

PACKAGING AND HARNESSING HUMAN RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Alhaji Bello Rauf Bella

Abstract

Nigeria has implemented various development plans targeted at infrastructure and capacity building. The vision is that this recipe will endanger growth development opportunity and help achieve the much yearned after technological competence, which to the dismay of policy makers remains elusive when cost and benefits are evaluated. Nigerians today have realized the need to refine our objectives through inward assessment and development on our educational manpower and socio cultural system. Indeed vocational education targeted at all skills acquisition and mastery of technologies in its various facets become an obvious starting point.

Introduction

The saying, that no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers is a reality which the government is fast coming to terms with, it is therefore, ripe to say that no nation can rise above the quality of education received. 'Since independence, the country has been battling with problem of disentangling itself from the bookish education system inherited from the colonial government. The major bane of the system was that it does not evolve from the socio-cultural background of the Nigerian diversity.

The inability of the government to fully realize its various development plans especially, in the area of technical/ technological self-employment led government to renew inquiry into the education system. It came to light that the educational system does not effectively reflect the need and aspiration of Nigerians, especially, in the areas of science and technology. There is therefore, good reason to applaud the 6-3-3-4 system of education and the recent universal basic education (UBE). Even the most difficult critic must agree that development objectives are being realized no matter how painful and slow.

Vocational and Skill Acquisition in Nigeria Today

Vocational and functional education as a body of knowledge is dual in its purpose, on one hand it provides training which qualify the recipient to become a teacher himself and on the other hand, the knowledge, skills and the recipient. The recognition of the importance of vocational education in nation building and economic empowerment of citizens has led to consistent outcry and directed effort to expand and improve the delivery of allied business education specialization areas, it suffices to establish that, today we have more universities, polytechnics and colleges of education where vocational and business education are taught. The curriculum too is sufficiently rich to engender effective teaching- and transmissions of knowledge and targeted skills method and techniques. Between the teacher and the student, a goal congruence can be observed as a strong influence, whereas between the duo and education objectives stands the curriculum like a colossus, using its advantageous height to chart a safe path for those threading the path of education.

In viewing education as a consumer education, Edem (1987); revealed that the knowledge an individual acquires must enable him to think critically and reflectively [a key to creativity] and acquire tools and basic skills which contribute to effective day-today living.

The national policy on education (FRN, 1998), based on the philosophy and goals is structured to promote national unity, facilitate freedom in intellectual pursuit. It has a vision, which is the economic growth of Nigeria as a self reliant nation to be reckoned with among the gathering of nations. To achieve this goal, specific assertions were boldly made in the policy as summarized below:

- a. Education shall continue to be highly rated in the national development because education is the instrument of change; any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution;
- b. Life long education shall be the basis of the nation's educational policy.
- c. Education and training facilities shall continue to be expanded in response to societal needs and make progressively accessible to afford the individual a far more diversified and flexible choice.
- d. Education activities shall be centered on the learner for maximum self-development and self

fulfillment.

- e. Universal basic education in a variety of forms depending on needs; and possibilities, shall be provided for all citizens,
- f. Efforts shall be made to relate education to overall community needs.
- g. Modern educational, techniques shall be increasingly used and improved upon at all levels of the education system.
- h. The education system shall to be structured lo develop the practice of self learning.
- i. Physical and Health education shall be emphasized at all levels of the education system.

Much of the aforementioned strongly correlate with ideals of vocational education which clearly suggest the need to make available training facilities i.e. computer, manual/electronics, scanner, projectors;and other machines needed to provide the requisite training skill and experiences required for performance in the office and self employment.

The policy also emphasizes skills learning guide and progress monitoring. The need for self-dependence is entrenched in the compulsory first nine years of academic, skills and technical training which is considered to be basic education for self reliance. Good reason suggests that any initial education 'which is to make an individual self sustaining obviously has to be vocational education without question..

Packaging and Harnessing Human Resources for Skill Acquisition and Vocational Training

Human resources'is defined by Frank (1974), as: the people who are part of the organization. They may be direct employees, the customer served part-time person, temporary employees or consultants, or any person with a varieties of other relationships to the organization. However, for 'the purpose of this paper, human resources encompasses individuals or group with formal, informal education or both possession of knowledge, training skills and competence which can be effectively directed to achieving production demand. Human resources in any organization borders on human resources utilization i.e. recruitment, selections, placement, compensation and appraisal of the human resources whereas the second activity concern human recourse development (HRD) which is designed to enable the existing members of the organization to assume new roles and function.

Better still, human resources development is designed to improve workers efficiency and effectiveness on me job. \-, ' •

Characteristics of Human Resources Development

1. Organization, which "recognizes that the procedure and protocol of selection should be documented and systematically executed to ensure the recruitment of the right personnel.
2. Stated time- time is crucial in the selection process i.e. sourcing for fresh graduates could be targeted towards pre-service or post service period.
3. Behavioural Change: Employees are expected to learn new method, skill, knowledge and ideals during retraining or refresher course. This will cause their behaviour to change their approach to work measured by increased performance.

Retention of human, resources is a practice vigorously pursued, since they represent experienced labour/force which should be guided jealously. Retention of human resources is seen to be promoted, when employee are well-motivated; hierarchy of needs.

Harnessing Requisite Synergies of Education and Human Resources for Sustainable Development

As we have already observed, there exists a relationship between education and human resources. Education begets human resources and human resources beget education. The two are more or less complementary. Nigeria as a whole, with a population of about 140 million is in possession of abundant human resources. The perspective of a working development plan for Nigeria necessarily

equires that the policy on education should be in tandern with it. This will ensure that time and scarce resources are not wasted endlessly. This inability to ensure goal congruence has been the greatest undoing of policy makers in the hay-days of the 1970's which has resulted in the costly retarded development witnessed till- date. The recognition that development in countries of Africa should have its foundation entrenched in small and medium scale industries is very correct. The reasoning is that such environments .possess less sophistication and would afford budding craftsmen and

technicians the opportunity to put their training, skill and experience to work. If the objective of sustaining development is to bear fruit, the provision of the right type of education in quantity and quality must be vigorously pursued. Periodic review, assessment and evaluation will provide the platform for modernization and quality control.

Militating Factors

The inability of Nigeria to achieve rapid development can be traced to lapses in education in the main and along with other factors. It appears that the problems of development in west Africa and most of African states have common root causes. Coming back home, and remaining with the scope of this paper the following suffice.

Poor Planning: - The availability of think-tanks are usually carried out in isolation is the problem. The impact of plans targeted towards objectives, the resources effect and non-implementation through pilot scheme to enable proper evaluation of programme viability have been a reoccurring issue. The tendency to think it will work in Nigeria because it had worked somewhere else had led government functionaries struggling to obtain dossiers of blue prints from abroad.

Brain Drain: - The wave of economic hardship which overshadowed Nigeria particularly from 1986 when structural adjustment programmes [SAP] was introduced witnessed a significant number of Nigerian professional seeking greener pastures from the shores of foreign land. There is no gain saying that some of these professionals are highly trained technocrat whose services would have immensely contributed in moving the nation forward.

Finance: This has continued to be a reoccurring problem. Fund is required to acquire specialized equipment for use in workshops, laboratories and field works not to talk of researches generally which can be financially intensive and extensive. The little fund available can hardly achieve much given the devaluation effect of inflation and unfavorable exchange rate. The level of scientific researches" carried out in the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education have therefore been abysmally low.

Derailment of Democratic Governance: - The inability to evolve a truly democratic government of national unity, peace and progress, the unhealthy competition for political and resource control at the centre created a situation, where political leaders spend valuable resources and time on how to remain in power without devoting enough time to consider issues of economic development.

Recommendations

Education and human resource in their paper have been shown to be essential aspects of development and growth. Growth sustains development. Despite the dissatisfaction of Nigerians to the level of development achieved given our abundance resources, Nigeria remains a country envied even by developed countries who are smart to see the potentials and strategies position occupied by Nigeria in Africa as a continent and indeed within west African where she occupies a position of economic power and leadership. There is therefore, a need for us to realize that the future of the country depends on the determined visionary effort we make today as educationist through our ideas translated into policies, techno crafts, craftsmen and allied professionals whose concerned effort will provide the synergy required for Nigeria to dare a quantum leap voyage.

Conclusion

It is the view of the writer that a stable governance in Nigeria indeed is key to all Nigeria's problem. What with unemployment, inflation, poor exchange rate and crises of corruption and mismanagement of scarce resources can be brought under control and eliminated from our sociopolitical system and replace, with good governance, transparency and accountability.

Cell building approach should be used in formulating policies. Past experiences native to Nigerian should be given prominence. The role of allied ministries i.e. ministry of education should be given ample room to adopt legislation. According to Frank (1974), ministries should have the liberty to determine their training need and how to achieve these needs. Countries like Germany, Britain, France and Sweden have specific legislation on human resource development in the area of vocation.

References

- Abdul-Raheem, B.A. (2002). *Towards Improving Vocational Technical Teacher Education for National Development. Vocational Renaissance*, Vol, One, Voren, Nigeria.
- Aliyu, M.A (2002) *Business Education in the Year 2002 and Beyond; Vocational Renaissance*, Vol 1 Voren, Nigeria.
- Amechi, I.E.E (1984). *The Needs of the Nigeria Worker*, Longman Nigeria limited.
- Anikpo M.O.C. (1984). *Identifying the Needs of the Nigerian Worker*, Longman Nigeria limited
- Edem D.A (1987). *Introduction to Educational Administration in Nigeria*, Ibadan: Spectrum book limited, Nigeria.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1998). *National Policy on Education, 3rd Edition*.
- Frank, H.E. (1974). *Human resource development: The European approach*, gulf Publishing company book division, Houston, Texas, U.S.A.
- Joseph, L.O (1984). *Mastering the Techniques of Teaching*. Pretence Hall of India, India: Private Ltd New Delhi.