

Vocational and Technical Education: As an Effective Tool for Curbing Security Challenges in 21st Century in Nigeria

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Abstract

Vocational and technical education play a crucial role in preparing individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to drive the technological advancement of a nation. The concept of security encompasses various dimensions, including national security, personal security, food security, and social security. Unfortunately, Nigeria has experienced a significant rise in insecurity in the 21st century. This has prompted the federal government to prioritize the development of technical and vocational education in the country. To address this issue, the government is focusing on providing training facilities, equipment, well-trained facilitators, instructors, and increased funding for vocational and technical education institutions. This research explores the significance of vocational and technical education in addressing the security challenges faced by Nigeria in the 21st century.

Keywords: Vocational Education, Technical Education, and Security Challenges

Introduction

The National Policy on Education (2004) defined vocational technical education as that aspect of

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education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge.

Vocational education as entrenched in the National Policy on Education (2004) is concerned with quality human resource development directed towards the formation of a national pool of skills and self-reliant people in the vocational field. Vocational education according to Aboje (2006), is any educational system directed toward the preparation of the individual or recipient for occupational life. Vocational education is that form of education deliberately designed to help man improve his skills in choosing an occupation that focuses on providing knowledge, developing skills and inculcating the attitude that are necessary to enter into an occupation (Okorie, 2006). Vocational education is any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare people for employment in recognized occupation (Mago, 2011). According to Okoro (2006), technical education is that type of education which “equips the individual with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the individual to live a useful life in society economically, socially and spiritually. According to Uwaifo (2009), technical education is the training of technically oriented personnel who are to be the initiators, facilitators and implementers of technologically development of a nation. It is training of citizens on the need to be technologically literate would eventually lead to self-reliance and sustainability. He observed that technical education more than any other profession has direct impact on the development of the country. Again, technical education contributes so much ranging from electrical/electronics technology, metal work technology, mechanical/automobile technology, building technology and woodwork technology etc, technical education is practical oriented education which makes it unique in its content and approach thereby demanding special attention. The term

vocational and technical education said by Ehud (2004) “is a broad education system which involves the production of a labour force including skilled, semi-skilled, technicians and professionals with the requisite skills and ability to work in a chosen career” Unfortunately, despite all the glaring contributions of technical and vocational education in our nation, Nigeria is yet to accord this type of education the attention it deserves. This is one of the major reasons for the rising unemployment, poverty and unabated crimes in the society today.

Concept of Security

The concept of security is multi-dimensional and can be categories into four inter-relation aspects, which are the national security, personal security, food security and social security (Waisu, 2010). According to Abdullahi (2005), security embraces all aspects of society including economic, political and social dimensions, individual and family, country, local and national life. Security according to Nwagboso, (2012) is the act of being safe from harm or danger, defense, protection and preservation of values, and the absence of threats to acquired values. Security is about survival and condition of human existence. Security also exist when people live together in a certain environment without disturbance or violence.

Security according to Bassey (2005), is an innovative, systematic and proactive process for the determination of danger, the protection and prevention of harm of any kind against persons and property, for any nation to make progress and develop economically, politically and socially, its peace and security of life and property are prerequisites. For a nation to experience peace and security, her citizens have to be fully engaged in one vocation or the other which will bring about economic growth and peaceful co-existence Aliyu & Shehu (2008), define national security as the national desire to live without external threat to all values that are regarded as important or vital. Nweze (2004) conceptualized national security as

the prevention, protection and the guarantee of the safety of life, property, wealth of the citizenry and measure to guard against to national sovereignty. It equally implies freedom from danger to life and property and people to pursue legitimate interest within the society (Bassey, 2004).

Insecurity

Insecurity is the presence of and /or apprehension of those tendencies that could undermine internal cohesion and corporate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people. It also implies the presence or apprehension of danger to people and property and the presence of a non –conducive atmosphere for the people to pursue their legitimate interest within the society. It embodies the presence, or apprehension of threat to, and or direct violation of security. It implies threat to individual security, state security and security of the environment. Beland (2005), define insecurity as “the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection”. It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity and it feeds into many other forms of insecurity such as economic security and social security.

Security Challenges in 21st Century Nigeria

Nigeria in 21st century has witness an unprecedented level of insecurity. This has made national security threat to be the major issue for the government and has prompted huge allocation of the national budget to security. In order to ameliorate the incidence of crime, the federal government has embarked on criminalization of terrorism by passing Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011, installation of Computer-based Closed Circuit Television cameras (CCTV) in some parts of the county, enhancement of surveillance as well as

investigation of criminal related offences, heightening of physical security measures around the county aimed at deterring or disrupting potential attacks, strengthening of security agencies through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media (Azazi,2011). Despite these efforts, the level of insecurity in the county is still high. In addition, Nigeria has consistently ranked low in the Global Peace Index (GPI,2012), signifying a worsened state of insecurity in the country (Nwalado & Nwalado, 2015).

According to Dembo and Mustapha (2013), it is on record that Nigeria had witness a drastic and frantic security challenges in the last few years. These crises are in various forms: communal, religious, political and socio-economic, with varying degrees of casualty, mostly innocent citizens of this country (Nigeria). Some see this phenomenon as a calculated attempt by the international community to divide the country while others believe it is the phantom sectarian violence that is responsible. The most worrisome fact is that this incessant violence apart from killing and maiming innocent souls has imprinted agony, tension and aggression in the minds of Nigerians. Today, we live in absolute suspicion and constant presentiment of an impending disaster. Most economic activities have come to halt and private businesses are crippling with the result of the inability of employers to pay their employees. All these are the direct aftermath of insecurity is caused in the country. They opined that the insecurity is caused by three (among others) major factors:

- a) Illiteracy
- b) Unemployment
- C) Disregard of traditional security measures.

Role of Vocational and Technical Education in Curbing Insecurity in 21st Century in Nigeria

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The development and security of any nation hinge on the social and economic contributions of her citizens. Technical education plays a major role in promoting community and national development, including security sustenance (Oguntuyi,2013). Unfortunately, Nigeria does not seem to give technical education the attention it deserves. This appears to be the reason for rising rate of unemployment and poverty in the society which had contributed largely to the insecurity problems in the country. This is because the youths and graduates from tertiary institutions are not equipped with adequate skills that will enable them exploit the natural resources that abound in Nigeria. He further posits that unemployment leads to frustration and disillusionment which may result in crime or drug abuse in a futile attempt to escape from, and forget the pains and humiliation associated with poverty which has worsened, as millions of school leavers and graduates of tertiary institutions are not gainfully employed. The reason is that they lack the necessary occupational skills that would enable them to be self-employed and effectively function in today's world of work (Olaitan, 1996). Ayodele (2006), identified the problem of irrelevant education that is bookish, theoretical and a white collar job oriented. In addition, government programs are not designed to promote vocational and technical education. The level of infrastructural development and facilities provided by the government are affecting to a large extent, the level of skills acquisition in the country. The high rate of insecurity as exemplified in kidnapping, prostitution, and armed robbery has a relationship with unemployment and poverty. Illiteracy and more especially lack of occupational skills that can be derived from vocational and technical education, which can be described as any form of education whose purpose is to prepare person(s) for employment in an occupation or group of occupations. This implies that vocational and technical education has a major role to play for the sustenance of living in this period of security

challenges in Nigeria. This is true in the sense that vocational and technical education can help one to be independent, autonomous, ambitious, and can take responsibility for their future. Usoro et al. (2012) state that with vocational and technical education, there should be a remarkable reduction in the rate of such crimes as robbery, kidnapping, terrorism, assassination, insecurity, war, internet scammer, prostitution, militancy etc. as well as alleviation of the poverty rate in the nation, there is no doubt that vocational technical education is one of the instruments a nation can use to curb rising wave of social vices like war, hatred, assassination, terrorism etc and unemployment that could lead to poverty.

Skill acquisition for self-employment is the focus of vocational education. It is aimed at eradicating poverty and youth unemployment in the society. When the youth are gainfully employed and self-reliant, they cannot be used or manipulated by greedy politicians to perpetuate violence in the society or be involved in acts of terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, ethnic and religious conflicts. Security challenges are the direct effect of and consequences of a misplaced educational system and vocational programme. A well-articulated vocational education programme that is free from political gimmick and manipulated will go a long way in reducing security challenges and further rekindle the hope and aspiration of foreign and local investors. Vocational education gives training and impacts the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically. Idleness is a base for laziness whose end result is involvement in criminal activities. A man who profitably engages in one productive exercise or the other is likely to be able to meet his basic needs as a responsible citizen (Ishaya 2014).

Quality education is a major tool to sustainable peace, illiteracy is one of the major causes of war in our society today. Without good education given to the citizens of a nation, such nation will hardly experience peace. Vocational and technical

education has been programmed to deliver to the individual learner the needed skills required for them to be useful to themselves and the society at large. Sustainable peace and security can be achieved in Nigeria if the government will invest more in the future of her citizens by mobilizing them to engage in occupational skills and competencies, especially in vocational and technical training within and outside the school system. Upon completion of their vocational training and graduation, the individuals will be gainfully employed or become self employed, and then contribute meaningfully to their society. Individual with such skills would be satisfied with their lives and relationship with the society, and will never have time to be recruited or involved in violence, robbery, kidnapping, human trafficking, suicide bombing by way of searching for daily bread (Ogo, 2012).

Problems and Challenges of Vocational and Technical Education in Curbing Insecurity in Nigeria

There are numerous problems and challenges facing vocational and technical education which has affected negatively our national life and security development. Among the numerous challenges are:

- i. Lack of sufficient training facilities and equipment: Most vocational education departments in Nigeria universities do not have laboratory or workshop space let alone usable facilities and where they exist, they are grossly inadequate. Oduma, (2007) posited that what is seen and referred to as vocational education laboratories in various institutions today is an eye-sores as the laboratories only have items or equipment that were provided at the point the department were established.
- ii. Serious shortage of vocational and technical education trained instructors and facilitators: Acquisition of skills requires that strict

attention and supervision must be given to every student. With the overwhelming population of students in Nigeria schools, individualized instruction becomes very difficult especially during practicals due to shortage of vocational education teachers. So many studies e.g (Osuafor, 2006) have revealed shortage of vocational technical teachers in our schools.

- iii. Poor funding of vocational education: Universities in Nigeria are owned and funded by the Federal Government, state government and private individual. In Nigeria, the allocation to education as a share of the GDP is quite minimal. Okeke and Eze (2010), reported that sufficient fund has not been channeled to vocational education which is a major problem plaguing the system. Similarly, Ugiagbe in Okeke (2010), observed that poor funding cause acute shortage of the necessary facilities needed for effective implementation of the program.
- iv. Poor remuneration of vocational teachers: Many universities across the country are inadequately staffed because of poor remuneration of vocational teachers. Uwaifo, (2005) opined that academics is not as attractive and commensurate to the effort, commitment and finances put in to acquire it; whereas a first —degree graduate can function well in the industry and politics etc and earn good money.

Conclusion

Vocational and technical education is the training of technically oriented personnel who are to be the initiators, facilitators and implementers of technological development of a nation. The issue of security challenges of any country has to be among the priorities of any government because it is a process that affects the citizens negatively. Nigeria in recent time has witness an

unprecedented level of insecurity. This is the one of the reasons the federal has to take a necessary step in promoting the development of technical and vocational education in Nigeria. The paper concluded that vocational and technical education has a crucial role to play in curbing security challenges in Nigeria as it is an educational system that makes people either directly employed by the government or self-employed, which would bring about peaceful coexistence and also contributing to the economic growth and development of a nation.

Suggestion

Based on the conclusion the researcher suggested that

1. The government must enhance the quality of vocational and technical education by allocating sufficient funds to polytechnic and technical colleges. This will ensure that adequate training facilities are available and well-maintained, enabling students to acquire the necessary skills for sustainable economic growth, job creation, and a stronger economy.
2. It is essential to increase awareness about technical education as a viable career option among various stakeholders, including parents, religious institutions, community organizations, and non-governmental organizations.
3. Providing an allowance to students pursuing technical education can serve as a motivation for others to consider technical courses as their field of study.
4. Offering a special salary scale to technical education instructors and facilitators can act as an incentive for them to work diligently towards achieving the nation's educational goals.

5. Making vocational technical education mandatory at all levels of tertiary institutions will help in preparing students for the demands of the job market and contribute to the overall development of the economy.

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