
An Appraisal of Technical/Building Technology Education as a Tool for Developmental Sustainability

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Abstract

In this millennium era, the world economy is now operated by the private sector. Technology education is needed to give the skill, knowledge, training etc. to an individual to assist him or her have an understanding of the kind of work to embark upon. This paper also looks at the concepts of technical/technology education and their benefits. The writer concluded that, there is the need for Nigeria youths to acquire saleable skills in order to prepare them for the challenges of achieving the millennium goals. Recommendations are also proffered, among which are: The government should encourage interested persons to study technical education, there is the need to encourage research activities, there should be training and re-training of technical teachers.

Wide spread poverty does not make for national development. A situation where the bulk of government revenue derivable from the technical and technology industry is not realized does not ensure availability of adequate funding for government projects. (Akin 2005) Reformation of our technology is vital to enhance access to capital for our small and medium scale industries. Technological reformation is essential for the growth and development of free market economy in the country, it's promote democracy and enables comfortable environment for their citizens. Technology reform educational programme and generate useful technical information

system that will be of benefit to the nation in converting her rich raw material resources.

Technology is man's answer to a great deal of his cosmic and environmental limitations. If Nigeria is to effectively develop technologically, education is one of the best ways. This type of education is needed to create, operate, maintain and sustain the technological and economic growth of the nation (Yakubu, 2000).

In this era of globalization, a country without technical and technological base will be turned into a dumping ground for imported goods. The pressure on Nigeria is to source technology acquisition as cheaply as possible to be able to remain competitive in a deregulated global economy (Balogun 2008). The present reality of our economic problems has made the nation to focus attention on the role that technical manpower can play in developing the economy.

Technical graduates are the only group of people within the tertiary educational system that are basically trained to be self-employed.

Technical Education

Technical education in Nigeria dates back to the Nineteenth Century. Technical education is that aspect of education, which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge at upper secondary and tertiary levels to prepare middle-level personnel (technicians, electricians, plumbers, and so on) and at university level, for higher management positions, technical education includes general education, scientific and technical studies and related skill training. The components of technical education may vary considerably depending on the type of personnel to be prepared and the educational level concerned. (Ekpenyong 2005)

Technical education had a slow start and developed less quickly than other forms of education. This is due to the fact that the Colonialist who introduced western education did not popularize it on the same scale as literacy, religious and pedagogical form of education. According to (Btagarawa 2001) the slow pace of technical education in Nigeria is as a result of the fact that "it is expensive to develop and sustain partly because of its high resources requirement.

Importance of Technical Education

Education is important for every individual, it plays a vital role to change the start of a country. Education makes a man realize about himself and his goals and how to achieve those goals.

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Technical education deals with courses that are practical in nature, like agriculture, engineering, building and other areas. We are living in millennium age of science where we find technologies in every aspect of life. Technology eases and makes life comfortable for every day living. It is needed in research centres, in the defense sector; in biological areas etc. no nation can progress unless it promotes the technical aspect in all fields. Technical education produces technicians for all types of industries and it is true that the progress of a country must depend upon its industrialization capacity without which a buoyant economy would not be possible.

Technical education promotes the materials prosperity, economic advancement, self-respect and dignity. If a country has her own technical experts, she may save a lot of foreign exchange. Technical education makes a country rich, prosperous and resourceful.

Building/Technical Education

Technology education is teaching/learning process that equips an individual with the right kind of knowledge, attitudes and skills that enables him to have an intelligent understanding of his environment and propels him to act in such a way to improve it. In this millennium era, it has become necessary to evolve new areas of approach and quality required of the technology education graduates. New competencies should be developed in the following areas (Oduniaya 2006):

- 1 Improved information and communication technology.
- 2 Institution industry relation.
- 3 Staff development.
- 4 Exchange programmes.
- 5 Establishment of industries.

The new information age reduces economic isolation and allows nations to diversify their volatile economic bases by providing an opportunity to participate in the global economic process. The information revolution places an increasing role on knowledge and information as critical factors of production, thereby becoming key inputs into a nation's development strategy. (Ballogun 2008)

Tertiary technological institutions need to encourage and motivate staff to go into the industry and work for a period of time to get acquainted with the current technological requirements of the work environment. For staff and students to effectively train in other part of the world, there is need for the organization of summer courses for staff, where experts would be brought in as facilitators.

Importance of Technology Education

Technology education provides basic technological literacy for everyday living. This functional education emphasizes practical, demonstrations, modeling and the acquisition of skills in the use of tools and equipment. Appropriate technology programmes empower the average Nigerian technically in the world of construction; it makes an individual to be creative and to think critically.

Technology education programmes can provide the skills for self-empowerment by individuals, which will in turn reduce the problems of unemployment in the nation.

Problems of the Technical/Technology Education

In Nigeria we have failed to learn that technology cannot be transferred, it can only be developed. Over the years lack of good background in technology education has adversely affected the nation in realizing sustainability of her development goals. Some of the problems are highlighted below:

- i Inadequate Training:** The training being offered in schools is not relevant to real industrial situations in the building industries. Teaching and instruction are abstract because students cannot practice what they are being thought. Acquisition of knowledge is different from technological capability.
- ii Inadequate Funding and Facilities:** In Nigeria, the institutions offering technology program have financial problems, they lack the finance to equip their laboratories; they pass through the schools without the mastery of their own skills.
- iii Poor Image and Esteem:** In Nigeria, manual labor has no value and the technical/technology programme is associated with manual labour. The craftsmen does not enjoy any recognition in this part of the world.
- iv Lack of Experienced Teachers:** Technical programmes require experience teachers, the caliber of teachers we have in schools cannot undertake any task above their capabilities as many are not current in the area of experience as a result of rapid changes and innovation in technology. The teachers cannot teach what they do not know or have never seen. According to Amaefule (1999) there must be a constant program for the training and re-training of teachers in skill courses. This is very important for the teacher to be abreast of the continuing change in structure and equipment.
- v Inadequate Facilities:** There is the problem of facilities in the teaching of technological programmes in Nigerian schools.

The Need to Acquire Technology Education

Technology education is a course that equips the learner with knowledge and skills in diverse areas: woodwork, metal work, bricklaying, plumbing, electrical installation etc. it will be out of place for any graduate of technology/technical education, having acquired those knowledge to be unemployed. According to (Ekpenyong 2007) they have the knowledge and skills needed to enable them successfully fit into the world of works within the available job opportunities in the society after graduation.

There is the need to seriously consider the technological/technical sector as an area that has not been fully tapped. Technology education can play vital roles in economic development; effective skill acquisition in technology is indispensable towards empowering people and producing a self-reliant nation with dynamic manpower for sustainable development.

Conclusion

In this paper, the authors have examined the importance of technical/technology education for sustainable development; technology is the hub on which development in any organization revolves. The problem of low level technological development is a carry over from the colonial era and low status given to technical education. There is the need for Nigerian youths to acquire saleable skills in order to prepare them for the challenges that lie ahead in this millennium.

Recommendations

- 1 Manual labour should be encouraged in the Nigerian society to enhance self-reliance in order to achieve the millennium developmental goals.
- 2 Technology education requires experience teachers; therefore, there should be training and re-training of teachers.
- 3 There is the need to encourage more activities into technology of the country, this will facilitate the identification of the relevant issues involve in the development of the area and the possible solution to the problems for suitable development in the 21st century.
- 4 For the government to achieve in the area of education in her millennium development goals, attention should be given to technical and technological educational reformation.
- 5 Government should encourage interested persons by offering scholarships to students to study technical courses.
- 6 Programme curriculum should review; and where possible technical courses should be introduced in primary schools.

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