

Mechanism for Improving Technology Education Curriculum: A Necessity for Sustainable Youth Empowerment.

IDRIS, ABUBAKAR MOHAMMED

Department of Industrial and Technology Education
Federal University of Technology, Minna.

&

UMAR, IBRAHIM YAKUBU

Department of Industrial and Technology Education
Federal University of Technology, Minna

&

AUDU, RUFAI

Department of Industrial and Technology Education
Federal University of Technology, Minna.

Abstract

Generally, there has been a growing concern over a number of issues that affect the well being of youths in most nations of the world. Some of these issues are education, health, employment poverty, drug abuse and involvement in crime. This paper is aim at improvement the quality of technology education through the identification of mechanisms that will enhance and sustain youth empowerment.

Introduction: The basis for industrial development of any nation is hinged on the fact that the basic necessities of citizens of such a nation should be well taken care of the need for food and shelter, for instance; have to be met before one considers every other needs. The present hardship Nigeria is passing through is massive unemployment, low capacity utilization and sub-standard nutrition. In the present day Nigeria, nothing is as precious as saleable skills in order to survive the economic hardship especially for the youth. Every individual should be equipped with the necessary skills to contribute effectively to the development of the country. The inclusion of technology education in the Nigerian education system through the national policy on education is an obvious testimony of its recognition by the government. This is aimed at changing the former system of education of training the head and not the hand to training the head and the hand.

Osuala (1981), define technology education as education to earn a living in an occupation in which success is dependent largely upon technical information and understanding of the laws of science and principles of technology as applied to modern design, production, distribution and services. Also Longman (1995), defined Technology as Knowledge about scientific or industrial methods or the use of those methods; Technology education which includes vocational and technical education is a utility education, it passes to the individual, useful and useable skills which are expected, presently or later in life, to make the individual self sufficient. It involves the use of the heart, the head and the hands. This type of education will make the youth to be more empowered and be useful to themselves and the society at large.

No doubt, technology education ought to reduce unemployment, provide incentives for employment opportunities and ensure proper organisation and meaningful output of those employed. It will equally ensure self-employment. Curriculum in technology education is considered as the totality of those experiences, knowledge, skills and activities systematically planned to educate the students for gainful employment in an y chosen occupation or a cluster or occupation (Ogwo, 2002). This

connotes that the aim of technology education curricula is to develop manipulative skills for employment and or producing job makers and not seekers. What is apparent therefore, is that technology education curriculum should be geared towards development of specific skills required for attainment of youth empowerment for self-sustenance.

According to Hornby (2000), Mechanisms is defined as a methods or procedure for doing things, while Ezeji (1990), viewed mechanisms as ways or means of improving the provision of facilities. The mechanisms that exist for improving technology education for youth empowerment include subvention from the state and federal government, Social clubs, Foreign aids, Education Tax Fund, Parent Teachers Association (P.T.A), Philanthropists\ Philanthropic organisation, e. t. c.

An Overview of Nigeria's Youth Profile: The conceptualization of the term "youth" varies from one country to another depending on the interplay of socio-cultural, economic, institutional and political factors. In Nigeria a youth is any person aged between 12 and 35 years (FRN, 1999). Although the UN convention on the right of the child defines children as persons below the aged of 18 (UN, 1996) it appears the age categorization for children and youth by the united nations are overlapping this was intentional ill view of the fact that it had no separate plan for a convention on the right or the youth. However, it is important to note that in many societies a dividing line is drawn between a child, youth and adult based on number of characteristics and traditions (UN, 1996). Despite, the nuances in the operational definition of the term youth, this paper accept the UN'S conception of youth as its working definition.

Global demographic data as at 2002, revealed that the world youth population was one billion, that is, one out of every five persons is between ages 15-24 years representing 18 percent of the world's total population. In Nigeria, available population data indicated persons between 15-24 years as at 2000 represented 24, 726,912 representing 19.2 percent of the total population. By 2030, it has been projected that the youth population would have increased to 20.0 percent of the total population (UN, 1996). Today, a great number of these populations of youths are unemployed, thereby making them to indulge in a lot of vices. Technology education can provide the teaming population of the youth with the necessary saleable skills and expediencies that can make them to be empowered and becomes self-sustenance

The problems of Technology Education: Despite all efforts been put in by the various Government towards the advancement of technology education, some impediments still stand on the way. These include;

Problem of Funding: there is no doubt that technology education is poorly funded. It is capital intensive and enough money is not made available to run the programme. Because of this poor funding basic facilities like equipment, machines, workshops are lacking in our technical\vocational schools.

Lack of Qualified Technology Teachers: shortage of qualified and well trained technology teachers hinders the growth of technology education. Nwokolo (1993) stated that it is not surprising that teachers of technology are being recruited, trained and lost to other sectors due to prestige and status due to prestige and status when compared to other sectors. Motivation of Teachers of Technology Education: the mass exodus of teachers from this area to industries and private sectors today should be a thing of concern to the government. This is because they are not sufficiently motivated. Lack of Equipment, Facilities and workshop: Norman (1975) stressed the need for facilities, pointed out that certain facilities are specially designed to enhance the teaching of certain skills in some subjects without which some skills cannot be acquired.

Mechanism for Improving Technology Education for sustainable youth Empowerment: Having gone these far, the writers would want to make some suggestions for the improvement of technology education.

Curriculum planning: - the curriculum planning Implementation of indeed all technical institutions should be adjusted in such a way as to lay more emphasis on practical skills. Sufficient facilities should provide by Government and organisation to sustain the high emphasis on practical work.

Integration of indigenous Technology in our school programme: some highly developed countries such as USA, Germany e.t.c, have systematically improved their indigenous technology by incorporating it in their school system as well as adequately funding technology education through teaching, research, and development (Johnson, 1987). Nigeria should emulate such idea so that technology education could be improved. Motivation of Teachers of Technology Education: As a way of improving technology education, Auta (1994) suggested that the Government must see that the condition of services and of technicians is raised and their salaries Improved.

Upgrading of Technology Education: Technology education ought to be upgrading and its practitioners should be given the deserved recognition.

Continuous Training: Technology education requires continuous training on the part of the teachers. Such teachers need to be exposed to sufficient modern equipment and conditions of improved services, through acquiring the right type skills and competence and imparting it on our youth for empowerment and national development.

Also, relevant government agencies (i.e. NBTE, NABTEB, Ministry of Education, I.T.F) in conjunction with industries should organize workshops or conferences to create awareness for support in making technology education curriculum effective for economic development and youth empowerment.

Conclusion: The need for effective curriculum implementation cannot be over emphasized. The curriculum needs to be properly implemented to ensure that its objectives are achieved. This means that the appropriate resources for effective teaching and learning must be made available, this is because skill development in vocational/technical education is predominantly workshop based. It is also a well-known fact that theoretical concepts must blend with practical concepts for any vocational/Technical education or training to be meaningful. Therefore, for the youth to be empowered and be self sustenance, the curriculum of technology education need to be reviewed to meet the present and future challenges of the youth and national development.

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