

**SPORTS, TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (S&TVET) AND
YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY**

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Abstract

Youth empowerment is a way of assisting youths realize their innate tendencies, discovering their creative and productive potentials for achieving development, gradual improvement in their standard of living as a way of stamping out unemployment and poverty. Youth empowerment is germane to the economic development, poverty alleviation and national security as well as stability of a developing nation like Nigeria. This paper titled “Sports, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Youth Empowerment for National Security” examines the conceptual meaning of the Sports, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Youth Empowerment and National Security is to periscope the importance of youth empowerment to national development. The paper deals with the importance of utilization of National Youth Empowerment strategy to achieve sustainable National Security and Development. It concluded that to guarantee effective youth empowerment, poverty alleviation and sustainable national security and economic development, Sports, Technical and Vocational Education should be well funded by the government and donor agencies. The development of youth empowerment program should be aggressively pursued as there are many gains in its pursuit while failure to address empowerment may lead to many catastrophes. It implies that vigorous pursuit of Sports, Technical and Vocational Education and Training and youth empowerment will lead Nigeria as a nation to unprecedented capacity building, entrepreneurship growth unemployment reduction, self employment, economic growth, national security and poverty eradication.

Key words: Sports, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (S&TVET), Youth Empowerment, National Security, Economic Development, Entrepreneurship

Introduction

Sport is any human activity which involves physical exertion and skill as the primary focus of the activity with rudiments of competition through rules and patterns guiding the activity. Sport is at the nucleus of any nation's identity. Sports performance has remained the avenue through which great nations of the world exhibit supremacy over their counterparts through sports development. Therefore, the use of sports in pursuit of national security cannot be over stated.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is that aspect of education which enables individual to develop his Knowledge of Science and manipulative endowment in many occupational areas and levels from learner, neophyte, artisan, craftsman, technician, technologist and professional levels. The goal of TVET is to develop the knowledge and skills that will help the workforce, especially the youths become more flexible and responsive to the needs of local labour markets, while competing in the global economy.

Youth empowerment on the other hand is a means of providing youths with the ability to perform in

terms of having necessary skills, knowledge of science when given the opportunity to perform. Youth empowerment is a means of developing the youths to improve the quality of their lives and share equitably in the benefits of economic growth.

Youth empowerment focuses on improving the socio-economic welfare of Nigerian youths by inspiring and motivating them to embracing technical and vocational education and training as a means of equipping themselves and society.

The issue of National Security is germane to the development of any nation. President Reagan (1986) opined that National Security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic power, diplomacy, power projection and political power. I can also add technological and sports development.

Vocational and Technical Education and Training for Youth Empowerment

The UNESCO revised recommendation concerning technical and vocational education (2001) recommended in scope 1, article 2 and 3 that; “Technical and Vocational education is a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general education, the studies of techniques and related sciences and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life.

Therefore, technical and vocational education and training is further understood as;

- An integral part of general education.
- A means of preparing youths for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work.
- An aspect of lifelong learning and preparation for responsible citizenship.
- An instrument for promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development.
- A method of facilitating poverty alleviation.

Education is the bedrock of development of a nation; youths are the agents of the development either now or in the nearest future. Youth empowerment teaches its recipients most especially the high school youths, the art of leadership and technical expertise. Youth empowerment through its own curriculum and interactive business and mentoring, impact on its recipients the saleable skills necessary to become effective leaders in their communities, homes and society in general. Vocational and Technical education and training makes the recipient, most especially, youths scarcer in the labour market rather than making them unemployable individuals who are burdens to the society. To 'Empower' according to the New Webster's Dictionary, implies 'to give power to' or 'to enable someone to'. It can be reasoned that when someone is empowered to do something, the individual has the authority or power or patent to do it. Empowerment as a concept could be linked to the concept of skill transfer through apprenticeship system or self help. Youth Empowerment could be succinctly reasoned out to mean assisting youths realize their innate tendencies, their creative propensities and productive potentials for achieving sustainable development and gradual improvement in their standard of living as a way of stamping out poverty.

World Bank (2011) defined empowerment as the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. This definition sees empowerment in the light of human capacity building for the purpose of making the individual or group self-reliant. Furthermore, empowerment can be described as a person's capacity to make effective choices; that is, as the capacity to transform choices into desired actions and outcomes. One can now reason that empowerment is a deliberate process of building or transforming an individual or person or

group of persons to be useful to him or themselves and the society.

Nwankwo, Obeta and Nwaogbo (2013) delineated various form of youth empowerment programmes set up by the government for training youth for skill acquisition for self reliance in various areas of Vocational and Technical education and training as follows;

- National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1989
- Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) in 1999
- Graduate Empowerment Scheme (GES) in 2004
- National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) in 2009
- Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) in 2002
- Subsidy Re-Investment and Empowerment Program (SURE-P) in 2012

All these could be seen as new development programmes for youth empowerment. Youth empowerment programs as a capacity building issue is a non discriminatory, non-political, bias free and reachable scheme designed for and made assessable to every individual, irrespective of sex, class of degree, course of study, social status and race diversity. The development of youth empowerment programs in Nigeria could be traced to Harare declaration on the plan of action for youth empowerment in 1995, the world youth ministers meeting in Portugal in 1998, to the Youth ministers meeting in Solomon Island 2000.

Abdullahi (2003) declared that the relevance of youth in contemporary development has received increase recognition in official circles. Examples of these are; National Youth Development Policy of 2001. The political process which commenced in 1991 has provided many opportunities for the actors within the society to make impact in the democratization process. The youth has been recognized as a formidable social force in the process. Abdullahi (2003) declared that youths are the most active segment of any society imbued with relentless energy, vigour and drive. He further informed that the youths are the major catalyst for development in any given society. As future leaders and key determiners of peace and stability of society, youth are indeed the greatest assets of any nation.

Government has embarked on many developmental programs in the past and recent. Some of these government initiatives are such programs as; Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Green Revolution (GR), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), and Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), and National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS). The NEEDS is a National Coordinated framework of action in collaboration with the State and Local Governments designed for the purpose of poverty reduction, poverty alleviation, employment generation, wealth creation and value orientation. It aimed at all aspects of the people's socio-economic life with the aim of reducing poverty and inequality.

One of the most important features of Vocational and Technical Education and Training (TVET) is its orientation towards the world of work and the emphasis of the curriculum is on the acquisition of employable skills. TVET delivery systems are therefore well placed to train the skilled and entrepreneurial workforce needed to create wealth and enable youths emerge out of poverty. Another important characteristic of TVET is that it can be delivered at different levels of sophistication. Many functions of Vocational and Technical Education for youth empowerment include the provision of basic knowledge and practical skills needed for entry into the world of work as employees or as self employed. If well implemented, Vocational and Technical Education is capable of building practical and applied skill in youths which is an essential ingredient for National development in areas of commerce,

agriculture, industrial, economic and socio-economic development.

The goals and function of vocational and technical education as stated in the national policy on education (FRN 2004) directly match the incomparable impact of vocational and technical education and training to youth empowerment. The document provides that: Technical and Vocational Education is a form that includes preparation for employment in any industry for specialized education for which there is societal needs, and which can most appropriately be acquired in schools. The National Policy on Education (FRN 1981) defined Vocational, Technical Education as that aspect of education that leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge.

The goals of Vocational and Technical education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (2004) shall be to;

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

These goals after critical analysis clearly depict the economic functionality of vocational technical education for skill development and empowerment of the youth. It is education for self-reliant, poverty reduction and eradication. It is therefore socially and economically viable option for youth empowerment.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training for National Security

The youth according to Abdullahi (2003) has been acknowledged as a formidable social force in the process of democratization. Youths are the major catalyst for development in any given society. As future leaders and key determiners of peace and stability of society, youths are indeed the greatest assets of any nation's security.

National Security

The concept of National Security developed mostly in the United States of America (USA) after the World War II. At that time, it focused on military might, but it has now encompassed a broad range of facets, all of which impinge on the non-military or economic security of the nation and values espoused by the national society. National Security can be defined as the protection or the safety of a country's secrets and its citizens. It implies that a nation is secured when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war and is able to, if challenged, to maintain them by war. Security itself means a freedom from danger, risk threat and protection from external aggression, infiltration, theft and espionage.

Security can have military and non-military connotation as it embraces every aspect of development. It then implies that, if there is no security, there can be no development and vice-versa. Security includes social, economic, political, legal, information, food and technology and youths are mostly the agents of this security. Security can be broken into two main broad categories viz; external and internal security. Arabamen (2003) defined internal security as on which has to do with nation's territorial borders and her protection from external aggression. It is the primary responsibility of the armed forces to uphold external security as provided in section 217 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which provides inter alia that;

1. There shall be armed forces for the federation which shall consist of an Army, Navy and Air force; and such other branches of the Armed Forces of the federation as may be established by an act of national

assembly.

2. The federation shall, subject to an Act by the National Assembly, made in that behalf, equip and maintain the Armed Forces as may be considered adequate and effective for the purpose of;
 - a. Defending from external aggression
 - b. Maintaining its territorial integrity and security of its orders from violation on land, air or sea.
 - c. Suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President (as President Ebele Jonathan rightly did on Boko Haram insurgents) but subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly.

In fulfillment of the above constitutional provision, Technical and Vocational Education and Training provides this service as stated in the National Policy on Education (FRN 1981). The policy enumerated the objectives of vocational and technical education as;

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

The objectives of technical and vocational education have been well spelt out in the national policy paper (2004) to include;

- i. Provision of trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce particularly at sub-professional grades.
- ii. Provision of technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.
- iii. Provision of people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solutions of environmental problems for use and convenience of man (national security is implied here).
- iv. Giving an introduction to professional studies in engineering and among other technologies.
- v. Giving training and imparting necessary skills (most especially to the youths) leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant and;
- vi. Enabling our young men and women to have intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.

It is important to admit that technical and vocational education and training encompasses every aspect of education, training and development. This makes it very unique among other forms of education as the bedrock of both manpower, industrial and security development agent. The neglect of Technical and Vocational Training in Nigeria is not only socially and economically injurious as put by Abubakar (2010), but risky in terms of security because it provides haven to social misfits to engage in crime which is dangerous to national security and cohesion. Technical and vocational education; therefore, is a way of securing the society with adequate job opportunities, job security, national security from internal and external aggression as well as economy for national youth development.

It is auspicious to note that National Security starts with food security because, a hungry man is an angry man. The populace needs personal security from hoodlums, armed robbers, pen-robbers and muggers. Job security is important so that citizens can be gainfully employed, live meaningful lives and secure

their homes, children and wives, ageing parents and kiths and kins.

The security of highways and bye-ways will enable mobility and free movement of people. Security must insulate religion bigots, illiterates, haters of their own people, so that they do not cause trouble. These are all parts of the concept of national security.

At the government level, a state must manage its resources well and should frown upon misuse of national funds. Government must retrieve proven stolen wealth and resources; it should create external machinery to trace national wealth wherever it can be found. A state that condones corruption weakens its own authority and stability. Technical and vocational education and training in one of its objectives is centrally placed to provide this security service.

A state must secure the health of its citizens by creating adequate medical centre and hospitals. Then it would have no reason to rush sick citizens to other nations that have built suitable medical facilities for their own citizens.

At the academic level, national security is an intricate network of system of defense measures, aimed at ensuring the safety of governments, the state and their nationals. Through overt and covert measures of military intelligence operations, under cover disruptions of the sinister activities of men and women with misplaced consciences, the security of people, their state governments are ensured. The methods used in security operations are varied; examples of these according to Esiemokhai (2010) are: infiltration, intrigue, subterfuge, deception, rough tactics and wire-tapping, define intelligence and military action. Technology and vocational education and training provides the desired technical skills necessary for the operation of the technical war machineries and weapons as enumerated above.

The simple knowledge of security gathered, explaining that intelligence has political military strategic components which according to Esiemokhai (2010) are associated with statecraft, governance and security. He emphasized that every sovereign, independent state must train, sustain and nurture men and women to serve in its security and intelligence outfits most especially in the handling of weapons. Technical and Vocational Educational education is centrally placed to provide this service. It is part of the services being provided at the military training school at Jaji in Kaduna.

In advanced countries of the world, Europe and America for example and especially in our own country Nigeria, security and intelligence outfits are selected from the best and brightest citizens, most especially the Technology/Technical and Vocational education training graduates. These are the people who are endowed with keen and subtle intellect. They are the anchor of state security.

There is a difference between the cult of intelligence and the craft of intelligence. It is a craft when it is based on scientific and technological methods and genuinely used to defend the nation. It is a cult, when groups in military intelligence conspire against the state for example, by staging a coup d'etat.

Military intelligence operates both general and specific intelligence systems. It is mainly about gathering information on the plans of the enemy, demonstrators, terrorists and other dangerous people that pose security risks. Technical and Vocational education and training provide the necessary security supports in this aspect through the modern information and communication technology programme. It should be recalled that the secret of Boko-haram was revealed during the peak of their insurgency in the North-eastern part of Nigeria. Most especially cut-off of the phone network services from the most affected part of the Northern part of the country during the Boko-haram insurgency is a good military strategy that weakens the communication line of the sect.

It is also important to note that recruitment into defense and military intelligence outfits needs not only scrupulous assessment of the recruits' intellectual sharpness, smartness and patriotism but those who have been filled with the spirit of God Almighty as done to Bezaleel in the book of Exodus 31: 1-3. Graduates with the best grades most especially in the area of Sports, Technology/Technical and Vocational education and training should be deployed into the aforementioned areas above.

Youths should be empowered in Sports, Technology/Technical and Vocational Training to man the strategic security position in our country Nigeria. Angry and hungry youths should be empowered in Sports, Technology/Technical and Vocational education and training for the defense of their fatherland rather than allowing them to be used by the failed politicians who are bitter and are ready to use the unwary young drop outs for their political gains.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is evidence that Sports, Technology/Technical and Vocational Education is the surest way for promoting rapid industrialization, economic development, wealth creation, youth empowerment, poverty alleviation/eradication and crime reduction and other security strategies. Sports, Technology/ Technical and Vocational Education and Training as a practical skill-oriented programs help in maximizing creation of jobs, youth empowerment and skills development. it is therefore capable in strengthening the social links of a community by promoting employment creativity and sustainable means of subsistence. Sports, Technology/Technical and Vocational and Education and Training program according to France C.N. et al (2003) has been an integral part of national developments strategies in many societies because of its impact on human resources development, productivity and security sustainability. Majority of the challenges confronting African Nation today is traceable to youth unemployment, underemployment, poverty and incessant criminal cases that threaten the national security. This is as a result of lack of relevant education, denied access to capital and many unmet expectations. It then follows that the basic requisite for curbing unemployment, underemployment among Nigerian youth is empowering them with sports, basic vocational and technical education and job training skills relevant to the needs of the societies where they live. This will definitely lead to self reliance, self employment and poverty eradication. Provision of technical and vocational education and training for the youths will stamp out the crime rate and guarantee the national security and the stability.

Recommendations

In view of the above impact of sports, technical and vocational education and training, it is therefore recommended that;

- · Technical and vocational education and training should be given a high priority in the government development programmes. It should be funded by the government and other educational funding agencies.
- · Government should also establish existing human capital development and sports centres most especially the youth empowerment centres at affordable costs and assessible to her citizens.
- · Government should vigorously pursue policies that increase access of loans for financing youth empowerment programmes.

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