

**Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET): A Roadmap towards Industrializing Nigeria**

By

**Hassan N. Muhammad (Ph.D)**[hasmuh@gmail.com](mailto:hasmuh@gmail.com)

&amp;

**Baba, Mohammed Rabi**[rabiub@yahoo.com](mailto:rabiub@yahoo.com)**School of Technical Education,  
Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum Yobe State**

---

**Abstract**

*Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is cardinal to economic development of any country. Training in general has potential benefits which accrue to the individual, to an organization and to the country as a whole. TVET in Nigeria has suffered a setback due to low status accorded to it; emanating from problems relating to policy interpretations and implementation. The delivery of TVET has been characterized with disparity between the training offered and the labour market demand, low level quality training, acute monitoring and evaluation as well as inadequate funding. The paper looked into what may be the future of TVET in Nigeria if proper attention is not given to the sector. Finally, the paper concluded by stressing out the need for government to create an enabling environment that will promote the growth of enterprises which in return will stimulate the economy thereby increasing labour-market demand for TVET and further training opportunities will be created which can lighten the path for industrialization.*

---

**Introduction**

Technical vocational education and training (TVET) is a programme that lays emphasis on training for a specific career or trade. The training is related to both manual, practical professions and academic skills. The training is usually provided at high school level or at post-secondary trade schools for the purpose of preparing the trainees to take up either a paid job or establish their own businesses immediately after graduation.

(TVET) has emerged as one of the most effective human resource development strategies that any nation need to embrace in order to train and modernize their technical workforce for rapid industrialization and national development. TVET is now receiving attention from many African countries Nigeria inclusive after years of neglect. Since the beginning of the new millennium according to George, (2012) a fresh awareness of the critical role that TVET can play in economic growth and national development has dawned among policy makers in many African countries and within the international donor community. This has shown that the African government has shown increasing importance to TVET with respect to poverty reduction strategy and its orientation towards the world of work. Its curriculum therefore, is directed on skill acquisition, which is another important characteristics of TVET. George (2012) observed that it can be delivered at different levels of sophistication meaning that TVET can respond, not only to the needs of different types of industries, but also to the different training needs

of learners from different socio-economic and academic backgrounds and prepare them for gainful employment and sustainable livelihood. The 1997 UNESCO international standard classification of education defined TVET as education and training to acquire the practical skills, know-how and understanding necessary for employment in a particular occupation, trade or group of occupations. TVET therefore is not only about knowing how to do things but also understanding why things are done.

**The Development of TVE in Nigeria**

The education system of Nigeria had been influenced by the British system of education. This type of education neglects the cultural and vocational interest of the nation. The apprenticeship system was the earliest type of vocational education practiced in Nigeria and it provided employment for youth as they learnt how to use their hands in specific trade (vocation) (Uwaifo, 2009). The first attempt towards technical education was in 1901 when the colonial Government established Railway Training Institute, and the second was the establishment of survey school in 1908 both in Lagos as training schools for its own departments. Later in 1931 Yaba Higher College was established (Federal Ministry of Education (FME), 2003). The report of the advisory committee on technical education and industrial training of 1957 was another effort of government towards TVET in Nigeria in which it was charged with mandate to recommend the viable strategy that would modify and enhance the existing technical

schools at the regional areas of the country. The Ashby commission of 1968 recommends that technical institutions should be established to ensure sustainability of the country's economy in 1980's and beyond. Though these same recommendations had earlier been made by various committees and commissions including Skapski report of 1962, Dike commission of 1962 and the comparative technical seminar abroad (Paul 2007 in Hassan & Rabiou 2011). However, the question remains that have all these achieved the goal of TVE in Nigeria? The introduction of 6-3-3-4 system of education in 1981 was intended to popularize TVET in the country, particularly at Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) level as contained in the FGN (2004). However, this effort also has not yet produces the desired results. In 2009 the Federal government launched another educational system 9-3-4 system under the UBE programme, aimed at giving basic education to children aged 3 and 14 years (Bulus, 2010).

The current 9-3-4 system of education has the introductory technology subject taught at the JSS which has been renamed basic technology. If proper attention is not given the 9-3-4 may not work as well. TVET is said to have suffered enormous setback in Nigeria due to the low status accorded to it in general, part of the problem seems to emanate from the various interpretations of vocational and technical education, by policy makers as well as by the implementers of policies on vocational and technical education. During the colonial government, the policy on education encourages schools to teach agriculture and craft as part of vocational education, but the policy according to FME (2003) lacked popular appeal and had very limited outcomes. New policies are needed to clarify the importance role of technical and vocational education and training and to address the requirements in various sectors of society. The policy measures intended to expand and improve technical and vocational education and training in Nigeria have not been effective (Moja, 2000). As with many good policies, problems are experienced in the implementation process. The general problems of technical and vocational education in developing countries include: limited resources for expansion, exclusion of technical and vocational education from the main stream curriculum, lack of guidance services, inadequate training of vocational teachers, and the lack of teaching resources (Moja, 2000). In addition to the general problems, Nigeria faces additional challenges, which includes low public perceptions of technical and vocational education, though it is reducing gradually. There is the tendency of well-trained technical and vocational teachers to seek jobs in the private sector rather than the public sector due to higher salaries offered and the prestige attached to

such appointments. Thirdly, there is a significant mismatch between training and practice. The existing policy on technical and vocational education are said to be inadequate, and are not informed by experiences elsewhere, which might suggest strategies to produce both highly skilled professionals as well as technical assistants. The merger of TVE with science education units at the Federal Ministry of Education has impacted negatively on TVE due to lack of understanding of the peculiar funding needs for TVE and occasional diversion of funds from TVE to other sectors.

### **TVET Delivery System in Nigeria**

The environment in which TVET delivery system operates in Nigeria may be described under these headings:-

- Mismatch between training and labour market skill demand
- low quality training
- poor public perception
- Inadequate financing

#### **1. Mismatch between training and labour market skill demand**

Large number of graduates coming out from the formal school system are not employed despite the opportunity abound for skilled workers. There is argument that lack of inputs from prospective employers into the curriculum design and training delivery in institutions is partly responsible for the mismatch (Goerge, 2012). Another reason of high unemployment rate among graduates may be attributed to lack of proper implementation of the entrepreneurial aspects of the school curriculum.

#### **2. Low Quality Training**

Emphasis on theory and certificate rather than on skills acquisition and proficiency testing is what resulted to low quality of TVE graduates. Inadequate training of teachers, obsolete/absent of training equipment and sometimes lack of instructional materials in most of the institutions in the country are some of the factors that reduce the quality of training offered.

#### **3. Lack of proper Monitoring and Evaluation**

TVET programmes are mostly not designed to meet a projected labour market demands. The emphasis is always on helping unemployed to be employed without critically attempting to match training to available jobs. This has resulted according to George(2012) in many vocational school graduates not finding jobs or finding themselves in jobs which they have had no privacy training. Non-targeted skills dert is one of the major weaknesses of TVET system in

African countries. Training institutions also do not track the employment destination of their graduates. Consequently, valuable feedback from past trainees on the quality of the training they have received and the opportunity for their experience based inputs to be factored into the review of curriculum and training packages are lost.

#### 4. Inadequate funding

It must be recognized that TVET is expensive, and as popular saying goes; quality comes at a price. The capital expenditure on education in 1996-1998 as reported by the ministry was on the average less than 17% of its average level in 1980-1982. Education in Nigeria is underfunded, but more so is technical and vocational education. Effective funding is required in the sector as material and equipment are costly, experts in this field are expensive to produce and without them the nation can hardly forge ahead (FME, 2005).

#### The future of TVET in Nigeria

There is no skepticism about what tomorrow might bring about TVET in Nigeria. Therefore, it would be possible if we can develop a system that makes learning more interesting, involving and permanent to the students in the various aspect of our educational program. A system that:

- (i) Helps the trainee to capitalize his interest and abilities to the highest possible degree.
- (ii) Provide the training that he/she would meet after school.
- (iii) Provide to trainee the manipulative and thinking habits required in the occupation itself.
- (iv) Providing training on the actual job and in exercise or pseudo job.
- (v) Ensure that training is carried out to the extent that it gives the trainee a production ability with which he can secure development or hold employment.
- (vi) Making sure that training is given to those who need it, want it and can profit by it.
- (vii) Ensure that each member of the group has the opportunity to participate as a tutor and tutee.
- (viii) Helps to properly socialize the entire students and puts them on their toe (academically), so they cannot be ridiculed by their peer. (Uwaifo, 2009).

#### Way Forward

1. A high quality skills training requires appropriate training equipment and tools, adequate supply of training materials for practicals. Other

requirements may include relevant text books and training manuals.

2. There is need for well qualified teachers. A qualified technical teacher must have industrial experience. Since industry based teachers are hard to come by, because they are in high demand in the labour market, these category of people should be suitably motivated to offer part time instruction in TVE institutions.
3. It is true that technical education is expensive and quality comes at a price. There is no substitute for adequate funding when referring to delivering quality TVET. In this regard Government should enforce levies on employers of labour (enterprise) for the support of skills development. This has been practical in some African countries like Cote D'voire, Mali, South Africa and Tanzania. It is generally less than 2% of the enterprise payroll.
4. Competency based training should be enhanced. The concept of competency based training is not new in Nigeria. An apprenticeship system is a typical competency based, competency may be seen as the ability to perform a prescribed professional task under the coaching of a master. It is actually learning by doing and by coaching.
5. Feedback from past trainees on the quality of training they received and the opportunity for their experience-based inputs are to be co-opted into the review of the curricular for TVE institutions. In other words tracer studies should be used to improve the market responsibilities of training programmes.
6. Dual mode and training as described by Yakubu, (2007) in Abduhamid and Iliyasu (2008) is essential to improving the integration of young adult in the labour market. Dual training consist of training youth both in a school environment and in industrial setting. Dual training should indeed not be taught as one-way delivery system, i.e. from TVE institutions to enterprise, but also from enterprises, particularly in the informal sector, to TVE institutions.

#### Conclusion

The key to economic growth and industrialization is a skilled and well-trained workforce, the provision of which is one of the main objectives of technical education. Improvement of youth employment has been defined as one of the most important objectives of the Millennium Development Goals. Vocational training of youth before they take on jobs will not only help in engaging them in productive activities but, it will also offer a guarantee for their better future. Gaining vocational skills will make the youth employable and counter social vices such as drug addiction, trafficking, activities of warlords and terrorist groups,

migration and brain drain, gang involvement, theft etcetera which are consuming the youth because of their unemployment or under-employment. Therefore, increasing youth employment has great significance in terms of conflict prevention as well. Also, if an applicant has received vocational training before being hired, his employability will increase and moreover, he will not need to be trained by the employers which will save the time, money and in turn, the efficiency of the company

The promotion of technical and vocational education and training for industrialization demands policies and strategies that address the cross-cutting issues of quality and relevance of training, employability, collaboration between training institutions and employers, assessment, ensuring quality assurance of training programmes, funding, and instructor training. This calls for a TVET system that is competency-based and employment led, with proficiency testing of learners and trainees as proof of competence. TVET should also be seen and acknowledged by all stakeholders as a road to a well-

paid job or self-employment or higher education and not as an alternative educational opportunity fit only for early school leavers, the less academically endowed or the poor.

Finally, it is right to note that technical and vocational education and training by itself alone, does not lead to rapid industrialization, or provision of jobs or eradication of poverty, but good policies can do the two. Federal Government therefore, need to create an economic environment that promotes the growth of enterprises and generally stimulates the economy. When businesses develop and expand, additional labour-market demands for technical and vocational training emerge, new jobs and further training opportunities will be created to lighten the path of industrialization. For this to happen, the TVET system must however, be relevant to the labour-market need and to be of high quality. This is the challenge that Nigerian Government and training institutions must rise up to in order to develop Nigeria industrially.

## References

- Abdulhamid, A. & Iliyasu, A. Y. (2008). The Relevance of Technical Vocational Education as a Tool for Economic Empowerment. *Journal of Technology and Educational Research*, 1(2), 53-65.
- Bulus, I. (2010). *Teacher Technical Education: A Roadmap to Achieving Vision 20:2020*. A paper presented at a Convocation Lecture at Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Combined Convocation on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010.
- Federal Ministry of Education (2003). *Education Sector Status Report*. A Document of Federal Ministry of Education, Retrieved online, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://www.fme.org>
- Federal Ministry of Education (2005). *Nigeria Education Sector Diagnosis: A Condensed Version: A Framework for Re-engineering the Education Sector*. Retrieved online on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from <http://www.fme.org>
- Federal Government of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on Education* NERDC, Abuja
- George, A. (2012). *Technical and Vocational Education and Training for Industrialization*. Retrieved online from [www.arrforum.org/Afeti.doc](http://www.arrforum.org/Afeti.doc) on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012
- Hassan, N. M. & Rabi, B. M. (2011). *Technological Development and the Needs for Reforms in Technology Teacher Education in Nigeria*. A paper presented at Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) Zonal Conference held at Prof Jibril Aminu Auditorium, FCE Yola on 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> October.
- Moja, T. (2000). *Nigerian Educational Sector Analysis: An Analytical Synthesis of performance and Main Issues*. A Document Produced for the World Bank. Retrieved online from <http://www.fme.org> on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012.
- Uwaifo, V. O. (2009). Industrializing the Nigerian Society through Creative Skills Acquisition Vocational and Technical Education Programme. *International NGO Journal* 4(4) 142- 145. Retrieved online from <http://www.academicjournals.org/INGOJ>