

TECHNICAL COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION IN AKWA IBOM STATE: A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH ON THE STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlighted technical college administration in Akwa Ibom State with particular reference to the organizational structure and leadership styles of the Principals. The study identified democratic, autocratic, servant, laissez-faire and transformational leadership styles exhibited by the Principals. The challenges of technical college administration were discussed. The study proffered increased funding, provision of functional workshops and training materials among others as the way forward towards improving technical college administration in the State. The study concludes that school heads should adopt transformational leadership style since it enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms. Secondly, government should take proactive measures to revamp technical college administration so as to achieve the purpose of technical college education in the State.

Keywords: Technical Colleges, Administration, Organogram, Leadership and Leadership Styles

Introduction

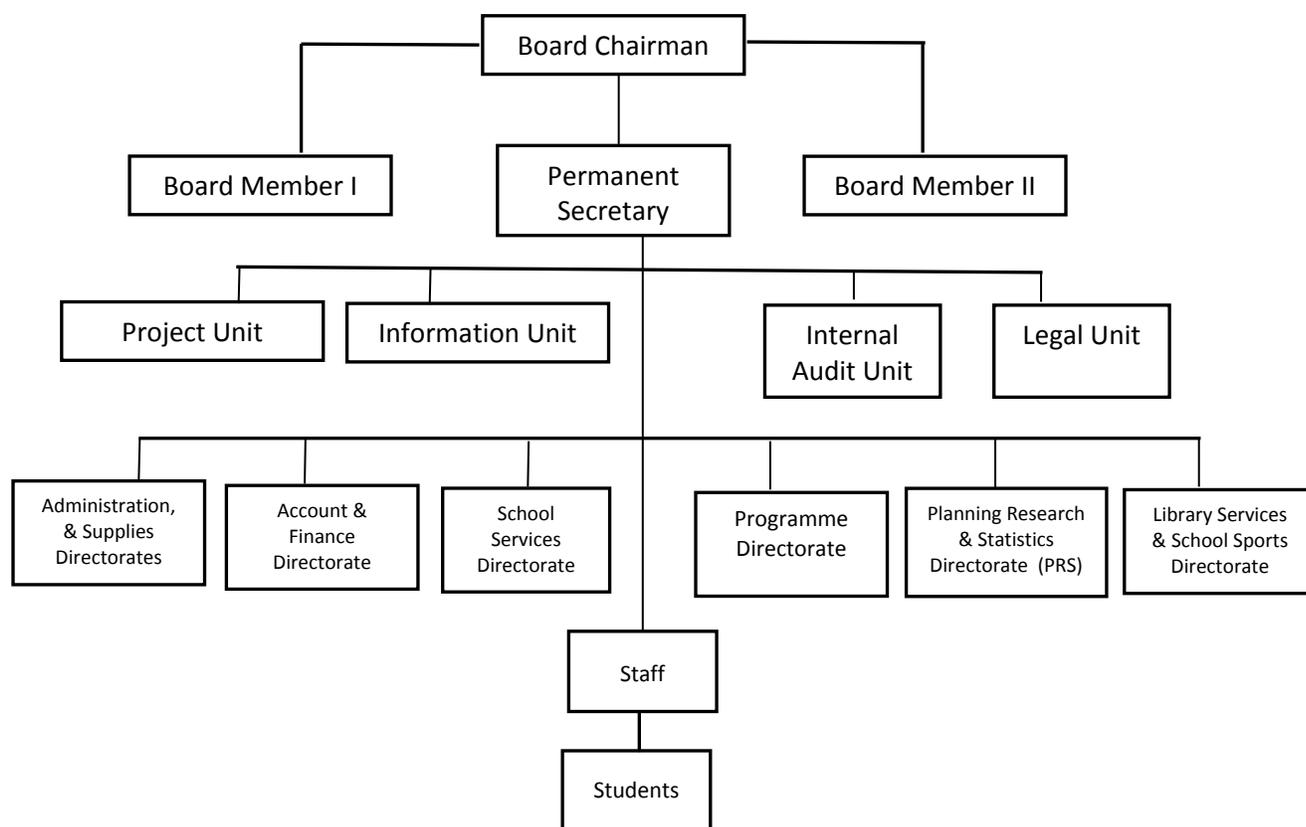
Technical Colleges are institutions of learning at the secondary level of Nigeria educational system. Technical College students are taught to acquire knowledge, skills and attitude in occupational areas such as carpentry and joinery, furniture and upholstery making, block laying and concreting, plumbing and pipe-fitting, electrical/electronics, automobile engineering craft, welding and fabrication craft, and mechanical engineering craft. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) designed technical education such that students are trained in those aspects involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitude, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life. Akwa Ibom State has seven functional technical colleges for education and training of its citizens for technological development. These technical colleges are: Government Technical College, Ikot Akata, Mkpato Enin; Government Technical College, Ewet, Uyo; Mainland Technical College, Oron; Union Technical College, Ikpa, Esit Eket; Government Technical College, Ikot Uko, Ika and Government Technical College, Mbioto, Etinan. These technical colleges impart life skills in the youths, making them skilled technicians and craftsmen for the industry and for self-employability.

Technical College administration entails planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling human and material resources to attain its goals and objectives (Utuk and Okon, 2017). A technical college administrator therefore could be seen as one who adopts a management style; develops an organizational structure; plans and executes an overall strategy for the content and delivery of instruction; plans for and controls the fiscal resources necessary for running the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme. Organizational structure otherwise called organogram is the hierarchical arrangement of lines of authority, communications, rights and duties of an organization (Otuka, 2016). The organogram is a visual device showing the various departments and how they relate to each other. It defines how activities such as task allocation, coordination and supervision are directed towards the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. For any organisation to succeed, there must be well defined organizational structure, showing the levels of leadership, span of control and the lines of communication from top to bottom (Utuk and Usoro, 2018).

The concept of leadership connotes power, authority, management, administration and supervision (Boateng, 2012). Leadership style is a leader's manner of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. It is the way a person uses power to lead other people (Etokeren, 2017). There are as many different leadership styles as there are leaders. The most appropriate leadership style depends on the function of the leader, the followers, the situational demands and environmental factors (Pareek, 2010). This paper seeks to explore technical colleges' administration in Akwa Ibom State. In particular, the study seek to highlight the organizational structure, administration, supervision and leadership styles employed in these colleges in order to achieve the organizational goals and objectives.

Organizational Structure

Akwa Ibom State Technical Schools Board is an extra ministerial department under Ministry of Education. The Board has an executive committee, six (6) Directorates, nineteen (19) sections and four (4) units as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Organogram of Akwa Ibom State technical Schools Board

Source: Akwa Ibom State Technical Schools Board (2017)

The Executive Committee comprises the Chairman, two board members and the Permanent Secretary. The Executive Committee constitutes the policy unit of the establishment. The Executive Committee makes policies in line with its statutory functions. The Permanent Secretary serves as the administrative head, accounting officer as well as the secretary to the board.

The six directorates of the Board are:

- i. Administration and Supplies Directorate
- ii. Accounts and Finance Directorate
- iii. School Services Directorate
- iv. Programmes Directorate
- v. Planning, Research and Statistics (PRS) Directorate
- vi. Library Services and School Sports Directorate.

The Board has nineteen sections namely:

- i. General Administration
- ii. Personnel and Manpower Development

- iii. Pensions and Retirement Matters
- iv. Stores and Supplies
- v. Other charges
- vi. Revenue Monitoring/Collection
- vii. Payroll
- viii. School Inspections and Monitoring
- ix. PTA Matters, Welfare and Discipline
- x. Staff Development, Guidance and Counseling
- xi. Trade and General Education Accreditation
- xii. Examination and Certificates
- xiii. Extension Services, SIWES, Production Unit, Technical Exhibition
- xiv. Education Planning Development
- xv. Proceeds and Statistics
- xvi. Educational Research
- xvii. School Sports
- xviii. Library Services and
- xix. Information and Communication Technology.

There are four (4) units under the office of the Board Chairman, namely;

- i. Legal unit
- ii. Information unit
- iii. Internal Audit unit and
- iv. Project unit.

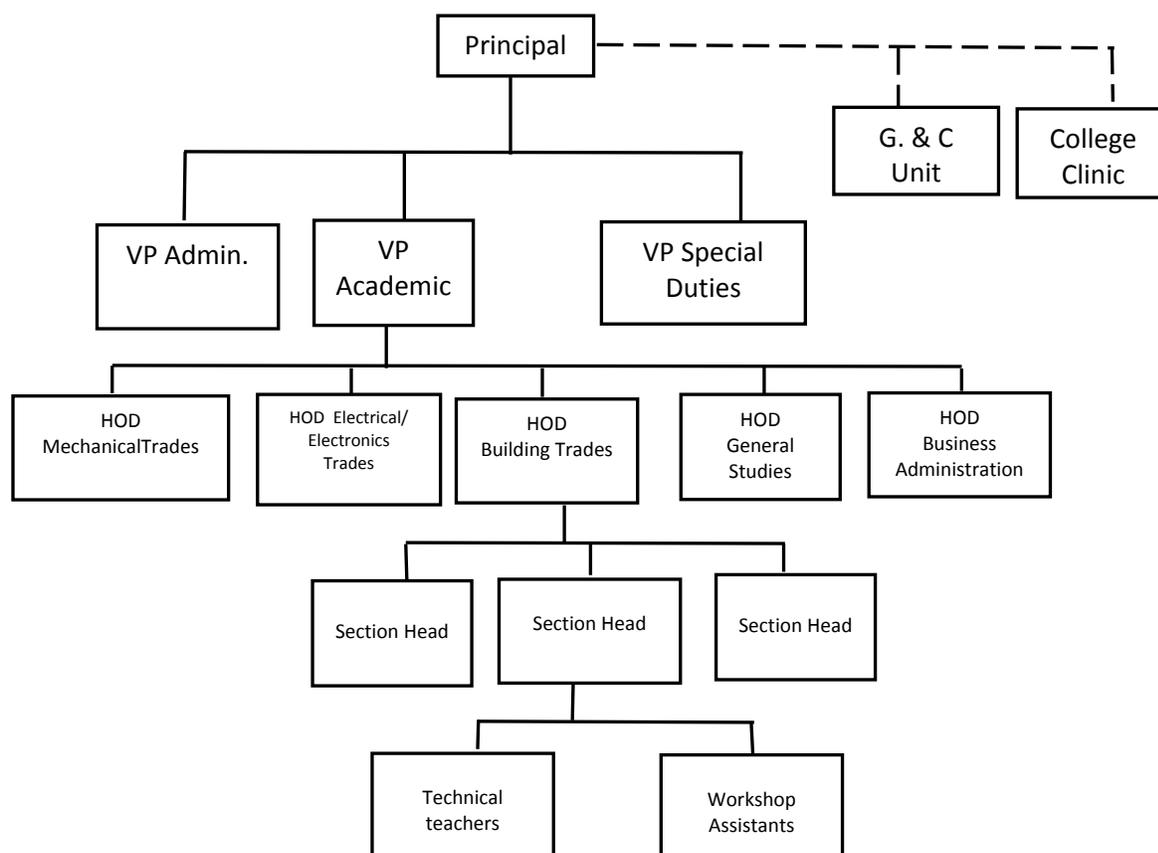
The State Technical Schools Board (STSB) was established on a part time basis by Edict No. 10 of 1990 with subsequent amendments in 2000 and 2005 which resulted in its present status as a fulltime Board (STSB, 2017). The board relies on the following service instruments to enable her function effectively; scheme of service, public service rule, financial regulations, extant circulars, policy directives and other service documents. The Akwa Ibom State Edict No. 10 of 1990 enables the Board to:

- i. Manage, inspect, supervise and control technical colleges in the State.
- ii. Employ and discipline staff, deal with confirmation of appointment, conversion and promotion.
- iii. Receive and disburse grants to technical colleges and monitor its expenditure.
- iv. Ensure that the national curriculum for various programmes is taught in technical colleges.
- v. Pay salaries, fringe benefits and other remunerations to teachers and other staff of the board.
- vi. Receive tuition fees and other approved fees payable by the students in technical colleges.
- vii. Maintain technical colleges.
- viii. Collect and provide nominal rolls, statistics and other information with respect to technical colleges.
- ix. Promote the development and training of the staff of the Board.
- x. Ensure that course of instruction given in technical colleges conform with the National Policy on Technical Education.

- xi. Provide guidelines for the choice of textbooks for use by Technical Colleges subject to the approval of the Commissioner for Education.
- xii. Prescribe conditions under which persons may be admitted as students of the technical colleges.
- xiii. Maintenance of comprehensive personnel records for the teaching and non-teaching staff.
- xiv. Perform other functions as may be assigned to it by the Commissioner for Education.

The organizational structure of each of the seven technical colleges in the state is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Organogram of Technical Colleges in Akwa Ibom State



Source: Field Work, 2018

Key:

———— Line function.

----- Staff function.

VP Vice Principal

G & C Guidance and Counseling

The Principal is the chief administrator of Technical Colleges in Akwa Ibom State. The Principal implements policies initiated by the state and federal governments and their agencies. The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. The Principal is assisted by

the Vice Principals. The Vice Principal administration assists the Principal in the day-to-day administration of the school. He or she acts in the absence of the Principal. The Vice Principal academics is mostly concerned with academic matters of the school. He or she ensures that courses are taught according to curriculum contents. The VP academics is responsible for drawing up the college time-table, assignment of courses/classes to teachers, time keeping, provision of teaching/instructional materials, supervision of instruction among others. The Vice Principal, special duties carries out other administrative duties that are not handled by the Principal and the other Vice Principals. In most cases, he or she handles disciplinary cases and other duties assigned by the Principal.

The Heads of Departments (HODs) are in-charge of different trade areas/ancillary units. These include:

- i. Mechanical department
- ii. Electrical department
- iii. Building trade department
- iv. General studies department
- v. Business administration department

The heads of department are responsible for the smooth running of their departments. The section heads are in charge of the various operational units within the department. They are the subject specialists in each of the trade areas within the department. The other technical teachers and workshop attendants report directly to the section heads as shown in Figure 2. The college guidance counseling unit and the college clinic are staff functions of the organization.

Administration of Technical Colleges

Kasambira (2002) defined administration as a process of working with and through others to accomplish organizational goals efficiently. The author identified the administrative tasks of the school head as coordinating, directing, and supporting the work of others by defining objectives, evaluating performances, providing organizational resources, building a supportive psychological climate, dealing with parents and resolving teachers' conflicts. Technical college administration entails planning, organizing, directing, supervising, coordinating and controlling human and material resources to attain organizational goals and objectives. The planning function of the Principal involves planning the curriculum and the courses to be taught. Curriculum planning is a policy function. The Principal has little or no authority to effect changes in the curriculum, and physical facilities in the college. However, the Principal is responsible for planning of courses. That is, planning how approved courses could be taught effectively using the facilities and resources at his disposal. The Principal is responsible for planning for and controlling the personnel required to staff the various programmes; plans for and controls the auxiliary services for the TVET programmes; develops and executes a system for attending to students' services; maintains liaison with the public and private groups to whom TVET is accountable and also provide means of evaluating the administrative structure among others. Supervision in technical colleges are done by the Principal, the Vice Principals, the heads of department and the sectional heads at different capacities in the educational system, aimed to improve instruction. Supervision involves activities which are needed in the promotion, development, maintenance and improvement of instruction in a given vocational school (Ben, 2010). Evaluation, as an administrative function, is an assessment of the educational process to determine the extent to which the objectives of the institution had been achieved. It seeks to identify weaknesses in the administrative structure and course offerings so that appropriate

remedial measures could be taken (Soromadu, 2010). When evaluating any educational system, one must determine the extent to which it is meeting the needs of a particular society at any given time (Fafunwa, 2009).

Leadership Styles in the Technical Colleges

Machumnu and Kaitila (2014) posited that in a vocational school system, an effective leader should be able to influence groups such as the teachers, non-teachers, students, community, and policy makers towards the achievement of organizational goals. Leadership style is a leader's peculiar manner of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating subordinates in an organization. It is the way a leader uses power to lead other people. Hence, there are as many approaches to leadership as there are leaders. These leadership styles include, but not limited to: autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, servant, transactional, visionary, coaching, pacesetter, affiliative, commanding, transformational, bureaucratic, and charismatic leadership styles. A survey of the seven technical colleges in the state reveals that most of the administrators prefer democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire and sometimes transformational leadership styles. The effectiveness and performance of technical schools depends largely on the leadership style of the school head. The choice of a particular leadership style is a function of the leader, the nature of the followers, the situational demands and the environmental factors. A few of these leadership styles as discussed by Utuk and Usoro (2018) are hereby highlighted.

Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leaders are boss-centered. The leader holds all authority and responsibility. The leader makes decisions on their own without consulting subordinates. According to Pareek (2010), this style of leadership is effective if there is no need for others to contribute to decision making and when motivation is not a critical factor in implementing a decision. In autocratic leadership, the leader administers the school virtually by decrees. The autocratic leader is an authoritarian. Decisions taken in autocratic leadership are often resisted by parents and students which may lead to tensions and sometimes strike actions, if not intervened. Autocratic leadership resists the role of school development committees and may find it difficult to operate in an environment which demands collective decision making.

Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership is one of the most preferred leadership styles. The democratic leadership involves subordinates in decision making. Democratic leadership entails administration by consensus through consultation with the staff, parents, the school heads and other stakeholders. According to Pareek (2010), democratic leaders may have difficulty when options differ widely and it is difficult to arrive at a consensus. The democratic head, also known as consultative leader, reserves the right to make the final decision. The democratic leadership involves the staff in the developmental process of the school. All members of the school, under democratic leadership, including students and members of staff have opportunity to make inputs toward the smooth running of the school. Thus, a feeling of responsibility is developed within the group, who feels successful under the democratic leadership. Democratic leadership entails fairness, competence, creativity, courage, intelligence and honesty.

Laissez-faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leaders have minimum involvement in decision making (Pareek, 2010). The leader seems to pass the responsibility for decision making to the group. The subordinates are allowed to work as they choose with little or no interference. The laissez-faire leadership gives little or no direction to the subordinates. The leader allows group members to have a great deal of

freedom in decision making. The laissez-faire leadership is successful when their subordinates are capable and need no motivation. In the context of a vocational school, the laissez-faire leadership will let things happen virtually by themselves. The leader does not initiate innovations in the running of the school. The school operates on the momentum of the staff; the leader feels reluctant to interfere in the running of the school.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems. Transformational leadership is one in which the leader works with teams to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change in tandem with committed members of the group. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. Enacted in its authentic form, transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms. Transformational leadership is an integral part of the full range leadership model. The full range of leadership according to Bass (2008) introduces four elements of transformational leadership:

1. *Individualized Consideration*: The degree to which the leader attends to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower and listens to the follower's concerns and needs. The leader gives empathy and support, keeps communication open and places challenges before the followers. This also encompasses the need for respect and celebrates the individual contribution that each follower can make to the team. The followers have a will and aspirations for self-development and have intrinsic motivation for their tasks.
2. *Intellectual Stimulation*: The degree in which the leader challenges assumptions, takes risks and solicits followers' ideas. Leaders with this style stimulate and encourage creativity in their followers. They nurture and develop people who think independently. For such a leader, learning is a value and unexpected situations are seen as opportunities to learn. The followers ask questions, think deeply about things and figure out better ways to execute their tasks.
3. *Inspirational Motivation*: the degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. Leaders with inspirational motivation challenge followers with high standards, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning for the task at hand. Followers need to have a strong sense of purpose if they are to be motivated to act. Purpose and meaning provide the energy that drives a group forward. The visionary aspects of leadership are supported by communication skills that make the vision understandable, precise, powerful and engaging. The followers are willing to invest more effort in their tasks, they are encouraged and optimistic about the future and believe in their abilities.
4. *Idealized Influence*: Provides a role model for high ethical behavior, instills pride, gains respect and trust. As a development tool, transformational leadership has spread already in all sectors of western societies, including governmental organizations.

Transformational leadership is the most effective style of leadership in the modern school system. The leader aims to transform the team members and the organization during the period of leadership. The leadership is all about initiating change in the school, groups, oneself and others. The transformation leader does things that

he/she would best be remembered afterwards. Transformational leaders have integrity, high emotional intelligence, and self-awareness. They are authentic, empathetic and humane. The transformational leadership inspires team members and is accountable to the team and the organization. Above all, the transformational leadership has skills for conflict resolution in the organization whenever they may occur.

Challenges

There are many challenges confronting technical college administration in Akwa Ibom State. Some of these challenges would be discussed in this paper.

1. **Poor Funding:** Technical education is capital-intensive. With the current policy of free and compulsory education for all its citizens from primary to secondary school level, Akwa Ibom State government is expected to fund the technical colleges for the smooth administration of the schools. According to Fafunwa (2010), the funds are there but the ability to spend it “judiciously” is lacking. However, the funding of the technical colleges in the State had been very poor. Technical colleges need equipment and tools, training materials, power/lighting and workshops for effective teaching/learning process. All these require a lot of money. As a result students are trained without acquiring relevant skills which could make them employable or self-reliant.

2. **Lack of Training Materials/Equipment:** Effective vocational training can only be given where the training jobs are carried on in the same way with the same operations, the same machines and tools as in occupation itself (Ben, 2010). In the State, training materials are not provided for students to carry out practical in the technical colleges. Most of the machines and tools are not serviceable. Students are taught trade courses in theory, without carrying out practical. This is a great challenge as the students graduate from the college without acquiring the requisite life skills.

3. **Lack of Physical Infrastructure:** Most of the college workshops had been dilapidated. Some of the workshop roofs had been blown off by wind, thereby exposing the machines/tools to rain and harsh weather conditions. Virtually, there is no pipe borne water supply to the workshops. Most colleges are without electricity. Where electricity is provided, the power supply had been epileptic over the years.

4. **Qualification of School Administrators:** Most of our technical colleges are headed by Principals whose qualifications are in mathematics, social studies, business administration etc. As a result, supervision and evaluation of the teaching-learning process had not been effective as the heads provide generalist advices and not as specialists in the trade areas.

5. **Inadequate Technical Teachers/Workshop Attendants:** Technical colleges in the state lack qualified technical teachers/workshop attendants. When recruitment exercise was conducted, teachers with non-trade qualifications (generalists) were employed instead of the technocrats. This is a worrisome situation as the colleges have teachers who cannot teach trade courses, thereby hampering the success of technical education in the state.

Conclusion

The administration of technical colleges in Akwa Ibom State had been discussed. The organizational structure of the board and that of the colleges had been highlighted to show how the colleges are being administered. The leadership styles of the administrators had also been identified. The study highlighted some of the various challenges of technical colleges’ administration in Akwa Ibom State. The study concludes that school heads should adopt

transformational style of leadership since it enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms. The study also suggests that government should take proactive measures to revamp technical college administration so as to achieve the purpose of technical college education in the state.

The Way Forward

1. Akwa Ibom State Government should build workshops in the technical colleges and provide amenities such as electricity and pipe borne water to enhance students' practical classes.
2. Akwa Ibom State Government should provide each technical college with at least a functional 22 KVA Lister generator to power 3-phase machines in the workshop to enhance students' practical, since the power source from the National grid had been epileptic.
3. Government should acquire new/modern machines as the few old ones are obsolete and need replacement.
4. Government should embark on teacher's training and re-training for capacity building, to update their knowledge and proficiency on the trade.
5. Technical teachers should be mandated by the Technical Schools Board to acquire certificate of competency from accredited professional bodies before being enlisted into the state service.
6. Government should collaborate with companies in the state to assist in providing infrastructures such as workshop and equipment. Recently, Exxon Mobil/NNPC joint ventures had initiated to build and equip technical workshop at Government Technical College, Ikot Akata. Other companies and government parastatals such as Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) should be made to emulate their example.

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