

**TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR YOUTH  
EMPOWERMENT AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA  
BY**

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**Abstract**

*The Future of any nation lies essentially on the capabilities of its youth. This paper attempts to discuss the relevance of functional Technical Vocational Education to youth empowerment. The paper high -lights the states and Federal Government Contributions towards Youth Empowerment. It noted with dissatisfaction that some of the measures already taken by Local, State and Federal Government are not only haphazardly done but also grossly inadequate, especially in the face of massive youth restiveness, youth debasement, poverty, hunger, population explosion and the unemployment situation. The paper high -lights the problem and asserts that proper planning and vigorously pursuit of TVE programmes can make Nigeria self-reliant economically, it thus gives suggestion on the way forward.*

**Introduction**

The Importance of Technical Vocation Education ('I'VE) is enormous, especially now that National Policy on educational NPE (2004p.24) has recognized it as the type of education that leads to acquisition of practical skill, attitudes understanding and knowledge relating to economic and social life. In line with this good intention, the federal Government developed a new system of education from the former 6-52-3 practiced during our colonial era to a new system of education known as 6-3-3- 4system NPE (1981revised) which currently metamorphosed into the present system of 9-3-4 system known as new 9-year basic education curriculum structure according to Nigeria Education Research and Development Council NERDC (2008).

This new curriculum was turned in line with millennium Development Goals (MDGS) that is the development that seeks to tackle on poverty, health, and gender equality, the environmental and global partnership. It also addresses the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS) whose major highlights in this new curriculum include:

1. Entrepreneurial Skill
2. Strategic Communication Skills known as Information Communication technology (ICT).
3. Support for reducing poverty, Creating job and wealth for the graduates. On the other hand youths are the fulcrum of development in any nation of the world. It is in this light that Asogwa (1999) highlighted that the success of national development depends on the abundant and

albeit untapped resources of the youths who form a large section of the population. Going by the statistics of federal ministry of statistics (1992) the youths make up more than 60% of the Nigerian population. This view was supported by the united nation in Nigeria UN (2004). These youths are mostly found in productive sectors of the economy both in public and private areas. These youths in Nigeria are also involved in the development of their communities through programmes by way of self-help groups, social defense, mutual aids and some other community development programmes.

Hassan (2008) opined youths are human beings at their most capable stage the arc the most productive segment of the population of any country. For a country to reap, exploit and benefit fully from the strength of and capabilities of the youths, adequate attention by way of education and empowerment should be accorded to the youths. Therefore the Nigerian youths must be allowed active participation in national development as well as their involvement in decision making process at all levels because they are future leaders. To achieve these laudable objectives, there are certain conditions that should be met as a divided that can hasten lip development among these youths such as inculcation of national consciousness, right type of values, attitudes as well the training opportunities for the youths .to acquire appropriate skills abilities and competences both mentally and physically. Olaitan (1996) perceived that technical vocational education as the most reliable instrument for individual and societal survival and development in a constantly changing world. Osuala (1999) observed that the violence that rocks Nigeria cities has its roots in unemployment and unequal opportunities which arise due to lack of vocational technical skills considered necessary for individual to gain employment.

This paper thus calls for proper planning and streamlining or the activities that are involved in the employment of the youths such that majority of them could benefit from such programmes.

### **DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

There are divergent views on the definition of the youth depending on the particular perspective one is viewing it but in the context of this paper youth is viewed as a period immediately succeeding childhood to adult. Youth is therefore defined based on the tradition and culture of a community especially at the agreed age when a person becomes marriageable especially from early adolescence to adulthood. These include post senior secondary school students, graduate of tertiary institutions, (NYSC) and the street youths including the hawkers.

Empowerment according to World Bank (1991) empowerment is a process of increasing the assets and capabilities of an individual or groups to make positive choices for desired out comes in order wards empowerment implies helping people to build and capitalize on their own potentials for survival. Sustainable development (SD) according to Okpala (2012) is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.

### **A Brief Survey of Some of the Youths Empowerment and Rural Development Programmes**

Olaitan (1996) stated that evidence of government's concern for rural development includes the establishments of various agencies and programmes.

Such as

- The Directorate for food, roads and rural infrastructure (DFRRI)
- The better life for rural women programme (BLFRW B)
- The National Policy for Integrated rural Development (NPFIRD)
- The National Directorial for Employment (NDE)
- The Green Revolution and the back to land programme
- Better life programme and family economic advancement programme
- Introduction of NYSC, technical aids Corp's
- Complementary efforts of some state government for example include youth and women programme in Bauchi State
- 2011 youth stake holders forum II organized by the Lagos State government.
- These programmes were primarily and fundamentally introduced to engage the Nigeria Youths, and equally assist them to establish ventures that could assist in empowering them. What is interesting to note is that these agencies and programmes along with their different approaches adopted by successive government arose from an awareness that youths in rural and urban communities in Nigeria must be enabled to continue to serve as a back bone of national economic development. Arguably these agencies and programmes have been met with failure and the most important reason for their failure is that most of them are predicted on ignorance about the actual need and interest of the youth such programmes usually exhibit inadequate knowledge of fundamental data on population of a 'given youth in a particular programme, interest and attitude of the youths towards such programme.

Other reasons are:

- These agencies have been politicized to the extent where one cannot vouch for those in management position of those agencies in terms of their know ledge and experience in achieving the goals of the agencies.

- Inadequate funding, poor staffing, lack of logistic support insincerity of purpose and lack of continuity are part of their failure.
- Also the youths are not given the opportunity to make choices based on their interest abilities and capabilities because they seek to provide for the youths what the youths do not feel they need.

Therefore, this paper promotes the position that functional technical vocation education more especially the type which fosters the acquisition of survival skills is what the youths needs more than anything else in order to be able to salvage themselves from poverty, illiteracy, youth restiveness and other vices.

### **Relevance of Technical Vocational Education to Sustainable Industrial Development**

Osioma, (2005) stated that the need for technical vocational education arises because the economy depends largely on the ability of educational institution to produce the right caliber of skilled manpower for industries.

According to Osuala (1987) technical vocational education is a systematic learning experience which is designed to fit individual for gainful employment in recognized occupation as semi skilled workers or technicians or sub professionals the subject therefore, expose the learners to both theoretical and practical orientation with the intention of making individuals more resourceful, creative and innovative for development and survival or both the individual and the society.

Consistent with this statement, Denga (1983) earlier explained that technical vocational education as the type of education that is suitable for production of industrial technician needs. The emphasis for these types of training is practical training needed to enter into industry, agriculture, commerce etc and become gainfully employed. Similarly Okorie (2001) sees vocational education as an design to prepare skilled workers for industry agriculture commerce etc and this education is usually provided for at secondary or at lower tertiary levels. 'I'VE consists of the subjects or discipline which are vocational in nature and are capable of providing occupational courses for individual; who wants to be occupationally competent.

### **Technical Vocational Activities that Enhance Youth Empowerment When Vigorously Pursued**

#### **Agricultural Education and Youth Empowerment.**

Akuma (2011) observed that the increasing need for food and other agricultural products made subsistence farming inadequate for the production of enough food and materials for the ever increasing human population. For this reason new technical vocational method are used "to improve productivity with the objective of preparing graduates with the right altitude to work and professional competence in agriculture and equally develop in the youths adequate knowledge and ability to manage farm

effectively. For instance, various machines are now used instead of crude implements and traditional method to increase food and fiber as well as live stock.

### **Auto- Mechanic and Youth Empowerment**

A lot of opportunities about in this trade for the youths. Youths can be engaged in Auto vehicle body building, Auto body spraying and Auto mechanics. The government or the private partner can engage a trainer to train at least a minimum of 10 youths per trainer and agreed on amount payable to the trainer annually for three years. This will enable the youths to acquire competence to be self dependent and self reliant.

### **Business Education and Youth Empowerment**

Awoyoku (2009) stated that the new 9 years basic education curriculum structure as an innovation has presented this subject in an integrated nature. And so the teaching of the subject is by integrated approach which increases students/youths reading and practicing ability based on the way the content" of the scheme arc arranged. From these students arc directly involved ill tile learning process, with the objectives of equipping students with the right skills that will enable them to engage in a work life the office as well CIS for self employment.

### **Building Technology and Youth Empowerment**

Youths with manual dexterity can be encouraged to venture into block laying and concreting. With the assistance of the master trainer who teach them the art of tempering sand and cement in a good proportion to get a good mix in preparation for molding of sand Crete block. By this, youths are empowered in the art of block laying and concrete. This is very vital especially these days that population has increased and more houses are daily being built to accommodate the teaming population both in urban and rural centres.

### **Carpentry and Joinery and Youth Empowerment**

Youths can be sensitized to take to this all important trade. Carpentry and Joinery is as old as mans history. The various state ministries of works and housing can empower youths by training them on carpentry and joinery and at the end of three they can be given a proficiency certificate O11 trade test part 1 and part 11 this will enable them to be employed to work in both public and private officers as well as be self employed.

### **Electrical/Electronics and Youth Empowerment**

The aspirations of having constant electric energy for industrial and domestic uses have not been realized. Many Nigerians now resort to using generators in both houses, big offices and commercial areas. Repairs and maintenance of generators of all kinds and sizes are now in vogue. Through master

trainers, youth's interest can be channeled on the art of repairing and maintaining generators on the ratio of one to ten youths for easy assimilation of the training programme.

### **Home Economics Education and Youth Empowerment**

Anyakoha (2009) stated that these days, home economics has become a very important school subject that is taught as from primary, junior and senior secondary school levels. Also home economics prepare male and females for both home making and different jobs that require home economics skills, knowledge and attitude and these contributes to national economic development. In light of the philosophy of home economics education, it is evidently clear that an exposure to such an education could really be a tool for empowerment of the youths.

**Metal Work Technical Education and Youth Empowerment** Youths can be empowered in the skill of welding and fabrication where they design and construct metal for doors and window protectors of air kinds. They can also be empowered through master trainer in the art .of fitter machinist, casting, forging and foundry work as well as in the art of marking articles with sheet metal such articles includes sieve, metal buckets, pucker, rats and rabbit trap, metal pots etc. It is a known fact that metal articles arc durable.

**Information Communication Technology (ICT)** Information communication technology which IS the entire process involved in sending receiving storing and retrieving of information using electronics devices has made the world a global village. The advancement in technology has made it easy for two individuals at wide distance from each other to talk as if they were staying at a close range. 1 t is now feasible for a single person to address the whole world at once without stress.

Therefore interest of the youths should be channeled towards becoming computer literate. Group's churches, mosques private and public firms are encouraged to train the youths on these new technologies for self reliance. The computer and its application are other areas which disabled youths can benefit

### **Recommendations**

- As the economy restructures and moved from labour intensive to capital intensive and then to knowledge intensive, the VTE system must respond to ensure that the work force has relevant knowledge skill and values that would enable the youths to adopt to the changes.
- The management of all technical vocational education institutions should be left strictly for experts in relevant areas. The present situation where general educationists are managing the supposed technical vocational education institutions should be discouraged.
- Adequate funding in terms of provision of tools. Equipment, training, material, transportation and welfare package for technical vocational teachers' infrastructure facilities and utilities should be made available.

- The dignity of labour which the country is noted for should be encouraged and adequately rewarded in order for the youths to embrace practical skills as a means of survival for the individual and the society at large.
- Government at other levels should complement efforts of the Federal Government Policy on Youth Development so as to facilitate the attainment of the laudable objectives.

### Conclusion

TVE provide an important path way in total education system. Nigeria will hardly develop without well equipped technical vocational education institution. Matsura (2001) observed that education for all and most importantly technical and vocational education is there for an indispensable segment crucial to the technological empowerment of people and consequently the nation. Agbabaje (2005) contend that vocational education is a key to self reliance and economic growth opportunities for diversified subsistent production as well as establishment of small, medium and large scale industries these provide people with gainful employment and enhance the country's foreign exchange. We should be aware that the youths are the major components of the Nigerian population they should not be allowed to waste, but should be encouraged to be self reliance.

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