

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AS A ROADMAP TO PEACE BUILDING AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION IN NIGERIA: NORTH EAST PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This research presented a critical examination in formulation of policies and their implementations of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) in some states of the country. The study indicated the relevance of VTE in creating condition of peace building and socio-economic development in various states of the North East zone of the federation through examining some states such as Adamawa state, Borno state, Taraba state and Gombe state. They were all randomly selected among the six states of North East geo-political zone. The comparative analysis of difference in objectives of VTE in the four selected states was made. The findings of the study indicated a holistic implementation of policies on VTE in North East Nigeria. Therefore, it has been critically examined the concepts of vocational and technical education relationship between vocational and technical skills acquisition and peace building in North Eastern Nigeria. Hence, it has also been considered the roles of VTE in socio-economic reconstruction in the study area and how VTE engenders peace among the youths within enclave of Boko Haram crisis territories. Hence, each state government should give VTE due attention that makes school children and youths acquire work-related and work-based skills which will make them self-reliance after leaving schools rather than being school leavers who lack the required employable skills in the labour market. The study concluded that if this is achieved, every participating youth of the program will be gainfully engaged in their various areas of specialization which can ensure political stability within the societies.

Keywords: Vocational/technical education; Sustainable development; Policy formulation/implementation; Peace building; Socio-economic Reconstruction.

Introduction

Skills are very essential for both scientific and technological development in every society. However, no meaningful as well as sustainable development if there is no sustainable livelihood as well as peaceful living and co-existence. Adebisi, (2013) postulated that if there is no sustainable development, there will be no sustainable livelihood. That was with a view to sustaining human existence and living. Doing and keeping one's labour is a catalyst for sustainable development and peace of mind. Therefore, Vocational and technical education (VTE) is a system of education designed to equip individuals with professional skills. However, this system of education has been long neglected especially in various states of the country. The impact of such neglect has been high rate of unemployment and joblessness culminating into restiveness among youths which led to many social crisis such as Boko haram, banditry, Shila boys and kidnappers around the North East region of Nigeria states.

Very large population of youth around the enclave of the region are idle. Kamer, (2022) opined that, around 37.05% of the youths were unemployed. Lumbreras et al, (2021) asserted that unlike Nigeria with the population of over 200 millions, Algeria with a population of over 39 million, 60% of whose citizens are under 30 and 27% under 14, the hardest hit by unemployment are the educated young people. Thus, these youths are easily susceptible to engaging in social vices such as insurgence and militancy plus the associated crimes, which are

the foremost evils of this generation. Therefore, unemployed youths in North East region of Nigeria states are frustrated and depressed and at a very slight provocation they are prone to restiveness. High level of unemployment in any state of the federation within the region has direct negative effects on the level of crimes and insecurity in such state (Adebisi, et al, 2014). Hence, poverty is associated with unemployment (European Training Foundation, 2000). Van der Veen, and Simone, (2020) asserted that unemployed youths are frequently perceived as a high risk for the stability of a country. Therefore, it indicated that creation of jobs and employment opportunities are essential pave way to maintaining peace, law and order in various states within the region. However, promoting VTE is very crucial in maintaining political stability and self-reliance among youths in the North East region of Nigeria states of the country. Job creation and employment opportunities will engage the youths to be responsible and with legitimate sources of livelihood thereby curbing their involvements in various social vices such as frauds, kidnapping, armed robbery, Shila activities, banditry and insurgency. Adebisi et al, (2014) stated that unemployment made youths indulged into many crimes as a means of livelihood.

Globally, VTE has been an integral part of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies in industrialized and developed societies due to its impact on productivity and economic development (Mikailu, 2011). Balogun, (2012) opined that VTE has been recognized as a positive indicator in growing economies, since it improves human resource development and its utilization. However, policies and systems of any state in the nation tend to change dynamically as dictated by its socio-economic, political as well as technological circumstances. Old systems become inappropriate, new technologies emerge, old skills become redundant while the human element requires new skills, new attitudes and a new orientation. Perhaps never before in history has the need for manpower development became important as now when matching between man and machines is increasing in complexity. The needs of industry include land (for buildings, installation of equipment and future expansion), capital (for purchasing land, plants, equipment or machinery as well as reward for labour) and human labour force. This suggested that their training is inadequate, irrelevant or is at variance with the needs of the society (Adebisi, 2013).

Manpower has been defined as the portion of a nation's population that is capable of engaging in productive employment (Adebisi, 2014). In other words, it is the total supply of persons available and fitted for service. Hence, development is a planned programme to achieve targeted sustained economic growth of a particular state or nation or part thereof with desirable milestone over definable periods. Development may also be perceived as expanding, enlarging upon or bringing out the potentialities, capabilities etc. of a person (Kamer, 2022).

Training in VTE for job opportunities

VTE training and the labour market as an area of core competency is on the supply side of the labour market (i.e., the supply of workers) and the intermediation between labour supply and demand. VTE education and training also performs a social function by empowering people to participate actively in civil society processes.

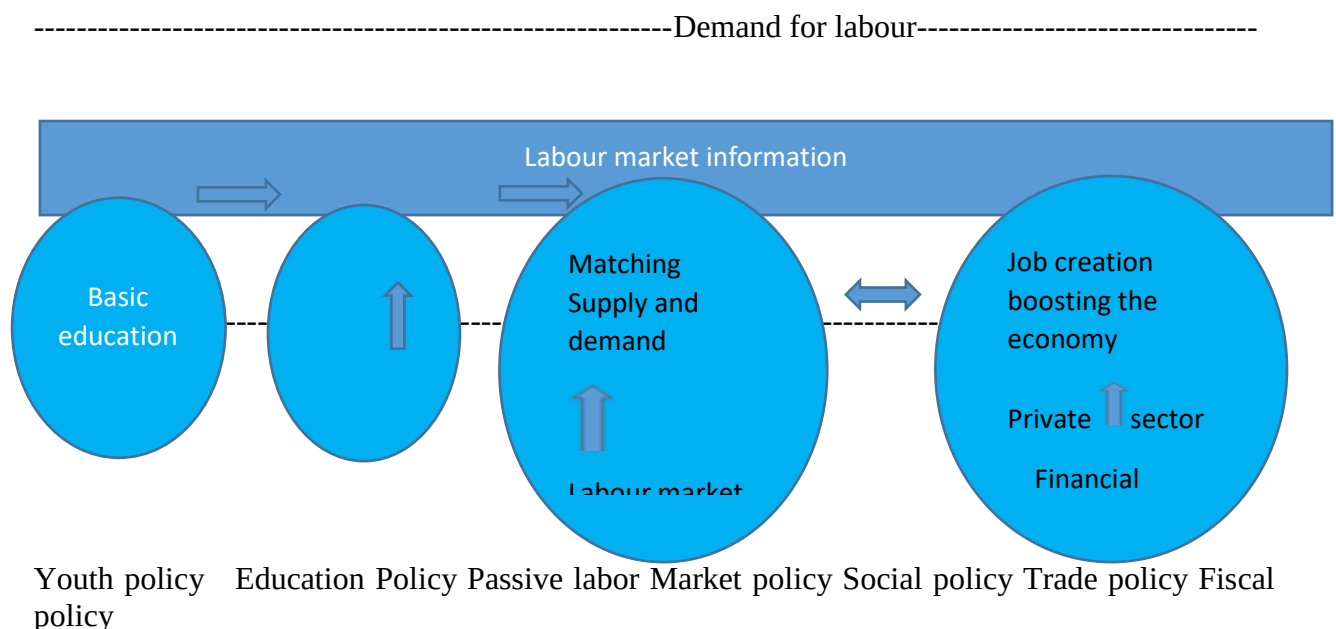


Fig 1. Model of Technical education and youth employability indicator in economic development

Fig 1. Above suggested that by facilitating and promoting job-seekers,, access to the formal and informal labour market through its activities in the area of TVET and labour market, Nigeria leaders will be making important contributions to reducing unemployment and underemployment. As joblessness and underemployment among large sections of the population also have the potential to fuel conflict, technical and vocational education and training and labour market policy measures can also contribute indirectly to conflict prevention and youth restiveness.

However, measures undertaken in the core competency area of VTE promotes employment-oriented and socially and ecologically sustainable growth processes in developing and transition of a particular state through improvements of competitiveness. Private sector development plays an important role in creating jobs and thus stimulating the demand side of the labour market – explicitly or implicitly as an intended outcome of efforts to boost the economy.

The role of VTE in manpower development presently in various states of the federation is to achieve development, it must offer a variety of skills in both vocational and technical courses such as agricultural science, business education, fine arts and home ecnmics (Alam, 2007)so that the vast population of the states can contribute to economic growth by participating in different professional fields. VTE systems play a crucial role in the social and economic development of every state. Owing to their dynamic nature, they are continuously subject to the forces driving change in the schools, industry and society. Mechanized farming requires technical skills that could be obtained in technical and vocational schools. The real tests of success of VTE are the employability of the graduates, personal development, opportunities for further education and career development, public acceptance and image. Ultimately, the effectiveness and responsiveness of a VTE system would be measured by its impact on the social and economic development of the nation.

The Impact of Negligence of VTE in the States around North East region of the country

Therefore, some previous government had neglected some aspects of VTE education like bricklayers, carpenters, painters and auto mechanics; laboratory and pharmacy technicians, electrical/electronic technicians and skilled vocational nurses, etc. Economic development is the process of accumulation of real capital brought about by the application of advanced production methods and organization which raise productivity and, thus, income and investment possibilities in each state around the region. However, application of new technological process which is bound to lead to further increases in productivity, income and investment are essential. Thus, rapid economic growth seems to increase capital stock than in labour supply, sustained growth depends on technological progress. Lack of new strategies to adapt technologies led to slow development in socio-economic and industrial development in the study areas.. Substantial increases in productivity cannot be achieved without proper reinforcement and motivation for technological and organizational methods. If the allocation of available capital favors the production and import of capital goods while neglecting technical education the (marginal) productivity of invested capital likely falls considerably short of what otherwise could be attained relatively easily. VTE education Programs is to provide for the effective utilization of knowledge accumulated elsewhere rather than attempt to be self-sufficient in a narrow national sense. Enrolments in VTE program and level of economic development are related, therefore, demand for the program seemed to exist in industrially developing societies, with growth and diversification of industrial structure.

Relationship between VTE skills acquisition and peace building in North East region.

Skilful societies can be able to be self reliant and create more job opportunities the younger upcoming generations and this can channelled their energies and behaviours toward positive societal development and peace among people. Through the above means, security among residence can be achieved and make some VTE programs available for drop-out among the youths in the societies. Therefore, peace and tranquility can ensure societies free banditry and insurgency within the crisis areas (Suleiman, 2013).

The Roles of VTE in Socio-economic Reconstruction in North East region of Nigeria.

The United Republic of Tanzania, (1996) lamented that the shortage of technicians, engineers and technologists in every sector of the economy created a serious setback in implementation of the economic development programmes on which the nation depends. Nguliamali and Temu, (2014) conceived that development as moving from one step to an improved one through technical know-how. They believed that skilled persons have important roles to play in transforming various sectors of the economy including agriculture, industry, construction industry services in urban and rural areas, schools and in many other development activities. The following are ways that vocational and technical education can engender socio-economic reconstruction in the various states of the federation and the country in general.

- Vocational and technical education tend to assist in tackling the problems of unemployment and reduces white collar jobs seekers. Training the youths and adults in VTE program's empowers the individual participants to be self-reliant and self-employable by acquiring workable skills in different vocations such as electrical, plumbing, automobile, vulcanizing, computer engineering, agriculture, cloth weaving among others culminating to high standard of living.
- VTE education is a self-motivating factor in individuals to work for the nation because it stimulates technological, economical and industrial development through the production of competent and honest workers who are capable of utilizing the abundant natural and human resources available in and around the region for social, economic and industrial growth and development.

- VTE assist to influence rapid social and economic development. Personal or individual's development which lead to societal or national development. Sustainable economic growth is important for catering societal needs of individuals in all aspects of life ramifications. Vision 2063 can only be realized when VTE form of education is much priorities to empower youths within all crisis regions of the nation.
- Adequate inculcation of farming skills into the youths will empower them to become 'intelligent users of our natural resources' (Morebise, 2022).
- VTE program's is essentially needed to prevent unprecedented mass drift of youths from rural-urban areas, and from one state to another.
- Job opportunities should be created by the various governments at all levels to impact the youths with vocational and technical skills rather than employing expatriates to do the work that the locales could and should do.
- Through effective implementation of VTE program's within the NE region, the states can soar high in manpower development leading to sustainability economic growth.

Van der Veen, and Simone, (2020) postulated that wider access to VTE education not only leads to a decent workforce or boosts economy, but also enhances security situation in conflict-affected environment.

Conclusion

The time has ripened for the governments of North East Nigeria to allocate adequate resources, formulate and implement policies aimed at developing and revamping VTE program's in all aspects of educational levels since it is essential to industrialization, wealth creation and poverty reduction. The desire for peaceful living and socio-economic transformation in all the crisis areas, North East Nigerian region highlight VTE as a driver of human development. More so, the rehabilitation of many repented kidnappers, bandits and insurgents is achieved through vocational skills training with a view to making them self-employed. Thus, there is need for proper supervision and implementation of the set objectives of VTE education in the entire region. As the adage is "Prevention is better than cure" goes the common saying. Vocational and technical skills acquisition should be made mandatory for all students and young adults at all school levels by the state governments. Since A hungry person is an angry person! Joblessness will cause poverty. Poverty will cause hunger and hunger will cause anger. Anger in turn will cause violent reactions and violent reactions will cause crises. There can never be peace when there are crises neither can there be development when and where there is no peace. Therefore, North Eastern Nigeria must continue to undergo a rapid transition from a predominantly traditional to a more modern and scientific economy in which skill acquisition will be the main vehicle for employment and self-reliance.

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