

Analysis of Skill Acquisition Programmes (SAP) on Employment Opportunities in Rural Rivers State

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Abstract

The study analyzed skill acquisition programmes (SAP) on employment opportunities among rural people in Rivers State. Structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from 100 respondents. Multistage sampling technique was employed. Four institutions involved in SAP were purposively selected while 80 beneficiaries and 20 managerial/administrative staff of the institutions were randomly selected. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study revealed that the four institutions carried out activities/skills in carpentry, computer training, fashion design, welding, GSM repairs, barbing /hair saloon, hat making, soap making and tie and dye. All(100%)the persons that enrolled with RSSDA and NDDC graduated at the end of the programme while Elf (95%) and NAOC(90%) graduated at the end of the programme. Furthermore, the study revealed that 23% of the beneficiaries are self-employed, 19% were employed by government, 14% were employed by private sector and 45% still see their selves as unemployed. The factors militating against SAP were beneficiaries went into SAP because they needed money ($\bar{x}=3.10$), lack of interest in the skills ($\bar{x}=2.90$), lack of electricity to continue the skill ($\bar{x}=2.80$), beneficiaries sell their starter packs ($\bar{x}=3.10$), lack of store/place to start the business ($\bar{x}=2.90$) and government not admitting the right individuals into the programme ($\bar{x}=3.10$). It was therefore recommended that leaders in the study area should allow the programme to be independent. They should allow the coordinators or organizations to recruit the candidates themselves.

Keywords: Skill Acquisition Programmes, Employment Opportunities, Rural

INTRODUCTION

Skills acquisition can be seen as a programme designed to train youths in vocational skills in various trades such as fitting, welding, automobile, and electrical/electronic. Including, health and safety business skill, GSM repairs, upholstery and mechanical business skills. The rationale behind the creation of skills acquisition programme was aimed at creating more jobs for youths with a view to making themselves reliant. According to Boucher (1992), skills acquisition is the process of facilitating the development of a novice into an expert. It is the ability to bring about some end result with maximum outlay of energy or time and energy (Guthrie, 1982).

Various stakeholders are involved in skill acquisition programme. Both government and non-governmental organizations are involved. Governmental organization like Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) had empowered many youths in the state. Non-governmental organization involved in the empowerment of youths include Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Total E & P Nig. Ltd (TEPM), Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC) and Nigeria Liquefied Gas (NLG). However, statistics shows that only about 35% of youths in the state have benefited from the various skills acquisition programme and are being employed National Directorate of Employment. (NDE, 2004).

The study on unemployment among youths in Ogba/Egbema Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria revealed that out of the 100 youths surveyed, 70 had been involved in SAP but they still see themselves as being unemployed (Albert, 2010). It seems the aims and objectives toward the creation of SAP had not been fully achieved. In spite of the SAP been carried out by government and non-governmental organizations in the state, the rate of unemployment is still very high in the state (Ndu, 2008). It is on this premise, the study wants to know if there are institutions (governmental and non-governmental agencies) involved in SAP in the study area. If there are, what type of skills are they into? Who have benefited from them? What is the status of those that have benefited from them? Are they self-employed or employed by somebody? Had SAP added any positive growth on employment? And what are the factors limiting SAP from achieving its objectives?

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area (ONELGA) in Rivers State. Onelga is one of the fastest growing Local Government Area in the state. It is also a major producer of oil as it hosts (TOTAL E&P & NAOC) out of the 13 major, multinational oil companies in the state. Multi stage sampling technique was employed; the first stage involved the purposive sampling of the four institution involved in SAP

in the study area (RSSDA, NDDC TOTAL E&P and NAOC). The second stage involved the sampling of 80 beneficiaries from the 4 institutions and 20 managerial and administrative staff of the four institutions using the simple random sampling. A total of 100 respondents were surveyed. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistic. A four point Likert- type scale of options “Great Factor” (3), “Factor” (2), “Less Factor” (1), “Not a Factor” (0) was used to ascertain the factors militating against SAP. The values were added to get 6, which was further divided by 4 to give 1.5. The mean score was 1.50. Any variable with a mean score of 1.50 and above was regarded as a factor while items with a mean score of less than 1.50 were regarded as a not factor.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 show that a higher percentage (41%) of the beneficiaries was in the age bracket of 18 – 25 years while 80% of the staff was above 41 years. This implies that those who have benefited from SAP were mostly youths who are in their productive age. While the staff was mostly adults who are still in their productive age but would not be vibrant and active as the beneficiaries.

Majority (61.25%) of the beneficiaries are males while 38.75% are females while majority (90%) of the staff are females. This implies that more males participated / enrolled in SAP than their female counterpart while the instructors of SAP were mostly females. Furthermore, entries in Table 1 show that majority (61.25%) of the beneficiaries are single while majority (90%) of the staff are married. This implies that the unmarried youths were mostly the ones that needed employment opportunities in the form of skills.

A higher percentage (51.25%) of the beneficiaries had WASC/GCE certificate, followed by those that had FSLC (26.25%). Only 3.75% had HND, BED or BSC. For the staff of the establishment, majority (70%) had M.Sc/MBA while 30% had HND/B.Sc/BED. This implies that the beneficiaries had basic education- that is they can read and write while those coordinating the SAP are specialist in different areas.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency		% of Beneficiary	% of Est.
	Beneficiaries	Establishment		
Age (yrs)				
Below 18	20	-	25.0	-
18-25	33	-	41.0	-
26-33	22	-	27.5	-
34-41	4	6	5.0	20
Above 41	1	14	1.5	80.0
Total	80	20	100	100.0
Sex				
Male	49	6	61.25	10.0
Female	31	14	38.75	90.0
Total	80	20	100.0	100.0
Marital status				
Single	57	2	71.25	10.0
Married	23	18	28.75	90.0
Total	80	20	100.0	100.0
Level of Education				
Non formal education	5	-	6.25	-
FSLC	21	-	26.25	-
WASC/GCE	41	-	51.25	-
NCE, ND, OND	10	-	12.50	-
HND, BSC, BED	3	6	3.75	10.0
MSC/MBA	-	4	-	70.0
Total	80	20	100.0	100.0

Source: field survey, 2011

Organizations involved in SAP and activities undertaken

Entries in Table 2 show that both government and non-governmental organizations are involved in SAP in the

study area. They include Rivers State Sustainable Development Agency (RSSDA), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC); Total E&P Nigeria Limited (TEPN) and Nigeria. Agip Oil Company (NAOC). Also, the study revealed that all the establishments were involved in the training of barbing/hair saloon, GSM repairs computer training and welding. NDDC was involved in all the activities outlined except in tie/dye. The result indicates that the establishments had different types of skills for beneficiaries to choose their areas of interest.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of organizations involved in SAP and activities undertaken

Type of Skills	Establishments		TERN	NAOC
	RSSDA	NDDC		
- Carpentry	15(21.4%)	16(8%)	0	0
- Tailoring /fashion design	0	57(2.5%)	20(10%)	2(4%)
- Barbing /Hair salon	23(32.8%)	29(14.5%)	8(10%)	5(2.5%)
- GSM repairs	10(14.2%)	10(5%)	8(10%)	5(7.5%)
- Computer training	10(14.2%)	70(35%)	10(20%)	3(1.5%)
- Hat making	3(4.28%)	60(30%)	0	0
- Welding	9(12.83%)	35(17.5%)	10(20%)	10(5%)
- Soap making	0	20(10%)	30(15%)	2(4%)
- Tie and Dye	0	0	20(10%)	0

Source: Field survey2011

Persons Who Have Benefited FromSAP

Table 3 shows that all the persons who enrolled with the governmental establishments (RSSDA and NDDC) graduated at the end of the programme while 95% graduated out of the 200 persons that enrolled in TEPN and 90% graduated out of the 50 persons that enrolled in NAOC. This implies that greater proportion of the respondents graduated with one type of skills at the end of the training.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of persons who have benefited from SAP

Establishment	No. of persons enrolled 2007-2010	Those graduated 2007-2010	that %
RSSDA	70	70	100.0
NDDC	200	200	100.0
TEPN	200	190	95.0
NAOC	50	45	90.0

Employment Status of Beneficiaries

The result shows that out of the 80 beneficiaries, approximately 23% were self -employed, 45% were still unemployed, and 19% were employed by government while 14% were employed by private sectors. This implies that 23% of the beneficiaries are self- employed which is a significant figure out of 80 beneficiaries of SAP. Also, approximately 33% of the beneficiaries are now employed, rendering services to government and non-government agencies in the state. This shows that 56% had a means of livelihood and so SAP has help to reduced unemployment situation in the study.

Table 4: Employment Status of Beneficiaries n = 80

Employment Status	RSSDA	NDDC	TAP	ESI	Total % of Respondents
Self employed	6	6	1	5	18(25.5%)
Unemployed	10	4	12	10	36 (45%)
Employed by government	-	10	3	2	15(18.75%)
Employed by private sector	4	-	4	3	11(13.78%)
Total	20	20	20	20	80 (100.0)

Source: field survey 2010

Factors affecting skills acquisition Programme

The factors militating against SAP include the sale of starter packs by beneficiaries, lack of interest by participants on the skill learnt ($\chi=2.90$), politicians/ highly placed individualsinterfering with the selection procedure of participants into the programme and the none availability of electricity to continue with the skill learnt. The purpose of giving beneficiaries starter packs after the training was for sustainability of the skill learnt.

It was to overcome financial hindrance that may make participants of SAP not to be self-employed. Therefore, skill learnt when not used or put into practical becomes useless.

Table 5: Factors militating against skills acquisition Programme

Factors	Weighted mean	Remarks
- attitudes of beneficiaries	2.40	Not a Factor
- people went into SAP because they needed money	3.10	Factor
- lack of assistance	2.00	Not a Factor
- lack of interest in the skill	2.90	Factor
-no proper training	1.90	Not a Factor
No electricity to continue the skill studied	2.80	Factor
- large student population	1.90	Not a Factor
- beneficiaries sell their starter packs	3.10	Factor
- lack of store/place to start business	2.90	Factor
- attitude of high placed persons in government	2.60	Factor

>1.50 = A Factor < 1.50 = Not a Factor

Conclusion and Recommendation

Skill Acquisition Programme has helped to reduce the unemployment situation in the study area and so should be encouraged by government and non-governmental agencies to ensure its continuity. For effectiveness, of the programme leaders in the study area should allow the programme to be independent in order for the coordinators or organizations to recruit the right people who are actually interested in learning a skill in order to make a living out of the programme. Based on the findings, it was therefore recommended that a proper monitoring mechanism should be put in place to monitor graduates of SAP. This is to ensure that they use the starter packs given to them to establish their own private business even if they want to work with private and government sector after graduation. Beneficiaries should be selected on voluntary basis and not on compulsion. This will allow them to develop interest on the intended skill.

Finally, proper loan facilities should be made available to apprentice or graduates of SAP. This will enable them to secure a store/outlet to establish their private business.

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