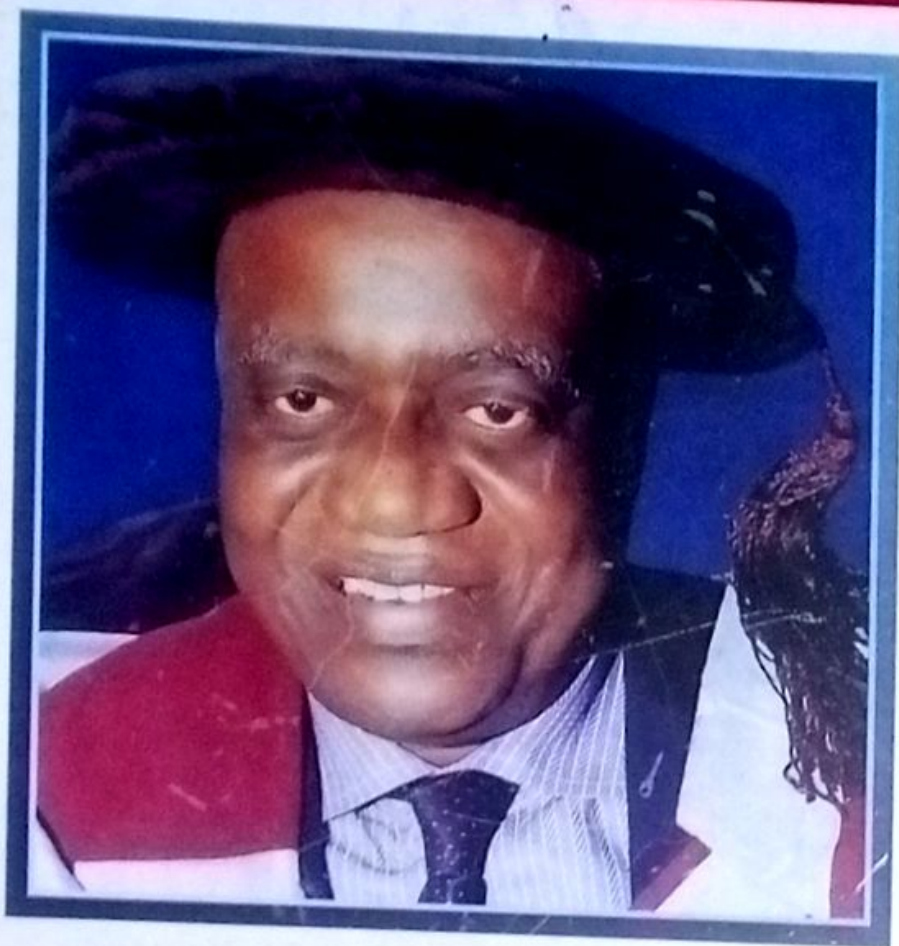


New Perspectives in Literacy and National Development



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A FESTSCHRIFT FOR

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Chapter 26

Vocational Education Literacy as a Tool for National Development

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Introduction

Vocational education literacy is important for both individual wellbeing and National development. The present economic condition coupled with the high rate of unemployment in the country has greatly justified the existence of Vocational education in the curriculum of secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Before now, there was de-emphasis on Vocational education literacy which was thought to be 'frills' Robert (1983) in Odike and Nnaekwe (2018). While there has been increasing emphasis on discipline areas like Mathematics, English, and Science as the only important subjects in the curriculum.

The attitude of society and parents towards Vocational education discourages students who would like to study the course in higher institutions from doing so (Ayub, 2017). According to him many parents still choose the academic stream rather than technical and vocational training. Parents see Vocational education as a course for the less privileged and someone else's child while they nudge their own children towards other supposedly lucrative and prestigious courses such as Medicine, Engineering, Nursing, law and so on.

Okocha in Odike and Menkiti (2018), report that some parents do not desire their children to study Vocational education because they believe that it is meant for drop-outs or dullards. Most parents therefore employ all manner of inducements to motivate their children to study sciences, which will qualify them to read the prestige courses in the university, without considering the children's interest and abilities. It is only the students who cannot excel in these courses that grudgingly turn to any other course, including Vocational education. Government by implication equally discourages the students from opting for vocational education because emphasis is not laid on any other subjects other than Sciences, English and Mathematics at the secondary school level. While in actual fact, vocational education literacy is the bed rock of any nation. It plays a crucial role in the economic development and by extension national development.

Ironically, most of the students who studied the so called preferred courses end up being jobless after graduating from school or university if they cannot

et white collar jobs. This is because they are not equipped with vocational skills, knowledge and attitude that will enable them to create job for themselves and become self-reliant which in turn contribute to national development. It is against this backdrop that this paper is written to discuss the roles of vocational education literacy in the national development and the hindrances to its effective implementation. It also proffers some possible solutions to the identified problems of vocational education in Nigeria.

Vocational education is a program of study taught in both secondary and tertiary levels of education in Nigeria. This program is designed to equip the recipients with academic and vocational skills, knowledge and attitude needed to function effectively in the world of work for the individual well-being and national development. Vocational education literacy is therefore very vital to the development of any nation. Unfortunately, Vocation education program being neglected and looked down on by students, parents and society in general. Students neglect Vocational education programme and are disenchanted about opting for it, especially at the tertiary institutions. This is because of poor societal perception of vocational education in Nigeria. Hence, Vocational education curriculum is being poorly implemented at both secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. **This chapter focused on the Vocational Education literacy and National development. Various forms of literacy were enumerated. The roles of Vocational education to national development were discussed. Some of the hindrances to the effective implementation of vocational education curriculum were highlighted. Possible solutions to the identified problems were proffered in view to achieving sustainable national development in Nigeria.** It recommended among other things for a change of the general public's attitude towards the Vocational education since it has capacity to contribute to both individual wellbeing and national development. It was concluded that parents should encourage their children and wards to study Vocational education if they are interested in it. The government on the other hand should make vocational education attractive and functional for it to enhance the national development through adequate funding.

Concept of Vocation Education

Vocational education is also known as Vocational and Technical education. It is a major means of equipping people with entrepreneurial skills. Encyclopedia of educational research defined vocational education as education designed to develop skills, abilities, understanding, attitude, work habits, and appreciations needed by workers to enter and make progress in employment on

a useful productive basis. The International Labour Organization (ILO) in Ihekwoaba (2005) defines vocational education as "activities which essentially aimed at providing the skills, knowledge and aptitude required for employment in a particular occupation, group of related occupations or to function in any field of economic activity including agriculture, industry, commerce, the hotel, catering and tourist industries, public and private services. Vocational education is the acquisition of necessary occupational and technical skills and their application in solving practical problems. Vocational education is a major means of equipping people with entrepreneurial skills.

UNESCO's Convention on Technical and Vocational Education, according to (David 2016) states that Technical and vocational education, "*... refers to all forms and levels of the education process involving, in addition to general knowledge, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, know-how, attitudes and understanding relating to occupations in the various sectors of economic and social life*". UNESCO defined Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) as "a comprehensive term referring to the educational process when it involves, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related science and the acquisition of practical skill and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Vocational Technical Education according to (Malgwi in David 2016), is a systematic study of techniques for making and doing things.

Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council in David S (2018), defines Vocational Education as those aspects of education which involves general education; the study of technologies and related science; and the acquisition of practical knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills relating to occupations in various sections of economic and social life. Every adult individual should be equipped with requisite skills and knowledge to be able to engage in a reasonable occupation. Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) plays important role in technological and economic development of any country. It equips the recipients with the relevant skills needed for economic growth and national development.

The aim and objectives of Vocational education in Nigeria as stated in National policy on education (20013) are as follows;

- i. To provide trained manpower in applied science, technology, commerce particularly at sub-professional grades.
- ii. To provide technical skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.
- iii. To give an introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technologies.
- iv. To give training and improving the necessary skills leading to production of

- craftsmen, technical and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant.
- vi. To enable young men and women to have intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

Scope of Vocational Education in Secondary School System in Nigeria

Vocational education is taught at junior and senior secondary schools as well as in the higher institutions. At the junior secondary school level it is called pre vocational subjects. The pre vocational subjects are taught as stipulated in the junior secondary school curriculum according to the national policy on education (2013). At the junior secondary school level (JSS) seven programme areas of pre-vocational education are in the curriculum. All the pre vocational subjects are electives, meaning that each student can choose any of the pre vocational subjects. It is only Introductory Technology (Basic Technology) which is a core tsubject at the JSS level, and should be taken by all the students in JSS.

At the senior secondary level (SSS) many vocational subjects are in the senior secondary school curriculum. Each student is expected to offer at least one vocational subject. The pre vocational and vocational subjects in the school curriculum are listed below.

Pre-Vocational Electives at Junior Secondary School (JSS) Level

Agricultural Science;. Business Studies; Home Economics; Local Crafts; Computer Education;. Fine Arts (Culture and Creative Arts; Music; and Introductory Technology.

Vocational Education Electives at Senior Secondary School (SSS) Level

Agricultural Science; Applied Electricity; Book-keeping and Accounting; Building Construction;. Auto Mechanics; Commerce;. Computer Education;. Electronics; Clothing and Textiles;. Food and Nutrition; . Home Management;. Metal Work;. Technical Drawing; Wood Work;. Shorthand;. Typewriting;. Fine Arts; and. Music.

Tertiary Institutions' Major Vocational Education Programme Areas

Vocational agriculture; .Business and office occupation; Distributive education; Home Economics education; Trade and industrial education; Health occupation' Technical education and so on, depending on the institutions concerned.

Vocational training can be given out of school in form of apprenticeship under a master craft and under internship.

Concept of Literacy.

Vilya Lakstian (2019), defines literacy as "The ability to read, write and use numeracy, to handle information, to express ideas and opinions, to make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners. There are currently various forms or types of literacy in literature, with different definitions. Mkandawire (2015), lists various forms and types of literacy based on the field of studies in question. These according to him include- Basic Literacy Functional Literacy ; Critical literacy ; Profession Literacy ; Conventional Literacy ; Initial Literacy ; Legal Literacy ; Medical Literacy ; *Financial literacy* ; Statistical literacy ; Film Literacy; Teaching literacy ; Workforce literacy ; Workplace literacy ; Survival Literacy ; Business Literacy ; Street Literacy ; Scientific Literacy; Agricultural literacy; Computer Literacy ; Technological literacy; Ecological literacy ; Transactional literacy ; Magical Literacy ; ral and Cross; Cultural Literacy ; Family literacy; Art(s) Literacy; Civic Literacy ; Electoral Literacy; Adult Literacy; Information Literacy ; Media Literacy; Political Literacy; Popular Literacy ; Diaspora literacy; Emotional literacy; oral literacy ; Multi literacy and Visual literacy .

Rassool in *Vilya Lakstian* (2019) defines basic literacy as the acquisition of technical skills which involve reading written texts and writing simple statements in daily contexts. Literacy is meant as the reinforcement of getting information via reading and expressing by writing (Bakhtin s in *Vilya Lakstian* (2019) opines that, literacy develops to the level of functionality which is referred to functional literacy. In his own contribution regarding functional literacy, (Gray in *Vilya Lakstian* (2019) states that someone is functional literate when he acquires the relevant knowledge that enables him to use it in all activities which the proficiency of literacy is required, for the effectiveness in his group or community. He further explains that functional literacy shows that literacy reflects individual quality in the midst of society. That functional literacy maximizes how individuals utilize literacy skill for their environments. To perform at functional literacy , it is essential to have consolidated strength on basic literacy as the resource for building functional literacy.

Vocational Education Literacy

Vocational education literacy is a functional literacy; since it enables individuals to apply acquired skills knowledge and attitudes in the performance of various economic activities, which contributes to national development. Vocational education literacy is built on basic literacy. Without basic literacy it will be difficult to acquire vocational literacy. Someone must be able to read and

write for one to learn vocational Education courses very well. Literacy according to (Nordtveit in *Vilya Lakstian* (2019)) stimulates productivity in human's life. Vocational education literacy is therefore needed by every individual for effective participation in the world of work for economic and national development.

A nation is not likely to achieve sustainable development if it lacks literate human resources. The level of development of any nation hinges on the quality of its educated citizenry. All forms of Literacy education is aim at developing the individual who in turn is expected to contribute to the development of the society. Individual development leads to national development. This implies that if individuals that constitute the nation's workforce are not functionally literate, the development of such nation will be hampered. There is therefore, positive correlation between level of literacy of citizenry and level of development of any nation. Literacy is very crucial to social, political, economics and human development of any nation. Hence, literacy according to (Aamarpali, 2015) ,is said to be a fundamental human right of every citizen and foundation for lifelong learning.

Vocational education literacy is therefore the ability to apply the vocational skills, knowledge and aptitude acquired during vocational training in the production of goods and services that will satisfy peoples want for the purpose of earning a living.

Vocational education illiteracy is a major hindrance to acquisition of employability skills by individuals and development of any nation. It encourages unhealthy behaviors in the society and many other vices which are detrimental to the development of a nation. The various atrocities being committed in this country for many years now, ranging from kidnapping, killings of innocent citizens, armed robbery, banditry, human trafficking, insurgency and all other vices can rightly be attributed to high rate of unemployment. This high unemployment rate is, to a great extent as a result of low level of various types of literacy, especially vocational education literacy. This is a clear indicator of under developed nation. No nation can progress economically without high level of vocational education literacy.

How Vocational Education Affects National Development

Development is critical and essential to the sustenance and growth of any nation. The term "development" in international parlance encompasses the need and the means by which to provide better lives for people in poor countries. It includes economic growth and human development—providing for health, nutrition, education, and a clean environment. (David 2016)

National development is the change in growth and development, which comprises social, cultural and economic change. National development would

be the expansion and growth of people in the defined territory or government. It is the ability of a country to improve the social welfare of the people (Apurba 2018). He enumerated some of the indicators of national development according to UNO which includes:

- Equal living standard for all.
- Equal distribution of income and capital.
- Expansion of facilities regarding education, health,, shelter and social welfare.
- Preservation of environment.

Lawal and Oluwatoyin (2011) noted that development is critical and important to the sustenance and growth of any nation. That a country is classified as developed when it is able to provide qualitative life for her citizenry. According to them, Nigeria has been battling with the problems of development for the last fifty years in spite of huge human, material and natural resources in her possession. This can be as a result of Nigerian negligence of vocational education since the time of colonial era.

Many factors can influence National development. These factor includes among other things- Social Factor; Economic factor; Environmental factor; Political factor

Human Resource is very crucial to economic growth of a country. It is one of the most important determinants of national development. The quality and quantity of available human resource directly affect the growth of an economy (Taboola, 2016). The quality of human resource is dependent on its skills, creative abilities, training, and education. He explained that if the human resource of a country is well skilled and trained then the output would also be of high quality. Therefore, the human resources of a country should be adequate in number with required skills and abilities, so that economic growth can be achieved. This can be achieved largely through acquisition of Vocational education literacy by the citizenry.

Vocational education literacy contributes a lot to national development. Vocational and technical education provides the manpower needs of the society by equipping the students with the appropriate skills that enable them to engage in various occupations. Some specific areas in which skilled workers are required according to Okorie in Odike (2017), lists below:

1. Agriculture: Nigeria needs people who are skilled in modern methods of agriculture. These people will ensure that adequate food is produced for Nigeria's increasing population.
2. Road construction: Nigeria is rapidly expanding her road system such construction jobs requires not only expert and dedicated workers but skilled technicians who are able to operate and service the equipment used in road construction.

3. **Transportation:** Nigerian roads are full of all kinds of vehicle which assist in the economic development of the country by ensuring that goods and services are moved quickly and safely from one part of the country to another. These vehicles need efficient operatives and skilled technicians to ensure that they are operated safely and that their useful life is extended.
4. **Industry:** Modern industries are being established in all parts of the country. These industries need skilled and well trained workers to ensure that goods manufactured in Nigeria are as good as those manufactured in other countries of the world.
5. **Business:** People need skills to operate and administer government and industrial operations. The expansion of both the public and private sectors in Nigeria means that more workers, skilled in office management, accounting, Marketing, Word-processing, (typing and shorthand), computer operation are required to ensure that accurate records are kept and that administrative efficiency is maintained.

It is a common fact that any country that does not give attention to Vocational education cannot experience a reasonable level of development especially economically.

The points below highlight how Vocational education Literacy affects National Development. According to Abdurrahman (2013) Technical and vocational education played a vital role in national development, especially in areas which include the following:

Generation of Employment or Job Opportunities

Vocational education does not only provide direct employment but also serve as a means of self-employment for much of the nation population. Small Scale enterprises account for about 30 per cent of wage employment in Nigeria (Osuala.2009). Most graduates are unemployed not because of lack of academic qualifications but because they are not vocational education literate. They lack practical, technical, and job skills. Technical and vocational education drastically reduces the rate of drop outs or unemployment in the society, since it develops marketable skills in students/youths that can make them easily employed. It makes an individual become an asset to him and the nation rather than a liability to the society.

Industrial Development

Education equips individual with the skills and technical knowhow required to work in industries or even establish and operate them efficiently. It then helps a nation develop technologically and industrially by producing people with necessary skills and capable of developing and utilizing technologies for industries and economic development.

Entrepreneurial Strategy

It equips the recipients with entrepreneurial skills, which, if properly utilized can enhance massive production that will in turn help in the growth of the nation's economy. It is a major source of income and financial independence for individuals who acquired the skill and want to utilize it. It offers the recipients or beneficiaries the ability to be self-reliant, to be job creators and employers of labour.

Promotion of the Nigerian Economy

It promotes the national economy through foreign exchange by exporting the locally produced products. The knowledge of technical and vocational education helps in the conversion of local raw materials, this reduces the importance of foreign goods which lessen our import dependency and encourage exportation of our local product.

Osuala (2009) also noted that Vocational education contributes the Nigeria economy through the following means:

Stimulation of the Nation's Resources

Vocational education activities act as stimulators to the nation's dormant resources. Through efforts, of those who engaged in all sorts of trades funds which could have been lying dormant in people's safes and cupboards are put into economic activity. Through buying, selling, and investments, the people are compelled to use their money to satisfy their various needs.

Skill Acquisition:

Vocational education normally serve as training stations for the acquisition of the skills needed for managerial, supervisory, and technical manpower. It provides practical training opportunities and at the same time, utilizes latent savings and skills.

Income Generation and Redistribution

Vocational education literacy helps individuals to generate income through their various economic activities. Small scale enterprises help in the generation and redistribution of income by making money available to people through paid employment. Consequently, many people become less dependent on others financially thereby alleviating Poverty level of the citizenry

Reduction of the Incidence of Rural-Urban Migration

Vocational education provides employment for the rural population and consequently reduces the incidence of urban migration. Many youths in the rural areas are no longer desirous to go to the urban areas in search of employment. This is because they can engage in economics activities in their villages or be employed by business owners. They reduce unemployment in the country, and stem the urban-rural income differential.

Enhancement of Standard of Living

Vocational education enables the individuals to engage in various economic activities which make large quantities of goods and services available to people. With increased supply of goods and services, individuals' demands increase as a result which in turn, results in a better standard of living for the people. Vocational education literacy is therefore needed for acquisition of the occupational or technical skills knowledge needed by individuals to function effectively as in both private and public sectors of the Nigeria economy for national development. Adequately trained workers are more efficient and productive than poorly trained workers and consequently earn his or income. Vocational education literacy also enables individual to appreciate the need for work and develop appropriate attitude towards work.

Despite the fact that Vocational education literacy is very vital to the national development, Vocation education programs have never been effectively or properly implemented in Nigeria right from the colonial era to the present day. Many factors have been militating against its proper implementation in Nigeria. This explains why there is still high rate of unemployment in the country. Consequently, there is high rate of insecurity in the country because may unemployed youths have resorted to engaging in various criminal activities ranging from stealing, armed robbery, kidnapping, Yahoo Yahoo and other vices, since idle mind is said to be devil's workshop.

The major hindrances to effective implementation of Vocational education in the Nigeria as noted by many researchers including Ihekwoaba, (2005); David, (2016) and Odike, (2018) are as follows:

Inadequate Funding

Vocational and technical education has been poorly funded, from the colonial era to the present day. Money budgeted for vocational and technical education has also been low compared to the amount for other sectors. Consequently, many technical colleges do not have adequate technical workshops, equipment, laboratories and tools.

Poor Societal/Parental Attitude towards vocational education

The attitude of society, including parents, towards vocational education discourages most students who would have cultivated interest in studying vocational education in higher institutions. The society holds the view that vocational education is for only less intelligence and disabled people. Hence parents hardly encourage their children to study vocational education. Every parent would encourage and motivate his/her children to study science subjects which will lead them to bombastic course in the universities. Furthermore, Nigerians prefers white-collar jobs to green or blue collar ones.. The society regards factory workers as being less intelligent, and less educated than office workers. Some people prefer to work as clerks, messengers, and office assistants than as craftsmen or technicians.

Lack of Qualified Teachers of Vocational Education.

The teachers are the curriculum implementers. Analysis of teacher component also revealed that there is dearth of well qualified vocational education teachers. Recruitment and retention of qualified vocational education teachers seem difficult. This is because many qualified Vocational education graduates prefer to be employed in industries, banks and other places, where remunerations are high and opportunities for growth and development are numerous and inviting when compared to teaching profession. The reason is that the teaching profession is unattractive because of the low status accorded it.

Inadequate Facilities/Instructional Materials

Vocational education programs are so capital-intensive that special attention ought to be paid to their implementation in the school system. A lot of facilities and instructional materials are needed for effective teaching and learning of vocational education. Effective vocational training can only be given where training is carried out with the same technology as it is performed in the real life environment, with the same operation, the same tools and the same machines as in the occupation itself (Agusiobo in Odiike and Nnaekwe 2017). The fund allocated to Vocational education can hardly be adequate to procure such equipment to teach students in the classroom.

Apart from the fact that basic facilities are lacking, there is also a lack of teaching materials especially textbooks to aid the learning of students. This lack of materials makes teaching and learning of Vocational education course ineffective, leading to improper implementation of program.

Low Patronage/Low Morale

Parents advise only their children or wards who failed to gain admission to read their preferred courses in the higher institution to enroll in vocational courses instead of staying at home. Or to go and learn hand work". By this, they are referring to vocational and technical skills, which the society regards education for the dropouts. The suggestion portrays VTE as cheap, inappropriate and a choice of last resort. For this reason, the students' morale is usually low when compared with their counterparts in other disciplines.

Conclusion

Vocational education literacy is a veritable tool for both individual and national development. No nation can attain high rate of development without paying much attention to Vocational education. Since human resource is very crucial to production of goods and services, it is imperative that the citizenry should be encouraged to be Vocational education literate by equipping them

with vocational and technical skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to be self-reliant and contribute to national development. to engage in Nigerians are gradually shifting emphasis from general education to Vocational education due to high rate of unemployment which has culminated to many criminal activities. Hence there is need for effective implementation of vocational education. to enable the aims to be achieved. So many factors militating against its effective implementation have been highlighted and possible solutions proffered. . If the suggested solutions to the identified problem are implemented judiciously by all concerned, there will be remarkable improvement in both individual and national development.

Recommendations

Based on the above, the following recommendations were made to achieve effective implementation of Vocational education for National development in Nigeria:

- Government at all levels should mount campaigns on the essence of Vocational education for self-reliance, and national development through mass media to educate the public on the need for Vocational education to both individuals for national development. This will help to correct the negative societal perception of Vocational education programme.
- Government should increase funding of Vocational education in order to ensure that reasonable fund is allocated to it for effective implementation of the programme, bearing in mind that every aspect of Vocational education programmes are highly capital intensive.
- Those charged with the administration of Vocational education should be those that read Vocational education, and are ready to judiciously utilize any fund allocated to it for effective implementation of the programme.
- Personnel who are vocationally and technically oriented should be involved in the planning, implementation and teaching of various vocational programs to ensure that the aims and objectives of Vocational education are achieved.
- Funding of Vocational education should not be left to government alone. Some other external bodies such as – Endowment fund/ Donations; Companies and Non-government Organization; Parents-Teachers Association (PTA); Alumni association; and the community where the institution or school is located should help in funding it.
- Students, graduates and teachers of Vocational education should help to sell their discipline- vocational education by encouraging their friends and relations to study any aspect of Vocational education.

- Parents should encourage their wards that have interest in Vocational education to study it and be better equipped to engage in their own businesses if they desire to. Parents should not force their children to read a course because it has prestige. The students' ability and interest should be taken into consideration when advising them on the course to study in the tertiary institution. This is to ensure that they are not being frustrated and indulge in various criminal activities in school or eventually drop out of school.
- The government should encourage students to enroll in Vocational education programme by highlighting its importance in preparing individuals for self employment and for National development.
- The government should also encourage effective implementation of Vocational education programme by creating an enabling environment for teaching and learning business courses both in the secondary schools and the tertiary institutions.
- Students should be mandated to study Vocational education at the secondary school level to enable them to acquire saleable skills in the field of Vocational education even if they cannot further their education after graduating from the secondary school.
- The government or those in charge of Vocational School should use standard facilities as is used in the real life situation to teach students. This will enable them to acquire vocational education skills expected of them to be able to perform in the world of work.
- Vocational education teachers should use appropriate instructional materials to teach the students to enhance teaching and learning process.
- The Government or employers of Vocational education teachers should employ only those who are well qualified to teach the students effectively.

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About the Book

New Perspectives in Literacy and National Development



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A Foreword by
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Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife, Oyo State, Nigeria

New Perspectives in Literacy and National Development essentially focuses on the contributions of literacy to the growth and development of a nation. In this connection, it explores the essence of literacy, its attributes and its manifestation in and interactions with language and mass media; vocational education, science and technology; curriculum issues; politics and sustainable development; gender and societal issues; as well as legal matters to foster not only the meaning, constituents and objectives of literacy and national development in Nigeria, but also their interrelationships and inseparability.



FOREWORD
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