

# Rethinking Vocational Education in Nigeria

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**Abstract-** Educational systems practiced in Nigeria x-rayed with emphasis on vocational education. Vocational education is the system of education that involves less theory but more practical with numerous advantages amongst which are to be self-employed, job creation, secure job, reduces crime rate, decreases capital flight, increases standard of living. Nigerian youths suffer job deprivation for lack of required skills, hence, the study is to inform and persuade individuals to develop interest in vocational education. Colonial masters initially kept this system of education to themselves, exposed Nigerians to only paper qualifications introduced by missionaries along religious lines for the purpose of preaching, clerical and administrative duties. Nigerians were importing virtually every manufactured good, since the skills were not available. Scenario analysis and secondary sources were used. The study reveals that the secret behind some countries fast developing, becoming developed arises from their seriousness with vocational education. Consequently, Delta State Governor, Senator (Dr.) Ifeanyi Okowa approves 19 new technical (vocational) institutions in Delta State to place the State ahead of others primarily to enable the youths create jobs and or be self-employed. Similarly, Joemarine and Izisco are maritime and technological (vocational) institutions own by indigenes of Burutu Local Government, Delta state, Nigeria in furtherance of vocational education.

**Indexed Terms-** Education, Export, Maritime, Skills, Qualification, Vocational,

## I. INTRODUCTION

The study focused on educational systems in Nigeria with special emphasis on vocational education. Generally, education is the process of acquiring knowledge by imparting the knowledge through instruction or practical ways (<https://examplanning.com/ty2019>). Education brings about positive changes in terms of information,

attitude, ability and mind set amongst others in an individual's life. Hence, it is a passage to progress. Education may also be seen as the process of receiving or given systematic instruction particularly, within the school system. Education facilitates learning such as acquisition of knowledge, habit, skills, beliefs, values, and training (Dewey, 1944). Lack of vocational education has been responsible for youth's unemployment with associated social consequences. Scenario analysis and secondary sources were used for the study. Nigerians were deprived, misinformed, misdirected and made to hate vocational education during the colonial era. The trend has changed, the hiding secret behind some countries fast developing and becoming developed, while some are stagnate and others importing and borrowing depend largely on varying level of involvement in vocational education. The study reveals that vocational education is the best type of education.

## II. TYPES OF EDUCATION

There are three basic types of education, namely, formal education, informal education and non-formal education.

1. Formal education: this has to do within school or institutions. It may be full time or part time subject orientation with the ultimate aim of obtaining a certificate or degree from primary school to university. Very qualified teachers are usually engaged under this system.
2. Informal education involves practical adult learning using various approaches or methods such as participatory learning. May not be done in conventional schools, no structural time table, could be home studies, no definite scheme. Learning may be from friends, media, life experience etc. they are decentralized and unique in their missions and practices (Sheffield, 1972). According to Abdullahi and Abdullah, (2014) implementation of literacy programs is for both school age children and adults.

3. Non-formal education is the type of education that sometimes covers a long period of time due to long processes employed. Learning could be by experience, home and work. Adult basic education centres are good features of non-formal education setting, basic skills, distance learning, no age limit. This type of education involves vocational training. Time table can be sometimes adjusted to suit learning conditions.

Countries adopt education systems in line with societal changes from man's crude history to present level of sophistication experienced as new knowledge emerges (www.ph.fi, 2014). A country's standard of living is dictated by the type of educational systems implemented, hence, emphasis in learning now is shifting from the erstwhile theoretical certificates and degrees to entrepreneurship education, vocational and technical education.

### III. THE NIGERIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Nigeria is the most populous black nation in the world with an estimated population between 203,413,903 and 204,999,136 (Worldometers, 2019, Unicaf University, 2019). Western-style education came to Nigeria with the missionaries in the mid-nineteenth century. Although, Methodists founded the first mission school in 1843, but progress in education was slow throughout the colonial era until the end of World War II and by 1950, the country had developed a three-tiered system of primary, secondary, and higher education based on the British model which includes academic and vocational training at the secondary level, and higher education for small elite destined for leadership.

Unification of the education system arises from government taken over schools from the missionaries based on the 7-5-2-3 educational policy: 7 years of primary education, 5 years of secondary school, 2 years Higher School Certificate Levels, and 3 years of university education.

This system replaces that of the 8-5-2-3 educational policy: 8 years of primary education, 5 years of secondary school, 2 years Higher School Certificate Levels, and 3 years of university education (Imam,

2012). The minimum standard (qualification) for entry into the teaching profession in Nigeria was raised from Teacher Grade II Certificate to the National Certificate of Education (NCE) resulted from the 1998, revised education policy (Imam, 2012).

In 2008, Nigeria's population was estimated at 138 million, split fundamentally between Muslims (50 percent) and Christians (40 percent). Muslims constitute the majority in the north of the country and Christians in the south. There are about 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria. The largest groups that influence the country politically are as follow: Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5% and Tiv 2.5% (Karugu, Kamere and Mugo n.d). Nigeria adopted the American system of education in 1982 which comprises of six years primary, three years junior secondary, and three years senior secondary school and 4-6 years of university education leading to a bachelor's level degree in most fields. Education was free but not compulsory at any level (WES Staff, 2019, Karugu, Kamere and Mugo, n.d).

Religious groups, mainly Christian missionaries from Europe who used Nigerians as tools for preaching and converting them originally established the country's schools. The curricula were faith-based and overwhelmed by religious indoctrination, and brainwashing (Karugu, Kamere and Mugo, n.d). The education system that was introduced by the then colonial masters were for clerical and administrative jobs for Nigerians, while vocational and technical studies were reserved for only the whites culminating into master (whites) and slave (Nigerian) relationship. By this arrangement, importation of basic domestic and industrial needs became the order of the day, leading to richer European countries and poorer Nigerian nation.

### IV. TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) TO IMPROVE NATIONAL GROWTH.

In the early 1980s, as a result of high unemployment rates for school graduates, the Nigerian government placed new emphasis on making vocational programs available to students (Chuta, 1986). The Federal Ministry of Education in its Master Plan for 2001-

2010 gave rise to the Development of the National Vocational Education system in Nigeria, while efforts were being made to improve the quality and availability of vocational education; many policy-oriented approaches have been blocked by a small number of politicians (Omolewa, 2008).

Vocational training is often refers to the education and training that focuses more on practical skills and being able to perform tasks related to working in a particular industry (Wiesen, 2014). In Anah and Ernest (2013), the purpose of technical, vocational education and training (TVET) is to equip people with the technical and professional skills needed for socio-economic and industrial development of the country. It is basically, a skill based program designed for skill acquisition at a lower level of education (GreenspringSchool, 2018, Ekpenyong, 2011). Vocational education is the aspect of study which covers general education, the study of technologies and related science, and the acquisition of practical knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills relating to occupations which enhances economic and social life (Seyi, 2014).

According to Ojimba (2012), vocational and technical education has been an integral part of national development strategies in many societies because of its impact on productivity and economic development. Despite its contributions, a good number of leaders in Nigeria have not given this aspect of education the attention it deserves, hence, Nigeria's underdevelopment culminates into recession (Dike, 2012). In Ekpo (2014), vocational education is made up of formal and non-formal components. Oseni, (2012) assert that technical, vocational education and training (TVET) prepares engineering technicians and craftsmen for jobs that are based on practical activities.

More people acquiring TVET in Nigeria will lead to production of more goods and services locally; individuals to become self-reliant, crime rate will drastically reduce, poverty eradication, exportation of goods and services, reduction of capital flight, abundant employment opportunities, increase in standard of living, reduction of inflation rate, more employers of labour, promote sustainable development and increase in industrial and manufacturing activities of the country. Therefore, the

importance of TVET cannot be overemphasized as it is one sure approach to accelerate economy during recession. Globally, TVET is given high premium by various governments. Thus, in Nigeria, according to Bamiro (2012), it has taken United Nations Education and Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to partner with the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) to address the problems facing technical and vocational education (TVE).

#### V. TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

- Primary school: According to the Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2012), primary education is the education given in institutions for children aged 6 to 11 plus. While “basic education” shall be of 9- years duration comprising 6 years of primary education and 3-years of junior secondary education. According to (UBEC, 2012), the Universal Basic Education (UBE), came as a replacement of Nigeria's Universal Primary Education scheme of the 6-3-3-4 system of education. This system seems adequately planned, poorly funded, wrongly directed, and haphazardly implemented, hence, could not achieve the desired goals.
- Secondary school: secondary education is the education children received after primary education and before the tertiary level. Fundamentally, secondary education shall be to prepare the individual for; (a) Useful living within the society (b) Higher education (FME 2012). Tertiary Education: Tertiary education is the education given after secondary education in Universities, polytechnics/monotechnics and colleges of educations. Others are Vocational Enterprises Institutions (VEIs) which admit candidates with a minimum of basic education certificate (Junior School Certificate) for a three year program leading to the award of National Vocational Certificate (NVC) equivalent to senior secondary school certificate and Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs) on the other hand admit students with a minimum of 5 credits at senior secondary school certificate or equivalent (SSSC, NTC, NBC) for a two years study leading to the award of National Innovation Diploma (NID) equivalent to National Diploma (NBTE,

2014). As part of efforts to equate a number of vocational and technical qualifications, the NBTE adopted the National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) which is a measure of competence to do a job whilst Academic Qualifications generally measure the individual's knowledge of a subject to ensure equivalent qualification holders are given equal attention (NBTE,2011). The proposed six-level system of qualifications is as shown in table 1

Table 1. Proposed six-level (NVQF) system

National Educational Standards	Competency-Based Assessment Certification/ Experience
Postgraduate	NVQF level 6
HND/Degree	NVQF level 5
ND/NID/ANTC/ANBC	NVQF Level 4
NTC/NBC/NVC 3, Trade Test 1	NVQF Level 3
NVC 2, Trade Test 2	NVQF Level 2
JSS3, NVC 1, Trade Test 3	NVQF Level 1

Source: NBTE (2011)

In Nigeria, interpreting technical/business certificates for proper job placement is critical, such as Royal Society of Arts (RSA) stages 3, 2 and 1 for business related courses, City and Guilds of London Institute's Craft and technician certificates, West African Examinations Council's (WAEC) technical/business certificates and National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) technical/business certificates. With the introduction of NVQF, it is hoped that holders of various technical certificates facing discriminations can have some relief.

#### VI. COUNTRIES IMPLEMENTING TVET PROGRAMS

In Oseni (2012), training programmes embarked upon by some countries include:

- Brazil: operates with about 700 industrial skill training centres. Produces more than 1,000,000 trainees annually
- Malaysia: most technical secondary schools were converted to vocational secondary schools

- China: vocational education starts from primary school level
- Japan: about one quarter of secondary school students take specialized or vocational courses.
- Germany: after graduation from junior secondary schools, two-third of them enter the vocational education system
- United Kingdom: In addition to their training programmes, the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and the City & Guilds of London institute provide certification for various trainees
- United State of America: technical and craftsmen are trained mostly in post-secondary technical and vocational training schools
- Canada: technical and craftsmen are trained by TVET i.e technical schools, polytechnics and universities.

#### VII. RETHINKING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Thinking of studying? Career counseling is very vital towards choosing an educational system. The new trend is from brain-to-hand; hence, it has to be holistic, innovative and critical thinking must be applied;

- To acquire certificate or degree only to look for job after graduation?
- To create jobs after graduation?
- To be self-employed after graduation?
- To study both theory and practical in order to create jobs and or secure job.

Strictly speaking, vocational and technical education dictates the technological development of any country (Seyi, 2014). Without vocational education, no country can be called a developed nation. Hence, vocational education that was once reserved for only the whites in Nigeria has become the leading system of education for the following reasons. Companies prefer employees who already have something to bring to the table as opposed to those needing direction and guidance as they do not need on-the-job-training. All in all, vocational education can play a vital role in the stability and security of lifestyle while you figure out other options for yourself (Aguwa, 2018, Mille,2019).

Delta State Governor, His Excellency, Senator (Dr.) Ifeanyi Okowa having travelled round the world discovered that the only system of education that can

bring about prosperity to all Deltans is the “vocational education”. This culminates into, Delta State leading other States of the federation recently approved new 19 technical colleges (Waves, 2019). Similarly, IZISCO and JOEMARINE are vocational institutions engaged in Maritime and Technology studies established by indigenes of Obetebe community, Burutu Local Government, Delta State, Nigeria which open the doors of vocational education in Ijaw land. Having satisfied that the world is now vocationally and technology driven, the Minister of State for Mines and Steel Development Dr. Uchechukwu Ogah during his visit to the Metallurgical Training Institute, Onitsha, Anambra State said, what the country needed for rapid growth and development were skill acquisition institutions (Okafor, 2019).

### CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made in discussing educational systems in Nigeria with special emphases on vocational education as the best. Previously, the colonial masters trained Nigerians to handle clerical and administrative duties through the acquisition of paper qualifications, though, through religious groups initially for the purpose of preaching gospel, while reserving the vocational skills for the whites. These gave the whites the opportunities of importing manufactured goods from their home countries to Nigeria (a parasitic nation) then.

High level of unemployment of Nigerian youths due to lack of employable skills is critical as well as high crime and poverty rate are driving forces to re-thinking of vocational education. Policy inconsistency and inability of leaders to implement vocational educational policies held the country backward technologically over the years which culminate into import dependent. Similarly, global lockdown induced inflation due to COVID-19 also exposed Nigeria with respect to over reliance on foreign goods and services as most manufactured concerns were imported.

Nigeria government discovered lately that no serious country can transfer her hard-earned technology to another country easily, but can best be developed. This feat can only be achieved by embracing vocational education which raises standard of living leading to

reduction of crime rate and increase in life expectancy amongst other benefits.

### RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations were derived from the study.

1. Individuals are encouraged to learn at least a trade in order to create jobs so as to live independent life even after retirement for those in service.
2. Government at all levels should establish Vocational training centre’s with adequate funding, preferably, in each Local Government Area
3. Government at all levels should provide training opportunities (scholarships) for trainers of vocational education at various levels including commensurate incentives.

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