

---

# JONATT

---



**THE JOURNAL OF NIGERIAN  
ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS  
OF TECHNOLOGY  
(NATT)**

---

**Vol. 5 No 1 June 2005**

---

**ISSN 1118-4558**



## Vocational/Technical Education for Poverty Alleviation and self-reliance: Towards Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Rufai Audu

Industrial And Technical Education Dept.  
Federal University Of Technology Minna

### Abstract

It is a well-known fact that millions of Nigerians live below poverty line. This paper stresses on the need of vocational/technical education for self-reliance in order to sustain development in Nigeria. The concept of poverty and poverty alleviation as well as the causes and consequences of poverty were also discussed. Efforts made by successive governments in order to alleviate poverty were highlighted. Finally conclusion was drawn and recommendations made to ensure that vocational/technical education is given much priority in order to enable individuals acquire practical skills to be self-reliant; thus, contributing their quota to the development of the nation at large.

### Introduction

Nigeria ranks among the nations that are naturally endowed in terms of human and material resources. It occupies an enviable position in the league of National of the world. Yet poverty stinks in the land of plenty to say the least. In Nigeria poverty stares us in the face right from our bedrooms to the kitchens and then to the streets where on daily basis, we watch helpless poverty-stricken Nigerians wandering about in search of means of survival. A critical look at Nigerian populace shows that poverty syndrome is not hidden. It could be identified in the level of education, social, cultural development of course poor standard of living. As a matter of fact it cut across all aspects of life. In his address to state Governors and coordinators of National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP) at a retreat. According to president Obasanjo (2001) it is estimated that about 70% of the total population of Nigeria live below poverty line. To him it is hardly surprising that Nigeria now ranks among 25 poorest countries in the world.

The recent development in Nigeria with regards to a situation whereby, a substantial section of the society live below poverty line and remains unemployed calls for a great concern among every well meaning Nigerian. A situation where a good number of university and polytechnics graduates as well as other school leavers do not have jobs seems to heighten the need for more emphasis on vocational/technical education (Asumbe, 2001).

Vocational/technical education is that form of education that leads to the acquisition of practical skills, which will enable an individual to be gainfully employed in a chosen occupation or become self-reliant. Osuala (1998) says that vocational/technical capitalizes on the capacity of people to change and learn new improved skills so as to develop creative approaches to the generation of services and production of products. Adedoyin (1999) describes it as a process of functional capacity building to achieve placement, performance and improvement on the job. The implication of this is that one is secured in getting a standard means of livelihood for himself self.

### Concept of Poverty and Poverty Alleviation

Different people define poverty in different ways. According to Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995) poverty is a condition of being extremely poor. It is regarded as deprivation and lack of basic amenities of life for human survival. In a similar view Olaitan (2000) sees poverty as the scarcity of



human basic needs or the inability of an individual or society to acquire human basic needs for existence. In this context poverty connotes individuals or groups of communities or nation at large. A poor person is dependent on others for welfare because of lack of vocational skills and other means of meeting basic human needs. Economic competition or misplacement of priority on the part of the government during planning and implementation cause poverty among the citizenry. Poverty alleviation is seen as means of bringing poverty level to bearable minimum. In order to design effective programme for poverty alleviation, it is very important to know the source of income to the poor. World Bank Report (1990) pointed out that different approaches to poverty alleviation were evolved by different parts of the world based on their peculiarity. In Nigeria, most especially the poor have been the centres of all policies of development but it is very questionable whether the poor have benefited much from anti poverty policies and campaigns in this country (Amali 1996). What Amali is saying in this context implies that several policies, campaigns and programmes have been used to curb the poverty in Nigeria, which has not yielded the expected result.

### **Causes of Poverty**

Poverty may be traced to various sources which include unemployment, population explosion, improper planning by the government and natural disasters. Other sources of poverty are wars, unhealthy environment and inefficient facilities.

Without employment, the source of income of an individual is blocked, so also is the ability to cater for his/her needs becomes difficult. Non provision of adequate facilities to cater for the increase in population leads to starvation, diseases and poverty. When plans are made and such plans are derided as a result of corruption, greed and other dishonest behaviour, poverty is the result.

Natural disasters like flooding, famine, draught, earthquake, and windstorm, are capable of destroying lives and properties. Wars result in loss of property, causing migration without any place in mind, thus leading to refugee's situation and loss of job.

Unhealthy environment results in diseases and sickness forcing people out of job thus rendering them incapable of providing for their needs. Societal attitude and policies like high interest rates, unstable currency exchange rate, hoarding and smuggling make the people to be poor.

Inefficient facilities such as electricity, water, communication, roads increases the cost of production thereby putting prices out of the reach of the ordinary persons.

### **Consequences of Poverty in the Society**

The effects of poverty in any nations cannot be over emphasized. Persistent poverty is perhaps responsible for most social revolution and indiscipline. The poor will always like to express themselves by rebelling once a situation becomes too difficult for them to bar against the constituted authority. Poverty contributes to crime in the society. According to Oludotun (2001) the increasing rate of crime such as armed robbery, "419", corruption, prostitution, nepotism, drug trafficking, cultism and other social vices are definitely the product of poverty in the country. As long as people feel uncatered for, their loyalty to government of the day would become shaky. What then is the solution or way out of the stark poverty staring the face of millions of Nigerians? Perhaps the solution is in giving emphasis to the development of vocational/technical education.

### **Government's Effort on Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria**

Successive government in Nigeria has had various programmes to improve the standard of living of the populace. Such programmes include Operation Feed the Nation, Green Revolution, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Family Support Programmes (FSP), Better Life for Rural Women and Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Peoples Bank, Community Bank, Mass Transit Programmes to mention but a few.



However, the latest of such programmes is poverty Alleviation Programmes (PAP). This programme was launched in January 2000 whereby 200,000 unemployed people across the nation were taken into the federal government employment system on an ad-hos basis. Subsequently, a technical committee headed by Professor Ango Abdullahi reviewed (PAP) and produced the draft National Policy on Poverty Eradication. A committee that included membership from relevant ministries and agencies articulated the government's position on the policy. The committee later came up with the blue print of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). The sum of #10 billion Naira was allocated to it as an interventionist approach in the fight against poverty. It was aimed at generating 500 jobs in each state of the federation.

Unfortunately the above programmes have not succeeded in the alleviation of poverty in Nigeria. The reason for the unsuccessful attempt or failure is that these approaches have focused on employing youths rather than making them self-reliant and employer of labour. Even some cases, money doled out without any commensurate services rendered. Therefore, the potential measure towards achieving poverty alleviation in Nigeria should be fashioned in such a way to make the youths self-reliant. This can be achieved by laying appropriate emphasis on vocational and technical education. Apart from the potency of vocational technical education bringing about sustainable poverty alleviation in Nigeria, it will form the bedrock of technological development, in which Nigeria cannot afford to be left behind in the present era of globalization.

### **Vocational Technical Education and Poverty Alleviation**

The usefulness of vocational technical education is inestimable as it stretches from an individual to society at large. Olaintan (1996) buttresses this fact by concluding that apart from individuals being the primary beneficiary of vocational/technical education, the nation is usually the fundamental beneficiary of this form of education. In other words, vocational/technical education serves as an excellent instrument of making positive changing in individuals' life and the society at large. The vocational/technical education alleviates poverty in so many ways such as:

- It has an illustrious past, having trained millions of young people and adults to participate in the world of work. Its development has included a move from apprenticeship method in beginning to full-time vocational/technical schools and then to vocational education programmes in public high schools.
- Vocational/technical education reduces the rate of unemployment amongst the citizenry. More educated Nigerians are neither self-employed nor unemployed by the government. In fact, technological and industrial developments would have been stimulated through the production of competent or capable workers who would have utilized available materials to develop the country. In other words, this form of education can be reduced drastically. It enables individuals to acquire the skills needed to make them to be employed or be self-employed after graduation.
- Major effort of alleviating youth unemployment and dropout in Nigeria has been initiated via vocational/technical education programmes by the Federal, State and Local Governments. Educational programmes of the Federal and State Governments include the establishment of polytechnic and mono-technic colleges. The ultimate aim of establishing such institutions is to provide youths with saleable skills, which will enable them not only become employable, but to establish their own industries and business.
- Vocational/technical education refines individual's attitude to work. This is because a person with expertly acquired skills sees himself/herself as someone who is hard working to make money in order to live comfortably. In other words, individuals now see the dignity in labour, which encourages the feelings that the skills acquired ensure living in comfortability.
- Vocational/technical education encourages both cognitive and psychomotor skills for technological and industrial capable of developing and utilizing available materials to produce useful things for the society.



### Conclusion

Presently, there is no alternative to vocational/technical education as to alleviating poverty. This is because through vocational/technical education practical skills are acquired to enable individuals to be employed or become self-reliant. This enables them to secure a standard means of livelihood, and contribute towards the development of the society and the nation at large.

### Recommendation

For vocational/technical education to alleviate poverty and bring about sustainable development in Nigeria, the following recommendations are made.

- The curricular content of programmes and teaching methods of vocational/technical education should be oriented towards the development of skills rather than the acquisition of paper certificates that people carry about without getting jobs. Individuals who acquire practical skills will be gainfully employed or become self-reliant, thus contributing to the development of their society and the nation at large.
- Non-government Organizations (NGO's) should collaborate with Ministry of Education in the planning and development of curricula for vocational/technical education in line with the stipulation of the National Policy on Education. This will ensure that courses to be offered at the affected schools are relevant to the need of the society as well as national economy.
- Occupational survey should be carried out periodically to obtain comprehensive information concerning the occupational life of the people, available jobs, qualifications required, training facilities and employment opportunities. An advisory council on vocational/technical education and policy makers should be formed to use the survey report to determine national needs, recommend course offerings, appropriate training facilities and curriculum relevant to the occupational needs of the people.
- Government should ensure that vocational/technical education is adequately funded to ensure that qualified and experienced teachers/instructors are employed and also from time to time there should be in-service training for such instructors in order to upgrade their skills and knowledge. Also infrastructural facilities that will be used for training of individuals to enable them acquire the necessary skills that will make them become productive, leading to the development of the nation.

### References:

- Adedoyin, S. F. (1999): "Vocational options in Agriculture and Rural Development". *Agricultural career Guidance Handbook* NIRESP Bulletin.
- Amali, E. (1996): "Poverty in Nigeria" A paper presented at the Annual conference of American Studies Association of Nigeria.
- Asumbe, B. N. (2001): Skill Acquisition Programmes through vocational Education; A key to poverty Alleviation in Nigeria; In T. A. G. Oladimeji, O. T. Ibeneme, O. M. Adesope, M. A. Ogunyemi and H. M. Tukura (Eds) *Technology Education and Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria: proceedings of the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual conference-Umuze*. Cambridge International Dictionary of English, (1995) published by Cambridge University press.
- Obasanjo, O. (2001): "Obasanjo's Address to state Governor's and Co-ordinators of National Poverty Eradication programme Retreat" *Nigerian Tribune* June 26.
- Olaitan, S. O. (1996): *Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria (Issues and Analysis)*; Onitsha: Noble publishers.
- Olaitan, S. O. (2000): The Nature and concept of poverty in Nigeria, "Poverty Alleviation Initiative in Nigeria". *Nigerian Educational Research Association* (NERA) Nsukka
- Oludotun, J. S. O. (2001): "Jobs and its Relevance to the present Day Policies in the Areas of Eradication of poverty and Elimination of Corruption Practices. Seminar paper at National jobs pre-competition Workshop, held at federal College of Education Akoka: Lagos
- Osuola, E. C. (1998): Manpower Development; An Editorial comment. *Journal of Nigerian Vocational Association*, Nsukka,