

## Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Programme for the Improvement of Individuals in Akwa Ibom State

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### **Abstract**

*Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is education for those who need it, those who want it and those who want to progress by it. Its objective is to provide people who can apply specific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man. The inadequate flow of finance to purchase teaching and learning materials for the training of students causes a major setback for the implementation of TVET programmes. TVET is an important tool for rapid economic development and survival of individuals in the state; hence, there is need for its review of curriculum content to meet the needs of the society. This is to ensure that its practical courses expose students to trainings that match the different theories learnt in the classroom. In essence, Technical and Vocational Education Training would contribute to the progress of individuals in the state both by reducing unemployment through creating employment in the fields of pre-vocational specialization and self-employment. Furthermore, seminar and workshops should be organized to enlighten the public about the importance of TVET programmes.*

**keywords:** Programme, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Individuals, Improvement

### **Introduction**

Technical Vocational Education and Training is a cardinal factor in any economic development of a country. Training in general has potential benefits which accrue to the individual, organization and the nation in general. To the individual, training enhances their future earning potentials, career progression and employability. The concepts of TVET, is associated with education for work or a kind of education purposely designed to equip learners with Occupational competencies needed to fill the yearning gap in manpower development for a sustainable economy (Ekpenyong, 2010). According to Fien, Rupert and Man-Gonp (2009)TVET is defined as the type of education that emphasizes the application of skills,

knowledge and attitude required for employment in a particular occupation or cluster of related occupations in any field of social and economic activity. Technical Vocational Education and Training is the education for those who need it, those who want it, and those who want to progress by it (Okoye, 2013).

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) defines vocational education as "that form of education which is obtainable at the technical colleges. This is equivalent to the senior secondary education but designed to prepare individuals to acquire practical skills, basic scientific knowledge and attitude required as craftsmen and technicians at sub-professional level. This implies that an individual who acquires those competencies and some psychomotor skills in TVET is already empowered to be self-reliant. Such individual has greater opportunities to earn a livelihood as well as contribute to national development. Technical Vocational Education and Training is designed to offer training to improve individual's general proficiency in relation to specific occupations. Thus, a sound practice of TVET seemed to be the secret behind the success of most of the developed nations of the world.

The provision of Vocational and Technical Schools has a long history as Nigerian Government always seeks solutions to these challenges. Ekpenyong (2008) discussed the 17th and 18th centuries as the period of industrial revolution "Realism and Rationalism" which was also marked in education. Great men of learning were beginning to exhibit broader views on life in a manner reminiscent of the age of Socrates and Aristotle. In other words, even though great emphasis was still being placed in liberal education, the need for vocational education was beginning to be felt. John Locke (1632-1704) in his curriculum for boys included writing and drawing which as Boyd and King (1975) suggested in Ekpenyong (2008), might have included shorthand, one or two manual skills which included gardening, woodwork and book keeping.

According to Dickkson (2010), vocational education became popular in the elementary schools in the United States after 1880 and developed into courses in industrial training, book keeping, stenography and allied commercial work in both public and private institutions. Some of the early private trade schools in the US include Cooper Union established in 1859 and Pratt Institute established in 1887. It is worthy of note that China, Malaysia, Thailand, Japan and Germany embraced TVET with every sense of commitment and in different grand styles that elevated their status to world class technological giants.

Unfortunately, the present state of TVET in Nigeria shows that the country is not taking TVET seriously. Regrettably, this neglect and high handedness about TVET has doused various articulated skills acquisition programmes of the government. According to Friedman, (1982) in Jubril (2008) technical and vocational education seems deficient in citizenship or leadership training but they could provide students the skills to become productive

entrepreneurs who can optimize creative and innovative ideas to promote the nation's economic pie and increase personal freedom. It is also remarkable that neglect of TVET is socially injurious as it robs the nation of the contribution's graduates would make to national development, Jubril (2008) concludes. It is therefore imperative to reposition TVET to turn out graduates with requisite competencies to fill the gap in manpower needs in order to arrest unemployment and its attendant poverty. The studies show that most graduates of technology and vocational institutions lack requisite skills and entrepreneurial acumen owing to inadequate resources in the schools as well as lack of commitment on the part of the students (Uya, 2014).

Okonjo-Iwuala (2013) opined that it has been well documented that Nigeria's higher institutions lack the tools to give students the skills employers' need and as a result the issue of youth unemployment appears to be shooting up the sky because most of the graduates' lack "employability" skills that are often acquired from vocational schools. This could still be the reason many of the so-called "expatriate engineers, who are being paid huge sum of money in dollars to build the roads and bridges in Nigeria are graduates of technical and vocational colleges, yet, most engineers and technologists of Nigerian Higher institutions are labelled unemployable (Okoye, 2014). Also, the unavailability of improved mechanism to help facilitate individual graduate to function well in the society acts as limitations to the setting up of structures for a successful TVET programmes in the country.

## Overview of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is the oldest form of education in the human race that has direct link with industrial activities, This is sequel to the fact that from the early beginning of human race, all the efforts of man to conquer the physical environment, the dangers and rigours of external world, boil down to manual skills and knowledge pertinent to specific tasks. These have been in one way or the other transmitted from one man to another and from generation to generations. It can therefore be concluded based on this premise that the history of TVET is the history of man's effort to learn to work (Essien and Usoro, 2011). The concern of TVET is learning to do through acquisition of skills on how to handle tools to accomplish specific task skillfully.

According to Usoro (2013), TVET has been education concerned with work especially in its traditional stage. Today its concern has extended to include man, man's vocational development and education about work and what work involves. Hence, the author made assumptions about the world of work in respect to TVET.

### These assumptions are:

TVET is economic education as it is geared toward national economic strength.

1. Education improvement leads to a better standard of living for the individual and this

in turn becomes a gain for society as a whole. TVET has therefore been thought as a wise business investment both for the individual and for the society.

The realization that investment in education contributes to national economic strength has led to a new look at interdependence of educational system and the occupational structure of the labour force.

2. The needs of individuals must be primary when determining the allocation of resources if TVET is to be consistent with democratic principles.
3. TVET can develop a marketable man by developing man's ability to perform skills that extend this ability as a tool of production. This assumption is regarded as the basic justification for TVET which has been linked with economic theory throughout human history. Thus, inventions and discoveries are continually creating new devices and processes. This in turn makes it necessary for their development and efficient use, new tools, new appliances, new operations and new methods to which both workers and leaders must continually adopt.  
TVET is education for production to serve the ends of the economic system and is said to have social utility.
4. The main emphasis of this assumption is on production and social utility of TVET. This is a narrow concept of TVET. It is more important to develop man as an individual who is important in himself and who can apply his unique talents to earn a living.  
The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) in realization of the relevance of TVET to the nation's economic strength outlined the goals of TVET as follows:
5. Provide trained manpower in areas such as, technology and business particularly;  
Provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agriculture, commercial and economic development;
6. Give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically (FRN, 2013).

The stated goals cannot be achieved by one single component of TVET, hence, the TVET family is made up of the following members: Agricultural Education, Business Education, Health Occupations, Distributive Education, Home Economics Education, Technical Education, Trade and Industrial Education and Computer Education. These fields of academic discipline have unique curricular designed to provide job-oriented programmes with the primary purpose of providing the learners with skills and knowledge for specific occupations in related areas.

## The Concept of Vocation Education

Vocational education is education and training for work. It is an education where skills are taught for the purpose of gaining employment through exposure to practical experience for self-actualization. Vocational education is education designed to prepare skill workers for industries, agriculture and commerce. Vocational education can be regarded as experience gained directly or indirectly that enables one to participate in a socially useful occupation either in or out of school, at various levels and to be sufficiently equipped to become an intelligent creator of goods and services. The continued deterioration of the national economy is a clear signal to every Nigerian for reliable and independent means of survival. This can only be realized through improved vocational training programmes with emphasis on functional agricultural education.

## Challenges of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

There are many challenges facing the effective implementation of Technical vocational education and training programme in the state. They are as follows:

**Poor funding:** Technical and vocational education training is very expensive as it is capital intensive. Even though all the tiers of government in Nigeria are interested in funding the course, such governments have approved lean resources to implement it. That is why there is inadequate flow of finance to purchase teaching and learning equipment, tools and materials right from the secondary level to that of the tertiary institution level. Practical courses that are meant to expose students to real practical training in order to match the theory learnt in the classrooms have become a mirage.

**Lack of economic self-reliance awareness:** Many youths and adults do not know that TVET is the only branch of education that can provide gainful and immediate employment to graduates, and that liberal arts education only makes graduates to be job seekers. This is due to erroneous belief that the course is offered to the never-do-well members of the society and it has negatively affected the interest of students in both secondary and tertiary schools towards TVET.

**Inadequate workshops/laboratories for training:** Laboratories/workshops, which house the tools, machines, and equipment for the training of students, are hardly available and the available ones are obsolete. This is why many technical and vocational education teachers resort to theoretical, teaching. Where few functioning equipment or machines are available, students are divided into groups. This system is not effective, as many students do not have access to such equipment for practice as much as they want.

**Parental Influence:** Some parents have cultivated an undue 'influence over their children or wards by counseling them on the type of course(s) to be taken due to their educational status.

**Power supply:** There is problem of power supply in virtually all 'parts of the country which make it impossible for small and medium scale businesses to function effectively.

**Policy and legislative inadequacies:** These have also contributed to the poor performance of TVET in Nigeria. Some policy provisions like amorphous merger of science and technology education; where science over-shadow most considerations disregarding occupational orientations of technical and vocational education subject area.

**Lack of appropriate trained personnel:** Untrained personnel and rigid curriculum requirement of TVET courses have had so much of a negative effect on TVET programmes. If these problems would be addressed, our economy will surely be revamped and the vision 20-20-20 will be a reality.

## **Importance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to Individuals in Akwa Ibom State**

In Nigeria people go to school with the belief that education will enable them participate in the society. From the look of things, full participation in Nigerian society requires Technical Vocational Education and Training at all levels of our educational system, which recognizes different skills and abilities and gives an equal opportunity to every individual to prepare for work. Therefore, the importance of Technical Vocational Education and Training to individuals in Akwa Ibom State cannot be over-emphasized. The important of TVET are enumerated as follows:

1. Technical Vocational Education and Training helps to solve the problems of unemployment and reduces the number of people who depend on government for job. When the youths and adults are trained vocationally or technically, it would enable them to be self-reliant in different areas such as electrical, plumbing, automobile, vulcanizing, computer engineering, GSM repairs, cloth weaving and so on.
2. Technical and vocational education training is always serving as a motivating force in individuals to work for the nation because it stimulates technological and industrial development through the production of competent and honest workers who are capable of utilizing the abundant natural and human resources available in a country for economy and industrial growth and development.
3. It helps to bring about rapid economic development and survival of individuals in the state. To continually meet the needs of the present generation means there must be

continued economic growth. The commitment of the Federal Government to place Nigeria amongst the 20 top economies in the world by the year 2020 can only be realized when the TVET programme among others is harnessed to empower individuals sustainably in the state.

4. Through technical and vocational education training, local technology can be developed by indigenous technicians and technologists. It should be emphasized here that every society has its own peculiar problems. Therefore, it will take the ingenuity of local artisans, craftsmen, technicians and technologists to design and fabricate tools, equipment and simple or complex machines to solve local problems. This eventually will save the nation billions of Naira or Dollars in foreign currency that would have been used in importing machines, most of which break down shortly on arrival in the country because they were not designed for our peculiar environment.
5. Technical Vocational Education and Training is not left out in agriculture. It is needed to direct those in the sector towards making the farmer an intelligent user of our natural resources.

## Strategies for Enhancing Development of TVET in the State

For TVET to move forward, the following strategies should be employed:

1. Review of curriculum: The content of technical and vocational education needs to be reviewed in order to meet the needs of the society. The review should also be in line with emerging technologies and global workforce demands.
2. Provision of well equipped workshops/laboratories: Properly equipped workshops/laboratories should be provided in all schools at all levels to ensure proper teaching and learning of technical/vocational subjects and skills acquisition.
3. Proper funding: Adequate budgetary provision should be made to the technical education sub-sector for adequate procurement of teaching and training facilities and provision of infrastructure for the success of the transformation agenda.
4. Provision of properly equipped libraries: A library is an indispensable storehouse of knowledge and an important facility in the school that enhances the teaching and learning process, therefore, the government should build and equip all libraries in Nigerian schools and colleges so that teachers and students have access to relevant up-to-date information.
5. Training and retraining of staff: Staff development programmes should be encouraged

in all technical and vocational institutions in the state. On-the-job training and retraining in the area of in-service training should be given to teachers, technologists, instructors and other supporting staff in order to improve their capacities for proper teaching and training of the youths for skills acquisition, for it is said that "a well trained trainer trains better".

6. Improved working conditions for staff: The remuneration of technical teacher in terms of salaries, wages and other conditions of service should be improved to attract and retain technical teachers, technologists, engineers, instructors and other staff. There should be adequate provision and installation of information communication technology (ICT) facilities in all technical and Vocational institutions in the state at all

## **The Benefit of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to Individual in Akwa Ibom State**

1. The economy becomes more productive, innovative and competitive through the existence of more skilled human potentials. Therefore, the benefits of TVET to individuals lie in its job-creation role in the economy, some of these benefits are:
2. Technical and vocational education prepares the individual to acquire skills for gainful employment.
3. It enables individuals to be self reliant through the setting up of small and medium scale enterprises (SMES)
4. It is a specialized education model for human resource development which is a pre-requisite for national industrial development.
5. It helps improve and maintain the standard of managerial and technical performance in industries and other organizations.
6. It acts as a platform for ensuring sustained supply of qualified manpower to meet future needs of organizations at all levels.
7. It propels employees to high standard of proficiency in their vocation.
8. It helps to raise the profitability and productivity of an enterprise through the effective use of highly trained manpower.

## **Educational Implication of Poor Implementation of TVET Programmes**

The development of individuals' knowledge, skills and desirable attitude for legitimate work through TVET may not be achieved if the policy guidelines of TVET as clearly stated by FRN (2014) are not properly implemented. These will lead to poor performance of TVET students in various examinations and in the world of work. Some of the educational implications caused by poor implementation of TVET programmes include:

1. The practical courses that are meant to expose students to trainings in order to match the theories learnt in the classroom have not been achieved due to poor funding. As



such, the materials needed for teaching and learning are not available for the training of these students.

2. Technical Vocational Education and Training graduates will be made job seekers but not job creators as a result of theoretical education. This then leads to the increase in unemployment rate and the number of individuals who depend on the government for job.
3. Technical Vocational Education and Training programmes if well implemented is a very important tool for country's rapid economic development and survival of individuals but this is not the case as a result of poor implementation of National policy on Education.
4. Inadequate workshops/laboratories for the training of skilled manpower to meet the needs of organizations at all levels become ineffective.
5. The academic standard and performance of the Technical and Vocational Education Training students becomes affected as the application of the brain and manipulation with the hands in order to give an individual the "best assurance in a creative activity" cannot be successfully achieved.

## Conclusion

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) would contribute to the progress of individuals in the State, both by reducing unemployment, through creating employment in the various fields occupation or clusters of occupations and self-employment. It can improve productivity and corresponding higher graduate earnings. Vocational education will lead to the establishment of a closer relationship between institution and industries in the state.

Technical Vocational Education and Training is also a form of education that promotes and encourages the dignity of labour and the related competences. This is why the clamour for the re-orientation of our educational system in Nigeria with skills, attitude and knowledge has been hinged upon TVET in order that the teaming youths and adults could achieve self-employment. Also emphasis is being placed on the development of occupational skills needed as preparation for work in order to earn a useful and lawful living through gainful employment. It also involves the application of the brain and manipulation with the hands in order to give an individual the "best assurance in a creative activity". It would create a kind of mechanism for meeting the various types of manpower needs in agricultural, business, technical, home economics, fine and applied arts, or clusters of occupational interests and capabilities. This will however lead to the development and improvement of individuals in Akwa Ibom State.

## Suggestions

For the success and survival of TVET as a viable tool to economic development the individual and the society, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Government should increase the budgetary allocation to TVET programmes. As it is known that government cannot do it alone, corporate organizations, parents and alumni associations should assist in providing some of the equipment needed in the training of

technical and vocational students.

2. Efforts should also be made by the government to see that there is full implementation of the policies that concern TVET programmes. The government should make this possible by promulgating laws or sanctioning each state that fails to adopt or implement the policy fully.
3. Government should encourage interested persons by giving scholarships to students and technical teachers for further studies in technical and vocational education training courses. Technical Teachers Training Programme (TTTP) should be revived.
4. Youths should be given the necessary vocational training by the various institutions involved; that will keep them busy in order to reduce crime and juvenile delinquency.
5. Enlightenment campaigns should be organized to enlighten the public about the importance of TVET programmes to individuals and the society.
6. The aim of TVET is to prepare persons for employment in different field of study like in agricultural education, fine and applied arts education, business education and vocational trades in soap making, hairdressing, computer training among others. Also emphasis should not be based on theories only but also on the practical aspect of it.

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