

Modernizing Technical and Vocational Education and Training for the Realization of Vision 20:2020 in Nigeria

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Abstract,

This paper examined the need to modernize the TVET with a view to making it conform with the modern technological changes and skill needed in the workplace in order to achieve Nigeria's vision 20:2020. Relevant literatures were reviewed and recommendations made. Among the recommendations are that: private sectors should be encouraged to participate in the delivery of TVET to reduce dependency on government and that TVET should be brought into the mainstream of general education system so that it become less dead-end

Introduction

As economic, social and technological changes gather momentum, nations all over the world need to develop the knowledge and skill of their citizens on a continuous basis so that they can live and work meaningfully in the knowledge society. There is fresh awareness among policy makers in Nigeria and indeed the international community on the crucial role that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) play in national development. According to Olaitan; Nwachukwu; Igbo; Onyemachi and Ekong (1990), VTE has been an integral part of nations strategies in many societies because of its impact on productivity and development. The increasing importance attached to TVET is reflected in the various poverty reduction programmes. The like of National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and various youth empowerment programmes spread across the country.

At a world forum on education in 2000 in Dakar Senegal, the United Nations' Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) set an ambitious goal that would ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. The effort to provide TVET for all youths and adult will deepen the economic and social development of

countries by ensuring their capacity to learn and provide the foundation for their employability and access to decent work. This is also one of the key policy challenges in the ILO's **Global Employment Agenda, Education for All and Work for All**. UNESCO and ILO (2007) opined that in a time of continuous economic, social and technological changes, skills and knowledge become quickly out-of-date. The international organisations stressed that people who have not been able to benefit from formal education and training must be given opportunities to acquire new skills and knowledge that will provide them with second chance in life and work.

However, Putz and Dybowski (2007) observed that in many countries of the world, reforms in education and training system tends to concentrate on expanding general education and academic pathways while TVET often receives comparatively little attention in the structural adjustment process in education. Putz and Dybowski stressed that in many countries of the world, TVET is part of secondary education and delivered by colleges or schools, an approach which does not prepare adequately graduates to meet the demands of the world of work. Assessments have shown that employers are often not satisfied with the quality of TVET received by the beneficiaries of this type of education. For instance, Awotisayo (1997) cited in Maigida (2007) lamented that the training

received lacks relevance in the sense of relating to viable practical skills needed in the workplace. The employers complain of the low quality of training schemes, lack of practical skills of trainees as well as inappropriate training contents. All in all, a rather poor performance. Very clearly, this is an area in dire need of reform which could be addressed through modernized TVET for realizing vision 20:2020 in Nigeria.

Overview of Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Technical and vocational education and training has been in existence for several decades, yet TVET educators still grapple with the concept of the field of study they claim to belong. This is vividly manifested in the varied definitions and terminologies which have been used overtime in the field, each claiming to be probably most appropriate. Vocational education is any form of education whose primary purpose is to prepare persons for employment in occupations. Olaitan (1996) defined vocational and technical education as a form of education which emphasizes the development of occupational skills needed as a preparation for work. It is a form of education which promotes the dignity of labour by entrenching work as the goal of education. Vocational technical education is education for work. Learning in TVET is a conscious effort to acquire an experience (Olaitan et al, 1999). Its task is to help the learner learn in an educational institutions and work environments. The task of TVET therefore is the transmission of ideas, skills and values of work and environment and what individuals can do with their lives.

Daniel and Aultin (2001) viewed TVET as a "comprehensive term referring to 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 relating to occupation in various sectors of

economic and social life. Their definition should not be understood as saying that everything said about TVET has to be imparted in a general education setting.

Rather, a critical analysis of the definition revealed the fact that a general education background is necessary for vocational and technical education. This is evidenced in the definitions advanced by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) as; "an integral part of general education; a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work;

an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship; an instrument for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development; a method of alleviating poverty.

The term "TVET" as used in this paper follows the 1997 UNESCO International Standard Classification of Educational definition, which is education and training to "acquire the practical skills, know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation, trade or group of occupations or trades". Training in TVET consists of imparting not only the cognitive skills and dexterity but also in developing the requisite values, attitudes and behaviours, the ethos which are typical of the occupations essentially for superior performance in them.

The conceptual definition of TVET according to Ighedo (1997) cuts across educational levels (Junior Secondary Schools, Senior Secondary Schools, Vocational Training Schools and even tertiary institutions) and sectors (formal or school-based, non-formal or enterprise-based and informal or traditional apprenticeship). Dike (2007) opined that TVET has been an integral part of national development strategies in many societies because of its impact on human resource development, productivity and economic growth. Despite its proven

contributions, he lamented that Nigeria does not seem to give TVET the attention it deserves, and that appears as one of the reasons for the rising unemployment and poverty in the society.

Current Status of TVET in Nigeria and its Challenges

TVET systems differ from country to country and are usually delivered at different levels of institutions including technical and vocational schools (both public and private), polytechnics, enterprises and apprenticeship training centres (African Union (AU), 2007). Technical and vocational education and training in the traditional society is largely run on the apprenticeship system. Fafunwa (1974) identified vocations like carpentry, building, carving (wood and bronze), leather work among others as those practiced before the advent of colonialism in Nigeria. At the advent of the colonial government in Nigeria, poor attention was accorded vocational – technical education because the colonial masters mainly needed clerks and interpreters. This according to Okoro (2006) led to the production of arts – biased labour force individuals, neglecting vocational areas like metal-work, wood-work, agriculture, building, accountancy among other vocations that call for semi-skilled and skilled manpower required in the face of global need for industrial revolution. Okoro observed that during the colonial era, there was no formally organized vocational and technical education at the secondary school level.

In Sub-Sahara Africa, formal TVET programme are school – based (AU, 2007). The union found out that training models follow those of the colonial power. In general however, students enter the vocational and technical track at the end of primary school, corresponding to 6 – 8 years of education in countries like Burkina-Faso and Kenya, or at the end of what is called basic education in Ghana, Nigeria, Mali and Swaziland. The duration of school – based technical and vocational education is between 3 – 6 year,

depending on the country and the model. Olaitan (1996), explained that except in few cases, the socio-economic environment and the contextual framework in which TVET delivery system currently operate is characterized generally by;

- Weak national economic, high population growth and a growing labour force.

- Shrinking or stagnant wage employment opportunities especially in the industrial sector.
- Huge number of poorly educated, unskilled and unemployed youth.
- Unco-ordinated, unregulated and fragmented delivery systems.
- Low quality of training.
- Geographical, gender and economic inequalities.
- Poor public perception.
- Weak monitoring and evaluation.

The current status of TVET in Nigeria is not about weaknesses. TVET is passing through promising reforms that are designed to build on the inherent strengths of the system and respond to the challenges of Vision 20:2020. This is evidenced by the active participation of the private sector in the TVET system. The large number of master craftsmen and women, the resilience of the traditional apprenticeship system, the setting up of national training bodies like Capacity Enhancement Scheme (CES), Managed Attachment Programme (MAP) among others and the enactment of laws by various state assemblies to strengthen national vocational training programme and policies to improve their employability and adaptability to different occupations. Well-trained workers can be more productive as long as they work in an environment that allows them deploy their higher skills. Economic development depends to a great deal on adopting TVET system to meet social and economic demand. For this reason, many countries have stressed the need to place greater emphasis on TVET in the years ahead. For instance, the Federal Institute for Vocational Training in Germany

highlights the following as methods of strengthening the practice of TVET;

1. Providing attractive, qualified training programmes and continuing training opportunities in order to enhance employability and occupational mobility;

2. Designing TVET to conform more closely with the field of practice;

3. Orienting TVET closer to the requirements of the employment system and the corresponding labour market.

Achieving the Vision of 20:2020 and through Modernized Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The primary goal of TVET programme according to AUC (2007) is the acquisition of relevant knowledge, practical skills and attitude for gainful employment in a particular trade or occupational areas. The need to link training to employment (either self or paid employment) is at the base of the best practices and strategies being observed world-wide in view of the rapid technological advances taking place in the labour market, flexibility, adaptability and life-long learning which have become major objective in the quest for growth in any nation. Another objective for TVET is that, it is a vehicle for economic empowerment and social mobility as well as social mobility for the promotion of good governance and regional integration in Africa. Careful studies have shown that good training provided at the right time to the bright group of people pays well, training increases productivity and hence the income of workers. (Okorie, 2000). It tends to meet needs by preparing young people for degrees which comply with high standards while opening up forward looking employment prospects.

Modern training requires many bridges between schools and enterprise (Castro, 1999), for it is disservice to train youths in vocations or skills that are obsolete or soon to become. The institutional reform

and the structural changes required are not politically deliberate and involve the reshuffling of people, institutions and funding mechanisms. The entire world as observed by Olaitan (1996) within the last 50 years has witnessed innumerable changes that it could be rightly claimed that everything in this world is not actually metamorphosing. Olaitan explained that new cultures, ideas, technologies and political alliances have replaced old ones at an alarming rate, so much that the fear of stagnation has become more than the fear of change. The saying that nothing is permanent except change makes much meaning to all of us living today and at the rate changes are encountered, there is no doubt that mankind had learned to associate change with development and progress. Hence, the vision of 20:2020 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The vision is the responses to the development challenges facing Nigeria. The focal point of vision 20:2020 is for Nigeria to become one of 20 largest economies in the world by year 2020. The reform programme is highly ambitious and reflects the impatience of Nigerians to seek quick dramatic changes and also the fact that Nigeria has eminent potentials waiting to be unleashed. Correspondingly, Soludo (2007) posited that Nigeria is a nation blessed with abundant human and natural resources - largest black nation; 8th largest oil producer; 6th largest deposit of gas; 34 solid minerals; 144 exportable commodities; huge arable land among others. Soludo yet lamented that Nigeria stagnated in first 40 years as a nation and suffers from unemployment, poverty, corruption, trade marks, collapse of education system, culture of impurity and anything goes. TVET no doubt creates among youths and adults alike wealth generation, poverty reduction and value generation through acquisition of relevant technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) perceived TVET as the greatest force that can be employed to achieve quick desirable changes or development of the

nations economic, political, sociological and human resources. The National Policy on Education document as well as various efforts that have gone into its implementation are based on this conviction. TVET which enables a person to make intelligent use of the products of technology, utilize new technologies, develop better entrepreneurial skills and become innovative worker (Uwadiae, 1992) reduces unemployment in a society. In a country like Nigeria where unemployment appears to be shooting up the sky because of lack of employability skills that are often required from technical and vocational institutions, employers of labour could be given a stronger voice in the decisions of the training institutions in a bid to match the skills, knowledge and competencies delivered by TVET system with the requirements of the labour market and the world of work. Daniel and Aultin (2001) noted that modernizing TVET is among the ways to improve economic opportunities for the youths. This is because the progress of Nigeria towards achieving vision 20:2020 lies in the productivity of its citizens and quality education. Undoubtly, genuine technical and vocational education and training programme holds the key for removing Nigeria from the chackle of poverty and unemployment rauaging the nation.

Summary/Conclusion

Considering the important role TVET plays in the overall development of any society or nation, efforts must be intensified until the right environment is provided for it to blossom. In his exposition on TVET, Ighedo (1997) stated; "one of the prerequisites for the development and modernization of a country is technical-vocational education and training. If carefully planned and operationally financed, an efficient and effective capability may be provided". Nigeria, despite having vast economic resources has been suffering from an obvious lack of skilled and semi-skilled manpower in almost all sectors of the

economy. In order to fill this deficiency, TVET must be modernized to meet the country's needs for skilled and semi-skilled manpower.

Recommendations

1. All TVET system is aimed at imparting comprehensive professional competencies on an occupation. Hence, a programme should be guided not only by the requirements of the labour market, but also by the need of individuals to acquire skills knowledge and competences that would enable them become successful to prove themselves in the labour market. Based on the relevant literatures reviewed in this paper, the following recommendations are hereby made;
- 1.1 TVET system of a developing, implementing, monitoring and reporting the performance of TVET in every levels of TVET programme to allow for corrective measures where necessary.
2. Stakeholders in technical and vocational education should establish TVET management information systems for education and training including labour market requirements.
3. Policies and incentives that will support increased private sector participation in TVET delivery should be introduced by stakeholders in technical and vocational education.
4. TVET should be brought into the mainstream of general education system, so that the vocational and technical track is less dead-end.
5. Stakeholders in technical and vocational education should initiate and support advocacy programmes that would reduce poor public perception on TVET.
6. Basic education system, and higher education technical institutions, and vocational training centres should strive towards preparing their

graduates in manipulative skills that would lead to self reliance.

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