

STATUS OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM PROGRAMME FOR SKILL ACQUISITION IN A DYNAMIC SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT: *The paper was designed to look at the present status of technical education curriculum programme for skill acquisition in a dynamic society. The paper examined technical education curriculum programme and the different national developmental strategies and the same time touched the current implementation and talked about evaluation for technical education programme that necessitate a change in a dynamic society. One of the components examined concerning this paper is the teacher that is responsible for the implementation of the policy and technical education curriculum. Other key elements discussed are the tools, equipment and facilities that are the major keys and elements of skill acquisition. In view of the prevailing circumstances and status, it was suggested that government should make fund available to train and retrain Nigerian's for ever changing and dynamic society among others.*

KEYWORDS: Acquisition, Curriculum, Dynamic, Education, Programme, Skill, Society, Status, and Technical

INTRODUCTION

Education is a dynamic instrument of change in technical education skill acquisition, hence governments the world over invest massively in the education of their technical skills required for the modern age, the recipients must be exposed to the curricular content of technical education that will lead to the production of people who can bring about socio-economic developments of their nations. For technical education curriculum content to be meaningful, the educational system must have adequately trained and competent teachers who are resourceful and well motivated to carry out the job effectively (Oboro and Onosode, 1999). Government on its part must ensure that institutions are well funded and facilities made available for teachers to work with. For instance, infrastructure facilities such as classrooms, workshops, libraries, offices, right type of equipment and people with technical know how must be there in order to produce the required results.

Ojo (2005) defined education as a process of initiating an individual into the norms and values of the indication society. The Encarta Dictionary (2005) sees education as the process of learning how to learn. Many people in Nigeria are in dire need for one form of education or the other, and

the women folk are not different in this pursuit. Education is the best method of transmitting information to women about their rights.

STATUS QUO OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN SKILL ACQUISITION

There was a system on ground before the advent of the British in Nigeria, many communities and traditional cultures had developed their own informal, formal and technical education. Technical education was done through the system of apprenticeship, whereby young boys and men were attached to master craftsmen where they learnt various trades and skills such as carpentry, masonry, blacksmith, foundry, carving, textile design, and dyeing and so on. It can be stated categorically here in this study that such trades are still existing in our villages and cities till today and even more of the trades like road side auto-mechanics, vulcanizers, welding trades, tailoring and other skill related trades that requires the apprentice to now register with the master craftsmen and learn such trade, then gain freedom after the agreed period for learning and mastering the trade. At the end, the trainee will now be certified and freed to start a trade of his own. Typical examples are the road side vulcanizers, goldsmith responsible for our welding rings in Nigeria, etc. such apprentice could spend from three to seven years depending on the trades they were specializing in, the master's skills, competence and exposure and the individual ability and performance of the apprentice. At the end of such training, the graduate apprentice was assisted by the family or the community to acquire necessary tools to start his own trade. He would recruit other apprentice to work with in his new set up (Odugbeson, 1995).

The status of technical education when Nigeria gained independence attracted efforts aimed at achieving rapid national development, innovations, reforms in educational objectives, because education in the country as seriously marked with the dominance of literacy education. The educational system remained largely literacy in nature with technical education aspects not made popular. The situation is still persisting with technical education not given its necessary attention like the provision of tools, equipment and facilities at the moment. Guja (1999) stated that despite the various attempts at the regional levels to initiate some new ideas and reforms by the Nigerian political leaders, the structure and aims remained largely literary and static.

In 1960 after independence, the initial efforts aimed at achieving rapid national development were concentrated on the expansion of formal educational institutions at all levels. The national development led the establishment of the first and second generation universities and polytechnics by decree in quick succession to fulfill this national objective. The status of technical education at this time was not encouraging because most of the programmes in the established institutions were however concentrated in arts and the humanities. There was a radical reform in education aims after the independence. Earlier in 1966, a national curriculum conference was scheduled but it was later organized in 1969. The report of the conference brought some changes and modification known as the national policy on education (1977). Revised in 1981, 1988 and 2004. The National Policy on Science and Technology (1986) emphasized the introduction of gainful practical activities in the classroom at all levels. The national policy on education encouraged the use of practical work in handicraft, gardening, and

farming among others as strategies for effective implementation of technical education curriculum in a dynamic society.

The current status, technical education is offered at (a) local apprentices with Master crafts; (b) Pre-vocational school; (c) Vocational schools, (d) Technical colleges; (e) Polytechnics and Monotechnics; (f) Colleges of Education (Technical) and Universities offering technical education courses. The federal government has of late, created various programmes/agencies aimed at promoting self employment and self-reliance through technical education. These include the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), small scale industries, loan scheme, the people's bank, the National Open Apprentice Scheme and Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND). These are various programmes of the government geared towards rehabilitation of acquisition of skills and competencies for a dynamic society.

Implied in the status quo, education in the various institutions are skills producing teachers with little or no skill for the changes in technology. The National Policy on Education saw education from the point of view of the needs of Nigerian. It looked at technical education from a functional viewpoint. Thus, it looked at education as a tool for developing national consciousness, inculcating the right type of values, developing skills, equipping the mind to think objectively and enabling people to live in harmony with one another (Guga, 1999). The objectives of the National Policy on Education is to deliver that functional education through a skilled teacher that is aimed at ensuring that youth of the community have access to the options and pathways of life long learning in technical education for a dynamic society (Asikadi & Luke, 2009).

Skills Acquisition

Now changes in curriculum content and behavioural patterns of the learners as well as societal values and disposition would definitely demand new skills from the teacher. The curriculum would be such that would equip him with the requisite skills needed for a dynamic society.

NATURE OF CURRICULUM FOR DYNAMIC SOCIETY

What kind of curriculum will be suitable for training the teachers of the future? Knowledge is always changing and so the content to be taught in the future schools may as well not yet be known. What is important therefore is that the curriculum for the education of the teacher of the future will be based on the principles of dynamism and adaptability. Technical education curriculum will be sensitive to the prevailing societal needs to be achieved through education. Technical education curriculum should be able to equip the teacher to be able to perform within the tenets of the contemporary situation. The technical education curriculum should reflect societal goals, interests and value expectations that are changing fast. Those disciplines that are phasing out and some that are emerging should be given consideration, and delete those aspects that are not needed.

New knowledge is emerging, rendering some obsolete. New technologies are emerging with great impact on the learner, the technical education teachers, the society and the entire education

enterprise. The learner's approach to the entire learning process is changing. The learner is not too willing to follow the old prescribed routine methods during implementation of technical education programme. He is rather interested in doing it very fast, to pass the examination very fast by all means, get into the labour Markey very fast and also make it very fast ka others are doing. All these emerging complicated construct of the learners of technical education courses pose more demands on the future teacher. The technical education curriculum will have to equip him to cope in content and pedagogy.

Education is a dynamic process and for it to continue with the changing needs of the changing society, the curriculum of technical education will undergo innovation and change. Technical education curriculum innovation and change pose new demands on the teacher ad the whole process of technical education teachers. To this end, technical education curriculum for the future will have to address some pertinent issues in the National Policy on Education (2004). The goals of technical education shall be to:

- (a) Provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical level. It is in view of the goal stated that the curriculum of technical education for the sciences, technology and business at craft, advanced craft and technical level of the education system would command great attention. This is because the ability of the educational system to assist the learners to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them plays effective roles in their societies and the world of tomorrow depends to a great extent on the approach of the technical educators and the society to the technical education curriculum. If effective trained manpower is to be provided and produced for the various levels mentioned, the selection of the technical education curriculum content and implementation for these levels must be performance based, comprehensive and forward looking.
- (b) Provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commerce and economic development. In this regard, technical education curriculum must be properly planned and systematically tailored to provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commerce and economic development in a dynamic society. To keep up with the progressive changes in the society and particularly with the changes that have occurred in emerges of technological innovation in schools. This view becomes pertinent because for education to be a dynamic process it must continue to change with the changing needs of the society. In addition to helping individuals develop technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for the world of work, they should also be helped to relate skills to development, pre-disposition, personal construct and frame of reference, for these influences skill development. There should also be a way of encouraging them to put these skills into effective practice.
- (c) Give training and impart the necessary skills to individual who shall be self reliant economically. In pursuance of this goal, it necessary give the technical educators the environment that will enable give training and impart the necessary skills to individual who shall be self reliant and to enable them set-up business of their own. This is because the ability of the technical education programme in any educational system is to assist the learners to acquire the knowledge, necessary skills, attitudes and values that will enable them play effective roles in their societies and the world of tomorrow depends to a great extent on the approach of the educators and the society to the designed technical education curriculum. If effective and competent individuals are

to be produced for the various levels of education and to be self reliant, the selection of the technical education curriculum content for these levels must be performance based, comprehensive and forward looking. The content should be such that should equip the technical educators to perform effectively for a particular level of education and also trained the individuals to be self reliant.

In pursuance of the above goals:

(a) The main features of the curriculum activities for technical colleges shall be structured in foundation and trade modules. The technical education curriculum for each trade shall consist of our components: General education, theory and related courses, workshop practice; industrial training/production work; small business management and entrepreneurial training.

It can be mentioned here that the individual students can select from range of courses in the technical colleges: Mechanical trade; computer craft practice; electrical engineering trades; building trades and wood trades.

Technical education is a purposeful learning activity undertaken on an on-going basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence. As a principle of educational integration, it can be seen as the provision of learning experiences in a wide range of options and simply put; it is education that is acquired with too much emphasis on certificate.

Skills and competencies acquired can be demonstrated without presenting the certificate. It is a kind of education acquired without emphasis on white collar jobs. It is a kind of training given to individuals to be self-reliant and also employer of labour.

SKILLS IN TRAINEE DEVELOPMENT

It is a well established fact that most Nigerian educational institutions of learning do furnish the students with adequate training in skills to fit them for productive work. The search for better jobs has drawn thousands of Nigerian youths (some without saleable skills) from rural areas to urban cities. Apparently, those with requisite education and skills are quickly absorbed into jobs while those who possess neither sufficient academic nor technical skills live in subsistence level and often out of desperation and frustration constitute a nuisance to the society.

Skill development is important for harnessing a nation's natural resources and for promoting economic stability. The wealth of a society determines to a large extent, the development of that society. Nigeria is endowed with mineral and agricultural resources. If these are to be properly harnessed and economically utilized, there is need for emphasis to be placed on the acquisition of skills in a prevailing society in need of development.

Skill development is essential for the development of intrinsic potential in an individual. To enable people develop their intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual, biological, political and economic capacities, there is need to provide assistance for people to learn and acquire appropriate skills. With this, individual can become aware of the challenges that are associated with a worthwhile life that will boost their career, stability and fulfillment in a world

of competitive industry. The development of skills is inherent in both formal and informal education process, as well as in the various forms of educational objectives (Psychomotor, affective and cognitive skills). Skill development also plays pertinent roles in all forms of knowledge, learning and professional training.

Skill is termed as expertness, practiced ability, dexterity and tact. It can be seen as a sequence of organized actions, proficiency executed and usually displaying a flexible but systematic temporal patterning. It involves the acquisition of performance capability. Skill development is the ability to do or to perform an activity that is related to some meaningful exercise, work or job. It is commonly misconceived that the development of skills requires dull brains. Skill acquisition requires intelligent humans. Indeed most skill trainings present great challenges to the learner on the integration of the practical work and theoretical fields, common sense, a good power of observation and courage. To possess a skill is to demonstrate the habit of acting, thinking and behaving in a specific activity in such a way that the process becomes natural to the individual through repetition or practice. The development of skills varies with the nature, complexity and the type of activity. Individual who opt for skill training should among other things, possess qualities such as interest, ability, aptitude, patience, personality characteristics and other human/physical qualities that would enable them to succeed in it.

Skill and knowledge are inseparable entities. There are no elements of differentiation between them. It should be noted that all skills are form of knowledge but not all knowledge are forms of skills. However, all skills are dependent on some form of knowledge. Skill is a manifestation of acquired knowledge. It is a knowledge that is translated into practical activity. It may also be described as knowledge that is put into practical use once it is translated into activity (Okorie, 2000).

Generally, skills comprise two general components: the knowledge component and the activity component. The latter is made up of motor and perceptual skills. Both knowledge and activity components combine in different proportions for different skills. The practical or activity components of skill relate to those areas of knowledge that pertain to the mode of doing. It enables the individual to acquire the know-how of a variety of skills that is related to a particular trade or occupation. Theory and practice must be fully integrated into a teaching-learning process for the purpose of effectiveness and worthwhile result. All teaching should help the learners acquire a blend of theory and practice skills in order to achieve his objectives.

The range of course in the technical college to attain the objectives shall be as wide as possible and include but not limited: Mechanical trades; computer craft practice; electrical engineering trades; building trades; wood trades and construction trades. These are the trades under technical education that can assist individual.

PROGRAMME STATUS BY EVALUATION IN A DYNAMIC SOCIETY

In the study, there is need to evaluate the Technical education programme. Evaluation is the appraisal of the worth, status or value of a thing or action and the making of appropriate decision

on the basis of such appraisal. There is great need for evaluation of technical education curriculum in a dynamic and ever changing society. Evaluation in technical education involves the collection of data concerning the technical education curriculum implementation, the teacher, facilities, methods and other related activities in the classroom during implementation. The next level is the use of the data collected to assess the effectiveness or quality of technical education programme or the performance. Technical education programme are established for some purposes mentioned earlier and it is the function of the programme evaluation to determine the extent to which the purpose of the programme are being achieved. Technical education programme is a plan of things that will be done or included in the development of technical education. A training programme of technical education that can accommodate the changes in the society. It is the outcome of the evaluation that will determine those necessary elements that can be added or deleted from the technical education curriculum to meet and satisfy the objectives of the National Policy on Education.

The main purpose of evaluation in technical education is to judge the worth, usefulness, effectiveness or value of the programme, by it on textbooks, students performance or equipment. In a dynamic society programme evaluation in technical education should perform one or more of the following functions.

Technical education Programme Improvement

Programmes are evaluated because we need improvement. Huge sum of money spent by governments on education to improve the skill of her citizen. This money should produce good educational programme for technical education students; technical education programme hat would serve the needs of the country and bring whatever changes are expected in the behaviour, character, skill level and social life of students who pass through the technical education institution.

Technical Education Planning

Evaluation carried on technical education programme aids the planning of a new programme and deciding whether to expand, modify or discontinue with the existing programme (Okoro, 1991). Planning for a higher and improved quality educational programme can emerge as a result of evaluation of the old and current programme. The planning of a technical education programme ensures that the programme will serve the needs of the society.

Decision Making

Effective decisions will be taken when authentic data collected are properly analyzed and utilized in planning technical education programme. It is necessary to evaluate a programme to assist decision maker to arrive at the best decision on how to implement technical education programme.

Accountability

Accountability is the process of ensuring that all technical education expenditure is justified by the improved learning or other favourable outcomes that might result from the expenditure. Accountability will ensure alternative methods of procuring cheaper equipment, new building,

and facilities and to determine such cost to benefits that can assist the management to actualize the set goals in technical education.

Personnel Improvement

Evaluation can assist the institution to identify those personnel that will re-train to enable them fit into the technical education programme. It will ensure that technical education personnel are well trained and it is through evaluation that the management can identify those that are strong and weak in performance. It is under personnel improvement that staff is usually assisted by identifying their strong and weak points and be given encouragement to improve on their performance.

Status of Training and Retraining in Dynamic Society

Technical education is the foundation upon which the skills of individual are built. Preparing individual for the T world of work require a good technical education foundation in a dynamic society. The strengthening of education is an essential foundation for a lasting solution to the training needs of a country. The training and retraining is necessary because there are millions of unemployed people who lack marketable skills and who have training needs which demand immediate action.

Voluntary action by some groups – especially employers who through formal or informal on-the-job training have traditionally been the chief source of training for workers in many occupations is essential.

Further needs in the field of training include experimentation with special techniques and programmes for training out-of-school youth and other special groups particularly people with little education in information communication technology (ICT), software developers in mechanical trades; computer craft practice, electrical/electronics trades, woodwork trades, construction trades, welding and fabrication etc. The dynamics in training must be adapted to shifting technological demands. Both young people and mature workers must be made aware of the possibility that they may have repeated need for training and retraining often with great resultant opportunities for occupational progress and development in the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) Technical educators responsible for the implementation of the technical education curriculum must train and retrained to meet up with changes in technology.
- (2) Technical education programme must be given the necessary evaluation and appraisal to meet up with the global status in a dynamic society.
- (3) Status quo must be changed by the government and technical teachers for the provision of equipment, tools and facilities for teacher of technical education to effectively implement the programme in the classroom.
- (4) Funding is the greatest parameter for the improvement of the present status of technical education in a dynamic society.

- (5) Technical education teachers should be given opportunity to embark on industrial training to afford the time to acquire skills for improvement in a dynamic society.
- (6) Government should provide in-service training for the teachers to update the skills for new technologies for a dynamic society.

CONCLUSION

The journey from the period of independence for Nigerian educational system and specifically technical education has witnessed many changes in status since the conception of the aims and objectives. It can be established in this study that it is normal in view of the dynamic nature of our economy as a result of changing needs, interest, skills, competencies and the government of Nigeria in charge of educational system. The present aims and objectives as related to the status of technical education are broad and comprehensive. But at the moment it must be stated clearly that however well conceived, well designed, planned and articulated, without effective implementation by the teachers, the aims cannot yield good fruits and it will remain an affair on paper documentation or mere paper work.

In the face of the present status of technical education, it is very necessary to adopt the best implementation strategies to enable the teachers and students overcome our numerous skill acquisition problems inhibiting the growth of technical education in a dynamic society like ours.

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