

VOCATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION FOR JOB CREATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The paper examines vocationalization as an approach to education for job creation and sustainable development in Nigeria. An overview of general education and vocational education in this paper identified diffusion and assimilation of knowledge and skills for a balance curriculum such that school leaver would become job creators and not job seekers. In the paper the relevance of vocational education to job creation and sustainable development are examined. Vocationalization of education should make education 'culture specific' in terms of making the curriculum to reflect the traditional vocational /occupational activities of the people. Another aspect of vocationalization is the making of entrepreneurship education a general courses of study in every educational programme.

Introduction

The aim of education generally is to make man useful to himself and the society. Education can also be seen as a tool which enables the individual to live effectively and efficiently, not only for his own benefit but for the benefit of the society. The training any individual may receive from any educational institution should enable the individual to contribute, either in micro or macro level, to the development within socio-economic, political and cultural perspectives. In other words, every useful individual must work

or do a job either independently or in subordinate to another person(s). To this end, education must provide the individual with a vocation or career. One sure way to achieve this is through vocational education without totally neglecting the general education.

Overview of General Education and Vocational Education.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) has identified education as an instrument "per excellence" for effective national development accordingly, it

outlined the national goals of education, based on the Nigerian philosophy of education to include the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society; and the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competences as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

Based on the above excerpt, it could be seen that education in Nigeria has two broad divisions' general education and vocational education. The general education gives the individual a more rounded academic preparation so as to make him feel at home and fit in the world outside his areas of specialization. It is based on those studies known as liberal arts, humanities, social sciences, mathematics, biology and physical sciences.

On the other hand, vocational education is seen as a education programme designed to develop human resources and use of natural and capital resources wisely and to participate fully and effectively as productive members of the society (Okoro, 2003). International labour organization (ILO) equally described vocational training as activities which are essentially aimed at providing the skills, knowledge and altitude required for employment in a particular occupation or function in any field of economic activity including agriculture and industry, commerce and hotel, public and private services etc.

General education and vocational education are often dovetailed within a given educational system and programme, Okoro (1993) explained that general education provides the society's values and the communicative and manipulative skills on which effective vocational education is based. This implies that general education provides knowledge of reading, writing, mathematics, science, without which a good vocational education cannot be imparted. In line with Okoro, Inwang (2000) claimed that vocational education cannot be properly dealt with without first considering general education because the former is rightly the part and component of the later. In other words, without general education, vocational education curriculum is not balanced. This balance in the curriculum will provide learning experiences and opportunities that will produce youths with sound knowledge, skills and good pattern of conduct necessary for a successful and satisfying life as well as sustainable development of the society.

Vocational Education, Job Creation and Sustainable Development

The history of mankind is largely the embodiment of his struggle to satisfy his ever increasing needs and wants, and manipulate his physical environment. From the pre-historic period till date, man assumes the responsibilities to ensure his comfortable, survival by providing himself with foods, shelter, clothing and to defend himself from external aggression. To achieve these, man has to engage himself in work.

Based on the above expositions vocational education can be rooted back to the early occupational practices of man as transferred from generation to generation. In line with this assertion, Okoro (1992) affirmed that vocational education make a very early beginning among the races of mankind. This is expressed in all man's effort to conquer his physical environment, the dangers and rigors of external world. The manual skills and knowledge pertinent to, specific tasks have in one way or another, transferred from man to man and from generation to another. It is clear therefore, that man's ability to inch his life toward better and safer existence was through learning process which were somehow, intuitive and spontaneous. These assertion are the basics of the concept, philosophy and objectives of vocational education, job creation and sustainable development

Accordingly, a definition of vocational education explains a whole range of activities in education for work over a total life span of individual and it cuts across all learning environment of his life span. Although the various definitions of vocational education stem from different philosophical orientation, the common point of convergence is that it is concerned with acquisition of skills and knowledge for employment into useful occupation and improvement of already acquired skills either in the formal or non-formal setting.

Based on the philosophy and objectives of vocational education, the concepts of job creation is basically concerned with the application of

vocational knowledge skills to create opportunities for employment either for oneself or and for others.

Job is a piece of work, especially, one done for purpose of profit. Colloquially, job means employment or post, a transaction in which duty is sacrificed to private advantage. Therefore, any activity of man described as job according to ACAS work research unit and adapted by Mullins (1999) should.

- (i) provide opportunity for learning and problem solving within the individual competence
- (ii) be seen as leading towards some sort of desirable future;
- (iii) provide opportunity for development in ways that are relevant to the individual;
- (iv) enable people to contribute to decision affecting their jobs and their objective.
- (v) ensure that the goals and other peoples expectations are clear and provide a degree of challenge;
- (vi) provide adequate resources (training, information, equipment and materials).
- (vii) provide adequate support from the contacts with others.

This job characteristic model elicits broader social concern for the quality of working life of individual worker(s) with due consideration for their experiences of the work.

No job can be created without adequate education which can, at times, be described as training. Such training, at which ever form or level should be

vocation oriented. Education for job creation is inline with the Nigeria's philosophy of education which among other things believed that education is an instrument for national development. To this end, the formation of ideas, their integration for national development, and the interaction of person and ideas are all aspects of education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

Therefore, education has to be geared towards self realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity as well as towards social, cultural economic political, scientific and technological progress (FRN, 2004).

One major way of achieving sustainable development is for the nation to meet its manpower requirement. Manpower, according to experts is the portion of a nation's population that is capable of engaging in productive employment. With its broad concept, manpower includes all who are potentially employable, ranging from unskilled to highly skilled work.

Manpower development/production is therefore the development of individuals through training to make them capable of engaging in productive employment. Another concept that is closely related to the concept of manpower is the labour force or workforce. Labour is described to comprise all those persons who, whether employed by others or self-employed, are working for a living on a fulltime, part time or temporary basis or who are seeking

employment (Beyer, 1978). Labour force which can at times, be referred to as labour supply or labour market can be seen as the showroom for manpower.

In line with the issues of job creation and sustainable development, labour is an inevitable factor because society or nation's wealth is often measured by the number of its citizen who have contributed meaningfully to the growth of the society. A wealthy society is one that is capable of meeting her economic, social, moral, and political obligations if the wealth is properly managed. For a society to claim that she is wealthy or viable economically, members of the society must be knowledgeable and skilled to influence positively the industrial and agricultural sectors of the economy. That is, the society through her citizens, must be industrially buoyant, agriculturally sufficient, technically up on date, and must maintain balance of trade within and out side her boundaries (Olaitan, 1996).

Consequently, the wealth of a nation is essentially the function of the nation's manpower development policy and programme. The policy and programme determine the quantity and quality of labour force required to handle the natural resources for sustainable development. The process harassing these resources would result to job creation. By implication, the educational achievement of a nation in the production of workforce is a significant factor in improving the quality of labour with respect to her manpower requirement (Essien, 2004).

Vocationalization of Education, Job Creation and Sustainable Development

Vocationalization means making the general aim and objective of education vocation oriented. It involves the search for an alternative curricular or an attempt to reform the traditional curricular that is liberal in content; as necessitated by the need for a utilitarian education for the nation to counterbalance the over emphasis upon liberal education of the elite handed down by the colonial masters.

Vocationalized education include indeed, the network of all human efforts undertaken in formal, informal, non-formal, traditional or modern way to make individuals cultivate the right set of habit and skills which will enable him to survive and operate meaningfully as vocational or trained members of the society (Otagburuagu, 1994).

Admittedly, self-employment and self-reliance are mutually interdependent in the sense that the first anticipates and implies the other. Self-employment in the context of this paper is a situation in which an individual utilizes his education, skills, training, mental and physical resources etc, to earn a living by channeling such potentials to meaningful and satisfying productive goals. Self-employment means an awareness of the individual talent(s) and the exploitation or utilization of these talents for the benefit of the individual and his society. Self-employment is the ability to work, the willingness to generate the work (create the job) to be done and the wage to be earned without depending on the public sector-generated employment. Some individuals may generate work or

create job not only for themselves, but also for others whom they would employ.

Vocationalization of education should produce a models that would make education in Nigeria 'culture specific'. This means that education in every culture must seek ways to transmitting the norms, values, science, art and the world view of the culture in which it is a part. It is worthy of mention that pre-literate Nigerian communities relied on the traditional form of education for the preparation of their children for life. The education models postulated by this paper should introduce the learning of our traditional craft and technologies, since technology is strongly influenced by culture and geographical area in which it arises and by the materials available for vocational or occupational activities.

In Nigeria for instance, several fundamental differences exist between the Northern and Southern part of the country with respect to the physical environment, social organization and agricultural produces. Based on the premise, in the Niger Delta, for example, the occupation of the people include farming, fishing, collection and processing of palm fruits and hunting. Others are boat-making, net making as well as local gin manufacturing; hence, their vocational activities are largely influence by the cultural and geographical feature of the area. The induction of this traditional arts, crafts and knowledge in the education system will produce individuals who could create jobs and not legions of job seekers.

This will reduce urban migration with its endemic problems to the socio-

economic wellbeing of the nation. The individuals will then explore and exploit the available natural resources in their immediate community to earn living.

In the process of vocationalization of education, training institutions from the senior secondary school level to the tertiary level in every programme of study should include entrepreneurship development in her respective programmes or curricular. Such curricula should be psycho productive based, where the aims and objectives of the curricula should be functional, practical and utilitarian in nature.

It has been obvious that the various government programmes and schemes to promote job creation have not yielded the expected results. Such programmes include National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Small and Medium Enterprise Scheme (SMES) and Micro-Finance Scheme. The failure is not in these programmes and schemes only but in every education programme available in Nigeria system. One major reason for this is lack of entrepreneurship education as integral part of the various programmes and schemes.

Entrepreneurship according to Zuamo and Aondoakaa (2007) is the process of identifying, developing, and bringing vision to life. Vision according to the authors may be an innovative idea, an opportunity or simply a better way of doing something. The end result of this according to the authors is the creation of new venture (job) under conditions of risk and considerable uncertainty

Entrepreneurship can be expressed in several ways. The most popular ones can be through opening need organization (e.g starting a new business), Another approach is to promote innovation or introduce new products or services or market in existing firms its an approach referred to as corporate entrepreneurship. A recent approach involves charitable organization (or portions of existing charities) which are designed to be self supporting in addition to doing their works (Tyolumun and Umogbai, 2003).

Vocationalization of education through the introduction of entrepreneurship education in every education programme like other general courses, will make the three major educational objective of Nigeria as provided in section L, and subsection seven of the National Policy on Education attainable. Every school leaver should be able to create job and not to seek for jobs. When this is achieved, the development of the nation will be sustained.

Conclusion

From what has been discussed in this paper, it is clear that we do not need a new system of education to promote job creation and sustainable development in Nigeria. What is required is to make the curriculum all embracing, every education programme must be vocational oriented with emphasis on psycho productive objectives. Every student should be made to learn the traditional Craft, Art, Science and technology that is 'culture specific' to the individual; bearing in mind the availability of raw materials or natural

resources in their immediate environment. Furthermore, entrepreneurship education should be a general course of study at the secondary and tertiary level of education in Nigeria.

Recommendation

For job creation and sustainable development in Nigeria: The curriculum for every form of education must be vocational and all embracing in nature, this must be complemented with general education.

The objective of every form of education must be geared towards developing skills and being self-reliant.

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