

# THE TEACHER AND SKILLS ACQUISITION EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

The development of a nation like Nigeria lies on whether functional education is in place or not. This could only be looked at from the utilitarian angle. Nigeria as a developing nation had the influence of the colonial education, which was purely for the purpose of administration. It was on this note that vocational education was not made to spread like other form of education inspite of its usefulness. Subsequence upon this, the paper was discussed to consider the commitment of teacher education in vocational education and, or skill acquisition education, vis-a-vis the need in Nigerian society. Consequently, conclusion and recommendations were made.

## **Introduction**

Teacher education is the hub upon which education industry rely. So to say, the development of any society is dignified by the quality of teachers. This argument is in line with the position of Iwuchukwu (2006) which sees the entire system of education depending on the teacher for effectiveness. Hence, the teacher is seen as the central interest of teacher education programme in Nigeria and perhaps, in other parts of the world. In harmony with the above, the National policy on Education clearly states, no education system may rise above the quality of its teacher; so teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development (FRN. 2004.39). In relation to this axiom, it could be seen that teacher education forms the crust of human development; more importantly as it prepares the youths for the world of works. The basic questions that may come to mind are: which form of education most likely fit skill acquisition programme? What can be done outside the

teacher in such task of human capital development? As most persons feel, the reality of these practical affairs could be singled out within the parlance of vocational education.

Vocational education according to Roberts (1951) in Egwooje (2007) is that form of education or training which is specifically designed for the preparation of the individual learner to earn a living to be self reliant as to increase earnings to occupation where technicality and understanding of the laws of science and technology is applicable to modern design production, distribution and services are essential for success. The teacher on the other hand occupies entrepreneurial position in the educational system. Iwuchukwu (2006) put it that as a human person, the teacher organizes all other facilities for effectiveness and functionality of the educational system. Therefore, the quality of the product in education is judged by the effectiveness of the teacher education to the country, as the nature of the personnel handling education is nurtured by teacher education programme. In conjunction with the above view, Ocho (2005) disclosed that in school education, the teacher is the central to the determination of what is learnt. In the light of this, skills development and, or acquisition is traceable to the teacher in education industry which is the central processor. Wokocha (2006) noted that the primary factor of youth restiveness in the Niger-Delta and South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria is joblessness. If one shares the same view with this argument functional education which is the expression of pragmatic philosophy should be prioritized and teacher education should be given serious concern as it engenders nation building.

### **Teacher in the Modern Developing Society**

Teacher has been viewed from different points by different people, especially, when world of works is seen associated with training, instruction, initiation, indoctrination and teaching of principles which guide both theory and practical affairs. Efurhievwe (2007) maintained that many are of the view that teachers are found in all works of life and in every home. In this view, he went further to stress and maintains that such lacks dispositions for being called teacher, and therefore possess traditional identity of a teacher.

The roles of the teacher have risen from the traditional level of impacting of knowledge, inculcating of moral discipline, classroom management and transmission of cultural heritage to the modern role which hinge unto economic, social, political and technological values of the now; which revolves round such attributes that could develop habits, skills and attitude that will change the behaviour of the learners' intellectual and emotional disposition in pursuing the global needs goal/challenges. The role, attitudes and perception of the teaching within a period of time has reflected at the background of the meaning and the definitions of the teacher. Therefore, the role of the teacher in the modern developing society is diversified. Kpangban (1997) asserted that the role of the teacher, however form a complex web, as noted by Ottaway (1962) in Kpangban (1997); the teacher is between the world of youth and the adult world, trying to meet the claims of his pupils while reconciling them with the expectations of their parents, and relating both to the needs of society at large. The modern roles however, entails that of skill acquisition which is meant for training of youth and adult in a formal, informal or, and non-formal setting. "All teachers in educational institution shall be professionally trained; as such Teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and in the curriculum. Teachers

shall be regularly exposed to innovations in their profession." (FRN.2004.39 and 40).

Unachukwu (1990) sees the teacher as one who helps an individual to acquire some habits, skills, attitude and desirable changes in the behaviour of his student morally, socially, intellectually, and emotionally. The attributes of the teacher from the above depicts that the teacher possesses what it takes to develop the modern society; thereby justifying the essence of training the workers to acquire useful skills in addition to acquisition of broad-based general knowledge. So, the input-output process of the teacher must certainly reflect his competency and content. In this regard, Iwuchukwu (2006) argued that, if the products of Nigerian educational system are of low quality, the first claim will be that the factors of production are of low quality which means that inadequacies abound among the teachers in terms of personality, motivation and commitment.

### **Skills Acquisition Education**

Skill acquisition education which also could be termed as vocational education is engrafted in the world of works; Aristotle (1920) in Duruamaka Dim (2006) cherished the idea of training some people for practical or technical work. This is in consonance with the traditional or conservative school whose ideas favourably disclosed that some are born in the world of works while others are born with leadership quality. Each is expected to take its relevant place in education; all to the interest of the society. The proportion of the workers are usually far higher than that of the leadership, as such functional education should be favoured and thus be encouraged in the society.

Vocational education as a progressive school is seen coming with a broad-based programme for equipping the youth and adult with desired skills and knowledge. As a back-up to the above, Duruamaku-Dim (2006) posited that vocational education is traditionally known

as formal and non-formal programmes that offers the youths to acquire skills for different uses in the world work. He went further to appreciate vocational education with the following underlying assumptions as guide:

1. That vocational education has evolved in Nigeria to meet the skilled needs of entrepreneurs; proprietors and capitalist employers.
2. The skill Nigerians should acquire broad-based knowledge to function effectively in the contemporary world of works.
3. That vocational education and philosophy are appreciate academic disciplines, Which by their contents, inquiry and methods play an important role in preparing Nigerian Youths for the world of work.
4. That vocational education becomes more valued in Nigeria as the economic importance of clerical, commercial and technical skills have grown.

From all indication, skill acquisition education is the same as vocational education. As could be added to what was earlier mentioned, teachers are found in traditional/ conservative or progressive setting, which could be formal or non-formal learning environment. Skill acquisition education, an adopted form of vocational education is found within the parlance of non-formal setting of vocational education. Considering the progress rate of the society, it becomes imperative that youth and adult members of the society who were not privilege with the aspect of general education or selected aspect of literacy vocational education were made to be equipped with such skills as tailoring, bricklaying, hair dressing, computer operators, mechanics; carpenters, technicians and so many others. The purpose of this is to encourage members in such entrepreneurial skills that will expose and occupy them in the world of works.

Here it is made clearer in that education is meant for utilitarian purpose.

### **The Need for Skill Acquisition**

In the world around, the rate of technological advancement is on the increase. The practical expression of it is experienced in all sectors of the society span from industrialization, communication, transportation and the like. This however has drastically modified the taste of value in the society, as the interest and aspiration is directed towards the modern civilization. For this to\* be properly effected, education which has been considered as "an instrument for national development" has to . be implored, hence vocational education becomes a necessity for propelling and attaining these contemporary sets of values. Today, the behaviour of the members of the society has been so influenced by the changes imposed by the challenges of vocational education. Efforts were highly made to reduce the demand of administrative and clerical oriented form of education by replacing or encouraging vocational education.

Fafunwa (1967) in Ifemeje (1984) posited on the need for vocational education, thus,

It is clear that African reconstruction, rebirth; development can become a reality only when African is prepared to place more emphasis on technical education. We do not know of any country or nation in the world that was developed by an army of clerks and administration. The African builders of tomorrow will be drawn from an army of skilled technicians, engineers, scientists and the like, who have technical skills and a good general educational background as well as from millions of Africans with elementary, secondary or university education who are also able to turn screws, wield axes, tend gardens and fix tyre.

The outcome of vocational education are multiple, all of which are in attempt towards, promoting the socio-economic and technological realities of both local and international nations.

### **Obstacles to Skill Acquisitions Education**

Vocational education is not as widely spread as other form of education in Nigeria. This was as a result of the interest put in by the pioneers of formal education. The founders of Western education instituted such education which aided their administration in Africa. Perhaps, it might be, that vocational education is not in their agenda for the people of Africa, as such had no bearing with the administration; Also, they felt that the cost of running vocational education was too high. Fafunwa (1982) pointed out that the voluntary agencies which pioneered western education in Nigeria were unable to popularize vocational education on the same scale as literacy education since the former is much more expensive in terms of staff and equipment.

Again, Fafunwa (1967) in Ifemeje (1984) gave some reasons why vocational education had not received due attention as: technical education was thought of belonging to people who were not intelligent enough to do academic work, as technical workers were paid poorer wages than clerks. Many Nigerians have the conception that job involving working with hand is not meant for intelligent people. So, people perception is that, skills and habits which vocational education was meant to give could be acquired through mere apprenticeship, and therefore should not be taught or learnt in academic environment. Again, the cost of establishing technical colleges and vocational/skill acquisition centres is very high as such private school owners find it difficult to enter such ventures like other form of institutions. Above all the teachers of vocational and technical education are too few in the country to embark upon such programmes.

### **Conclusion**

From the highlight above, it could be made clear that skill acquisition education which is synonymous to vocational education is an old educational programme in Nigeria, but due to attitudinal factors of the people at the introduction of the Western education, vocational education was not favoured among the list of items proposed for national development. However, the need and importance of either vocational or skill acquisition education can not be down play, since the challenges, the demand, the promotion and the improvement of the modern day society hinged on pragmatic philosophy.

Emphasis of vocational education is now so high that the training on skill acquisition span across many areas of studies like Business education, Agricultural Science, technical studies, Home Economics etc. Here efforts are being made to ensure that skills, attitudes and habits in these areas of studies are inculcated to youth and adult members of the society thereby changing their orientation towards meeting up to attain national challenges and achieving the set goals.

Teacher education programme therefore, should not only develop, but also equip the members of the society with training and pedagogical skills that are needed in vocational or skill acquisition education in achieving its goals which are:

- (a) Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
- (b) Encourage further the spirit of enquiring and creativity in teachers.
- (c) Help teachers to fit into social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.
- (d) Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for

their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations, (e) Enhance teacher's commitment to the teaching profession. (FRN.2004. 39) It is therefore, pertinent to note that teacher education programme trains its initiates to hold City Guide; National Diploma & Higher National Diploma in various technical areas and m vocational courses; and NCE (Technical); BSc (ed) and other higher degrees in various areas of studies in vocational fields to enhance vocational and skill acquisition programme.

### Recommendations

Having considered the topic," the teacher and skills acquisition education in Nigeria", one may subscribe to the fact that no education system may rise above the quality of the teachers. On this note, the paper recommends that:

- (1) Teacher education should be enhanced and be given practical expression.
- (2) Teacher education programme should strongly be justified by making TC II the basis of teaching profession thereby allowing vocational studies part of the TC11 curriculum where the graduates who did vocational studies at this level will be allowed to move to Colleges of Education (Technical). Consequently, only the graduates at this level of studies should be allowed to the University to have their first degree. This will however, improve the quality of the teachers meant for the programme.
- (3) Graduates and intending individuals for studies in Technical and Vocational education should be granted automatic scholarship.
- (4) Vocational education on the other hand should be rated higher than any form of education and so should be encouraged.
- (5) Government should encourage and financially support private school owners in

instituting vocational and technical schools so as to increase manpower needs from this field of studies,

- (6) Teacher education programme should not be seen as a last resort in study where failed individuals from other faculties will go to have their university education.

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