

## **ROLES OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (TVE) IN ALLEVIATING POVERTY IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*The objective of technical and vocational education and training is to impart, mainly in young people, the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them contribute effectively to the socio-economic development of their communities, and ultimately that of the country. Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) should be a tool for empowering the Nigerians,*

*especially the youth, for sustainable livelihood and the socio-economic development of the country, thereby eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. There is no doubt that quality TVE promotes skills acquisition through competency-based training with proficiency testing for employment, sustainable livelihoods and responsible citizenship. This paper therefore reveals TVE as a means of alleviating poverty in Nigeria. Some recommendations on the best way to establish and practice TVE so as to eradicate poverty and ensure environmental sustainability in Nigeria were suggested, among which are the promotion of TVE as a tool for economic empowerment in Nigeria, and linking of TVE to the job market.*

**Keywords: Technical and vocational Education, poverty,**

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## **Background to the Study**

Poverty is a dreaded condition of absence of capacity to maintain at least basic level of decent living. It is a hydra headed condition which tends to restrict people from socio-economic opportunities. As a complex and multi dimensional phenomenon, poverty goes beyond condition of lack of resources; it extends to social inequality, insecurity, illiteracy, poor health, restricted or total lack of opportunity for personal growth and self realization. Onibokun and Kumuyi (1996) defined poverty as 'a way of life characterized by low calorie intake, inaccessibility to adequate health facilities, low quality education, inaccessibility to various housing and societal facilities.

In order to lift the poor out of poverty, an economy must produce an adequate supply of good-paying jobs (adequate labor demand), there must be an adequate pool of quality persons to fill those jobs in addition (adequate labor supply) and proper mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that individuals get what they deserve (allocation and legitimation). It is therefore believed that Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) contributes to economic growth and economic growth is directly related to poverty alleviation. Poverty, like other macroeconomic variables such as unemployment, can be reduced by economic growth.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) recommendations of 2002 on technical and vocational education and training for twenty-first Century, define the "technical and vocational education" 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 occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Technical and Vocation Education (TVE) is concerned with the preparation of learners for employment, through the provision of knowledge, skills and attitudes desirable in the world of work. Technical and vocational education is further understood to be:

- a. an integral part of general education
- b. a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work
- c. an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship
- d. an instrument for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development
- e. a method of facilitating poverty alleviation (UNESCO and ILO, 2002).

Technical and vocational education can be formal, informal, continuing or lifelong learning, in-service training with various ranges of providers: public semi-public and private institutions. Technical and vocational education has an orientation towards the world of work and the emphasis of the curriculum on the acquisition of employable skills. Its delivery systems are therefore well placed to train the skilled and entrepreneurial workforce that nation needs to create wealth and emerge out of poverty. Due to the dynamic levels of its training delivery, it can respond to the different training needs of learners from different socio-economic and academic backgrounds, and prepare them for gainful employment and sustainable livelihoods. The needs for TVE around the world are enormous because of the changes occurring in the world of work, which have implications on the structure of appropriate courses in TVE. It is therefore essential for every government be it local, state, or federal to be deeply aware of the importance of human resources development (HRD) and makes great efforts to develop technical and vocational education and training.

TVE varies from country to country with some countries having more in common than others due to historical and other reasons. However, in some countries, TVE is offered at the upper secondary education level. Across the world, the programmes of TVE are conducted for two, three or more years' duration particularly when the programme include pre-vocational courses. Some countries run apprenticeship programmes as well. Also in some cases, TVE provision follows secondary education in institutions/schools like Polytechnics and Monotechnics while some are held at secondary schools. For instance, some countries like Ghana, Senegal, and Swanziland in an attempt to expose young people to pre-employment skills have incorporated basic vocational skills into the lower or junior secondary school curriculum (Atchoarena and Delluc, 2002). The 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria gives considerable attention to technical and vocational education.

Under a quality Technical and Vocational Education (TVE), it should be possible for students who drop out of the school system to learn a trade or re-enter the formal vocational school system to upgrade their skills, either on part-time or full-time basis. Similarly, regular technical and vocational school students should be able to acquire relevant practical skills in the non-formal sector. Technical and vocational education as preparation for an occupational field should therefore provide the foundation for productive and satisfying careers and should:

- a. lead to the acquisition of broad knowledge and generic skills applicable to a number occupation and is able to transfer from field to another during his/her working life:

- b. at the same time offer both a thorough ar.: specialized preparation for initial employment, including self-employment, ar.:. also training within employment;
- c. provide the background in terms knowledge, skills and attitudes for continuing education at any point in the individual's -working life.

Special provision should also be made for out school and unemployed youth and children socially disadvantaged groups such as minorities migrant workers, refugees, etc. with little or primary education, as well as for those not enter education or training programmes after compellation of compulsory schooling, in order that they may acquire skills for wage – or self-employment (UNESCO and ILO, 2002).

### **Non-Formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training**

Non-formal TVET, defined as the opposite of formal TVET that is school-based with a rigid curriculum, has the advantage of shorter duration r is occupation-specific and may or may not follow the standard curriculum prescribed by national educational authorities. In addition, the entry qualifications of trainees can be extremely varied. However, the strategies and structures for formal and non-formal TVET delivery are similar in mar A respects. In particular, it is important that the two TVET systems are piloted by a single national' coordinating body in order to facilitate articulator: between the two systems and enhance coherence are better management of the entire TVET system

Another characteristic of non-formal TVET delivery is the emphasis on the acquisition practical skills for direct employment. For this reason skilled craftsmen with some pedagogical training may be engaged as instructors. On the contrary teachers in the formal TVET delivery system are required to be certified graduates at technical/teachers colleges with relevant vocational teachers' qualifications (COMEDAF, 2007).

### **The Role of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) in Alleviating Poverty**

The bid to reduce poverty level worldwide led to the declaration of Millennium Development Goals in the year 2000. Countries, especially developing countries, were mandated to cut by half the incidence of poverty by 2015 among other goals. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represent commitment by governments worldwide to do more to reduce poverty and hunger. Thus, to reduce poverty (Goal 1, Target 1) steps have to be taken to provide affordable products and services, and build local business linkages and employment opportunities.

Since technical and vocational education (TVE) is concerned with the preparation of learners for employment, through the provision of knowledge, skills and attitudes desirable in the world of work, its contribution to eradicate poverty cannot be overemphasized. The

most important role of TVE is enhancing economical and social development. It is therefore an essential approach in preparing human resources within the educational economical system. TVE by itself do not create jobs, but it is beneficial when it is associated with the actual needs of labour market. This is the reason its programmes in Nigeria should match current and future labour market needs. A standard TVE is expected to mobilize resources needed to face the present problems and future challenges. It should create a motivating environment that leads to effective interaction between all parties involved in the training process. Due to its concentration on the actual needs of the labour market and focus on the output, it designs flexible programmes that serve the needs of production and service sectors, and designs practices and learning experiences that best serve job requirements (Johanson and Adams, 2004).

Quality technical and vocational education (TVE) helps develop the individual's knowledge of science and technology in a broad occupational area requiring technical and professional competencies and specific occupational skills. The primary objective of technical and vocational training in Nigeria is to help alleviate poverty through the acquisition of employable skills. Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) focuses on training all employees in general, and pay special attention to those workers whom their qualifications do not match with their jobs, and those whom, have outdated skills, and junior workers that are not experienced enough. It equally focuses on changes that occur in the structure, levels, values and expectations of the labour force. Also, the impacts of political, economical, social and technological changes on the production and service sectors, the workforce in general is another focus of TVE.

The African Union (AU) has recognizes the importance of TVET as a means of empowering individuals to take control of their lives and recommends therefore the integration of vocational training into the general education system. The AU also recognizes the fact that vast numbers of young people are outside the formal school system, and consequently recommends the integration of non-formal learning methodologies and literacy programmes into national TVE programmes (COMEDAF, 2007). Technical and vocational initiation in the general education of youth for the purpose of eradicating scourge of poverty in the country should fulfill the educational requirements of all spheres of interest and ability. It should mainly perform three functions:

- a. To broaden education horizons by serving as an introduction to the world of work, and the world of technology and its products through the exploration of materials, tools,

techniques, and the process of production, distribution and management as a whole, and to enrich the learning process through practical experience.

- b. To orient those with interest and ability in technical and vocational education towards preparation for an occupational field or training outside the formal education system;
- c. To promote in those who will leave formal education with no specific occupational aims or skills, attitudes and thought processes likely to enhance their aptitude and potential, to facilitate the choice of an occupation and access to a first job, and to permit them to continue their vocational training and personal development (Kim, 200).

It is largely accepted that TVE can equip women for the job market or self-employment, thereby increasing their self-reliance and self-confidence. It is therefore seen as a means to promote human resource development and consequently, it can be regarded as a panacea to combat ever increasing poverty problem in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion**

The main objectives of TVE are to prepare for the country a labour force meeting needs of the labour market, to enable people contribute to sustainable social, economic and environment development. It is therefore important to make sure that every Nigeria citizen has equal access to TVE programmes, which should be quality and relevant to needs and aspirations of our society. Government appears to have shown some measures of commitment to the implementation of Technical and Vocational education, notwithstanding the fact that the programme still suffers from most of the ills of the past. For instance, the public and even parents consider the vocational education track as fit for only the academically less endowed. Also, the students entering the vocational and technical education stream find it difficult to proceed to higher education. There is need to eradicate the societal poor perception of TVE and make it less dead-end.

There is no doubt that it is veritable instrument to eradicate poverty yet, the Government needs to tailor it towards nation's needs and aspirations. Proficiency, employability, entrepreneurship, efficiency, and sustainability should be the guiding principles to be considered as the major drivers of a TVET strategy in Nigeria.

Technical and Vocational Education should be promoted as a tool for economic empowerment in Nigeria, therefore, the use of role models in TVE and the involvement of successful entrepreneurs in motivation campaigns is necessary. The employment of experts in the field as practice teachers should always be supported by the government.

TVET programmes in Nigeria should hereby develop indigenous skills associated with the manufacture of traditional artifacts and crafts.

Since the ultimate aim of vocational training is employment. TVE programmes therefore have to be linked to the job market. In this way, the socioeconomic relevance of TVE is enhanced.

Some vocational training programmes like dressmaking, hairdressing, and cookery and associated with girls - very often girls who are less gifted academically. While some technical education and training like automobile, draughtsman-ship etc are stereotyped to boys of the caliber mentioned above. For poverty to be adequately eradicated through TVE there should not be gender stereotyping.

### **Recommendations**

- Government and relevant stake holders should fund TVE to enable it equip citizenry with requisite skills for self-reliance.
- Youths and idle individuals should be encouraged to take vocational courses.

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