

POVERTY REDUCTION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

This paper x-rayed poverty reduction and national development through technical vocational education and training (TVET) in Nigeria. It reviewed the present status of TVET, government effort to revamp and revitalize TVET. The study further addressed poverty, classes of poverty, kinds of poverty reduction and its consequences to national development. The study recommended that, in other to combat the negative impact of poverty in Nigeria that funds should be provided for TVET institutions for effective implementation of the program, government should involve organizations and industries in the formulation of the curriculum and in the certification of skills offered; and the World Bank intervention programs in technical vocational education and training in some states of the federation should be extended to other states not presently included to ensure availability of skilled men and women in every part of the country for national development.

Keywords: *Technical vocational education and training, poverty reduction, national development.*

INTRODUCTION

Of all the continents in the world the most blessed is Africa, yet remains the poorest and least developed region. Most African countries have been engulfed by series of internal crises over some decades (Nwachukwu, 2014). Due to these crises, poverty is on the increase throughout the nations; the process of training designed to give knowledge, develop skills and abilities that could lead to development for the vast majority of citizens of developing countries. Education is

the process of training designed to give knowledge, develop skills and abilities that could lead to development of mental alertness and the right attitude to life. Lack of education remains a barrier to advancement for the vast majority of citizens of developing countries. Many countries lack essential raw materials, knowledge and skills gained through formal technical vocational education and training (TVET) (Oriahi and Aitffe, 2010), Technical vocational educational and training has emerged as one of the most effective human resources development strategies that African countries need to embrace in order to train and modernize their technical workforce for rapid industrialization, national development and hence, poverty reduction. Technical vocational education and training is that which prepares individuals for gainful employment (Okorieocha and Duru, 2014). In other words, TVET refers to deliberate intervention to bring about learning which would make people more productive (or simply adequately productive) in designated areas of economic activities for instance economic sector, occupation, specific work tasks). TVET has the potential to enhance human capabilities and enlarge people's choices. Technical vocational education and training is back on the development agenda of numerous African countries after years of utter neglect, instigated by a complex set of reasons that included budgetary constraints and criticism of the World Bank in the early 90's on its direction and focus (World Bank in Afeti, 2015).

The World Bank had argued at the time that, the cost of technical vocational education was enormous compared with the returns to the economy, that the quality of training was poor the delivery of technical and vocational education was not cost-effective. Since the beginning of the present millennium, a fresh awareness of the critical role of TVET in economic growth and natural development has dawned on policy makers in many African countries and within the alternatives donor agency/community (Afeti, 2015) maintained. The increasing importance that African governments currently attach to TVET is reflected in the various poverty reduction strategies papers which governments have developed in collaboration with the World Bank (Bloom, Canning and Chan, 2006). In its poverty reduction strategy document, Cameroon for

instance intense to develop vocational education and training to facilitate integration into the labor market, Ghana links vocational education and training with education of the youth and the development of technical and entrepreneurial skills; Lesotho and Rwanda focus on linking TVET to business while Malawi emphasized the need to promote self-employment through skills development.

TVET is the type of training which is focused at developing not only practical skills but also attitudes and habits that makes the recipient creative, innovative and resourceful (Ibeneme in Nwachkwu, 2014). It is bedrock upon which a nation's socio-economic, technological and cultural advancement must be built. Its benefits need to be more equitably distributed between men and women, and rural and urban areas. This form of education has the economic role of providing qualified manpower by changing the individual and enabling him to use complex technology (Gleason in Nwachukwu, 2014).

The emphasis therefore, is not only on the provision of skilled manpower for a static economic but, also continuing to do so for a dynamic one, especially for changing societal needs to enhance technological advancement. Popoola (2013) opined that TVET programme is the most satisfactory tool for self-reliance, economic survival and development of knowledge accumulation. African Union (2012) stressed that TVET delivery systems are well placed to train the skilled and entrepreneurial workforce that the continent needs to create wealth and energy out of poverty.

Poverty is a global issue ravaging most countries in Africa. Poverty is a condition of having insufficient resources or income (Corbet in Nwachukwu, 2014). Poverty predominantly is experienced in the rural areas which are characterized most often by poor or non-available infrastructure and little or no provision for other critical social services. There are many poor countries in the world with Nigeria inclusive and the standard of living showed a tremendous increase in poverty index of 69%. This therefore implies that, for development to be achieved in

Nigeria, the nation should be compatibly free from the overwhelming consequences of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment.

Present Status of TVET in Nigeria

TVET varies from country to country and are delivered in different levels in different types of institutions mainly vocational technical schools, polytechnics and apprenticeship training centers. In Nigeria the acquisition of formal technical education is possible form secondary to tertiary levels of the country's 9-3-4 education system. At post secondary/ tertiary levels, technical and vocational colleges, monotchnics, polytechnics and universities, have been the institutional structures meant to enhance the nation's technical growth, the period of school based technical and vocational education is between three to five years depending on the institutions and model.

The Federal government of Nigeria wants technical education to occupy a prominent position in the schools, but the schools pay little or no attention to technical vocational education and training (Serumu, 2015). Serumu further stated that teachers and students seem not to understand what it is all about, and hence develop some contempt and aversion for TVET courses and subjects which now make both teachers and students to be less interested in the program. Formal TVET programs in Nigeria are currently operating in environments (Yusuf and Soyemi 2012, NBTE 2011, Aigbepede 2011 and Lilly and Efajanure 2011) that are characterized among others by:

Poor Perception of TVET: For many years technical and vocational education has been considered as a career path for the academically less endowed. This perception was fuelled by low qualification requirements for admission into TVET programs (cut-off point of 150 for polytechnics in Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination rather than 10 as obtainable in universities). Moreover there war perceptions that polytechnics were set p to train middle level manpower which the nation needs for economic development after the individuals numerous attempts to gain admission into universities have failed.

The poor societal recognition of TVET has translated to low enrolment and an inadequate skilled workforce.

Mismatch between Training and Labour Market Skill Demand: This accounted for high rate of unemployment among graduates from formal school system. The reason for this situation is lack of collaboration between the training institutions and the industries. There is a poor linkage with industries due to obsolete curriculum and infrastructure.

Also there are no job linkages and matching or internship facilities provided by the TVET authorities, which also makes the take up rate and job success rate of TVET quite limited.

Discrimination against Graduates of Technical Schools:

Constitutionally, the universities and monotechnics /polytechnics in Nigeria are at par; they are all tertiary institutions of learning. The Bachelor of Science degree (B.sc) earned from universities and Higher National Diploma (HND) earned from the polytechnics are equivalents. Both B.sc and HND holders spend at least 5 years in school and undertake the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC); a compulsory one year service to the federal government of Nigeria. However, these parties do not go further than the aspect above. HND graduates for instance are not admitted into a Masters of Science (M.Sc) program until they have acquired an additional post graduate qualification to their HND. Also, graduates of polytechnics are not placed on the same salary level and step even in the Nigeria federal and state civil services. The B.Sc holders' salary is always higher. Furthermore, the HND holder is discriminated against by most professional bodies in their registration.

Low Quality Training: Generally, the quality of training is low and deficient, with undue emphasis on theory and certification rather than skill acquisition and proficiency testing. Inadequate training of TVET teachers, lack of teaching resources, poor teaching/learning environment, inappropriate training equipment (demonstration equipment instead of actual equipment found and used in the industry). Others are poor aspiration of income trainees, obnoxious policy of 80% success rate of trainee before accreditation of technical institutions and lack of training materials are some of the issues that combine to reduce the

effectiveness of training in meeting the required knowledge and skill objectives.

Inadequate Financing: It must be acknowledged that TVET is expensive on a per student basis, despite the fact that subvention to training institutions particularly polytechnics has been increased, it is gross inadequate because unit cost are essentially higher in TVET institutions than in elementary and secondary schools due to small student-to-teacher ratios, expensive training equipment and costly training materials that are utilized if not wasted during practical lessons.

Weak Monitoring and Evaluation: TVET institutions do not track the employment destination of their graduates. Consequently, valuable comment from past trainees on the quality of training they have received and the opportunity of their experienced-based inputs to be factored into the review of curricula and training packages are lost.

Governments Efforts to Revamp and Revitalize TVET

There have been diverse governmental efforts to revamp and revitalize TVET in Nigeria. Yusuf and Soyemi (2012) stated that in a bid to strengthen TVET system as part of human resource and manpower increase to meet current and future needs for swift socio-economic development of the nation, the federal government through the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) in 2000 and 2007 approved an Aide Memoire with UNESCO for the development of new curricula, e-books and training manual for use in monotechnics, polytechnics and other specialized institutions.

To this end, the National Board for technical Education (NBTE) has produced new curricula for National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND), Past-Higher National Diploma (PHND) program offered in monotechnics, polytechnics and colleges of technology. The board in addition produces 20 new curricula for National Diploma (ND) programs offered in innovation enterprise organization and 88 new curricula for programs offered by vocational enterprise institutions and designed 356 e-books.

To broaden access to TVET and promote private participation in skill training, the federal ministry of education signed the establishment of private sector-led vocational enterprise intuitions (IEI). Between 2007 and 2010 a total of 49 IEIs and 13 VELs were approved by the ministry of education, while 23 additional ones were given operational licenses. The IELs and VELs are to carter for the interest of school leavers who wish to acquire demonstrable practical to secure employment and generate employment; persons seeking for career path that do not require University degrees; persons without time for full time study but desire to develop their skills; persons interested in self-employment; university graduates in search of employable skills and adults seeking to re-skill themselves.

Other remarkable contribution of the federal government were, the allocation of #15bn trust fund for the supply and installation of science laboratory and workshop equipment in 51 beneficiary monotchnics and polytechnics, the \$42 million five years TVET project for upgrading of 10 TVET institutions and restructuring the present supply –driven system that responds to the needs of private sector financed by federal ministry of education-Africa development bank, the establishment of 6 additional staff development centers in six geopolitical zones of he country for polytechnic staff development. These centers are; South-South: Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe-Oghara; South-East: Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro; North-East: Federal Polytechnic, Damaturu; and North-West: Kano state Polytechnic (Yusuf and Soyemi, 2012).

Through the World Bank intervention programs many state governments in Nigeria mainly in the South West and South-South geo-political zones have engaged in the renovation and equipping of various technical colleges in their respective states. These states include Rivers, Edo, Lagos, Bayelsa and Delta. The primary aim is to improve the mismatch between training and labour market skill demand and also to enhance the quality of training above all to eradicate poor perception of technical vocational education and

training in the country. Furthermore, there are collaboration between the industries and technical colleges mainly in Lagos state. For instance, at the Government Technical College, Agidingbi, Ikeja, Samsung built and equipped its technical workshop for the training of students on production and repairs of Samsung electronic products.

Poverty and its Consequences to National Development

Poverty in the words of World Bank (2000) is pronounced deprivation in wellbeing, and comprising low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. It also include low level of health and education, lack of clean water and sanitation, inadequate security, lack of voice and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better ones life. Poverty is any shortage of elements or resources that are needed or desired, of unemployment which is due to the non-acquisition of relevant saleable skills an individual needs in order fit into the job market.

Poverty is classified into absolute poverty, relative poverty, rural poverty and urban poverty, refers to lack of minimum physical requirements for existence. Provision of good is lower than that of others. Rural poverty is characterized by poor material condition, low level of education, unemployment, low investment and high out migration. Urban poverty is characterized by environmental degradation, congested accommodation, low per capital income, and other problems related with urban areas such as slums and shanties (Galbraith, 1969, Roges, 1988, in Mustapha, 2011).

Poverty leads to frustration and disillusionment that may result in crime such as; kidnapping, armed robbery among others including drug abuse. These are activities an individual may indulge in a futile attempt to escape from and forget the pains and humiliation associated with poverty or lack. There is a concern of poverty reduction in the industrialized countries as we as in developing countries, with a focus on the poor. The cost of education from the government to the people has put additional economic burden on the already poverty-stricken parents. Oghuvubu in Nwachukwu (2014), emphasized that a good

percentage of children and youth leave primary, secondary and universities before graduation. These maybe due to lack of fund poor feeding, inability to read, write and so on, resulting from poor beginning, and effect of family background.

The developing countries are facing greater national development challenges, even as they are focused with trying to help people living in extreme poverty. Poverty has various manifestations including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood, hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, increased morbidity and mortality form, illness, homelessness and inadequate, unsafe and degraded environment, as well as discrimination and exclusion.

Concept of Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction is a set of measurers, both economic and humanitarian that is intended to permanently lift people out of poverty. It has been largely as a result of overall economic growth. Poverty reduction in the opinion of Owen (2009) is often used as a short-hand for promoting economic growth that will permanently lift as many people as possible over a poverty line. There are three kinds of poverty reductions (Thin, 2004). These are poverty alleviation, lifting people out of poverty and poverty prevention.

- Poverty alleviation: This deals with alleviating the effect of poverty and or reducing the severity of poverty without changing people form 'poor' to 'non poor'.
- Lifting people out of poverty: It is poverty reduction in the true sense: This deals with reducing the numbers of poor people and /or transforming people into non poor people.
- Poverty prevention. The enables people to avoid failing into poverty by reducing their vulnerability.

TVET as a Tool for Poverty Reduction

Education of every citizen is essential to reducing poverty and enhancing national development. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) have been recognized in most countries of the

world as tools for reducing poverty and enhancing national development. The development of small scale industries through TVET, based on the utilization of available resources in the immediate neighborhood and the level of technology that is appropriate to the level of education and skills of the disadvantage groups can improve job creation, economic development and poverty reduction (Ogudu, 2013). Kind and Palmer in Okorieocha and Duru (2014) stressed that TVET is usually linked with improvements in productivity, quality, diversity, occupational safety, and health and income benefits. In other words, in terms of linking skills development to poverty reduction, there is a much narrower focus on individual and biophysical/income related aspects of poverty and less attention to the multidimensional nature of poverty and face huge challenges in accessing the skills needed for healthy and productive lives. Skills development has a role to play in job creation, though skills alone cannot create jobs. There need to be other enabling factors in place. It is increasingly recognized that the skills, ideas and competencies of local people are a critical factor in supporting business creation, and in helping unemployed people to access jobs and increase their incomes (Morel, 2004). Skills development if associated with other local development tools (such as micro credit, rehabilitation of social and rural infrastructure, access to water maintenance of irrigation and drainage systems, production and marketing of local products, improvement of income generation potential, environmental protection) it can be a powerful tool as a source of income generation (Morel, 2014).

The development of skills through TVET is now a priority by education ministers in both developing and developed countries. The first goal of the MDGs is the eradication of severe hunger and poverty. The key to poverty alleviation is economic growth and creation of employment for all. African Union (2011) emphasized that, although the primary objective of technical and vocational training in Nigeria is to assist reduce poverty through the acquisition of employable skills, a tactical method to skills development on the continent cannot ignore the effects of globalization. In addition to equipping learners with competencies appropriate to the new forms of works, it was felt that

these initiatives will assist TVET in shaking off its image as a 'second choice' suitable primarily for students with lower academic attainments and by bringing TVET closer to the world of work and making learners and their families aware of the advantages of pursuing TVET programs. The overall advantages of the TVET policy is to provide the economy with capable and competitive workforce and to train citizens able to participate in sustainable growth and poverty alleviation by ensuring that there is provision of training opportunities to all social groups without discrimination. These program impact not only the traditional skills that underline technological advancement because developed countries need to create new products and services as the older industries relocate to developing countries.

TVET must equip men and women for the labour market or self employment, thereby growing their self reliance and self confidence (Pongo Effah, Osei-Owusu, Obinnim and Sam 2014). This may be seen as a way to promote human resource development and therefore can be considered as a panacea to combat the ever increasing poverty problem in the country as the overall impact of TVET program at the social level in term of its entrepreneurial, sustainable development, active citizenship and community building has all been impacted positively.

TVET prepares people for employment since it is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude for the world of work (ILO, 2000). It does also change the social fiber of the society. Thus the main goal of TVET is to increase the employ ability of TVET graduates. The participation in the labor force of the TVET is an indication of intent to actively engage in the production of goods and services. This is a crucial step towards employment and social wellbeing. In line with the view of Usman and Tyabo (2013) TVET and job training program are integral part of national development strategies in many societies due to the impact on human resources development, productivity and economic growth, which translate to poverty reduction. According to UNESCO (2000), any form of training should be based on improving the life and livelihoods of individuals who without the means of viable and

meaningful skills development and workplace training with respect to the best ways of carrying out workplace function and performance jobs. Once people are actively engaged in employment there will be the need for the development of partnership with other organizations as well as financial and technical support for programs operation as well as to students and graduates so as to curtail the issue raised by African Union (2012), that majority of African youths continue to face unemployment, under employment and poverty due to lack of skills, lack of relevant education, denied access to capital and many unmet expectations.

CONCLUSION

The attainment of poverty reduction through technical vocational education training requires collective and serious effort and commitment on the part of the parents /guardians, educational institutions/training providers, employers and government. Government through relevant agencies has resorted to increase funding to support the sector; employers need to contribute to the development of national skill standards. TVET is currently being acknowledged by every stakeholder as a valid passport to a well paid job or self employment or a higher educational opportunity and not meant for the less academically endowed or the poor. Despite the abundance of the natural resources, poverty remains prevalent in the country. Poverty will be reduced when TVET programs are well funded which will invariably develop the nation. However, it must be emphasized that skill acquisition is not sufficient to ameliorate poverty and enhance economic development. It is a pre requisite but a lot needs to be done. Poor governance, poor economic policies, corruption have to be eradicated with adequate infrastructural facilities being put in place before reduction can be achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to reduce the effects of poverty and enhance national development in the country through effective technical vocation education program the following are hereby recommended:

- I. Funds should be provided for TVET institutions for effective implementation of the program of the country.
- II. Retraining programs should be organized for the technology teachers to keep the abreast of emerging entries into technology.
- III. Appointment into instructorship and headship in this field of study should be on merit and competence. It should be void of ethnicity, nepotism, quota system or social affiliates
- IV. To ensure that TVET is more market driven, it is necessary for the government to involve organizations/industries in the formulation of the curricula and in the certification of skills offered.
- V. Governments need to supply necessary inputs that can improve people's livelihood to effectively annihilate poverty.
- VI. There should be a paradigm from theoretically based education to practically and research oriented system of education in Nigeria.
- VII. The ongoing World Bank intervention program in technical vocational education and training in some states of the federation should be extended to other states to ensure the availability of skilled men and women in every part of the country.
- VIII. Parents should encourage their children to choose technical and vocational education track and reject the perception that TVET is for the less academically endowed.

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