



AN OVERVIEW OF FUNDING TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION IN A  
DEMOCRATIC NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

*Technology Education programmes is a capital-intensive programme. Governments in the precolonial era solely funded technology education programmes. Even after independence technology education programmes were given the government backing until later in the 1980s. This paper took a general survey of the funding of technology education programmes before independence and after. During the 1980s Government attitudes towards technology education changes, initially by localizing the Technical Teacher Training programme which was done in the United State of America. Other programmes of Government were also identified. Problems with the present system of funding in the Democratic government were highlighted suggestions for improvement were given. Summary and Conclusion were also drawn.*

**INTRODUCTION:**

Funding in Education generally implies the provision of necessary facilities or means in the form of money, finance, provision of adequate materials, equipment, tools good environment for learning etc for the smooth and effective implementation of educational programmes. In other words, funding in Technology education varies slightly from general education in that technology education requires special attention in all its constituents. This ranges from the teachers and their training, provision of materials, equipment, tools, and conducive environment for learners, and the updating of obsolete equipment and knowledge.

Technology education is defined by the American Industrial Arts Association (1985) in Akinseinde (1998) as a comprehensive action - based educational programme that is concerned with technical means, their evolution, utilization, and significance with industry, its organisation, personnel, system, techniques, resources and products and their Social/cultural impact. Akinseinde further stressed that the programme is based

on activity-oriented instruction, which enables students to reinforce abstract concepts with concrete experiences. Every nation needs technology education as an important ingredient for development. A nation's level of technology depends on the extent to which current scientific knowledge is put to practical use. Technology helps persons understand and appreciate their jobs (Romiszowski 1982). A democratic government is a government, which comes to power through the ballot box, hence the common and generally accepted definition. A government of the people for the people and by the people. In a democratic government it is expected that whatever decision in being taken for implementation has to be in the general interest and benefit of the citizenry. The National Policy on Education (1985 Revised) stated that Education is an expensive social service and requires adequate financial provision from all tiers of Government for a successful implementation of the educational programmes. This policy also made more mention of technical education than other forms of education, hence its special nature. The Policy went further to state that:- Government recognises the importance of technical and commercial education and the need to relate its programmes to the requirements of commerce and industry. Formulae for collaboration and joint responsibility, such as is already being carried out in schemes like Industrial Training Fund will be designed for sharing cost burden between the public and private sector.

Government has the responsibility of making sure that the private sectors contribute certain amount of their profit to education as it was done in the present government when it created the Education Trust Fund The Government of Late General Sani Abacha created the Petroleum Trust Fund who assisted among other things the supply of materials, equipment to educational institutions.

### FUNDING TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

The traditional system of education of the various Nigerian communities laid much emphasis on the development of technical skills which was in fact the backbone of the traditional education (Fafunwa 1974). This training is fund-free whereby parents and Elders who are professional in certain trades train the young ones. Some of these trades include; blacksmithing, weaving, knitting, dying, fishing, hunting, head-plate etc all in an effort to have a self-reliant community Oranu (1992) noted that vocational education in the years of non-colonial heritage and non-formal education were self-acquired self-developed and self-financed. However with the coming of the Whitman and the establishment of organised institutions, schools were financed



by foreign missions who owned the schools. According to Fafunwa (1974), the missionaries, in addition to book learning introduced vocational training programmes as part of their activities. The missionaries controlled and financed these institutions. The real government entry according to Okonkwo (1994) was the introduction in 1931 of the Departmental training programmes for junior technical staff. The notable ones were the survey school in Oyo and Kaduna in 1938 and a veterinary school in Vom in 1935. In his work on the Nigerian Teacher Education, Okofor (1988) reported that the emergence of a policy on African Education headed by Phelps-Stokes commission in 1922 came up with a ten year plan in 1926 to include among other things the establishment of trade and handicraft centres for the training of manual skills, as well as technical institutions for the training of technicians. A grant of 400,000 pounds was provided by the British Government for the first five years of the programme. Government at the centre took the whole responsibility of funding technical education. He concluded that some firms like the Railway Corporation, Post Authority, Post and Telegraphs opened technical institutes for the training of their staff only.

#### **FUNDING OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION AFTER INDEPENDENCE**

After independence, funding of technology education continued to be handled by Government. Idwazng (1969) in Biose (1994) reported that in the 1960s attempts were made to change the functions of existing trade centres to technical schools, while some of the technical schools up graded to polytechnics such as the ones in Kaduna, Yaba and Ibadan. The Federal Government was the sole financier, but with some aids from foreign agencies like the Ford Foundation. In this direction, the Federal Government initiated development plans in order to introduce an effective funding of technical education. The first development plan (1962-1968) in Okonkwo (1994) was introduced and this promoted technical schools in the country. Other successive development plans had no problem of implementation in the 1970s to the 1980s which was due to the oil boom. No inflation, no noticeable global economic recession, so the economy was stable.

The 4th Development plan (1981 - 1985) which coincided with the Democratic government of president Shehu Shagari, the government entered into technical agreement with the American government for the training of technical teachers under the Technical Teacher Training Programme which was coordinated by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Washington. The

aim of the programme was to train about 500 technical teachers annually for a period of 10 years. Olaitan (1987) stated that this projected figure was not achieved as the value of the Naira declined and the earning from oil sector also dropped. Another factor within the plan period could be the incessant change in governments. The training of technical teachers' abroad was to meet up with the demand of the National Policy on Education on the training of technical teachers.

The government purchased equipment for introductory Technology to be taught in the Junior Secondary Level. Biose (1994, Stated that in this direction, experts from the countries where these equipment were produced came to Nigeria to train some Nigerians on how to install, operate and maintain the equipment. Those countries were:- Bulgaria, Hungary, France, Italy and United States. By 1991 it was obvious that the TTTP abroad had been terminated because of the economic crunch. Since then the programme had been localized, where the participants are on in-service with their employers. The Federal Government only pays their tuition fees and books allowance.

### **PROBLEMS ASSOCIATION WITH THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF FUNDING TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION**

The present funding system is plagued with problems, which have led to the low pace of development of technology education in the present democratic dispensation. Some of the problems include under-investment in vocational education. It is observed that vocational and technical school timetables are patterned after that of the general academic subjects. Most of school workshops and laboratories are made to close late in the afternoon and does not open until the next day. Ma'aji (1998) observed that these equipment could be profitably used during evenings, weekends and public holidays to upgrade the skill of local artisans, industrial workers and doing other private contract works which could be a potential source of income to the schools. Also in the same Vein, Uthman (2000) and Olaitan (1988) saw the need to privatised the workshop equipment and facilities which will help in the effective management, increased efficiency and netting of reasonable money in the school coffers as some of these equipment were under utilised.



Another problem has been the over reliance on a single source by Government. The government has based all its programmes on oil, and any set up that is solely dependent on one central source is bound to suffer in case of distortion of independent factor. Coomds and Hallak (1987) in Ma'aji (1998) stressed that an important determinant of the strength of an educational systems revenue base in the diversity of its sources of income, and how these sources respond to economic changes, unlike what the present type of funding whereby all educational programmes are expecting their fund from government. Another problem is the attitude of some of the people in Government positions. Since the middle of 2001 when the Academic staff Union of Universities Cried to Government on the situation of Education in the country, the Government responded with committees and promises which for about two years could not implement. This lukewarm altitude led to the National Strike of the Union. One of the observations of ASUU was the Government expenditure on education since 1999, the expenditure is as follows:- 1999 - 11.2%, 2000 - 8.36%, 2001 - 7.0%, 2002 - 5.6% and 4.7% for 2003 (Source ASUU bulletin 2003).

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF FUNDING TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION IN A DEMOCRACY:**

**It is dear that government alone cannot fund** technology education with the present economic situation. The following suggestions will go a long way in improving technology education:- The government should give education priority attention or at least meet up with UNESCO guidelines of 26% Annual budget to Education, other countries give education more than this. The people in government position who control education financing should not allow the diversion of such funds for whatever reason. The ETF should be allowed to be used for the purpose it is meant for. Government to encourage private sectors, NGOs, foreign bodies to assist technology education programmes. A fund to be called Technology Education Trust Fund be created, and Industries, Companies etc be made to pay a certain percentage to the Fund. Technology institutions should open their workshops, laboratories to the outside community in order to generate revenue. Technology institutions should make use of the departments in construction of their furniture's,

buildings etc to cut cost of production outside.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper looked at the funding of technology education in a democracy. It reviews how technology education was funded in the pre-colonial era through to the post-independence and to the present political situations upon identifying the problems some of the problems associated with the present system of funding are highlighted and suggestions were given with the suggestions stands on its own, but each should be applied as the situation demands.

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