

RE-ENGINEERING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR SELF RELIANCE AND JOB CREATION

Princess Ijeoma Obilo and Leticia Chinyere Nwachukwu

Abstract

The paper examined re-engineering Vocational Education in Nigeria for self reliance and job creation. The concept of Vocational Education, Vocational Education for self reliance and job creation, challenges of Vocational Education were highlighted and discussed. The challenges of Vocational Education in Nigeria which includes apathy towards Vocational Education, inadequate funding, insufficient supply of equipment and instructional materials among others were enumerated and discussed. Based on the literatures reviewed, the paper recommended amongst others that; government, churches and organizations should help create awareness on the importance and need for vocational education; adequate fund should be allocated towards Vocational Education both from government, churches and organizations; communities, churches should also help government in equipping Nigerian vocational schools in all ramifications.

The rate of unemployment in Nigeria and the dependency syndrome on government for survival is over bearing. For this, there is every need to re-design, re-plan, re-develop, re-implement, re-evaluate and re-innovate the entire curriculum content of Vocational Education. Since it is the systematic learning experiences which are designed to fit individuals for gainful employment in recognized occupations as semi-skilled workers or sub-professionals, Osuala (1981). In spite of the lofty goals of vocational education, a lot of challenges abound. This paper therefore speaks on re-engineering Vocational Education for self reliance and job creation. The paper will examine the topic through the following sub-headings, thus:-

- Concept of Re-Engineering
- Concept of Vocational Education
- Vocational Education for self-reliance and job creation
- Challenges of Vocational Education in Nigeria
- Conclusion
- Recommendations

Concept of Re-engineering

Engineering is the work involved in designing and constructing engines and machinery or structures like roads and bridges, Horby (2010). Re- is added to verbs/nouns to form new words that refer to the repeating of an action or process. This suggests that re-engineering involves re-designing, re-constructing and re-structuring. In curriculum studies, curriculum engineering involves such tasks as different types of decisions like issues of curriculum design, planning, development, implementation, evaluation and innovation Onyemerekeya (2001). By the definition of curriculum engineering, curriculum re-engineering involves such tasks as different types of decisions like issues of curriculum re-design, re-planning, re-development, re-implementation, re-evaluation, re-innovation and many others in the process.

Re-engineering Vocational Education implies that the existing curriculum content of Vocational Education is no longer serving the purpose for which it was meant for. Thus, the call to re-design, re-plan, re-develop, re-implement, re-evaluate and re-innovate its curriculum content exhaustively for self reliance and job creation for the entire citizenry.

The Concept of Vocational Education

Vocational Education, according to Azuka, Nwosu, Kanu and Agomuo (2009), is a specialized study aimed at preparing youths for jobs in bookkeeping and accounting occupations, office occupations which include word processing, stenographic and secretarial occupations, general and clerical occupations, and general marketing occupations. Osuala (1981), defined Vocational

Education as systematic learning experiences which are designed to fit individuals for gainful employment in recognized occupations as semi-skilled workers or sub-professionals. This means that Vocational Education has been seen as that part of the total experience of an individual whereby she/he learns successfully to carry on a gainful occupation.

Vocational Education is also concerned with the acquisition of skills and knowledge for employment and sustainable livelihood. It also implies that Vocational Education is a practical instruction that gives learners specific occupation skills. It concerns training for a specific vocation in industry, agriculture or trade.

Tuhemba and Amokaha (2009) defined Vocational Education as that kind of education that seeks to develop the status of an individual and that of the nation. In addition to providing the recipients with knowledgeable skill and right attitude, Vocational Education prepare an individual for the world of work. Vocational Education is education and training for work; it is an education where skills are taught for the purpose of gaining employment through exposure to practical experience for self-actualization.

Vocational Education is also education designed to prepare skill workers for industries, agriculture, commerce and for offices. Vocational Education can be regarded as experience gained directly or indirectly that enables one to participate in a socially useful occupation either in or out of school, at various levels and to sufficiently equipped to become an intelligent creator of goods and services. Vocational Education creates opportunities for graduates to be self employed and in turn, create employment for others. The continued deterioration of the national economy, calls for entrepreneurship skills for a reliable and independent means of survival. This can only be realized through improved vocational training programmes in Nigeria. For this reason, the paper calls for re-engineering of Vocational Education in Nigeria for self reliance and job creation.

FRN (2004) in its National Policy on Education, defined Technical and Vocational Education as a comprehensive aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. The FRN (2004:30-31), went ahead to state the goals of technical and Vocational Education as to:-

- a. Provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and business particularly at crafts, 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 individual who shall be self-reliant economically.

Vocational Education for Self Reliance and Job Creation

The Wikipedia encyclopaedia (2007), defined Vocational Education as a form of education that provides people with practical skills and also allow them to engage in careers that involve manual or practical abilities. It went further to mention some of the careers in Vocational Education training to include; motor mechanic, bicycle repairers, carpentry, sewing, electrical installation. Others in the line are hotel management, hairdressing, farming (poultry, cassava, animals etc), plumbing, computer services, and air-conditioning. It went on to state that Vocational Education is sometimes seen as Vocational Education and training (VET).

Aiwansedo and Imeokparia (2011) is of the opinion that most of these vocational training careers mentioned above require little capital to start. They also added that if such vocational occupations are well managed, they can develop to big industries or venture, thereby making the entrepreneur self reliant. It will also aid in reduction of unemployment for the entrepreneur will employ others in that firm/venture/industry. This will eventually lead to national development. Agbobu and Aladokun (2000) noted that Vocational Education is instrumental to modern economic development and skilled manpower. They equally stated that it is also capable of providing workers with skills acquired to support developing modern economy.

Challenges of Vocational Education in Nigeria

In spite of the lofty goals of Vocational Education, a lot of challenges which militate against its effective and efficient delivery abound, thus Vocational Education in Nigeria is faced with the following challenges:

- a. **Apathy towards Vocational Education:** The general attitude of the society towards vocational training is never encouraging to any one who wants to embark on it. No wonder the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Nkwodirmah (2011) stated that the general public attitude is that which regard Technical Education as some what inferior to other types of education. The government has not tried to better the status of Vocational Education and that accounts to the reason for regarding graduates of Vocational Education as those who could not make it academically, Afe, (1992). Again, poor salaries are paid to technical workers which gave people the thought that it is not as lucrative as other professions.
- b. **Inadequate Funding:** Afe (1992), stated that Vocational Education is capital intensive. Fund is needed to purchase equipments for practical exercises/works in the laboratories. The Laboratories need to be well equipped for a meaningful learning to take place.
- c. **Insufficient Supply of Equipment and Instructional Material:-** Vocational training as one of the skilled oriented programmes demand that adequate equipment and instructional materials be made available for proper acquisition of skills. Nkwodimmah (2011), citing Ekpenyong (1995) noted that for proper skill acquisition in home economics, there should be enough sewing machines, cooking appliances and other household equipments.
- d. **Insufficient Training and Staffing:** Insufficiency of technical teachers are seriously affecting the vocational subjects in Nigerian vocational schools. Most of the technicians due to the attractive condition of services offered in industries prefer to go there to taking to teaching. These have led to lack of teachers in Nigerian vocational schools. Most vocational schools lack enough qualified competent teachers. No provision is made for the training .and further training of vocational schools teachers with a view to keeping them abreast of change and new developments in their areas.
- e. **Lack of Vocational Guidance:** Student find it difficult making wise choices of trades. No information is available to help them make decisions. The youths are not exposed to the guidelines of vocational training early enough.
- f. **Lack of Power:** Absence of electricity which should be used to operate machinery, has crippled most vocational schools and industries.

Conclusion

Vocational education exposes learners/youths to the world of work culture which ensures that they acquire skills that will help them and the entire society in which they live. There is every need to re-engineer vocational education in Nigeria so as to achieve self reliance and create jobs for entire citizenry.

Recommendations

There is need to re-engineer vocational education in Nigeria for self-reliance, job creation and national development. The paper recommends the following as a means of re-engineering vocational education based on the above challenges:-

- a. Government should help create proper awareness to enlighten the public on the need and importance of vocational education. This will help reduce the notion that vocational education is for the un-intelligent and also reduce inferiority complex. The churches should also help create this awareness on vocational education.
- b. **Funds:** Adequate funds should be allotted to vocational training. It should not only come from the government rather churches, industries and organizations who are aware of the need for vocational training should help.

- c. Equipment and instructional materials should be enough. Nigerian communities, organizations, churches and industries should help us equip Nigerian vocational schools adequately.
- d. There should be adequate training and staffing of teachers in Nigerian vocational schools for effective and efficient skills acquisition that will lead to self reliance and job creation for national development.
- e. Proper vocational guidance should be given to the students at the appropriate period to help channel them aright. The youths should have early exposure to vocational training and education.
- f. The then NEPA (National Electric Power Authority) failed Nigerians in terms of power supply. Nigerians are since its name has been changed to (PHCN) Power Holding Company of Nigeria Plc that it will serve us better.

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