

Implementation of Technical and Vocational Education in Post-Primary Schools in Nigeria: A Qualitative Approach.

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ABSTRACT: Education has been recognized as an instrument for national and economic development of many nations including Nigeria. This has led to the establishment of technical and vocational schools in order to empower individuals for self-employment and industrial purposes. However, TVE system in Nigeria does not seem to achieve its national goals and objectives as the policy does not match with the curriculum implementation process towards self-employment and national development. The study utilized qualitative approach using interview and observation in order to assess the implementation of technical and vocational education in Kano State-Nigeria. The findings of the study suggest various ways in which the government could effectively address the issue for better equipped graduates in the country.

Keywords—Curriculum, Employment, National Policy on Education, National Development, Technical and Vocational Education (TVE).

I. INTRODUCTION

Technical and vocational education (TVE) has been an integral part of National development in many countries, its contributions to economic development and productivity is highly significant in terms of employment and business. Youth's employment plays an important role in building life skills in young people and also supports communities and families (Mujumdar and Khambayat, 2010[1]). The British education system had a great influence over Nigeria's education system which has been in practice for decades. The common type of vocational education inherited before colonial masters was the apprenticeship system of education which provided the youths with employment and learnt specific skills/trades with the use of hands. The establishment of technical schools and trade centers as formal institutions in Nigeria were basically predicted to teach skills and also mastery of the use of hand in order to train individuals to acquire knowledge and skills for formal employment. It was also designed to meet the employment needs of the economy which include industry but unfortunately, it is noted that preparation of workers in today's industries in Nigeria is not effective (Uwaifo, 2009[2]). The unemployment rate of graduates of TVE in Nigeria is very high. While technical education is designed to provide theory and practical knowledge to individuals, vocational education prepares individuals and imparts necessary skills for a paid employment in a recognized occupational setting. This type of training is provided to individuals who desire to work in an industry or commerce or in any set up that uses machinery and tools for their services (Oni, 2007[3]).

The National Policy on Education (2004[4]) states the main aims of secondary education within the overall Nigerian education policy as:

- (1) Preparation for useful living within the society
- (2) Preparation for higher education.

The policy further states that, the goals of technical and vocational education shall be:

- i. To provide trained manpower in the applied science and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels;
- ii. To provide the technical and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development;

- iii. To give training and impart necessary skills to individual who shall be self-reliant economically (NPE, 2004:30[4]).

In pursuance of the stated goals, the national policy on education further states that: “The trainees completing technical college program shall have three options:

- i. Secure employment at the end of the whole course or after completing one or two modules of employable skills.
- ii. Set up their own business and become self-employed and be able to employ others;
- iii. pursue further education in advance craft/technical program and in post – secondary (tertiary) technical institutions such as science and technical colleges, polytechnics or colleges of education (technical) and universities” (NPE, 2004:31[4]).

II. LITERATURE

In Nigeria, the technical and vocational education had a very good beginning, but unfortunately the educators and society misunderstood the whole concept. Educators nowadays could not discern the main purpose and goals of technical and vocational education conceptually, which is due to policy articulation. However, the negative notion of the society towards Technical and Vocational Education as a program for those who could not further education into the universities has been on the increase. It is also believed that the graduates of such program could not secure a white collar jobs and parents detested in enrolling their children into such program. Against the background of this, Technical and Vocational Education has been making a slow progress right from its inception to the present day in Nigeria. The status of secondary schools in terms of academic relevance has relegated Technical and Vocational Education for a very long time. Akerele (2007[5]) attributed such action to the negative contribution and attitude of government towards skill-oriented programs in terms of finance and materials. However, he noted that as a country that is classified as a developing nation, Nigeria could not afford to lose the attached benefits of Technical and Vocational Education. In essence, in order to enhance national development and sustainability, the skilled-oriented type of education should adapt technology and use of indigenous resources as a complementary measure. Oni (2007[3]) also noted that, the technical institutions failed to provide quality technical and vocational education programs in the nation which results in the shortage of human resources in the country.

Bolaji (2007[6]) described the non-directional educational policy as the soul bane of the entire educational system of the country with a specific reference to the structure of the curriculum. The country had experienced three different changes in few decades in the educational policy; these changes that occurred of recent times were the 9-5-4 system, which means a child will spend nine years in primary, five years in secondary and four years in tertiary institutions. The 6-3-3-4 system of education which was in existence for about three decades provides six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary school, three years of senior secondary school and also four years in tertiary institution. The three years of senior secondary school could be spent in either academic secondary schools or technical schools which both were designed for employment or furthering education after graduation. Many scholars described the current system of education in Nigeria as being focused towards training individuals with a cultural orientation rather than equipping them with problem-solving approach. It is also considered to be a system that discourages practical activities and support memorization of theory. However, Babafemi (2007[7]) observed that, the introduction of 6-3-3-4 system as a positive move towards attaining technological development of the nation and also describing the move as a well-planned activity that is capable of transforming the educational revolution in the country, but lamented that with current trend of poor implementation of technical and vocational education program, the country is far away from the main agenda as stipulated by the national policy on education.

III. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used content analysis technique in order to analyze the data from the interview and observation conducted at technical and vocational schools in Kano State-Nigeria. The data analysis from the audio-taped interviews, researcher’s memo and researcher’s notes was done upon receiving the data. Semi-structured interview was conducted with five selected heads of departments as well as all the administrators of Technical Schools in Kano state. Purposeful sampling technique was employed for the selection of the participants among the five technical schools. Purposeful sampling deals with the situation where the characteristics or special features of a subject grant him the qualification to be included in the sample; it is relatively easier and ensures that only those elements that are relevant to the research were included (Sommer and Sommer, 2002[8]).

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1.1 Curriculum

The most vital aspect for the success of educational development of any nation is a well-planned, articulated and implemented curriculum that is designed to be taught and learned in schools for the purpose of elevating social consciousness and brings about economic viability. The result obtained from this study shows that, the curriculum of technical and vocational education in the country is adequate in terms of content and also covers the skill element needed but it is lacking in terms of implementation towards achieving the desired national goals. The curriculum favors technical colleges to be operated as training institution for the graduates to further their education but not for employment as designed by the policy because of the fewer number of practical periods allocated for the trade subjects. The time allocated for the conduct of both theory and practical classes are grossly inadequate for them to cover the needed areas provided by the curriculum. The findings show that in previous years, more time was allocated for the trade subjects who represent about 70-80% of the time allocation but due to the introduction of so many general subjects, the periods were reduced and taken away from the allocation given to the earlier trade subjects without any compensation. This agrees with the findings of Onyene, et al (2007[9]) which affirmed that the current curriculum used by technical and vocational education is very much relevant for the training of skilled oriented students for the purpose of national development and self-employment but it is more of theory than practical aspect. In another research conducted by Dike (2009[10]), he lamented that, the failure to meet with national development needs is attributed to the theory-based curriculum in Nigeria as the students are mostly exposed to theory without practical. He concluded that, even the half-baked roadside craftsmen are more equipped in terms of practical skills than the graduates of higher technical institutions in Nigeria.

1.2 Teaching Methods

On the other hand, the result shows that the teaching methods applied for the development of skills and training of the students of technical schools were basically done using demonstration and lecture methods. This is due to insufficient facilities and teaching materials for the conduct of their lessons, therefore, the teachers have to resort to these two methods in both the theoretical and practical classes. Students also have no option than to be listeners from the teachers who spend all the time in explaining and demonstrating the concepts with the locally sourced scraps and sometimes in abstract without engaging the students into the real practical work. The teachers have to device means of getting the scraps of materials from the road side mechanics for them to utilize for demonstration in classroom lessons. In the same vain, the findings of this study coincides with Kennedy (2011[11]) where reported that the trend in the teaching of building technology in Nigerian technical and vocational schools is too theoretical with less emphasis on the teaching of practical skills. He maintained that, teachers use lecture method in most cases in all aspect of their teaching which also involve those topics that needed other teaching methods. He therefore reiterated that in order to achieve the national goals as stipulated in the National Policy on Education, teachers should employ appropriate teaching methods in the teaching of technical and vocational education in Nigeria. The findings of this study also agreed with that of Egun (2009[12]) where he stated that the instructional methods used in the teaching of technical subjects are basically lecture method and in most cases devoid of demonstration, according to him this will not give the students the firsthand experience that will make them see the reality of things and will also deny the students from having effective development of competence. He also opined that competence could only be developed through the means and usage of appropriate teaching methods by the teacher who is competent enough to link the learner with the curriculum.

1.3 Technical and Vocational Education and National Policy in Nigeria

The Nigerian policy on education which is the blue print of educational policy is a nationally derived ideals and aims that are supposed to guide and direct the educational development of the country based on two important features. At first, the policy points at the direction for the future and secondly it gives direction for options for future actions. The current National Policy on Education (2004[4]) in Nigeria reiterates its focus to the educational system of the country towards the needs for the realization of industrialize nation through technical and vocational education. This crucial role is vested upon sound TVE program in the country in order to realize the needed change of orientation of the entire educational system so as to give more attention and focus to science, vocational and technical education system that will prepares students with skills so as to be self-reliant and become useful to the society. It is evident that for a country to achieve its national goals for industrial, economic, political and social life-styles emphases should be given to the development of technical and vocational education at all levels. From the results obtained by this study, the policy has failed to realize the first two options due to the inclusion of more general subjects in the system which took over the trade and practical subjects in technical colleges in the country. These general subjects are also not adequately taught for

the students to even cope when they get to tertiary institution to further their education, this means that the graduates of these types of institutions are neither here nor there due to lack of competence at all angles.

The vocational schools in the country were gradually been phased out and some of them were turned into vocational training centers whereby dropouts as well as un-employed youth are trained in some few specialized areas. As for the technical colleges, the results of this study affirmed that students enrolled into technical colleges after junior secondary schools at the age of 15-16 years. They are also expected to complete their study within 3 years of high school in which they are expected to directly go to labor market for employment or set-up their business without any further re-training as applied in most of the developed and developing countries. This has tremendously affected the system and also contradicts the goals of technical and vocational education as stipulated in the national policy on education due to the nature of the current curriculum which is more of general subjects and did not favor skill acquisition. One begins to wonder how the graduates of such institutions could be self-employed without proper skills in their various fields after graduation. However, Ajibola (2008[13]) believed that, copying models in the design and construction of a functional curriculum has always been un-successful to many countries. He therefore, lamented that, models are unique to different countries settings and requires the needs of that particular societies. Therefore, Nigeria should develop its own model that will suit its system.

V. CONCLUSION

The study sought information that are very useful from the teachers as well as the management staff of technical schools particularly with respect to general implementation of technical and vocational education in Nigeria. Though, the research was conducted in one state out of thirty-six states of the federation, it is obvious to mention that all the schools in the country operate with the same curricula, the same age group of students, the same teachers qualification and they also have the same types of facilities that are used for the teaching and learning. The expectations of the teachers, parents, schools as well as the industries are not met which also signifies the obvious reason for lack of technological development in the country. Lack of commitment from the government, students, teachers, parents and the industries contributes towards the failure of the system. Therefore, different teaching methods for the teaching of technical subjects should be employed in teaching of technical subjects in Nigeria. Teachers should be engaged in various training are-training sessions in order to equip them with up-to-date skills and knowledge towards teaching approaches. This will help in imparting the necessary knowledge and skills to the students by their respective trade teachers. The inconsistencies between the national policy on education, the role of technical and vocational schools need to be addressed in order to have a clear context towards implementation of technical and vocational education in Nigeria. Provisions of instructional materials, machineries as well as consumables are highly significant in the teaching and learning of technical skills. Theory and practical classes should be given more time so as to have adequate practical for the purpose of acquiring relevant knowledge and skills among the students so that they can be able to fit into industries and also compete with their counterparts globally.

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