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DEARTH OF FACILITIES: A HINDRANCE TO WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract:
The bedrock of technological development in any country lies in the effective implementation of technical and vocational education programme. The desire to produce competent graduates of technical and vocational education can be achieved when the facilities in the workshops are relevant and adequate for the programmes as demanded by the curriculum. This study has shown that inadequate facilities have grave consequences on women participation in technical and vocational education. Nigerian cannot afford to be left out of the great benefits in technical and vocational education. It then becomes pertinent to provide the necessary equipment and facilities in the different institutions to attract women into the programme.

Keywords: facilities, women, technical and vocational education, competent

1. Introduction

Many nations and individuals are increasingly realizing that technological acquisition and development through technical and vocational education is a precursor to social, economic and industrial development of the country. Technical and Vocational Education is meant to prepare beneficiaries for employment in recognized occupation by inculcating skills, knowledge and attitude needed for utilizing the natural resources needed for economic development of the nation and for personal improvement.

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It is also education that provides training particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels. It provides the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial, economic development and gives training and impacts the necessary skills to individual who shall be self-reliant economically. Achievement of the above stated objectives would be to the extent of producing and ensuring high quality and quantity of human resources. Production of human resource invariably entails equipping the youth (both male and female) with employability skills in technology that will enable them live a functional and productive live.

The scenario in Nigeria has been more male seeking and acquiring technological skills than female. This no doubt spells doom for the technological development and emancipation of the country especially as over half the entire population are females. The census figure (2006) showed that females constitute more than 50 per cent of the total population therefore; they must be involved in all spheres or plans of the country's labor force including technical and vocational education. Egun & Tibi (2010) observed that, Nigeria educational system, especially technical and vocational education which have high potential to create jobs for the unemployed and solve most of the human problems, is yet to be embraced by majority of Nigerian women. Women and girls are very important in nation building. National development is achieved only when individuals (women and men) in any nation produce to the limit of their capabilities (Ogbuanya, 2008). Therefore, there can be no meaningful development in Nigeria if women are deprived of the opportunity to acquire technical and vocational education skills.

Literature review

The scenario in Nigeria has been more male seeking and acquiring technological skills than female. Egun & Tibi (2010) observed that, Nigeria educational system, especially technical and vocational education which have high potential to create jobs for the unemployed and solve most of the human problems, is yet to be embraced by majority of Nigerian women. According to Egun & Tibi (2010) women education is necessary. Women education is that which is geared towards developing women's abilities, attitudes, skills, knowledge and other forms of behavior. The proper use of educational facilities in teaching technical education will determine whether women will have equitable access to technical and vocational education. Asiyai (2012) indicated that training facilities can be used by educators to present a complete body of information in the teaching/learning process for a more effective instruction. The author also indicated that the resourceful teacher should therefore make use of mechanical representation of

the real things in the teaching to make such teaching more meaningful and understanding more permanent. Deem (2011) stated that women are taught to choose jobs that are easy to combine with motherhood, that is jobs which require little commitment and training. This problem could be solved by providing attractive learning environment in schools (Du & Kolmos, 2009).

Okwori (2004) noted that lack/insufficient teaching materials constitute a major impediment to success in technical and vocational education. He further stated that female pupils showed negative attitude to primary science and TVE because they were not exposed to a variety of relevant teaching materials like their male counterparts. Consequently, there was no motivation to pay attention as such as the males. As a result, the negative attitude towards science and technical and vocational education expressed by primary school female pupil is developed at their early ages, in addition to the misconception of the society about science and technical and vocational education and other technical related programs. According to Lasser & Fite (2011) pre-school institutions and early education provide the pre-schools with a stimulating environment, which enriches the child cognitive abilities and skills. The author also stated that the mental retardation or backwardness in later life arise also from lack of all source of sensory stimulation.

Bebbiaflai (2003) observed that there is a death of science/TVE materials and facilities in primary schools, which are aids to effective teaching and learning. Whereas in the educational prescriptions the preschool, child needs to be supplied with different types of material and facilities, which will encourage experimentation and discovery. Bebbiaflai (2003) also noted that schools need tools and equipment for successful teaching and learning, because TVE program in this country cannot stay with modern industrial demands. The practical work constitutes an important component of technical and vocational education. It is a reality that without workshop spaces, implementation of some laudable TVE programs would be very difficult. According to the author, a common problem that characterizes all pre-primary, secondary through higher education in Nigeria is the lack of learning material such as textbooks, laboratory, and classroom.

Ayeni & Adelabu (2012) agreed that educational facilities should create an environment in which physical sensory comfort determined by good lighting conditions, thermal comfort, acoustics, color harmony and good sanitary condition exist if teaching and learning is to be effective. He further stated that training facilities in Nigerian institutions have been described as a neglected aspect of the educational system. The poor condition of training in the higher institutions particularly the technical and vocational education has attracted attention and criticism from

educationist of recent time. Gloria (2011) observed that technology education at all levels in the Nigerian institutions are not properly organized and practiced because facilities and equipment are out dated or lacking.

2. Way ford in Achieving Women Participation in Technical and Vocational Education

Umunadi (2013) pointed out that adequate fund should be provided to bring the learning facilities and equipment in institutions of learning to standard. Raymond (2012) also noted that training facilities for effective teaching and learning should be sufficient in number, adequate in dimensions and physical layout to accommodate program activities. Physical facilities in technical and vocational education differ from those in other schools. Specific workshops and laboratories are usually required to stimulate those in the industries in which the grandaunts may eventually be employed (Bulama, 2001).

At the higher institution level, the facilities are normally planned to provide experiences and skills that are needed in the industries since the aim of TVE at all level is to prepare the learners for employment. Notwithstanding, there is no controversy among scholars, researchers, educational planner and administrators about the fact that training facilities are essential ingredients in the efforts to realize effective teaching and learning outcomes, especially on women. Okwori (2004) asserts that the quality of facilities has an impact not only on educational outcomes but on the well-being of students and teachers. Essentially, availability of adequate school buildings, classrooms, laboratories and other facilities is necessary for the accomplishment of any educational goals and objectives (Adeyemo, 2012).

Apart from the emphasis on buildings, laboratories, workshops and the like, Oladipo & Adetoro (2000) agreed that material such as textbooks, laboratory instruments, magazines, bulletin boards and alike go a long way in assisting teaching-learning process and invariably enhancing students learning achievement. Thus the need for the use of audio-visual aids like radio, television and video sets, projectors, computers and other modern electronic devices to enhance women achievement in technical and vocational education, cannot be overemphasized in this technological age.

The provision of trained labour force in applied science, technology and commerce is one of the aims of TVE, and this cannot be achieved without ample provision of workshop facilities (Onwegbunwa, 2005). Facilities can limit educational programs, but well planned facilities will not only enhance the day to day learning process but also pave way for women participation in technical and vocational

education. Technical and vocational education without facilities can only yield little or no success in its operation and if the nation wants to achieve the much desired objective as contained in the National Policy on Education (FME, 2004) as one of the major tools for realizing part of the national objectives, then, facilities of all kinds should be made available in workshops in various institution of learning. Availability of tools, machines, and materials promotes meaningful teaching of practical lessons, students always remember what they have learnt and it enhances active participation of men and women in the lesson especially when they are involved in the demonstration (Onwegbunwa, 2005).

The author also observed that provision of modern and adequate equipments should be a priority by federal and state government to be supplemented by industries and philanthropist. He noted that technical and vocational education is the basic ways by which men women can avail themselves of the opportunities for gainful employment. This cannot be realized with the present condition of facilities as found in institutions of learning particularly in technical and vocational education institutions.

Adesina (2001) stated that libraries have a vital role to play through the provision of various textbooks, manuals on machines to aid students in understanding the machines which they have to use. It is therefore not surprising to note that the inequality that exist in TVE is traceable to inadequate workshop facilities which denied students necessary exposure to materials which helped in supplementing classroom teaching (Okwori, 2004). New jobs and skills require technically competent personnel which Nigerian technical and vocational education institutions are expected to produce but they are not doing so due to lack of equipment.

Bulama (2001) lamented that "it is sad to note that at each level of educational system, there exist dilapidating or nonexistent infrastructure, poorly stocked libraries and equipment. There is therefore need to provide appropriate infrastructural facilities. The author also noted that teachers should also be encouraged to improve facilities too where possible, they should make use of simple homemade devices to stimulate and encourage confidence in the application of technology.

Technical and vocational education is capital intensive and government alone cannot effectively fund it. The financial resources should be mobilized from the federal, state and local governments, NGOs, the private sector and civil society, for both policy formulation and implementation to create enabling environment for vocational technical education that will attract women into the program.

3. Contribution of Technical and Vocational Education to National Development

There is no doubt that technical and vocational education is the bedrock of any national development. That is why today many countries have given it serious attention so as to maximize productivity and sustainable development. Unfortunately, Nigeria does not seem to give technical and vocational education the attention they deserve and this appears to be one of the reasons for rising unemployment and poverty most especially among women in the society. The transformation agenda of Federal Government of Nigeria which includes National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEED), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Vision 20 20 20 which has remained main concern of government policies in the drive to revitalize the nation's economy if it has to succeed any attempt to ignore the development of technical and vocational facilities may be the country's greatest disadvantage. The economic competitiveness of a country depends on the skills of its workers. This is has led to many nations placing emphasis on VTE for development of occupational skills needed as preparation for work in order to earn a useful and lawful living through gainful employment. The skills and competencies of the workforce in turn is dependent upon the quality of the country's education and training system (Mustapha & Greenan, 2002). There is need for re-orientation of our educational system in Nigeria with skills, attitude and knowledge that will be hinged upon VTE so that the teaming youth and adults could achieve self-employment. There is also need to take into account the increasing demand for women in the workforce, and as such, it would create a kind of mechanism for meeting the various types of manpower needs in agriculture, business, technical, home economics, fine and applied arts and a bunch or clusters of occupational interest and capabilities thereby reducing poverty among women.

With the rapid technological advancement which the world is now witnessing and the continuous transformation of the world economies through globalization, there is a great pressure than before in many countries to develop their technical and vocational education system to meet their developmental needs. As a result of rising unemployment, lack of skilled workers, high dropout rate, and the changing demographic nature of the workforce, this have placed the issue of workforce education high on the education reform agenda of many countries.

4. Implication for Women Participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Poverty Alleviation

It is generally accepted that women can contribute as much as men to socio-economic development. It is also beyond question that TVE plays vital role in achieving social and economic equality of women. Education of women is a strategy for establishing parity between men and women in adult social and political life (Bradley, 2000). Because household labour is typically uncompensated, participation in the work force is an important way for women to accrue resources that can shift the balance of power between men and women. When women are incorporated into technical and vocational education we are decreasing gender parity in the occupational structure (Bradley, 2000). Sakellariou (2006) states that, women in TVE earn more, have higher labour force participation, experience high employment roles and are associated with a narrow gender earning gap compared with women with general education.

Technical and vocational education is considered to be important especially for girls and women, in that, it is closely related to lower infant mortality and improved nutritional status (Sackey, 2005). This author asserts that education of girls and women enables them to have access to employment opportunities and put them in decision-making and encourage them to act as role models. Education of women exerts a positive impact on their participation in the labor market and results in reduction of child bearing (Sackey, 2005). When women are educated it enhances their human capital; they will be better equipped to participate in a more productive way in the work force. Sackey (2005) posits that, as more women are educated and acquire the skills, they will increase their employability in the formal labor market with favorable impact on their perceptions of ideal family size and fertility preference. Hilal (2012) noted that when young women are trained in technical and vocational education skill, they have labor market prospects. They enjoy economic benefit and wider well-being. It is widely acknowledged that the right of women to employment is a fundamental importance, acquiring TVE will provide them a chance to personal employment and self-esteem enhancement (Panitsidou et al., 2012). This author states that it enables a significant economic impact on women through exploitation of activity and productivity of all human resources, contribution to family and increase consumption of goods and services (Panitsidou et al., 2012).

When women acquire technical and vocational education it leads them to reduction in gender inequality, it narrows gender gaps in employment and skill levels, they contribute to increase in productivity and output of the economy (Walby & Britain, 2007). In the perspective, discrimination against women and labor market rigidities

associated with sex segregation of occupations and industries are to the detriment of the economy as whole. A decrease in gender inequality would be good for the economy as a whole (Walby & Britain, 2007). Walby & Britain (2007) opine that if women gain access to decent employment, they will be able to fund their own pension if not, in old age, many women will have to make recourse to public funds. There is general public interest in the achievement of equality. This would enable public funds to be spent in other ways (Walby & Britain, 2007).

With technical and vocational education training, women secure work with attractive salaries that can give them certain confidence and economic independence that may help them to withstand the gender discrimination that prevails in the society (Clark & Sekher, 2007). There is a strong concern that with globalization, those who are unskilled and poor are likely to be adversely affected. Educated women find in the high-tech sector not only is it an opportunity to improve their financial autonomy, but also a platform for greater mobility and larger social acceptance in the male dominated society (Clark & Sekher, 2007). Investing in human capital is one of the most productive strategies that is not only viewed from the economic point but also from the social one, and can have chain effect.

Technical and vocational education builds women human capital which is the core element that allows individuals to achieve financial and social goals (Sakellariou, 2006). Sakellariou (2006) also notes that social return for individual women are mostly psychological benefit with technical and vocational education contributing to their self-esteem, self-value and self-confidence as well as supporting personal activation. Acquiring technical and vocational education skills and competence can extend women professional opportunities at micro level. High labor market participation implies a low rate of unemployment and can have favorable consequence for national competitiveness and gross domestic product (GDP) growth.

Study has shown that one of the significant returns on technical and vocational education concerns the positive influence parents exert on their children. Sakellariou (2006) points out that parents who acquire technical and vocational education training tend to provide more stimulating environment and are more dedicated to learning activities than those who do not participate. This author also notes that technical and vocational education programs have been linked to a reduction in criminal activities. Wider non-material benefits such as social peace, democracy, tolerance, social capital, and social integration may also accrue. According to Sakellariou (2006) technical and vocational education in some countries, contribute to increased social stability even if the effect are not very significant.

An increase in women's earned income decreases her likely hood of being subject to crime of violence with the home. House poverty increases the likelihood of women being assaulted in the home by partner (Walby et al., 2004). Domestic violence is low in families that are more equal. Study shows that women who are more economically dependent on their husband (not employed or earning much less than their husband and with young children) suffer more domestic violence than marriages that are equal. Walby et al., (2004) attribute these consequences lead to reduced workplace performance, loss of promotion possibilities, loss of job, low production etc. Machin & Meghir (2004) reinforces the picture of strong association between the low wage labor market and crime. The author subscribes to the need to increase efforts to attract women into technical and vocational education is clearly evident. It is not only a valid way out of poverty; it can provide satisfaction and fulfillment for many women.

5. Conclusion

From the sources cited in this study, it can be concluded that the success of the TVE depends partly on the educational stakeholders lay emphasis on TVE facilities. From the foregoing also, one agrees that adequate facilities are highly needed for effective teaching and learning in schools. The author subscribe to the school of thought that it enhances and sustains quality education be it general education or technical and vocational education programmes. The author advocate that investment in TVE facilities must be accorded priority attention since no country can favourably compete in the emerging global market place with poorly skilled labour. Enough training facilities need to be provided to replace obsolete training equipment in this era of digitalization, in order to meet modern standard.

Nigeria's economic growth is dependent on the availability of skilled professionals who can contribute to economic prosperity and productivity. The prosperity of many developed countries is due to in part to the contribution of TVE and maintaining that quality of life is dependent upon the preparation of the next generation of women in acquiring TVE skill.

The problems that women face in acquiring a vocational education stem from traditions of a male-dominated society. The objective of female empowerment continues to be compromised by gender inequality. With the current economic state of the world coupled with the refugee crisis in many developing nations, the gender gap for technical training and employment for women needs to be bridged now more than ever. Nigerian women are still faced with under generational poverty which leads them

to all kinds of social vises mostly prostitution across the globe. These social vises could be addressed if TVE policies are implemented.

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