

## Regulation of Technical and Vocational Educational and Training Institutions in Nigeria: Appraisal, Challenges and Way Forward

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### Abstract

*Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been identified as the bedrock of economic growth and technological advancement of any country which is capable of providing equal opportunities and employment for her workforce. In this paper, the regulatory powers of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) to regulate TVET Institutions in Nigeria were analysed. Major challenges affecting NBTE to exercise these regulatory powers over the regulatees in the sector such as shortage of well trained and experienced manpower, political interference, inadequate infrastructure and municipal facilities, obsolete regulatory instruments, corrupt practices and related offences, proliferation of illegal TVET Institutions and inadequate funding among others were highlighted. The paper also suggested a number of strategies to improve compliance with the minimum standards and enhance quality of TVET delivery in Nigeria. These include exploring new funding approaches, sustained legislative support for the sector, and inter-agency collaboration to support monitoring and ensure compliance to the laid down standards and guidelines.*

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**Keywords:** *Regulatory powers, qualifications, standards, guidelines and regulation*

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### 1. Introduction

Regulation has become very important considering the need to promote safety and security of the consumers and society against harmful effects of financial fraud or crisis, poor or inefficient services, fake drugs, unsafe and unhealthy food, illegal Institutions and environmental pollution. According to Black (2002), regulation is defined as “the sustained and focused attempt to alter the behaviour of others according to defined standards and purposed with the intention of producing a broadly identified outcome or outcomes, which may involve mechanisms of standard-setting, information gathering and behaviour modification”. This implies that regulation is a means of controlling economic and non-economic activities by implementing or enforcing rules developed for a specific industry to operate within. It also involves intentional, goal directed, problem-solving efforts of the state and non-state actors to put things in order.

In the regulatory process, regulators such as government agencies, associations or firms make and/or enforce the rules on the regulated. The regulators issue penalties, sanctions or warning on failure by the regulated to comply with the laid down rules. Examples of the regulated are individuals, firms, non-government organisations, government entities and professionals among others. For regulatory process to be effective and successful, there should be regular and unambiguous communication or interactions among the regulator, regulated and others stakeholders (Black, 2002). Regulation generally focuses on relationships that cover the traditional public control of private activities, private-to-private, public-to-public and even private-to-public relationships to achieve quality control (Koop & Lodge, 2017).

Moreover, the key objectives of regulators include the need to protect end-users or consumers against abuses or poor service delivery by the service providers. They are also to protect the private investors or organisations especially by providing them with some financial waiver, discretions and key services to resolve issues with other relevant government agencies. The regulators are to monitor the performance of the service providers and ensure that obligations of the service providers to their clients are enforced (Priest, Stanbury & Thompson, 1980). It is thus imperative that the regulators establish and amend their regulations, and monitor implementation of these regulations.

Generally, regulatory powers confer on the regulators, a collection of investigative, compliance monitoring and enforcement powers. For instance, compliance monitoring power gives the regulators the right to enter and search premises, observe activities carried out in the premises, inspect, examine and record observations, ask questions from persons in the premises and request for documents. Investigative power deals with the procedures to gather evidences with respect to breach of regulations or involvement in criminal offences by entering and searching premises, and seizing evidential materials. Enforcement powers enable the regulators to apply to the court for a civil remedy in relation to the breaching of the standards and guidelines or issuing an infringement notice to a regulatee as an alternative to court proceeding for breaching the guidelines or regulations, or begin the process to secure an injunction in court to enforce a legal action (Petrie, 2021).

Regulation of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) outside the University system in Nigeria is the statutory responsibility of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). NBTE uses the standard-based quality assurance framework to regulate (monitor and control) TVET Institutions in Nigeria. Like other regulatory agencies in the Nigerian higher education sector such as National Universities Commission (NUC) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), NBTE is expected to exercise 'command and control' power to formulate guidelines, coordinate issuance of licenses, perform on-site inspection, enforcement, carry out review and assessment of guidelines, and ensure compliance to the laid-down standards by TVET institutions and relevant licensees or training providers in Nigeria.

The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) was established through NBTE Act of January, 1977 (NBTE, 2023a). The Act mandated NBTE to perform two key functions. Firstly, it is “to coordinate all aspects of technical and vocational education (TVE) falling outside the universities and to make recommendations on the national policy necessary for the full development of TVE for the training of technicians, craftsmen and other middle-level and skilled manpower. Secondly, it is “to determine as it considers appropriate, the skilled and middle-level manpower needs of the country in the industrial, commercial and other relevant fields for the purpose of planning training facilities and in particular to prepare periodic master plans for the balanced and coordinated development of Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology after consultations with relevant government agencies”.

Furthermore, NBTE is also empowered by the Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Act of 1985 (NBTE, 2023b). The Act empowered the Honourable Minister of Education to establish minimum standards for Polytechnics, Technical Colleges and other technical Institutions in Nigeria after consultation with NBTE. NBTE on its part is responsible for the maintenance of these national minimum standards. The Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Law (amendment) of January 1993 or CAP E3 LFN 2004 also empowers NBTE to regulate TVET Institutions in Nigeria (NBTE, 2023b). This Act enabled a company incorporated in Nigeria and individuals or group of individuals who are citizens of Nigeria to own and operate Institutions of higher learning including technological and technical Institutions. The Act specified that only persons or group who has satisfied the laid down criteria should be granted approval to establish an Institution of higher education. This was not the case before the Act was enacted.

Previous studies have discussed regulations in different sectors of the Nigerian economy. A study by Omoleke (2015) dissected the aviation laws and institutional agencies regulating aviation industry in Nigeria. The industry was found to be weak, not competitive, grossly underfunded, have obsolete navigational facilities, bad runaways, and inefficient operations. Specifically, the need to review the law guiding aviation industry to forestall unintended air disasters in future was recommended. Gumi (2015) discussed the regulatory functions of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and National Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) to regulate the various aspects of Nigerian banking such as payment and settlement systems, non-interest and cross-border banking. The study found that financial regulations in the Nigerian banking sector have increased safety, stability and efficiency in the system. Ekhaton (2016) examined the use codes of conduct to regulate the oil and gas sector in Nigeria. It was noted that self-regulatory framework in the Nigerian oil and gas sector is ineffective and lack independent verification and enforcement by auditors and professional inspectors. Klantschnig & Huang (2018) assessed the activities of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control in Nigeria (NAFDAC) to curtail the problem of fake or poor quality drugs in the Nigerian markets. The author observed that NAFDAC has succeeded in enlightening Nigerians about the dangers of unregistered and fake drugs, facilitate registration of products and issuance of registration numbers to them, and arrest of unlicensed drug distributors and confiscation of their

products.

Aidonojie et al. (2020) analysed both the local and international environmental laws promoting protection of environment. The functions of National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) to implement environmental guidelines, policies, laws, rules and regulations and standards in Nigeria were highlighted. The paper showed that without judicial intervention to interpret and apply relevant environmental laws, Nigerians will continue to be exposed to the dangers of environmental pollution which affects human health and degrades the environment. A related study by Budnukaeku & Hyginus (2021) discussed the key measures taken by the Nigerian government to preserve the environment and its resources, protect the public from ecological nuisance and harmful wastes, and prevent various types of pollution through environmental laws and acts. The authors identified lack of enforcement as the biggest obstacles to the environmental regulations in Nigeria. Nzarga & Mballo (2017) dealt with the aspects of NESREA regulations on telecommunications facilities in Nigeria. The authors cautioned NESREA to engage the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and other stakeholders to evolve positive regulations for the telecommunications industry in Nigeria. Okom & Enyia (2018) delved into the aspects of regulatory functions of Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to protect, inform and educate telecommunication customers in Nigeria. It however showed that the NCC regulations do not have provision for anti-competition matters and lack power to deter cyber security. Arowolo & Douglas (2022) explained the diverse roles of Energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN) and Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) in terms of planning, coordinating and monitoring of renewable and non-renewable electricity development in Nigeria. The study however advised the federal government to establish a specific and independent regulator for renewable electricity to improve electricity supply to the end users in Nigeria.

From these studies in literature, it is inferred that regulation of TVET Institutions in Nigeria has been not studied or discussed. This study therefore attempts to fill this gap. The purpose of this paper is thus to identify and analyse the powers conferred on NBTE by the Laws to regulate the TVET sector outside the University in Nigeria. The remaining sections of this paper will therefore provide insight into the regulatory powers of NBTE, challenges inhibiting application of its regulatory powers and strategies that could be applied for effectively delivery of the mandates of NBTE using this suite of regulatory powers.

## **2. Powers to regulate TVET Institutions in Nigeria**

The following regulatory powers are derived from the statutes guiding the operations of NBTE.

### **2.1 Power to obtain information**

In order to perform its statutory functions, NBTE enabling Act of 1977 gave the Executive Secretary or any of its authorized staff, power to execute the following:

- i. To have a right of access to all records of Institutions under its regulatory purview; and
- ii. By notice in writing serve on any person in charge of any such Institution to furnish information on such matter as may be specified.

The Act made it a mandatory duty for any person required to furnish NBTE with information

should comply with the notice from it within a reasonable period of time. For instance, some of the information that NBTE usually considers or requests from TVET Institutions include students' enrolment figures, staff nominal rolls, budgetary provisions, capital projects, academic records, physical facilities, quality assurance activities, students' records etc. Usually, the need for information may arise under the following circumstances:

- i. Allegations against Management or staff of TVET Institutions that call for investigation;
- ii. Request for waiver to replace or employ staff by TVET Institutions;
- iii. Request to mount new programmes;
- iv. Request to establish new Institution or campuses;
- v. Enrolment of students into Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme;
- vi. Disbursement or allocation of international or local grants to Institutions;
- vii. Curriculum development or review activities;
- viii. Compilation and collation of data for Annual Digest of Statistics;
- ix. Quality Assurance visitations;
- x. Service compact (SERVICOM) charter and reports;
- xi. Financial transactions with NBTE.

This is an important power that has helped NBTE to perform its functions over the years. However, the Act only emphasizes on writing as the means of requesting (presumably by surface mails to serve notices to Institutions) while applications of newer modes of communications such as telephone calls, short messaging (SMS), e-mail, messaging apps etc were not explicitly stated in the Act. Hence, the Act needs to be reviewed so that NBTE could legally use any mode of communication to obtain relevant information from TVET Institutions. Also, there is a need to state the sanctions for failure by the regulatees to provide accurate information required by NBTE.

## **2.2 Power to accredit programmes**

Education (Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Act of 1985 among other things specifically gave NBTE the power to accredit programmes of all Polytechnics, Technical Colleges and other technical Institutions in Nigeria. Accreditation in this context is for the purpose of awards of national certificates, diplomas, and other similar awards or qualifications. Accreditation from NBTE's perspective refers to the public recognition granted to a programme offered by a TVET Institution or the generality of its administration having satisfied its educational standards and guidelines as determined through initial and periodic evaluation. In simple term, it involves evaluation of curriculum implemented, academic regulations, academic works of the students, students' performance, quality and number of academic and non-academic staff, adequacy of physical facilities and structures, municipal services, funding and entrepreneurship curriculum, projects and training facilities in comparison with the laid down or minimum standards. Accreditation therefore seeks to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a programme or Institution to promote delivery of qualitative education by the TVET Institutions.

To ensure uniformity, fairness and credibility of the accreditation process, "Evaluation Forms"

have been developed in booklet formats by NBTE. They specified all the criteria to be met by the programmes or Institutions to be accredited by NBTE. The visitation team composed by NBTE has to agree and rate each criterion on qualitative rating scale of 'Very Good', 'Good', 'Fair' and 'Poor'. The team is expected to write their observations on each criterion and offer pragmatic suggestions, advice or recommendations to the Institution where necessary. There is a section of the Evaluation Form where the team is required to recommend whether the programme should be considered for:

- i. Grant of Accreditation for five (5) years with or without condition(s);
- ii. Grant of Interim accreditation for one (1) year due to a number of observed deficiencies;  
and
- iii. Denial of Accreditation due to gross deficiencies in the programme or Institutional Administration.

Fig. 1 shows the flow chart of the NBTE accreditation process. For more than four decades, NBTE has been undertaking accreditation of programmes in TVET Institutions and Institutional administration. The success of this exercise is evident in the increased number of students admitted yearly to gain admission into the TVET Institutions recognized by NBTE with the strict position that minimum academic standards must not be compromised. The biggest challenge facing NBTE regarding accreditation is paucity of fund to exercise this power and perform this statutory function of NBTE.

Although, Institutions are obligated to inform and invite NBTE for accreditation when their programmes are due for it, many of them care less to do this. There is an urgent need to review the Education Act to specify actions or sanctions to be taken against Institutions running programmes with expired accreditation status or enforce compliance by all TVET Institutions to accredit their programmes and Institutional Administration as and when due.

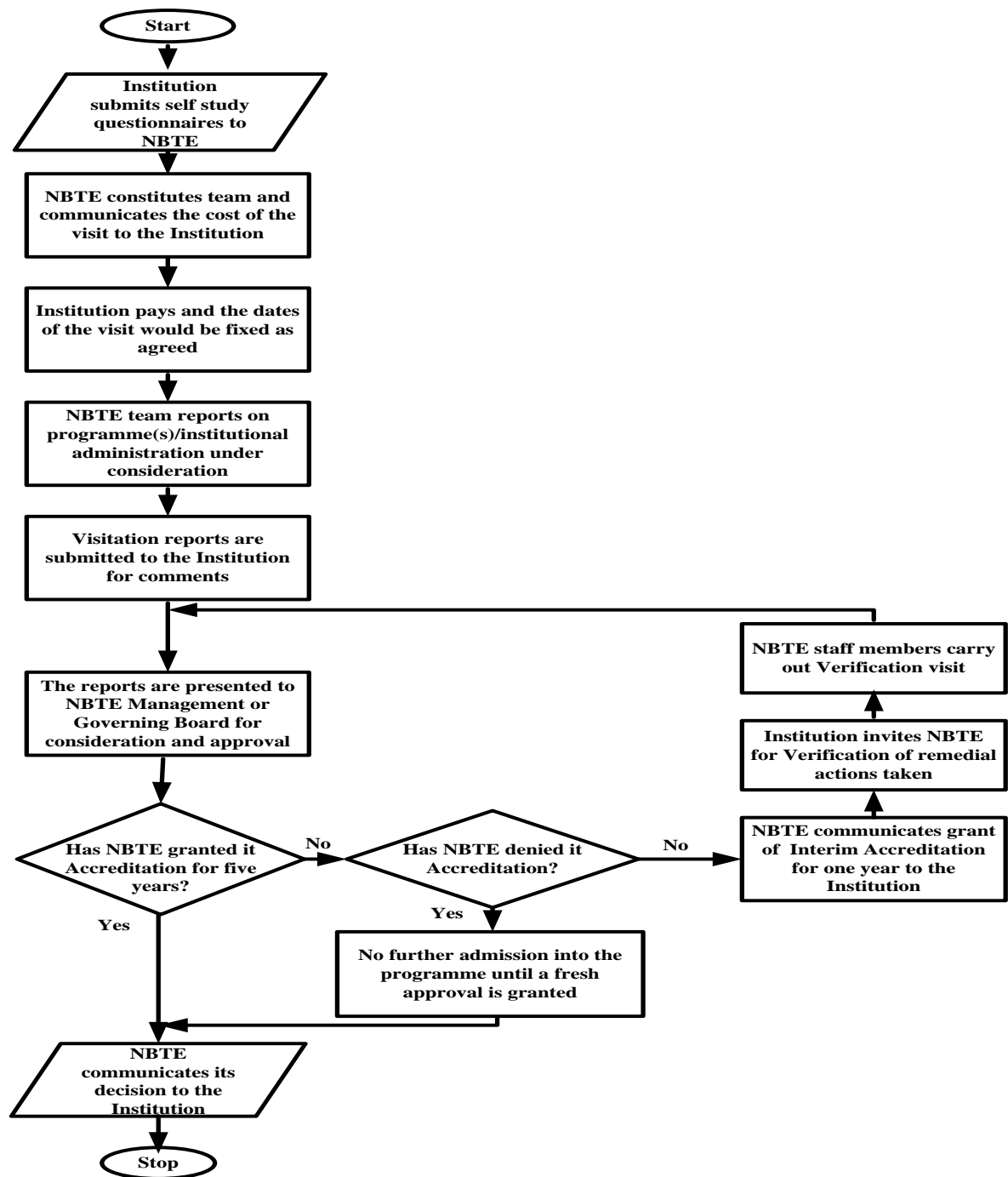


Figure 1 Flow chart of NBTE Accreditation process



### **2.3 Power of Inspection**

In the Education (Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Act of 1985, power of inspection is conferred on NBTE and other similar regulatory agencies such as NUC and NCCE, in order to be kept informed of the nature of:

- i. the instructions given at approved Institutions to persons attending courses of training or programmes;
- ii. the examinations as a result of which approved qualifications are attained and appropriate certificates are awarded.

To exercise this power, it involves appointment of inspectors by NBTE to visit approved Institutions, monitor conduct of examinations leading to award of national vocational certificate (NVC), national innovation diploma (NID), national diploma (ND), higher national diploma (HND), post-HND and national skills qualifications (NSQ). Inspectors are mandated to report to NBTE after Inspection visits to Institutions, the sufficiency of instructions, examinations and other matters of concern. The Inspectors have right to obtain from the Management or staff of Institutions under consideration any information that would assist them in the Inspection exercise and determination of level of compliance with the laid down standards. The power conferred on the Inspectors, the right to enter the premises of Institutions inspected whether there is a prior notice or not, and when there is a suspicion of breaching the laid down standards. Lastly, Inspectors are permitted to perform all such other things that are necessary to achieve the purpose of the inspection exercise. The procedures to be taken against Institutions when they are found wanting are spelt out in NBTE (2023b).

After inspection, sanctions for failing to implement the directions specified by NBTE to reach prescribed minimum standards within the given time frame are stated below:

- i. withdrawal of recognition for any academic programmes or qualifications issues by such Institutions;
- ii. On conviction by Court of law, a fine not exceeding NGN500 (less than one US dollar) or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six (6) months or both fine and imprisonment for Inspector who fails to furnish those returns as required;
- iii. On conviction by Court of law, a fine not exceeding NGN250 (less than one US dollar) or imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months or both fine and imprisonment for Inspector who furnish false returns or reports;
- iv. On conviction, a fine of not exceeding NGN500 (less than one US dollar) or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months or to both such fine and imprisonment for any person who assaults, obstructs, resists any appointed inspector(s) indirectly or directly.

This is a good regulatory power to enable NBTE performs its functions well and ensure compliance to standards related to the provision of adequate training to admitted students by TVET Institutions. However, the fines need to be reviewed upward or allow court to decide what to be paid as fine by the offenders.



#### **2.4 Power to close down erring Institutions**

Another power conferred on NBTE from the Education Act of 1985, is the power to close down erring Institutions. These refer to Institutions offering programmes leading to national qualifications but are not established in compliance with the provisions of this law. NBTE is empowered to take necessary steps to close down such Institutions. The following steps are to be taken (NBTE, 2023b):

- i. NBTE shall send a notice to the proprietor of the Institution an intention to close down the Institution;
- ii. The proprietor is allowed or given opportunity to reply within sixty (60) days after the receipt of notice from NBTE;
- iii. NBTE considers the representation of the proprietor and decide on whether to close down the Institution or not; and
- iv. Any person aggrieved by the decision of NBTE has a right to apply to the court for a review of the matter.

NBTE however cannot close down public Institutions established by Government without the approval of the President of Federal Republic of Nigeria. The challenge here is that it is difficult to enforce a close down order in Nigeria without involving the security agencies and court injunction to close down illegal Institutions. It would amount to trespassing unless a Court warrant or permission has been obtained to enter, search or seal a premise. It would also require that sufficient evidences are needed to present such cases in courts through in-depth and forensic investigation activities. Legal teams have to be engaged to handle such cases. Funds would be needed to pay for legal fees and other related expenses which may not be there in the first place.

NBTE as a law abiding entity and is limited in what can be done legally to close down erring Institutions. It often involves the anti-graft and security agencies to investigate and prosecute erring Institutions if found wanting. However, this procedure has to be clearly stated in the Law to make it obligatory for the anti-graft and security agencies to collaborate with NBTE and respond promptly when Institutions are reported for full investigation and legal actions to be taken against them. Furthermore, effort needs to be made to sensitize the general public on the operations of erring or illegal Institutions so that they would no longer be patronized by Nigerians.

#### **2.5 Power to issue guidelines**

The Education Act (Amended) of 1993 empowers NBTE to issue guidelines to relevant institutions under its purview on the following matters:

- i. The maximum number of students that may occupy each class. That is the carrying capacity for each programme. For instance, non-technology based programmes has a maximum of 60 students per class/stream and technology based programme has 40 students per class/stream;
- ii. The ratio of students to each teacher, that is staff - student ratio. It is 1:20 and 1:30 for technology and non-technology based programmes, respectively;

- iii. The minimum number of weeks in each academic session during which instructions would be given to students. TVET Institutions have a minimum fifteen (15) weeks per semester for lectures, practicals and tutorials and minimum of two (2) weeks for registration, examinations etc;
- iv. The records to be kept by Institution. These include financial, academic, personnel, students, asset, planning and physical development records etc;
- v. The accommodations to be maintained by the Institutions (male and female students' hostel)
- vi. Teaching space in every classroom or lecture hall;
- vii. Amenities to be maintained by the Institutions or municipal utilities;
- viii. The laboratories, workshops, studios, rooms, libraries etc to be maintained by the Institutions;
- ix. Administrative blocks and staff offices to be maintained by the Institution;
- x. Other special buildings to be maintained by Institution such as staff club, recreational facilities, medical/health centre, sport complex etc;
- xi. Staff quarters and other living accommodations to be maintained for staff of the Institution;
- xii. The boundary wall or fences to be maintained by the Institution; and
- xiii. Other physical structure required to ensure maintenance of the minimum standards as laid down by the Federal Government.

In addition, NBTE does not only have power to issue guidelines in respect of the areas mentioned above but can also amend these guidelines. NBTE is also mandated to give them widest publicity to the Institutions under its supervision through notices or any other means that may be determined by NBTE.

Furthermore, NBTE has also issued guidelines on matters beyond the ones listed in the Act in order to standardize all its activities and ensure a level playing field for all the Institutions in the sector. For instance, NBTE had issued guidelines on establishment of new institutions, new programmes, accreditation of existing programmes, Institutions, staffing, entrepreneurship training, skills development and National Skills Qualification Framework, capital projects, academic plans, physical master plan, curricula development and review, appointment of principal officers, constitution of governing council for private polytechnics, entry requirements etc. The Act may be reviewed in future to give NBTE power to issue guidelines on matters affecting TVET Institutions that may emerge due to technological or socio-economic development of the country.

Another area of concern is that the Act does not allow foreign nationals to establish TVET Institutions or international institutions to set up their campuses in Nigeria. This should be reviewed to stimulate direct foreign investment, encourage competitiveness and expand access to TVET sector which can have positive impact on the Nigerian economy and reduce unemployment.

Apart from the above, it is also important that NBTE should be given enforcement powers to use civil penalties or enforceable undertaking by:

- i. applying to the court to seek for a civil remedy or penalty for any regulatee or regulated entity who contravenes the laid down guidelines and standards;
- ii. Issuing an infringement notice to a regulated entity and request regulatees to pay a fine for the offence committed;
- iii. Commencing enforcement action in court for failure to pay the fine by the regulatees; or
- iv. Accepting an enforceable undertaking from a regulatee and/or institute court proceedings against regulatees based on the terms of the undertaking (Petrie, 2021).

### **3. Challenges of exercising NBTE Regulatory Powers**

Here, attempt is made to point out some of the major challenges confronting NBTE in the process of exercising its regulatory powers over the TVET Institutions and relevant service providers in Nigeria, and to fulfill its core mandates. These include:

- i. Paucity of fund which is one of the leading challenges of regulating TVET sector in Nigeria. The annual budgetary allocation to NBTE is dwindling and grossly inadequate to cover its operational and capital expenses and meet all its financial obligations. This is really pathetic;
- ii. Corrupt practices seem to be deeply entrenched in the country. The cases of admission irregularities, illegal affiliations, gratification, sharp practices, certificate fraud or racketeering, examination malpractices and misappropriation of funds that are not thoroughly investigated and prosecuted by the appropriate authorities leave much to be desired (Okorafor & Nnajiifo, 2017).
- iii. Another critical challenge facing TVET in Nigeria is undue political interference and pressure from politicians, public officers and top government officials to influence the regulatory activities and decisions of NBTE to favour their cronies or associates. This tends to lower the education standards in Nigeria;
- iv. Proliferation of illegal study centres, private Polytechnics and Colleges of Health Technology in different parts of the country without the approval of NBTE is alarming. These illegal Institutions are defrauding Nigerians, awarding fake qualifications and difficult to close down without the support of security agencies;
- v. The number of experienced and talented staff to actualize the purpose of TVET in Nigeria is not adequate. Most of the staff in the sector possess limited knowledge and competencies to be able to identify non-compliance to regulations, investigate the causes of complex and dynamic problems and to design cutting edge and effective solutions to address them;
- vi. The present conditions of infrastructure, facilities and utility services in our TVET institutions are too poor to facilitate proper delivery of high quality programmes;
- vii. Inadequate orientation, wrong perception and career stagnation or ceiling are discouraging young minds to pursue TVET programmes or trades. They prefer to pursue programmes that will lead to white collar jobs than blue collar jobs. This trends need to be reversed;

- viii. The regulatory instruments in use by NBTE are now out of date and not in tune with both technological and economic realities. These Acts are over-due for review. Some of the sub-functions listed in the NBTE enabling Act of 1977 are no longer performed by NBTE while the scope of other sub-functions have been expanded beyond what is stated in the Act. Therefore, there is a need to further amend the enabling Act in line with the current realities, technological advancement, future possibilities and global trends;
- ix. There are agitations from the TVET Institutions to run degrees, National Certificate in Education (NCE) and other non-accredited diploma programmes which are outside their primary mandates. They are really deviating from their goals and gradually losing focus;
- x. There is no collective self regulation in the TVET sector. That is, the organized groups or associations do not have regulations or codes of conduct to control the behavior of their members (Black, 2001). Self-regulation in most industries is now a global trend and should be adopted in Nigerian TVET sector.

#### **4. Way Forward**

In order to achieve high quality, functional and well regulated TVET sector in Nigeria, the following strategies are suggested for effective exercising of NBTE regulatory powers.

##### **4.1 Legislative Support**

The Acts empowering NBTE to regulate TVET Institutions in Nigeria are overdue for review. Some portions of the laws are obsolete and not in tandem with the current realities in the country. It is important for the law makers to review these Acts to spell out clear sanctions for anyone who beaches the provisions of the Acts. In addition, new laws should be enacted by the National Assembly to:

- i. encourage Governments at all levels to invest heavily in the development of TVET in Nigeria;
- ii. make TVET attractive to all and sundry;
- iii. criminalize operations of illegal TVET institutions and study centres and facilitate speedy trials of offenders;
- iv. Support the use of ICT and other technological advancements to regulate TVET in Nigeria;
- v. encourage direct foreign investment in the TVET sector to produce competitive graduates with high-demanding skills and facilitate enrolment of more qualified students into TVET programmes.

##### **4.2 Improved Funding**

NBTE needs more funding to meet up with the global standards and expectations of the general public. With adequate funding, it is assumed that most of the regulatees would be willing to comply with the extant guidelines while the regulator would execute its statutory mandates satisfactorily in the sector. The following are suggested to improve funding in the sector:

- i. The Federal Government should implement the UNESCO recommendations and allocate not less than 26 percent of the Nigeria's annual budget to the education sector;
- ii. An Executive Order should be issued to revenue yielding agencies in Nigeria to provide

special financial intervention to NBTE to perform its critical functions especially development and review of curricula, quality assurance activities, compliance and monitoring visits, tracer studies, technical manpower survey and assessment, physical planning and control, and publications on TVET;

- iii. Establishment of national skills fund by Federal Government to address the needs for the high demanding and emerging skills in Nigeria in both public and private Institutions and non-formal sector;
- iv. External grants and donations from development partners and foundations, multilateral organisations should be facilitated to enable NBTE coordinate the Nigerian TVET sector effectively;

#### **4.3 Cooperation and Collaborations with other Agencies**

There is a need for effective collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations and security agencies to improve monitoring and control of quality of training, processes and operations of regulatees in the Nigerian TVET sector. This cooperation should promote exchange of information and ideas freely, facilitate staff exchange programme, share resources or expertise, and sponsor staff to attend jointly organized courses and training programmes. This perhaps would eradicate the issue of separate or multiple accreditation exercises when the professional regulatory bodies collaborate with NBTE to accredit programmes leading to national qualifications.

#### **4.4 Capacity building for the staff of NBTE**

The success or failure of exercising regulatory powers by any regulator depends on the quality of its staff. A regulator with unmotivated, unethical and inefficient staff cannot drive its vision and mission. It is very important that NBTE should invest more on its staff by training and re-training them for effective and efficient services to the public, expose them to diverse and new regulatory approaches, boost their confidence and inspire them to be creative and innovative. The following areas are suggested to build staff capacities among others:

- i. Ethical and professional conduct training;
- ii. Basic and advanced digital literacy training;
- iii. Investigation, compliance, enforcement and regulatory training;
- iv. Entrepreneurship development training;
- v. Leadership training;
- vi. Stakeholders' relationship management training;
- vii. Educational planning, administration and technology training;
- viii. Research, data analysis and technical report writing.

### **5. Conclusion**

The relationship between the quality of technical manpower of any nation and regulation of its TVET Institutions and service providers are proportionate. Lack of adequate resources and funding, obsolete legislations, inadequate staff development opportunities, insufficient capacity to enforce standards and guidelines affect the quality of TVET diplomates or graduates in Nigeria. In order to provide employable and relevant skills to Nigerians, opportunities to earn good incomes, assist young school leavers to pursue their life-long dreams, stir up creativity and

innovation, and contribute meaningful to the development of the country, the Nigerian TVET sector should be well regulated. Government should continue to support NBTE to implement existing regulations and provide incentives for the regulated entities in the sector to follow the laid down standards and guidelines for the sector.

Furthermore, there is need to amend the Education Act, specifically the Act should state in clear terms that any person running and issuing certificate of technological programmes or courses without the approval of the NBTE is doing so illegally and the Institution should be closed down immediately. The provision of the Act that mandates the NBTE to inform the Proprietor and give him 60 days' notice on the intention to close the Institution should be restricted to Institution that has NBTE approval.

The need to immediately close down illegal Institutions cannot be over emphasized as in recent times before the NBTE gets to know of their activities, students and their parents would have already expended money and time on the programmes. An example came up in recent time wherein a student of an illegal Polytechnic wrote to the NBTE to confirm the status of the Institution after obtaining both his ND and HND qualifications and sadly the Institution had not been accredited. Four years of the student's life went down the drain not counting the monies expended. Illegal Institutions have become endemic and it is killing the school system and there is a need to take drastic actions by closing them down pending thorough investigation.

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