

Comparative Analysis of African Traditional Vocational Education and Western Vocational Education: Bridging the Gaps for Economic Transformation in Nigeria.

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Abstract- This paper Comparative analysis of African Traditional vocational education and Western vocational education: Bridging the gaps for economic transformation in Nigeria, is a position paper that examine how the indigenous people of Africa has been transferring vocational skills to the people from generation to generation. The paper also examines the vocational training of Western education. The study revealed that, the two types of vocational education are of great benefits to the nation. It was therefore recommended among others that, there should be inclusion of African Traditional vocational education curriculum in the Western vocational education for economic growth of the nation. The paper concludes that the knowledge of the past which didn't allow unemployment in the society should be included in the Western vocational education.

Index Terms- Comparative Analysis, African Traditional Vocational Education, Western Vocational Education, Bridging the gaps, Economic Transformation

I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria as a nation place emphasis on skills acquisition. To Nigerians, the society owes its young people the best opportunity to assume healthy and positive adult roles because the well-being of each individual is important in itself; and also, because of the potential contribution of individual to the collective well-being. An individual's competitiveness of enterprises and industries will depend more on the acquisition and application of his or her knowledge. Education has been identified as a tool for self-reliant or self-sufficient. For any youth or young adult to be self-reliant, African Traditional education or Western Education is a paramount tool to his or her success.

The world today is experiencing a rapid change in education especially technological advancement as a result of vocational education. Vocational skills development is an important factor in the drive to enhance productivity, stimulate economic competitiveness and raise people out of poverty.

The concept of vocational education is not new to us in Nigeria. It was essentially one of the major focuses of the Nigerian Indigenous or Traditional Education. In pre-colonial time, vocational education was taught by non-formal methods (even though some elements of formality have been observed in some cases such as the apprenticeship scheme which was very pragmatic. It is an educational system that adequately provided for and implemented all the domains of learning; cognitive, affective and the psychomotor that needed to be developed in an individual). People received training in smithing, (iron, silver, gold etc), carving, (wood and bronze), Sculpturing, painting and decorating, carpentry, dress making, boat making, leather work (Osokoya2010).

Amadi (2012) described vocational skills acquisition as a process where by a person acquires or learn a particular skill or type of behavior needed for business through training or education in order to identify and exploit entrepreneurial opportunity for self-employment. Vocational skills acquisition is the process of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by creating avenues for empowerment, thereby creating an avenue for jobs and wealth creation while instilling self-sufficiency and reliance among Nigerians (Isaac 2011).

II. AFRICAN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

The various communities that were later united and named Nigeria due to the activities of the colonial administrators had their own educational system and practices which aimed at bringing up their young ones in the way of life of the people. The young ones within the system acquired the skills, knowledge, patterns of thought and attitudes which the communities thought were required for effective life in them and for dealing successfully with the people belonging to other communities. African Indigenous Education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitude and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which he lives (Fafunwa in Adayinka 2015).

The goals of African Traditional/ Indigenous Education are:

- i. Preservation and conservation of the cultural heritage of the people.
- ii. Adaptation of children to their physical, social and spiritual environment so that they could exploit and benefit from it.
- iii. Instilling in the children a sense of the interdependence between the community of inherited laws, customs, language and values on the one hand, the wellbeing of the children themselves and the community.
- iv. Development of the child's latent physical skill.
- v. Development of character
- vi. Inculcation in the child respect for elders and those in positions of authority.
- vii. Development of intellectual skill.
- viii. Acquiring of specific vocational training and to participate actively in family and community affairs
- ix. Understanding, appreciating and promoting the cultural heritage of the community at large.

The ultimate goal of this education is the production of an individual who had respect for the promotion of the privacy of the community over the individual; honesty in dealing with others; abhorrence of

cheating and corrupt practices; moral courage, truthfulness, sense of justice, selfless service,; hard work; personal discipline, integrity, respect for elders/ parents, being skillful, co-operative and conforms with the social order of the society. Adayinka (2013), refers to it as perennialism, that is vehicle for the maintenance or preservation of the cultural heritage.

III. WESTERN EDUCATION IN NIGERIA.

Western Education or Christian Missionary Education that has significant impact in Nigeria started on 24th of September 1842 when Thomas Birch Freeman, a Wesleyan Methodist Missionary accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. De Graft arrived Badagry to convert the natives to Christianity. Other missions like Church Missions Society, Church of the Scotland, American Baptist Mission, Roman Catholic Mission also finds their way to Nigeria and established schools in their respective towns of settlement. (Akinbi 2014).

Almost every commentator on the development of development of Nigerian Education has remarked that the missionaries cum colonial education in Nigeria was too literary, too academic and was not adapted to the needs of a developing nation. Fafunwa (1971), Taiwo (1981) and Osokoya (2010) came to the conclusion that Nigeran education during the colonial period was geared towards the production of proud people who dislike manual labor and prefers white collar jobs.

A number of reports of educational commissions in Nigeria (Elliot commission of June 1943, Asquith commission of August 1943, Phelps Stokes commission of 1922) before and after the nation's independence regarded missionary education as defective and irrelevant to the needs and aspirations of the people.

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

African Traditional education, though informal, was aimed at inculcating attitudes and values in children and integrating individuals into the wider society. This education was given through the method of

initiation, observation, direct information and participation. It was training for participation throughout one's life and it embraces the training for allegiance, mutual interest and interdependence on one another. The education was relevant to the needs and aspirations of individual in the society as functionalism was regarded as the guiding principle.

Every member of the community engaged in one vocation or the other and there was no unemployment in traditional education. Western Education which is referred to in this study has been regarded to be too literary, too academic and was not adapted to the needs of a developing agricultural nation like Nigeria. This study therefore is set to do the Comparative analysis of African Traditional vocational education and contemporary vocational education and how it can be boosts the nation economy.

V. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.

1. To examine the vocations prevailing in African Traditional vocational education and Western vocational education.
2. To examine the methods of acquisition of the two types of vocational education.
3. To suggest how the two vocational educations can be of tremendous benefit to Nigeria economy.

VI. VOCATIONS PREVAILING IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

In African Traditional vocational education, there are Physical education which encouraged children to participate in activities that can develop their physical fitness like: wrestling, acrobatic display, swimming, jumping, dancing and racing. Intellectual training also developed the intelligent of the children by introducing them to activities that can widen their level of reasoning and exposure. The activities included teaching of local History, Legends, Local Geography, plants and animals, poetry. Character training encouraged members of the society to be of good behavior at all times. Humility, honesty, perseverance are part of character training in African Traditional vocational education. African Traditional vocational education was divided into three by Fafunwa (1974). These are;

- i. Agricultural Education which includes farming, fishing and veterinary science, that is animal care and animal rearing.
- ii. Trades and Crafts, like weaving of baskets, clothes, smithing of iron, silver, gold, carving of wood and bronze, Sculpturing, painting and decorating, building, boat making, food selling, dyeing.
- iii. Profession includes priesthood, medicine, justice like police, judges. Hunting, military, Chieftaincy, kingship with all these vocational training in African Traditional vocational Education, there was no unemployment.

In the Western Education, the training is majorly academic which narrows the opportunity of getting job to only white-collar jobs because the curriculum is towards literacy.

VII. METHODS OF ACQUISITION OF THE TWO TYPES OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

African Traditional education, though informal was given through the method of initiation, observation, direct information and participation. Functionalism was the guiding principle. Western Education is a formal educational system. There are lots of curriculum that are taught by experts. It also includes examination which will lead to certification which will enable a qualified candidate to seek for employment after graduation.

African Traditional Education and Western Education both have their benefits to individuals and the nation at large. The two should be merged in other to harness their benefits for better economy. Vocational Education that is well financed by the government and philanthropist will boost the nation economy.

VIII. SUMMARY

There is lot that Nigeria Western education has to learn from African Traditional vocational education. For instance, respect for elders which will make the respected elders to open up skills needed by the

individual for survival in the Society. Honest labour, helping those in need, strict ethical codes, fair dealing with neighbors being modest with honest labour. As a way out of unemployment, the nation has to fall back on the African Traditional vocational education and borrowed significantly from the system.

RECOMMENDATION

- i. There should be meeting point for the two types of vocational education so that the nation can benefit from the two.
- ii. Western Education curriculum should be developed to accommodate some of the African Traditional vocational education.
- iii. Government should devote time and finance the vocational aspects of Western Education adequately.
- iv. Non-governmental agencies should support the effort of the government in the area of vocational education.
- v. There should be equal remuneration for the employment of those in the vocational skills and white collar jobs.

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