

EMPOWERING NIGERIAN YOUTHS THROUGH TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR CURBING INSECURITY

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian government had initiated several youth empowerment programmes through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), but a lot of these programmes lack structure and their impact not felt by the nation's youths. This is evident in the substantial number of youth that still lack work skills-which often results to unemployment, insecurity, loss of lives and properties and chaos. This paper discusses the significance of (TVET) in curbing the insecurity challenges facing the nation. TVET was seen as a tool for addressing economic and socio-political crises that is threatening the unity and security of the nation. Some recommendation were made which include among others Efforts should be made to strengthen the collaboration between industries, vocational institutions and TVET providers so as to enable that relevant content that meets labour needs are taught to participants of various vocational training programmes and Government through Technical Education Boards should offer counseling, mentorship and teach youths to develop financial planning skills, business skills, communication skills, customer relation skills as well as basic computation skills needed to enable them start viable and sustainable enterprises.

Keywords: Empowerment, Nigerian Youths, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Insecurity.

INTRODUCTION

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) provides one of the most recognized and effective means by which developed nations such as Germany and Australia, through quality and up-to-date information have been able to prepare and train workers to be both knowledgeable and proficient in particular skill areas. This by no means indicates that TVET is a form of education that particularly seeks to equip individuals with capacities, skills, knowledge and understandings in a specific vocation or trade to enable such individuals become productive citizens of their nations and also to enable the individuals live productive and meaningful lives (UNESCO & ILO, 2001). The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004) defined TVET as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational processes involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life.

It is therefore evident, that TVET prepares humans for the ever changing world of works. It has as one of its core goals and aims the quest of preparing people for employment and also to be as a source of change for people in the world of works, through which these individuals can aspire to have a better life and then develop the necessary skills needed to attain such aspirations. Consequently, TVET is seen as an instrument for reducing extreme poverty (Hollander & Mar, 2009). These distinctive features of TVET make it an effective tool that can be used to achieve a globally recognized workforce, peace and national security for a nation. According to Zarini, Wilson, Mar, and Varis (2009) TVET facilitates the development and strengthening of youths around the world thereby curbing insecurity in the country. Insecurity would be best understood by first presenting the concept of security. In the view of Akin (2008) as cited in Achumba, Ighomereho, & Akpor-Robaro (2013) security refers to "the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions". It is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives or properties. It embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence (Ogunleye, et al, (2011) as cited in Achumba et al. (2013).

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be highly participatory, youth-driven processes that help young people to strengthen positive attitudes, skills and behaviours that improves proper functioning across a range of life activities. Yet this is not the case with the YEPs and poverty reduction programmes set up in the nation. Various researchers have reported that many youths do not participate in these programmes due to the shallow means with which these programmes are being publicized (Ohize & Adamu 2009). Furthermore, there also exists the issue of misappropriation of funds specifically disbursed for the sole purpose of implementing these programmes. Chinedu and Olabiya (2015) reports that this has led to ill-structured programmes with unsuitable content focusing on skill areas already vastly populated. Hence, resulting in the production of unskilled workers with little or no knowledge of the vocation they were trained for.

TVET is believed to prepare youths to develop profitable social habits required by the society (Olaitan, Nwachukwu, Igbo, Onyemachi, & Ekong, 1999). Research literature has also emphasized that it is rare to see those who are vocationally trained and gainfully employed become delinquents and anti-socials of the society (UNESCO, 2004). To this end, it becomes necessary to overhaul already established programmes to focus on skills and vocational areas that have not been fully explored in order to provide skills to youth across all sectors of the nation's economy. Furthermore, administrators of these programmes across federal, state and local government areas would need to develop working plans that draws from the results of research to appropriate funds disbursed for YEPs.

JUSTIFICATION TO THE NEED FOR EMPOWERING YOUTHS

Okorie (2001) reported that TVET has a good potential of creating jobs for the unemployed graduates, and reducing poverty level in the society. Hence, a focus on horticulture, metal fabrication, carpentry and joinery, business, engineering, construction etc is thus a necessary way of creating jobs and empowering unemployed youths. To elucidate this, (Shields & Willits, 2003) in a survey carried out to determine the growing importance of horticulture in the agricultural economy of the north-eastern United States, reports that the sector generates an estimated \$3.3 billion and creates over 107,000 jobs. This goes a long way in exposing the need for this skill area to be vastly developed especially in the African economy. Business, engineering and construction are complimentary skill areas which should not be left unattended to.

(Botswana Core Welfare Indicators Survey, 2010) emphasized that youths can be empowered through the following programmes: Life skills and capacity building programme, youth entrepreneurship programme; attachment to public programmes; attachment to mega projects; and basic computer literacy training programme. MacFarlane and Khong (2006) and Paleri (2008) also asserted that the provision of jobs also makes it possible for a country to be well secured economically, they emphasised that third world countries are less secured due to the lack of employment for its citizens. Therefore, in order for developing nations like Nigeria to become economically stable, without the incessant disruption of its peace and national security, necessary action must be taken to integrate these techniques into its existing system to bring about the desired change Nigeria seeks.

SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

The current insecurity challenges in Nigeria are at an alarming rate that calls for a greater concern. The various security challenges being faced by the country have been attributed to youth unemployment in many cases. Poverty has driven criminal activities such as: sectarian violence, political thuggery, kidnapping, armed robbery and other vices. There are various factors that could be responsible for these challenges and these include:

Ethno-Religious Crisis

Ethno-religious crises is a situation where by the relation between one religious or ethnic group are soured in multi-ethnic and multi-religious society which is caused by lack of mutual understanding, respect for each other. The result of which leads to, fear of domination and ability to react violently to settle disputes (Umar, Paul & James 2014). These conflicts are directed toward ownership of scarce resources, power control of land, expansion of religion among others which result in less peace, destruction of land, life and properties in the country (Umar, Paul & James 2014). These ethno-religious conflicts result in disintegration of the social environment and breakdown the stability, peace and increase the rate of insecurity in Nigeria.

Loss of Socio-cultural and Communal Value System

The traditional value system of the Nigerian society like most African societies is characterized by such endearing features as collectivism, loyalty to authority and community, truthfulness, honesty, hard work, tolerance, love for others, Mutual harmony and coexistence, and identification of individual with one another. Other distinctive features of Nigerian traditional society are abhorrence for theft and high value for life. Stealing was considered extremely disgraceful and lives were also highly valued. All of these values

which made society secured and safe have all gradually been thrown away and lost by the society's teaming youth.

Rural/Urban Drift

The migration of jobless youths from rural areas to urban centres is also one of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria (Onuoha, 2011) as cited in Achumba et al. (2013). Nigeria is one of the countries in the world with very high rural/urban drift. Most urban areas in Nigeria have grown beyond their environmental carrying capacities and existing infrastructure and this has resulted to increased poor quality of the living conditions in urban areas in Nigeria (Achumba et al. 2013). Out of frustration, these youths are drawn into crime.

Unemployment/Poverty

As a result of the high level of unemployment and poverty among Nigerians, especially the youths, they are adversely attracted to violent crime. Nwagbosa (2012) as cited in Achumba et al. (2013) argued that the failure of successive administrations in Nigeria to address challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities is one of the major causes of insecurity in the country.

TVET: A Tool for Empowering Youth

TVET refers to a range of learning experience which aims at providing skills training to workers and also enable them to adapt to the changing needs of industries in particular and other economic sectors in general. UNESCO and ILO's general conference on TVET referred to TVET are those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge related to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life (UNESCO and ILO 2001).

TVET in the context of this paper can be described as an aspect of educational processes that brings about training of youths technologically to fit into the world of work and for self-employment. It also provides continuing training for those already qualified, so that they can keep up with modern working method (skill improvement).

TVET is among the tools for addressing the National Security (Adegbajo) as cited in Chinedu, et al. (2015); through developing the nation's industrial sector and providing entrepreneurs who should be employers of labour. More emphasis need to be put and commitments be renewed to reorganize TVET in the country so that the required outcomes should be achieved by producing skilled graduates from schools. Chinedu, et al. (2015) stressed that through development of skills; individuals could explore their environment and harness the resources within it, which could serve them and the society, since the wealth of the society, determines the development of the society. Functional TVET can therefore, make the youths productive and employers of labour instead of being used in facilitating violence.

CONCLUSION

The tool for addressing the security challenges in Nigeria is TVET as the greatness of any nation is in the quality of its people, the worth of its governance and the empowerment of its youths. The future of our country and its development depends on how we develop, empower and inspire our youths. TVET is very essential for youths as it enables them to be gainfully employed and productive, enabling them to become responsible citizens, thereby promoting peace and national security. It is believed that TVET will ensure peaceful coexistence among people living in societies and equip youths with adequate and up-to-date skills of their chosen vocation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made;

- TVET administrators should develop vocational skills in areas such as horticulture, business, engineering and construction works that will develop in youth character and general discipline of a work environment towards national security.
- Administrators in TVET programmes should utilize apprenticeship training to prepare youths to develop profitable social habits required by the society and basic computer literacy training programme to empower youths with IT skills.
- The Ministry of Education through NBTE and its respective agencies charged with the responsibility of empowering youths through vocational training should conduct public education campaigns and activities to sensitize, educate and inform youths in various communities about the significance of TVET programmes.

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- Efforts should be made to strengthen the collaboration between industries, vocational institutions and TVET providers so as to enable that relevant content that meets labour needs are taught to participants of various vocational training programmes.
- Government through Technical Education Boards should offer counseling, mentorship and teach youths to develop financial planning skills, business skills, communication skills, customer relation skills as well as basic computation skills needed to enable them start viable and sustainable enterprises.

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