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The Status of Visual Art Apprenticeship Training in Ghana

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Abstract
This study examines the traditional apprenticeship of the visual art vocations in the wake of several attempts at formalizing apprenticeship in Ghana. The descriptive survey design was employed with questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection complemented with published literature. With the use of survey questionnaire and published literature this study took on the combined qualitative and quantitative approach of research. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample 270 master crafts-persons and 300 apprentices respectively across the major crafts production centres. The study revealed that traditional apprenticeship with reference to visual arts vocations is still characterized by significant weaknesses and challenges in terms of relevance and quality of training. In spite of the weaknesses, the traditional apprenticeship provides greater opportunities and exposure to many youth in the area of entrepreneurial skills and self- employment. It was also revealed that greater number of both apprentices and master craftspersons have good educational background, a development likely to raise the status of apprenticeship and a requirement for the upgrade of the training content. The study recommends a comprehensive review of policy, legislative and regulatory framework for apprenticeship with the view of making it workable, and COTVET should be assisted and supported to deliver on its mandate. It is also recommended that the content of the training programme should be strengthened by incorporating essential topics missing in the visual arts apprenticeship programme.
Keywords: apprentice, master craftsperson, traditional apprenticeship, visual arts, training

1. Introduction

Apprenticeship existed long before the introduction of formal education in Ghana. It was known to be the only mode of training for skills development especially in the traditional crafts. The traditional (unregulated) apprenticeship training is the type practiced in Ghana. This form of apprenticeship training is well associated with the informal sector in many African countries over decades if not centuries. It is the most predominant skills development model in sub- Sahara Africa and the Indian Sub- continent (Asian Development Bank, 2004). Traditional apprenticeship is most often regarded the only way of learning a trade by majority of African youth (Fluitman and Sangare, 1989). The reason for this situation according to Demeke and Amha (1997) is that formal technical school minimum entry requirement such as two-years of high school education or successful completion of junior high school is attainable to a few . This effectively excludes greater majority of African youth from formal technical education. It is an established fact that on the average, 55% of graduates from junior high school are unable to inter into senior high school due primarily to lack of access. EMIS (2012) reckons 150,000 graduates annually from junior high school cannot continue to senior high school. The World Bank (2005) confirms that traditional apprenticeship is the main entry point for dropout from education and also for some graduates from pre-secondary vocational education in some Middle East and North African countries. The World Bank (2005) further accepts most estimates that suggest mastercrafts persons provide at least 90 percent of all skills training in Ghana. Adams 2007; King and Palmer 2007 admit traditional apprenticeship is responsible for between 80-90% of employment in much of Sub-Sahara Africa and South Asia and for over 50% of employment in Latin America. Traditional apprenticeship is based on an informal training agreement in practitioner's business. It is all about a mastercrafts person providing a youth with training within a period of three to four years in exchange of negotiated fees. The fees vary from trades and also depends on the status of the mastercraft person (World Bank 2005).

This form of skills development training is practiced in various forms in different countries but there are some common features of traditional apprenticeship in West Africa. Palmer (2005) lists some specific characteristics of apprenticeship in Ghanaian setting as follows: lack of clear organizational structure: there is a close link between training and real production: they caters for the majority of technical vocational education and training recipients, including illiterates and semi-literates: there is no formal curriculum, what is taught depends on what is actually produced: no one single government ministry has responsible for it: and the entire training is sponsored by parents and apprentices. etc

On the importance of traditional apprenticeship Demeke and Amha (1999) indicated that it is known to be intensely practical in nature and very effective in providing the youth with skills relevant to the real world of work. This was confirmed by a study conducted in a number of developing countries, master craftspersons and apprentices interviewed acknowledged that traditional apprenticeships are more effective in providing the youth with skills than the formal training programmes in vocational schools or training centres (World Bank, 2005). The cost of apprenticeship is also far cheaper than the private vocational training centres. It is also accessible to more marginal societal groups than that of formal training system. One key advantage of this mode of training over the

formal sector counterpart is that it allows for a gradual build-up of informal business networks and for the development of general business skills (King and Palmer 2007: Assad 1993; Grierson 1993). In spite of the critical role it plays in the economy through skills development, traditional apprenticeship is noted to be usually concerned with artisanal crafts than tertiary and service activities (Fluitman, 1994).

Traditional apprenticeship which is well known to have served the informal sector reasonably well in many African countries has often been criticized for excessive trade sub-division. What this means is that traditional trained workers are good at what they know but are often poor at adapting to new situations (Assad, 1993). Ziderman (2003) maintains that traditional apprenticeship has proven to be too narrowly focused to cope with the increasing challenges in technological changes, skills upgrading and expanding markets. It is often tagged as perpetuating older technologies, with master craftspersons failing to keep up with technological changes.

In Ghana most of the crafts production centers where traditional apprenticeships take place are located in the rural and the sub-urban areas. These areas are not well developed to take advantage of modern development and technological changes. The following are some of the challenges of traditional apprenticeship, they include long working hours, unsafe working conditions, low or no allowances or wages, little or no social protection and strong gender imbalance are among the most decent work deficits (Molz, 2015). To address these challenges a number of suggestions aimed at improving apprenticeship have been proposed. Traditional apprenticeship system which is well established, is particularly well suited to African life. It has a competitive edge over many traditional training models practiced in Africa. Inspite of its many advantages in transferring skills from one generation to the other, it suffers from serious problems and weaknesses that require urgent attention.

A number of studies had been conducted on traditional apprenticeship in West Africa and a good number of suggestions made for its improvement. Though many of these studies were not specifically focused on visual art or crafts apprenticeship, their findings and recommendations are worthy for the overall development of apprenticeship system. Bas (1988) argues that apprenticeship system is most suitable for Africa and compares favourably with the education provided by African formal technical educational institutes both in terms of cost and effectiveness as far as employment is concerned.

Nwanovnol (2004) on improving informal apprenticeship scheme for self-reliance in Nigeria identified some problems that mitigate against effectiveness of apprenticeship. These were poor evaluation techniques, lack of modern facilities among other things. Addressing the challenges of apprenticeship training and technical vocational education system in the 1990's Budu-Smith (1993) pointed out some fundamental issues that need to be resolved in relation to apprenticeship in Ghana. These were a national labour force training policy, funding mechanism to support apprenticeship system, co-operation between industry and educational institutions, and demonstration of commitment to apprenticeship on the part of government, employers and labour. This information was based on a survey conducted in which data was established from government records and training institutions. Participants included representatives from governmental level, employers of apprentices, journey men/women, first year apprentice trainee and trade advisory committees.

Another study by Unwameiye and Iyamu (2004) on improving Nigeria indigenous apprenticeship system recommends organizing short courses for upgrading of technical skills of master craftspersons, and journey-men/women. Establishing a model vocational training centers in each local government area by the Industrial Training Fund's National Apprenticeship Scheme and finally efforts be made at evolving a kind of dual or Germanic model of apprenticeship. Unfortunately the dual apprenticeship system has not been a success story in Africa. Johnson and Adam (2004) acknowledge that attempt by Germany to transfer dual system to a long list of developing countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America produced no clear record of success. A completely new model was also put forward by Donkoh and Mallet (2006) they suggest a two-site apprenticeship model that is to take place in two sites. The (on-site) workshop and (off-site) through distance learning. It is envisage that this model will be based on the government policies at the time. Those are the government's desire to partner the private sector in developing apprenticeship training, the Information Communication and Technology for Accelerated Development (ICT4AD) and lastly the Presidential Initiative on Distance Learning (PSIDL). This model was to take advantage of modern technology and address the many challenges that the conventional apprenticeship system had not been able to solve.

Many other studies agree with Adams (2007) that strategies for improvement of traditional apprenticeship should include improving basic education content in order to promote trainability of apprentices and master craftsperson, providing opportunities to master craftpersons to acquire new technologies and improving their pedagogical skills and certifying skills attained as bench mark for skill quality and portability.

2. Interventions and attempts at formalizing traditional apprenticeship.

Reforming traditional apprenticeship has been a major issue of most government's skills development agenda. Over the last twenty years there has been a renewed commitment at reforming skills development in Ghana. This is attributed to the youth employment crises, where a large cohorts of unemployed youth especially the junior secondary school graduates who are unable to take up further training, and the increasing demand for skills

resulting from technological changes. Very little existed to regulate apprenticeship training. Even though Ghana and other West African countries are signatories to a number of international conventions governing the conduct of apprenticeship system, they were hardly enforced. Instead apprenticeship in West Africa region is seriously embedded in informal institutional framework (Nubler, 2007). African Union (2007) also revealed important institutional gaps and deficits in African informal apprenticeship. Before the year 2000 the only major forms of regulations governing apprenticeship system in Ghana were the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) Acts1970, the Apprentice Training Regulations Legislative Instrument No (1154) and the Children's Acts (560) of 1998. The NVTI was established in 1970 by an Act (351) of parliament with the sole purpose of co-ordinating the operations of apprenticeship in the Ghana (NVTI, 1972).

National Apprenticeship Council and Ghana Apprenticeship Scheme were established by NVTI under the authority of National Vocational Training Board (Apprentice Training Regulations 1971. National Apprenticeship Scheme was designed to promote apprenticeship training in Ghana by ensuring that all apprentices in the trades covered by the scheme received adequate training according to standard prescribed by the NVTI (NVTI, 1972). The failure of NVTI to effectively manage apprenticeship among others necessitated the establishment of National Coordinating Committee on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NACVET) in 1990 (GoG,2006). NACVET was established to coordinate the nation's skills development programmes, but failed to deliver on its mandate. The World Bank (2001) describes it as weak organization with no capacity to develop a national policy for skills development. The failure of these two institutions and the lack of enforcement of legislative regulation concerning technical vocational education and training culminated in the setting up of a new coordinating body, the Council for Technical and Vocational and Education and Training (COTVET).This was upon the recommendation by the Education Review Committee of 2001, and the subsequent Government White Paper Report on TVET.

COTVET was established by Act 718 in 2006 to formulate national policy on TVET and skills development across pre-tertiary education in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. It is also to co-ordinate, harmonize and supervised the activities of both public and private TVET providers including apprenticeship in the informal sector. COTVET since its establishment has made some significant contribution. These according to COTVET (2014) include the implementation of National Apprenticeship Programme, establishment and operationalized National TVET Qualification Framework (NTVETQF) and adoption and piloting of competency based training model.

Among the many interventions to modernize traditional apprenticeship are the Skills Development Initiative (GSDI) implemented by COTVET with the support of German Government. This project seeks to improve the quality of apprenticeship in selected trades through capacity building. ADEA, (2012) acknowledges that this project operates on three main intervention levels. These are advising COTVET in the field of TVET policy and strategic development. Strengthening trade association's role in TVET including their involvement in developing of competency based training standards quality assurance. Supporting public and private training providers in developing and implementing courses for master craftspersons and apprentices on pilot measures.

Another initiative rolled out by COTVET is the Technical and Vocational Training Voucher Programme. It's designed to improve access of apprentices, master craftspersons and entrepreneurs to technical and vocational further training which meets defined quality criteria (COTVET 2014). There is also the Rural Enterprise Project which seeks to promote entrepreneurship in the rural areas in Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions in Ghana. Under this project technology transfer activities were effectively implemented through short and long term training at centres for apprentices and master craftspersons (IFAD 2004). Examining the implementation strategy Haan (2006) points out the core activities included basic skills training, skills upgrading for master craftpersons, complementary theoretical training for apprentices, technology and occupational safety and health seminar.

Another intervention worthy of mention is the World Bank's Vocational Skills and Informal Sector Support Project (VSP). This project targeted five occupational areas of the informal economy, namely dressmaking and tailoring, electrical installations, refrigeration and air conditioning, carpentry and joinery, and block making and concreting. The projects were executed through twelve weeks practical courses for apprentices, technical upgrading courses of four weeks for master craftspersons which included entrepreneurial, accounting and costing skills. The other component is engaging Informal Sector Associations in designing courses through selecting of participants and choosing the tools for the equipment kits for the graduates.

One other major intervention is the Skills Training and Entrepreneurship Programme (STEP).This initiative was designed to enable beneficiaries to join the formal economy. The focus was on skills training through vocational training providers, skills enhancement for master craftspersons and skills training in apprentices' placement and microfinance. Other interventions were the Opportunities Industrialization Centre (OIC)-Ghana Improved Apprenticeship Training Project, the International Labour Organization – International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO- IPEC) informal apprenticeship training project Palmer (2009) and the Post Junior Secondary Apprenticeship Training Pilot Programme- EdSAC (World Bank, 1995).Theses were some the major programmes initiated at various periods to improve and up-grade apprenticeship training in Ghana.

Evaluation of these programmes revealed varied degrees of successes, and also some with serious challenges. Majority of these interventions have been urban based and targeted on artisan training courses like auto-mechanics, garment making, hairdressing, electronics, welding and fabrication, etc. However the craft related vocations like the wood carving, pottery, leatherwork, adinkra printing, basketry, lost-wax casting and other that are usually rural based are mostly left out. This study therefore examine the status of visual art apprenticeship training in the midst of several interventions and attempts at formalizing apprenticeship in Ghana.

3. Methodology

The study employed descriptive survey to obtain information on the status of visual arts apprenticeship (vocation) in Ghana. The target population for the study comprises mainly of master craftspersons, apprentices and journeymen of selected visual arts vocations. The selected vocations are basketry, pottery and ceramics, jewellery, leatherwork, textiles, sculpture, painting and graphic design. The selection was based on the fact that these are the visual arts subjects offered at the pre-tertiary level in Ghana. A total of two hundred and seventy master craftspersons and three hundred apprentices of the selected visual arts vocations from major crafts production centres across the country were involved in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select master craftspersons. To achieve pertinent information, certain criteria were imposed. The participants (master craftspersons) qualified for the sample selection must have had considerable skills development training experience of not less than five years, good reputation, adequate capacity in terms of personnel and equipment. In the case of apprentices, simple random sample selection was adapted. At least an apprentice each of not less than six months of training was selected from a master craftsperson.

The survey questionnaire was used as the main data gathering instrument. Observation approach was also used. It focuses on the mode of instruction and the kind of interaction between trainers and trainees, the training outfit and the instructional materials used. The administration of instruments was made through the use of research assistants

4. Results and discussion.

Characteristics and background information of the respondent

Of the total respondents of 270 master craftspersons 45 (17%) were females while 225 (83%) were males. The 270 master craftspersons have a combine total of 1076 apprentices, of this number 159 (15%) were girls and 917 (85%) boys. This data present interesting relationship in the percentage ratio of male to female apprentices to that of master craftspersons. Whiles the ratio of female to male in the case of apprentice is 15:85% that of master craftspersons is 17: 83%.

Table. 1 Age distribution of the 270 respondent (master craftsperson)

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
Under 30 years	14	5
30 – 39 years	80	30
40 – 49 years	94	35
50 – 59 years	68	25
60 years and above	14	5
	270	100

Source: Field survey 2015

The result indicates that 90% of the respondent master craftspersons were between 30-59 years old. The remaining 10% is shared by the two age brackets of under 30 years and 60 years and above with 5% each. In all a total of 188 (70%) are under 50 years old. What this means is that a good number of the masters are in their youthful ages. This offers a brighter future for apprenticeship. Apath from being active and energetic in providing the needed training, they also stand a better chance of re-training and upgrading of their knowledge in skills development training.

Of the total number of 300 respondent apprentices 219 representing over 70% are of the ages ranging between 16-25 years. 37% are of the ages ranging between16-20 years, and 108 (36%) are with the ages between 21-25 years. Only 45 (15%) of them are below 15 years and a further 36 (12%) of them are over 25 years of age.

Table. 2 Educational Background of 270 respondent (master craftspersons)

Educational Background	Frequency	percentage
MSLC / BECE	65	24
Apprenticeship	96	36
Secondary	59	22
Post-secondary	39	14
Tertiary	11	04
	270	100

Source: Field Survey. 2015

Result on education background of the 270 master craftspersons indicates that 161(60%) had educational

level below senior secondary. This is made up of a total of 65 (24%) basic school graduates and 96 (36%) who obtained qualification through traditional apprenticeship system. A total of 59 (22%) had secondary education. The remaining 50 (18%) had post- secondary education, with 11(4%) of them making it up to the tertiary level.

Table 3 Educational background of 300 apprentices

Educational Background	Frequency	Percentage
No schooling	18	6
Primary School	36	12
Junior High School	168	56
Senior High School	78	26
	300	100

Source: Field Survey.2015

Educational background of the sample apprentices indicates that more than half of them 168 (56%) are graduates of junior high school. A good number of 78 (26%) of them pursued secondary education. 36 (12%) of the sample had gone through primary school education and 18 (6%) had no formal education at all. The data indicates that at least 82% of the apprentices had pursued secondary school. This is made of 168 (56%) junior high school graduates and 78 (26%) who made it beyond junior high school up to the senior high school level. It is also clear that, the educational background of apprentices is better compared to their masters and in some time past.

Table 4 Duration of service in apprenticeship training or skills development training.

Number of years in apprentice training business	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 10 years	30	12
10 – 20 years	97	36
21 - 30 years	86	32
31 - 40 years	48	18
Over 40 years	9	2
	270	100

Source: Field Survey. 2015

On duration of service in the apprenticeship training business, a total of 134 (49.6%) had considerable experience of between 21-40 years. 97 (35%) had been in the business for between 10 -20 years, and 86 (31%) have also been in the business between 21 – 30 years. Master craftspersons who have worked between 31 – 40 years were 48 (18%). Those who have had less than 10 years working experience in skills development training were 30 (12%). Only 9 (2%) of the master craftspersons have acquired a wealth of experience of over 40 years in apprenticeship training.

Entry Requirement

The survey result indicates that visual art apprenticeship is open to all manner of persons irrespective of educational background. Entry requirement is so flexible and has room for all. Even those with little or no schooling at all are offered the opportunity to participate in apprenticeship training. In a response to a question on entry requirement, master craftspersons cited interest, aptitude and readiness to learn as some form of criteria for entry. Apart from educational background, it is also open to all ages. The data obtained indicates that 15% of the apprentices are below 15 years old. This includes a small percentage of children of primary school children as young as ten years undergoing apprenticeship training on a kind of part-time basis. These children were found to be relatives of master craftspersons. They only attend to the apprenticeship training centers after school. This development is contrary to the regulations governing apprenticeship in Ghana. The National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) Act (1970) the Apprentice Training Regulations Legislative Instrument (1154) stipulates that any youth who has attained the age of 15 years old and who has parents' or guardians' consent. Also the 1998 Children's Acts (560) provides a framework for informal apprenticeship. It maintains the minimum age of 15 years old and set out the responsibilities of the master craftspersons. Unfortunately these regulations are not strictly enforced.

An interesting link to entry requirement is the gender distribution which indicates the disparity between the participation of female and male in some visual art vocations. The survey data recorded zero participation of female in leatherwork, tanning, sculpture, picture making and graphics in all their various subsectors for both master craftspersons and apprentices. These visual art vocations in all its forms, under traditional apprenticeship do not seem to be attractive to females. At Ahwaa, a well- known wood carving village in Ashanti Region in Ghana with a large population of craftsmasters and apprentices in wood carving not a single female was recorded as craft entrepreneur or apprentice known in this vocation. Similar situation was recognized at Aburi in the Eastern Region where a thriving business exists in wood carving production and apprenticeship. In the history of kente weaving at Bonwire and its surrounding villages, female participation is completely absent. It was revealed that only two ladies were known to have successfully gone through apprenticeship and subsequently established kente weaving business. Though females are very active in the commercial aspect of the kente business.

This situation is attributable not only to the deeply rooted cultural biases in the labour market, and the old

tradition of sex in the arts. It has also become very fashionable for most young girls to undergo apprenticeship training in vocations as dressmaking and hairdressing. A study by Hoffman Barthes et al (1999) on scientific, technical and vocation education in Africa confirm that several studies claim that by the onset of adolescent, most girls are already biased against technical careers. These biases are further worsen by the biases of their parents, it is then compounded by the masculine content of the subject matter to portray such visual art vocations as woodcarving, metal casting, tanning, no go areas for females.

Duration of Training

Duration of apprenticeship training ranges from a minimum of over one year to a maximum of four years depending on the type of visual art vocations and where it is being organized. The data gathered indicate for example wood carving apprenticeship training at Ahwiaa lasts for two years. Kente weaving at Bonwire also takes two to complete whiles adinkra printing at Ntonso takes only a year to complete. These are all very well- known visual art production centres in Ashanti region. A notable feature of apprenticeship is the tradition of serving the master after the training, this tend to prolong the training period.

Training instructors

Training is carried on by the master craftspersons who incidentally are proprietors or owners of the workshops and do not have adequate and requisite training in skills development. The entire 270 sample master craftspersons indicated, they do not have the requisite qualification in skills development training. They also have no other instructors to assists in the training except to rely on some journey men or their longest serving apprentices. There is generally lack of broad training perspective. Training programme does not seem to be a priority because the masters, who double as entrepreneurs are pre-occupied with managing their businesses. The apprentice training does not follow any structured pattern that will provide the apprentices with much needed skills, attitudes, and knowledge expected of a specific crafts. In most cases the training is narrowed down to the production of only one or two particular artefact(s) an individual master craftsperson or proprietor is producing for sale.

Training facilities

Apprenticeship training in visual art vocations requires adequate workshop facilities, tools and equipment for quality training. There is no standard criteria for structures and facilities for the training. The situation on the ground is nothing to write home about. Training workshops and studios exist in all regions and are located in villages, towns and cities depending on the nature of each vocation. Most of the visual art apprenticeship operate under sheds, kiosks and in makeshifts structures. Workshop owners are not in the position to provide decent training environment. The training outfits are poorly resourced in terms of equipment and tools. As part of contract or conditions of the apprenticeship scheme, apprentices are supposed to own some amount of recommended tools. Owing to high cost of quality working tools, majority of the apprentices and that of their masters rely on the local and improvised tools. Only a few master craftpersons or craft entrepreneurs are in a position to hire equipment for special jobs such as sanding or carving decorative patterns on wood. The overall assessment of the situation in general is that training facilities are not the best. The entire apprenticeship system is devoid of modern educational technology, particularly computers, internet, multimedia equipment. These modern educational technology and media enhance reach, cost effectiveness, quality and richness of educational programmes.

Curriculum and scope of training

The use of formal curriculum is completely absent in the visual art apprenticeship programme. The question as to which body is responsible for the development of curriculum and what factors determine the content does not arise at all. All the respondent master craftpersons said no to the use of formal or uniform curriculum. The content of training of a particular training center is determined by the demand of product(s) at a particular time or the kind of product or artefact a particular master craftsperson, who doubles as an entrepreneur produces for sale. The type of artefact(s) produced by a particular master craftsperson forms the basis of the training content. It was found out from the survey that the training covers considerable topics that are necessary to equip an apprentice with reasonable marketable skills. These include introduction to names and uses of tools and equipment for specific visual art vocation, measurement, properties and processing of raw-materials, forming techniques. However there are other more crucial topics that are completely left out in the training programme. These include topics such as drawing and sketching, basic design and making processes, finishing techniques and simple packaging techniques. The visual art apprenticeship trades, like all artistic occupation requires highly creative minds, analytical and critical thinkers. Artists who can design forms and systems to solve problems, people who can turn round ordinary materials of little value into highly prized useful and decorative items. To produce competent art practitioners or craftsperson in any artistic enterprise will require incorporating the above mention topics into the training programme. Absence of such crucial topics as basic designing, drawing, basic colour theory, designing and the making processes as well as finishing among others is sure to produce mediocre visual art practitioners or semi-skilled apprentices. Such crafts persons can't solve the nations' artistic problem left alone compete favourably in the global market.

Training methods

Training is by observation, imitation and hands on experience. The learning process starts with a preliminary phase,

where the new apprentice does simple task such as cleaning of workshops or studios. They are introduced gradually to appropriate tools, equipment and materials of specific vocations. It is then extended to such tasks as sanding or polishing as in the case of wood carving, or preparation of clay, kneading and wedging as in the case of pottery. From then, the training moves on to a more complex tasks.

The survey also reveals that visual art apprenticeship is most often product specific. For example a master craftsperson or craft entrepreneur in kente business will offer training only in kente production. In the case of pottery, the training could be solely on the production of pots or glazed mugs depending on the business of the master craftsperson or the craft entrepreneur. As a result, the practical aspect of some basic, but vital technical practices of some crafts are completely absent in the training. This tends to narrow the scope of the training. A situation Haan (2002) claims it denies trainees the opportunity from learning the whole spectrum of skills, thus at best makes them semi- skilled upon completion of the training .The only exception to this trend found out from the survey is graphic design apprenticeship. Though a few graphic design master craftspersons were found to be providing training only on one or two products such as sign writing.

The study however revealed that most graphic design training enterprises produced a wide variety of design products and therefore their training is generally quite broadened. The graphic design studios and entrepreneurs are into providing a wide spectrum of skills training, cutting across designing, printing, computer graphics, branding of vehicles, photography, construction and mounting of bill board among others. They are also well abreast with modern technologies and the use of modern and sophisticated equipment. These include computers scanners, digital cameras, and large format printers among others.

Training fees.

The cost of apprenticeship training is solely borne by parents and guardians of apprentices. Training fees vary, ranging from fifty cedis to as high as seven hundred cedis. In some parts of northern Ghana, where apprenticeship or transfer of skills is within families and socio groupings based on the socio-cultural conventions, small amount of money such as twenty cedis or no fee is paid for the entire training. These were noted in such crafts as tanning, leatherwork, basketry and weaving. It was also noted that fees charged by trainers in the metropolitan and municipal cities are far higher than that of smaller towns and villages. These are solely determined by the master craftspersons or craft entrepreneurs. There is virtually no government support as far as cost of training is concern. The government's desire to bear part of the apprenticeship training did not materialize. The educational Reform Review Committee of 2001 recommendation and the subsequent (White Paper report on technical vocational education and training TVET)

Trade associations

In the absence of a governmental bodies to supervise the operations of apprenticeship training, there exist a number of Trade Association or Informal Skills Associations. These associations operate at the various visual art/crafts production. They are expected to serve as intermediaries between enterprises and the government and other agencies. They are also considered to represent one of the strongest element of the current institutional framework of the informal apprenticeship training and to be actively involved in the supervision of skills training. The reality is that they are more of providing welfare services to members than improving the quality of training provided. The International Fund for Agriculture (2002) described them as weak and ineffective in providing useful services to their members. However members often enjoy the benefit of attending workshops designed to upgrade their technical and occupational competencies. These workshops are organized by some development partners and non-governmental organization. Some of the active ones doing well in this direction are Aids to Artisans Ghana (ATAG) and Cultural Initiative Support Programme (CISP).

Assessment procedure

The survey also revealed that visual art apprenticeship like others had no standards for training quality and assessment of acquired skills. Assessment of training quality and competencies are carried out without any scientific basis. These revelations are consistent with previous studies. Fliutman, 1994; Palmer, 2007) concluded there are no clear standards, monitoring and quality assurance as well as competency assessment procedure. In several instances it is the costumer who certifies the mastery of apprentice through the approval of an artefact made. This situation is not a good one since any meaningful assessment procedure for an educational enterprises in present day should be based on sound educational principles. The result of this lack of standard assessment is the wide variation in the quality of skills among apprentices. Perhaps the way to solve this effectively is to fully implement competency based training and the integration of informal apprenticeship system into National Qualification System Framework as stated in (TVET policy document, 2004).

Problems and challenges.

Although the findings of this study acknowledges a number of merits of apprenticeship training, there are serious challenges and limitations of the system that affect the quality of training. The respondent (apprentices) complained of long working hours, tedious nature of some aspect of the training, high cost of power tools, performing menial assignment and running errands and other tasks which have no bearing on the training. The conditions and treatment under which some apprentices training operates have been described in some previous

studies as exploitation and cheap labour (Palmer, 2007; DFID, 2007).

On the part of master craftpersons, a number of issues bordering on quality of training were noted. Apart from their limitations of theoretical knowledge, lack of knowledge on modern technology and new trends on their trade areas, low competency level in teaching and training matters, there are other challenges and deficiencies in the entire training programme. These include inadequate training facilities, high cost of raw materials, electricity, power tools and equipment, payment of numerous and high taxation, difficulty in getting ready market. Other challenges identified in the survey include poorly trained or untrained instructors, inadequate or poorly maintained, outdated and inefficient tools and equipment, lack of capital or access to credit, poorly designed content which is usually time based instead competency based, unpreparedness on the part of master craftspersons to accept and adapt to modern technology, equipment and new materials and the issue of attracting the correct caliber of trainees for the various visual art trades. This has to do with the trainability of the trainee apprentice, their level of education, literacy, numeracy, creativity and interest. The challenges and deficiencies identified confirm (Fliutman,1992; King and Palmer, 2006) who summarized the challenges to include the use of obsolete training facilities and workshops, inadequate tools and equipment, reliance on very basic production and outdated technology, perpetuating traditional technologies and absence of simple written curriculum to guide the training process

On strategies to solve the numerous challenges the respondent master craftspersons were quick to appeal for government intervention. This according to them, should be in the form of funding, upgrading of their technical and skills development training competencies, and reduction of taxes. There have been several interventions meant to improve the quality of apprenticeship, these interventions come not only from the government, but also from development partners and non-governmental organizations. Inspite of the many such interventions, visual art apprenticeship does not seem to have benefit much. Much attention have been concentrated on such trades such auto mechanics, electronics, garment making, cosmetology and welding and fabrication.

On the issue of improving the quality of apprenticeship training in Ghana many have argued as to whether to intervene or not in a system that seems to be doing very well. However the survey result clearly points to a fact that there are serious limitations and deficiencies which require urgent intervention. The findings of this study are consistent with (Nubler, 2007) who concluded that empirical evidence shows many apprenticeship system work, although they do not work well. A confirmation that, something needs to be done about apprenticeship system especially that of visual art vocations to make it more functional and sustainable. Apart from all these, the current world situation concerning technological changes and emerging new professions make it the more necessary for urgent attention. The traditional apprenticeship training needs to re-position itself in response to new increasing complex knowledge, especially in modern trade characterized by rapid technological change. The other point on emerging new professions have to do with adapting to such fields as information and communication technology instead of the only traditional cognitive job based teaching methods.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that traditional apprenticeship is well established and it is particularly suited to the Ghanaian situation especially the informal sector. It is so engrossed in the informal institutional framework to the extent that early attempts to regulate its operations did not yield appreciable result. The Apprentices Training Regulations Legislative Instrument No (1154) and the Children's Acts (560) of 1998 and a few others did very little to change the status of apprenticeship. Skills development training in visual arts which forms part crafts related vocation has traditionally been executed and sustained through apprenticeship. The visual art apprenticeship is providing greater opportunities and exposure to many youth in the areas of entrepreneurial skills and self-employment, and it's indeed as relevant as formal TVET. It is however characterized with significant weaknesses and challenges in terms of relevance and quality of training. There is also the lack of theoretical component in the training and over reliance of old technologies, resulting in limited transfer of skills

The study reveals that majority of the youth in visual arts apprenticeship have completed junior high school and a good number of master craftspersons are also well educated. A development likely to raise the image and status of visual art apprenticeship. This requires raising the standards to a much higher level and some form of formalization to meet Ghana's present developmental needs. Though some interventions are ongoing such as upskilling of master craftspersons in the areas of further technical and pedagogical training and improving access to technology, but not much can be said of visual art apprenticeship in Ghana. On the basis of the findings emanating from this study the following recommendations are offered.

There should be a comprehensive review of policy, legislative and regulatory framework for apprenticeship in Ghana with the view of making them workable, and COTVET should be assisted and supported to perform its mandate as the overaching public organization on the TVET and skills development sector to coordinate and oversee TVET delivery in the country.

With reference to the issue of quality of training, such topics like sketching, drawing, idea development, designing and making processes should be incorporated into the visual art apprenticeship programme. This will equip trainees with the expected skills in designing, better finishing, problem solving and creative abilities.

To ensure fair play and equity, the government should at least bear part of the training cost of apprenticeship. Considering the huge sums of money spent on secondary education and the formal TVET, and the fact that majority of the recipient of apprenticeship are the less privileged. They are mostly the rural population and the urban poor who needed assistance most.

To solve the challenge of lack of theory and non-exposure to modern training facilities and technology, the government should establish the community based apprenticeship scheme in all district, municipal and metropolitan assembles as stated in a White Paper on Education Reforms Review Committee 2004. Master craftspersons should be encouraged and assisted to upgrade their pedagogical, professional and technical skills. This will place them in a better position to improve upon their skills development training competencies and to adopt appropriately to changing situations in their businesses. Assistance could be in the form tax reliefs and credit facilities considering their massive contribution to skills development training of the country.

Again on the upskilling of master craftspersons, there is the need to coordinate and monitor the various training offered by a number of non- governmental organization and some international agencies. Some of these organizations do have their agenda. The scope of training, also depended solely on their interests with little or no link to upgrading apprenticeship and vocational training. To ensure uniformity and quality training there should be a standardized training structure for all interested organizations, These training programme should take into consideration the cultural values of Ghana, without compromising on some global values such as punctuality, efficiency, time management and positive work ethics which are absent in most training programmes in Ghana.

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