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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, SECURITY AND NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTIVITY

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Abstract

Security of lives and properties of the citizens is one of the main pillars of social existence. There are elements that pose threat to stability of the country. These elements include but not limited to poverty, unemployment and unemployability. These phenomena can be addressed when youths become productively engaged. Education has been identified as a veritable tool for sustainable productivity. But the nature of education to be administered has a lot to contribute to national productivity. As such, there is a clarion call to review the education curriculum of the country to enable it address the problems of citizens. Subsequently, vocational education seems to provide answer to the question as it is saddled with the responsibility of providing skills to learners that will make them productive, reliable and self employed. The issue of what constitutes national need still stares in the face as efforts are being made to provide solution to numerous security yearnings of the country. Vocational education therefore, if well implemented will acquaint the youths with proper skills that will enable them find solutions to the problems of the country. This is because, acquisition of relevant skills will enhance employment opportunity which will reduce crime rate and stabilize security situation of the country. Using descriptive analytic method, the paper tries to find a nexus between vocational education, security and national productivity. It concludes that a well implemented vocational education will tackle security problem of the country by reducing unemployment and unemployability which will enhance national productivity.

Introduction

Security of lives and properties is one of the basic needs of humanity. Security is not limited to a state of feeling safe in one's body or property. It extends to living in certainty about future. In this regard, we talk about food security, job security, employment, corruption and

other phenomena that when threatened or if allowed to thrive will pose danger to the well being of the populace. According to (Ezike, 2015), “Security is not limited to feeling safe in lives and properties. It extends to threats to those things that will make living comfortable”. He goes further to explain that if one feels secure in his property that is, there is no open threat to his possession, but has no employment, that such a person is highly vulnerable in social matters. Therefore for him security should touch every facet of human endeavour.

In Nigeria, it is an obvious fact that security threat is one of the biggest challenges faced by any government in power. The situation has heightened to a point that it forms the fulcrum of campaign and manifestoes for politicians and political parties. The security challenges in Nigeria ranges from open threat to lives and properties of the citizens to food, employment, poverty, corruption and so on. Finding solution to the security challenge of the country has formed the point on which other factors rest if sustainable productivity will be achieved.

Vocational education on the other hand is positioned to address various security challenges of the country if well implemented. Vocational education is different from other forms of education. It is a type of education that helps an individual to be self reliant, employed and of assistance to his immediate environment and beyond. It is practically oriented and the purpose is for learners to be able to do the job rather knowing the theories alone. If it can be logically argued that insecurity is as a result of unemployment, underemployment and unemployability, it can be validly concluded that vocational education will go a long way in cubing the menace of insecurity in Nigeria.

Productivity is one of the major characteristic of every living thing. Its impact is very motivating in human endeavour. It may be understood as the ratio of input to output. The output and input relation is relative depending on the areas of human endeavour. In business, output may consist of sales, earnings and market shares. In other words, it can be said that productivity increases when there is desirable pecuniary remuneration for any services done. Inversely, low productivity occurs when no appreciable monetary compensation is obtained for job or services rendered. Suffice to say that high productivity is said to be achieved when there is high revenue in monetary terms which can be used to procure infrastructure and other goods that will aid comfortable living.

This researcher wishes to take departure from the above proposition, bearing in mind that there are values that have no pecuniary qualification, yet they form the basic fabric of nation's existence. Sequel to the above the need to give answers to these pertinent questions arises; Whose vocation, Whose productivity and Whose education?

The above question is important, especially when a solution has to be sought for national development of a particular people. It is noteworthy to state that the western education which prepares one for white collar job is no longer effective in increasing productivity among Nigeria populace. Of more worthy of note and painfully too is the fact that vocational education, the way it is implemented today, may not even effectively replace the meal ticket type of education we inherited from the colonial masters because the above questions were not put into consideration in formulation and execution of the curriculum for vocational education.

Vocational education is proposed to take care of the needs of the citizens. Still arises is the question 'whose needs'? This question is as important as the above ones, because of the tendency to produce what may not be required by the citizens.

In Federal Polytechnic Oko for instance (where the researcher teaches) there is a programme called EED (Entrepreneur Enterprises Development). In this programme students are taught how to produce soap, beads, necklaces, and bags and some snacks. What follows after their training is that every student now has a white bucket to display the snacks (particularly chin-chin) they have made. At a point the sellers seem to number the buyers. This is an example of one of the consequences that will occur if the above pertinent questions are not put in place while formulating curriculum for vocational education in Nigeria.

If vocational education is meant to prepare one to be self employed on graduation (Mmuo, 2013) then whose vocation to be pursued is very important to be determined. The nature of vocation to be pursued is also very important in order to achieve sustainable productivity, with education serving as a midwife, it is also necessary to choose the right type of education for safe delivery of the product of vocational education to the nation. It is important to state that vocational education is meant to provide employment. Employment can only be provided if graduates of vocational education learn skills that are relevant in providing solutions to the national problems. It is only then that it can reduce crime rate among the youths and enhance national productivity.

The task of this project is to find a nexus between security and vocational education as a panacea for national productivity. Using descriptive analysis, it tries to synthesize vocational education and security as the former assist the later in bringing sustainable productivity to the nation, not in terms of output/input relation that is viewed only from pecuniary quantification and quantification but in other relations that are conversely related to pecuniary remuneration.

Vocational Education in Nigeria

Vocational education is related to the old apprenticeship system which is designed for various levels of work starting from manual trade to highly specialized work.. there is need for high skilled manpower to replace the graduates of normal education who were trained for white collar jobs. Nigeria as a conscription of colonial masters has failed in various aspects of national life. The reason may not be far from lack of agreement as to what is actually the need of the country. Similar challenge is equally encountered in the area of vocational education.

Vocational education prepares students for different programmes and sectors in Nigeria, like agriculture, commercial and other industries. After passing through vocational education system, youths have opportunity to explore different career options. They are exposed to various practical activities which make them to acquire the desired skills in the career. This is in line with submission of Toscani Academy that, “Vocational education is the aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as the basic scientific knowledge. Encyclopedia Americana submits that its aim is to prepare young people and adults for useful occupation, particularly for skilled trades and semi-professional careers(Ikpe, 2018). United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization(UNESCO) Document, 1974 states that the technical and vocational education is used as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life.

From the above submissions, one could see the reason vocational education and occupational training courses are among the bedrock of the national development plans of numerous civilizations. This is because it helps to develop human resources, makes them more productive and useful to the society as well as leads to a great and massive economic expansion and advancement. Knowledge produced and acquired through vocational education is the most vital and sustainable basis of national productivity and security. Irrespective of this conspicuous contribution of vocational training to the development of any nation, Nigeria unfortunately has not been able to tap from this aspect of human resource development and its benefit to the nation’s development and civilization. The task of this essay however, is not necessarily to explore the benefits and the consequences of not having a proficient vocational education plan in the country. Rather it is to demonstrate

that vocational education if well implemented will go a long way to solving security problem in the country thereby improving on the national productivity.

Vocational Education and Security: Connecting the Dots

In an ideal and well governed state, there is a symbiotic relationship between education generally, vocational education in particular and security. Insecurity undermines citizens' potentials and constitutes a constraint on their capacity for sustainable development which will in turn stifle productivity. There is no doubt that one of the major problems of Nigeria is security. There are diverse manifestations of violence spearheaded by various unknown groups in the country. The security of today's Nigeria is dotted with numerous threats of violence and instability. The country's democracy is tested by rampant crime and unprecedented campaign of terror. It could be adduced that the government's inability to track down security problems is lack of knowledge of what constitutes security in the modern time. According to (Ejogba, 2006) "The perception of security varies even within the same community". Conventionally, security is seen only from abilities of a state to defend itself against any real or imagined threat to its territorial integrity. At domestic level, the internal security apparatus should be able to secure the state from any internal uprising. Based on this, the security is militarized; heavy equipment and ammunition are provided to tackle security threats of any form. In the end, it could be observed that militaristic approach to security is incapable of solving security problem in the country.

Consequently, there is a need to broaden what security is all about. According to (Nweke and Nwachukwu) "Presently there is an attempt to broaden it to accommodate other relevant, if not critical, elements within this conception". It is within these critical elements that vocational education comes in. These involve economic development, equality, political accountability, good governance etc. (Aliyu, 2012) posits that, "For security problem to be cubed there is need for reduction of threats, both actual and potential, that is capable of generating insecurity for the country such as poverty, unemployment and inequality". He further argues that the fundamental challenge of the third world countries, of which Nigeria is one, is simply security defined in terms of national development. For him to talk about security in Nigeria without corresponding reflection on the question of national development is a futile venture. It is on this note that the present researcher posits that vocational education will enhance national productivity by maintaining security stability through poverty reduction by acquainting the youths with proper skills. According to Alamika, "Low education often translate to absence of competitive skill, adequate income, exclusion from participation in vital economic, political and social organisations and relations; lack of access to adequate

food and nutrition, housing, health care and efficient public emergency and safety services – all of which are elements of human security.” Therefore vocational education, having been encumbered with the task of acquainting the citizens with good skill that will help them be productive, will help the citizens live life that will be devoid of security threat. A country with poor skilled manpower as is the case in contemporary Nigeria will lack citizens that can produce or manage competencies and resources required for developing and sustaining relevant and strong or capable institutions and leaders for development, democratic governance and national productivity.

Conclusion

What has been demonstrated so far is that vocational education is a very important and veritable tool for enhancing national productivity. National productivity cannot be achieved without proper, adequate and functional security network. It is said that idol hand is a devil's workshop. Unemployment rate in Nigeria is hitting the roof. Most educational institution in the country turns out thousands of graduates every year but there are no institutional arrangements for their employment. As man is naturally instinctual to survival, many in a bid to survive engage in violent and criminal activities against the society. Such criminal activities include militancy, kidnapping, bombing, armed robbery, destruction of government and private properties, among others. It is in line with this that the need to promote vocational education, as an approach to solving security problem is the one that needs immediate attention and expedite action. Vocational education is saddled with responsibility to acquaint the populace especially the youths with proper skills acquired through training. This will create employment and make youths occupied and engaged by extension avoid crime. When the rate of crime is brought to the bearing minimum following the high rate of youth engagement through vocational education and training, national productivity will be achieved and sustained.

Recommendations

1. Adequate budgetary allocation should be made for vocational-technical education due to the capital intensive nature of the programme.
2. Federal Government of Nigeria should setup a standing committee of technical education to facilitate cooperation between training institution and the industrial firms.
3. The expansion of training facilities for both trainers and trainees.
4. The curriculum of vocational-technical education should be broadened and focused on local needs.

5. Industries should be encouraged to accept trainees on industrial attachment.
6. State and local governments should establish multi-purpose vocational centres for artisan training.

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