

Developing the Youth through Technical Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Abstract

Nigeria is a country characterized with natural resources in its abundance which can cater for the well-being of the citizens, yet the citizens especially the youths are living below poverty level as many are victims of unemployment and cannot offer meaningful and positive contribution to the development of the nation. The unemployment rate is as a result of the abandonment of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) that can offer skills to the youths for self-reliance and employment. In this vein, this paper seeks to address how a developed TVET programme can develop the youths in order to build the nation for sustainable national development in Nigeria. The following outlines provide a guide to the content of this paper; the concept of sustainable development, the meaning of TVET and its role in sustainable development, how to develop TVET for sustainable development in Nigeria. Others were the definition of youth and the concept of TVET for youth development. The researcher suggests that TVET can be developed for sustainable development in Nigeria through making a flexible TVET policies, establishment of TVET special training centres on local basis, improvement of the linkages between training institutions and the industries, provision of adequate training facilities, giving of grants to individual who successfully complete TVET training, granting of soft loans to established business, establishment and effective management of financial institutions such as Micro-Finance Banks, Bank of Industries (BOI), employment in both public and private sectors should be centre on psychomotor contribution rather than certificate among others. The implementation of these strategies will enhance the development and sustainability of TVET programmes in Nigeria. Based on the discussion made in this paper, the study recommends that the period of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) should be converted to be a compulsory training period for all graduates on different types and kinds of TVET skills, For non-graduates youths, there should be a skill training organized and supervised through government agencies such as Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and other commissions, Government should grant soft loan to those venturing into TVET as this will enable the establishment of the acquire skills. Also, loan should be given to graduates who have completed a training programme for easy establishment.

Keywords: Skill Acquisition, Sustainable Development, TVET, Unemployment, Youth

1.0 Introduction

Nigeria as a country is endowed with natural resources that are capable to catapult the nation to a maximum level and height in terms of development can contribute to national development. It is a nation that is characterized with the endowed with many youths who are the prime movers of any form of development (political, economic, social, cultural etc.). The development of any nation depends on the workforce available and to what the extent to which is the workforce is viable and capable. According to www.tradingeconomics.com, youth unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 25.20 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016 from 25 percent in the third quarter of 2016. The National Population Census (NPC, 2006), asserted that the total population of the youth (15-35 years) is about 64,086,797. Out of this population, about 16149873 Nigerian youths are unemployed. If these large populations of the group suffer and become victims

51 of unemployment, how would the nation move forward and sustained its development
52 when the youths are the engine **room-of-any for** development? These youths that are not
53 engaged in any activity are morally, politically, economically, socially, psychologically
54 and culturally depressed, which is dangerous to the entire society as their actions of anti-
55 social activities poses a threat to the nation's economy. Also, they cannot contribute
56 meaningfully to the development and sustainability of the country's economy.

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59 In order to make them useful, meaningful and to be an active partner in the nation's
60 economy, they must be employed and empowered. Through this, the youth can contribute
61 **in to the** building and sustaining the nation. Youth as defined by the National Policy on
62 Youth Development (NPYD, 2001), is any individual who is a citizen of the Federal
63 Republic of Nigeria, between the ages of 18-35 years. The National Youths Policy affirms
64 that the extent of the youth's "*responsible conduct and roles in society is positively*
65 *correlated with the development of their country* (FRN, 2001:1)". This is true because the
66 youths constitute about 33% of the entire Nigerian population (NYCN, 2011) which when
67 they are fully integrated into the society through knowledge utilization, skill training for
68 empowerment and employment have the ability to skyrocket the nation positively.

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71 The slogan of the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) is stated thus "*Build the*
72 *Youth, Build the Nation*". In other words, if the nation must be developed, the youth must
73 first be developed because they are the corner stone that determines the economic
74 developmental shape and structure of that nation. Youth development can be by engaging
75 them through empowerment or employment processes. Youths' empowerment and
76 employment can be realized through developing a well organized Technical Vocational
77 Education Training (TVET) to offer skill acquisition for self reliance and development.
78 UNESCO (2012) asserts TVET as a comprehensive term involving in addition to general
79 education, the study of technologies and related sciences, acquisition of practical skills,
80 attitudes, understanding and knowledge related to occupation in various sectors in
81 economic and social life. According to Mclean and David (2009), TVET is concerned with
82 the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the world of work, to increase opportunities for
83 productive empowerment and socio-economic development in knowledge, economics and
84 rapidly changing work environment. Based on this, if TVET is develop for the youths to
85 key into the programmes, the nations' economy will be developed and sustained through
86 the contribution of the youths **using skills and knowledge** acquired from TVET.

87 According to Deebom and Zite (2016), one obvious means of meeting the economic needs
88 of the society is by training the youth and giving them some industrial or commercial
89 skills as a means of livelihood. The National Youths Development Policy recognizes that
90 the youths are key resources that can be tapped for the benefit of the whole country. It also
91 asserts that youths are the foundation of a society as their energies, inventiveness,
92 character and orientation define the pace of development and security of a nation. Through
93 the youths' creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in economic
94 development and socio-political attainments. This also leads to national sustainable
95 development. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (as cited in Okwelle &
96 Ayomike, 2014) defined sustainable development as the management and conservation of
97 the natural resources base and the orientation of technological and institutional change in
98 such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for
99 present and future generation. By this definition, TVET and the youths are now seen to
100 play an integral role for the attainment of sustainable development. At this point, the
101 researcher deems it necessary to examine whether developing a well organized TVET
102 programmes can build the youth in order for them to develop the nation through their
103 contributions, innovations and ideas. It is no longer a ~~gainsaying~~ mere cliché that the
104 youths are the leaders of tomorrow. They are also the prime mover of any developed
105 economy. The question to be asked is ~~that~~ "How can Nigerian youths move and
106 developed the economy when they are not developed? This was ~~buttressed~~ ~~discussed~~ by
107 Deebom and Okwelle (2016) who opined that poverty and its symptoms dominate as
108 majority of the youths lack the skills for employment or self-employment. Developing the
109 youth simply means making them to be self-reliant through empowerment or employment.
110 This could be realized through TVET which is the only education that offers skills and
111 knowledge. For instance, Mark Elliot Zuckerberg, the founder and inventor of the most
112 populous social network (~~Facebook~~), who at the age of 20 launched ~~Facebook~~ on
113 February 4, 2004 which have ~~contributed and to~~ ~~sustaining~~ his country's economy (United
114 States) through his skills, talents and knowledge acquired which are the essential
115 ingredients of TVET. Also, Ukrainian, Jan Koum who at the age of 33 years in 2009
116 launched and became the founder of ~~WhatsApp~~, a mobile messaging application for
117 communication ~~have has~~ sustained the economy of Ukraine through skills and knowledge.
118 This study intends to ~~achieve answer~~ the following ~~questions~~:

- 119 • ~~The concept of sustainable development.~~ **What is sustainable development?**

- 120 • ~~The meaning of~~ **What is** TVET and what **might be** its role in sustainable
- 121 development?
- 122 • ~~How to developed TVET for sustainable development in Nigeria.~~ **What are the best**
- 123 **TVET strategies for sustainable development?**
- 124 • Who are the youths?
- 125 • ~~Concept of~~ **What is** TVET for youth development?

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131 **The Concept of Sustainable Development**

132 According to Ahiakwo (2015), to sustain means “to provide enough of what somebody
133 needs in order to live or exist”. A sustainable situation involves “the use of natural
134 products and energy in a way that does not harm the environment”. Sustainable
135 development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently quoted definition is
136 that “Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present
137 without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need”
138 (<https://iisd.org/isd/>). The draft post-2015 agenda proposes 17 goals to promote well-being
139 for all at all ages. According to the agenda, some of the Sustainable Development Goals
140 (SDGs) were to:

- 141 ✓ End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- 142 ✓ End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable
- 143 agriculture.
- 144 ✓ Promote and sustained inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and
- 145 productive employment, and decent work for all.
- 146 ✓ Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- 147 ✓ Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization,
- 148 and foster innovation.
- 149 ✓ Conserve and sustainability use the oceans, sea and marine resources for
- 150 sustainable development.
- 151 ✓ Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for
- 152 sustainable development (The Guardian, May 19, 2015).

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154 Also, TVET is understood to contribute to sustainable development. In this context, the
155 UNESCO-UNEVOC Bonn Declaration on Learning for Work, Citizenship and
156 Sustainability in 2004 stated that “since education is considered the key to effective

157 development strategies, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) then
158 must be the master key that can alleviate poverty, promote peace, conserve the
159 environment, improve the quality of life for all and help achieve sustainable development”
160 (UNESCO, 2005). The concept of sustainable development has been defined in many
161 widely differing ways. One of such broadly accepted definitions is that of Brundtland
162 commission report in 1987 in Redclift (2005), which defined sustainable development as a
163 new form of developmental perspective which integrates the production process with
164 resources conservation and environmental enhancement to meet the needs of the present
165 without compromising our ability to meet those of the future. Furthermore, Kurya and
166 Hassan (2007) posited that sustainable development is a continuous and progressive
167 increase and expansion of the volume of goods and services provided in a given economy
168 with improvement in the social, political and economic life of present as well as future
169 generation. To this end, Arokoyu (2004) argued that sustainable development is inherently
170 a value-laden concept, in that it implies responsibility for both present and future
171 generation. TVET is a sure way for achieving a sustainable development through
172 inculcating the youths that has the innovation, stamina in moving and making the
173 economy more productive and competitive.

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175 **The Meaning of TVET and Its Role in Sustainable Development**

176 Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) means different things to different
177 people from a general perspective. To some people, it means a non-formal training mainly
178 for school dropouts that cannot survive in formal university training. For others, it is a
179 programme that is used in to train semi-skilled labour. TVET from a general and
180 professional point of view is a formal training needed by all. It is an education program
181 that is organized to orient people into skills acquisition, and as well teach them the attitude
182 and knowledge necessary for the appropriate utilization of such skills. Also, it is education
183 designated to develop specific occupational skills (Butterfield, 2000). According to
184 Adenle and Shobowale (2009), TVET exposes the learners to ~~acquire~~ the acquisition of
185 demonstrative skills that could be transformed into economic benefits. The United Nations
186 Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour
187 Organization (ILO) recommendations of 2002 on TVET for the twenty-first century,
188 defined TVET as:

189 *“those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general*
190 *education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the*

191 *acquisition of practical skill, attitudes, understanding and knowledge*
192 *relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life”.*
193

194 From the above definition, TVET prepares an individual for skilful performance on
195 practical task. It involves the acquisition of skills and competencies that can help
196 individuals to function productively in industrial and commercial occupations (Wapmuk,
197 2011). It is a training characterized **with by the** element of sustainable development.
198 Today, TVET is increasingly recognized globally as **an** effective means of empowering
199 young people to engage in productive and sustainable livelihoods. Sustainable
200 development is about the development of individuals and that of the society and national
201 economy. TVET empowerment improves a nation’s economy, provides job opportunities,
202 **reduces can contribute to reduction in** crime rates and encourages creativity and
203 competitiveness in nation-building. TVET facilitates the adjustment of the skills and
204 knowledge of man to the changing demands within the society. Skill and knowledge as
205 well as social values acquired through TVET allow an individual to manipulate the natural
206 and physical environment for making life more useful for improved sustainable scientific,
207 technological and economic development (Okwelle, 2008). Thus, TVET and sustainable
208 development are inevitably connected. TVET as a programme has an essential role to play
209 in raising awareness, and providing skills and values considered necessary to put
210 sustainable development into practice. As **the- a** goal, sustainable development lies at the
211 heart of the TVET system, and become the platform among the society it serves
212 (Chepkemi, Watindi, Cheron, Ng’isirei & Rono, 2012). In the new economic
213 environment therefore, TVET is expected to produce an educated, skilled and motivated
214 **workforce** for sustainable development and nation’s growth. Today, TVET is increasingly
215 recognized globally as effective means of empowering young people to engage in
216 productive and sustainable livelihoods.

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219 Youth empowerment is crucial to sustainable national security, because when youths are
220 empowered by equipping them with employable skills they will be engaged and will
221 eschew violence and embrace peace. The term “youth” varies in its significance and age
222 range from culture to culture. It may universally be defined as a transitional concept.
223 Adenle and Raheem in (Ogbuanya & Obiajulu, 2015) viewed youth as a very specific
224 stage between childhood and adulthood, when people have to negotiate a complex
225 interplay of both personal and socioeconomic changes in order to manoeuvre the
226 ‘transition’ from dependence to independence, take effective control of their own lives and

227 assume social commitments. The National Youths Policy recognizes that the youths are a
228 key resource that can be tapped for the benefit of the whole country.

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231 **How to Develop TVET for Sustainable Development in Nigeria**

232 Though, TVET system in Nigeria like other African countries is threatened with many
233 challenges, one of such major problems upon which other problems seem to emanate from
234 is that of image of TVET. Evidence from studies indicates that many youths, parents and
235 even government perceive TVET as not valuable as a general education (Afeiti, 2008,
236 African Union (AU), 2007, Okoye & Okwelle, 2013). This negative view has grossly
237 discouraged many young people from enrolling into TVET programmes, undermining the
238 importance of this form of education to national and sustainable development.

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241 It has been noted that TVET provides the needed employable skills and attitudes required
242 for job performance at the workplace. It can be perceived that the world of TVET
243 constitutes technical education and vocational education. Technical education is defined as
244 a formal training that enables the application of the techniques of applied sciences and
245 mathematical principles for the services of mankind; whereas vocational education is the
246 educational preparations and training provided to individuals to enable them become
247 specifically qualified for a particular vocation. Okoye and Okwelle (2014) argued that
248 while technical education is aimed at nurturing skills and practical development of an
249 individual, vocational education is imbued with strict adherence to guiding principles for
250 effective professional performance in an occupational field. TVET therefore is defined by
251 UNESCO (2012) as those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to
252 general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of
253 practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various
254 sectors of economic life.

255

256 The researcher suggests that TVET can be developed for sustainable development in
257 Nigeria through making a flexible TVET policies, establishment of TVET special training
258 centres on local basis, improving the linkages between training institutions and the
259 industries, provision of adequate training facilities, giving of grants to individual who
260 successfully complete TVET training, granting of soft loans to established business,
261 establishment and effective management of financial institutions such as Micro-Finance
262 Banks, Bank of Industries (BOI), and employment in both public and private sectors

263 ~~should be centre on psychomotor contribution rather than certificate among others.~~ The
264 implementation of these strategies will enhance the development and sustainability of
265 TVET programmes in Nigeria.

266 **Who are the Youths?**

267 Youth is a period which is ~~both extreme importances~~ **important** in the development of
268 any nation as well as a sensitive period for the individual youth and by extension, the
269 society and nation as a whole. Youth are not only actual leaders in some role or the other
270 but are also future potential leaders and are actually the greatest investment in any
271 country's development. The extent to which the youth of any nation possesses ~~the assets of~~
272 intelligence, responsibility, creativity and patriotism determines the potentials of a nation
273 for development. The way in which a nation defines its youth is related to the objective
274 conditions and realities that exist in its immediate environment. By way of definition in
275 the Federal Republic of Nigeria, a youth is defined as a citizen of Nigeria of aged between
276 18-35 years (NPC, 2006). This age bracket represents the most active, dependable and yet
277 vulnerable segment of the country's population socio-economically, emotionally and in
278 other respect. Also, the youth policy defines the youths as all young persons of the ages
279 18-35 years. Predominantly, Nigeria's population is characterized with youths occupying a
280 high percentage of its population.

281
282 According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2012) of National Population Census
283 (NPC, 2006), the total population of the youth (15-35 years) is about 64,086,797 while
284 youth of age bracket (18-35 years) was about 52,183,686. For the purpose of this paper,
285 Nigerian youths are citizen of Nigerian between the ages of 18-35 years which form about
286 52 million persons; with 24,548,835 (47.2%) being males and 27,634,852 (52.8%) being
287 females out of an entire population of about 140,003,542 persons. The youths thus
288 constitute about 37.3% of the total population. This is equivalent to one youth out of every
289 three Nigerians. They are the backbone of the development of the country. Indeed, if
290 Nigeria is to be sustained as a viable entity, there must be a very good plan to tap the
291 energy and resourcefulness of the youth population to fast track national economic
292 development of the country through TVET (The Tide, 2013). The National Youths Policy
293 recognizes that the youths are a key resource that can be tapped for the benefit of the
294 whole country. As earlier pointed out, the youth has a crucial role to play in the efforts of
295 achieving national and sustainable development anywhere in the world. The place and
296

297 importance of the youth in the development process is aptly described by the National
298 Youth Policy in this way:

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300 *“Youth are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not*
301 *only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are*
302 *potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country’s*
303 *development. They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a*
304 *country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their*
305 *vitality, responsible conduct, and roles in society is positively*
306 *correlated with the development of their country” (FGN, 2001).*
307

308 Youths of a nation serve as the building blocks that link the past with the present. The
309 youths represent the future and the hope of every society and this has been more apt in
310 Nigeria especially if taken in the context of the country’s 50 years of nationhood (Walter
311 & Anikeze, 2017). However, the youth being a vulnerable group with peculiar but unmet
312 needs and aspirations, majority of them faces several problems which include
313 unemployment, underemployment, and poverty among others. These have hampered
314 sustainable development as they cannot meaningfully contribute to the economic viability
315 of the nation due to lack of skills for self-employment, paid employment and
316 empowerment. This was evidenced as Yakubu (2012) and Akpan and Udoh (2014) opined
317 that lack of productive and marketable TVET skills has been identified as the major cause
318 of unemployment as many youths are not adequately prepared to fit into the productive
319 sector of the economy and cannot provide the services that can generate sustainable
320 income.

321

322 **Concept of TVET for Youth Development**

323 The development of the youth depends on their readiness and the availability of the
324 programmes that can enhance such development. Youth development cannot be achieved
325 without proper integration and incorporation of programmes for empowerment and
326 employment. This is certain because development is the end product of empowerment and
327 employment. From the above assertion, it is convince that Nigerian youths needs TVET as
328 the only platform that can usher in place the desire and expected development through
329 empowerment and employment. It is a form of education that aims at self-reliance and
330 sustainability. Technical and vocational education is a form of education designed to equip
331 the learners (youths) for gainful employment and empowerment. It is also that part of
332 education that provides the skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for effective
333 employment in specific occupations. According to Dawodu (2006), TVET **are is** the most

334 reliable vehicles for self sustenance, economic prosperity and political supremacy of a
335 nation over others since it prepares an individual for employment in any industry for
336 specialization. By this, it implies that it will make the youth flexible and employable in the
337 labour market. A graduate of TVET must be ~~embedded with~~ possess skills, attitude, ~~and~~
338 knowledge needed in the industry ~~for utilization~~. It is important to know that the world
339 today has advanced to a point where ~~only certificate~~ a degree ~~alone~~ cannot give
340 employment. It is a period where skills ~~acquired and posses~~ will ~~edge or single~~ set apart
341 an individual out of mix-multitude hunting and searching for a particular job. A well
342 organized TVET programme ~~that is rebuild~~ will actually bring about youths'
343 development.

344
345 According to Sachs (2004) in Alhassan and Abdullahi (2013), development is a process
346 where an economy undergoes social and economic transformation leading to a rise in the
347 standard of living, ~~and~~ access to basic amenities for all through knowledge. It is in
348 recognition of the above concept of development that TVET ~~in empowering youths for~~
349 ~~poverty alleviation as a means for poverty alleviation~~ should be given utmost priority by
350 government, having in mind the future consequence and task ahead for sustainable
351 development. Technical and vocational education and training plays an essential role in
352 improving the wellbeing of youths and communities. It increases productivity, empowers
353 individuals to become self-reliant and stimulates entrepreneurship. Investors are more
354 willing to invest in a community with strong human resources (Chinwe, 2008). Skills
355 development can therefore contribute to strengthening the social links of a community by
356 promoting employment creativity and sustainable means of existence for the youths. By
357 implication, TVET delivery system (Audu, Karim & Balash, 2013) has the potential to
358 train the skilled workforce that the nation needs and create employment for the youths and
359 emerge out of poverty, underdevelopment and technical backwardness.

360 361 **2.0 Conclusion**

362 From literature reviewed in this paper, Nigerian youths are still wallowing and languishing
363 in poverty and lack because the nation has not been able to identify ~~and walk on the~~
364 ~~corridor~~ the importance of TVET. In as much as the youths are not built, the nation
365 cannot be developed and its effect is that the national economy cannot be sustained. Papers
366 reviewed shows that many developed nations around the world were able to ~~attained a~~
367 ~~tremendous height~~ be where they are today because the youths and TVET were
368 simultaneously identified as an instrument ~~of~~ for sustainable national development.

369 Nigerian youths are left behind because of poor policy formulation and implementation
370 concerning TVET and its impact on national development. TVET programs suffers² poor
371 sponsorship in Nigeria. ~~Researches reveal that many developed nations have adopted the~~
372 ~~dual system (incorporating TVET with youths) to ensure productive economy through~~
373 ~~TVET programs with every seriousness. Dual system involves technical and vocational~~
374 ~~training provided on special vocations in government approved industries and~~
375 ~~commissioned agencies to get the youths involved.~~

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378 **3.0 Recommendations**

379 From the above, the following were recommended:

- 380 i. The period of National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) should be converted to be a
381 compulsory training period for all graduates on different types and kinds of TVET
382 skills. ~~The~~ Internship should be made compulsory in selected special vocational
383 areas. The more versatile and knowledgeable experts or adult educators who could
384 employ a range of learning models, not just competency-based training, should be
385 recruited as instructors in such training centres or industries selected for the purpose.
- 386 ii. For non-graduates youths, there should be a skill training **programme** organized and
387 supervised through government agencies such as Niger Delta Development
388 Commission (NDDC), National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and other
389 commissions. Also, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Community-Based
390 Organizations (CBOs), philanthropists, public and private industries should venture
391 into organizing free skill training programme for youths' empowerment.
- 392 iii. There should be ~~a~~ synergy between tertiary institutions offering TVET and the
393 industries that can offer practical knowledge on subject area. This linkage could be
394 through the Students' Industrial Attachment Period (SIAP). In this way, theoretical
395 knowledge that seems ~~that-to~~ be abstract in the classroom will be translated into
396 reality which will enhance easy acquisition of skills in a chosen area of
397 specialization.
- 398 iv. Government, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), Philanthropists and others
399 should partner in providing infrastructural facilities to TVET institutions. Also,
400 industries should ~~transfer the obsolete~~ **donate** tools, equipment to the institutions as
401 a way of making acquisition of skills easily realizable.

- 402 v. Government, public and private **entities** should be **involved** in establishing more
403 registered TVET programmes centres at an affordable and reduce cost of training
404 fee.
- 405 vi. Government should grant soft **loans** to those venturing into TVET as this will enable
406 the establishment of the acquire skills. Also, loan should be given to graduates who
407 have completed a training programme for easy establishment.
408

UNDER PEER REVIEW

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