

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: A NECESSITY FOR SPECIAL NEED PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL

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Abstract

The paper examined the objectives of vocational education, its importance in the society. The paper also examined handicapped peoples' situational challenges. It advocated the use of vocational agricultural skills and knowledge for training the handicapped in order to sustain them, make them self-reliant and encourage development of their potentials, in the society. In order to address the millennium development goals, the paper stated the categories of the handicapped that can be developed with such skills that will satisfy their needs, desires, and goals. The problems facing such trade learning centers were discussed; recommendations and conclusions were made in line with the discussions of the paper.

Introduction

Vocational education is that aspect of total education process that focuses on individual occupations. It provides knowledge, develop skills, and inculcate the right attitudes that are necessary for entry into and progress in occupation (Okoro, 2005). The purpose of vocational education is to get people into occupations, which requires specialized training. Olaitan (2005) states that vocational education is for skills and knowledge acquisition and training for one occupation may be of little or no relevance in another occupation. He stressed that vocational education inculcate right attitude for development of individualized occupation. The National Policy on Education, Federal Republic of Nigeria (FGN) (2004) states the following goals of vocational education.

- a. It provides trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advance craft and technical level.
- b. It provides the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development.
- c. It gives training and impact the necessary skills for individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

Based on these National objectives of vocational education, vocational agriculture is an indispensable factor in creating an enabling environment for the development of special need people within the millennium development goals. Since the handicapped, can cope with such vocational agriculture areas, making them independent of their economic development, the need then arises for the handicapped to be grouped, selected, on their areas of capability and trained on different skills for useful development.

The Special Need People for Special Need Education

The special need people are the handicapped people, that needs special help in education to sustain them, and make them self-reliant, through skill and knowledge acquisition, in any field of vocational education particularly in

Agriculture, Business, Home Economics and others. There are different categories of handicapped people, or learning disability. Some are hard of hearing, people with one hand, one leg, mentally retarded that cannot cope academically. These groups of people or individuals needs special education for the development of skills, knowledge, right attitude, for sustaining them in life process. Special need people are the exceptional children, youth and adult. Okorie (2005), states that special need education seek to insure their sustenance, reliance, and recognition in the public. Their educational need is to equip them and receive instructions appropriate for their capabilities and needs. These handicapped persons were regarded with hostility, fears and superstition before 18th centuries, (Quay 1973). They were rejected in the past and were not thought to be deserving the right, due to other human beings.

Hewett, (1974) states that the handicapped children and adult had been traditionally categorized on the basis of their disability into eight groups because handicapped children youth or adult may be suffering from more than one handicapped condition. Horowitz, (1980) also outlined the following handicapped groups:

- Emotionally disturbed, children, youth and adult: who exhibit learned behaviour which are consistently maladaptive.
- Learning disturbed children, youth and adult who exhibit a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological process involved in understanding in speaking.
- Mentally retarded group: Who exhibit such average general intellectual functioning, which originate during the developmental period and which is associated with impaired adaptive behaviour.
- Visually handicapped, youth and adult who either have partial sight or who are blind.
- Hearing impaired children, youths and adult whose speech deviate from others. It interferes with the communications and causes maladaptive behaviour.
- Physically handicapped children, youths and adult who are crippled as a result of neurological, orthopedic or chronic, health disorder.
- Gifted children, youth and adult, who exhibit outstanding ability or attainment, often defined by an IQ of more than 120 point. Among all these categories of handicapped people. This paper tend to address the cases of hearing impaired, physically handicapped, emotionally learning difficulties in speaking and gifted people.

Kirk (1972) had optimal method for dealing with handicapped condition, since there are the poor and needy with inadequate health care, aid condition, he suggested the use of vocational skills for their development as alternative for their sustenance and self-reliance. Human competences necessary for development of the handicapped for skill acquisition include – cognitive skills for processing information about the world, behaviour to satisfy needs, desires and goals, emotional attitudes to guide behaviour and awareness of self and others within the framework of complex social network (Phipps 1984). To actualize this noble dream of vocational education, special vocational centres need to be established for the development of their potentials.

Vocational Education Institutions, Necessary for Training Special Need People

1. Vocational Agricultural Training Centre/Apprenticeship Center

The Vocational Training Centre admit and train special need people in different areas of agriculture, youths and adult that have learning disability, or handicapped in one way, in their hands, ears, eyes, legs and could not continue, or could not cope up academically, because they were mentally retarded and can be developed by skills acquisition and knowledge, using practical training in the vocational training centre. Such skills like Budding, Grafting, and Layering in different crops can sustain an individual. Budded citrus are needed in different locations by different people, and this yield money, raising of ornamental flowers, which is used for land scaping in every compound, hostels, schools, recreational centres and other demand for these agricultural crops. This could sustain and make them self-reliant and develop their potentials, and eventually employ others.

2. Vocational School for the Handicapped

Vocational school of handicapped, which is craft school for the youths, of different levels and adults. They are the needy people, handicapped and those that have learning disability. They may be physically unable to do some job. Their alternative is to give them skills in a particular area which can suit them, sustain them and make them self-reliant and useful in the society. They feel happy and can employ other people. Since they cannot secure job easily without such skills. (Fafunwa 1984).

3. Poultry Industry

The poultry industry are the users of the graduates from Vocational Agricultural Training Centers. The handicapped people and people with learning disability that have received training in Vocational Agriculture Centers can be employed and retrained with special skill in poultry industry (Ogba & Onuoha, 2008).

It may be in feed formulation, or art of feeding birds. Special need people with learning disability can formulate feed using different feed stuff. Feed for livestock is a costly venture, with which anybody who has developed the practical skill for formulating feed will be sustained, in the society. (Rogers 2004) noted that the formulation of feed and art of feeding skills and its knowledge are practical ways of raising birds, while good routine practices produce good layers of high quality egg.

4. Fishery Industry

Fishery industries employ the services of people trained at vocational agricultural centres, the handicapped people, people with learning disabilities, that have acquired skills and knowledge that can be retrained to suite the practical work in fishery. Fishery industry is an enterprising venture, which requires simple skills and knowledge for manipulation, such skill include skills in feeding, feed formulation as alternative to ready-made feed. The use of local feed stuff, harvesting skills, knowledge of water level, removal, and replacement, fertilizer application and introduction of fish fingerling into the fish pond. Handicap people in the group of deaf, dumb, physically disabled can comfortably do the job. (Adedeji 2007).

Problems Facing Vocational Education in Development of Relevant Skills for Special Need People.

1. The development of competence needed by the special need people requires technical manpower, with well designed curriculum, which will have direct relevant to their occupational skills in industries and individual job Description prevalent in any sector of vocational agriculture such as crop production, fishery, poultry production, and other livestock management skills. Trainers manpower demand has to deal with expertness, experiences in human resources development. Olaitan (1994).
2. The problem of finance, since such manpower requires payment of the service providers, steady means of payment to be agreed upon and modality of approach such as who is to pay, government or private promoters of the apprenticeship centre.
3. Mode of admission, accommodation of needs, feeding of the needs, special attention or services to the needy all requires serious funding by government.
4. Inadequate facilities at the Centre: The facilities needed include water supply of the centre, regular supply at electricity at the centre, machines needed at the centers, desk, workshops laboratories, libraries, equipment, hearing aid, clutches, gloves and quality tools for skills development. Human resources cannot be achieved without relevant facilities necessary for training and retraining, without practical such skills have no relevance to vocational education (Osuala 1995).
5. Poor relationship between vocational centres and individual firms or government parastatals. The handicapped or the needy receiving training at vocational training centres need not to graduate without utilization of their services by individual firms like poultry farm, fishery farm, crop raising/nursery industries, (for vegetable and horticulture). This is to encourage them, sustain them and encourage their efforts to survive. Piggery industries, and other smaller ruminants, like rabbitary should not waste much time in appreciating their services since their services are needed after training for doing one thing or the other which the skills are properly developed within this sectors.
6. Poor organization and supervision depends on the number of staff demanding to be trained in each centre. Responsibilities assigned to each staff, and the ratio of the special need people in each training centre. The type of skills required to be given at each period of time. The extent to which each segment of the training are dully reorganized at intervals, much will be achieved otherwise.

Conclusion

The vocational education is for skill and knowledge development. The paper explained vocational education as for the development of the needy to sustain handicapped people, who cannot be allowed, or employed ordinarily in any organization, firms or parastatal. But with the development of this needy people with skills and knowledge in different sectors of vocational agriculture will make them self-reliant and employable, and can employ other people, such handicapped adult and youth, with hearing impairment, (deaf) speech impairment (dumb) amputees, whether in one hand or leg, or crippled, can be developed. This is to fight against disregarding this categories of the needy and carry them along within the new millennium development goals and challenges of the 21st century.

Recommendations

The paper recommended the following:

1. Vocational training centres should work in accordance with the institutions which can absorb such handicapped youths and adults in order to train them with production skills of the poultry industries or fishery.
2. Government, local, state and federal should as a matter of urgency sponsor the full development of such skill development centers or partner with them to reduce the suffering of handicapped persons.
3. Government should as well establish at least two of such centers in each senatorial zone and should be on federal affairs and will be sponsored as the senatorial votes of the handicapped at senate level, facilities, scarce resources should be paid directly.
4. Each state government should establish handicapped welfare board, where such cases will be recorded and ensure the training and posting immediately and their training is completed.

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