

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET): AN INSTRUMENT FOR WEALTH CREATION

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Abstract

The economic variability of any nation depends on the availability of trained manpower to transform her resources into wealth. Trained manpower means skilled manpower in various spheres of human endeavour. Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are workshop based programmes with over 1200 career potentials based on their eight service areas. They therefore hold promise in manpower development for rapid development as well as for entrepreneurial exploits. By these potentials, TVET are capable of creating wealth and alleviating poverty. They are therefore instruments for creating wealth and sustainable economic development of a nation. TVET had been cherished as the key to solution of economic anemia of nations especially the third world nations, including Nigeria. Training manpower in over 1200 Vocational-Technical careers for a nation's departments of human functioning meant a lift from the domain of poverty into the domain of wealth, created by economic and industrial machinery of TVET. To enhance TVET potentials for wealth creation, the governments should provide the quality facilities, equipment and tools to help TVET transform into its dreams and anticipations into realities. The governments should also formulate policies to safeguard their existence and facilitate their contributions towards wealth creation not only for Nigeria but also for humanity.

Key words: TVET, Wealth, Wealth creation, skills acquisition.

Introduction

Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are described as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of 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 [Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN)], (2013).

Olusanya (2005) described TVET as education designed to develop skills, abilities, understandings, attitudes, work habits and appreciations encompassing knowledge and information needed by workers to enter into

and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis. Olusanya viewed that acquiring technical skills through TVET would expose students to career awareness and opportunities available in the world of work. It would also enable the youths to have intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology as well as make them choose prudently the careers in which they are likely to excel.

Further, Akaninwor (2004) and Okwelle (2003) posited that the programmes which TVET offer are geared towards helping individuals acquire relevant knowledge, develop skills as well as appropriate attitudes in specific occupational areas which will enable

the individual enter and progress in the world of work. TVET do not only lead to employment, they also ensure that the income from working is reasonable (Okoro, 1993). Skills acquisition enhances productivity and sustains competitiveness in the global economy.

From the foregoing discourse, it is, therefore discernible to state that TVET had been established as a most effective means for society to develop its members' potentials to respond to changes, challenges and demands of the future. On the other hand, it can be stated that TVET hold the key for wealth creation.

The Concept of Wealth

Moneycatus (2014) defined wealth as the abundance of valuable resources or material possession. Basically, this means that someone is considered wealthy if he or she has a lot of things that others value. In economics, wealth is commonly applied to accounting as the net worth of a person, household or nation, that is, the value of assets owned and all liabilities owed at a point in time.

For national wealth, as measured in the national accounts, the net liabilities are those owed to the rest of the world (Wikipedia, 2014). Wikipedia further viewed money as a parameter for wealth and described the function of money as a universal instrument of quantitative measurement, for it measures all things, making things alike and comparable due to a social 'agreement' of acceptance. Wealth can also be defined comprehensively, as the stock of all assets, and of liabilities that can contribute to the well-being of an individual or group (Pender, Marre and Reeder, 2010). Poverty is viewed as a condition of having insufficient resources or income; lack of basic human needs such as adequate and nutritious food, clothing, housing, clean water and health services. Poverty is the opposite of wealth (Encarta, 2009).

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The potentials of TVET as instrument of Wealth Creation

TVET is a workshop based programme of education and training. It has eight service areas, namely, Agriculture, Business, Technical, Trade and Industrial, Home Economics, Health Occupations, Distributive and Computer Education – the 8th number of the family of TVET. A breakdown of the eight service areas yields over 100 occupations. Most of the occupations in TVET are multi block in nature (Fryklund, 1980), while very few others are single-block. A multi block occupation of industrial nature is made of divisions of work each of which is practically an occupation in itself. For example, Home Economics consists of Foods and Nutrition, Clothing and Textiles, Home Management, Family and Child Development, Sex Education, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Entrepreneurship Education, Population Studies and Research (Elias, 1980, Usoro, Usoro, Akpan and Otu, 2010).

Skills in the foregoing areas are crucial factors for wealth generation. One can imagine the amount of wealth generated by dealing in meat pie, 'moi-moi', yam chips, cakes, bread, doughnuts, buns, sausage rolls, 'akara' balls, chin-chin, potato chips, soya beans milk, knitting and weaving. Home Economics as a TVET programme has the potentials of empowering men and women to become economically self reliant and effective contributors to the economic growth of a nation (Uloko, 2010, Effiong, Nsa and Thompson, 2012, Victoria, 2014 and Wikipedia, 2009). Adesina (2014) opined that the next big investment frontier is unlocking Africa's vast agricultural potential to feed the continent and the world. Adesina who was the Agriculture Minister in Nigeria had within two years of his tenure turned agriculture away from being a development programme into business activity, generating wealth for millions of farmers in Nigeria (Premium Times, 2014).

Furthermore, the automobile technology is a multi block occupation. This involves the occupations of auto-electricity, auto mechanic's, auto body repair, spray painting, vulcanization, wheel alignment and engine

overhaul. Each division is an occupation in which training is provided for skills development needed for wealth creation (Crouse and Anglin, 1985 and Moeed, 2010). A single-block occupation has just one division.

Drafting is another multi block occupation. It has over 16 divisions which are career in themselves (Spencer, Dygdon and Novak, 2003). Animal production in Agriculture is multi block occupation with over 10 divisions. There are aspects of agriculture each having its divisions as occupations in themselves (Fryklund, (1980) in Bareja, 2011). Metal work technology is another multi block occupation consisting of art metal, forging, sheet metal fabrication, welding, machining and foundry work. Each of the foregoing has divisions in skills training is required. Skills acquired in all the identified occupational divisions are tools for wealth creation and economic reliance for self and nation (Usoro, Udoutin and Udofia, 2011, NBTE, 2011 and Peter, Abiodun and Jonathan, 2010).

Since almost all the occupations in the eight service areas of TVET are multi block, a breakdown of all the occupations contained therein yields over 1200 careers (Fryklund, 1980, Evans, 1977, Thompson, 197, Elias, 1980 and Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT), 1994). Skills training in more than 1200 careers can produce more than the required manpower (for paid employment and entrepreneurial exploits) for job as well as wealth creation. Here lies the hope and strength of TVET mission of wealth creation.

It is obvious that TVET has mission of wealth creation for the society. However, TVET's mission is not without challenges. These challenges are summarized as follows:

- The challenge of absence of identified and documented employable and technical skills for skills training in trade and other vocational institutions in Nigeria.
- The challenge of treating TVET as an alien. It should made part of the Nigerian culture, using the home as the primary basis.
- The challenge of according TVET, an inferior image is still there and thus blocks new entrants into this form of life-sustaining education. TVET is tired of lip-service from the authorities.
- Inadequate equipment of TVET workshops with modern machines, tools, ICT facilities.
- Entrusting the planning and equipment of TVET shops into the hands of personnel who have nothing to do with TVET has political connotations. Politicking with TVET is inimical to wealth creation which Nigeria is anticipating to achieve in her 2020 transformation agenda.

Usoro, Udoutin and Udofia (2011) also identified and explained the following challenges that are apt to plague TVET's mission of wealth creation:

Low Adult Literacy Rate As compared to Those of Industrialized or Newly Industrialized countries

The adult literacy rate (15 years plus) is 66.5% for Nigeria as compared to those of China (95%), Singapore (92.5% and even South Africa (86.5%). All these countries are ahead of Nigeria in their literacy rates (Susu, 2010).

The level of Government Sector Expenditure on Education

Nigeria's total expenditure on education is 0.6% of GDP compared to 43% for South Korea or 4.49% for Mexico, 4.8% and 5% for United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA) respectively (Susu, 2010).

Other problems hindering the contributions of TVET towards national development include, lack of integration of computer services into TVET related technical training, unsuitable curriculum, dearth of qualified teachers, large class sizes, lack of indigenous texts, weak dependence on locally produced training materials, lack of training equipment and inadequate teaching aids. TVET has suffered an offensive neglect to the detriment of national development and subsequent wealth creation. In Nigeria, technical degrees are regarded as inferior to regular academic degrees, but in the

industrialized nations, those TVET degrees are highly regarded.

The Electric Power Challenge

Nigeria with a population of about 160 million is experiencing inadequacy in power supply. The current supply of about 400 MW out of the 600 MW expected, is by far below what South Africa, USA and other industrialized nations are producing (Usoro, Usoro, Akpan and Out, 2010). This inadequacy in power supply has caused factories (sources of employment) to close down and hindered the operation of machines and equipment for skills training in jobs of interest to the nation.

The Challenge of unemployment among Nigerian Youth

About 80% of Nigeria's youth are unemployed and about 10% are underemployed due to improper education (Ayonmike, 2010). This is a challenge for TVET for job creation. To equip the Nigerian youth with skills in job areas for sustainable national development, TVET has the key but need mega bucks which governments are capable of providing. For TVET to realistically achieve its mission of wealth creation, the foregoing challenges must be aggressively reduced or controlled by the Nigerian governments and concerned stakeholders.

Conclusion

For any nation to be economically viable, the quality-level of skill training towards the acquisition of competence by its citizens will determine the success of the nation's economy. Skills provided by TVET are regarded by most countries as the pivot on which their development revolves because of the blessings or benefits stored in it, such as, empowerment, jobs and wealth creation and alleviation of poverty. TVET graduates have through sound general education as basis of TVET programmes acquired employable skills needed in a variety of occupations in the world of work. The foregoing discourse points at TVET as an instrument or tool for wealth creation and eradication of poverty.

1. Sequel to the foregoing discourse, the following recommendations were made:
2. Government should encourage TVET students by providing the required tools, equipment, materials and infrastructure for their training.
3. Commensurate incentives should be provided to motivate teachers to enhance productivity and retention in the profession.
4. Adequate allocation of funds is advocated for scholarship awards by governments for TVET students' training within Nigeria and abroad.
5. Computer services and other aspects of information and communication Technology (ICT) should be integrated in the eight TVET option.
6. TVET staff should be encouraged and financially aided to produce curriculum guide to facilitate students' skill acquisition in the various TVET careers. Dependence on foreign texts is expensive and can lead to abstract reasoning by students.

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