

## **ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES IN ZAMFARA STATE**



**ABUBAKAR, A.**

*Department of Adult and Non Formal Education,  
Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto  
abubakarabbas57@gmail.com*



### **ABSTRACT**

---

*Vocational training centres are consistently increasing within the urban and rural places to cater for the needs of adults with special needs living idle. Yet, this unhindered proliferation of the centres is not commensurate with the adult skills acquisition in overcoming unemployment in Nigeria. The paper applied survey method of research using 600 sampled out of 1,800 entire population of the trainees, from six local government areas (LGAs) in Zamfara west zone. Each LGA trained 300 persons with special needs. 600 questionnaires were purposively distributed to the apprentices. Although, 540 questionnaires were duly filled and returned. The paper found that Zamfara state Youths (persons with disabilities) lost proper direction in handling the materials (apparatus) given to them due to the lack of monitoring from the government. The results revealed that 408 (75.6%) of the apprentices (persons with special needs) embezzled and sold away the apparatus largesse to them after graduation from apprenticeship. From the result therefore, the paper concluded that the aim of government to create job opportunity is threatened by the ineptitude of the youths. It is therefore recommended that government at all levels should ensure effective monitoring mechanisms meant for transparency and the judicious use of the apparatus offered to the youth (persons with special needs) after graduation.*

**Keywords:** *Vocational training, persons with special needs, Adult education, apprenticeship.*

---

### **Introduction**

The Nigerian education philosophy is based on the integration of individual into a sound and effective citizen vis-à-vis the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences, both mental and physical, as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society. It is within this framework that vocational training in adult education centres becomes relevant.

The acquisition of skills and knowledge is essential to the development of autonomous and productive individual men and women. Therefore, adult education offers a second chance to youths who could not benefit from the formal school system, the opportunity to get useful knowledge and skills to improve their lots in the society, (Linder, 2010). The process of development and its socio- economic challenges have

modified the roles of youths in our society. These changing roles call for adequate preparation of adult youths through formal career education or through adult and non-formal education, (Chukwuma 2003).

Surely, the inclusion of adult education in the National Policy on Education (2013) has ushered in an outlook to the concept of skill training with the introduction of pre-adult subjects such as wood work, metal work, electronics machines, local crafts, home economics and business studies which are skill oriented.

Under the policy, the training for occupations at the junior and senior secondary schools is basically pre-adult in preparation for entry into adult skills programmes in future by both men and women based on interest, aptitudes etc. Also, women could acquire adult education at the Technical Colleges, Post-Secondary Institute and through adult and non-formal training and retraining programmes organized by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) at designated Adult Training Centres. In fact, government programmes such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) has amplified the demand by women for adult skills development which in turn has necessitated the expansion of existing adult training centres and the creation of new ones by public and National Directorate of Employment, (NDE, 2015).

The purpose of this paper is to expound the gap created between the vocational centres and the apprentices after their successful graduation. The presence of centres in their localities to the outside world is to bring out government and private efforts towards promoting self-reliance amongst adults (persons with special needs) in Zamfara State.

### **Background to the study:**

Vocational and technical education is viewed as that training which consists of the acquisition of knowledge, skills, competencies, structural activities, through formal, on-the-job or off-the job training which provides the trainee the opportunity of employment in different industries and the capability of being self-employed. Another definition provided by the Federal Republic of Nigeria NPE (2013) stated that in addition to general education, vocational education entails the study of sciences and technologies and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge of different occupations in diverse sectors of economic and social life.

Formal vocational education is made of learning geared towards skills acquisition in hand work for self-reliance there is therefore the need to provide opportunities for adult men and women to enable them contribute their quota effectively to their home and national progress and most importantly for self-development and self-reliance.

Non formal vocational training programmes have improved adults awareness and equally given them skills for self-reliance. According to Solesi, (2014) and Umamerge (2014), vocational education prepares youth for payment industries commerce and other enterprises by exposing them to experience that provide the

manipulative, cognitive and attitudinal skills that make them qualify for it, it also provide experience for adult who are already employed and whose skills have become obsolete and needed to update them.

Vocational education provides youths and adults with appropriate skills, abilities and competences, both mental and physical, as equipment for them to live in and contribute to the development of their society. The importance of vocational education in training centres cannot be over emphasized. Some of which include:

- To train youths and adults for various jobs and help them to acquire specialized skills.
- To help instill common sense and sense of responsibility in the grown up people.
- To help them in picking up modern methods of farming and other related traditional vocations.
- To help the people to be aware of the rights and duties towards the state.
- Majority of the youths and adults need a job to take responsibility of their family. Vocational education provides them with such a job.
- To reduce unemployment in the society.
- To teach them about technology so as to bring the desired learning.
- To also help reduce crimes in the society.

### **Concepts of Adult Education**

Adult education is an important aspect of the society that helps the people to be aware of the rights and duties towards the state. Apart from intellectual training, it also helps to install common sense in the grown up people. However, UNESCO viewed adult education as *“the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in school, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.”*

The Nigerian National Blue print on Mass literacy adult and non-formal education (2008) revised, enumerated four forms of adult education programmes in Nigeria, which include:

1. **Basic Literacy Programme:** According to Omolewa et al, (1982), is regarded as the acquisition of skills of reading, writing and computation. Basic education is regarded as traditional or conventional literacy, this approach includes identification of letters of the alphabets, recognition of words, and construction of sentence etc.

Basic literacy programmes in Nigeria includes the following: Women education, Girl-child education, Prison education, Functional education, Literacy by Radio, Basic literacy in Ajami/Arabic literacy.

**2. Post Literacy Programme:** The term post literacy applied to a stage of adult education into which illiterates enters in order to acquire literacy skills. Post literacy programme is a stage of follow up education for new literate in which he/she will be able to use the skills to study some subjects (Zakari and Abubakar).

Adult learners in this stage can begin to read books, new papers and start new studies. Post literacy programmes in Nigeria include the following: Primer based method, Post literacy for girl-child, Post literacy for out of school, Liberal education, Advanced literacy education (NMEC, 2008).

**3. Continuing education programme:** This programme provides educational opportunities for those youths and adults who have never had the privilege of any form of education. It can also provides further educational opportunity for different categories of completers and non completers (drop out) of the formal education system (Muhammad et al 2008).

Continuing education in Nigeria includes: Remedial education, Advance literacy education (NMEC, 2008).

**4. Vocational education programme:** This is another adult education programme in Nigeria, designed to fit individual for gainful employment in recognized occupation as semi-skilled workers or technicians or sub-professionals.

Vocational education programmes in Nigeria include the following: Candle making, Tailoring, Soap making, among others (NMEC, 2008).

### **Concept of Apprenticeship**

The term apprenticeship has been used to describe a model of on-the-job learning that results in acceptance in to a wide range of occupations including the profession, crafts and skilled trades. The traditional concept of apprenticeship involves four main elements- the apprentice as a learner, the idea of trade or craft knowledge as fixed and unproblematic, the master as a teacher and the idea that learning in workplaces is a form of context-bound understanding not conducive to transfer. (Pratt, 1992). Moreover, in both classic cognitive psychology and the anthropology of education, apprenticeship is portrayed as lacking an explicit theory of instruction and not dependent upon formal teaching (Scribner & Cole, 1971; Collins et al, 1989; Coy, 1989). By and large, apprenticeship is the process of teaching a trade to young practitioners. It comprises mostly of on-the-job training accompanied by some amount of the conventional reading and classroom study. Ideal duration of the training is 3-6. The origin of apprenticeship can be traced back to the middle ages when master

craftmen employed young people as what can be termed as assistants who worked as labours and in exchange provide them with food, lodging and formal training of the craft. At later period of the time the government stepped in to regulate and license vocational training institutes and made the process formal and legal.

Adult/Vocational Training Centres in Zamfara West Senatorial Districts

1. Staff Training Centre, Sabon-Garin NRC area, Gummi.
2. Youth Development and Skills Acquisition Centre, Bukuyum.
3. Women Education and Adult Education Centre, Gummi.
4. Youth Development and Skills Acquisition Centre, Maradun.
5. Skills Acquisition Centre, Talata-Mafara.
6. Youth Development and Skills Acquisition Centre, Anka.
7. Youth Development and Skills Acquisition Centre, Bakura.

### **Challenges of Vocational Training for Persons with Special Needs in Zamfara State**

The primary objective of vocational training centres is to equip the participation with various vocational skills and knowledge to enable them contribute more meaningfully to their family, community and national development, Teboho, (2000).

There is the need for nations to develop their citizens through the provision of desirable training that will make them attain self-reliance. One means to achieving this is through the provision of training in vocational education centres. Despite the opening of the centres in different parts of the state by the government for the purpose of achieving self-reliance among the youth, the centres are facing a lot of challenges as; one of the greatest challenges that stunt the development of vocational training is the traditional beliefs that place women at the home front which denies most women the access to educational opportunities that will empower them to perform their roles creditably as well as enable them engage in gainful employment for varying factors.

In Zamfara State for instance, a large number of the percentage of life living in cost of living and unemployment constitutes the population of women, (Radas 2013;28). In effect, the index by NBS in (2014) statistically rated the status of women found in Nigeria women status to be extremely poor with respect to health education, marriage, children and social participation. This has led to a renewed emphasis on women education in Nigeria over the years with increase in the area of vocational training.

In the era where gainful employment is a mirage the need to be self-employed and self-reliant become imperatives. There is need to provide an alternative means through which the individual can acquire skill, Gilbert A.J. (2002). By and large, adult education is aimed of helping the individual to achieve a degree of self-fulfillment happiness and meaning in life.

***Specifically, Vocational Education in Nigeria lacks the following:***

- a) Functional policies and strategies particularly in the area of socio-economic developments.
- b) Sansaliyu (1999), identified the existing gap between policy decisions and implementation and therefore stated that VTE policy must center around vocational technical education and should be flexible and adaptable to the needs of technological development in the country.
- c) Lack of adequate awareness of the importance of vocational technical education as a pivotal element in the education industry.
- d) Lack of training equipments, qualified trainers and funds to maintain the centre.
- e) Lack of Motivation in Encouraging continuity in vocational technical education and training.
- f) Lack and inadequate guidance and counseling system which will help to put students in proper career path.
- g) Inadequate and qualified trainers.
- h) Lack of ambitious and realistic goals to enhance Nigeria to be the most competitive and knowledge based economy by the year 2020. Lack and insufficient investment in quality vocational technical education system.

The survival of vocational technical education in Nigeria, training and learning must take place in a conducive environment equipped with all VTE required tools and equipment's. Peter and William (1999) advocated the gaining of experience from a good working environment. So as to build accurate representations of reality, create consensual meanings in social activities, experience remains very important. Experience gained in a good work environment should be regarded the best teacher.

**Research Objectives**

The paper is built on four (4) objectives formulated to investigate the effectiveness of the centres programmes on the use of the apparatus provided to the graduates at the end of the training. The objectives are:

1. To ascertain the extent to which the apprentices (persons with special needs) attend the vocational training session.
2. To know how skills acquired has improved the socio-economic status of the youths (persons with special needs).
3. To find out factors against the success of youths (persons with special needs) in vocational training centres.
4. To determine the status of apparatus issued to youth (persons with special needs) after the training.

### **Research Questions**

In order to carry out a successful research, four questions were formulated to guide the research. Therefore, the following questions were asked:

1. Has the apprentice (persons with special needs) been attending training regularly?
2. Do skills acquired during training improved the socio-economic status of the trainees?
3. What are factors impinging on the success of youth during training?
4. What is the status of apparatus largesse to youth after graduating from training?

### **Methodology**

The study is based on selected vocational training centres, purposive sampling was used to make a representation of the fourteen (14) Local Government centres in Zamfara State. Survey method was employed, using 600 sampled survey out of 1,800 entire population of trainees from the six local government areas (LGAs) in Zamfara west zone. Each LGA trained 300 persons. The researcher administered questionnaire on both adult (persons with special needs) men and women participants. A total of 600 questionnaires were used equally distributed. Five hundred and forty (540) questionnaires were duly filled and returned. Simple percentages and charts were used in the presentation and analysis of data collected.

### **Research Analysis of Data and Discussion of Results**

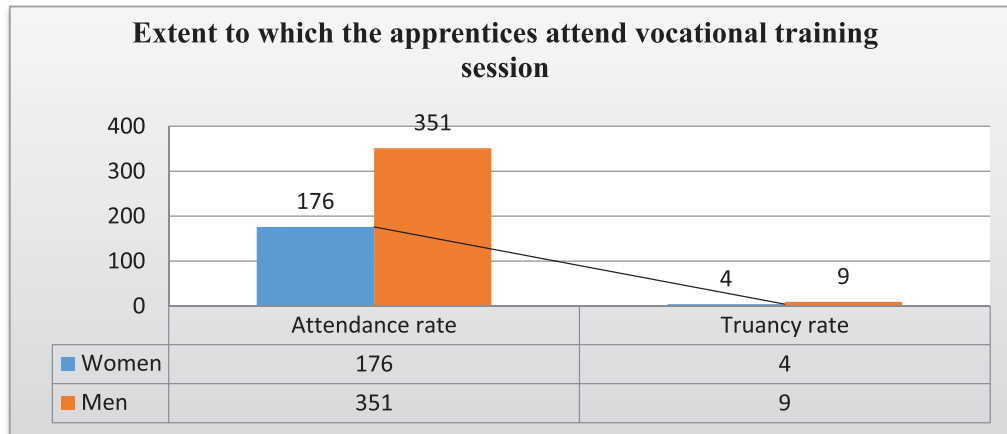
In order to simplify the work, this paper has divided research analysis and discussion of results in to four sections. Each section trying to answer one of the research questions raised.

#### **Research Question One:**

Has the apprentices (persons with special needs) been attending training regularly?

The above question is to find out the level of attendance among the apprentices during the training. The result of investigation has shown their level of attendance as presented in the chart below:

Chart 1



Source: 2019 Survey.

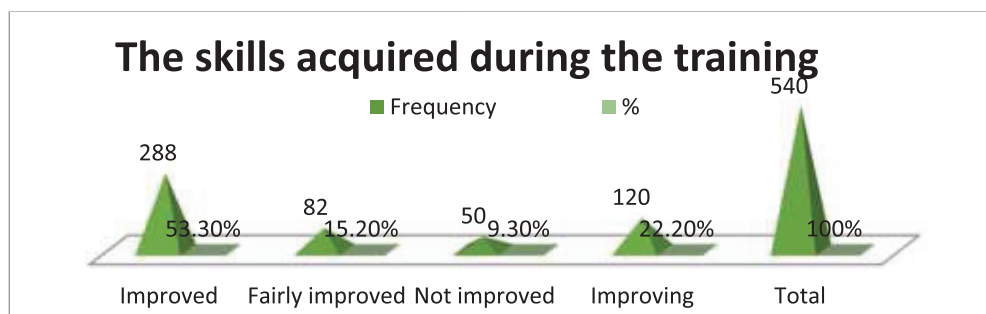
The chart 1 above shows the magnitude at which the participants attended the training amongst adult men and women during their training. This therefore implied that there was good turnout during the training sessions, even though male trainees out-numbered their female counterparts. Truancy rate was very minimal. This means that there is appreciable attendance which makes the training successful.

**Research Question Two:**

Do skills acquired during training improved the socio-economic status of the trainees?

The above question is to find out whether or not the skills acquired during training session have improved the socio-economics status of apprentices. The result of investigation is presented in the chart below:

Chart 2



Source: 2019 Survey.

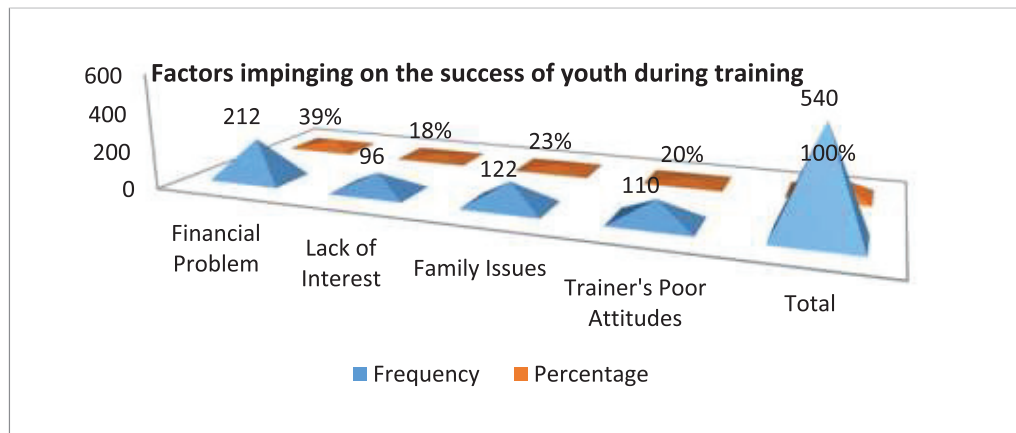


The above chart 2 indicated that the skills acquired during the training were quite improved with 288 (53.30%) for the trainees, as opposed to unimproved skills with 50 represented by only 9.30% for apprentices. In the same vain, the participants with improving skills at 22.20% (120) proved that they are positively responding to the training in terms of performance, which also paves way for their graduation at the end of the course duration.

**Research Question Three:**

What are factors impinging on the success of youth during training?  
 The fore mentioned research question is to find out factors striking on the success and achievement of youth during training. The result of investigation has shown some impinging factors on the success of youth as presented in the chart below:

**Chart 3:**



*Source: 2019 Survey.*

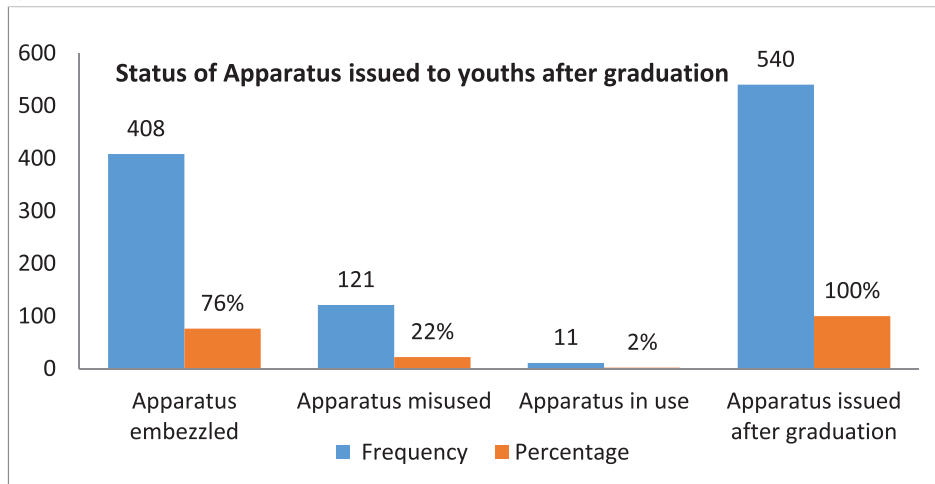
The chart 3 above indicated that the most impinged factor on the youth’s success is financial problem with (39%), followed by family issues with 122 represented by (23%). Also trainer’s poor attitudes towards trainees hault on the youth’s achievement during trining as presented in the above table with (20%), while the least factor that hinders youth success is lack of interst with 96 represented by (18%).

**Research Question Four:**

What is the status of apparatus largesse to youth after graduating from training?

The above research question is to find out the status of materials (apparatus) giving to youths after their graduation from training in vocational centres. The result of investigation is shown and presented in the chart below:

Chart 4:



**Source: 2019 Survey.**

The above chart 4 indicated that the apparatus issued to youths after graduation from training were embezzled with 408 (76%) for the trainees in contrary to misused apparatus with 121 (22%) for trainees. Also graduants with apparatus in used were 11 represented only by (2%) which indicated that there is hinderance on the government effort to reduce unemployment rate among the teeming youths.

### Conclusion

At this junction, the paper drew the following conclusions based on the contents of the findings:

The paper concluded that the aim of government to create job opportunity is threatened by the ineptitude of the youths (persons with special needs). The youths' unwise mismanagement and mishandling of the apparatus provided to them meant to alleviate their poverty become worrisome to end unemployment with ease in Nigeria.

There is no timeline to end unemployment when compared with provision of sustainable skills to the youths (persons with special needs) if allowed to continue to sellout their apparatus provided to them free of charge.

Similarly, the paper suggests the fact that Zamfara State government did not sustain the payment of allowances to persons with special needs after graduation. This

negates the sustainability of the training and programme on the side of persons with special needs; since the overwhelming factor impinging on the success and achievement of youth during training relate to financial problem.

### **Recommendation**

*The paper made the following recommendations:*

1. That the government at all levels should ensure effective monitoring mechanisms meant for judicious use of the apparatus offered to the youths (persons with special needs) after graduation.
2. The managers and government should further establish business centres (shops, canteen, joints etc) where the graduates of apprenticeship could be posted to in order to facilitate their businesses without hindrance. This will enable training managers keep track of items provided to the youth.
3. More women should be encouraged to participate in skills acquisitions learning/training centres without discrimination.
4. There should be regular and consistent inspection and supervision of the apparatus made available to the training and business centres.
5. That the government should introduce refresher courses for the trainers aimed at improving their competencies.
6. That the government should ensure proper implementation of policies attached to the skills training centres.
7. That the government should introduce and sustain payment of allowances to the apprentices (persons with special needs). As most of the factors hindering the success of vocational training in the centres relate to financial problem.
8. That government should provide enough funds for training materials.
9. That communities and well to do individuals should contribute by sponsoring youth (persons with special needs) in their areas for vocational training at the centres.

### **Reference**

- Chukwuemeka, E.A. & Salih, U. (2003). Advantages of computer based educational technologies for adult learners. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology – TOJET*.
- David, G. & Michael, Y. (1998). Apprenticeship as a conceptual basis for a social theory of Learning: *Journal of vocational education & training*.
- FGN(2013), revised edition: National Policy on Education, Lagos NERC.
- Gilbert, A.J. (2002). Problem and prospect of vocational education in Nigeria.
- Linder, G. V. (2010). Ten green business ideas for new entrepreneurs. Green for All CAP Green Business Content.
- Ogbonna, E.A. (2001). The impact of vocational centres in the attainment of self-reliance for women in Edo state.

- Radas, D. K. (1990). The factors affecting women's effective participation in adult education in Nigeria.
- Sansaliyu, (1999). Factors affecting the performance of participants in adult education programme in udu local government area of Delta state.
- Solesi, A. O. & Umamerge. (2014). An appraisal of skill acquisition centres in Nigeria. Research & Curriculum Development Department. Industrial Training Fund (ITF), Headquarters, Jos, Plateau State.
- Teboho, M. (2000). Nigeria education sector analysis: An analytical synthesis of performance and main issues. This Document was Produced for the World Bank in January 2000.
- Visiting Professor of Higher Education New York University Department of Administration, Leadership and Technology, New York, NY.
- UNESCO (2006). Definition resolution: Record of 33rd General Conference. Volume I.
- Zakari, L. (2015), Assessment of the contributions of Donor Agencies to the development of Adult and Non-formal education programmes in Sokoto state: Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Sokoto state, Nigeria.