

## Business Apprenticeship Training (BAT) and Youth Empowerment: A Strategy for Poverty Alleviating and Unemployment/Self-reliance in Nigeria

Idris Yakubu Haliru\*<sup>1,2</sup>, Asnarulkhadi Abu Samah<sup>1</sup>, Ma'arof Bin Redzua<sup>1</sup>, Nobaya Ahmad<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dept. of Social & Development Sciences, Faculty of Human Ecology, Universiti Putra Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>Dept. of Local Govt. Studies & Development Studies, College of Administrative and Social Science, Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna, Nigeria.

[idrisyakubu175@yahoo.com](mailto:idrisyakubu175@yahoo.com)

**Abstract:** Business Apprenticeship Training (BAT) is key to youth empowerment, poverty alleviation, unemployment and self-reliance. However, this paper intends to bring to the fore the need to engage the youths in business, income and profit oriented ventures of knowledge and skills via vocational training aimed at empowering the youths, alleviate their poverty status, create employment and make them self-reliant. Available records show that youths constitute quite above half of the productive capacity of the Nigerian population. Therefore, the high rate of poverty and unemployment percentage ratio are unacceptable and as a result, there is the need to put the nation onto the path of sustained development, growth and income generation by positively engaging the youths into vocational skills, knowledge and training. The main thrust of the paper is to describe the key essence of BAT as an intervention scheme aimed at empowering the youths by engaging them meaningfully, reduce poverty, unemployment and sustained wealth creation. The paper recommends among others, creation of vocational training at all levels of governance to enhance entrepreneurship and thereby arrest unemployment.

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### 1. Introduction

Young people are key to nation building. They are the main assets of any nation in the world, as such, there have been agitations from governments, and non-governmental organization's including donor agencies, that young people should be involved in the processes and policy issues that affect their lives and communities (1).

The Business Apprenticeship Training Centers (BATCs) have been in place for four decades now. It began as a collaborative of the American Ford Foundation and the then North Central State Government. The programme was for vocational and skills development of artisans for the industries in the north, especially Kaduna. The Nigerian civil war in the early 70s gave greater justification for the programme in view of the decrease in the number of the highly desired artisans, majority of whom were southerners but had to flee the north due to the civil war and its effect. From its inception to date, thousands of youths have graduated in the programme, many of whom are working in Ministry of Works (MOW), Nigerian Police Force (NPF), as pioneer staff members of Nigerian National Petroleum Cooperation (NNPC) and Defense Industry Corporation of Nigeria (DIC) technicians. BATCs, has the following as its mission statement- [1] to raise

skills of workers for better employment in industrial establishment, [2] To create better skilled entrepreneurs among the self-employed trade men and [3] to pursue direct labor projects with a view of not only giving trainees the scheme's practical experience, but to also ensure self-reliance when they eventually graduate. Therefore, BATCs provides the required BAT aimed at building the social and human capital assets of youths (2). Through, a focus on active participation, mastery experiences in terms of knowledge, skills and positive connections in order to improve developmental outcomes (empowerment) and positive transition to adulthood (1).

For a developing nation like Nigeria with a growing population of 140 million (3) to annex its full potentials and productive capacity, it must invest in social and human capital building (4-6) by engaging its youths in vocational training (7-13). Sharing same vision, the Common Wealth Youth Programme (CYP) (14), works to engage and empower young people and enhances their contribution to development anchored on the belief that young people are [1] a force for peace, democracy, equality and good governance, [2] a catalyst for global consensus building, and [3] an essential resource for sustainable development and poverty eradication. Similarly, engaging youths in BAT will enhance self-reliance and take the youths

out of poverty, through sustained growth and increase employment (15). Moreover, youth empowerment is vital to building a virile and sustainable society which empowers and allows young people overcome poverty and become self-employed, developing self-esteem (16) and self-efficacy (17). In this regard, the youths are more able to take decisions on issues that boarder on their lives, particularly their well-being in the society. Accordingly, (15) further argues that poverty alleviation provides a veritable opportunity through which governments can revamp the battered economy and rebuild self-esteem in majority of Nigerians who have over the decades suffered dehumanization. Therefore, this article will base its findings solely on secondary sources of data obtained from journal articles, books, web page, working papers, paper articles, reports as well as programmes.

## 2. Review of Literature

BAT, Vocational Education Training (VET) and Youth Empowerment (YE) have been the focus all over the world aimed at boosting technological advancement, alleviate poverty and create employment in any country (18). It was further argued that, training, acquisition and utilization of relevant skills by youths are indispensable for economic growth and national development. As a result, more emphasis is focused on developing nations like Nigeria as the most populous country in Africa and the eight in the world, with nominal GDP of \$207.11 billion and per capital income of \$1,401 and has the second largest economy in Africa after South Africa (3). It is in this regard, that governments and charity organizations are increasingly demanding that young people be involved in the processes that affect their lives and their communities (19). Youth Empowerment Programmes (YEPs) are designed to build on the assets of young people by focusing on active participation, mastery experiences, and positive connections in order to improve developmental outcomes and positive transitions to adulthood. Proponents of YEPs suggest that they may constitute an effective, theory-based approach to youth development.

### 2.1. Business apprenticeship training

A model in the plane of community activity, involving active individuals participating with others in culturally organized activity that has, as part of its purpose the development of mature participation in the activity by the less experienced people has been provided (20). The idea of apprenticeship necessarily focuses attention on the specific nature of the activity involved, as well as on its relation to practices and institutions of the community in which it occurs, economic, political, spiritual, and material. Similarly,

(21) define business apprenticeship training to mean where the employer agrees to provide structured and formal training in a specific filed(s) or trade over a defined period of time. Hence, BATCs which in turn, provides BAT and produce continued journeyman level employment after the training is successfully completed. The programme is for skills development of youths as artisans who later find use for them and eventually, get the participants empowered economically, socially and psychologically.

### 2.3. Defining youth

The concept youth is a relative term, depending on the perception of individual countries. Nevertheless, in defining youths there is the need to take into account the broader view of socio-cultural and contextual issues. In view of the foregoing, (22) acknowledges the United Nation General Assembly definition of youth as between the ages of 15-24. Similarly, UNDP uses a more flexible definition which allows programmes to be aligned with national and local realities in that it allows for country specific policies and programmes. This is in consideration of the heterogeneous nature of the youth population and recognizing that different age groups within the young population may have different needs in different contexts. This is particularly obvious in crisis prone countries and post crisis settings where years of childhood and youth may easily be lost. From the Nigerian context, the youths are segment of the population in a society within the age bracket of 18 – 35 years (National Policy of Youth Development, 1999) usually, they tend to be active, vibrant, daring with lots of useful energy if put to positive use. The youths have contributed immensely to the development of Nigerian State from pre-colonial to independent and post independent era. Notwithstanding their positive contribution to the Nigerian State, they constitute the critical and volatile segment of the society. Besides, UNDP further emphasized on young women and men ages 15-24 and extend the inclusion of young men and women within the age bracket of 25-30 and even beyond age 35 based on contextual realities, regional and national youth policy directives (22).

### 2.4. Empowerment

This is a multi-level concept consisting of practical approaches and applications, social action processes, and individual and collective outcomes. In the broadest sense, empowerment refers to individuals, families, organizations, and communities gaining control and mastery, within the social, economic, and political contexts of their lives, in order to improve equity and quality of life (23–26). Therefore, the concept of empowerment has been

addressed at both theoretical and practical levels in specific reference to youth. Empowerment is the ability of people, organizations and communities to gain mastery over their affairs (25). In a relative way, (27) sees empowerment as a perceived control over others or over oneself and mainly as subjective perception. It is a motivational construct which focuses on what people expect with regards to their power and whether they are satisfied with their current status of power (28). Accordingly, (29) asserts that, empowerment is a process and a dynamic two pronged construct of identity of both individual and collective. Hence, it is a process to acquire 'power' individually and collectively, with the tendencies and ability to act and make one's own decisions regarding life and society. Therefore, (29) reiterated that, since empowerment is synonymous to power, then, empowerment process should be broken down into four levels, namely; power over, power to, power with and power within. 'Power over' exclusively deals with domineering or subordination kind of relationship in assumption that power exist only in a limited quantity. It is a kind of power extended over someone which triggers passive or active resistance. 'Power to' is the kind of power that is centered on the ability to make decisions, have authority to proffer solutions to problems with the tendency of being creative and enabling. Here intellectual abilities of knowledge and know-how as well as economic means, i.e. the ability to access and control means of production and benefit in terms of assets are key. 'Power with' is social or political power which enhances the notion of common purpose and understanding and the ability to come together, negotiate and defend common goals i.e. individual and collective rights, dialogue, and lobbying political ideas. People do feel collectively they have power, most especially when they come together by uniting in search of a common objective or when they share same vision. 'Power within' is that power that is innate; it refers to self-awareness, self-esteem, identify and assertiveness i.e. knowing how to be. It is the ability of how individuals, through self-analysis and internal power can influence their lives and make changes. Thus, empowerment forms part of the vision to acquire power, control one's life and make choices. Choices debate was expanded by (30) who emphasized on people's ability to have access to things and freedom to make their choices. In a broader context, (31,32) defined empowerment as the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in negotiation with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. Therefore, empowerment can only be attained when people participate in empowerment schemes or programmes be it as a model or approach (33,34). BAT as an intervention scheme, is geared towards

enhancing human capital needs, hence, the active participation of the people with resultant effect of empowerment. Participation and empowerment are twin strategy aimed at promoting sustainable, people centered development, equal opportunities and social justice (35, 20). With no purposeful participation empowerment remains a mirage (36). In like manner, empowerment without participation becomes a hollow exercise (37).

## 2.5. Youth empowerment

This involves partnering and participation of young people in decision making processes as it concerns programme design, planning, and/or implementation (38). It was further emphasized that youth empowerment involves engaging young people in programme leadership as characteristics of their involvement in safe, positive, and structural activities. Similarly, (39) emphasized that young people are key to nation building. They are the main assets of any nation in the world, as such, there have been agitations from governments, donor agencies and other charity organizations, that young people be involved in the processes and policy issues that affect their lives and communities (1). The aim of BAT is to build the assets of youths in form of human capital (2). This is achievable through a focus on active participation, mastery experiences in terms of knowledge, skills and positive connections in order to improve developmental outcomes (empowerment) and positive transition to adulthood (1). The period of adolescence is particularly important given its instrumental role in the development of habits and competences that can affect young people's wellbeing and resilience throughout their lives (40). At this stage, the youths are vulnerable in which case emotions and risk-taking tendencies are amplified (41). The present study intends to use BATCs as a youth empowerment intervention strategy for development of the social system. Although, despite the various programmes at various periods (42) and the increasing popularity of involving young people in the process that affects their lives and communities, little is known about the demonstrated impacts that participatory programmes have on young people (43,44).

To a large extent, youth empowerment is expected to be based on fundamental right and freedom of inclusiveness in all issues including policy issues that concern them (43,44). In the same vein, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) gave youths the absolute right of being heard in Article Twelve with the capsulation of the rights approach, thereby, reappraising the inability of young people to exercise their rights to free voice on issues that directly affects them. However, youth

empowerment is not only limited to Nigeria, it has been given an international boost. The African Union, European Union, United Nation, World Bank and philanthropic communities, have adopted strategies and programmes of human capital and youth's empowerment (45). Empowerment often goes beyond rights and voice, but also, outcome, in that empowerment often leads to positive developmental outcomes aimed at strengthening institutions and communities (45,46,47). This implies the evaluative question of the level of impact of human capital on youth's empowerment.

### **2.6. Poverty**

This has no any distinct definition, however, interpreting the concept is based on set and laid down parameters in form of benchmarks geared towards determining at what point people are assumed to be inflicted by poverty. These parameters vary from country to country to national and international organizations. The US categorization of "absolute poverty standard" is based on nutritionally sound food designed by the Department of Agriculture where the average cost of the family food plan is multiplied by three and resultant total is defined as the poverty line (15). Hence (49) adduced that, any situation that falls below such line is described as absolute poverty. Also, in a related study, (50) in his submission argued that poverty is the inability to meet and maintain the minimum levels of living standard in terms of food, clothing and shelter. In the developed world, poverty is measured on the bases of income and access to basic infrastructures; water, health and quality education, likewise transportation and access to information and feedback (15). Moreover, (51) opined that with respect to poverty in a developing country like Nigeria, the rural economy is subsistence over a long time to poverty in the rural population. It is in view of this (52) argues that wide spread and severe poverty is a reality in Nigeria. Consequently, (52) based his assessment of poverty to the extent that poor people lack most basic necessities of life to a degree that one wonders how the young men and women manage to survive. For instance, poor health as it reflects in Nigeria's high infant mortality and low life expectancy. Therefore, the position of the United Nation's statement is the most ideal in that poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family; not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living and not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility

to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation (52).

### **2.7. Unemployment**

In trying to define unemployment, it is pertinent to be mindful of the concept underemployment so as to have a clear understanding of both concepts. Therefore, unemployment from the perspective of the British Department of Employment, affirms that unemployed is a school-leaver who is not in paid employment but who is available for working (53). In the view of the United Nations, unemployment consists of all persons who during the reference period, were not working but who were seeking work for pay or profit, including those who never worked before (15). In furtherance to the United Nation's view point, unemployed persons also include those that were not seeking work because of temporary illness, because they made arrangements to start a new job subsequent to the reference period or because they were on temporary or indefinite lay-off without pay (15). Likewise, (15,54) assert that underemployment is determined by the number of hours put in at work by an employee. From the Nigerian perspective, underemployment is a situation in which an employee works for less than 40 hours a week for involuntary reasons.

### **3. BAT – A Vocational/Technical Education for National Growth and Development/Youth Empowerment**

In an attempt to achieve the goals of BAT many Business Apprenticeship Training Centers (BATCs) have been established in Nigeria. BATCs are among many interventions of poverty alleviation and unemployment schemes put in place by the government at various levels to enhance youth empowerment. In BATCs, training, knowledge and skill acquisition are pursued for the benefits of the young people. However, the trends of engaging youths in apprenticeship and vocational training show that the level of skills and ability to apply the acquired skills in the real world do have a significant effect on one's growth and empowerment. It is as a result (9) argues that, possession of requisite vocational technical education skills and its applicability will help to implement complex growth inducing technologies and productivity enhances practices. Also (18) corroborates the vital role of vocational technical education in technological advancement of any country. In furtherance of the earlier argument, it is a known fact that training acquisition and utilization of relevant skills by the youths is indispensable for economic growth and national development. However, intervention schemes like BAT and VET

are all products of policy changes which indeed have forced most countries of the world including Nigeria to turn around their traditional vocational training policies in line with the recent trend (9). Thus, Nigeria has indeed formulated viable policies, but the major challenge has been the implementation.

Findings of studies show that, for instance in Uganda, vocational education and training improves access to labour market and livelihood, opportunities, though a number of areas requires improvement (55). Nevertheless, the study further emphasized that, large number of young people equipped with appropriate skills have the potential to boost their country's prosperity. According to (56) ignoring the skill needs of disadvantaged young people not only limits their chances of achieving their potentials, but also threatens to slow growth and poverty reduction. Similar studies carried out in Hungary and Germany on dual vocational and apprenticeship training systems at the secondary level, combining school based vocational education with employer-provided, workplace-based training have sustained a positive track record in easing the transition from school to work, lowering the unemployment rate, and increasing the quality of work in cross-national comparison (57,58). Likewise, apprenticeship system of training in Switzerland has a long tradition of success, just as it is in Germany, Austria, Denmark and Netherlands (59). Switzerland, happens to be one of the OECD countries with the lowest youth unemployment rate and this is due to the provision of young people with theoretical education and practical training, such that they become productive participants in the labour market (60). All these could largely be attributed to large share of young people to obtain a degree at the third level of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED).

Nigeria's economy is in dire need of holistic reform as a result of the present economic recession, arising from continuous mismanagement in the past. Hence, there is the need for productive, competent and flexible workforce of all categories of manpower as a requisite for furthering economic growth and development. Thus, the demand for skilled workers and technicians to meet the requirement of industries as the dominant provider of employment (7). Therefore, vocational technical education is unable to respond to the changing labour market due to lack of instructional equipment, teaching methods and evaluation techniques are outdated leading to inappropriate low internal and external efficiencies. Similarly, BAT and VTE will benefit young people by getting them engaged in formal and non-formal vocational training across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria, as it will offer increasing opportunities for training to young men and women, reduce regional

disparities across training centers and contribute to the development of a range of skills needed by the economy. Thus, with the demand driven principles, their chances of contributing to the reduction of poverty under-employment and unemployment are very high (7).

#### **4. BAT and Youth Empowerment**

BAT is a capacity building and intervention programme that often involves young people as partners and participants in decision making process implementing positive policy outcomes with adults acting in a supportive role in programme leadership. As such, the best form of human empowerment is by ensuring that each citizen is educated and trained in BAT and vocational skills to be able to produce goods and services for national development (11). Youth empowerment involves both individuals and collective, democratic processes of engagement, implying group interaction (39, 46). In this way, BATCs are exclusively one-to-one youth development interventions aimed at building the needed human capacity in youths through instilling knowledge, skill acquisition and giving training to the targeted youths and thereby empowering them. However, if youths are not meaningfully engaged in practice it will only create the awareness in terms of content delivery instead of shaping programme planning and implementation (61).

BATCs as an intervention scheme to mentor the youths in human capital development by making sure that the intervention is empowerment-based, by engaging the youths through participation and seeking their impacts in decision making process i.e. participatory approach (62). The BATCs focuses on youth empowerment initiatives outside formal schooling, but accommodate youths who have attained formal education but lack the basic required knowledge and vocational skills to be self-reliance, and youths that have not been privileged to go through formal education, but equally need the required skills. BATCs are to enhance capacity building through productive engagement of the youths who would thereafter come out of the process through practice and become more empowered, leading to job creation and poverty reduction in the society.

#### **5. Government Intervening Strategies in Vocational Training, Poverty Alleviation and Youth Empowerment**

Successive governments in Nigeria have at one time or the other created many intervention schemes to stem out poverty, unemployment and empower the youths and women in the country. It is in this light, (63) reiterated women empowerment through literacy training as a process whereby women are able to learn

skills and organize themselves to increase self-reliance and to assert their independent right to make choice and control resources. However, the National Economic Empowerment and Development strategy (NEEDS) claimed that many of the responses to poverty reduction appear to be ad-hoc, uncoordinated and more or less fire brigade approach (64). From 1975-2015 different intervention programmes with poverty reduction thrust aimed at empowering the citizenry with knowledge and skill acquisition training have been undertaken. Programmes such as Community Bank (CB), established in the year 1990, National Directorate of Employment (NDE) 1986, People's bank of Nigeria (PBN) 1989, Directorate of Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DIFRI) 1987, Better Life for Rural Women 1990, Family Support Programme 1987, Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) 1998, Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) 2000, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) 2000, National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) 1973 and Nigerian Agricultural Bank (NAB) first incorporated in 1973, in 1987 it was renamed Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB), subsequently in 2000 it was merged with the People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN) and took over the risk assets of Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) to become Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank Limited, (NACRDB) a name that has always be considered too long and unwieldy. In the year 2010 it was shorten to Bank of Agriculture (BOA). These programmes are aimed at empowering the people and addressing various manifestations of poverty.

However, in urgent need to rescue the situation, the federal government of Nigeria in 2004 launched another poverty alleviation scheme at all three tiers of government packaged as National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), the State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (LEEDS), holistically, operated at all three levels respectively with the aim of eradicating poverty in Nigeria (65). Despite all the above attempts to alleviate poverty, it is still a mirage, and as a result, the international community felt it needs to act fast and the United Nations (UN) in 2005 launched the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as part of effort to accelerate the attainment of MDGs ahead of the 2015 targeted date (66). However, the programme could not achieve most of the set goals as most African countries could not meet the said target. Given the afore-said challenges, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) came into being aimed at ending poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. Each goals has specific target to be achieved over the next 15 years (67).

Meanwhile, under the present economic hardship that is currently being experienced in Nigeria, there are fears that the present programme (SDGs) might also go in the way its predecessor.

Besides, as the global economy slows down with signs that it is heading towards recession (68), there are chances that many more nations will face socio-economic crises that would require urgent attention. This means that without rapid economic growth to sustain the nascent democratic gains, youth empowerment, poverty and unemployment situations will be grimmer as more youths will become less empowered, unemployed with varying consequences for national security. (69) identified poverty alleviation as a means through which the government desired to revamp the battered economy and rebuild self-esteem in majority of Nigerians, most especially the youths. It also intends to banish hunger and poverty, and empower the youths, training and re-training in vocational skills for youths, especially those that have dropped-out of formal employment or education (70).

Hence, under the condition high level of unemployment, there is urgent need to orientate the youths by inculcating in them self-empowerment and entrepreneurship through vocational and apprenticeship training programmes as a short term intervention mechanism (71). However, (72) discovered that human resources development and management could be an effective tools for youth empowerment, poverty reduction and self-reliance. In this regard, the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) is a scheme so crucial in that youths are empowered on practical basis in the course of their service year where knowledge and skills are imbibed in them on the essence of supporting these apprenticeship and entrepreneurship projects cutting across all spheres of the country (73). Sadly, none of the programme met its desired objectives due to poor implementation, corruption of government officials and public servants, poor targeting mechanism and failure to focus directly on the poor (69).

## **6. Benefits of BAT to Human Capacity Building and National Development**

BAT and other forms of training have become global programme taken seriously in developed nations to boost and sustain human capacity building and national development, needless to say developing nations like Nigeria. This is because, training is essential for proper industrial development at all levels (11). Youths engaged in BAT will acquire the required knowledge and skills for industrial revolution and national development. Therefore, BAT is a form of training whose primary objective is to prepare individuals for employment and self-sustenance (74).

In like manner, BAT and vocational technical education are aimed at providing skills, knowledge and attitudes to prepare individuals for employment in recognized occupation or careers for human and nation building (75). It was further argued that, the economy and society, including individuals and enterprises benefit as well, since the economy becomes more productive, innovative and competitive through the existence of more skilled human potentials (11). However, aside the mission statement of BATCs (7,9,11,18,) analyze these benefits and concluded on a bottom line that, BAT and vocational technical education lies in its ability to create job, enhance economic growth and industrial development. Some of these benefits are:

- BAT and vocational training prepares the individual to acquire skills for gainful employment.
- It enables individuals to be entrepreneurially inclined through the setting up of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMES).
  - It is a model for human capacity building and pre-requisite for national industrial development.
  - It goes a long way to improve and maintain standard of managerial and technical performances in workshops, industries, and organizations.
  - It is a platform for sustained production of qualified manpower to meet future needs of national development at all levels.
  - It encourages continues learning and training which propel employees to high standard of proficiency in their chosen career.
  - It raises the profitability and productivity of an enterprise through the effective use of highly trained manpower.

### 7. Challenges Experienced by BAT and VTE in Nigeria

Studies in Nigeria shows the challenges militating against smooth operational activities of BAT and various vocational and technical education from engaging and sustaining such schemes. For example (7) came up with some challenging factors such as [1] inadequate implementation of rational and pragmatic policy measures, [2] shortage of well-trained and qualified teachers to handle the various training centers, [3] project size and scale, and [4] financial mismanagement. In a related development (11, 12,18), highlighted the following as challenges too; [a] poor organization and slow pace of implementation, [b] shortage of qualified manpower, [c] lack of equipment and infrastructural facilities for teaching and learning, [d] low level of funding of vocational technical education, [e] poor remuneration of vocational technical teachers and motivation, [f] inadequate power supply, and [g] inexperience and poor coordination of the programmes. It is in view of

the above that (10) pointed out that, the inability of the government of Nigeria to adequately do the needful by ensuring that all measures are put in place to enhance technology education is a serious impediment to national growth and development. Similarly, (12) lamented that though technical colleges have been established by both federal and state governments, vocational training centers' built by governments, individuals and organizations, Universities of technology, polytechnics and similar institutions established in all states, yet there is acute shortage of technical teachers and instructors. Most importantly, learning and training need be a continuum in the sense that skills, and knowledge acquired in schools and training centers quickly become obsolete in the labour market and the curriculum of technical education takes too much length a time to be reviewed in line with the fast changing dynamics of science and technology in today's world of global village.

### 8. Conclusion

Nigeria as it stands today cannot compete favorably in terms of trade on the world global stage, because she is an import dependent nation. And this is occasioned by lack of low, medium and highly skilled manpower to sustain the country's industrial and economic growth for national development. Therefore, as a developing nation, and currently heading into recession, there is an urgent need to look inward by engaging and empowering the youth into BAT and VTE as a catalyst to a mass skilled labour force thereby, determining the amount of output it can produce per unit input. If this is done, it will go a long way to enhance economic growth, industrial revolution and national development.

Ironically, the enlisted challenges would have made good the required recommendations for propelling the country on to the path of economic recovery, industrial revolution and national development. But notwithstanding, the paper did proffer some key recommendations such as:

1. Pragmatic, rational and consistent as well as judicious implementation of policies that have direct bearing with the development of BAT and vocational training across all training centers, institutes and schemes at all levels of government in the country.

2. In view of the change mantra clamored by the present government, institutionalized partnership should be encouraged between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, professional and corporate bodies, entrepreneurs and artisans aimed at attaining the visionary change agenda.

3. Revamping the abandoned technical education occasioned by total neglect of the then technical colleges which hitherto provided the nations

required low and medium skilled manpower will be a step in the right direction.

4. As obtained in Europe, Germany and other developed nations in the world, Nigeria should start thinking towards adopting the dual education system, where apprenticeship and vocational training are integrated into the general conventional education system alongside provision of needed, finance, infrastructure and highly skilled personnel. This approach will prepare the youths to be self-reliant, sustaining, reduced poverty and unemployment.

#### Corresponding Author:

Idris Yakubu Haliru

Department of Local Govt. & Development Studies  
College of Administrative and Social Science, Kaduna  
Polytechnic, Kaduna, Nigeria.

E-mail: [idrissyakubu175@yahoo.com](mailto:idrissyakubu175@yahoo.com)

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