

Review

Funding of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

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The study highlights the fact that the practical nature of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is such that it requires lots of money for effective running and maintenance. This fact raises a number of issues and challenges in this aspect of education. The huge equipment, the infrastructure housing the workshops, the specially 21st century oriented teachers and curricula for the new millennium are some of the issues in TVET while how to raise the huge monetary and human resources and the building of industries and factories for proper orientation of the students are some of the challenges facing nations in running TVET. Presently, Nigeria does not put enough money into education generally, compared with her neighbours. The corrupt attitude and practices of people in government and the failure to adequately fund the programme, has affected TVET and it has not solved the problems of unemployment, ignorance, poverty, numerous vices indulged in by the youth which TVET has solved in various countries of the world. The study adopts the primary and secondary approach. It posits that for Nigeria to join the league of nations to enjoy the dividends of TVET, it should review the present curricula to march 21st century technological aspirations and to plough substantial resources into the programme.

Keywords: Funding, Issues and Challenges, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, (TVET) Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The development of TVET in various nations of the world has lent way to rapid change in technological advancement of the 21st century. The programme is so relevant that it is an integral part of national development. It raises skilled workforce and self reliant youths that contribute to national development in both rural and urban centres. It is not surprising that the new industrial countries (Asian Tigers) have made giant strides in technology because of the pride of place and resources devoted to education and TVET in particular. South East Asian countries top the list on the ranking of 20-best educational systems globally. Japanese educational system has gone padagotronics. This is intense and extensive use of electronics in teaching –learning

processes. No wonder it ranked second (2nd) in the 2015 ranking of 20-best educational systems globally, next to South Korea. Japan enjoys the dividends of adequate funding of her system and it is a house-hold name all over the world. The UNESCO 2012 Third International TVET convention at Shanghai noted that if TVET is to reach its full potential for transforming the lives of individuals and promoting healthy economies and societies, the challenge of youth employability and skills and how to green TVET must be addressed in an integrated manner. The follow- up 2015 convention in Bonn, Germany highlighted Work-Base Learning (WBL) a key element for successful TVET, it ensures training is relevant. At these conventions various nations were

represented and these have carried TVET to their very remote villages eradicating poverty and cushioning unemployment.

Statement of the Problem

The study highlights the fact that TVET has not been given adequate attention as an essential aspect of 21st century education in Nigeria. Although the programme is clearly penned in the national policy on education to equip those who go through it with basic scientific knowledge, practical and applied skills in readiness for self reliance, self employment and employers of labour, yet it has not been allocated adequate fund and human and material resources necessary for efficient and effective running of the programme. TVET assumes central place in the educational aspirations for the 21st century globally. Many nations have already integrated TVET in their technological quest for education by providing conducive environment, human and material resources, for it. Providing adequate fund means that there is enough money for the purchase and installation of huge technological and technical equipment required, funding means that teachers are trained and re-trained to be current with new trends in TVET, it means that teachers are paid adequate salary as professionals in their field as when due, that there is money for infrastructure, that environment is student friendly and that they have classrooms well equipped for technological teaching –learning, it means that that government has put in place laboratories, work-shops, factories, and industries for student Industrial Training (IT) and for employment after graduation, it means that there is provisional assistance for those who want to be self employed for initial take off. Nigerian government has not put this kind of atmosphere in place. Even though knowledge of TVET equip graduates with basic practical and technological skills required for self reliance, for tackling poverty and unemployment and for societal development, the government has not deemed it necessary to fund education to salvage youths from frustration and involvement in vices as it is witnessed today. The Youth roam the streets and violence, kidnapping, armed robbery, rape, prostitution etc have characterized the life of many of them. Asian nations are in the forefront of global organised UNESCO conventions where new trends and the way forward in TVET are discussed. The participants from there cart away prizes for success in the effective implementation of programmes in TVET. Nigeria has not been mentioned in these conventions. Political thuggery and embezzlement of funds and corrupt practices of the worst kind abound. Ethnic politics and discrimination and mediocrity are the order of the day. Education especially TVET is not a priority for the ruling class. The study discusses some of

these nagging issues and challenges and the way forward.

Funding

The nonchalant attitude of Nigerian governments to funding of TVET dates back to the colonial days. At the pre-colonial era, TVET was entrenched in the African Traditional Education (ATE). It was transmitted non-formally through apprenticeship approach. Parents sponsored their children and functionalism was effectively built into societal life. At the colonial era TVET was not given the priority it deserved, it was not until the Phelps Stoke report that the colonial government attempted formal TVET. But the programme faced many challenges of which funding was primary. Colonial government did not prioritize TVET because of that Nigerians looked down on the programme and pursued university education in anticipation for white collar job and air conditioned offices. Education was fee-paying all through colonial era, so that many people could not benefit from schooling because they could not afford the fees. Thus TVET suffered and is still suffering serious neglect at the post independence era. Education in general suffered neglect because of inadequate funding, but that of TVET has been worse. The political class played ethnic and party politics and diverted funds to party and personal use. Corruption index among the ruling classes is a by-word in Nigeria. Corruption is the other name for the political rulers. Transparency International (2015) noted that Nigeria ranked 137th most corrupt country out of 175. The recent remarks of Nigeria as a most corrupt country by the British Prime Minister, Mr. David Cameron on May 12, 2016 according to the news on NTA and Channels point to the fact that monies meant for education are diverted into personal accounts and stacked away in foreign banks. The effects of inadequate funding are devastating.

Teachers and 21st century oriented Teachers

Teachers are poorly paid and owed arrears of salary such that teachers struggle to survive by seeking some other means to make ends meet. They embark on strike actions to press home their situation but nobody pays attention to their demands. They are not accorded the type of recognition and respect that are accorded to other professionals, medical doctors, lawyers, engineers etc. They are neither trained nor re-trained to acquaint them with latest trends in their area. The Asian teachers are consistently following and are participants in the UNESCO conventions on TVET that way they take note and incorporate into the programme the current trends and it is not surprising that their participant took the

UNESCO prizes for carrying vocational skills to their remote villages.(UNESCO 2012). The Nigerian TVET teachers do not enjoy the privileges their counterparts in New Industrial countries enjoy. Eye witness account to institutions visited revealed that many teachers have no office spaces and the available offices are not furnished and are dilapidated. There are no well equipped classrooms with gadgets. Pedagogy suffers. Teachers are pushed into the traditional approach of teaching in the 21st century and there is no paradigm shift. Teachers teach theoretically without students having the opportunity to acquire the practical experience that is necessary in the programme to make them self reliant. Students are thrown into the job market ill-prepared and so unemployable.

The 21st century society is a knowledge and technologically driven society, information, computer, digital, new media age and digital revolution age. The century has witnessed rapid development in technology. The developed and the New Industrial Countries (NICs) have made giant strides in technology, entrepreneurship and Information Communication Technology. (ICT). The South East Asian countries have the best educational systems by the 2015 ranking. Japan has gone padogotronics, excessive use of technology in teaching and learning. The secret of this success lies in their teachers. FRN (2014) noted that it is necessary to produce highly motivated, conscious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system. The South East Asian nations have ploughed much money in training, retraining, motivating and acquainting teachers with the latest trends in technology and TVET. The teachers spend long hours practicing what they would teach and demonstrate their teaching in classrooms furnished with technological gadgets. The Nigerian teacher is not yet prepared for 21st century teaching as demands by the new millennium. Corruption among the ruling class has eaten deep into the fibers of the society and education, especially TVET has suffered gross neglect.

Colonial Mentality

The colonial mentality and crave for university certificate has made many Nigerians look down on the graduates of TVET institutions. They are regarded as “inferior and non performers” and most parents would not have their children go through the programme. Employers of labour prefer university graduates and where graduates of TVET are employed their career prospect is bleak since they prefer to return to the University for degree. A onetime minister of state for education noted at a graduation ceremony of one of the Federal Polytechnics in 2006 that, the number of matriculating candidates was put at 19,111 compared to 806,089 candidates recorded for UME (www.schoolwebng.com/.../polytechnicfederal-

Poly). The Polytechnic Act of 1985, tagged the graduates as “middle level manpower” and the salary structure terminates at grade 14 while the structure terminates at 17 in the Nigerian civil (www.placing.org/new/printphp =175)

Equipment in TVET

Unlike programmes in Arts, TVET requires in addition to special classrooms with special gadgets, large equipment for the workshops and laboratories which are not only cost intensive but are expensive to maintain. Home Economics for instance has at least three distinct areas: laundry, cookery and sewing. Each of these areas, requires in addition to spacious buildings, machines and gadgets for effective programme learning and practical work. They require teachers who are professionally trained in the areas. Ekpenyong (2005) noted that a survey in Technical Business Education revealed that most of the facilities required for effective teaching of the subject were grossly inadequate. There were provided in a school only a typewriter to ten students. Out of two schools that had typewriters, only one had a typewriting teacher. None of the twenty four schools had short- hand teachers, at all. There is no adequate exposure of students to practical experience and so students are half-baked and incapacitated in the job market. Amoor (2009) noted that in the eyes of the public, TEVT is of low esteem, lacks dignity and recognition, and most parents do not encourage their children to read it. The core Technology cum engineering has suffered gross inadequate provision of equipment. The heavy equipment and gadgets that a 21st century TVET workshop and laboratories should have are conspicuously unavailable. The situation is worrisome and the society is paying very dearly for this neglect and insensitivity by the government. It is clear that the government does not care to fund the programme. It shows how committed the government is to a matter that is an emergency in other parts of the world. Although it is boldly written in the NPE (2014) that education is an instrument par excellence for development, yet it has not backed up this declaration with action. TVET languishes and the nation does not benefit from the difference the programme would have made in the youth if the programme had been funded.

Curricula for New Millennium

The only permanent thing in the world is change. People, nations and the world must learn to adapt to changing demands of time s and seasons. The 21st century emphasizes science, technology, ICT, it is the age of globalisation, knowledge economy etc . According to Trilling and Fadel (2009) the 21st century themes are surrounded by the three sets of skills most in demand in

the century: learning and innovation skills, information, media and technology skills, life and career skills. 21st century seeks to produce world class skilled workers who can do several things at same time through the spirit of the age-technology. The new millennium curricula are practical not just theory oriented. Nigerian curriculum needs an overhauling to march the spirit of the century and to be able to produce individuals who will practicalize what is being taught. There is still much of traditional approach to learning.

Challenges

It could be seen from the foregoing that the programme is bedeviled by many challenges. It is a very serious challenge ploughing into the programme the amount of resources (human, material) enough to make TVET what it ought to be. It is also a serious challenge putting into place the necessary equipment and gadgets requirements in the programme.

CONCLUSION

TVET languishes through neglect and inadequate funding in Nigeria. It not only has the potential for transforming lives but it is transforming lives of individuals and promoting healthy economies and societies, tackling the challenges of youth unemployment in various countries of the world. It is sad that despite its relevance this 21st century theme is so neglected and underfunded. Whatever input the government has made is grossly inadequate and so TVET cannot address the problems that it has addressed in many parts of South East Asia and developed countries. Nigerian government should arise to the situation.

RECOMMENDATION

The government and stakeholders should vitalize TVET through awareness campaigns of its importance in the 21st century and through provision of human and material resources. Effective supervision and inspection should be conducted to make sure that the practical aspect of the programme is in place.

There is need for Nigeria to link up and be part of the international conventions where current trends and initiatives in TEVET are discussed.

Policies should be effectively implemented not just in paper. The need for government to adequately fund TVET is most urgent and should be tackled so, stakeholders and NGOs should come to the rescue of TVET through financial assistance.

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