

SKILL ACQUISITION AS A PANACEA FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW

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Abstract

Poverty alleviation has been a serious issue of concern for governments at the national and state level, thereby making several efforts to alleviate or substantially reduce poverty through policies and programs over the years. However, still, the majority of Nigerians are struggling with a high level of illiteracy, out-of-school children, income unaffordability, maternal mortality, malaria, starvation, hunger, and malnutrition, and more than (70%) of the people lack decent housing and cannot afford to pay rent. Skills acquisition programs are the recent strategy adopted by governments to ameliorate the suffering of poor people by giving them the skill to cater to their development. This paper is an x-ray of different skills acquisition training programs and their impact on poverty alleviation using secondary sources of materials. It revealed that skills acquisition has created a new way of tackling poverty and changed people's economic status. It concluded that skills acquisition training program has helped to reduce unemployment, poverty, and crime in societies. Hence, it recommends that efforts be made to strengthen and uphold the continuity of skills acquisition training programs as it has proven to reduce poverty, unemployment, and crime.

Keywords: Acquisition, Alleviation, Poverty, Programs, Skill,

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Because of the devastating effects of poverty on both the people and the nation, there was ever uncompromising concern by both international and national governments over the years on efforts targeted at poverty alleviation by different countries. At the international level since September 2000, the first target of the M.D.G.s was to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Subsequently, when the goals were later expanded along the time frame from 2015-2030, the first goal of the S.D.G.s was also to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger in a sustainable manner, especially in developing countries (Babagana & Dazz, 2019). It is generally believed that social vices and other criminal activities result from poverty, unemployment, and inequality, which is why all nations strive to embark on programs and policies targeted at poverty alleviation over the years. It was similarly stated by Alesina and Perroti (1996) and Benhabib and Rustichini (1996) that increasing unequal access to income and social services in a nation is a cause for social unrest such as violence, crimes, threats to fundamental human rights, and many other social insecurities in a nation. It means that fair and equitable distribution of resources affects poverty negatively and causes peaceful coexistence in a nation.

Because of that, no successive government, whether military or civilian, has come and gone without launching one or other poverty alleviation program in Nigeria. For instance, for the past four decades in Nigeria, there have been programs and policies such as the Green

Revolution Program (G.R.P.), Operation Feed the Nation (O.F.N.), Better Life Program (B.L.F.), MAMSER, Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Poverty Alleviation Program (P.A.P.), 7-Point Agenda, Subsidy Reinvestment, and Empowerment Program (Sure P), YOUWIN, NPOWER, TRADER-MONEY, Government Empowerment, and Enterprise Program (GEEP), School Feeding Programs, Conditional Cash Transfer (C.C.T.), amongst others. Nevertheless, still, it was revealed in a study conducted by Babagana (2022) that because of the inability of the government to address the issue of poverty in Nigeria, the country was ranked 11th most likely to fall on the list of 148 countries in the failed state index of 2019. Again, recently there has been an ongoing regional effort by the governors of the northeastern states under the aegis of the northeast Governors forum to address issues of poverty and insecurity in the region. Since 2019, six governors of the northeast region from Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe states have been collaborating in a series of meeting from one state to the other. In their first meeting, they vowed to address poverty and insecurity issues in the region and are harnessing enormous resources to fight poverty and insecurity in the region because they believed that if poverty is addressed automatically, insecurity and other social vices will be addressed in the region. However, still, three years after their unrelenting efforts, the recent survey updated by the National Living Standards Survey of the N.B.S. (2021) indicates that the region has the highest number of poor people in Nigeria. Consequently, characterized by poor living conditions, lack of access to education, lack of access to health care services, a high number of out-of-school children, high rate of illiteracy, high rate of maternal mortality, denied access to commercial and agricultural activities, and generally more than (75%) of the people are poor.

In addition to the numerous efforts made to alleviate poverty, as mentioned earlier, state governments are making independent efforts at their disposal to alleviate poverty in their respective states. For instance, Borno, Sokoto, Taraba, kano, and other state governments have put in place several measures in terms of policies and programs apart from adopting the existing national and international programs. Such efforts include creating a ministry for poverty alleviation and youth empowerment and establishing Micro Finance Banks, where several loans, cash transfers, tricycles, knitting machines, sewing machines, training programs, and other materials were given to the people. However, the impact of these interventions has not been beneficial to the poor people in the respective states where illiteracy level and out-of-school children are increasing, income unaffordability is increasing, maternal mortality, malaria, starvation, hunger, and malnutrition are also increasing, and more than (70%) of the people lack decent housing and cannot afford to pay rent because the price has become exorbitantly high. A recent survey by N.B.S. (2020) for the state-by-state poverty profile of Nigeria indicates that most states are still struggling below the poverty line.

In contrast, Taraba and Sokoto states were ranked the highest in poverty. However, the data did not capture Borno state in the survey due mainly to the problem of insecurity bedeviling the state, making it impossible to survey the area. However, N.B.S. (2021) survey shows that as a result of the problem of insecurity, the situation of poverty in Borno state has continued to worsen. More than two- third of the population survives on less than one dollar a day, forcing

most poor people to beg on the street or knock on the doors from house to house. There arises the question of what is the best alternative for poverty alleviation in Nigeria by the policymakers and other concerned citizens. How can individual purchasing power be raised to achieve the nation's rapid individual and economic development? There emerged the shift of most policies and programs to target raising individual skills to make them self-reliant and cater to their individual needs through skill acquisition training programs or entrepreneurship development programs both at the national and state level. At the national level, efforts were made through the educational curriculum where institutions were mandated to teach technical and vocational skill acquisition programs to prepare the students with the knowledge of self-reliance right from post-primary schools to university education. In contrast, other policies targeted at empowering individual skills were strengthened, such as entrepreneurship programs, the establishment of skill acquisition centers across all the country's regions, and the empowerment of the national directorate of employment to train and equip individuals with vocational skills and packages for self-reliance and others. Because the general belief is that once individuals are given skills, they can utilize the skill acquired to earn a living and contribute meaningfully to their development and the nation. It can further be justified by conceiving Skill Acquisition encourages individuals to be drivers of their development using the skill acquired to ensure their income and, in turn, self-sufficiency (Daniju, 2007)".

While at the state level, most governments have shifted their priorities towards conceiving that skill acquisition so the best alternative for ensuring rapid socioeconomic development and [poverty reduction as such sectoral priorities for the establishment of skill acquisition centers were seen across states, encouraging entrepreneurship development, and giving hope to the poor people by training them to have the individual skill to cater for their development. The institutional arrangement of the skill acquisition training center was designed in such a way that people would be enrolled for a period of six to twelve months. They would be trained in tailoring, carpentry, computer training, welding, interlocking, bricklaying, electrical work, embroidery, and many other skills that will make them self-reliant so that they will be out of poverty and cater to their needs. Therefore, at the end of either six or twelve months, when the trainees have acquired the skill, they would graduate and be given some starter packs and cash to establish their businesses and earn their living. Currently, the recent approach adopted by the national government and most states is the best strategy for poverty alleviation that will guarantee individual and economic development of the nation. Once their skill is upheld, they can provide essential needs and basic social amenities that they can afford, such as better and improved nutrition, education affordability, shelter, clothing, minor healthcare, and many other necessities that will improve their livelihood.

Several studies have been conducted on the impact of skill acquisition training programs on poverty alleviation by different scholars in different case studies, such as Ikegwu (2014), Abbas (2013), Ogaboh, Agbah, Ocheni, and Nkpoyen (2014), Basse (2013), Liberty (2014), and Idris and Agbim (2015) just a few to mention. However, this paper adds to the body of existing literature on skills acquisition and poverty alleviation by reviewing the methodologies used, the findings, and the conclusions drawn from different studies in different case studies to find out the successes or the failures recorded in poverty alleviation through skills acquisition in

different case studies which will assist the current paper in drawing better and more beautiful recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and future researchers in the field of skills acquisition and poverty alleviation. Apart from this, the paper adds to the body of existing literature on skills acquisition and poverty alleviation by revealing the different implementation mechanisms used by different training programs across different case studies so that it will identify the implementation lag necessary for subsequent skills acquisition training programs. More so, it will clearly show the satisfaction level of beneficiaries due to the impact of acquiring skills and determine whether their poverty level is reduced. In addition, governments, non-governmental organizations, influential people, and community-based organizations with critical stakeholders in the area of development will find this paper very useful because it will summarize the various and available mechanisms for reducing or alleviating poverty through skills acquisition and the method to be followed to reduce poverty through skills acquisition training programs.

Therefore, this paper is divided into six parts: the introduction (which deals with a brief overview of the poverty profile, efforts made to alleviate or reduce poverty, the brief background of skills acquisition, and the contributions of the current paper to the body of existing literature). The methodology (which shows the methods used to collect and discuss the data, which were primarily on already conducted studies relevant to skill acquisition and poverty alleviation). The review of related literature (deals with the definition of poverty and skill acquisition by different authors and the review of perspectives of different scholars concerning poverty alleviation through skills acquisition, and the review of related studies conducted elsewhere in terms of title, author, methodology used, findings, and conclusions). Discussion of findings (deals with discussing the outcome of the literature reviewed). Then the conclusion and recommendations.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts the ex-post factor research design to collect data from relevant studies concerning skill acquisition and poverty alleviation of different case studies. Therefore, the main data source used in this paper was secondary materials from journals, articles, textbooks, conference papers, publications of statistics on the poverty profile from relevant agencies, and many other secondary materials, just a few to mention. Hence, literature was sourced from many sources, including digital sites such as; google scholar, research gate, science direct, academia, JSTOR, Taylor and Francis, Elsevier journals, springer journals, Interscience publications, and many others. The method used in the literature review was thematic review style which takes the viewpoint of authors from a relevant point of view, and themes and contents that are related to poverty alleviation and skills acquisition were made the basic component of the source of contributions of the studies reviewed from the different authors. Consequently, the case study method was used to gather in-depth and detailed information about the performance of different skills acquisition training programs and the success or failures they have obtained, which means that the technique for the selection of the studies was based on different regions and states to avoid the concentration of the style of skill acquisition training program on poverty alleviation in one state, region, or nation. However, it touches

different states and experiences from different nations. Furthermore, the method used in reviewing the studies was primarily concerned with the author, date, title, the methodology adopted, findings of the studies, conclusions, and the recommendations made by the different studies to enable the paper to grab the methodology used by different studies and to know whether skill acquisition has made a significant success or failure in poverty alleviation or not. Then the methods, findings, conclusions, and suggestions of the different studies reviewed were the basis for drawing the discussion of findings for this paper—explanatory research was used to explain what is obtained from the secondary data reviewed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Issues

Poverty

The World Bank (2017) defined poverty as the condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health services, shelter, education, and information. In this definition, information may refer to the deprivation of some fundamental rights and exclusion in participation in the decision-making process affecting them. Korankye (2014) sees poverty as a pronounced deprivation in well-being such that an individual does not have access to basic resources required for him/her and consists of several dimensions, including low income and the inability to process basic goods and services required for survival with self-esteem. It encompasses a lack of education, a poor state of health, access to clean water and sanitation, loss of physical security, lack of voice, insufficient capacity, and lack of opportunity to better one's life. Ahmed Muhammad (2019) states that defining poverty is a herculean task because of the elusiveness and the controversy surrounding the concept. It arises from the nature, magnitude, and causes of poverty that differ across regions and nations. Thus, it defines poverty as insufficient income to secure necessities such as food, potable water, clothing, and shelter. Despite the multifaceted nature of defining poverty, most scholars see the term along the income line and or include the element of income in the definition of poverty. It arose from the notion that income is easily associated with understanding poverty and encompasses economic and social implications.

That is why Adedapo and Demokun (2021) suggested conceptualizing poverty includes economic, human, political, sociocultural, and protective capabilities. Income drives economic, human, political, sociocultural, and protective capabilities, as mentioned above. Similarly, Ijaiya (2014) defines poverty as a lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods, hunger, malnutrition, ill health, and limited or lack of access to education and other basic services are the basic indicators defined poverty. In this definition, poverty is closely linked with a lack of income. Income affordability is closely associated with a meaningful life that can make one enjoy a healthy and comfortable life. Along the dimensions of income again, Aluko (2011) states that people are poverty-stricken when their incomes, even if adequate for survival, fall radically behind that of the community average. It is a situation where people might have the means of getting income, but the income earned cannot sufficiently cater to the daily expenses of the individual as was defined by the World Bank that

the minimum threshold for income that an individual will strive to survive in a daily expenditure should not be less than \$1.95 a day. In reality, however, coupled with the economic activities and uprising in the prices of commodities in the market and goods and services, the minimum threshold defined by the World Bank is still inadequate for an individual's daily expenditure. Meanwhile, Su fang et al. (2021) see poverty in two ways –continuous shortage of income or material resources and the chronic insufficiency of human capability. All of these scholars situate poverty as a lack of income, and all their views centered on affording income as the best way of getting out of poverty.

Nonetheless, some scholars are of the view that no matter your capability in terms of income affordability, you may also have poverty in one way or another other, either relatively or in other dimensions of human need, and this gives the ability to other people to conceptualize poverty beyond the income line and give it a more encompassing definition. For example, Idris (2015) agreed that poverty could be defined as a lack of income or material resources, as conceived by Su, Song, Ma, Nannan, Sultanalive, Ma, Xie, and Faha (2021). However, it goes beyond income and further defines poverty saying that poverty refers to a lack of physical necessities, assets, and income. It consists of the general condition of deprivation, which includes social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonality, powerlessness, and humiliation. Looking at this definition goes beyond the income line. It adds that an income-earning individual can also be considered poor, such as deprivation, powerlessness, humiliation, seasonable physical weakness, and isolation. While some scholars define poverty not directly concerning income, the contents or the elements contained in the definition will capture those things related directly to income-earning ability, i.e., the availability of those things can only be possible when there is enough income in one's possession or the process.

Skills Acquisition

Ikegwu (2014) defines Skill acquisition as the ability to learn a skill that can be intellectual such as learning to listen, speak, read and write or manually, such as learning to build or make something. This definition specifically relates skills acquisition to possessing only cognitive and intellectual skills without referring to physical, technical, entrepreneurial, or vocational skills. Furthermore, the possession of cognitive skills alone can impact a nation's development, especially in developing countries, if the cognitive skill acquired is linked to innovation, creativity, and source of gainful employment, especially among the teaming youths or the productive age. Meanwhile, King (2007) states that most donors who continue to be interested in the concept of skills acquisition are talking about something more than literacy and numeracy skills and certainly more than the term life skills. That is a strong sense that the capacities acquired through skills training or development are linked to livelihood. In this definition, one can notice that the acquisition of the skill alone does not impact the development of an individual or a nation but to transform the skill acquired to go beyond literacy and numeracy is what is required to have development. It can be achieved through the use of vocational or entrepreneurial skills to be imparted to the citizens to contribute meaningfully to solving the problem of poverty and unemployment. It can be seen from the definition of

Adedepo (2021) that Skill acquisition is the solution to improving the opportunities of youths who lack the resources, skills, or motivation to continue with higher education. It provides useful skills for youths' entry into the labor force and improves their chances of a successful professional carrier. In this case, the acquisition of skills, especially among the youths, can be said to be a driver of educational development and as well reducing poverty and unemployment because they can have what it takes to read, write, and also the source for their means of livelihood through the skills acquisition.

Similarly, A.D.F. (2005) states that Skill acquisition is vital for an economy to compete and grow, particularly in an era of economic integration and technological change. Skills are widespread in Nigeria. The modern wage sector and the Agricultural and informal sectors nationally demand them. However, defining skill acquisition can always be distinct from defining learning because it is the coming together of the memory and the sense organs that will make a person understand the skill and hence transform the skill acquired into innovation and creativity. That is why most concepts of skills acquisition revolve around defining the term learning instead of skills acquisition. In the distinction, learning refers to an organism storing something about its past in memory.

In contrast, Skill Acquisition refers to prolonged learning about particular events through many pairings of the learned stimuli. Then, a person can begin to develop knowledge representation of how to respond in a certain situation, which can be in the form of skill acquisition. For instance, Ridzwan (2015) defines Skills Acquisition as a form of learning that can be experiential, which allows one to have certain practices leading to a form of belonging to and being accepted as an apprenticeship training system and sets up a system that makes up a community of practice. Oladeji (2019) defined skills acquisition as a well-designed procedure of acquiring new ways and methods for carrying out specialized functions. In other words, it is the form of training by individuals or a group of individuals that can lead to the acquisition of knowledge for self-sustenance.

2.2 Empirical Review

This section looks at the review of similar studies conducted concerning skill acquisition and poverty alleviation in different case studies. The review was based on the author, title, date, methodology, findings, conclusions, and recommendations of each study review to determine the level of achievement or failures recorded on poverty alleviation using the mechanism of skills acquisition training programs across different environments. Ikegwu, Ajiboye, Aromolaran, Ayodeji, and Okorafor (2014) conducted a study titled "Human Empowerment through Skills Acquisition; issues, impacts, and consequences"- A non-parametric view, In Nigeria. The study identified the skills most learned by Nigerian youths. In achieving this, a cross-sectional institutional-based design study was carried out in the Yabba and Akoka environs. A total of 210 questionnaires were used in the study to the participants -graduates, undergraduates, and learned people. It was revealed in the study that Skills Acquisition has brought about societal empowerment by providing jobs and developing entrepreneurial ability, which in turn will ensure financial independence and assure a better standard of living. The study concluded that Skills Acquisition contributes significantly to society in terms of

reduction of joblessness, advancement of knowledge, technological development, reduction in crime, and poverty reduction. Furthermore, it recommended that the federal, state, and local government should join hands together in making available funds for trainees to be able to set themselves up after acquiring such skills as soap making, tailoring, hairdressing, mechanics, tie and die, information, and communication technology and catering business thereby creating the small and medium-scale industries that drive economics like china.

In a study by Liberty (2014) titled "Comparative Assessment of the impacts of small-scale loan and skills acquisition training schemes as poverty alleviation program in Borno state, Nigeria," The study assessed the impact of the Skill Acquisition Program in Borno state. The researcher employed survey research, and 350 respondents were sampled using a questionnaire as an instrument. The study revealed a significant correlation between the implementation of the Skills Acquisition Scheme and Poverty Reduction in Borno state. It concludes that; Skill Acquisition Training Scheme has tremendously created a new means of fighting poverty because it has changed people's economic status for the better by providing a source of employment to the people generally. It recommended that the Skills Acquisition Scheme, which has proved to be workable, should be enhanced in agriculture.

Meanwhile, Abbas (2013) conducted a study titled "A Critical Appraisal of Poverty Reduction Policies in Nigeria." A Case Study of National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) in Yobe state. Quantitative research was used, and 165 questionnaires were distributed to policymakers, coordinators, beneficiaries, and the general public. It was revealed in the study that programs and strategies currently adopted by NAPEP include micro credits, health care delivery, capacity building, and provision of basic infrastructure such as water, electricity, and rural roads, and training citizens for Skills Acquisition in the productive sector, among others. The study concluded that the general consideration of these policies indicates that the strategies were badly implemented and had no particular focus on the poor regarding design and implementation. Finally, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, should be given adequate support and cooperation to continue with the good efforts they make in their poverty reduction efforts.

Furthermore, Ogaboh, Agbah, Ocheni, and Nkpoyen (2014), in a study titled "Microfinance Credit Scheme and Poverty Reduction among Low-Income Workers in Nigeria." The study examined the Effect of microfinance credit schemes on poverty reduction among low-income workers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. A survey method was used to obtain data, and a structured questionnaire was administered to 540 respondents purposively selected from 9 local government areas of Akwa Ibom state. It was revealed that the microfinance credit scheme significantly relates to poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria. It concluded that helping low-income workers access credit facilities and promoting micro-enterprises would make them economically active to meet their basic needs and overcome the scourge of poverty. The study recommended that government should make policies that would encourage the continuity of the microfinance credit scheme in Nigeria. In another study conducted by Bassey (2013) titled "An Assessment of the Public Perception of Skill Acquisition Program as a Poverty Alleviation Strategy in Maiduguri Metropolis," the study assessed the impact of the Skill Acquisition

Program on the socioeconomic status of people living in Maiduguri Metropolis. A purposive sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 130 respondents who were given questionnaires. Further revealed that the skill acquisition strategy has impacted the socioeconomic status of the people of Maiduguri Metropolis and recommended that government adopt punitive measures and show its willingness and readiness to punish those sabotaging efforts in addressing the problems of poverty in Nigeria.

A related study by Roy (2018) titled "effects of poverty on education in India" examined how poverty affects children's education in India. The study uses secondary material sources and found out that unless we have a strong and universally available state welfare apparatus, the education of working-class children continues to be sacrificed and suggests that formulation of effective anti-poverty policies and a proper education system in India are recommended.

Again, Idris and Agbim (2015) conducted a similar study titled "microcredit as a strategy for poverty alleviation among women entrepreneurs in Nasarawa state, Nigeria. The study examines the extent to which microcredit operations alleviated poverty through the creation of self-employment, enhancement of education, training skills, and economic enforcement of women entrepreneurship in Nasarawa state, Nigeria. A survey design was used, and a questionnaire was issued to 343 respondents of registered women entrepreneurs in 13 L.G.As of Nasarawa state. The results showed that microcredit loan is positively related to the education, training, and skills acquisition of women entrepreneurs and concluded that women need microcredit to become or remain self-employed either by starting their own business or by expanding their existing business and recommended that more awareness on the relevance of microcredit to self-employment, education, training, and skill acquisition and economic empowerment should be created among women entrepreneurs.

More so, Noor, Isa, and Tanko (2017) conducted a study titled "influence of values on skills acquisition": the role of youth empowerment in Kano state, Nigeria. The study examined the influence of individual youth values using the Kano state economic and social empowerment scheme. It employs survey research, and questionnaires were given to the scheme beneficiaries across seven centers. It was revealed that inadequate funding and poor monitoring and supervision were some factors that hindered the scheme from achieving its objectives. Hence, it concluded that the politicization of the program has raised the anger of the youth and recommended that skills acquisition schemes should include the expansion of channels and a clear enrolment procedure into the scheme through collaboration with educational institutions.

Okeke and Aduma (2021) studied the impact of skills acquisition programs and women's poverty alleviation in Anambra state, Nigeria. The study examines the influence of skills acquisition programs on women's poverty alleviation in Anambra state, Nigeria, between 2010-2020. Three hundred eighty-six questionnaires were used in the study, and it was found that skills acquisition programs have significantly affected women's poverty alleviation in Anambra state. Concluded that skill acquisition programs have enabled illiterate women to acquire technical knowledge that has helped them face their future and hence recommended that awareness strategy should be intensified to capture more women for skills acquisition programs and make available funds for equipment to take-offs for easy take-off.

A similar study was conducted by Denis (2021) titled "Evolution of Agric business training skills acquisition program on poverty reduction among women in Cross River State. The study ascertains the extent to which Agric business training skills acquisition on poverty alleviation among women in Cross River State. A questionnaire was administered to 750 women respondents. The study revealed that the Agric business training skill acquisition program significantly influenced poverty reduction in Cross River State. They have concluded that the program significantly relates to poverty reduction among women and recommended that emphasis should be given to skills training as the mainstay of the Nigerian economy.

Urena (2012) conducted a similar study titled "Effect of the capacity building program of development agencies on the well-being of beneficiaries in Nigeria. The study focused on the Effect of development agencies' capacity-building programs on the well-being of beneficiaries in the Niger Delta. Data were collected using questionnaires from 271 randomly selected respondents across the Niger delta area and were analyzed using z-test statistics. It was revealed that most of the participants were applicants and unemployed. Those working received a mean income of 11,140.23 monthly, and their income increased to a maximum of 84,000. It concluded that skills acquisition was useful to the youths and recommended that donors of the program should ensure that the program is sustained by equipping more centers and making them available for training.

Meanwhile, Jackson, Eke, and Arele (2017) studied "Does skills acquisition improve rural household income level? Evidence from oil impacted communities of the Niger Delta. The study investigated if access to skills acquisition training improves household income levels in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It uses a mixed-method approach. Data was collected quantitatively using questionnaires and qualitatively participatory interviews, and F.G.D.s were applied to 610 households in the questionnaire and 72 persons for the F.G.D. The findings revealed that there is no significant relationship between participation in skills training and household income levels. It means that the household income level has remained the same between those who participated and who have not participated. The study concludes that participation in skills acquisition training does not improve household income because of the absence of a starter pack, short time durations, poor infrastructure realities, the non-intensive nature of the training, and the absence of a productive economy to absorb the beneficiaries. Hence, it recommended that skills directly related to the socioeconomic reality of the community be encouraged and ensure intensive training programs, starter packs, and other incentives be provided to the beneficiaries.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this paper can be categorized into three groups; the positive findings, i.e., those studies reviewed that showed that skills acquisition programs have significantly impacted poverty alleviation, and the negative findings, i.e., those that show that skill acquisition programs have not impacted poverty alleviation. In comparison, the other category is those studies that revealed some problems affecting skills acquisition training programs on the realization of their objective of poverty alleviation. Here ideas relating to the factors affecting

the skills acquisition programs presented by both the positive and negative factors can be documented as problems affecting the implementation of skills acquisition programs on poverty alleviation.

Findings obtained from some of the studies reviewed showed that skill acquisition programs have positively impacted poverty alleviation and brought about economic development. Such studies include Ikegwu et al. (2014) that skills acquisition brought self-empowerment by providing jobs and developing individuals' entrepreneurial abilities. Liberty (2014) states that skills acquisition has created a new way of tackling poverty and changed people's economic status, providing employment sources. Ogaboh et al. (2014) that the scheme has helped low-income workers access credit facilities and reduced their poverty. Bassey (2013) said skills acquisition positively impacted people's socioeconomic status. Idris and Agbim (2015) state that skills acquisition by women has helped them become self-employed and expand their businesses. While Okeke and Aduma (2021) said, skills acquisition significantly affected women's poverty alleviation. Meanwhile, (Denis) that Agric business training skill acquisition significantly influenced poverty alleviation among women. Similarly, Urena (2012) revealed an increase in the participant's income from 11,140.23 monthly to 84,000, especially the youths.

Meanwhile, some of the studies reviewed in this paper have shown that skill acquisition programs have not impacted poverty alleviation. Such studies include; Abbas (2013), who revealed that programs for poverty alleviation generally had been poorly implemented and lacked focus from the design and implementation and, therefore, had not impacted on poverty alleviation of the target beneficiaries. Roy (2018) found that education has failed because there are no effective anti-poverty policies like skills acquisition. While Noor, Isa, and Tanko (2017) revealed that skills acquisition had not impacted the poverty alleviation of the youths. Furthermore, Jackson, Eke, and Arele (2017) revealed that skills acquisition does not improve household income because the scheme is faced with many challenges.

However, scholars on both the positive and the negative viewpoints have converged and concur that many problems affect the skills acquisition programs in achieving their objectives of poverty alleviation. Some problems identified include a lack of a starter pack, short time durations, and poor infrastructure realities, the non-intensive nature of the training, and absence of a productive economy to absorb the beneficiaries. Others include poor funding, lack of monitoring and supervision, the politicization of the program lack of modern and sufficient equipment.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this paper was based on the findings obtained from the literature review.

First, this paper concludes that the skills acquisition training program has helped reduce unemployment and poverty in societies and brought about technological advancement and knowledge advancement (Ikegwu et al., 2014; Liberty, 2014; Bassey, 2013). Second, skills acquisition has helped women become self-employed, expand their businesses, and

significantly reduce women's poverty (Idris et al., 2015; Okeke et al., 2021). Third, the skills acquisition training program has significantly influenced agricultural development among women, and it has proven to be capable of being the mainstay of the Nigerian economy (Denis, 2021; Liberty, 2014).

Fourth, skills acquisition has increased the income level of participants, especially the youths, with a reasonable increase of (88%) and consequently reduced their level of poverty (Urena, 2012; Ogaboh et al., 2014). Fifth, skills acquisition schemes are underfunded, lack monitoring and supervision, and the program was politicized in enrolment, needed modest equipment, and lacked proper design to achieve their objectives (Bassey, 2013; Urena, 2012; Noor Isa, and Tanko, 2017; Abbas, 2013). Seventh, skills acquisition schemes have suffered from insufficient starter packs for beneficiaries after training, poor infrastructural facilities, and short duration (Jackson et al., 2017; Okeke & Aduma, 2021; Ikegwu et al., 2021; Roy, 2018).

Recommendations

The recommendations of this paper were based on the conclusions drawn from the findings.

- i. Government and Non-governmental organizations Civil Society Organizations should strengthen and uphold the continuity of skills acquisition training program as it has proven to reduce poverty, unemployment, crime, and joblessness in societies. It can be done by giving more priority to the program and ensuring that the program is sustained for a lifetime program.
- ii. Women and youths should be given priority, and more awareness campaigns should be made for them so that they can fully participate in the program, as it has proven to reduce poverty significantly among beneficiaries and expand their businesses.
- iii. Emphasis should be given to agriculture-related training programs, especially among the youth and women, because it has proven to be the mainstay of the economy.
- iv. More sensitization and lecture need to be given to the beneficiaries after their training to utilize the income earned from the skill acquired meaningfully in personal development, which will also help in nation-building to avoid a situation where the youths will use their earnings unnecessarily without any tangible outcome.
- v. Skills acquisition training programs should be properly funded, monitored, supervised, and void of political sentiments and interference. It can be done by giving the training centers adequate running costs to take care of their routine expenditures monthly, assigning supervising officers, and designing a reporting format for the administration that will be strictly followed. Again, there should be no political or personal interest in the enrolment of the trainees and the running of the programs, i.e., to allow bureaucracy to take its course to ensure the sustainability and consistency of the programs.
- vi. Again, the training programs should be properly equipped with sufficient modern equipment to enable the trainees to have sufficient knowledge of the skill acquired to be of recent technology that is marketable after the training.

- vii. There is a need to cooperate and support the N.G.O.s and C.S.O.s in the fight against poverty because it has proven they have made the life of the people better and improved their standard of living. It can be done by giving them enabling security cover, identifying those in need, and providing enabling environment to do their work.
- viii. Most importantly, the beneficiaries of the training program are supposed to be given startup capital to establish their business after the training. The training period needs to be adjusted from 6 months to 1 year to enable the trainees to learn the skills effectively.
- ix. There is also a need to upgrade the existing infrastructural facilities of the training programs to accommodate modern facilities and a high number of beneficiaries.
- x. Finally, there is a need for the government to shift its policies towards making effective skills acquisition training programs that will ensure continuity and the program's sustainability.
- xi. Should these recommendations be adequately taken care of, will poverty be alleviated using skills acquisition training programs?

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