

REFOCUSING TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: PANACEA FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA.

BY

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Abstract

This paper defines Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as an aspect of education that provides the learners with theoretical and practical knowledge of becoming independent members in society. Also, it looks at Economic Development as qualitative and quantitative increase in productivity that improves the living standard of majority segment of the population. It also discussed theories of Economic development such as neoclassical theory, structural theory and so on. Besides, it reviewed the strategies for refocusing (TVET). Also, the roles of (TVET) to Economic Development were reviewed. Finally, the paper recommended that (TVET) should be part of general statics in aim higher institution should enlighten on the importance of (TVET) among others.

Introduction

Generally speaking, education is said to be the most important element in the development of any nation. The importance of education in social, economic, politics cannot be over emphasized. It is in line with this that no nation of the world is wishing to be left behind in educating her citizens. Moreso, it is the means for the advancement of knowledge and development, refinement and application of theories and for providing solutions to all forms of problems (Adedokun, 2009). The level of economic development of every society depends on education especially Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). This is because TVET is both theoretical and practical oriented which is needful as far as 21st century is concerned. In addition, the level of Economic Development of any nation is defined by its ability to provide for its citizens with basic needs like food cloth, shelter, health and basic education. TVET is a password to any nation that wants to join the league of

technologically developed nations. Infarct, it is the backbone of industrial, social and economic development. The quality of economic development of a nation depends on TVET. Agogo(2010) lamented that Nigeria's economy is at a crossroad because of the stress on a one footed revenue agenda: Oil and Gas Sector. The basic solution to Nigeria's monocultural economy is diversification in which TVET is a panacea to industrialization, modernization and civilization and among others. It is in the light of above that this paper reviews theories of economic development, importance of TVET to economic development and principles TVET among others.

Concept of Technical Vocational Educational and Training

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been an integral part of national development strategies in many societies because of its impact on productivity and economic development. Despite its

contributions the leaders of Nigeria have not given this aspect of education the attention it deserves. And that is one of the reasons for the nation's underdevelopment. This article focuses on the dearth of skilled technical manpower in Nigeria and argues that technical education holds the key to national development.¹

Technical education "is a planned program of courses and learning experiences that begins with exploration of career options, supports basic academic and life skills, and enables achievement of high academic standards, leadership, preparation for industry-defined work, and advanced and continuing education."² And vocational education and training "prepares learners for careers that are based in manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation." In other words, it is an "education designed to develop occupational skills."³ Vocational and technical education gives individuals the skills to "live, learn and work as a productive citizen in a global society."

According to the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) it is defined as that aspect of education that leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. In this sense, it forms a practical segment of education that involves skill acquisition. Therefore, technical education is a subset of vocational education.

Similarly, technical vocational education and training is that education designed to prepare an individual for gainful employment as semi-skilled or skilled worker or technicians or sub-professional in recognized occupations and in new and emerging occupations or to prepare the individual for enrolment in advanced technical education programme. Technical Vocational Education Training can be explained in terms of: – training designed to advance an individual's proficiency in relation to his or her

present or future occupation, training or re-training which is given in schools or classes under public supervision and control; provision of systematic training experiences which are designed to fit individuals in recognized occupations. Thus, vocational education is that part of total educational system, which offers courses leading to the acquisition of specific skills to enable one to perform certain job. Sometimes, vocational education offers re-training to up-grade workers already in employment.(Adedakum, 2009) It is directed towards the preparation for occupational life since its recipients are equipped to face the challenges of the world of work. Vocational education preparation can be equated to the acquisition of a training experience that culminates in an industrial experience within a work-oriented society. It entails the transmission of knowledge and acquisition of skills that are related to various occupations.

It also entails the enrichment of the capabilities that influence the effective, psychomotor or cognitive domains of individual in readiness for entry into the world of work in order to satisfy their intrinsic and extrinsic values, work goals and aspirations such that local and national needs would be met. Recently, technical and vocational education is used as a comprehensive term for retraining in those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisitions in various sectors of economic and social life.(Agogo, 2010).

Technical vocational educational and training courses attract students who leave school and are unable to obtain employment. For such students, it offers them the opportunity the school system has to give them for training in technical fields. Furthermore, the mission of technical vocational education is not only to provide definite training in the various

occupations, but also to relate that training to science, mathematics history, geography which are useful the society. Vocational and technical education is not left out in agriculture.

It is needed to direct those in the sector towards making the farmer an intelligent user of our natural resources. Technical vocational education and training is also needed to prevent waste of human resources. So far, Nigeria has given very little attention to conservation of human resources. It is obvious that the waste of labour by improper employment can be largely avoided through technical vocational and training. Such training is the most potent remedy for unemployment.

Furthermore, technical vocational education training is needed in every aspect of our national life. The problem of juvenile delinquency and crime can be reduced if the youths are given the necessary technical vocational education and training that will keep them busy. In developed world, technical vocational education and training is regarded as a wise investment. It is believed by many people that through technical vocational education and training, boys and girls as well as adults will be trained to acquire requisite skills that will enable them secure employments, which will be beneficial to themselves and the society.(Apago and Adedural, 2007) The further buttressed that students have to work in laboratories and workshops that are well equipped with recent machines and tools like the ones they will encounter in industries. A lot is required. Therefore, government should increase the budgetary allocation to technical vocational education and training. And we know that government cannot do it all alone, corporate organizations, parents and alumni associations should assist in providing some of these equipment needed in the training of technical vocational education for students. Efforts should also be made by the government to see that there is full implementation of the

policies as they concern technical vocational education and training. They should make this possible by promulgating a decree or sanctioning each state that fails to adopt or implement the policy fully.(Mohammad, 2010)

Concept of Economic Development

Economic development is a term that economists, politicians, and others have used frequently in the 20th century. The concept, however, has been in existence in the West for centuries. *Modernization*, *Westernization*, and especially *Industrialization* are other terms people have used while discussing economic development. Economic development has a direct relationship with the environment and issues. Whereas economic development is a policy intervention endeavor with aims of economic and social well-being of people, economic growth is a phenomenon of market productivity and rise in gross domestic product (GDP). Consequently, as economist Amartyasen points out, "economic growth is one aspect of the process of economic development you most likely help fund economic development every time you purchase something at the store and pay local or state sales tax. That cup of coffee, those new shoes you bought, or the real estate taxes you may pay, all usually have a percentage of the sales going towards economic development projects or initiatives.

Economic Development is the development of economic wealth of countries, regions or communities for the well-being of their inhabitants. From a policy perspective, economic development can be defined as efforts that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community by creating and/or retaining jobs and supporting or growing incomes and the tax base.

In support of the mission of the University of Wyoming, the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics and the Cooperative

Extension Service conduct research in the area of Community Economic Development and analysis.

The concept of *economic development* is often misunderstood. Many times the term is confused with *economic growth* to define any type of money generating activity in the community. To further cloud the issue, there is no one prescription for economic development that will full-fill the needs of all communities. Successful economic development is a process that fills different needs for different communities at different times. Its success is often case specific, depending on the development goals, implementation and funding resources available. Communities need to thoroughly understand the process before jumping onto the economic development bandwagon. The results of misunderstanding the process can be misunderstanding by the community and political gridlock in the bureaucracy. (PA Klein 1977).

Theories of development economics: the most significant visible impact of American TVET institution has been in the field of what is called development economics according to PA Klein-Journal of uneconomic issues, (1977) Taylor & Francis.

Mercantilism Theory

The earliest Western theory of development economics was mercantilism, which was developed in the 17th century, paralleling the rise of the nation state. Earlier theories had given little attention to development. For example, Scholasticism the dominant school of thought during medieval feudalism, emphasized reconciliation with Christian theology and ethics, rather than development.

Structural Change Theory

Structural-change theory deals with policies focused on changing the economic structures of developing countries from being composed

primarily of subsistence agricultural practices to being a "more modern, more urbanized, and more industrially diverse manufacturing and service economy." There are two major forms of structural-change theory; W. Lewis' *two-sector surplus model*, which views agrarian societies as consisting of large amounts of surplus labor which can be utilized to spur the development of an urbanized industrial sector, and Hollis Chenery's *patterns of development* approach, which holds that different countries become wealthy via different trajectories. The *pattern* that a particular country will follow, in this framework, depends on its size and resources, and potentially other factors including its current income level and comparative advantages relative to other nations. Empirical analysis in this framework studies the "sequential process through which the economic, industrial and institutional structure of an underdeveloped economy is transformed over time to permit new industries to replace traditional agriculture as the engine of economic growth.

Structural-change approaches to development economics have faced criticism for their emphasis on urban development at the expense of rural development which can lead to a substantial rise in inequality between internal regions of a country. The two-sector surplus model, which was developed in the 1950s, has been further criticized for its underlying assumption that predominantly agrarian societies suffer from a surplus of labor. Actual empirical studies have shown that such labor surpluses are only seasonal and drawing such labor to urban areas can result in a collapse of the agricultural sector. The patterns of development approach have been criticized for lacking a theoretical framework.

International Dependence Theory

International Dependence Theories gained prominence in the 1970s as a reaction to the

failure of earlier theories to lead to widespread successes in international development. Unlike earlier theories, international dependence theories have their origins in developing countries and view obstacles to development as being primarily external in nature, rather than internal. These theories view developing countries as being economically and politically dependent on more powerful, developed countries which have an interest in maintaining their dominant position. There are three different, major formulations of international dependence theory: neocolonial dependence theory, the false-paradigm model, and the dualistic-dependence model. The first formulation of international dependence theory, neocolonial dependence theory, has its origins in Marxism and views the failure of many developing nations to undergo successful development as being the result of the historical development of the international capitalist system.

Neoclassical Theory

First gaining prominence with the rise of several conservative governments in the developed world during the 1980s, neoclassical theories represent a radical shift away from International Dependence Theories. Neoclassical theories argue that governments should not intervene in the economy; in other words, these theories are claiming that an unobstructed free market is the best means of inducing rapid and successful development. Competitive free markets unrestrained by excessive government regulation are seen as being able to naturally ensure that the allocation of resources occurs with the greatest efficiency possible and the economic growth is raised and stabilized.

It is important to note that there are several different approaches within the realm of neoclassical theory, each with subtle, but important, differences in their views regarding

the extent to which the market should be left unregulated. These different takes on neoclassical theory are the free market approach, public-choice theory, and the market-friendly approach. Of the three, both the free-market approach and public-choice theory contend that the market should be totally free, meaning that any intervention by the government is necessarily bad. Public-choice theory is arguably the more radical of the two with its view, closely associated with

Strategies for Refocusing TVET:

Apagu and Andural (2007) suggested the following strategies for refocusing vocational education in Nigeria

- ❖ **Ensuring equality of Access to Technical Vocational Education and Training by all Nigeria:** The national Board for Technical Education (NBTEJ) and the National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEB) should ensure that their modular curriculum make vocational education to be affordable by all Nigerians irrespective of academic strong and weak persons.
- ❖ **Coping with possible Enrolment Explosion in Technical Vocational Education and Training Programs in Nigeria:** Establishment of vocational education institutions, improvement of the introductory technology education facilities available in: the existing secondary schools of admit students in streams and run shifting system at the presently available science and technical colleges in the country.
- ❖ **Relent curricula in technical vocational education and training:** Re-engineer the curricula offering intechnical vocational education and training institutions in the country to first prepare Nigerian to live a happy life and satisfying life in Nigeria using Nigerian indigenous technologies and materials. This situation will make Nigerian vocational education more relevant to the

needs of the majority of Nigerians even adults Nigerians who live in the rural areas. Technical vocational education training is expected to prepare people to come up with products or render services in areas of local needs, not only in modern imported technologies. The nation's over dependence on imported technical vocational education and training curricula has resulted to the present high rate of unemployment even among the technical vocational education training programmed-graduated. This is so because what is needed by society is not taught/learned.

- ❖ **Reviving Handicrafts subject at the primary School Level:** There is need to revive the handicrafts subject in the primary school curriculum and monitor its teaching/Learning. There is also the need to include effective vocational guidance and counseling using vocational aptitude lessons in the handicraft lessons. This situation will help inculcate positive attitude towards vocational/technical and Nigerian indigenous technological education among the Nigerian youths during the early part of their formal education. The inculcation of appropriate attitude towards vocational/technical and Nigerian indigenous technological education in the youths is very important. Ndagan, (1995) says a battle in which people are being forced to accept training against their wish cannot be nurtured early in life towards the creation of good society and capacity to compete globally and successfully.
- ❖ **Palled Talent Search and Development:** There is need to establish talent search avenues and encourage development of identified talents. The idea of Junior Engineers, Technologists, and Scientists (JETS) club in secondary schools is one of such avenues. A person with special talent(s) should be helped to discover him/her self the more, for the good of society. For

example, the Akwalbom State government has approved 150 million Naira for the commercialization of an automatic voltage regular construction idea conceived by two indigenes of the state (Adefaye, 2004)

- ❖ **Adaptation Rather than Wholesale Adoption of the Teaching/Learning of imported Technological Knowledge/Skills:** Adaptation of the teaching/ Learning of imported technologies in our vocational education programmes should be encouraged. Experience has shown that many products of imported technologies have wasted away in the country just because of lack of spare parts. Consequently, Nigerian craftsmen and technicians should learn the technique of adapting imported technologies to serve us better, especially where there are no spare parts readily available. The production of the non-available spare parts alone will provide employment for the many unemployed Nigerian in addition to the actual maintenance and repair of these imported technological products.
- ❖ **Vocational Perspective of University Education:** in order to initiate the university undergraduates who have no previous vocational education in a chosen occupation. It will be more proper to introduce them to the basics of employment requirements in the chosen occupations to allow them explore the occupations and consider possible further preparation and practice on graduation.

Roles of TVET to Economic Development

- **Generation of Self-Empowerment:-** TVET assists developing nations in creating job opportunities. Okoro (1999) pointed that graduates are unemployed because they do not have saleable skills. TVET provides graduates with saleable skills. It generates employment in various areas such as plumbing, painting, GSM repair, entreprenuring activities, electronics e.t.c

- **Poverty Reduction:-** poverty is a situation whereby an individual cannot meet his basic needs such as: food, clothing, shelter and education. TVET could champion the setting up of small scale ventures, cassava production and others. This increase in productivity reduces poverty.
- **Youth Empowerment:-** TVET contributes to youth empowerment by providing them with both practical and theoretical knowledge needed in the world of work. It makes youth to be creative and innovative. Empowering youth had been put by Ali (2013) gaining power to make one's voice heard, to contribute to plans and decision that affect them. To use one's expertise to work and to improve performance.
- **Generating Capacity to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**
The MDGs are eight time bound development goals which were formulated to eradicate poverty, promote human dignity, peace, equality, women and youth empowerment,, democracy and environment stability. For these to be achieved TVET is crucial. According to Unongo (2012) TVET is a dynamic train that could create a good manufacturing environment, train people in specialized areas, services, maintaining existing infrastructures. It is heart-warming to know that Nigeria has established many agencies like National Directorate Empowerment, students Industrial Work Experience Schemes, Industrial training Fund and others. These agencies are solidly depending on TVET.
- **Provision of Skilled Manpower:-**
Economic Prosperity of any nation depends on production. And success in production depends on skilled labour. It is TVET that is responsible for impacting needed knowledge of production and distribution of goods and services. TVET is responsible for equipping young people for employment by

exposing them to experience that provides manipulative, cognitive and social skills that are vital in the world of work.

- **Stimulation of Technological and Industrial Development.** Another importance of Technical vocational education and training to the Nigerian society is that it stimulates technological and industrial development by producing competent workers who are capable of developing and economic development. Technical vocational education and training is the mechanism for meeting the manpower of the nation in agricultural, business, home economics, technical and other clusters of occupations. Finally, Technical vocational education and training is a most reliable vehicle to economic prosperity and political or diplomatic supremacy of a nation over others. For instance, some development countries like United State have used food and technical aid to support and diplomatically.

Conclusion

This paper has already defined TVET as Technical Vocational Education And Training. It discussed some theories of Economic Development in relation to TVET. It reviewed some roles of TVET job training has been an integral part of national development in many societies because of the impact on human resources development, productivity and economic growth(Dike,2007).and among others. It also looked at theories of Economic Development as strategies of refocusing TVET in Nigeria.

Recommendations

TVET should be made as part of curriculum for General Studies in our Educational Institutions. Policies makers should be enlightened on importance of TVET in relation to Economic Development.

Government should be should be open more TVET centers: this will aid in combing problem of unemployment, poverty inequality among others.

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