

**Strategies for Strengthening Technical and vocational Education in Nigerian for the
Realization vision 20-20**

Owodunni A.S.
Federal Government Girls' College
PMB 2045, Shagamu, Ogun State

Abstract

Technical and vocational education (TVE) is the master key that can alleviate poverty, conserve the environment, improve the quality of life for all, help achieve sustainable development and in all realization of vision 20-20. This paper therefore, made an attempt to look at the current status of TVE in Nigeria and strategies for strengthening TVE so that the vision 20-20 can be realized.

Introduction

The goals of the focus on the development of education in the 7 points agenda of the present government are development of skills expertise and capacity to contribute to development. It also aims at the development of a workforce that can derive the development of the economy. The vision of the present government has for the education sector, including using it in the training of skills expertise and capacity to contribute to the development of and drive the economy is appropriate. Without manpower with the right quality and orientation it will be difficult to grow the economy to one of the largest 20 in the world and remain there. And this could be achieved through technical and vocational education.

The aims of government on education, is to ensure minimum acceptable standards for all, and to develop a strategic plan to ensure excellence in both teaching and learning of skills on science and technology by students as innovations and industrialists in Nigeria. There is a fresh awareness among policy makers, and educators in Nigeria of the critical role that technical and vocational education (TVE) can play in national development. The increasing importance that government now attaches to TVE is reflected in the various programme of the government. Programmes like poverty eradication wealth creation and youth empowerment (Bloom, Canning and Chan, 2006).

One of the most important features of TVE is its orientation towards the world of work and the emphasis of the curriculum on the acquisition of employable skills. TVE delivery systems are therefore well placed to train the skilled and entrepreneurial workforce that Nigeria needs to create wealth and emerge out of poverty as enshrined in the government 7 point agenda (Vision 20-20). Another important characteristic of TVE is that it can be delivered at different levels of sophistication. This means that TVE institutions 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 youth the poor, and the vulnerable of society can therefore benefit from TVE (COMEDAF, 2007). All over the world governments have embraced the united nations millennium development goals (MDGs) that aim to significantly

reduce the number of people living below the poverty line, improve access to education promote gender equality, improve maternal and child health, ensure environmental sustainability and promote global partnership between developed and developing countries. The first goal of the MDGs is the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. The key to poverty eradication is economic growth and the creation of employment for all. However, poor people without process. The challenge then is to raise the productive capacity of the poor the youth and the vulnerable of society through the acquisition of job-specific competencies. And this can only be achieved through a comprehensive TVE curriculum that will cater for all categories of human being in the society. This paper therefore, looks at the present status of TVE in Nigeria and how it can be strengthening for the realization of vision 20 20.

Current Status of TVE in Nigeria

Technical and vocational education systems in Nigeria are delivered at different levels in different types of institutions including technical and vocational schools (both public and private) polytechnic monotechs, enterprises and apprenticeship training centres. According to the national policy on education (FRN, 2004) technical and vocational senior secondary education is designed to prepare individual to acquire practical skills basic and scientific knowledge and attitude required as crafts men and technical at sub-professional level. Technical education on the other hand is post-secondary programme offered at tertiary institutions (polytechnics/monotechs and colleges of education technical) whose major purpose is for production of technician and technical teachers.

At the juniors secondary school level the student are exposed to introductory aspect of TVE known as pre-vocational. The vocational subjects are offered during the last three years of secondary school. In all, a Nigeria child is expected to have had six years of exposure to vocational education before completing secondary school. These six years are partitioned into two tiers three years of junior secondary schooling and three years of senior secondary schooling.

The national policy on education (FRN, 2004) stated that the junior secondary school shall be both pre-vocational and academic and it shall comprise of basic subjects which shall enable pupils to acquire further knowledge and develop skills. The curriculum is structured as follow; core subject, which include mathematics, English, Nigerian languages Social Studies, Integrated Science, French and Introductory technology. Business studies, home economics, local crafts and computer education are also included in the curriculum. Further more, non pre-vocational electives are subjects such as religion knowledge, physical and health education, fine art, music and Arabic studies. After the junior secondary schools, the policy emphasized that the students shall be streamed into the senior secondary schools, technical colleges, an out of school vocational training center and apprenticeship schemes. The streaming which shall be based on the result of test to determine academic ability, aptitude and vocational interest shall be based on transition ratio of 60:20:10:10 as follows: secondary school 60 per cent,

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technical collage 20 percent, vocational training center 10 percent and an apprenticeship scheme 10 per cent.

The senior secondary school is for those able and willing to have complete six years secondary education. It is comprehensive with a core curriculum designed to broaden pupils' knowledge (FGN, 2004). The core subjects include English language, French mathematics, a major Nigerian language, one of biology chemistry physics or integrated sciences one of literature in English, history, geography or social science and a vocational subject. The national policy on education pointed out that every students is expected to select three of those subjects depending on the choice of career up to the end of the second year and may drop one of the non-compulsory subjects out of the nine subjects in the last year of the senior secondary school from which students can make additional courses to make up the nine subjects. A full implementation of the structure is to make senior secondary school leavers expose to vocational skill before completion.

The socio-economic environment and the contextual framework in which TVE delivery systems currently operate in Nigeria according to COMEDAF (2007) can be summarized as follows.

- a. Weak economy characterized by low job creation increase in population growth and a growing labour force.
- b. Small and stagnat wage employment opportunities in the industrial sector. In Nigeria today the vast majority of the workforce is in the services and agriculture sectors and about 80% of the workforce is in the informal, non-wage employment
- c. Large numbers of poorly educated unskilled and unemployed youth.

The average school completion rate in Nigeria is such that many young people drop out of the school before they have acquired any practical skills and competencies for the world of work. And only few among the students that completed their education had any vocational or technical training.

- d. High umbers of unemployed graduates due to lack of entre preneurial skill and many due to non-availability of job.
- e. Uncoordinated unregulated and fragmented delivery systems.
Co-ordination involves the activities of getting all the units of a TVE set up to function effectively, the effect of poor coordination is absence of effectiveness leading to unemployment.
- f. Low quality
Olatan S.O Nwachukwu C E Onyemachi G Igbo C.A and Ekong, A.O (1999) remarked that there are evidence of poor organization and implementation of functional policies, which has evidenced the downward trends in the quality both in process and products of TVE due mostly to the increased demand for access reduction in public and private finding, diversification of institutions and course growing internationalization and the peresistence of the employment crises in many economic sectors and communities. The quality of training is low with under emphasis on theory and certification rather than on skills acquisition and proficiency testing.

- g. **Geographical, gender and economic inequalities**
Access and participation in TVE in Nigeria reflects the gender biased division of labour. We should not lose sight of economic and geographical inequalities in designing technical vocational education strategies for realization of vision 20-20.
- h. **Poor public perception**
For many years technical and vocational education in Nigeria has been considered as a career for the less academically endowed and drop out. This perception has been fuelled by the low academic requirements for admission into technical and vocational education programmes and limited prospects for further education and professional development.
- i. **Weak monitoring and evaluation**
Evaluation is the process of assessing the effectiveness of technical and vocational education programme in relation to its objectives using appropriate measuring techniques and providing feed back (Olaitan et al 1999). Current training programmes in Nigeria are supply-driven instead of demand-drive. Technical and vocational education programmes are projected labour market demands. The emphasis appears to be on helping the unemployed to find jobs without any critical attempt to match training to available jobs this situation has resulted in many vocational school graduates not finding jobs or finding themselves on jobs for which they have had no previous training. Non-targeted skills development is one of the major weaknesses of the technical and vocational education system in Nigeria.
- j. **Inadequate financing, poor management and ill-adapted organizational structure.**
The diverse management structures and the sharing of supervisory responsibilities by various government bodies and ministries account for some of the inefficiencies in the system like duplication and segmentation of training, and the absence of a common platform for developing coherent policies and point initiatives.
- k. **Threat of HIV/AIDS:**
The impact of HIV/AIDS on the labour force (and hence its potential effect on vocational and technical training and skills development strategies) is considered alarming. The technical and vocational training environment because of the inevitable use of cutting tools and machines for training presents a constant danger for the spread of the disease and put the trainees at risk.

Strategies for strengthening TVE

The vision of the government for the year 2020 is to use education in the training of skills expertise and capacity to contribute to the development of economy and drive the economy (vision 2020). And in order to strengthening TVE for the realization of this vision the following strategy implementation as suggested by COMEDAF (2007) are recommended.

1. The government should perform the following policy roles
 - Give legislative backing to support TVE policies

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- Improve coherence of government and management of TVE.
 - Reach out to the Nigerian in diaspora to support TVE programme.
 - Introduce policies and incentives that will support increased private sector participation in TVE delivery
 - Partner informal TVE trainers to incorporate literacy and numeracy skills into their training programmes.
 - Provided training material and equipment, invest in TVE instructor training and enhance status of instructors.
 - Introduce measures to reduce gender, economic and geographical inequities in TVE provision.
 - Introduce sustainable financing schemes for TVE.
 - Provide funding support to the sector
 - Set up venture capital to support TVE graduates.
 - Introduce vocational education into general education system so that the vocational track is less dead end.
 - Introduce ICT into TVE
 - Monitor and evaluate the performance of TVE programme and apply corrective measures accordingly.
2. The training providers which includes TVE institute should perform the following institutions roles.
- Provide training within national policy framework.
 - Develop business plans to support training activities.
 - Establish strong linkages and collaboration with employers and industry.
 - Mainstream gender into training activities ~~and programmes.~~
 - Institute bursary schemes for poor trainings.
 - Strengthen guidance and counselling services to trainees.
 - Network and bench-mark with other providers.
3. The parents and guardian have following roles to play in the implementation of the strategy.
- Support children and wards to choose the vocational education stream.
 - Reject perception that TVE is for the less academically children or wards.
 - Lobby politician in favour of TVE.
 - Support activities of training providers.
4. Non-governmental organization (NGO) also has roles to play in the implementation of the strategy which includes
- Support development of national TVE policies and strategies.
 - Provide fund for TVE research and advocacy
 - Capacity building in TVE sector
 - Assist in identifying and disseminating best practices in TVE
 - Provide support for TVE advocacy initiatives
5. Public and private employers should also
- Deliver workplace training to employees

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- Contribute financially to national training fund
- Provide opportunities for TVE teachers to regularly update their workplace experience.
- Provide opportunities for industrial attachment for trainees.
- Contribute to the development of national skills standard.

Conclusion

TVE alone does not provide jobs or eradicate poverty. Good government policies do both. The strategy therefore urges government to create an economic environment that promotes the growth of enterprise and generally stimulates the economy if vision twenty-twenty is to be realized.

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