

# FUNCTIONAL TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) FOR SUSTAINABLE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

**PEDRO AGUNDU UGWOEGBULEM**

*Building Technology Education Department*

*School of Technical Education*

*Federal College of Education (Technical), Umuze.*

## **Abstract**

*Most nations in the world today are facing severe economic recession. The seriously affected nations particularly the developing countries are ravaged with socio-economic and political challenges such as youth unemployment, excruciating poverty, slow rate of development, youth resistiveness, bad governance, and other socially degrading activities. Nigeria is pathetically submerged in this state. Demographically, Nigeria has been described as a predominantly youthful society with a high rate of unemployment. The country has not been able to fix youth unemployment because her youths lack empowerment which could position them for self-employment and self determination. The development of the youth is critical to economic survival and vibrancy of any nation. The youths need to have access to education that will enable them enhance their standard of living and gain competitive skills/self-reliant skills that will be in high demand in the labour market and self-engagement. Functional and qualitative education still remains the most important potent instrument for sustainable Youth empowerment and national development. This paper strongly emphasizes Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as the panacea to youth unemployment. It upholds that TVET is a tool for empowering people especially the youth for sustainable livelihood and economic development.*

**Key words:** TVET, Youth Empowerment, Unemployment, Self-reliant skills, Self-employment .

## **Introduction**

Most nations in the world today are facing severe economic recession. The global economic melt-down has caused global financial crisis and triggered off socio-economic and political challenges. The seriously affected nations have been ravaged with unemployment, slow rate of development, youth resistiveness, excruciating poverty, problems of governance and other socially degrading vices (Mba, Nnadi, Ohawgu and Aduhuekwe, 2020). There has been turbulence in the world economic climate, a situation that has led to the decrease in gross domestic and national product. These unprecedented economic and social changes are sweeping across all corners of the global world and the growing effects of globalization and technology are drawing a new picture of our current and future world. Developing countries, like Nigeria are pathetically submerged in this turbulent economic condition compared to the developed countries which have adopted robust and well articulated-strategies in addressing the emerging socio-economic and political changes.

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In Nigeria, youth unemployment is one of the greatest socio-economic and political challenges that threatens national stability, security and economic growth; and impedes national development. The youths constitute more than fifty percent of Nigerian population (Nwodoh, 2020). According to Musari (2009), more than 4.5 million Nigerian youths enter the labour market every year without any hope of getting employment for life sustenance. The precarious situation has left the Nigeria youths in a vicious cycle of excruciating poverty that daily erodes their bright future and self-confidence. The increasing rate of unemployment and low socioeconomic status of Nigerian graduates in Nigeria are encouraging a dwindling faith in formal education. Nigeria cannot address the problem of unemployment because the youth lack empowerment through appropriate education that could put them in position for self-employment and self-reliance. The constant complaints of insufficient jobs for youths by federal parastatals and other non-governmental organizations has made it seem so difficult for graduates to have hope or even search harder for places of employment. The country is hence plagued by persistent challenges of unemployment, inadequate employability skills in relation to the requirements in the world of work as well as vulnerability of youths to sponsors of violent extremism due to unemployment triggered poverty.

The emerging global socio-economic and political challenges have placed a huge task on the educational service delivery. Educational administrators and planners have the mandate to address these emerging problems arising from youth unemployment. The pertinent questions to be addressed are:

- How do we address the issue of youth unemployment?
- What type of education should government adopt to arrest the problem of lack of employability/self-reliant skills among the youths?
- What policy measures should be put in place to promote sustainable youth empowerment and national development?

The answers to these pertinent questions are anchored on that type of education that is relevant, addresses needs and promotes youth empowerment. Investments in youths education is one of the most important and effective ways of reducing unemployment and hence poverty. Youth empowerment entails the development of mental and physical capacity, power or skills in youths for them to have enhanced social, cultural, political and economic status (Nwodoh, 2020). According to Ebhesi and Giame cited Nwodoh (2021), an education system that is worth its salt is one which emphasizes quality, relevance and equity with the products of such educational system being adequately equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies required to function effectively in the competitive world and face realities of life. Abdul Kareem (2001) cited Asare Bediako (2013) stressed that education has been universally recognized as an investment in human capacity which increases productive capacity of the people and later yields economic benefits and contributes to future national wealth.

This paper therefore vigorously promotes Technical Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) as an effective educational tool for youth empowerment, economic growth and national transformation. It is believed that when a youth is properly empowered through the right type of education, he/she will be integrated and pragmatically transform to a better personally with the spirit of self-determination and self-actualization to excel in life outside the non-existent white collar jobs. He /she will be an asset to the government, industries and private sectors.

### **Nigerian Economic Structure: Current Status and Emerging Issues**

According to United Nations Population Division (2017), Nigeria has an estimated population of 190 million, making it the largest population in Africa and the seventh largest population in the world by 2050 behind India and China. Nigeria is endowed with multifarious and multitudinous resources-both human and material- by far more than any other sub-saharan African country. Thus, Nigeria has the significant economic potential to become a major player in the global economy. However, this enviable status has not been adequately harnessed to benefit vast majority of Nigerians (Nwachukwu, Obi and Ugwoegbulem, 2018). According to Iwayemi (2013), the inability of Nigeria to translate these resources into maximum economic benefits was due to gross mismanagement, profligate spending, kleptomania and adverse policies of various governments.

Nigeria vigorously operated the formal education she obtained through colonization which incidentally suppressed agriculture, craftsmanship, apprenticeship and entrepreneurial activities of her people. The emergence of oil boom of between 1960's and 1970's led to the transmogrification of Nigeria's economy from the agro-based economy to mono-based petroleum-driven economy. The new found oil wealth, the concurrent decline of other economic sectors and the eventual shift to mono-based petroleum driven economy incidentally led to wide-spread poverty and unemployment among Nigerians (Odunlaro, 2007 cited in Ugwoegbulem, 2020). The incidental lurch toward this statist economic model has been particularly worrisome because virtually all other sectors of the economy except the oil and gas sector are nearly extinct or latent with minimal or no contribution to the economic growth and development of Nigeria. Nigeria's economy has continued to be dependent on oil and gas as the major source of foreign exchange earnings (Aleshe, 2014). The structure of the economy has continued to remain highly import-dependent, consumption-driven and undiversified. The country's economic mainstay is unrefined oil export combined with exports of other primary commodities without any further processing before exports. Crude oil accounts for more than 95% of exports and foreign exchange earnings while manufacturing sector accounts for less than one percent of the total exports (Saidu, Dahiru and Suleiman, 2017). It generates 75% of government revenue contributing about 30% of the GDP, but employs only 3% of labour force ( Akpobasah, 2014). Nigeria has not been able to create an environment for high value added economic activities. There is low capital formation and declining direct foreign investment, with the exemption of the oil and gas sector. Global oil drop witnesses over the years as well as the covid-19 pandemic period worsened the global financial crisis. Nigeria's economic development over the time remains sluggish, falling on an environment that does not promote much entrepreneurs who are proven globally as the backbone of economic growth. Nigeria has continuously occupied the lower steps of the Global Competitive Index Ladder as a consequence of low productivity and also over reliance upon resource exportation. Thus, Nigeria performs very poorly in terms of global economic competitiveness. The general economic performance has continued to be seriously undermined by deplorable infrastructures, insecurity issues, bad governance, corruption and mismanagement of public finances. Majority of Nigerians remain under the burden of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

### **The Youths and their Importance**

The youths are the beacon of hope in any society and the nation as a whole. They are one of the greatest assets any nation can possess. The National Youth Development (2001) asserts that the youths are the foundation of a society: their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pattern of development and security of a nation. The youths are anchored with productive and valuable skills which propel the socio-economic development of any nation. Through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in economic development and socio-political attainments. In their dreams and hopes, a nation finds her motivation; on their energies, she builds her vitality and purpose. And because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured (FGN, 2001). The youths occupy a prominent place in any society. Apart from being leaders of tomorrow, they outnumber the middle aged and aged (Onyekpa, 2007). Besides numerical superiority, youths have energy and ideas that are society's great potential. The youths are a particular segment of the national population that is sensitive, energetic, active and the most productive phase of life as citizens. The youths are also the most volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population in terms of socio-economic, emotion and other aspects (Anasi, 2021). The degree of disorderliness and instability in society is determined by the youths. Every nation should strive hard to possess an empowered youthful society because the youths are the engine drive of the socio-economic and political development of any nation.

**Unemployment:** Unemployment can be defined as the number of the able-bodied men/women who are not employed. The International Labour Organization (ILO) 2009 defined unemployment as the number of economically active people who are available but without work and are seeking to work including people who have lost their work and those who have voluntarily left work. Unemployment exists when a fit and eligible individual or group of individuals do not have a job or work to do for some compensation. Psychologically, the unemployed person usually experiences trauma, anger, frustration, low self-esteem, negative life satisfaction, unhappiness and mental disorder including depression and acute stress.

**The Youths' Age:** The Youths according to the National Youth Development (2001) are persons between the age of 18 and 24. Sometimes, this age range is extended to 35 years to cater for the people who have not actualized their dreams. This age-range would normally be for people who have completed secondary education and would either be in tertiary institutions or striving to secure employment or are already employed.

### **The Youth Unemployment and the Emerging Challenges**

The world economic situation is in great danger as a result of unemployment, unemployable skills and security challenges. Youth unemployment is currently a global issue that threatens national development. The socio-economic and political development in Nigeria poses great challenges to the youths. Economic and social statistics present a sombre picture that leaves much to be desired (Ajufu, 2013). Unemployment looms large in Nigeria and its concomitant consequences are alarmingly daring as the youths are worst hit. Uddin (2013) asserted that Nigeria has been described as a predominantly youthful society with a high rate of unemployment. Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2021) observed that Nigeria has a youth population of eighty (80) million representing 60 percent of the total population of the country. Sixty four (64) million of them are employed while one million six hundred

thousand (1.6 million) are underemployed whereas 112.5 million Nigerians live below the poverty line. According to Ogbuanya & Okoye (2015), Nigeria has an energetic and economic viable youth populace that should be involved in fruitful venture to help make considerable contribution to the domestic development. Statistics from Federal Bureau of Statistics (2017) corroborated that Nigeria has an economically active and working age population that is over 50% of the entire population and an unemployment rate of 14.2%. Also, the statistics extracted from National Bureau of Statistics (2020) stated gloomy picture of the emerging trend of unemployment rate in Nigeria. According to the excerpts, Nigeria's unemployment rate rose to 27.1% in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2020. The current unemployment rate in Nigeria is put at 33.3% in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2022 (NBS, 2022). A critical study of the unemployment rate in Nigeria shows at a glance that it has been increasing in arithmetical progression. Unemployment rate will continue to rise with the emerging trend of globalization and sophistication.

Youth unemployment in Nigeria is a consequence of several factors. One of the major factors is that of population growth. Nigeria as a country has continued to rise with the emerging trend of globalization and sophistication. Youth unemployment in Nigeria is a consequence of several factors. One of the major factors is that of population growth. Nigeria as a country has continued to experience high rate of population growth. This increasing population growth has produced an overwhelming increase in youth population thereby resulting in an increase in the size of the working age population. Secondly, lack of unemployable skills due to inappropriate school curricula is another factor contributing to the rising youth unemployment. Job analysts have argued that in Nigeria, the skills that job seekers possess do not match the needs and demand of employers. According to them, the education system in Nigeria has its liberal bias which indeed over supplies the labour market with graduates who do not possess the skills required by employers. Analysts have also opined that many graduates in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial skills to facilitate self-employment (Oladele, Akeke and Oladunjoye, 2011). Thirdly, the perception of policy makers and the youths themselves about employment is also responsible for rising rate of youth unemployment. To the policy makers and the youth, employment means a job with salary and working for someone else. Based on this, school curricula and training programmes are generally tailored towards preparing the young people for white collar jobs. Since these jobs do not exist, there is often a mismatch between the skills possessed by the job seekers and the available jobs.

The astronomical trajectory of unemployment, particularly among the youths in Nigeria calls for immediate action to curtail the growth. The reality on ground shows that government alone cannot provide all the needed jobs for the growing youthful population. The cause of increased rate of unemployment, particularly among the youths may not be unconnected to lack of functional education that promotes practical training that exposes the virtues of self-reliance (Uzor, Okeke and Ugwuanyi, 2019). With the saturation of the opportunity for white collar jobs, the possession of self-reliant skills would surely enable some of our unemployed graduates to become entrepreneurs who can create needed jobs to stimulate growth and development (Nwachukwu, Obi and Ugwoegbulem, 2018 and Oviawe, 2018).

Youth unemployment can lead to catastrophic consequences to a nation. The consequence of not fully developing and harnessing youth's potential could be dire, including

significant economic losses, armed conflict and political and social upheaval and instability. Youths are more likely to become frustrated because of the legitimate grievances, including lack of unemployment opportunities, low educational attainment, little participation in decision making and low social stability.

### **Youth Empowerment through Education: A potent instrument for Transformation**

Education is the most potent tool used for empowering the youths with knowledge, skills and self-confidence (Nwodoh, 2021). Any highly developed nation in the world today is simply the product of its educated citizens. Education is a weapon for the advancement of the underprivileged, the marginalized, the un-informed and the oppressed in the society. Youth empowerment through education is a catalyst for sustainable growth and national development. The notion of youth empowerment becomes a very handy tool when there is a need to address societal problems such as youth unemployment, poverty, bad governance, social vices among the youths, etc. A nation with an un-empowered youth gives an indication of looming socio-economic and political crisis. Functional and relevant education that addresses needs must of necessity provide the youths the empowerments for self-determination, self-reliance, economic and financial independence and economic development of the society. Thus, youth empowerment through education gives the youth the democratic license to be an active player in the society and national development.

The pertinent questions to be asked are:

- What is youth empowerment?
- What are the objectives of youth empowerment?
- What are the derivable benefits of youth empowerment?

The major objectives of any government intervention on youth empowerment is to involve the youths in the socio-economic and political development of the nation. "Empowerment" has been defined by several authors and users as it relates the issue they are dealing with. World Bank (2011) defined empowerment as the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to outcomes. Empowerment symbolizes effort to encourage or assist somebody for meaningful living. Youth empowerment is a development programme aimed at creating opportunities that will encourage and develop the youth to be morally responsible, self-reliant and financially productive citizens. Youth empowerment according to Vavrus and Fletcher (2006) is defined as an attitudinal, structural and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability and authority to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people around them. These definitions see empowerment in the light of human capacity for the purpose of making individuals or groups self-reliant. In the scholarly work of Olabiyi (2013), empowering the young people is the process of encouraging them to be active citizens in their communities, society and nation as a whole. Youths mentoring can provide the young people with positive role models, support and encouragement and is considered one of the most effective ways of helping them to reach their fullest effective ways of helping them to reach their fullest potential as the productive members of the society.

Thus youth empowerment is a process of building and individual in the aspects of skill, economic, finance, social, moral and psychological development with the aim of making the individual self-reliant to him/herself and the society at large. Education is recognized as the main vehicle for promoting and improving the status of youths. There is the

urgent need to reposition education to effectively equip the youths with right skills of empowerment to add value to the society. Education is signatory to major conventions protecting the rights of youths and also equipping the youths to be self-reliant provision of functional and qualitative education remains the best empowerment any government can give its citizens.

The objectives of Youth empowerment through education are numerous. According to Botswana Core Welfare Indicators Survey (2009 and 2010), the objectives of empowering youths are to enable them to:

- Develop good work ethics
- Attain entrepreneurship experiences
- Attain employment readiness
- Develop skills and competencies that will enable them make positive contribution to the development their communities.
- Foster the development of behavioural change and
- Instill some level of responsibility and accountability in them, drawing on their creativity and energy to improve the delivery of public services, reduce youth unemployment and eradicate poverty among young people (Ministry of Sports and Youths and Culture, 2009).

Skills-based training through education furnishes a lot of benefits. Skill development of the youth empowerment provides.

- Skills to diversify the youths for self-actualization, rather than reliance on government alone.
- Equipping the youths to value their handwork.
- Training in basic literary, numeracy and life skills which should be an integral part of the whole system.
- The promotion of the growth and profitability of the youths for self-employment to enhance the economy.

### **Basis of Skill-based training and Skill Development:**

To achieve sustainable youth empowerment and national development, there must be adequate investment in skill-based training. The transformation of African economics into global competitive of African economies with abundant opportunities for decent work for the young population which constitutes a large portion of the continent's population has been hinged on investment of relevant skills and knowledge (World Economic Forum, 2015). In this era of knowledge-driven economy, a youth must be empowered economically, politically and socially to be active participant in the society and the nation at large through relevant and functional education. Skills and knowledge are the engine drive of economic growth, social development and national transformation. Investment in knowledge and skills acquisition is seen by many governments as the cornerstone of developing an employable and globally competitive work force (AFDB & OECD, 2008). Developing human capital in different vocational skill acquisition programmes enables the youth to engage in productive work, adapt to rapidly changing labour markets and economics. The development of human capital through skill acquisition has the capacity to transform all sectors for global competitiveness as it is the human that controls and coordinates other sectors of the economy. All young

people require economic empowerment skills that prepare them for decent jobs so that they can thrive and participate fully in their societies.

Quality education and skills will not only empower the recipients for access to economically and socially rewarding jobs but also empower them to create jobs, provide opportunities for re-integration of displaced workers and migrants and provide platform for school dropouts and graduates to transit from school to work (AFDB & OECD, 2008). Developing relevant skills and competencies among the youth, poor and the vulnerable members of the society is crucial to reducing poverty and poverty-triggered insecurity in Nigeria. This becomes imperative as skills development in the global community is not just a part of country's human resources strategies but more of economic growth, poverty reduction and national security challenge. There is no denial that the country's long drawn struggle with sectional violence, insecurity, crimes and other social vices impact negatively on the country's image as a heaven of investment. These constraints to development have been linked with persistent high unemployment among the youths and a major cause is lack of adequate skills for employment among job seekers (Dike 2009; NISER, 2009, ODU, 2009, UDDIN, 2013).

Awo (2016) highlighted the derivable benefits of skill-based empowerment of the youth to the overall advantage of the nation to include;

- Poverty eradication which can be assured when the youths are engaged with economic and life sustaining activities.
- Reduction in crime and insecurity through youth empowerment programmes.
- Youth empowerment increases technological development of nation.
- Increased employment creation is also assured through youth empowerment as they will be gainfully employed to create jobs for our vulnerable groups in the society.
- Skill based youth empowerment increases creativity and innovation tendencies of the youth for quality livelihood.
- Increased entrepreneurship for amplified Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment generation and robust economy.
- Assured transparent social and political systems. This is because economically engaged youths cannot in any way be available for thuggery, rigging among other anti-social vices.
- A well structured VTE empowerment will improve the level of education of the general public because the youths form the greater proportion of the world population.
- Youth empowerment with relevant vocational and technical skills reduces the dependability of the youths on parents and government.

### **Making Case for Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as an Investment Tool for Youth Empowerment and Sustainable Economic Growth**

One of the key indices of a sustainable vibrant economy is the ability of a nation to provide enabling economic environment for its citizens to be gainfully employed or self employed through relevant and functional education. The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) faces huge demand globally due to high level of unemployment and the quest for technological development, industrialization and economic growth (UNESCO, 2010). TVET is irrefutably regarded as the centre-hub for propelling the



overall economic emancipation of the society through mass skill delivery. Skill training in TVET leads to acquisition of capabilities to generate wealth. It is a statement fact that TVET has no rival in skill delivery development. According to Okwori (2010), TVET is the only way we can enhance productivity, wealth creation and poverty alleviation of individuals and the society in general. Ajibola & Soyemi (2012) stated that TVET is a tool for empowering people especially the youths for sustainable livelihood and economic development. Chinwe (2008) asserted that TVET plays an essential role in improving the well-being of youths and communities, it increases productivities, empowers individuals to become self-reliant and stimulate entrepreneurship. TVET can be said to be one of the most effective means of empowering youths not only to overcome poverty but also limit the incidence of social vices in the society due to joblessness and to promote a culture of peace, freedom and democracy.

The question is what is TVET system? TVET according to FRN (2013) is an aspect of education that involves the acquisition of practical skills, attitude, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation or trades in various sections of economic and social life. Okoye and Okwelle (2013) stated that TVET helps to provide individuals with leaning experiences and training that equip them with skills to manipulate their natural environment and nurture the development of their immediate community and the nation in general. TVET prepares people for skilled performance on practical tasks. Wapnuk (2013) as cited by Chinwe (2019) agreed that TVET involves the acquisition of skills and competencies that can help individuals to function productively in industrial and commercial occupations. TVET according to Uwaifo (2010) is the training of technically oriented people who are to be initiators, facilitators and implementors of technological development of a nation. Uwaifo further stated that TVET equips people not only with vocational and technical skills, but also with a broad range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are now recognized as indispensable for meaningful participation in work and life. Invariably, TVET should include both social and productive skills that people need to self-reliant.

UNESCO (2009) defines TVET as all forms and aspects of education that are technical and vocational in nature, provided either in educational institutions or under their authority, by public authorities, the private sector or through other forms of organized education, formal or non-formal aiming to ensure that all members of the community have access to the pathways of life-long learning. According to Karaga, Kudu and Salawu (2017) as cited in Ugwoegbulem, 2021, TVET is seen as an economic education that is geared to the needs of the market and thus contributes to the national economic system. It is a type of education which imparts saleable skills or entrepreneurial skills required for business undertaking in the absence of paid employment. Okala (2003) emphatically stated that TVET is that aspect of education and training that borders on the acquisition of practical and applied technical and commercial skills as well as basic scientific knowledge which are necessary for betterment of man's well-being.

According to Kukoyi (2009), TVET is a planned programme of courses and learning experiences that begin with exploration of career options, support basic academic and life skills and enable achievement of high academic standard, leaderships and preparation for industry-defined work. The major thrust of TVET is to fight ignorant and illiteracy, provide knowledge, develop skills and inculcate the attitudes that are required for entry and progressing in any occupation. TVET prepares learners for careers that are based on manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to specific trade,

occupation or vocation. Unlike general education, the focus TVET is centered on applied skills as opposed to knowledge, practical as opposed to theory and skills as opposed to knowledge. TVET is essentially framed in such a way that the recipient should be able to create self-employment in the absence of paid job. TVET is the form of education that advocates the development of the head (knowledge), training of the hand (dexterity) and enriching the heart (conscientiousness and painstaking).

Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) has greatly emphasized that education is the most important instrument of change in any society and stressed that any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. In the direction of this affirmative policy statement, the Federal Government of Nigeria stated the goals of TVET to include:

- Provision of trained manpower in applied science, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels.
- Provision of technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary skills to individuals for agriculture, commercial and economic development.
- Give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

In pursuance of the above stated goals, the federal government of Nigeria developed a curriculum for this special area of education. The trade areas identified for this purpose include agriculture, automobile, mechanical, foundry, electrical, building, woodwork, hospitality, texture, printing, office business among others (Lakun, Abimbola & Knabayi, 2015). Courses under the identified trade areas are provided by polytechnic, monotechnics, colleges of Education, Technical Colleges and Commercial School all over the nation. These courses taught in these institutions can be merged with entrepreneurship education. Such infusion of entrepreneurship education will make them, manage, organize, establish and sustain an enterprise or business so as to become self-employed, self-reliant and employer of labour after school.

TVET is an educational system that focuses on imparting practical skills to the learners. The skillful areas in TVET are numerous. TVET is the panacea to youth unemployment in Nigeria. Therefore youth empowerment in Nigeria context can be viewed as an integral gateway to intergenerational equity, civic engagement and democratic building through re-engineering of vocational and technical education for improved creativity and innovativeness of the youth for productive living. Awo (2006) observed that effective performance of vocational and technical education in today's scared labour market requires proper training of students in the practical application of skills and knowledge gained to address unemployment and consequently poverty challenges. The wealth and prosperity of a nation depends on the effective utilization of human and material resources through TVET. TVET is considered to be the most effective means of developing human capital for economic growth and the transformation of any nation.

Akpomie (2009) noted that no nation can move forward technologically, industrially and economically without developing a strong partnership initiative in the creation of wealth, poverty reduction and employment generation with required vocational skills.

## **Conclusion**

Youth empowerment is geared towards equipping youths with skills needed for self-employment and national building. Nigeria youths are not empowered with skills to be self-employed and self-reliant due to lack of functional and relevant education.

Skill training enhances productivity and sustains global competitiveness in the global economy. TVET is an educational investment tool for sustainable youth empowerment and national development. If Nigeria is to be sustained as a viable entity, there must be a very good plan to tap the energy and resourcefulness of youth population to fast track economic development through improved creativity and innovation for their empowerment. Nigeria's development hinges squarely on the social and economic contribution of her citizens through vocational and technical training to promote community and national development. This is because TVET is that aspect of education that enhances the acquisition of applied skills and basic scientific knowledge to facilitate creativity and innovation among the youths. Youth empowerment through TVET will vigorously address the problems of youth unemployment with its attendant social vices. TVET plays an essential role in improving the well-being of youths and communities. It increases productivity, empowers the youths to become self-reliant and stimulates entrepreneurship.

## **Way Forward**

Nigerian educational system is replete with so many problems which limit the benefits to be derived from relevant and functional education. TVET programme has been an integral part of national development strategies in many societies because of the impact on human resources development, productivity and economic growth. Most of the advanced or developed countries such as China, the USA, France, interalia practiced a unique but home-tailored TVET capable of utilizing their resources to meet its socio-economic needs with a view of creating jobs. Nigeria educational system is characterized by gross underfunding, poor manpower planning and bad governance. Based on the issue raised in this paper, the following recommendations are made:

- TVET system should be fully adopted as a youth empowerment tool to address youth unemployment.
- Education should be funded adequately to meet UNESCO standard.
- The curriculum developers should allocate more time to practical and skill oriented courses.
- Entrepreneurship education should be infused into TVET systems.
- Entrepreneurship education vocational centres should be put in place in Nigeria TVET institutions not as demonstration centres but as practical and skill acquisition areas.

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