

REFOCUSING TECHNICAL TEACHERS EDUCATION FOR RELEVANCE AND SUSTAINABLE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper intends to identify the reasons behind the short coming in the down streaming of technical teachers education and make possible suggestions that will encourage stake holders on how to improve on it, produce qualitative teachers and students ,that will eventually make it relevant and become sustainable towards developing the nation.

Introduction

Technical Teachers education is one aspect of teachers' education that mainly starts after secondary school education. Since Nigeria independence in 1960, this aspect of education has generally being facing enormous challenges ranging from lack of manpower, to financing and non-availability of training materials.

The technological progress and development of a country depend on her technical teachers. The quality of technical teachers determines the quality of a Nation's technicians, artisans and technologist who are to be entrusted with duties of how to maintain and manage the Nation technological and engineering tools and equipment.

Jen (1992), stated that technical teachers' is an indispensable factor, in realizing the goals and objectives of technical education. Technical education determines the quality of industrial work force, which is a pre-requisite for technological advancement worldwide. Technical Education as entrenched in the National policy on education (2004), among others are to:

- provide trained manpower in the applied Science, technology and business particularly at craft advanced craft and technical levels.
- provide technical Knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agriculture, commercial and economic development.
- give training and impact the necessary skills to individual who shall be self-reliant economically.

The achievement of these goals and objectives are of most importance for Nigerian's technological progress and development. In view of the above the Nation's emphasis on technical education should receive maximum support from all directions for the country to become self-reliant especially in handlings their industries.

Adah, (1998) emphasizes the major setback that affects the country's developments. This major setback was as a result of poor initial attention accorded vocational and technical education at the introduction of Western education by the then British government and the missionaries. The curriculum were mainly on areas of reading and writing while vocational and technical education received little or no attention.

At present, the task facing this Nation is what to do that will bring the much needed attention back to technical education. This will require the interest of all the stake holders to put their heads together, return to the drawing board and clearly come out with facts that will help refocus our interest, attitudes and behaviours on providing sound, effective, equitable and reliable technical education as we hear of other great Nations like China, Japan and Germany etc.

Appraisal of Technical Teachers Education in Nigeria

The continuous growth of vocational and vocational education in Nigeria depends on the availability of technically trained manpower. Formal training for teachers was said to have originated with Western education. The first teachers college owned by government was established 1909, and that was Katsina teachers college. As demands for services of this category of teachers increased by 1992 a total of fifty (50) colleges of education were established out of which nine (9) are Federal Colleges of Education (Technical) and about three (3) are owned by the state governments mainly for technical and vocational education. Equally, some of the others colleges of education offer courses in vocational and technical education.

The first organized training of technical teachers education in Nigeria was the establishment of then National Technical Teachers College (NTTQ now Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka-Yaba Lagos in (1967). The demand for technical teachers keep increasing with the introduction of

6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria to handle, maintain, and teach all introduced technical subjects in secondary and technical schools with hope and view to promote vocational and technical education, which is as a result of the current National policy on education. The (6-3-3-4 system of Education) is responsible for considerable expansion in programme of technical teachers preparation in Nigeria Nwoke, (1980).

Many institutions in Nigeria now run Technical Teachers Education programmes which led to the award of Nigeria certificates in Education (N.C.E) in technical and vocational fields, among Federal and States polytechnics and some universities as well, who handle and train first and second degree technical teachers, that are holder of Nigeria certificate in Education from college and polytechnic across the country. Equally, it is well noted that almost all post primary schools now offer introductory technology as a subject to enable the younger generation develop early interest on technical education. All these are viewed towards refocusing technical education compared to olden days when technical education were introduced into some schools only by way of technical drawing and introduction aspect of subjects such as woodwork, metal work and electrical, electronics. Therefore, many technical programmes had setback throughout the country.

Constraints Affecting Technical Teachers Education

The constraint militating against technical teachers Education are many and varied. These constraints may not be different from those that affect vocational or other educational programmes in Nigeria. Jen (2002), listed the following as major constraints:

- i- Inadequate funding
- ii- Problems of inadequate facilities, equipment, machines, tools materials and supplies,
- iii- Poor image and attitudinal problem,
- iv- Inadequate or lack of teaching personnel in required quality and quantity.

Of all the above-mentioned, inadequate funding is identified as the most critical problem facing Teachers Education and Teacher Educational Institution.

Amakiri, (1992), pointed out that inadequate funding invariably lead to inadequate or poor facilities and other related problems in various circles. In the opinion of Ozigi, (1992), the development of teacher education in Nigeria has suffered from a number of factors. Among these militating factors is persisted poor image of the teaching profession which make investment in teacher education neither popular nor attractive. It has been observed that over-crowded classrooms, overworked teachers, out dated and inadequate infrastructure, materials and equipment, resulting to poor academic performances. Some drawbacks in the development of technical and vocational education in Nigeria which are centred on training can be grouped into two as follows:

1. Training Facilities

Lack of or poor training facilities.

Out dated machinery.

Poor method and techniques used among students that do not encourage among students.

Outdated curriculum

No textbooks for students, they only depend on notes made by teachers.

Poor library facilities

Too many pupils in the classes

Poor parental background, no free education and such good education can only be afforded by rich parents.

2. Teaching Staff

Inefficient and poorly trained technical staff.

Most technical teachers in schools are just workshop men or attendance and have no professional training.

Lack of commitment to duty.
Attitude of technical teachers to students
Limited in service programmes for technical and vocational teachers.
Many technical teachers refused accept the new trends in teaching technical subjects.

Limited opportunities exist for education based on the above-mentioned drawbacks. Aina (1991) concluded that the standard of technical education staff, which is so vital in bringing about in technical and vocational teacher education and the values people hold of technical teachers is of very poor quality. Educational planners should note with interest that time for unskilled manpower in all sectors are getting over. And as such Educational system that does not prepare one for professionalism has no place in modern society.

It is in view of the above that Lassa (1992), lamented that:

In the budget of the past ten years education has continual to enjoy the second highest allocation yet there are the perennial problems of inadequate equipment, shortage, of teaching aids, inadequate reading, materials, rear absence of fellowship, and study tours, sub-standard and ill-equipped laboratories, dilapidated classroom, blackboards and lectures theater, lack of research, grants and huge amount of money needed for teachers remunerations. Try as the government is doing, our academic institutions, generally are ill-equip and teacher education institutions in particular, seemed to be worse off Teaching profession is regarded as a leprous profession.

The few problems cited above indicate that teacher education and technical teachers education in particular will continue to suffer neglect unless the government re-address the issues and curricular of technical education once again.

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The Search for Changes in Technical Teachers Education Training Programmes

Transforming of inputs into outputs are some of the basic requirement necessary that will enhance the Technical Teachers Education. Hence it become of great importance to make a change in our present technological advancement programmes.

Technology involve transformation of activities such as practical skills be encouraged among trained technical teachers, which will in turn produce students that can effectively handle equipment, and materials to enable bring about innovation in technology are costly and require technological capabilities to perform the experiments. A certain amount of additional knowledge is necessary to achieve this change to the acceptance of the general public. These will be done by involving the would-be teachers of technology in a relatively " passive" activities such as scanning for new ideas and innovation techniques in their teaching application to improve our technology.

Transfer of technology deserved a high degree of adaptation of principles and techniques that takes time to produce good result. Curriculum for Technical Teachers Education should be redesigned such that the content are simplified and made easy. Expert should be contacted and arranged for, from time to time to educate lecturers, instructors and students who are expected to transfer this knowledge to practical real. On how best to develop our local technology to meet the international standard requirement.

Fields works, such as undertaking student excursion, organizing workshop and periodic sending of staff to conferences and workshops should be encouraged to motivate them. All these will help to provide first class information for both the teachers and learners. Finally, search for technical teachers education training programmes should entail subjects courses that outlines a compulsory field work, excursion. Particularly practical courage requirement becomes a must for all technical teachers to be,

Refocusing Technical Training for Reliable and Sustainable development

It has been mentioned times without number that the only way technical education can excel among other arms of education is by motivating all those undertaking the technical courses right from ordinary level to Masters degree programmes. Analysis available from Federal Government employment and pay of technical schools product hardly occupied and enjoyed better pay in higher position of offices compared to their mates who read other liberal courses. All these actually discourage people from joining the

technical schools. Students and all those participating in technical training courses should be given special grants and other benefits that will encourage and motivate them. For instance, the management of Federal Colleges of Education (Technical) Gusau in 2006 gave all technical education students free hostel accommodation and half amount of the college registration fees. The Federal Government, state Government and all stakeholders should re-examine the technical education once again and have a re-think for the country to move forward in technological advancement for better tomorrow.

Suggestion and Recommendations

The following suggestions and recommendations are made on how to solve some of the pressing Problem of technical teacher education programmes.

That the Federal, States Governments and all stakeholders should join hands and make this sector of education attractive by giving their products special attention after graduation.

Scholarships award and other fringe benefits should be re-introduce for all those participating in Technical Teachers Education e.g. (T.T.P) Technical Teachers programmes presently embarked upon by the federal government is fast losing her grip since the programme can no longer made prompt payment to their beneficiaries which is discouraging.

All technical schools curricular be made to introduce and teach field excursion course as this will enhance students performances and motivate both the teachers and students,

That equal treatment be given to technical education fields as others in all aspect of education.

Funding of technical teachers programme be reviewed and increased from time to time to enable the authorities in charge take adequate care of providing needed training materials.

Lecturers, instructors and all those involved in the running of technical education programmes be made to attend workshops and conference at least once a year to enhance their skills and experience.

Modern Workshops be built, Equipment and machines should be purchased to meet the current needs in technology advancement.

Conclusion

This paper explains the essentials of technical teacher education programmes and pointed out the constraints affecting technical teachers such as funding, lack of training materials, shortage of manpower, if given adequate attention will enhance the Nation technological advancement.

The Government should attach incentive measures that will motivate people to join the technical education programmes. These are the only suggestions raised that can help refocus Technical teachers education,

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