

THE ROLE OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN POVERTY ERADICATION AND JOB CREATION

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Abstract

Technical and Vocational Education, as a means of preparing young men and women for occupational fields and effective participation in national development is concerned with development of qualitative technologically skilled human resource that comprise people who will be self-reliant and employers of labour rather than job seekers. It is an integral part of education that comprises general education, theoretical, scientific and technical as well as business studies aimed at producing a national pool of skilled and self-reliant technicians, technologists and businessman. Lack of technically trained manpower is seen as one of the major factors that retard industrial growth and private sector participation in national development. This paper, therefore, looks at TVE, and its contribution to poverty eradication and job creation.

Introduction

It is evident today, that the dividing line between developing and developed nations is the difference in mastery and utilization of Technical and Vocational knowledge. No nation is economically developed on the basis of high population and/or abundant resources, but rather on the ability to master technical and vocational education as a way of improving the economic performance of the nation through the instrument of level technologies and utilise it properly. USA, Britain, Germany, Italy and other developed countries for instance, do not have more natural resources than Nigeria. Their development was rather a by-product of their national capability in technical and vocational education

(Kazaure & Danmalam, 2006).

As described at the second international congress on Technical and Vocational Education in Seoul, South Korea, in 1999, TVE was seen as that aspect of education with a common objective of employment as its immediate goal (UNESCO, 1999).

This goal is to be attained through the provision of trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business. It is also to be attained through the provision of technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development. It further gives and imparts the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-

reliant economically with a view of eradicating poverty and creating jobs.

Technical and Vocational Education – An Overview

In Nigeria, Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) is a comprehensive term referring to educational process that involves the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of competences, practical skills and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life.

According to National Policy on Education (2004), the aims and objectives of TVE are:

- i. Provision of trained manpower in applied sciences, technology and commerce, particularly at sub-professional levels.
- ii. Provision of technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development.
- iii. Training of people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man.
- iv. Giving introduction to professional studies in Engineering and other technologies.
- v. Giving training and imparting of necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant.
- vi. Enabling young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

As contained in the National Policy on Education Provision, TVE is concerned with two elements; these are competency-based skill acquisition and sound scientific knowledge. The backbone of all forms of development is education, more specifically, technical and vocational education. Lack of technically trained manpower with relevant skills is a major factor in holding back successful industrial growth.

Philosophy and Vision of TVE in Nigeria

Former President, Olusegun Obasanjo (2001) noted the following with regards to TVE:

“Technical and Vocational Education with its relevant practical training component holds the key to Nigeria becoming technologically relevant and internationally competitive in the world market. It is also the most effective means of empowering the citizenry to stimulate a sustained national development, enhance employment, improve the quality of life, reduce poverty, limit the incidence of social crises due to joblessness, and promote a culture of peace, freedom and democracy.”

To realize the above, the then government established Aina’s Committee and placed on it the following responsibilities;

- i. Reforming and re-positioning Technical Education in Nigeria.

- ii. Re-engineering strategies involving all stakeholders in the public and organized private sector together with non-governmental organizations to accept their roles in promoting TVE (FME, 2001).

Philosophy

According to the report of Professor Aina’s Committee, the philosophy of TVE in Nigeria is that; “there shall be Nigerians regardless of gender, socio-economic status, creed or ethnic affiliation to take control of their own destiny liberating themselves from dependency and endowing themselves with initiatives, creativity, critical thinking, entrepreneurial skills, democratic value and appreciation of work”.

Vision

According to the same report, the vision was put as;

- i. The emergence of a vibrant Nigeria catalyzed by a virile technical and vocational education system, a system that is characterized by high public regard, demand and high internal efficiency.
- ii. The emergence of Nigeria where knowledge, skills and attitude to its technical and vocational education trainees and graduates assures fulfillment for the individual, prosperity for the nation, as well as socio-economic sustainability.

Structure of TVE in Nigeria

According to Kazaure (2007), the structure of TVE comprises the following:

- a) Three years of Junior Secondary School.
- b) Three years in Technical Colleges (now Science and Technical Colleges).
- c) Two years technical Training in Mono/Polytechnics or three years in Colleges of Education to acquire National Diploma (ND) and NCE Certificates respectively.
- d) 3 –9 months Vocational Enterprise Training in Vocational Enterprise Institutes (VEIS) and Innovation Enterprise Institutes (IEIS).
- e) One year industrial training/practical experience.
- f) 18 months Post HND and B.Ed. Business Education Programmes.

As stipulated by the National Policy on Education (2004), the admission policy into secondary schools together with technical college looks as follows:

- 60% Secondary Schools
- 20% Technical Colleges
- 10% Vocational Training Centres
- 10% Apprenticeship Training Centres

The Roles of TVE

The roles of TVE in poverty eradication and job creation in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. The aims of TVE are geared towards imparting knowledge, skills acquisition, manpower development and self-reliance.

In order to take a closer to the contributions of TVE in poverty

eradication and job creation, let's look at the two concepts:

Poverty

Poverty could be defined as inadequacy of income to support a minimum standard of living. According to Budu (2002),

“poverty arises where an individual is not able to cater adequately for his/her basic needs of food and clothing in addition to meeting social and economic needs, lack of gainful employment, skills, assets, self-esteem, and has limited access to social and economic infrastructure like education, health, potable water, which resulted to limited chances of advancing his welfare to the limits of his capability”.

Poverty could be caused either by natural calamities or disasters such as drought, flood and storm or as a result of undesirable human activities. It could also be due to government's inconsistent policies, lack of transparency, responsiveness and accountability, high level of corruption, unemployment and unplanned population policy. In Nigeria, mass poverty is attributed to illiteracy, limited employment opportunities and lack of government's commitment towards providing the necessary enabling environment for socio-economic and educational development.

Job Creation

According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, job creation is the process of providing opportunities for paid work, especially for people who are unemployed. By and large, TVE is very

suitable in this respect as it creates job opportunities through the provision of knowledge, skills and attitude required in the world of work. Contrary to a notion believed by many, that job creation means providing employment opportunities for young graduates in government establishments, job creation also connotes self-employment which TVE stands to achieve.

Important roles of TVE in poverty eradication and job creation are as outlined below: -

1. TVE is the basis for modern life experience and needs. It plays important roles in providing good citizenship education as well as equipping recipients with knowledge and skills that lead to high productivity and self-reliance.
2. TVE also helps in the production of different categories of manpower needed in the various sectors of the Nigerian economy.
3. It imparts on to the students knowledge of how to make a living by bringing the best in people in order to make them change, learn new things, improve skills and develop good attitude and approach to the provision of products and services.
4. It plays a very important role in increasing the chances of finding jobs. This is actualized through the development of the individual as well as the society. As Adiko (2003) opined, “the recipients not only get jobs for themselves, but also create jobs for others”.

5. It reduces unemployment and fight against poverty by raising and sustaining a generation of job creators rather than job seekers.

TVE as seen here, is playing major roles as the component of education most directly concerned with acquisition of knowledge and skills required for industrial growth. TVE may not create jobs, but it provides people with skills required to give them better opportunities for self-employment, wage employment and even informal sector initiatives.

Nigeria can undergo a very significant growth if TVE is given the priority it deserves. For instance, from 1960s to 1990s, the four pioneer Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea) achieved spectacular economic growth because they realized enough that strong educational systems (holistic and integrated linking formal with non-formal) had to be put in place as part of strategy for national wellbeing. TVE during this era, was made a priority among priorities.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In order for Nigeria to be able to record much success in poverty eradication and job creation as well as becoming one of the best 20 economies by 2020, it must embrace a holistic and integrated approach to Technical and Vocational education. TVE should not be an option, but rather a necessity.

Based on this, the following recommendations are offered for possible consideration:

1. Improve funding of all Technical and Vocational Programmes because TVE is capital intensive, demanding heavy machines and equipments that are not readily available in our local markets.
2. Sensitise the public on the importance of TVE so that the economy's orientation of being service based rather than production based could be changed.
3. A programme should be embarked upon, for instance TVE teachers grants/bonuses in order to improve the quality of the TVE teachers.

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