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VISION FOR ACTUALIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Having been conversant with the goals and objectives of technical/vocational education under the settings of national policy on education/science and technology; this paper examines the ways for the realization of such goals and objectives; the efficient manners that grantee sustainable development in Nigeria..

The paper suggest that career school Exposition of learners, especially at primary level, must not be neglected as teachers collect handwork levy in place of the handcraft scheme established by universal basic education (UBE). In this same vein, the paper presents that pleasuring skill acquisition programme in all the technical colleges in the country makes the profession appetizing for both the teachers and students. The paper also stresses that curriculum content lacks the major courses, like design and implementation, engineering research etc in our technical colleges. Again there is inadequate number of teachers to facilitate learning in these areas.

INTRODUCTION

Clearly, a gradual retardation of technical, and vocational education in Nigeria has altered the efficiency of education requirements for dynamic and emerging societies. Okebukol (2004) says that if Nigeria has a vision of developing to become a giant like we have the vision of becoming a leader in Africa and in all spheres, we must develop the human beings in Nigeria to have that level of intellectual capacity that can make us to be leaders in Africa with higher technological recognition in the entire.world...

Nigeria, indeed Africa, is blessed with natural resources such as mineral, salts, water, good soil, forests, animal life and so on. But what the country is short of is skilled manpower.

Ukeje (1976) opines that scientific manpower includes the physicist, the chemist, the mathematician and research personnel. That is, all the people engage in the extension

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of scientific knowledge, these are the people that make the difference between a stone age and an industrial age; between a horse-carriage age and a jet age; between an electrical age and atomic age and between under developed and a developed country. In order to develop and adapt to change for utilization of better and more efficient techniques, machinery and equipments for actualization and sustainability of national development, we need professional and technical know-how. This means, among other things, that we need more of good and dedicated teachers, vocation and professional managers, doctors, scientist, technicians, mechanics and maintenance workers of all kinds. National policy on education (1998) asserted that a greater proportion of expenditure on university education in Nigeria shall be devoted to technical and vocational education. Not less than 60% of places shall be allocated to technical and vocational oriented courses in the conventional universities and not less than 80% in the universities of technology. On polytechnics education the national policy (1998) recognizes the following as some of the specific objectives of the polytechnics; provision of full time or part time courses of instruction and training in engineering, other technologies, applied sciences, business and management, leading to production of trained manpower. Provision of the technical knowledge and skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development of Nigeria. There will give training and impact to the necessary skills for the production of technologists, entrepreneurs enterprising and self reliant nation. Other operational objectives of technical/vocational education towards actualization and sustainability of national development are:

- Manpower development;
- Capital goods production;
- Mineral exploration and exploitation;
- Energy resources development, and
- Technology acquisition.

Within the framework of these goals, we can unmask the major problems leading to non-realization of the above goals and objectives of technical education for actualization and sustainability of national development.

WAYS OF CAPTURING TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL IMAGE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

1) **Career exposition of learners at primary school level, post primary and post secondary levels:** Parsons (1975), confirmed that a child's cognitive development tends to develop a career choice of his/her personality. This means that this child (learner) tries to imitate models in order to do things on his/her own while aiming to gain rewards and encouragement from his/her mentors. A handicraft scheme established by the universal basic education (UBE) in our conventional? Primary schools is to create a balance zone for career choices and concrete foundation into future professionalism. But the nonchalant attitude of some staffs, because of lack of motivation and poor salaries, many of the teachers spend more time outside the workshop/classroom trying to elk out extra money. Even the head teachers have turned the handicraft scheme into a money making machine. Pupils now pay money to forget the training or they are encouraged to buy their projects in the market instead of producing them in their schools. such ugly phenomena have spread into our higher technical/vocational colleges thereby negating the realization of the goals and the objectives of national policy on science and technology as well as technical and vocational education in Nigeria.

2) **Pleasuring skills acquisition programmes in all our technical colleges in the country:** The sympathetic syndrome of students (learners) negative attitude towards practical in our technical colleges is calling for urgent government attention to combat the existence of such phenomenon among technical colleges in the country. This manes that government should establish at least an annual science and technology competition anchored on skills demonstration with fascinating or enviable awards attached for the successful winners. Such awards will serve as a motivation and stimulation to correct students reluctance to practical, as they will not take skills acquisition in technical/vocational education as a road side profession that lacks government recognition and prestige. In the same vein, researchers should be given opportunities to show case their work based on the contemporary problems facing national development through a

championship established by the government. Industries can now tap into these research results and then design and implement them.

3) Curriculum content lacking major courses in technical/vocational education:

The design of Nigeria's educational curriculum is flawed given the neglect of some technical and vocational education courses. Consequently, the nation is *today lagging behind* in preparing its labor force for the 21st century economy. How could a learner study engineering technology, for example without design and implementation? Is it not like trying to retain water in a basket? For example, electrical/electronics departments in our conventional technical institutions study circuit theory (not circuit design), of which the concept should be anchored on the functional mechanism of the circuit diagram, content of the components in the circuit diagram, mathematical values of the component circuit etc. Without a course in implementation in the laboratory, even in other engineering departments, our students cannot design and implement; there is inadequate number of trained teachers in the area of design and implementation domain. Technical and vocational education is manpower driven and performance base. This reason calls for a speedy incorporation of design and implementation course work in our curriculum development for technical/vocational education in Nigeria.

4) Teaching engineering research in technical/vocational education: Engineering

research is the core of what technical and vocational education ~~entails~~ *is an enemy of* thing that impacts negatively to teaching of engineering research *is an enemy of* technical/vocational education towards actualization and sustainability of national development. yet engineering research is quite different from what it should be. The ability of forecasting a result before design and implementation is called engineering research. engineering research is very stressful, time consuming, financially risky, capital intensive and of course not much profiting to the researcher but to the beneficiaries. The teaching of engineering research is not existing in our technical colleges neither is it enshrined in the curriculum content for technical/vocational education in Nigeria. Nothing else brings new invention if not engineering research. the inability of most Nigeria professors to win

national and international awards is an eloquent testimony to the low level engineering of research knowledge and zero practice of engineering research as it is being carried out in our technical institutions presently. For instance, in 2007, the Nigeria liquefied natural gas (NLNG), science prize was not awarded to any Nigeria Engineer due to lack of a winning engineering research.

CONCLUSION

Actualization and sustainability of national development depends on the extent to which technical/vocational education grows in Nigeria. Concerted efforts should be made at both planning and implementations stages to make success. One of the most important areas of achieving the objectives of the technical/vocational education towards sustainability of national development is using technical educators in policy formulation and curriculum planning for technical/vocational education in Nigeria. In addition, government has failed in playing her role in revitalizing technical/vocational education due to poor funding, poor infrastructural development, poor implementation of technical/vocational education formulated policies, politicizing headship with incompetent candidates (unprofessional) and giving rooms for nepotism etc. It will be impossible for sustainable development to take place in Nigeria like other developed countries with such a minimal attention of government in technical/vocational education in Nigeria. Some third world countries like Malaysia and the Ire-land have understood this and have excelled tremendously because of their huge investment in the base via technical/vocational education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the importance of technical/vocational education for actualization and sustainability of national development, the following recommendations were made:

1. Design and implementation is the bedrock for achieving the aims and objectives of national policy for technical/vocational education in Nigeria should be a compulsory course work for learners in technical/vocational education.
2. Other objectives and goals of technical/education towards actualization and sustainability of national development will depend on engineering research.

This paper recommends that it should also be a compulsory course work for technical students.

3. Professionals in technical/vocational education should manage same and not politicians with incompetent technological skills, while no room should be given for nepotism during selection of leadership.
4. technical/vocational institutions in Nigeria should be required to manage their internally generated revenue (IGR) well, before agitating for further substantial funding from the government.
5. Government should provide a supervisory counsel from ministry of education to monitor the handicraft scheme in primary, students practical project in post primary and university education to ensure that they perform rather than pay money and over look the practical.
6. Any of the facilitators found guilty of bribery or discourages students from performing practicals should be sacked or brought to book.
7. Government should also encourage facilitators with attractive salaries to make the profession appetizing for both the teachers and students.
8. Government should also organize engineering and technology competition among technical institutions across the country so as to know the extent the schools and government have gone in manpower development. the successful winners should be given attractive national awards.

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