative minds and attitudes relating to occupations in various sectors of the economic and social life. On the basis of this vocational and technical education facilitates manpower and productive labour in applied sciences technology and commerce leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and skilled personnel who are enterprising and self reliant (FRN, 2004).

The Nigerian economy is dominated with unproductive labour and people who lack functional skills, people who cannot create job opportunities (Okafor, 2011). This caliber of people can not drive the economy. People who have established small or medium scale businesses drives the economy. When vocational and technical education is attended to through the skills acquired by the recipient's vocational and technical education would facilitate or drive the economy in Nigeria.

The concept of economy

According to Akpakpan (2012) the collection of all the productive activities in a society is referred to as economy. This implies that all the productive activities, such as all enterprises, farms, factories, workshops and shops and all other organizations involved in one activity or another in producing and distributing the goods and services people want. This simply means that economy is about the organization of production and distribution of goods and services.

The economy is very important to the society. It is important because it is expected to

- (i) Produce and distribute desired goods and services
- (ii) Create jobs and generate incomes in the process of producing and distributing goods and services.
- (iii) Improve the quality of life in the society
- (iv) Improve the development and growth of the country.

Economy is important to both government and individual because producing the right kinds of goods and services, creating desired job opportunities help to reduce social



inequalities, unemployment, poverty and external dependence. In order to improve economy and enhance development at the time economic recession in Nigeria, will require the need to adopt a functional, strong and reliable vocational and technical education.

Vocational and Technical Education for Skill Acquisition

Vocational and Technical Education is designed to provide food on the table. It facilitates skill acquisition of the world that embraced the vocational and technical education had since been developed.

For Vocational and Technical Education to enhance development in Nigeria, it must be repositioned and practical orientation in TVET programme in the view of Tilak (2003) government need to increase funding to support Technical and vocational education institutions for effective and efficient training of students to ensure the objectives are achieved. Further, that employers of labour need to contribute to the development of national TVET sector, identifying and disseminating best practices in TVET and encourage TVET advocacy, initiatives by funding TVET research and advocacy.

The acquisition of skills is not enough to bring about economic development, there is the need to eradicate poor government, poor economic policy, corruption and inadequate financial support dilapidated and infrastructural facilities. This trend must be avoided if much needed economic sustainable national development can be achieved in Nigeria (Okolocha, 2012).

Nigeria as a nation will have to empower Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) and must make specific contribution and implementation of new policy on TVET with referrals to funding and provision of infrastructural facilities employment of skilled and experience teachers as well as the provision of a good welfare package for these personnel for sustainability. Technical and vocational education in Nigeria could facilitate industrialization, if given adequate attention and properly managed. Ogundele (2014) note that Technical and Vocational education encourages industrialization and eradicates unemployment and poverty.

The productive labour according to Ogundele (2014) will not only produce goods and services, but will be able to operate and maintain the equipment. These industries require skilled personnel to enhance the production of quality goods and services, improve the foreign exchange through quality goods. This would expand the economic base of the nation, better life of the people, increased employment and reduction poverty. Accordingly sustainability of the economic development and national growth could be obtained through Technical and vocational education.

Skill Acquisition for Creativity and Employment

Individuals without skills can not be productive. Okafor (2011) remarked that there is a big gap between the ability and experience required to carry our work efficiently. Skill is defined by Ogundele (2014) as the ability to do something well, usually gain through training or experience. Acquisition is the act of having a new knowledge, skill that can be transferred to another person on that job.

Nigeria require individuals who are skilled in diverse areas for the improvement and in maintenance of tools, equipment and machines in modern technological development; people who have the ability to manipulate modern and advanced machineries for productive labour to enhance the production of food, products and services for the country.

Conclusion

Nations that embraced vocational and technical education (VTE) embraced knowledge practical based economy. Nigeria should not be an exception. Nigeria should be economically empowered through VTE for the acquisition of skills, employment generation, self-reliance, and enterprise promotion, reduction of unemployment and eradication of poverty for sustenance of national development.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations were drawn from the findings and conclusion of the work:

1. Akwa Ibom State Government should train and retrain technical teachers
2. Akwa Ibom State Government through Ministry of Education should provide tools and equipment/machines for improved and effective teaching.
3. Technical Teacher should ensure requisite skills and self-reliant to the student for enhancement of the productive workforce required in industries and related sectors.
4. Students in technical colleges and Tertiary institutions in technology related areas should be practically oriented, activity based, directed to work experience to facilitate expertise and professionalization for sustainable national development.
5. Akwa Ibom State Government should employ skilled and experience Technical Teachers, motivated and encouraged with a good welfare package to ensure sustainability of quality trained manpower for quality products and services
6. Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) should be made mandatory to Nigerian Citizens to overcome the problem of economic under development, unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.

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