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## Vocational Education Resources Wastages and National Development

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By

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### Abstract

*The attempt to revamp Nigerian economy in line with the National policy on Education found Vocational Education the first step by its mandate for training individuals for appropriate skills acquisition and competencies. Efficiency, productivity and economic reliance were targeted for gainful employment, national development and global demands. Unfortunately, Vocational Education became plagued with resources wastage. This paper recommended rational approach in employment of vocational education teachers. All tiers of government should ensure adequate funding for equipment, facilities and competent staff in vocational institutions. NCE graduates of Vocational Education should henceforth be posted to at least junior secondary schools, priority should be given to Vocational Education in term of funds allocation, scholarship and appointment of persons to policy making position.*

### **The Concept of Vocational Education**

According to Usoro & Usoro (2010) for many years the Nigerian Government had sought ways of improving on the wellbeing of individuals through improved educational programmes. Ekong (1999) perceived Vocational Education as an occupation-oriented educational programme directed towards making the recipients occupationally skillful and efficient in role performance in their chosen occupational areas-UNESCO (2000) on the other hand, defined vocational education as;

Education designed to prepare skilled personnel at lower levels of qualification for one or a group of occupational trades or jobs. Vocational education usually provided at the upper (senior) Secondary Technical School or Technical College includes general education, practical skills, and related theories required by the chosen occupation. The populations of these may vary considerably but their emphasis is usually on practical skills training.

However, in the view of Akpakpan (2004) education holds the key to a speedy Transformation of a country's economy, vocational education not left out as an instrument designed to develop occupational skills in individuals for productive living in a changing society. In consonance with the above, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004: p 20) stated the goals of Vocational and Technical Education to include: To

- a) Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences ,technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels,
- b) Provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial, and economic development;
- c) Give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

In pursuance of Vocational Education, the trainees after completion of their courses are expected to secure employment either at the end of the whole course of employable skills or set up their own business and become self-employed and be able to employ others. The expectation is that graduates from these vocational and technical institutions would become productive workers and good citizens who would be able to contribute to the development of their society and make Nigeria truly self reliant.

Unfortunately, according to Usoro & Usoro (2010) the degree of negligence on the part of the governments with respect to Vocational programmes in Nigeria has resulted in massive wastages. These wastages have assumed different forms that affect teachers, students' facilities and administrative practices. They view wastages as the

inefficient use of human and material resources in the educational sector. In addition Uche (2006) described wastages in Vocational Education as a situation where an investment does not produce either its anticipated results or produce results at a large considerable lower extent than it was set for. This is financial wastage resulting from the human and material wastages, a situation indicating that human resources or material resources wastage or both have not allowed such end products as to justify their investment. In the same vein, Okpara (2006) added that the problem of wastages in vocational education has actually affected the manpower needs of the nation.

In order to avoid this adverse effect on national development, the World Bank Policy paper on Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) (1991) states that to get the maximum benefits for national development from Vocational Technical Education the following factors must be considered:

- i. well-timed modern course linked of local and global demand;
- ii. Relevant and up-to-date TVE courses need to be developed.
- iii. proper justification in respect of individual country which level of schooling is best in offering TVE courses; and
- iv. wider range of TVE courses need to be developed to meet the national development as well as global demands.

For the purpose of this paper, Wastages in Vocational and Technical Education resources can be categorized as follows:

1. Human resources wastage
2. Material resources wastage
3. Financial resources wastage and
4. Administrative and supervisory resources wastage

### **Human Resources Wastage**

Babolola (2004) observed that many vocational education graduates wonder around without gainful employment. This implies that the nation's aspiration which has led to investment in Vocational Education is yet to be actualized and resources are rather wasted. The situation calls for re-examination of inputs into the institutions and how the inputs are processed, so that necessary measures will be taken to prevent wastages. Also, since 2009 the three sets of NCE graduates under the Federal Teachers' Scheme have been employed in the Primary Schools instead of Secondary Schools. Under the scheme the NCE graduates have left their areas of specialization such as Accounting, Agriculture, Building Technology, Automobile, Wood Technology or electricity among others for which they were trained to teach only general courses in the primary schools in which they were named for. In Akwa Ibom State for instance, with the free and compulsory education policy at least the 233 public secondary schools are not without vacancies for vocational education teachers whereas

NCE graduates are wasted in the primary school to the detriment of national objective achievement.

Human resources, especially the academic staff, supervisors and administrators are to have control over the other resources and ensure that the national goals and objectives are achieved. As observed by Afolabi (2005), no matter how beautiful the programme and assets of an institution are, without the academic staff, attainment of the institutional goals and objectives would prove abortive. In the views of Alam (2007) Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems should help unemployed young people and older workers get jobs, reduce the burden on higher education, attract foreign investment, ensure rapid growth of earnings and employment and reduce the inequality of earning between rich and the poor. The return on investment in Vocational Education enable global competitiveness and economic growth, while the return the individual will be a better career path, increased earning and a quality of life.

Human labour wastages in vocational education are also manifested in the unequal supply of Vocational and Technical teachers in their right specifications and numbers for the different vocational and technical programmes such as Agriculture, Home economics, Technical and Business Studies at the secondary, Tertiary and Teacher training levels has continued to stand out as a major impediment to the smooth implementation of government policy on vocational Education. Most teachers of vocational and technical education are posted to vocational and technical institutions within urban areas while very few are posted to those located in local Communities. This, too, contributes to serious wastage. Lamenting on wastage, Inemikabo (2006) pointed out that Nigeria has more than 551 vocational education institutions offering various programmes in Vocational Education without adequate number of teachers

### **Material Resource Wastages**

Vocational Technical Education programme in Nigeria faces material resource problems. Some of the teachers are often discouraged due to the inability of government to make adequate provision for machines and equipment, laboratories, workshops, classrooms instructional materials etc. In this direction, Ali and Amaenena (2006).

The consequence is that only the acquisition of knowledge and skills for Technical Education, Business Education, Agricultural Education, Home Economics Education, Health Occupation, Trade and Industrial Education, Computer Education and Distributive Education, but far from competency, could be made possible through such generic type of Vocational and Technical Education for national and global needs. The fact remains that improper functioning of the

Vocational service areas has led to wastages which may be difficult to estimate in monetary terms. Coupled with the above is lack of maintenance culture. Many Vocational institutions lose sight of the depreciation of their tools, equipment, plant and machinery. As such they fail to ensure provisions for them, only to realize later the life time of their tools, equipment, plants and machinery without their appropriate replacement.

### **Financial Resources Wastage**

Vocational and Technical Education lacks competent personnel at helm of affairs, whether at the Federal or state policy making, budgeting or implementation and hence coffers tremendously from poor or at times no funding. Funds are generally allocated to Ministry of in while the greatest part of the funds is usually disbursed to other of education leaving Vocational and Technical Education out of ignorance, prejudice or apathy with little OF no funding. Currently, scholarship under Technical Education Trust Fund Scheme allows only one million and fifty thousand Naira (₦1,050,000) to a Vocational Education teacher gains admission lo read Ph.D in Nigeria while one million and five hundred thousand Naira (₦1,500,000) is awarded lo a Science Education, teacher for the same purpose. It is very disheartening that vocational and technical education which is the livewire of the nation's development has not been allocated special vote.

### **Conclusion**

It is only when the resources meant for vocational education are competently and judiciously used without wastages in accordance with its set goals that national development can be assured.

### **Recommendations**

1. Holders of NCE in various vocational and technical courses such as Business Education, Technical Education, Agricultural Education as well as Computer Education should atleast be posted to Junior Secondary Schools.
2. Posting of vocational education teachers should be done proportional to the number of students and the vacancies available in each school irrespective of its location.
3. Teaching staff of vocational education should be allowed into in-service programmes and trained for competency and not just acquisition of knowledge and skill.
4. Modern and adequate facilities and equipment, tools and materials should be provided in schools lo meet with national needs and global standard.

5. Priority should be given to vocational education in government Funds allocation for education.
6. Vocational education experts should be appointed into policy making, administrative and supervisory posts for effective and efficient implementation of vocational education objectives and policies.
7. Provision for depreciation and maintenance should be made mandatory to ensure long life span and consistent use of tools, machines, plants and vehicles in vocational institutions.

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