
EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

The paper dwelt on; effective management of technical education for sustainable development and national security: the Nigerian experience. Important concepts embedded in the work were extensively discussed. They include; education, management, technical education, development, sustainable development and national security. The benefits of technical education and the challenges facing technical education in Nigeria were given elaborate attention. The causes of insecurity and the effects of insecurity in Nigeria were thoroughly ventilated. The writers lamented that Nigerian's technical education and indeed the entire education sector is comatose. Insecurity has indeed taken over the entire landscape what with Boko Haram insurgency, herdsmen menace, kidnaping, violent armed robbery and incessant banditry. The writers submit that the Nigerian State is indeed on a precipice. The writers as a way forward recommended amongst others; increased funding in the education sector to the tune of at least 26% of annual budget as recommended by UNESCO, declaration of emergency in the education sector and technical education in particular amongst many other recommendations.

Keywords: Education, management, technical education, sustainable development.

Every society both ancient and modern, through purposeful leadership continuously strive in pursuit of a better life for its citizens. The better life comes in form of quality education, healthcare, agriculture, general infrastructure. The list is endless. Of all the aforelisted, education seems the most vital and strategic as it drives every facet of any nation's economy; be it health systems, improved agricultural production, conducive business environment and general infrastructure. Education (formal and informal) makes all the difference between man and lower animals. It remains the most potent instrument for social change.

Concept of Education

Education is the process through which worthwhile values, beliefs, norms and attitudes of a given society are transferred from the older to the younger generation. It is the process which facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, habits and norms (Chukwu, 2020). In the words of Akani (2012) education is an instrument of positive change which empowers its recipients to be creative and become change agents useful to themselves and the society at large. Education is a veritable instrument in the development of human persons. When individuals are empowered through functional education, they are better equipped to; live better and ordered lives, understand their interests and vocations, have a zeal to succeed amidst odds and have better focus and desire to put into profitable ventures the skills and knowledge acquired (Offor, 2013). To be able to achieve its purposes, education at any level (primary, secondary, technical and tertiary must not just be qualitative, but functional. In espousing the essence of education, Rousseau in Chukwu and Nnaji (2018:298) avers that:

We are born weak; we need strength, helpless, we need aid, foolish, we need reason. All that we lack at birth, all that we need when we come to man's estate is the gift of education. This education comes to us from the education of men, what we gain by our experience of our surrounding is education.

Socrates (470-399BC) maintains that; the only good is knowledge conferred through education, while the worst of evils is ignorance. From the forgoing, it is obvious that education (whether formal, informal, general or technical education) is life itself and an indispensable instrument for the development and transformation of both individuals and nation states.

Concept of Management

Different scholars see the concept of management from divergent perspectives. What is very clear however is that management involves; people, coordination of group efforts including materials resources for the achievement of predetermined objectives. Drucker cited in Chukwu and Nnaji (2018) argue that management involves administering and coordinating resources effectively and efficiently in an effort to achieve organizational goals. Daft in Unachukwu (2014) submits that management is the attainment of organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner through planning organizing, leading and controlling organizational resources.

Contributing, Bhagwan and Bhushan in Sule (2016) maintains that management is the process of directing and facilitating the work of people organized in formal groups to achieve a desired goal. Bateman and Snell cited in Chukwu and Nnaji (2018) assert that management is the process of working with people and resources to accomplish organizational goals.

The foregoing postulations clearly indicate that achieving organizational goals is not possible without effective and efficient management process. Effective efficient and result oriented management of technical education for sustainable development and national security in Nigeria becomes absolutely germane and compelling.

Technical and Vocational Education

According to Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN (2004:29-31) technical and vocational education is used as a comprehensive term referring to three 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. Technical and vocational education which is given in technical colleges, monotronics, polytechnics and universities is further understood to be;

- a) an integral part of general education;
- b) a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work;
- c) an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship;
- d) an instrument for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development;
- e) a method of alleviating poverty.

The goals of technical and vocational education in Nigeria include to:

- a) provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and technical levels;

- b) provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development;
- c) giving training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self reliant economically.

It is unambiguous from the above that education, indeed technical education is the most potent instrument for societal growth and development. There is a distinct dissimilarity between what obtains in the living standards of the citizens in the first or advanced world and what obtains in underdeveloped third world countries particularly in Africa, including Nigeria. The advanced countries including; USA, Japan, Britain, France, Germany, Australia, Israel and Canada including the emergent Asian Tigers (Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Taiwan) are characterized by advanced health systems, technology driven agricultural production, very conducive business environment, guaranteed security for the citizenry, advanced and reliable information systems. The list goes on and on. It is the strong technical education systems of these countries that ensured they are ready for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Conversely, our dear Nigeria and other developing and underdeveloped nations especially in Africa are pervaded by very poor health systems, primitive agricultural production, very hostile business environment, high levels of insecurity (Boko haram, herdsmen menace and banditry in Nigeria), erratic information systems very poor power supply and general poor infrastructural facilities. The list is indeed endless. The very poor technical education systems in Nigeria and other third world economics has ensured that life in these countries remain short, cruel, brutish, hopeless and a survival of the fittest. Low life expectancy and high rates of migration are equally features of these countries. Nigeria and her ilk are evidently not ready for the challenges of the 21st century and beyond.

Benefits of Technical Education

Technical education is the education which provides special practical knowledge of technologies and skills to the beneficiaries. The major aim of technical education is that it makes its beneficiaries or students skilled and technically fit for the industries. Some of the benefits of technical education include:

1. It creates excellent opportunities for career and employment.
2. It impart the knowledge strongly from the basics to advanced and modern technologies for the budding technical aspirants. I am certain this is what Enugu State College of Education (Technical) is doing.
3. Technical education promotes independent and self learning.

4. Technical education tunes the student effectively and increases his potential especially for the world of work.
5. Technical education is not about writing and passing exams, but infuses in the student or beneficiary the technical bias thereby making him or her ready for the challenges of today and tomorrow.
6. It offers good opportunities for employment and quickly turns the beneficiaries from job seekers to employers of labour.
7. It makes the student self dependent. I know many students of Government Technical, Enugu who are training themselves and even helping the family economically with their earnings. I don't know whether this is equally the case with the students of Enugu State College of Education Technical (ESCET).
8. It helps greatly in reducing the scourge of unemployment.
9. Those who are in the conventional institutions writing and passing examinations that have little relevance in the modern world economic order most often end up unemployed and frustrated. This is not the case with beneficiaries of technical education.
10. Technical education ensures the development, progress and prosperity of nations (Mehdra, 2020:5-6).

It is very important to state that technical education is most often far cheaper than general education. This is because courses in general education take longer years with far expensive tuition. Parents should take note of this glaring fact.

It is clear that technical education is the way to go and very indispensable in this day and age. It is equally and clearly too an important component of sustainable development for nations.

Challenges Facing Technical Education in Nigeria

Enormous challenges stand in the way of technical education in Nigeria from achieving its set goals. Such challenges include:

1. **Inadequate funding:** We all know how important money is in the life of individuals, groups, organizations and governments. Due to poor funding, these technical institutions lack the requisite infrastructure and equipment that will enable them to excel. Such infrastructure and equipment include; classrooms, offices, functional libraries and laboratories. In the absence of these facilities, these institutes often churn out half-baked graduates who cannot perform in the workplace.
2. **Inadequate facilities:** Very often these institutes lack enough spaces for laboratories not talk of the equipment itself. In many instances, even when the equipment is available, the conducive environment to mount them for use becomes an issue and they are left to rot in the

rain and sun. Such scenarios are always embarrassing and an eye sure. Meanwhile the students and staff who are supposed to use such needed equipment are the ultimate losers.

3. Brain drain: This refers to migration of qualified technical teachers out of the country in search of greener pastures. Bassi cited in Okoye and Arimonu (2016) reported that 45% of Nigerian professionals including technical educators left the shores of our country. Why? In search of better livelihood of course. Sad indeed.

4. Poor staff motivation: This is a major challenge facing technical education and education generally in Nigeria. Very often the meagre salaries and emoluments of these teachers are not paid for months. They work with outdated equipment which are very often not available at all. Staff promotion hardly comes as and when due. The work environment very often is not just unfriendly but hostile. Staff dedication becomes a scarce commodity under these circumstances. You can now tell me how stated objectives will be achieved under such circumstances. These staff members who have varying family challenges to cope with pay little attention to their primary responsibility in the classroom and laboratory to hustle for their children's school fees, house rent, medical bills and most importantly feeding. President Buhari promised special scale for teachers in his independent day broadcast 2020. It is important to remind ourselves that many states of the federation have not implemented the ₦30,000 minimum wage approved by the federal government. Many states are equally owing their teachers a backlog of salary arrears. Where minimum wage is implemented, it is often haphazard.

5. Corruption: Corruption has become a hydra-headed monster bedeviling every facet of our national existence, including the technical education sub-sector. A greater percentage of budgetary allocations to the technical education sector and education generally very often their way into the private pockets of corrupt officials at the ministry, board and school levels. In cutting corners, refurbished equipment are bought instead of new ones budgeted for. Such equipment breakdown even before being put to use. In building classrooms and offices, contractors do shoddy jobs that never stands the test of time. These perpetrators are often never visited with appropriate sanctions because they are connected in high and low places. The culprits are even rewarded with more juicy contracts and appointments and the vicious cycle persists.

6. Skewed Value System of Nigerians: In our country today, too much emphasis is placed on university education and qualification not minding whether the holder possesses the requisite knowledge and skill. This is not the case in advanced countries whether skill and competence is what matters. In Nigeria's public service at both federal and state levels, graduates of technical education are often discriminated against and their career growth and prospects stunted. For this reason, most parents prefer university education and certification

to technical education (Nworlu – Elechi in Okoye & Arimonu 2016). Remember the raging controversy as it concerns the holders of B.Sc and HND certificates. The wrong value system of present day Nigerians, has ensured that it is only he with the cash that matters. Integrity no longer counts. The get rich quick syndrome has been raised to new heights and corruption has become a normal feature of the daily existence of Nigerians. It's really pitiable.

7. Lack of Political Will: Nigeria is no doubt blessed super abundantly. I doubt if there is any nation on the planet more blessed than Nigeria in terms of human and material resources. Lack of the will to do what is right on the part the weak, corrupt and highly incompetent political leadership especially at the centre has ensured that square pegs are almost always put in round holes. Nepotism, religious sentiments, tribalism and other social ills has created inscrutable cleavages within the polity. These sentiments count more in appointments instead of competence.

8. It is cardinal to point out that the curriculum of technical education in Nigeria which is based on foreign cum colonial model that is not suited to our environment is equally a major challenge.

From literature thus far, it clear that Nigeria as a polity is sick, our educational system and technical education sub-sector is on life support. Can this system help the nation achieve sustainable development in any way? Your guess is as good as ours.

Sustainable Development

We must at least have a grasp of the concept of development before delving into the broader sphere of sustainable development.

Development as espoused by Mbonu and Njoku (2017) is essentially a continuous process of generating and allocating resources for achieving greater socially satisfying needs. Development is a dialectical phenomenon in which the individual and the society interact with their physical, biological and inter-human environments, transform them for their own betterment and that of humanity at large through their knowledge of education. It involves comprehensive change or transformation in cultural, educational, economic, social and political fields. Development is seen as that process by which the adaptation capacity of any unit is increased. Development is an overall social process dependent upon the outcome of man's effort to deal with his natural environment which will involve going beyond the immediate situation and thinking of controlling their environments on a firm and continuous basis.

Nations the world over, have been striving to achieve sustainable development through initiating and instituting programmes to improve the way things are done.

Sustainable development calls for constant effort to initiate programmes and executing them for the overall interest of the people. The world commission on Environment and Development cited in Chukwu, Agada and Eze (2017:62) posits that:

Sustainable development is development which meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is a systematic concept relating to the continuity of economic, social, institutional and environmental aspects of human society as well as non-human environment.

The concept of sustainable development was originally introduced at the first earth summit held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972. Gathered in Sweden, representatives of government and non-governmental organizations identified education as fundamental to the successful achievement of sustainable development. However, little progress has been achieved since then, necessitating the injection of a badly needed urgency in 2005 when the United Nations adopted a decade of education for sustainable development.

In furtherance of the above, the adoption included the integration of the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning. The idea is that such an input will create a more sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations.

The purpose of sustainable development is to provide a means of configuring civilization and human activity so that society, its members and economics are able to meet their needs and express their greatest potential in the present, while preserving bio diversity and natural ecosystems. Planning for the ability to maintain this sustainable development emphasizes a desirable future state for human society in which living conditions and resource use meet human needs without undermining the sustainability of natural systems and the environment so that future generations may also have their needs met.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) cited in Chukwu, Agada and Eze (2017) highlighted the principles underlying sustainable development to include; intergenerational equity, gender equity and equality, just and peaceable societies, social tolerance, environmental preservation and restoration, poverty alleviation and natural resource conservation. The listed principles must be reasonably achieved before sustainable development can add value to the lives of the people.

From the foregoing, it is safe to say that sustainable development is all encompassing, cutting across all aspects of development, not a single or two year affair, but affects development at the present time, while ensuring that future development is not undermined. This would be an explanation to why countries strive to improve the standard of living of their citizens by ensuring that life enhancing projects are initiated to meet the present needs and also laying solid foundations whereby the needs of the future can also be

effectively met. Sustainable development is anchored on democracy, good governance, security, employment, social cohesion, quality health care, human rights and justice for all.

National Security

The news of the brutal murder of the very Reverend Father Paul Offu on August 1, 2019 sent down shivers down our spines. This happened barely five months after the decomposing body of Fr. Clement Ugwu was discovered in a bush barely one week following his kidnap. Many other cases of rape, kidnapping, murder has since been recorded in our dear Enugu State, still regarded amongst the safest states in Nigeria.

The herdsmen are on rampage across the country, killing, maiming, rapping and kidnapping at will with almost nothing being done in checkmating their nefarious activities. Killings in genocidal proportions are ongoing in southern Kaduna. Katsina, Mr. Presidents home state and other Northern states are not safe. The Kaduna-Abuja highway has become a no go area, just like many other highways across the land. Boko Haram has taken over the North East in pursuit of their so called statehood, the caliphate.

Truth is, there is uttermost and palpable fear in the land. Life has become so cheap in Nigeria that deaths of any kind hardly make news any longer. Nigeria is indeed on a precipice and something urgent needs be done.

The issue of security has been topical since primitive times. Audu, Lukeman and Mohammed (2014) argue that since the end of the cold war, there appears to be a shift from viewing security from state-centric perspective to a broader view encapsulating; human security, human rights and national development.

Iredia cited in Joshua, Ibietan and Azuh (2016) posit that national security is the capacity of a state to overcome challenges confronting her. He added that national security is not limited to military might, defence or law enforcement; it covers basic dimensions like job, water and food security. Any individual or any nation that cannot feed and/or shelter himself or feed and/or shelter its population is vulnerable and insecure. Any nation characterized by spiraling unemployment, inflation, high levels of tribalism, religious bigotry, moribund educational system, and beggarly infrastructure is insecure.

National security is equally seen as a state or condition in which the most cherished values of a country and the people are permanently protected and continuously enhanced. The concept of security also denotes the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger. It also implies the defence and protection of values acquired. Security has to do with freedom from danger or threat to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values, legitimate interests and enhance the wellbeing of its citizens. Internal security implies freedom from danger to life and property. Security is any mechanism

devised to alleviate the most serious threat that prevent people from pursuing their cherished values and interests.

From the aforesaid, it is easy to deduce that insecurity implies a state of vulnerability to attacks, danger or threats to a people, their properties, esteemed principles and the inability of the nation to protect its citizens. Alemika cited in Joshua et al (2016) postulated that insecurity can be classified into several dimensions. The most significant dimensions are:

- a) Physical insecurity: Violent personal and property crimes.
- b) Public insecurity: Violent conflicts, insurgency and terrorism.
- c) Economic insecurity: Hunger, poverty, unemployment, homelessness.
- d) Social insecurity: Illiteracy, ignorance, ill health, malnutrition, lack of clean water, discrimination and exclusion.
- e) Human right violation: Denial of fundamental rights by state and non state actors.
- f) Political insecurity: Denial of good and social democratic governance.

The dimensions of insecurity as highlighted above are interwoven and cannot be treated in strict isolation. Anan cited in Joshua et al (2016:3661-3662), in this wise argues that:

Today we know that security means far more than absence of conflict. We know that lasting peace requires a broader vision encompassing areas such as education, health, democracy and human rights, protection against environmental degradation and the proliferation of deadly weapons. We know that we cannot be secure amidst starvation, that we cannot build peace without alleviating poverty, and that we cannot build freedom on the foundation of injustice. These pillars of what we now understand as the people centred concept of human security are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

The foregoing altruistic, time tested postulation is not just apt, but lays bare the fact that security engenders, quality (technical) education and sustainable development. Conversely, good and quality education including sustainable development, cannot thrive in an atmosphere characterized by insecurity. Condoleeza Rice, former secretary of State of the United States of America asserts that, quality education of a nation is a direct function of a countries national security. This relationship springs from the role education plays in proving the knowledge base for technological training. In the main, education, technical education is as important as national security. The Boko Haram insurgency has become a festering sore because the Nigerian military is fighting 21st century Islamic military insurgency with 19th century military education.

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

The causes of insecurity in Nigeria include:

1. High rates of unemployment and poverty. Nigeria has been rated the poverty capital of the world by the United Nations
2. High rates of illiteracy among Nigerians
3. Ethnicity and religious differences
4. Corruption and unethical practices by Nigerians especially the political elite
5. Porous borders
6. The synergy between national security and democratic rule
7. Lack of maximization of the security budget
8. Terrorism
9. Rapid population growth
10. Poor economic policies by the various governments
11. Struggle for resources and land
12. The very wide gap between the rich and the poor
13. Lack of accountability and good governance.

Effects of Insecurity in Nigeria

These include:

1. Brain drain: Flight of badly needed professionals who seek employment outside the country.
2. Low foreign direct investment
3. Unemployment
4. Underdevelopment
5. Poor image of the country among the committee of nations
6. Heightened secessionist agitations
7. Diversion of scarce resources from areas of need
8. Large-scale devastation of property including individual homes, places of worship and farmlands (Omolumen and Audu, 2014),

Technical Education, Sustainable Development and National Security: The Nigerian Experience

It was former president, General Olusegun Obasanjo who recently opined that Nigeria currently possesses all the characteristics of a failed state. Who are we to disagree with him with all that stares us in the face today. A retired General and a two time Head of

State. He should know far better than most of us do. However watching closely, the state of affairs in the polity, even the uniformed will fully agree with the retired General.

Our educational system is ailing; occasioned by poor funding crumbling and ramshackle infrastructure and facilities, low staff and students motivation and morale, ceaseless strike actions, including the so called quota system that discards merit in place of mediocrity. The list is endless. In case we do not know, the Nigerian government budget for education was less than 7% of total estimate for this 2020 fiscal year. This is far removed from at least 26% UNESCO recommendation on budget to education for developing countries, including Nigeria. Let's not forget that Nigeria still has well over 10million school age children out of school. The situation in the education sector is indeed appalling. Let's not forget too that the Academic Staff Union of Universities has been on strike since the 23rd of March 2020 struggling to salvage our public universities from total collapse. Our public primary and secondary schools has since crumbled.

Nigeria scores very low in sustainable development. This is occasioned by an appalling educational system, health sector that is not working, terrible infrastructure and facilities, poor transport systems and an alarming security situation. Desertification is still a big problem, coupled with gas flaring and other sources of environmental degradation.

On security, the security situation in Nigeria has become so horrific that Nigeria is now being placed in the same league with such failed states like Somalia, Libya, Central African Republic (CAR), Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. What a pity. Nigeria ranks 16th in the list of most dangerous countries on the planet. Since 2015 till date, Nigeria has been rated by the World Terrorism Index (WTI) as the third most impacted country in the world by terrorism. Only Afghanistan and Iraq ranks above Nigeria. It is very embarrassing that our dear country ranks worse than Syria, Yemen, Somalia and Libya. According to Global Conflict Tracker, Boko Haram insurgency has claimed about 37,500 lives since 2011 and displaced about 2.5 million. The figures could be far higher. There is no end in sight to the carnage as it looks like the insurgents are taking the battle to the soldiers instead of the other way round. Large parts of the North East has become no go areas as the insurgents decimate both armed soldiers and civilians at will as reported daily in the media.

Reports indicate equally that most primary and secondary schools especially in rural Borno State are not functional. The humanitarian crises in the North East is indeed alarming and the destruction in infrastructure is unprecedented. Book Haram is rated by the United Nations as the world's deadliest terrorist organization. The very bad news indicate that ISIS and ISWAP has joined the fray in Nigeria. There is serious cause for concern.

Conclusion

Education, technical education is the very to technological growth and development of nations especially developing economies like Nigeria in this 21st century. When the various governments lay more emphasis on qualitative technical education with more youths benefitting, it means more youths will graduate from schools with skills, with many becoming employers of labour instead of job seekers. With this scenario, the insurgents will have less recruits. It is a well known fact that it is the idle mind that turns the devils workshop.

Recommendations

1. The various governments in the country should ensure that they set aside at least 26% of their annual budgetary allocations to education. This by extension, flows to the technical education sub sector.
2. Emergency should be declared on Nigerian's education system with massive rejuvenation in infrastructural facilities.
3. Special grants should be offered to technical instructors and teachers in all the schools to motivate them to give out their best in terms of teaching, learning and transfer of skills.
4. Constant training, retraining and inservice education must be made available to these teachers in technical order to constantly expose them to the latest in classroom pedagogy.
5. The various governments in the country should build more technical schools, colleges and universities, and ensure they are well equipped with well qualified highly motivated teachers and instructors. These schools will without doubt be churning out highly skilled graduates who are agents of sustainable development. The graduates will equally be highly skilled in various disciplines; auto mechanics, refrigeration, computer software and hardware etc. Instead of being job seekers these graduates will in no time become employers of labour contributing to national economic development and growth.
6. Courses on environmental sustainability should form part of the curriculum of technical education in technical colleges, polytechnics and colleges of engineering and technology in the various universities.
7. Security education should equally be integrated into the curriculum of at all levels in the country.

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