

FUNDING OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA IN ECONOMIC RECESSION

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Abstract

This paper is funding of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria in economic recession. It x-rays the meaning and development of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria, challenges of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria, education funding pattern in Nigeria, the methods of funding of vocational and technical education as well as the need for and ways of adequate funding of vocational and technical education in Nigeria. Vocational and technical education is capital intensive and it places a heavy demand on equipment, tools, personnel and workshop to accommodate the emerging technologies associated with it. The paper recommend among others that schools involved in vocational and technical education should from time to time organize endowment fund for funding of vocational and technical education in Nigeria.

Keyword: Funding. Vocational and Technical Education, Economic Recession, Nigeria.

Introduction

Today, Nigeria lays much emphasis on self-reliance for economic growth and development. According to Buba (2014), it is obvious that the role which vocational and technical education plays in achieving this objective cannot be overemphasized. However, for this role to be played effectively, vocational and technical education must be properly and adequately funded to meet up with the challenges of today's economic realities. Nigeria is passing through difficult times occasioned by political crisis, high rate of inflation, debt overhang, over-stretched government revenues, wide spread corruption and other economic doldrums. These negative factors have drastically retarded the efforts of government in properly funding vocational and technical education in Nigeria (Buba, 2014).

According to Ikenga, Ayemhenre, Okpuzor and Uloko (2014) vocational and technical education is an educational process which involves in addition to general education the study of technology related sciences and acquisition of practical skills and knowledge relating to

occupations in various sectors of the economy and social life. The National Policy on Education (2004) defined vocational and technical education as those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and acquisition of practical skills, attitude, understanding and knowledge occupation in various sectors of the economy.

Okoye (2014) states that with the growing impact of globalization and technological changes on national and international economy, many administrators, legislators, philanthropists and educators, currently endorse vocational and technical education as a tool to encourage a more holistic, integrated and sustainable national transformation and by which linkages, social welfare, technology and economic affairs are prioritized.

Development of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria

Around 14th century, during the pre-colonial era, skill acquisition in vocational and technical education was still an informal way, where the learner lives with his master throughout period of training. The instructional method used was through observation and imitation of the master. Non indigenous companies like the Shell BP and the UAC started training artisans among their employees, but the training acquired was to serve the skill needed by that particular company at that particular time.

The first technical institute, established in Nigeria was the Hope Waddell Institute, Calabar in (1885) with the aim of providing education in rudiments training in trades and teacher. The first vocational and technical institute to be established in Nigeria was the Yaba Higher College (1948) as seen in Aina (2009). With the motive to train artisans, craftsmen and technicians, together with teachers of technical education to teach in the trade centres. In Nigeria today, we have over forty Federal and State Technical Colleges, Federal Colleges of Education, State Colleges of Education, Federal Polytechnics, State Polytechnics, Federal and State University of Technology and a number of Colleges of Agriculture. Various skills have been acquired at various levels and in various fields from these institutions.

Therefore, what happen to the skill acquired previously that is termed as unsystematic but seems to be more effective and efficient, since during the pre-colonial era, vocational and technical education skills holds the axis of the country's economic which cuts across every sectors of the economy (Nyanabo and Ahukannah, in Nwaiwu .2015). Why do people think that skills acquired before is more functional than the ones acquired presently in our institutions. This calls for meditation.

Challenges of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria

The issue of vocational and technical education has not been considered in Nigeria today, it has not been given the attention it deserves unlike other sector of the economy, for example the health sector and this negligence by the Nigeria government leads to some obstacles in national development. Emphasis in Nigeria educational institutions has been on academic qualification instead of skill acquisition and problem solving activities. According to Aworonti (2007), there is a wide gap between the curriculum content being taught in the tertiary institutions that is the theoretical aspect and the practical skills needed by the employers of labour and the world of work.

Secondly, lack of resources, poor funding of vocational and Technical Education which resulted in the problems such as inadequate teachers, low quality of students, epileptic power supply as observed by Aina in Adamu (2014) lead to short supply of knowledgeable and competitive workforce. Also, according to Adesina (2006), the quality and quantity of teachers was also affected. The whole scenario is poor skill acquired. The traditional belief that Vocational and Technical Education programmes is for the school dropout will go a long way in making the Nigeria populace develop a good interest in the course.

Finally, low student enrolment in the Vocational and Technical Education in most Colleges calls for urgent attention. In fact, one wonders what is wrong in enrolling in vocational and Technical Education. The traditional belief is yet to change.

The economic recession which is hitting Nigeria now has always been here with us. This is because ever since the International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment programme, Nigeria does not seem to overcome the effect as its continuous tippy influence seems to leave the education sector, in particular comatose ever after due to poor funding (Bahir, 2013).

So far, education in Nigeria has revealed more of quantitative and less of qualitative impetus. But both quantity and quality are necessary if education particularly vocational and technical education is to produce the right caliber of human resources needed for national development. According to Dike (2009) stated that it is imperative for vocational and technical education to be adequately funded to make it result driven. According to him, this is because vocational and technical education by its nature provides the beneficiaries with knowledge, competencies, skills and aptitudes necessary to be useful members of the society. The increasing demands for quality vocational education, better management and competent teachers to vocational and technical education imply a need for substantial and consistent resource allocation while hoping that one day, the situation of gross under funding of vocational and technical education in Nigeria will be a thing of the past.

Needs for Adequate Funding of Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria

Proper funding of Vocational and Technical Education need not be over emphasized if Nigeria is to provide for adequate training of persons who can proffer solution to our industrial apathy and technological backwardness. The importance of proper funding of Vocational and Technical Education has been acknowledged by many educationists like Adesina, Ukeje, and Akpan in Ezekwesili, O. (2013) agreed that since the programme is capital intensive, proper implementation and actualization of its set goals will not be achieved without adequate funding.

At present, there are fluctuations in the supply of high and middle level manpower requirements in the nation's institutions of learning especially in the areas of Vocational and Technical Education. This is mostly due to inadequate funding. The poor funding is shown in ill-equipped workshops, laboratories, farms, and typing pools/computer laboratories in the schools. Definitely, the goal of vocational and Technical Education cannot be achieved without them. The official hypocrisy occasioned by lip service paid by government in the funding of education particularly Vocational and Technical Education has resulted in the current political proliferation of institutions of learning without any concomitant provision of relevant equipment and

infrastructures. Besides, the infrastructure in schools that were established in the early 1970s are mostly dilapidated due to poor maintenance. There is, therefore, the need for effective funding to facilitate maintenance and put the equipment in the laboratories and workshops in good working conditions through routine checks, servicing and repairs.

Funding of Vocational and Technical Education in Economic Recession – The Way Forward

Since it has been clear that Government cannot (or has not shown enough goodwill to) single handedly fund Vocational and Technical Education, it becomes imperative to explore the avenue of public-private-partnership (PPP) in an effort to put all hands on deck for the task of delivering the programme from its present quack mire, redeem the nation from technological backwardness and save our children from a bleak future.

A wide array of various sources of funding exists that can be explored for the benefit of vocational education growth. They include:

1. **Endowment Fund:** This is money donated to provide income for the execution of some projects. During school functions like prize giving day, Inter-house sports competitions, etc, appeals can be made by the school to governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), philanthropists and wealthy individuals as well as organizations to donate funds for the execution of some specific projects that will assist Vocational and Technical Education to achieve its mission for Nigeria. As a means of spurring up interest on the part of donors, some specific structures, laboratories, or farms could be named after such donors. Considering the honour and title – crazy society that we have, this would encourage more of such people to even single handedly fund such projects.
2. **Collaboration with Companies:** Most companies particularly the multi-nationals are sleeping – giants when it comes to funding of Vocational and Technical Education. This possibly accounted for why Ogumka in Agomuo (2013) remarked that the multi-national companies are not social welfare syndicate but hard – line profit motivated corporations. It becomes pertinent therefore to wake up these sleeping giants through effective collaboration so as to make them alive to their social responsibilities, particularly in the provision of structures, equipment and facilities in schools. Such collaboration could be initiated by the school principals or the Parent – Teachers Associations. The result would be amazing if organizations like the oil companies, communication service providers, financial institutions, the hospitality industry are contacted for this purpose.
3. **Establishment of Internally Generated Revenue Projects:** This is avenue that could be explored to facilitate funding of Vocational and Technical Education in times of global recession. In this regard, the vanishing school livestock farms should be restored. If livestock and crop farms re-surface in schools, income from there could be ploughed back to ameliorate some of the teething problems of Vocational and Technical Education. Even in the area of technical education, students can be made to engage in product manufacturing for their assessment under the guidance and supervision of their teachers. By this approach, technical education institutions in Nigeria are likely to be revenue yielding to the favour of their continued and productive existence. A management committee could then be set up to liquidate these products to the public in a widely

publicized open day in order to generate revenue for the school for the purpose of further promoting vocational education.

Instructors of Technical Education subjects should desist from giving assignments which only require mere reproduction of theoretical facts and production of pseudo jobs by the students. Schools should go into rental services by procuring and hiring out to the public items such as tents, canopies, plastic chairs, plastic tables, plates and spoons. The products from the home economics unit of the department of Vocational and Technical Education should also be placed on the shelf for the general public to buy. Also, services for the staff and students of such unit like Home Economics Education should be marketed as caterers and event managers, all in a concerted effort to generate revenue internally to promote Vocational and Technical Education.

School halls could be rented out for public functions like, weddings, church activities, conduct and marking of external examinations and other social meetings. In addition to these, the school could embark on remedial educational programmes like extra moral classes, Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination preparatory classes, external and internal school certificate preparatory classes in an effort to improve their internally generated revenue base.

4. **Parents – Teachers Association (PTA):** Parents – Teachers Association is a body of parents and teachers of a school with the common goal of promoting development in the school. In line with this the parents could raise funds internally among themselves, and could also seek external financial assistance from wealthy individuals, corporate organizations and NGOs to execute projects like provision of equipment, facilities and structures in the school, to promote Vocational and Technical Education.
5. **Alumni Association:** This is a body of every alumnus or old students of the school most of whom are well placed in the society, politics and some are captains of industries. This avenue could be employed to get them to donate and make meaningful contribution in cash and in kind to their alma mater with the aim of promoting Vocational and Technical Education.

Conclusion

Vocational and Technical Education as a workshop – based and skill development oriented programme is capital intensive as it places a heavy demand on equipment, tools, personnel and special workshop to accommodate the emerging technologies associated with vocational technical training. The singular effort of government in funding vocational and Technical Education has so far not paid off considering the serious dearth of equipment, tools, manpower and structures which could have helped to salvage Nigeria from her present technological backwardness. The fact remains that since government alone cannot adequately fund vocational and Technical Education, supplementary funding has to be sourced from elsewhere if the system must survive and saleable entrepreneurial skills imparted to the Nigeria youths. This will no doubt stem the rising tide of youth restiveness, kidnapping, armed robbery, political thuggery and other vices that remain the bane of the nation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. Secondary/Technical schools as well as the department of vocational and Technical Education in tertiary institutions should establish a deliberate school/community liaison by assistance from companies and financial institutions, communication service providers, as well as hospitality industries located in their area of operation. SIWES should be re-engineered to improve the future of vocational technical education programme products.
2. Schools and departments involved in Vocational and Technical Education should from time to time organize endowment fund raising to muster funds for provision of facilities, equipment and structures for vocational education.
3. Institutions involved in Vocational and Technical Education should showcase their products for public sale on open – days organized by them to get supplementary funds.
4. Institutions involved in Vocational and Technical Education should, their manpower through consultancy services as well as operating hiring and rental services of school halls, canopies, plastic chairs, tables, and school buses for supplementary fund generation.
5. The Parents – Teachers Association should help by providing the required facilities, structures and infrastructures for Vocational and Technical Education.

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