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Gender Inequality Challenge in TVET in Achieving Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The world aims to achieve sustainable development in the year 2030, which cannot be achieved if the current trend on gender inequality persists. Technical vocational education and training (TVET) as lifelong learning requires equal involvement of both males and females in accelerating economic growth and development in Africa and beyond. The secondary data collected for this research shows less participation of women in TVET despite the current contributions that women have made in all walks of life. Education incentives like scholarships, best female students awards, etc. should be given to women to encourage them to learn TVET courses dominated by males. Encouraging women to acquire more skills and reducing the time they spend on house chores will contribute significantly to the development of Nigeria and Africa at large. *KEYWORDS: TVET, gender inequality, sustainable development,*

I. INTRODUCTION

Africa has been seen as one of the continents with great potentials in human and natural resources. However, being plough back by political instability, poor governance, and insufficient knowledge on technology has resulted in some Africans living below the poverty level. United Nations vision 2030 Agenda for sustainable development is to eradicate poverty and foster gender equality to see that women are better integrated, indivisible, and balanced in the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental.

Women form the greater percentage in African countries. Yet, they are not adequately integrated into the society in terms of human development in science and technology, which has resulted in the increase in poverty level in the continent. Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2030, among its challenges, is to end poverty between now and 2030, promote gender equality, and empower women and girls(OECD, 2016).

Even though women are not given equal treatment in our societies, they have contributed immensely to the development of our countries. They have engaged themselves in various menialjobs like crop cultivation, rearing of animals, processing of palm oil, processing of garri, etc. Women have spent a considerable time in doing unpaid house chores more than men in countries like: Malawi 8.7%; Ghana 15.5%, Lesotho 15.6%, South Africa 15.9%, United Republic of Tanzania 16.5%, Mauritius 19%, Mali 20.4%, Ethiopia22.1% as opposed to 1.3%, 4.6%, 6.2%, 3.8%, 6.7%, 4.4%, 4.8%, 2.5% and 8.7% respectively of their male counterparts in these countries. (United Nations Statistics Division, 2017). Ekong (2008) observed that women's willingness, enthusiasm, and ability to participate in nation-building actively are often conditioned by many factors, mostly social and educational. Some of these might have been exogenously imposed because of unequal access to opportunities. Thus this paper examines the need to inspire African women to participate in TVET programs which could help them build and develop the necessary skills required in participating actively in the affairs of their countries.

II. TVET AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 International Context of TVET

The term Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) could mean occupational education (OE), vocational education (VE), professional education (PE), career and technical education (CTE), further education and training (FET), technical and vocational education and training (TVET), vocational and technical education (VTE), training and further education

(TAFE) and vocational education and training (VET), and Apprenticeship Training (AT) (Wang, 2012). There are several definitions of TVET, which include: that aspect of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. TVET serves as an overarching term to describe all kinds of formal, non formal and informal training and learning provided by or in all different institutions, providers and learning locations (Rubagiza, 2010).

TVET is an all comprehensive education and training (lifelong learning) aimed at promoting responsible citizenship, environmentally sound development and social transformation. In the rapidly changing knowledge economy, TEVT empowers persons and increases their efficiency for proper adjustment, sustainable livelihoods, and socio-economic development. It involves initial and continuous education and training that enable individuals to update and acquire new competencies for professional career development or career mobility. The main target of any formal or informal TVET program (Remedial, Retraining, Upgrade, Pre-employment) is to lead participants to acquire the practical skills, know-how, and understanding, needed to enter and progress in a particular occupation, trade, or group of professions.

2.2 Sustainable Development Defined

Development can be a change like things that result in growth, while sustainability implies striking a balance between the change and nature or maintaining the difference indefinitely.UNESCO (2021)sees sustainable development from four inseparable angles; society, environment, culture, and economy. It further discusses sustainable development as that development that meets the present needs without compromising the needs of tomorrow. For this work, sustainable development shall be defined as a lifelong upward trend in the individual and collective condition of life in society while creating a chance for future opportunity and development in the future. This means that every aspect of human and environment are carried along in this change without any form of discrimination, through sufficient empowerment that can further the enabling environment for growth.

Sustainable development acknowledges that growth must be both inclusive and environmentally sound to reduce poverty, build shared prosperity for today's population, and continue to meet future generations' needs. It must be efficient with resources and carefully planned to deliver immediate and long-term benefits for people, the planet, and prosperity (World Bank Group, 2014). UNESCO has its mission on global education "to contribute to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development, and intercultural dialogue through education, sciences, culture, communication, and information." According to the Harvard Think Talk on the subject, global education is a specialized body of knowledge and practice aimed at fostering competency to understand and address the multifaceted global challenges and opportunities through intercultural awareness, knowledge, and perspective on global issues and multilingualism(Betsy,2014).

2.3 TVET and its Direct Relationship with Sustainable Development

TVET is described as the "Master Key" for poverty alleviation, job creation, promotion of peace, and conservation of the environment to promote sustainable development and improve the standard of human life (UNESCO, 2004). Skill development is considered the essential tool needed to foster economic growth, reduce poverty rate, create jobs, empower women and youth, and promote social inclusion. The main aim of TVET is to train people in skilled jobs in all discipline especial in applied science, engineering technology commerce and industry in order to promote and sustain the nation's economic activities for the rapid social and economic development. Some nations are regarded as developed nations because of their might in technology, sciences, and commerce. It is worthy to note that nations with advanced technologies tend to have a strong, vibrant and successful economy.

Former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, noted that TVET with its relevant practical training component holds the key for Nigeria to become technologically relevant and internationally competitive in the world market. He maintained that TVET is also the most effective means of empowering the citizenry to stimulate sustainable national development, enhance employment, improve the quality of life, reduce poverty, limit the incidence of social vices due to joblessness and promote a culture of peace, freedom and democracy (Federal Ministry of Education-FME, 2000). TVET is designed to provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly to craft, advance craft and technical levels, provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development and give training and impart the necessary skills to individual for self reliance economic growth. TVET will provide the students with basic life skills which enable them to become productive entrepreneurs, and it engenders creative and innovative ideas, increases economic growth , and self reliance. The majority of new job opportunities are increasingly found in productive employment or work in the informal economy rather than casual employment. Decent and productive employment might be the main pathway out of poverty, and the type of work that individuals can access is critical. Those with secondary education or TVET are expected to earn 80

percent and 100 percent more than people with no secondary education (Nigeria: Skill for Competitiveness and Employability, 2015 P1).

The role of TVET in sustainable development through training skills required to improve productivity, raise income levels, and improve access to employment opportunities cannot be overemphasized. Providing adequate training in technologies will create opportunities and ensure that these opportunities are maintained, thereby eliminating unemployment and social vices in the economy. Globalization process, technological change, and increased competition due to trade liberalization necessitate higher skills and productivity among workers in both modern sector firms and Micro and Small Enterprises (MSE). Skills development encompasses a broad range of core skills (entrepreneurial, communication, financial, and leadership) so that individuals are equipped for productive activities and employment opportunities (wage employment, self-employment, and income generation activities), and this is what TVET is all about(Nyerere, 2009). This set of skill development should allow equal opportunities for all genders to foster speed of economic growth.

III. GENERAL CONCEPTION OF INEQUALITY IN EDUCATION

Education can generally be described as the process of acquiring basic knowledge through training in some basic skills like reading and writing, craft etc. necessary for upkeep of man in carrying its daily activities. From the inception of education, inequality exists, where the female in a family is restricted from participating in certain learning activities because they are simply female.

From the history of Western education, women have been perceived as weaker than men. This idea prompted the Marxist to state that oppression of women through socialist inequalities and ownership of women by men will end only when a communist society has been established. This will free women from the economic functions presently undertaken by families and those economic functions will be taken over by the state(Peter & Dennis, 2002) . Plato later stated in his work, universal education for both genders is needed to produce good citizens. He further noted that physical training and horsemanship should be seen as appropriate for both genders. Plato later made some reservations about women, that they had an 'inherent weakness of the soul' and mischief-makers. He opined that men should become soldiers and females destined to become mothers and take domestic duties. Therefore, girls should learn arts and knowledge that would be useful in running a home. The early Christian educators hold a contradictory idea about female education. According to Kersey (1981), girls shouldn't play with the boys but rather engage themselves in learning skills and handicrafts. Vives, a humanist, on the other hand, advocated for education for women to make them suitable companions in marriage. Vives also believed in lifelong learning for both sexes. Mulcaster, as a practical schoolmaster, though, unlike other writers, drew attention to the need for appropriate training for girls who might not marry; Gardiner, as cited in (Peter & Dennis, 2002), states," If a young maiden is to be brought up with a view to marriage, obedience to authority and similar qualities must for the best kind of training, but if from necessity she has to learn how to earn her own living some technical training must prepare her for a definite calling."

Jean Jacques Rousseau in his classic book Emile (1762), as cited in (Peter & Dennis, 2002), draws attention to the need to cultivate women's reasoning and understanding and stated that women's whole education should be related to that of men. From the early days of schooling until this moment, the disparity in education has stunted the growth and development of society. Therefore, there is a great need for women to be trained in technical skills like their men counterparts to achieve maximum results in our countries.

3.1 Women Participation in TVET in Nigeria

UNESCO's Institute of Statistics (UIS)(2014) reports that of all regions, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of education exclusion. Over one-fifth of children between the ages of 6 and 11 are out of school, followed by one-third of youth between the ages of 12 and 14. According to UIS data, almost 60% of youth between 15 and 17 are not in school. Girls' education is a significant priority. Across the region, 9 million girls between the ages of 6 and 11 will never go to school at all, compared to 6 million boys, according to UIS data. Their disadvantage starts early: 23% of girls are out of primary school compared to 19% of boys. By the time they become adolescents, the exclusion rate for girls is 36% compared to 32% for boys(UNESCO, 2019). In Kenya, enrollment data shows that 5% out of 30% of women in Vocational institutions enroll in courses like engineering and construction, etc.

In comparison, the rest, 25%, enroll in courses like secretarial studies, nurses, etc.Chege & Karuki, (2014). Nearly one in every four women in sub-Saharan Africa is a Nigerian due to its sheer size in Africa (Uzoma, 2013). From the Statistical Data (2014/2015) of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) on the male and female enrollment in the Technical Colleges in Nigeria, 87% of males were enrolled during this academic year against 13% of females. In the colleges of Health and Sciences 2014/2015 academic year, female enrollment stood at 71% while male 29%. This explains how women are perceived in the country as bestowed with the responsibilities of taking care of the families rather than engaging in the technical aspect of learning, which will help them participate actively in the country's socio-economic activities (NBTE, 2017).

Technical and vocational programs account for 22% of upper secondary education enrollment and are disproportionately male. Globally, the share of females enrolled in upper secondary technical and vocational programs is 43%, with regional shares ranging from 32% in Central and Southern Asia to 50% in Latin America and the Caribbean. Female students in such programs are often predominantly enrolled in food and nutrition, cosmetology, and sewing. Gender norms, which often translate into segmented employment opportunities, determine to a large extent what education opportunities are open to boys and girls. In tertiary education, 111 young women are enrolled for every 100 young men. But there are vast differences between regions: Women in sub-Saharan Africa are far less likely to enrol than men (72 women for every 100 men), while the opposite is observed in Oceania (70 men for every 100 women) and in Latin America and the Caribbean (76 men for every 100 women). Despite being the majority of university graduates, women are under-represented in specific programs. Across more than 120 countries, the share of female students in tertiary engineering, manufacturing and construction programs, and information and communication technology (ICT) is just over 25%. Countries closer to parity include Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. The countries with the lowest shares in both types of programmes are largely in western Africa (Benin, Ghana, Mali) and western Europe (Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland). The choice of field of study are linked to future job aspirations. In countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 15-year-old boys are more than twice as likely as girls that age to expect to work as engineers, scientists, or architects. Only 0.4% of 15-year-old girls want to work as ICT professionals, compared with 5% of boys. In Finland, 6.2% of boys expect to work as engineers, scientists, or architects, four times higher than the percentage of girls with similar aspirations (1.4%). Women account for less than 20% of entrants to tertiary computer science programs in OECD countries and about 18% of engineering entrants, on average (OECD, 2017 in GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING **REPORT 2019GENDER REPORT).**

3.2 Female Teachers in TVET

Female teachers have formed the smaller unit in the TVET institutions both in the developed and developing world (Axmann et al., 2015). The data released on government staffing by gender in Bangladesh shows that 20% of the staff in TVET institutions are female, among which none of the female teachers has attained the position of a principal, vice-principal 1, chief instructor (Tech) 3 and chief instructor (Non-Tech) 2 female representative respectively (World Bank, 2017). In Malawi, out of 187 staff in seven technical colleges, only 17 are female, which represent 9% of the staff in technical colleges (Chimpololo, 2013).

Among the staff in Technical Colleges in Nigeria, 80% of the total staff were male while 20% of the staff were female. The teaching staff in colleges of agriculture and related discipline, the male teaching staff (73%) make up approximately three out of four of the teaching staff strength (NBTE, 2017). To further stress the point on gender disparity, UNESCO 2019 TVET Country Profile indicator shows that 16,561 (80%) male and 4062 (20%) of female are TVET staff. This has shown the overwhelming dominance of males in the technical colleges. While this is the case in Nigeria and some countries in Africa and Asia, but some countries like the Philippines, Malaysia, and Mongolia have witnessed higher enrollment rates of female students in secondary and higher education in TVET institutions (UNESCO 2015)

3.3. The Consequences of Women not Fully incorporated in Sustainable Development

In the world today, women constitute the greater population. Women's potential cannot be quantified, yet these treasures possess by women are still unlocked because they have not been given a level playground like their male counterparts to reach their potentials. Lack of level playground, particularly in TVET among men and females, has slowed the pace of national development in our countries today. "In many countries, TVET and employment programmes have been gaining increased attention from policy makers and other stakeholders. At the same time, women are becoming an increasingly important constituency in the economy, and their right to participate in education and training on an equal basis with men has become part of the internationally-endorsed Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)"(p.4) (Foster, 2011). Lack of female-friendly facilities, lack of awareness, social issues are among factors that militate against women involvement in TVET (Ayonmike 2014, World Bank, 2017). In our current society, which is driven by science and technology, lack of adequate knowledge by women in this area will automatically deprive the opportunity to get the needed skills. In 2018 women only held 27 percent of top managerial positions globally (UN Women, 2019).

A report from UN Women shows that women do 2.6 times the unpaid care and domestic work than men do. In Ethiopia, Mali, and Mauritius, women spend 22%, 20%, and 19% of their day on unpaid domestic and care work, respectively; men spend 8.7%, 2.5%, and 4.8% of their day respectively on this work.

As of September 2017, women hold just 23.7% of parliamentary seats globally, an increase of 10 percentage points compared to 2000 but still way below parity. This has demonstrated the gender gap in the African continent in terms of knowledge requisite to the promoting sustainable development in Africa.

In the words of Tanzania Prime Minister Julius Nyerere, " person does not work very far or very fast on one leg", thus Africa with over 50% of its population being the womenfolk, will not attain sustainable development without effective participation of the womenfolk. Without effectively integrating women in all facets of life, sustainable development goals cannot be achieved, and the continent will remain behind in global development. The issues of reduction infertility and child mortality, economic growth, expansion of educational opportunity, reduction in malnutrition, improved health, and healthy environment, among others, will remain elusive without equal opportunity to empower both women and men. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the consequent improvement of their political, social, economic, and health status are essential for achieving sustainable development (Osinachi A.O. et al., 2014).

3.4. Why Nigerian women must be Motivated to Participate in TVET

Naturally, African women are diligent and very committed in helping build their respective homes with a low level of income. In an African society setting, women form a major arm of the labour force and play vital roles in building their nation. Despite this powerful trait possess by these women yet they are given fewer opportunities like their male counterparts to participate actively in the affairs of the government. African women have channeled most of their effort in doing domestic works and petty trading, where they have contributed significantly in the development of these areas.

Women have contributed significantly to the development of African society. However, women have achieved success in all walks of life as; lawmakers, ministers, professors, medical doctors, pilots, soldiers, entrepreneurs etc. In 2017 Burundi and Rwanda had the greatest female prime working-age labour force participation in decent work and economic growth rates at 96% and 97%, respectively, as against the global labour force participation rate at 63 percent with the global gender pay gap at 23%. This represents just little of what we can get from our African women if fully integrated in the labour force in our continent.

Women's participation in Nigeria's labour force is low and hasn't evolved much over the past 20 years. In 2018, only 50% of all women in Nigeria participated in the labour force - a mere 3% increase since 1990. yet, recent shifts to a service-based economy and the prestige associated with women's entrepreneurship are opening up opportunities for Nigerian women to play a more active role in business.

Thus, a society with a strong gender stratification system that tends to neglect women is an endangered society. This means that development cannot be tied to a particular sex. No one sex is too important in the issue of development. By virtue of their natural potentials, influence, number, and indispensability in any functional society, women need sufficient formal education that equips them to face challenges posed by modernity and civilization (Ezegbe & Akubue, 2012).

Modernity and civilization have, in a way, increased the incidence of unemployment. Lack of employment opportunities has awakened new interest in promoting entrepreneurship as a possible source of job creation, empowerment, and economic dynamism in a rapidly globalizing world. The entrepreneur is a tenacious individual who has gathered enough ability to surmount difficulties created by the social milieu and combine or marshal such resources as initiative, risk-taking, know-how, organizational capacity, leadership and marketing skills to establish a profit-oriented enterprise. Small-scale enterprises propelled by entrepreneurs have played and will continue to play a critical role in sustainable development. The success of the business relies to a large extent on the relevant knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by the entrepreneur. TVET can be attested to be the type of education and training most needed by entrepreneurs. This skill development of women through TVET remains one key way to sustainable development; as it increases the economic power of women who would direct such power at boosting the welfare of their families and the society. If women could add the much value as they do, even with the present disparity in empowerment, then it could only be imagined the extent to which they will contribute to sustainable development of the society, when given equal empowerment opportunity as men.

3.5 Encouraging women to participate in TVET

In the recent past, under-developed and developing countries have shifted attention into their education system by turning to TVET as the alternative means of creating and fostering economic development. However, the objectives of TVET has not been achieved as expected owing to the fact that TVET has lacked the best enabling environment to succeed. For example, in the 2014-2015 academic session, academic enrollment in the polytechnics in Nigeria shows that 51% of the students are males while 41% are females. Furthermore, out of 40,000 students who graduated with a higher national diploma, around 60% of these were male. In the 149 courses assessed, the share of female graduates was particularly high in Pharmaceutical Technology (86.2%), Nutrition & Dietetics (79.4%), Hospital Management (74.5%), Food Technology (70.8%), Fashion Design & Clothing Technology (91.7%), and Science Laboratory Technology (Biology 83.3%) (Dutch Ministry of Affairs, 2019). The male continues to lead in the science and technology courses. This is also further illustrated in National Board for Technical Education of Nigeria Digest of Statistics(2019), where for example in Federal Polytechnic, Oko 2016/2017 academic session enrolment by program,in Computer Engineering Technology ,80 male students enrolled against 35 female students. This shows how people see and understand female educations.

As much as we are talking about gender inequality, the government should establish more TVET schools to accommodate the rising population of secondary school graduates to ensure that both genders have equal access to facilities in tertiary institutions.

Increasing access without quality and relevance to the labour market will waste precious efforts and resources. In as much as there is a need to improve access, quality must not be compromised. TVET theories stipulates that there should be a minimum requirement below which TVET should not be attempted. TVET learning environment and resources should, as much as possible, be a replica of what is obtainable in the real work environment and attractive/accommodating to females. TVET programs should be made to have a direct link and relevance to the labour market. This can be achieved by linking TVET institutions to industries through partnership. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2011) noted that market relevance plays a major role in determining the success or failure of skills programs, and employment prospects are crucial for encouraging successful participation in TVET. However, as long as such hopes are compromised by regional economic decline or gender divided restrictions imposed on women within the employment structure, the participation rates of women will remain low. Therefore, it could be rewarding to give awards or recognition or any other form of incentive to employers, who make provision for gender equality in their employment opportunities. This will boost women 's opportunities of becoming role models to inspire young females. The state governor's wives should establish women organizations in technology to serve as a platform to attract funds and provide adequate sensitization of benefits to females in TVET (Adelakun & Oviawe, 2015).

In order to encourage women to participate in those TVET programs dominated by males, education incentives should be given to women like scholarships, best female students awards, etc. Government and non governmental organizations should sponsor girls in various TVET career development programs where they are not financially buoyant enough to pay the fees. These incentives and initiatives will go a long way in inducing the woman to actively participate in such TVET programs.

The slogan that women are not good enough should be removed in the mindset of people, which makes the women see themselves as weak and subordinates in various leadership positions and in the acquisition of some technical and technological knowledge. Various women have achieved a tremendous success in the leadership like Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Liberia), Ngozi Okonjo Iweala (Nigeria), Gisele Rabeshala (Madagascar), Huda Shaarawi (Egypt), and Nana Yaa (Ghana) among others. Therefore, women should be reoriented and sensitized to believe in themselves. This requires serious campaign; possibly women have achieved greater height in management should save as role model to develop the mindset in getting involved into leadership and essential technical skill acquisitions.

More women should be employed and adequately trained in TVET institutions, particularly in technical fields, to boost the courage of the younger women who may wish to take up TVET academic studies. More so, to ensure its credibility for teaching and training women, the time is ripe for TVET institutes to define their missions and goals relating to gender equality and involve them in the continuous monitoring and evaluation processes. For a holistic approach to gender equality, everyone within TVET institutes has to identify with the subject of equality, with an immediate need for appropriate indicators, tools, and processes for internal monitoring and the frequent evaluation of progress in gender-related activities (UNESCO, 2011).

Idris & Rajuddin (2013) opined that lack of encouragement by government contributes to female enrollment in TVET. Women should be encouraged to participate in the Common Wealth Project called "She Trades" with funding from the Government of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, She Trades is the Commonwealth Project launched in April 2018 to enhance the international competitiveness of womenowned or led enterprises in Bangladesh, Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria. The project is supporting 3000 women to generate sales and investment worth £28 million (\$36.3 million) by 2020 (International Trade Centre ITC, 2019).

IV. CONCLUSION

For Nigeria to achieve a remarkable development as envisioned in the sustainability development goals in 2030 and increase in the creation of jobs, women should be encouraged to participate in the TVET skill development program. The time which women spend in doing house chores and petty business should be channeled into obtaining necessary skills in science and technology. Men should spend considerable time assisting their women in doing house chores and taking care of the children as this should be seen as a dual responsibility in a family. Young women should stop thinking that once they got married, their education careers end at home, as this has hampered their progression in educations as seen among women in Africa. Suppose African women are given encouragement to partake on those TVET which seems to be made for men. In that case, it will go a long way in creating a harmonious atmosphere thus encouraging younger ladies to love and cherish the TVET programme.

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