

## **The Role of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) in Enhancing Socio-Economic Emancipation of Nigerian Youths and Promoting National Security**

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### **Abstract**

Vocational and Technical Education is a vital component of education in the development of practical and sellable/marketable skills for National Economic Empowerment and Development in Nigeria, viz-a-viz a tool for the amelioration of vices like national insecurity associated with unemployment due to non acquisition of sellable entrepreneurial/vocational skills. The paper is a conceptual paper based on the use of secondary data. It advocates the need for the Federal Government and all stakeholders in education to re-prioritize their agenda and strategies for improved Vocational and Technical Education and by implication Socio-Economic Emancipation of the Nigerian populace particularly the youths. In this bid, the paper has therefore x-rayed the concepts behind Vocational and Technical Education, bringing out its benefits (e.g. improved socio-economic welfare and provision of manpower) as a counter measure to address challenges associated with unemployment and national insecurity. The paper further highlights the problems (e.g. poor funding mechanisms, theory based curricula and lack of deserved attention from government/policy makers) confronting Vocational Education and recommends a systematic, result-oriented solution methodology which if faithfully implemented would go a long way in improving and enhancing National Economic Empowerment as well as ameliorating the problems of the vast insurgence of insecurity that has plagued the Nigerian nation.

**Keywords:** *Vocational and Technical Education, Unemployment, National Insecurity, Socio-economic Emancipation, Nigerian Youths*

### **Background to the Study**

Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) has been an integral part of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies in industrialized and developed societies globally due to its impact on productivity and economic development (McNabb, 1997 and Mikailu, 2011). Nations like USA, Brazil, Germany and the UK, adequately channel a lot of resources towards funding VTE institutions and providing soft loans as capital to small and medium scale entrepreneurs (Balogun, 2012). It has long been recognized as a positive indicator in growing economies, since it improves human resource development and its utilization. The role of Vocational Education as a key economic and social driver has been undervalued in Nigeria until recently (Balogun, 2012).

According to Ajeyalemi (2006) VTE is capable of providing the necessary tools for wealth creation in emerging economies like that of Nigeria because of its dynamic nature in the provision of small and medium enterprises. The characteristics of these economies include; the availability of a highly productive-based workforce rather than natural resources, the consolidation of tertiary institutions which is meant to engender economic efficiency in the educational sector. The education is not meant to close up avenue/production of middle level manpower but rather to create an open and flexible system of education that had not existed hitherto (Obasanjo, 2007). Abokede (2005) declared that the goal of VTE is to transmit ideas, skills and values of work and environment and what the individual can do with his/her life. This goal according to Abokede (2005) is of great importance especially now that emphasis is being placed on lifelong learning, which is expected to provide learners with new opportunities, responsibilities and challenges to exploit for survival. Abokede, (2005) further indicated that skills acquisition can be accomplished through work experience or through education in the school workshops and laboratories and that the aim was to develop a better avenue of integrating academic skill training and work experience. In recognition of the huge contribution skilled workers make towards organizational growth and development, organizations in development-conscious nations of the world spend billions of dollars annually on employees' skill upgrading and retraining programmes (Dike, 2009). Recently, the knowledge-driven global economy more importantly requires an educational programme that provides not only academic knowledge and occupational skills but also problem solving skills, creative and critical minds and socially responsible citizens (Dike, 2009; Balogun, 2012).

Young people (youths) particularly secondary school leavers in industrialized nations undergo VTE training that prepare them for the world of work and thus they remain one of the greatest investments and treasures for sustainable societal development. Hence, any society that can efficiently and effectively harness the

potentials of the youths and positively orient them on VTE (skill acquisition) is most likely to accelerate the pace of her economic development (Opara, 2011; Balogun, 2011). The rapid technological changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century pose challenges to the education and employment sectors. The new labour demands have caused many graduates with various certificates to be unemployed. The massive rate of unemployment and the changing face of the economic, social, political, labour market worldwide have led to new education reforms/policies with emphasis on VTE tailored towards helping youths and adults to be self-reliant (Okolocha, 2012).

According to Bankole (2007) in Junaid (2011) at least 60% of graduates in Nigeria were not able to get employment in the last few years and this was majorly attributed to the fact that they were not equipped with sellable/marketable skills. Another factor that contributed to lack of employment by the youths according to Awanbor (2004) In: Onazi (2007) was that during recent times, the explosion in the school enrolment figures in the country has generated massive migration to the urban areas thereby swelling the number of the unemployed in those areas. He further indicated that graduates were produced in their thousands from tertiary institutions with only 20% being able to get job placement. The ugly trend therefore calls for training the youths in vocational/entrepreneurial education in order to equip them with sellable skills such that they are productive in the “World Arena”.

Vocational and Technical Education is required to provide a solution to the alarming problems that threaten national security in most developing nations of the world, Nigeria inclusive. These challenges include unemployment and underemployment, poverty/food insecurity, insurgency, begging, prostitution, militancy, fraud, armed robbery, kidnapping, inter-communal conflicts, acts of violence, cultism, drug abuse, alcohol, bullying and other acts of violence. If the youths are gainfully employed in productive ventures the tendency to fall prey to the aforementioned vices will be minimal and thus they will contribute to national development as well as socio-economic development of the nation on a sustainable yield basis (Balogun, 2012). Nigeria's economic transformation can only be obtained if a functional Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system is put in place (Ogbuanya and Okoli, 2014).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Considering the vast contributions of VTE to National Development in most civilized societies, the Nigerian Government is yet to give this sector of education the voracious attention it deserves. Even though, the Nigerian government has made several attempts towards revamping the sector through various interventions/strategies such as the Educational Trust Fund ETF; Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS); Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (You WiN);

Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES); Community Services Women and Youths Employment CSWYE, project of the subsidy reinvestment and empowerment program (SURE-P), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Youths Service Scheme (NYSC), State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (SEEDS) National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) and Industrial Training Fund (ITF) amongst others, the lukewarm attitude by the Federal Government and Stakeholders in the field of education has contributed in no small way to the neglect of VTE Institutions.

This development has invariably affected the youths because the motivational and enabling environments are not provided for them to obtain sellable/marketable skills and knowledge which will enable them have a competitive edge over others in the already congested labour market with the resultant effect that they roam about the villages, towns and cities looking for jobs that are not available. This situation in-turn leads to dearth of skilled technological manpower to tackle the nation's developmental challenges. This invariably implies that on the basis of the continuous changes in the new global economy the Nigerian nation may not be relevant in the labour market in future if her citizens are unable to attain a certain level of technical skills. In view of the foregoing this paper seeks to identify the relevance of VTE on Socio-economic and National Development and the extent to which it can be rejuvenated to effectively prepare the youth and change their mindset to aspire to acquire sellable/marketable skills for attainment of an occupational life, thereby shying away from social ills like juvenile delinquency, youth crimes and other vices which eventually culminate into national insecurity.

## **Literature Review**

### **Conceptual Framework of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE)**

Vocational and Technical Education refers to aspects of the educational processes in addition to general education, the study of technology and related science together with skill acquisition that are practical to economic and social life (Katsina and Daudawa, 2007). According to UNESCO (1974) In: Aina (1993), VTE is a type of education which is an integral component of general education required for preparation for an occupational field and an aspect of continuing education. The National Policy on Education (2004) has placed a very high premium on VTE with regards to its significance in propelling technological and industrial advancement in the Nigerian nation. It has been recognized as the integral aspect of general education that leads to the acquisition of appropriate practical and applied skills and basic scientific knowledge. The National Policy on Education (2004) also declared VTE as:

1. A means of preparing for occupational fields and effective participation in the world of work

2. An aspect of lifelong learning and preparation for responsible citizenship
3. A method of enhancing poverty alleviation and as an instrument for promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development *inter alia*.

According to Odu (2011), the major philosophy of VTE as entrenched in the National Policy on Education (2004) is to give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically. Adama (2006) In: Nwanosike (2007) described VTE as a productive means of dealing with rapid change in the socio-economic context by actively pursuing initiatives mostly in the areas of securing employment, developing skills and creating viable enterprises that provide greater security and potential for independence. Osifeso (2011) opined that the intellectual basic of VTE goes beyond manual dexterity.

According to Aboje (2007) and Mikailu (2011) the scope of fields covered by VTE include; Agriculture, Business Education, Home Economics, Painting, Art works, Tailoring, Carpentry, Decorating, Metal Work, Mechanical, Electrical, Automobile, Woodwork, Electronics and Building Technology amongst others. Vocational Education unlike other forms of education especially science education requires the practical application of the skills acquired to provide human needs in terms of goods and services without necessarily requiring the understanding of the principles guiding the skills to be acquired (Toby, 1995). Vocational Education has also been defined as that education designed to develop skills, abilities, understanding attitudes, work habits and appreciations that confer knowledge needed to enter and make progress in occupation on a useful and productive basis (Aboje, 2007). Osuala (1997) defined VTE as all educational programmes that are involved in craftsmanship and the application of skill for the provision of human needs and services.

Maclean and Wilson (2009) defined Technical Education as that aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. It was further declared that it is a planned programme of courses and learning experiences that begins with exploration of career options, supports for basic academic and life skills and enables achievement of high academic standards, leadership, preparation for industry-defined work and advanced and continuing education. Maclean and Wilson (2009) also indicated that VTE is concerned with the acquisition of skills and knowledge for employment and sustainable livelihood. Camp (1983) In: Dike (2009) indicated that some scholars perceive VTE as one of the “bulwarks of social efficiency” since the preparation of a well-trained workforce is a sine qua non of “an efficient society”. Vocational skill acquisition can be defined as instruction and guide provided through technology education to individuals aimed at equipping them with various sellable skills for sustainable empowerment in the world of work (Onazi, 2007).

### **Development of VTE in Nigeria**

The apprenticeship system was the means of acquiring vocational skills in Africa before the arrival of the colonial masters, in Nigeria the phenomenon was not different because the history of VTE in Nigeria can be traced to the traditional apprenticeship training schemes which evolved around personal service through master craftsmen in which the youth were trained in traditional vocations by their parents, family, relatives and friends who were masters of the craft. The apprenticeship system of skill acquisition was evidenced in dying, pottery, wood carving, mat weaving, traditional medicine, blacksmith, tailoring, basket weaving, etc and it is considered the predecessor of the present day's supervised industrial work experience scheme (Fafunwa, 1994). Eventually the country transformed from the traditional apprenticeship system to modern technology education under the tutelage of missionary schools which introduced rudimentary training which were directed at the acquisition of vocational skills. (Aboje, 2007). These schools were formal vocational schools which assisted in getting interested persons trained in particular trades.

Around 1935 according to Oriaifo (1998) public and private agencies along with parastatals began the establishment of skill acquisition and development programmes for junior staff. According to Dike (2009) these staff were enrolled in the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and the City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) which controlled the craft level technical education in Nigeria through the conduct of examinations in commercial and technical subject. However, the West African Examination Council (WAEC) which was created in 1952 was saddled with the responsibility of conducting examinations in some technical and commercial subjects in RSA and CGLI from December, 1972. Although, only the theoretical aspects of the trade were examined by the CGLI and this prompted the Federal Government to introduce Federal Craft Certificate as practical aspect of the trade examined by CGLI (UNEVOC, 1996). The objectives of these type of schools at that time were to structure the secondary education system in Nigeria such that three (3) different segments would be in focus namely

1. General literacy schools for pupils with inclination for literary education and humanities.
2. Industrial training schools for pupils disposed to Technical and Vocational Education (this was described as education for those willing to become craftsmen, artisans, mechanics, etc.
3. Agricultural schools for those inclined to farming.

However, these objectives were not realized. At the end of the 1940s, the Colonial Inter-university Council made recommendations that colleges of higher education should be established to provide skilled middle and upper level manpower. These

recommendations gave birth to three (3) Colleges of Arts and Science which were established at Zaria, Enugu and Ibadan and they were charged with the provision of higher education of non-university character. The implementation of these committees provided the bedrock of VTE in Nigeria (Fafunwa, 1979).

According to Oriafio (1998) numerous efforts have been made to ensure that the Vocational and Technical system of Education was improved to meet the demanding needs of the nation. This has led to the inauguration of several committees which included the Federal Advisory Committee on Technical Education and Industrial Training which was established in 1995. The national curriculum conference held in 1969 gave birth to the National Policy on Education in 1981. The policy document witnessed several reviews which brought about many changes in the education sector which included the 6-3-3-4 system. In the quest for development and industrialization and the need to train more middle and higher level skilled manpower, additional technology institutions were established in the forms of polytechnics and universities of technology (Aboje, 2007).

The National Board for Technical Education was established in 1985 to manage the technical institutions for quality assessment and programme accreditations at polytechnics, professional institutions, technical colleges and training centres and to set guidelines and standards for admissions to different programmes in each institution (Dike, 2009). However, in 1992 the National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEB) was established charged with the conduct of technical and business examinations that were conducted by the RSA, CGLI and WAEC (UNEVOC, 1996).

At the secondary school level, VTE is usually offered at specialized technical institutions or through various programmes in conventional secondary schools leading to Senior Secondary School Certificate awarded by WAEC, NECO or NABTEB. At the tertiary level, VTE is offered in polytechnics, monotronics, colleges of education and universities leading to NCE, ND, HND, B.Ed., or B.Sc., in engineering and related disciplines (Mikailu, 2011).

### **Relevance of VTE in the Nigerian Economy in the Past**

The home apprenticeship system which involved manual and general instructions/tutelage by use of hand tools has in the past been a source of income to Nigerians particularly at the grassroots levels and it helped to propel the macro economy at such levels with the resultant effects that the incidence of youth unemployment, youth unrest, poverty, insurgency, terrorism and so on were at a dismal level. Youths in the past channeled their energy towards the acquisition of sellable/marketable skills and contributed their own quota to the growth of the

nation's economy thereby fostering socio-economic security.

### **Present Challenges of VTE in Nigeria and its Consequences on Youths**

Based on all the transformations that have occurred in the educational system, the higher education system in Nigeria has not been able to effectively address all the challenges related to economic and social emancipation of her citizens, job/wealth creation as well as equipping the youth with sellable/marketable skills. Evidently, the policy makers in Nigeria have not been able to handle Nigeria's quest for development and industrialization adequately since they have failed to accord VTE (skill acquisition) and human capacity development the deserved attention they require as earlier mentioned in the introductory part of this paper. The nation's theory based curricula has greatly contributed to the failure of the tertiary institutions in the area of meeting up with the national development needs since the students are often given few or no general education to enhance their skills in the preferred trades (Dike, 2009).

Ozoemana (2013) similarly indicated that Nigeria does not seem to give VTE the attention it deserves and further opined that it could be one of the reasons for the increasing unemployment and poverty in the society. The growing problem of unemployment in the nation has contributed largely to worsening the problem of poverty among the Nigerian populace and this is attributable to the fact that the youths and graduates from tertiary institutions are not equipped with the skills that will enable them exploit the natural resources available in the country (Ozoemana) 2013. Similarly, Ogbuanya and Okoli (2014) reported that among other factors, TVET programme is not functioning properly because the training stations are not adequately equipped with facilities that would guarantee sustainable skill and hence sustainable livelihood to the practitioners.

Dike (2009) further asserted that higher levels of technical skills are acquired in tertiary institutions such as the polytechnics, professional institutions (colleges of education) and at the university level. Here, most technical education is academic as students are exposed to mostly theory with rudimentary practical application in formal educational settings. Due to problems of poor funding mechanism the nation's technical institutions lack instructional facilities, workshops and skilled instructors for proper technical education and training. In fact, the 'half-baked' roadside auto mechanic or other master craftsmen are more skillful in their trade than those who passed through the higher technical institutions. As in other higher institutions the agencies in-charge of technical education in Nigeria have not performed their duties well (Dike, 2009).



The neglect of VTE in Nigeria is depriving the nation contributions its graduates would have made to national development and security. Therefore, the inability of our policy makers to make educated decisions has been detrimental to the progress and stability of the Nigerian nation. Streeten (1984) indicated that the development of human capital would help any nation achieve to some extent self-sufficiency in food production, capital and goods and services and the understanding of the nature of the environment, the preservation of it and eventually will eradicate environmental degradation, desertification, deforestation and soil erosion.

Every facet of the Nigerian society has become affected by the dearth of skilled technicians. Thus, the society lacks competent manpower in various sectors of the economy. The provision of adequate training facilities has the potentials of ensuring the higher degree of performance in the production of goods and services by the recipient of vocational education programmes. Aboje (2007) stated that the higher the number of well trained and skilled personnel in the various fields, the greater the prospects of establishing cottage industries and he further emphasized that the very quick means to diversify the economy is the establishment of cottage industries especially when the nation is emphasizing on self-reliance. China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia started their quest for industrialization by encouraging cottage industries which guarantees the effective utilization of any nation's natural resources. The issue of VTE is therefore very paramount to the development process of any nation because it produces manpower for progress in all ramifications.

Non-acquisition of appropriate skills has led to shabby performance of Nigeria's builders (masons/bricklayers) and building maintenance and this has often led to unbridled collapsing of buildings (This Day, August 15, 2005; In: Dike, 2009). The shortage of advanced technical manpower is also reflected in the agricultural sector. Peasant farmers who are toiling all day in the field with knives, hoes and shovels are unable to feed the nation's 140 million people. Nigeria's arable lands are not cultivated all year round because of lack of advanced technology for irrigation. The society is also unable to effectively and efficiently process, preserve and store the leftover of the seasonal foodstuffs. This has contributed to food scarcity and high prices of basic food items with the attendant rising hunger and starvation. Because of these deficiencies, Nigeria imports billions of naira worth of food annually to feed her citizens (BusinessDay, November 19, 2007; In: Dike, 2009).

### **Methodology**

This paper is a conceptual paper based on the use of credible secondary data.

### **Strategies for Rejuvenation of VTE in Nigeria**

In view of the established challenges of VTE (poor funding mechanism, lack of instructional facilities, workshops and skilled instructors, lack of deserved attention from government, theory based curricula, poor performance of agencies in charge of VTE) and their effects on youths, the need therefore arises for the rejuvenation of VTE towards addressing these challenges in the quest for socio-economic emancipation of Nigerian youths and fostering of national security. In the opinion of the author the major challenge of VTE that ramifies into the other stated challenges is the issue of poor funding mechanism. Therefore, this paper critically looks into this.

The problem of gross underfunding/poor funding of the Nigerian educational system has been in existence for many decades (Adegbenjo and Olubato, 2015). Poor funding is caused by wide deficits that exist between the amount budgeted and the amount released (Oseni, 2012). Thus, there are usually wide variations between the appropriated amount and the amount released. For instance, in 2010 out of the ₦74,923,247,201 that was appropriated for the education sector only ₦34,569,646,552 was released. Osuntokun (2003) in Adeyemi (2011) identified increased debt burden along with high population influx of students in all educational institutions as well as the rising cost of governance in states as some of the contributory factors to the poor funding of the educational sector in Nigeria. The fund allocation to the educational sector has dwindled from 10.13% in 2011 to 8.43% in 2012 and slightly jerked up to 8.7% in 2013 (Adegbenjo and Olubato, 2015). Following this trend UNESCO's prescribed bench mark of 26% of annual national budgetary allocation to the education sector (VTE inclusive) is yet to be met by the Nigerian government both at the Federal and State levels. With due consideration to the education sector in general, there is the need for government to have the political will to address the challenges of funding education.

Most educational institutions are under pressure between the quest for internally generated revenue (IGR) and the need to balance their capacity. A reversal of this trend requires strong legislation and advocacy. The 'Asian Tigers' in the past three(3) decades allocated about 25-35% of their annual budget to their education sector (Aboribo, 1999 In Omotor, 2004). This wide gap with reference to Nigeria implies that there is need for the government to prioritize and improve the budgetary allocation for the educational sector so that Nigeria can compete favorably with the 'Asian Tigers' in view of their enormous investments in the vocational education sector which eventually gave a quantum leap to their SMEs through young industrialists and entrepreneurs. These SMEs have driven their various economies and made positive contributions to the socio-economic growth and national security.

Government funding of the educational sector has been inadequate over the decades. Generally, the funding of education has been a shared responsibility among the three tiers of government (federal, state and local government) and their efforts were augmented by funds from other sources like NGOs, external donor agencies and developmental partners, companies/industries, educational trust funds, developmental levies/taxes, parents-teachers association (PTA), donations from endowment funds, local government taxes amongst others. However, these efforts are still not enough to service the educational sector.

According to FRN (2000), schools at all levels lack teachers and basic infrastructure and the situation has invariably made schools to suffer from overcrowding, poor sanitation, poor management and poor intra-sectoral allocation. In furtherance to this, Omotor (2004) indicated that other features were abandoned capital projects, inadequate funding, poor conditions of service, etc. These situations had often led to closures of schools and incessant strike actions with an overall damaging effect exhibited in form of poor teaching quality and poor product quality which invariably translates into poor education quality. Similarly, Okolocha (2012) identified the major hindrances to the growth of VTE as dearth of vocational teachers, weak capital base, poor funding and poor technology among others. He further indicated that these factors resulted in low-skilled graduates.

The issue of funding has become the major stumbling block to the development of effective VTE in Nigeria (Atsumbe, Emmanuel, Igwe and Atsumbe, 2012). Nuru and Mumah, (2009) In: Adegbenjo and Olubato (2015) reported that investment in VTE in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> development plans were 0.10%, 0.36% and 0.84% respectively. Adegbenjo and Olubato (2015) also reported that in spite of the fact that VTE requires infrastructure, human resources and facilities needed for the development of skills/competencies in students, it is yet to get enough fund allocations to achieve its aims and objectives at all levels of VTE in Nigeria. VTE institutions have not been favoured when it comes to statutory allocations to government agencies. Osuala (2004) indicated that post independence Nigeria obtained over 40 million naira from external agencies towards the establishment, expansion and operation of educational institutions in Nigeria. While the higher education and teacher training institutions consume 48% and 49% of the funds respectively, 13.5% was disbursed to secondary education and amazingly, only 7.3% which was the lowest was allocated to VTE. With due consideration to the expensive nature of VTE, this meager and dwindling annual budgetary allocation in Nigeria does not permit VTE to be allocated the required financial resources for the realization of its objectives (Adegbenjo and Olubato, 2015).

According to Adeyemi (2011), the meager allocations as well as the dwindling trend of total budgetary allocation to the education sector between 1995 and 2000, (1995(13.0%); 1996(10.8%); 1997(11.5%); 1998(9.6%); 1999(11.1%) and 2000(8.7%)) has indicated deficits in the funding of the sector. The allocation never reached 17% as noted by Adeyemi (2011) and Maiyashi (2003). According to CBN Statistical Bulletin (2000-2011) In: Adegbenjo and Olubato (2015), there had been short falls in the allocation to the education sector between 2001 and 2009 (2001(6.88%); 2002(11.56%); 2003(6.58%); 2004(6.89%); 2005(6.27%); 2006(8.56%); 2007(9.49%); 2008(7.74%); 2009(6.45%)). Furthermore, in concordance with the foregoing, Adegbenjo and Olubato (2015) indicated that there has been a deficit in the level of funding of the educational sector in Nigeria from 2011 to 2013 (2011(10.13%); 2012(8.43%) and 2013(8.7%)). Aturu (2011) In: Adegbenjo and Olubato (2015) indicated that in 2010 the Federal Government of Nigeria spent only ₦249.08 billion on education generally (VTE inclusive) out of a budget of about ₦4.07 trillion which translated roughly to 6% of the total budget.

Adequate funding is required for staffing as well as purchase, installation and maintenance of infrastructural and instructional facilities in vocational institutions viz a viz; classrooms, laboratories, libraries, workshops and teaching facilities that will bring technology closer to the learners in this era of global and knowledge driven economy. Babatunde and Adefabi (2005) studied the relationship between education expenditure and economic growth in Nigeria between 1970 and 2003 and results obtained established a long run relationship between education and economic growth.

Torruam *et al.* (2014) in their study on co-integration analysis of public expenditure on tertiary education and economic growth in Nigeria concluded that in order to attain maximum economic growth, government expenditure on education needs to be given more priority. Torruam *et al.* (2014) further indicated that investing in education offers high returns and noted that for Nigeria to achieve sustainable economic growth rate it is of paramount importance for the country to reposition herself as a potent force through the quality of her products from the tertiary schools systems, and also by making her manpower relevant in the highly competitive and globalized economy through a structured and strategic planning of her educational institutions. Torruam *et al.* (2014) at the end of their study recommended that government and private sectors should join hands by mobilizing resources to furnish tertiary institutions and equip them with adequate facilities, libraries, laboratory equipment, computers and modern instructional materials in order to improve the quality of education and enhance human capital development, labour productivity and ensure sustainable growth and development.

In line with these, this author advocates that the present democratic dispensation in Nigeria should partner with NGOs and other stake holders in education to ensure that adequate funding is given to the vocational education sector particularly at the grassroots levels to prevent rural urban drift which has amplified the unemployment situation in urban areas.

In line with the view of Maiyashi (2003) while agreeing that good education funding is necessary for economic growth, the government should let her citizens know that she cannot finance education alone. It is the opinion of this author therefore that the federal government should restructure and strengthen the capacities of already existing educational interventions like the Educational Trust Fund (ETF) and Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) such that they can give VTE priority with regards to improving funds allocation. Tertiary education institutions (VTE inclusive) should look for alternative funding by investing in both services and manufacturing sectors to boost their Internal Generated Revenue (IGR). The Nigerian government should put in place policies that are aimed at diversifying its one way oil based economy into more viable and productive sectors in order to attain greater economic growth thereby spurring an increase in educational expenditure towards the provision of up-to-date teaching facilities (equipment and machines) and infrastructures which will ensure that youths are imparted with sellable/marketable skills that will enable them to be employable in the ever changing labour market.

More intensified and functional Government/private sector partnerships or collaborative initiatives should be encouraged towards provision of equipment and facilities that will enable acquisition of sellable/ marketable skills by youths in order that they will fit well into the world of work. In order to adequately finance education in Nigeria, the government should strive hard to meet up with the prescribed UNESCO minimum standard of 26% annual budgetary allocation to the educational sector in general so that other units of the sector like VTE are rejuvenated towards meeting up with its stated aims and objectives as enshrined in the national policy on education (NPE, 2004).

The assistance of well established and committed external agencies/institutions as well as developmental partners could also be sought in form of grants or external loans for implementing capital projects in VTE institutions and also for capacity building (training and re-training of staff) in order to meet up with standard best practices in terms of skills acquisition and for youths to be able to become gainfully employed. World Bank 1988 indicated that 39 countries, Nigeria inclusive needed to subject their educational systems to overhauling and selective expansion policies so that they could benefit from World Bank donor countries.

Therefore, in line with this suggestion and maximum derivation of the aforementioned benefits, the federal government of Nigeria should uphold the World Bank suggestion. The government should also promote indirect taxation from lotteries, as well as property tax and graduate tax which is obtainable in developed countries with decentralized educational systems. Donations should also be encouraged from alumni associations, philanthropists, banks and business conglomerates. Legislators/parliamentarians should also be encouraged to improve funding of the educational sector from the allowances allocated to them for the development of their constituencies thereby contributing to education at the grassroots level. Generally, the government needs to view education as a catalyst of investment in development even though it is a capital intensive venture.

### **Conclusion**

It cannot be overemphasized as has been documented in literature review (Mikailu, 2011, Okolocha, 2012 and Ozoemena, 2013) that Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) is the “mitochondria” (power house) for fostering economic emancipation/development and national security of all nations, Nigeria inclusive. It has become an imperative macro-economic strategy for all societies either developed or emerging to place greater attention on creating and promoting small and medium-scale entrepreneurs in their quest to improve their GDP and global competitive edge. Against this backdrop, it is the opinion of the author that in the present democratic dispensation and era of economic reforms in Nigeria, VTE needs to be rejuvenated towards addressing the challenges of youth unemployment and national insecurity with due consideration to the fact that the expanding problem of unemployment has metamorphosed to worsen the situation of poverty, underdevelopment, insurgency and other related vices all which culminate into socio-economic and developmental breakdown when not quickly arrested.

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