

Technical and Vocational Education at Basic and Post Basic Levels of Education: Implications for Poverty Eradication and Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

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Abstracts

This paper examined the concept of Technical and Vocational education at basic and post basic levels of education: implications for poverty eradication and youth unemployment in Nigeria. Additionally, it identified the strategies that the universal basic education can adopt to harness unemployment and youth restiveness in Nigeria. Youths unemployment and poverty in Nigeria is high. Basic education is focused to promote functional education and skill acquisitions, creation of jobs and poverty reduction. Technical and vocational education is designed to awake and instill the spirit of entrepreneurship in students and equip them with business skills, which can enable them become employable after school. Also, this paper discussed how successful educational policies will enhance the lives of post U.B.E students and the communities at large. The paper covered a number of issues: It delved into the conceptualization of education, universal basic education; post basic education and career development, vocational enterprise institutions (VEIS), Technical and vocational education, and the challenges of the basic level of education in Nigeria. The paper recommended that Technical and vocational centers should be built by government and non-governmental organizations in all primary and secondary School across all local government areas in Nigeria. Secondly, students at the basic and post basic levels of education should be exposed to technical and vocational education subjects, it should be made compulsory subject, for it can make our school children to become creative, and self employed during their time of studies.

Key words: TVET, Poverty, eradication, career.

Introduction

There is a high rate of unemployment among the youth who have graduated from the Basic, post Basic and tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria. This unemployment has caused many youths to become deviant and difficult to control. The reason behind this, is the type of system, and the structure of the universal basic education of 1-9 years that we are running for the past decades in terms of the quality and content. It lacks the capacity to provide the required technical skills and entrepreneurship spirit among the (UBE) students. Yusuf & Ajiddagba (2010) hint on this when they write that the universal basic education is expected to provide opportunities for the child to develop life manipulative skills that can enable the child function effectively in the society within the limit of the child's capacity Federal

Government of Nigeria (2008). Going by this inscription, no Nigerian child regardless of age should be unemployed at the end of the basic education.

Obviously, students who graduate from the basic education end up becoming cleaners, grass cutters, messengers, security guards, just to mention a few. The Federal Government of Nigeria (2008) states that “Education is a right of every Nigeria irrespective of gender, social status, religion, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges”. With respect to this, education should never be seen as a privilege as long as you are a citizen of Nigeria state. In this study, we defined education as a concept. It states the goals of Nigerian education according to the national policy on education. The paper critically examined the Universal Basic Education and the post Universal Basic Education, their justifications and creation for poverty reduction in Nigeria, and bring to lime light solutions on how teachers, governments and non-governmental organizations can help to improve the quality of our basic education for productivity. And lastly it also goes a long way on proffering ways of correcting the ineffectiveness that has characterized the Universal Basic Education through Technical and vocational education. The researcher employed the descriptive survey design for the study.

Conceptualization of Education

Okafor (1987, as cited in Nzeneri, 1996), defines education as all experiences through which an individual acquires knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will, (p. 5). In another perspectives, Fafunwa (1974, as cited in Aminigo and Nwaokugha, 2007), however defines education as the processes by which a young child or adult develops abilities, and other behavioural forms which are of positive or acceptable value to the society in which he lives (p. 18). The excerpt above notwithstanding, other views about education abound thus:

Education has been viewed as a process through which an individual acquires several physical and social capabilities, required by the society in which he/she lives. Education ideally, is an ultimate value and as such through the provision of social service, it becomes an agent of change. From this perspective, education is to the nation what the mind is to the body. If the mind is sick the whole body is sick. This provides us the basis to argue that education is the most significant complex of social-control mechanism or tool that promotes national development (Said, and Abdullahi, 2029, p. 123).

The Philosophy of Nigerian Education

Section 1 paragraph 3: The Federal Government of Nigeria (2008) states the following as the philosophy of education in Nigeria.

- (a) education is an instrument for national development and social change
- (b) education is vital for the promotion of a progressive and united Nigeria
- (c) education maximizes the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfillment and general development of the society

- (d) education is a right of every Nigeria irrespective of gender, society, status, religion, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challenges.
- (e) education is to be qualitative, comprehensive, functional and relevant to the needs of the society. (P. 10, 11).

From the above we can see that every Nigerian citizen has access to equal opportunity to education at the basic, secondary and tertiary levels both outside the formal school system.

The Nigerian National Goals Of Education

Section: 1 Paragraph 5 of Federal Government of Nigeria National Policy on Education (2008): The five main goals of Nigerian education as stated in the constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria are:

- (1) To build a free and democratic society.
- (2) To build a just and egalitarian society.
- (3) To build a united, strong and self-reliant nation
- (4) To build a great and dynamic economy
- (5) To build a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens. (P. 11).

Universal Basic Education: The Justification and Creation

Federal Government of Nigeria (2008) state:

Basic Education is the education given to children aged 0-15 years. It encompasses the early childhood education (0-5), and 9 years of formal schooling. Early childhood education however is segmented into ages 0-3 years situated in daycare centers fully in the hands of the private sector and social development services whilst ages 3-5 are within the formal education sector, (p. 14).

The universal basic education was established in September 30th, 2000 under the president Olusegun Obasanjo administration, but the implementation started by 2004. According to the Section 2 Paragraph 2, Federal Government of Nigeria National Policy on Education (2008), the main aim and objectives of the establishment of the universal basic education are as follows:

- (a) Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- (b) The provision of free, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age.
- (c) Reducing the incidence of pupils leaving school early from the formal school system, through improved relevance, quality and efficiency.
- (d) Catering through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the promotion of basic education, for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling.
- (e) Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for the laying of a solid foundation for life-long learning, (p.14,15).

The Goals of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria as Enshrined in The National Policy on Education (2008)

In line with section 2 paragraph 4 Federal Government of Nigeria (2008), the national policy on education states the following: Provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship, wealth generation and educational advancement.

- a. Develop patriotic young people equipped to contribute to social development and in the performance of their civic responsibilities.
- b. Inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking and who appreciate the dignity of labour.
- c. Inspire rational consciousness and harmonious coexistence irrespective of differences in endowment, religion, ethics and socio-economic background.
- d. Provide opportunity to the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limit of the child's capacity.

With the success of the implementation of the UBE in 2004, there is an indication that it has come to stay and that following the reasons given for its establishment, it shows that there is a strong commitment by the Nigerian government to use education as major tools to curb poverty and improve the lives of school children after attending the UBE in order to become self-reliant.

Post Basic Education and Career Development

According to the Federal Government of Nigeria (2008), Section 3 paragraphs 33, Post Basic Education is the education children receive after successful completion of nine years of basic education and passing the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). It includes: (i) senior secondary education, (ii) higher school; and (iii) continuing education given in vocational Enterprise Institution to either basic education graduates who are not proceeding to senior secondary schools, or senior secondary graduates that are not proceeding to the tertiary level.

Objectives of Post Basic Education and Career Development (PBECD)

Section 3 Paragraph 34, provide holders of the Basic Education Certificate with opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of gender, social status, religious or ethnic background;

- (a) Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles;
- (b) Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- (c) Provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job specific skill for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development;
- (d) Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage;
- (e) Inspire students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence;
- (f) Foster patriotism and national unity, with an emphasis on the common ties in spite of our diversity;

- (g) Raise morally upright and well-adjusted individual who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour;

Vocational Enterprise Institutions (VEIS)

The establishment of Vocation Enterprise Institutions (VEIs) is to educate students to think creatively and transform knowledge through technological process into wealth and a broader economic base. VEIs will be offered to a variety of end users as follows;

- (a) Graduates of junior secondary schools who may not continue to senior secondary school for a period ranging from 1-2years.
- (b) Graduates of senior secondary school who did not make up to five credits and may therefore not continue to tertiary education for a period ranging from 1-2 years, Section 3B Paragraph 45 of National Policy on education (2008).

The Goals of Vocational Enterprise Institution

- (a) To train post Basic Education and senior secondary students who are desirous of obtaining some specific skills, Knowledge and appropriate certification to pursue a chosen trade or career.
- (b) To educate post Basic Education and senior secondary students to think creatively and transform Knowledge through technological processes into wealth broader economic base.
- (c) To provide technologically based skill training that ensures that students understand how their expertise fits into improving the society and fulfilling national goals.
- (d) To increase access to technological education at tertiary level.
- (e) To provide training that enable students acquire specialized craftsman skills that empowers them to compete globally.
- (f) To provide training that enables students to acquire skills and competences to exploit life's opportunities.
- (g) To provide training that enables students acquire nationally branded continuous education, section 3B paragraph 46, National Policy on Education (2008).

In Achieving These Goals, Government Shall Ensure That:

- (h) Institutions operate in collaboration with relevant industries, professional bodies and establishments ensure practical training and experience for students.
- (ii) Institution shall be non-formal and private sector drive but not precluding public/private partnership.

Section 3b paragraph 48, 49 & 50 states: Vocational Enterprise Institution shall cover all Vocational and craftsmanship areas such as adire, and other indigenous fabric making, craftsmanship, artisans' apprenticeship etc. as follows:

- (a) Adire, Aso Oke, Akwaete; and other indigenous fabrics and products;
- (b) Godo, Mats, Drums
- (c) Welding, Sheet metal Work
- (d) Motor Vehicle Repair (Mechanic, Panel Beater, Electrician, etc
- (e) ectrical Wiring- Domestic and Motor Vehicles;
- (f) Construction (Plumbing, Painting, Bricklaying, House Wiring, Electrician, etc)
- (g) Catering;
- (h)

Performing Arts (Dance, Drama, Film Production, Media, etc) (i) Hairdressing and Beauty; (j) Art; (k) Agriculture; (l) Fashion Design; (m) Sports; (n) All other Vocational Skills.

Government Shall

- (a) Approve, accredit and regulate all Vocational Enterprise Institutions as well as the certificates awarded thereby creating a national branding and Identity
- (b) Set up a framework that will drive public –private partnership in the establishment, management and administration of Vocation Enterprise Institutions;
- (a) Inter-state exchange visits of students and teachers shall be encouraged to foster national unity.
- (b) Sports, co-curricular activities such as youth clubs and school societies are important instruments for character training and shall be positively encouraged.
- (c) In recognition of the prominent role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) advancing Knowledge and skills necessary for effective functioning in a Knowledge- based world, government shall provide adequate infrastructure and development capacity for effective utilization of Information and Communication Technology
- (d) Co-operation work experience shall be encouraged to enable students have hands- on experience of the skills they have learnt as well as experience the world of work.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Definition of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is as follows:

An aspect 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 occupants in various sectors of economic and social life" In addition to technical knowledge and aptitude, increasing emphasis is on “softer” skills – communication, negotiation and teamwork. TVET is dispensed in public and private educational establishments, or other forms of formal or informal instruction aimed at granting all segments of the society access to life-long learning resources. (UNESCO) and (ILO) (2001).

In another perspective, the European Union Commission (EUROSTAT 2016) defines vocational education “as the training in skills and teaching of knowledge related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation in which the student or employee wishes to participate”

The concept of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is further explained as follows:

Traditionally, so-called “intellectual” work is often contrasted with “manual” work. Thus, there would be, on the one hand, white-collar (office) professions and, on the other, traders, technicians, etc. Nowadays, such a distinction is no longer possible, even though society

continues to undervalue and minimize technical education. Consequently, pupils facing difficulties in their studies are those usually sent to vocational streams. This vision of TVET is attributable to the crisis that Africa went through in the eighties. The serious economic and financial crisis that the continent faced at the time generated far-reaching changes in the production system and the labor market, and contributed to increasing graduate unemployment. Within that context, the TVET systems found themselves unable to provide the skills required by businesses. Facing increasing costs within the context of structural adjustment programs, TVET systems endured drastic budgetary reductions. Lastly, inadequate investments in TVET contributed to its deterioration and reduced its effectiveness. Yet, the principal objective of TVET is to train youths and adults alike, readying them for the labor market. With technical revolution and innovations in science and technology, labor market needs have significantly evolved. New challenges 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 education system, with a view to training youths to meet national, regional or international market needs. (UNESCO), and (ILO) (2001).

Technical and vocational subjects should be planned in such a way that it will be interesting and appealing for students to learn, how to start small scale factory with little capital and to grow it to bigger levels of production. For example, students should be able to learn (1) how to print and sell recharge cards from home (2) how to manufacture water proof (3) and how to start farming. If these suggestions are followed, many Nigerian will become employers of labour while in school. Ensuring the requisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, communicative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for the laying of a solid foundation for lifelong learning, (National Policy on Education, 2008).

Challenges of Technical and Vocational Education at the Basic and Post Basic Level of Education in Nigeria

The school administrator in Nigeria can be likened to a man who is hired to work on a farm, and he is not giving the necessary farm implements". He is sent to carry out the enormous task of producing persons who should come out with a relatively permanent (positive) change in behaviour, those who after leaving school are of use to themselves and the society (Abraham, 2013). To make educational policy is one thing, on the other hand the implementation of the policies been made is another thing altogether. Therefore, this study further identified the following among others as the major challenges facing basic and post basic levels of education in Nigeria. Lack of infrastructure, Lack of policy implementations, Lack of curriculum implementation, Inadequate funding, Parent/guidance and community, Staffing, Lack of instructional materials, Lack of Training and retraining of teachers, No workshops for prevocational elective subjects, among others. Let us examine some of these factors.

Lack of Infrastructure

Infrastructure and facilities are lacking in public schools as the population increased daily. The school buildings on ground are absolute and dilapidated, desks that are designed for two students alone are being used by four or more students and in a classroom that is meant for forty students, over sixty students now struggling to manage it. In such a setting, student and teacher relationship is hard to maintain, as everywhere is over-crowded with no good ventilation. The student will go home at the end learning little or nothing. Many schools in rural areas are yet to see a monitor for the first time, no ICT laboratory for their practical, no library, where students can be exposed to books; many schools do not have science laboratories.

Lack of Policy Implementation

Government through its ministry of education is responsible for making educational policies. The school administrators are only to implement, at the same time have no hand in the process of employment of staff, textbooks recommendation, the school calendar, unless the boss gives an order, that is why we see cases where announcement will be made about the approval of a policy made and yet they sit on it, and school administrators remain silent for in fear of losing their job.

Lack of Curriculum Implementation

The Nigerian curriculum content is over loaded, added to the fact that we are witnessing technological innovations in education sector. In some schools where they lack of teachers, you don't expect one person to be teaching 10-13 subjects because he wants to stick to the curriculum, it can be very stressful.

Inadequate Funding/Diversion of Funds Meant for Education

Funds allocated to education is insufficient and inadequate to run, the school administration, in most cases, teachers are not being paid salaries for many months, which is very discouraging to the profession. The school administrators struggle to repair even broken tables, minor electrical problems and other expenses in the school without enough funds or impress as it is called. Funds made for education should be released and not to be diverted to personal gains or to irrelevant projects.

Parents/Guidance and The School Community

Most times we have heard stories of parents and guidance interfering in the administration of a school sited in the community, especially when their children are been disciplined by the school authority the members of such communities wait and block teachers their way going after school because Lack of infrastructure and guidance and members of the community supporting and backing their wards deviant behaviours, as a result, these behaviors from parents have promoted deviant behaviors among learners in the school.

Staffing

The success of the UBE program lies majorly on the number and quality of staff that are available, (Okoro, 2015). Teachers are supposed to be the pillars of the educational system because they are real implementers of the educational programs made by the government, and so they should be treated with dignity. Certain criteria should be met before any one can be employed fully into the profession. The teaching profession has been treated as a place where people run to secure easy employment due to the scarcity of jobs and unemployment problems that arises on a daily basis.

Lack of Instructional Materials

What a person sees with his own eyes can make a lot of sense and makes deeper impression. Instructional materials and visual aid make learning faster, therefore the government should ensure that they are made available, so that the pupils at the basic level of education can see the practicals of what they are being taught. Because instructional materials are lacking today in many Nigerian schools, school children only learn the theoretical aspects of a concept without feeling them, this kind of learning is not making sense at all.

Training and Retaining Of Teachers

In Nigeria, the training of teachers only ends in the colleges and universities of education during the days of schooling.

The Implications of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Nigeria

Technical and vocational education and training is targeted on poverty eradication and unemployment in that there is always a job for those with the requisite specialized skills. What this means is that there is always an employment for those with relevant job skills acquired through technical and vocational studies. That was why it was taking to the tertiary level of education in the Nigerian educational system. The institutions was to provide industries, governmental establishments and other employers of labour with a steady supply of competent and qualified technical workers which will as a result transform our society by creating employment. In a nut shell, vocational and technical education and training is education for work in that it prepares individuals for gainful employment. The content of such education is usually drawn from the world of work through the analysis of the skills, understanding, values and attitudes of successful workers in a particular field. Instructions are organized into sequence of course aimed at preparing for a particular occupation or family of occupations. Technical and vocational education has certain and unique characteristics that distinguish it from the rest of the educational milieu. These characteristics represent a curricular focus that may be best associated with curriculum building, maintenance, and immediate and long-term outcomes. Technical and vocational education and training provides individuals with either paid employment or self-employment opportunities. some employment avenues that are opened to post basic and university graduates of technical and vocational education and training in some selected areas includes:

Industrial Crafts Technology: Function as painter to publishing company, advertising company, media houses, financial institutions, Construction Company, and building construction company and oil and gas industries and Setting up private studio.

Home economics: Function as therapeutic dietician to hospitals. Set up bakery for the production of bread, meat pie, biscuit, sausage roll, cakes, etc. Employed to run both private and institutional canteens, restaurants and hotel s and catering services in the prison yards and food processing industries.

Building Technology: Function as architect in building industries. Employed as architect in ministry of land and housing and other institutions. Set up drawing studios. Serve as teacher in technical colleges either in private or public schools

Metal work Technology: Function as welder, iron bender, turner in both production and construction industries. Graduates can be employed as supervisor in the ministry of labour and productivity. Set up welding, fabrication, and foundry workshops.

Electrical/Electronics Technology: Function as electrician in building, construction, and production industries and other institution that utilize electrical power and electronic appliances. Graduates can function as electrician in power generation, transmission and distribution companies.

Agricultural Education: provide students with relevant skills in farming such as; crop production, weed control, pest control, animal husbandry, and diseases management and control.

Conclusions

This paper has examined the concept of Technical and Vocational Education and various reasons why the universal basic education (UBE) has been ineffective to actualize the desired goals and objectives that led to the establishment of such institutions since the year 2000 as stated in the constitution. In addition, it has identified that lack of policy implementation, facilities, teaching staff, and technical and vocational subjects at the basic and post basic levels of education are the major problem rocking the education industry. The study also made some recommendations as a way forward.

The Way Forward

1. prevocational programmes should be encouraged by both government and non government organization, for it will make our youth to become self-reliant, independent, and to solve their own problems after school.
2. Technical and vocational centers, workshop with equipment, along modern facilities should be built by government and non-governmental organization in all primary and secondary schools across all local government areas in Nigeria where students can take their practicals.
3. Students at the basic and post basic levels of education should be exposed to technical and vocational subjects, such subjects should be made compulsory as they have

potentials to our school children become creative, self employed during their time of studies.

4. Technical and vocational subjects should be planned in such a way that will be interesting and appealing for students to learn, how to start small scale business with little capital and to grow it to bigger levels of production. For example, students should be able to learn:
 - a. how to print and sell recharge cards from home
 - b. how to manufacture water proof
 - c. catering services
 - d. Plumbing and borehole services.
 - e. Building technology, brick laying.
 - f. Putting of small-scale farming, example, fishery, piggery, poultry, carpentry, mechanic, computer operation, baking etc.

If these suggestions are followed, many Nigerian students will become employers of labour while in school.

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