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# **Strategies For Effective Utilization Of Non-Oil Sector For Youth Empowerment In Nigeria: A Theoretical Perspective**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the possible strategies that could encourage effective growth and spread of the non-oil sector in the country and possibly influence the youths with empowerment. The paper surveyed some available locally sourced strategies in the non-sector within or among the states in the country that would yield profitable returns and engage the Nigerians youths with jobs and wealth creation and for sustainable national development. Findings from the study emerged that entrepreneurs who invested their resources in the sector today have recorded a very big success in the country. Also, youths who are exposed to fully engagement in the non-oil sector are better placed to create jobs for themselves and others. The paper concludes that, strategies for diversification of non-oil sector contribute significantly to youth empowerment and improved economy in the country.

**Keywords:** Strategies, youth empowerment, non-oil sector

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria is one of the countries in West Africa highly endowed with natural resource such as groundnut, zinc, cassava, coal, economic trees, crude oil and other mineral resources. With crude oil or no crude oil, Nigeria can be proud of a robust economy, if these resources are effectively utilized through engagement of the youths in the country. The non-oil sector is an integral part of industrialization which serve as a key tool for youth empowerment towards building improved economy in the country. Over the decades, the country believes in crude oil production as a sole means to earn an improved economy and youth empowerment. However, despite the improved oil activities taking place in the last couple of years, the outlook for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth remains bleak. Onodugo, Amujiri, and Nwuba (2015) affirmed that Nigerian economy has for decades precariously leaned on the fragile foundation of crude oil. An emerging trend suggests that in the recent time after stoppage of oil bunkering to almost a finishing end through Tantita Services Ltd and other devices, the economy is growing without job creation for the youths and poverty alleviation. This end, attention of scholars has been shifted towards strategies for enhancing the non-oil sector as means and remedial for the high rate of youth unemployment. The youths in Nigeria constitute and occupy a vital segment whose survival is dependent upon exposing them to strategies for the non-oil sector industrialization. Strategies for non-oil sector industrialization, thus refers to systematic processes and activities that involve adequate supply of non-oil sector for youth empowerment. The non-oil sector industrialization refers to an aspect of a nation's economy which deals with production and creation of goods and service for job and wealth creation. Okoye and Agwuna (2010) maintained that youth empowerment and economic strength or weakness of any nation has a strong relationship with both the quantity and quality of available goods and services.

This in turn, is dependent on the level of awareness and exposure of the young people in the country to the non-oil sector featured activities and strategies. Akpomujere (2017) held that the dexterity with which hunger and poverty have devastated lives and future ambition of youths in Nigeria, have led scholars prescribing engagement of the youths in the non-oil sector as lasting remedy for youth empowerment and poverty reduction. Effective utilization of the strategies for promoting non-oil sector in the multifaceted industrialization will lead a nation to experience increased energy supply, transportation network, investment awareness, human capital development, technological advancement, innovation in the agriculture and manufacture. The strategies for non-oil industrialization form the engine room for the industrialization of the well-developed and emerging nations such as USA, Canada, Japan, China etc.

The Nigerian's economy is facing a bleak outlook due to rampant unemployment. This appears to be lacking in adequate attention given to the non-oil sector in the area of entrepreneurial-based technology and innovation, investment in the agriculture sector, investment in small and medium industries, information and communication, investment in science and research, plastic manufacturing, investment in soft drink production, maximization of mineral exploration in Nigeria. For instance, the major setback against successful and sustainable youth empowerment and improved economy in Nigeria is due to acute shortage of effective application of these strategies in the non-oil sector. These unwelcome happenings call for urgent attention to be directed towards the development of the giant strategies and methods in the non-oil sector. Okoye and Agwuna (2010) averred that, the provision of basic and indigenous industries will not only solve the unemployment problem among youths but would also provide training in different aspects of the non-oil sector necessary national development. Okoye and Agwuna (2010) summarized the non-oil sector strategies to include investment in small scale industries, production of soft drinks, preservation of fruits juice, plastic production know-how in information and communication technologies (ICTs), and a host of remunerating sources of revenue. Ottih (2016) described the non-oil sector as a foundation for every industrialized nation which guarantees efficient utilization of local resources, import substitution, job and wealth creation, increased Gross Domestic Product as well as poverty alleviation.

The oil sector was first discovered by Shell at Oloibiri Nigeria in 1956 and since this period, little attention has been paid to other means of revenue generation in the country. Currently, almost region and geopolitical zone is focused towards only the oil sector at the detriment of the non-oil field. However, the fundamental reality is that the country needs to diversity its sources of revenue and move back into such areas as agriculture and other sectors as it was in the early 60s when then East, West and Northern regions were known for their palm produce, cocoa plantain and groundnut pyramids respectively. These internally generated revenues formed the major sources of economic growth and employment in the country. It is believed that these areas have a lot of opportunities for youth empowerment and job creation as chief cornerstones for improved economy and national development.

#### **TECHNOLOGICAL AND INNOVATION NEEDS OF THE NON-OIL SECTORS IN NIGERIA**

During the first republic 1960-1966, the then three regional Governments (East, West and the North) used ENDC, WNDC and NNDC to develop the agricultural sector of the economy and allied agro-industries Nwodo in (Okoye & Agwuna, 2010) Nigeria economy then was buoyant and there was virtually no unemployment. Foreigners came to Nigeria to search and take jobs today; the reverse is the case when many Nigerian youths troop out of the country in search of jobs and in most case odd jobs. In that era, technological education was acquired formally in technical institute in Yaba, Enugu and Kaduna, and at the Nigerian railway training centres at Ebute Metta and Zaira. At Oshodi in Lagos State, telecommunication services and technology were also taught.

With such provision, youths were technically exposed to vital areas in line with the needs of the country and youths then could pick up jobs in any part of the country based on the competence before the Nigerian Biafian civil war broke out in 1966. After the ear, there seemed to be a kind of scheming in the socio-political administration of the country. In 1970's, the idea of geo-political zones in the country, viz, the South-South, South-East, South-West, North – East, North-West, North – Central geo-political zones.

In some of these geo-political zones, oil is non-existent. Majority of the state that constitute the South-East geo-political zone for instance belong to the non-oil sector. This fact suggests that such states must device some measures by which their revenue should be promoted and in turn empower their youths for accelerated national development.

On the issue of discuss, let us limit our examples within South-Eastern and South-South states. In the past, training institutes and centres were provided at regional status and things worked well, it implies that such practice could as well as be revived at state levels. In Anambra State for instance, the Akwa people are known for their ability in black-smiting by which assorted kinds of guns could be designed and produced. In Bayelsa and Delta States, the Ijaw people are very good in fishing and extraction of palm wine from raffia trees. It is possible then that theses state could seek to obtain license for this technology to give room for mass production if guns, fish, palm wine or other kinds of technologies for export purposes. After all, Israel has no oil deposit or well yet she is strong and powerful among comity of nations technologically. In the South-East and South-South zones, palm trees are in abundance. The proceeds from palm tree are very vital. For instance, the fibre from the palm kernel has been acclaimed to be the major raw material used in the production of car bodies for many kinds of car such as Daewoo and Opel Omega. The technology behind these productions can readily be handed down at Nnamdi Azikiwe University (UNIZIK), Akwa and in some other established institutes such as PRODA in Enugu, and palm kernel processing settlements in Bomadi and Burutu Local Government areas in Delta State. If centres or institutes for technical productions are established and encouraged by the governments, non-governmental agencies, philanthropists, churches and traditional rulers in the non-oil producer int eh world yet it was in 1976 when the government of that country came to the then East central state and Midwest state of Nigeria to procure the palm seedlings. Palm produce is today the main source of that country's economy. The non-oil sector states in the South-East and other states in Nigeria could as well harness and process the availed resources around them to achieve better economy and as well provide jobs for the unemployed and the out-of-school youths.

### **CONCEPTUALIZATION OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT**

Empowerment is an act of effective expansion and utilization of assets and resources to affect and shape lives in positive direction in a given society. Empowerment is a systematic process of providing ability, confidence, and self-expression to make informed decisions to arrive at best alternatives, options and actions with the aim of influencing lives to be sustainable in terms of self-reliance, moral, economic and social development. Ukazu (2021) agreed empowerment to the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Alsop and Nina in Adeola (2024) described empowerment as a person's capacity to make effective choices; that is, as the capacity to transform choices into desired actions and outcomes. This paper thus, described empowerment as a total process or commitment of making adequation provision for people in a society to be skillful and practically useful to self and the society at large, have exposed to economic, moral, social, psychological and financial sustainability.

### **STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING NON-OIL SECTOR FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT**

In this paper, it is exceedingly difficult for the researcher to cover all ramifications and strategies for promoting non-oil sector for youth empowerment. Thus, the paper limits the strategies to the following below:

#### **Investment In Technical And Vocational Education**

Technical and vocational education in traditional society described as the one which provides character-training and job-orientation. It is an integral part of the general education that equips and trains people for a chosen occupation. Before the advent of Western education in Nigeria, many communities and cultures had developed their own system of informal, formal and vocational education system. Adeola (2024) and Molz (2015) maintained vocational education as a pattern of education that is done through

the system of apprenticeship, whereby young boys and men were attached to master craftsmen where they learned various trades and skills such as carpentry, masonry, blacksmith, foundry, carving and most importantly, textile design and dyeing. Such apprentices could spend from three to seven years depending on the trades they were specializing in, the masters' skills, competence and exposure, and the ward's individual ability and performance. Ogunmola and Ogunmola (2021) and Ovbiagele and Ogumola (2021) agreed that graduates from technical and vocational education were usually assisted at the end of training and acquiring the needed skills and knowledge assisted by the family to acquire necessary tools, and local equipment to start his own trade. This paper therefore described technical and vocational education as a career-based education where its beneficiaries are subjected to acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and training for a specific job or employment generation. Technical and vocational education is designed towards skills and practical knowledge acquisition with the aim of achieving the long-term goal of a private sector driven economy for sustainability, poverty reduction and unemployment control in the society. The basic objectives of technical and vocational education include:

1. Meeting the society's needs for workforce.
2. Preparing students and other beneficiaries for career-based opportunities.
3. Enabling hands-on-training and workshop to gather practical experience.
4. Helping to fill the skills and knowledge gaps in all industries in the private sector.

The National Policy on Education of 2013 in Adeola (2024) summarized the purpose of Vocational education as:

1. To enable individuals acquire vocational and technical skills.
2. To expose the individuals to career awareness by exposing useable options in the world of work.
3. To enable youth acquire an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology; and
4. To stimulate creativity.

Deduction from this orientation, is that youths should be educated and equipped with skills and knowledge in line with the reality of the socio-economics demands of their immediate environment. Nwachukwu in Okoye and Agwuna (2010) agreed that proper education which is adequately provided to the youths is a condition for a nation's survival, emphasizing that anyone who is educated to less than his fullest potential is under-developed. The implication of this assertion suggests that the habits in which people must be trained, their thinking habit, their doing habit and the environment habit, which would enable them to conform to their environment, must be specific in terms of the job and its demands.

When Nigeria as it is known today was colonized in 1861, the various ethnic groups, the Ijaws, Edos, Ibibios, Efiks, Igbos, Yorubas, Hausas, Fulanis, Kanuris, Tivs, and a host of other tribes that now constitute in Nigeria, inhabited; various geographical areas of the country. Although there is no written account of a formal technological education, craft making, iron-smelting and black smithing for producing agricultural implements were carried out through apprenticeships for instance, canoe-making technology existed in the riverine and coastal areas. Dyer making and cloth weaving were known trades among the peoples of Eastern and Northern Nigeria.

One currently witnesses some Hausa tribesmen who hawk their wares (which include mats and trinkets) and also their vocations such as shoe making and shoe shining (Eze & Okoye, 2007). The point made here is that some people could succeed in life if they know the art in making goods shoes, good clothes, good dyes, good canoes, and so on. One could imagine the rate at which Nigerians clamour for made in Italy shoes, clothes, ties and other goods from the country. That country was once like ours. But one unfortunate factor against the made in Nigeria items, goods and services is the kind of saub the indigenous entrepreneurs receive from the public. The big task is how to re-orientate the social values of Nigerians in favour of made in Nigeria goods and services.

### **Investment In Agricultural Sector**

Man's primary concern has been how to ensure food security for its large population. Agricultural practice is one of the areas where Government investment will not only empower the youths but also

assist in providing adequate food for millions. It involves among others commercial cultivation of various crops, engaging in poultry farming, in fish pond and rearing of other domestic animals.

There have been many programmes the Governments initiated in the past years such as Green Revolution, Back-to-land, Agricultural Development Programme (ADP), National Agricultural and Development Authority (NADA), Directorate of foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Better Life for Rural Women Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), Mass Mobilization for Self-Employment and Rural Rehabilitation (MAMSERR), National Poverty Eradication Programme (MAPEP), and many other programmes. The central of thought of all these programmes was initiated to reduce poverty and for the youths self-reliant. Ifada (2024) described investment in the agricultural sector remains indispensable for economic growth and development. The role of agriculture in enhancing youth empowerment and national development is shared in the provision of food for mankind and its position as a key source of raw materials for the manufacturing sector. It creates job and agripreneurial opportunities for the teeming Nigerian youths for poverty reduction. Esene (2016) reported agricultural investment opportunities to include processing of garri and yam flour, canning and preservation of fruits such as orange, grape, lemon, guava, pineapple, poultry farming, canning and preservation of vegetables, vegetable and palm oil mills, rice milling plants, processing of cattle and poultry feeds, production of industrial starch, bread and caking, cattle rearing.

Originally, Nigeria was an agricultural-dependent nation. But later drifted to focus and completely reduced itself to the oil sector in the early 70s, with the decades of slow economic growth and development which subjected the nation to galloping atmosphere of poverty and unemployment. Ifada (2024) stated that, agriculture contributes 40% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs 70% of the labour force in the country. The Bureau of Statistics in Ifada (2024) held that, more than 70% of Nigerians engage in the agriculture sector mainly at the local consumption level. This claim implies that, Nigerian government and her citizens are yet to realize the significant impact of agriculture on building a strong economy which the country is seriously striving to achieve. Thus, there is need for resilient efforts and strategies by various stakeholders to pay more attention to the sector to enhance agricultural production from the subsistence to commercial level. Okoye and Agwuna (2010) demonstrated that, government at all levels should be saddled with the responsibility of mapping out programmes of assistance to farmers to cultivate various food, and cash crops and for seed multiplication and supply as well as livestock improvement scheme research in agriculture which will not only empower the youths but provide employment as many people would be self-employed in agricultural activities.

Agricultural development is a major strategy and measure to tackle poverty and unemployment in the interest of sustainable national development. This can be best achieved and measured through:

1. Employment creation: This has to deal with exposing the youths to the knowledge and opportunity to diversify their income and resources to be effectively engaged in agricultural activities for wealth creation and national development.
2. Agricultural-based educational programmes: The processes that will involve creation of massive educational opportunities and programmes in the agricultural sector. This will help the youths to avail themselves to the opportunities such as knowledge and skills in the sector.
3. Regulation of effective technologies policies and strategies to enhance massive participation of the population in agricultural activities from the point of commercial mindset. These strategies on food crops, livestock and fish production and forest products and wildlife.

Paul (2023) further buttressed that, nation's youth empowerment and national development can be realistic, consequent upon the:

1. Provision of adequate food for a growing population, and raw materials for industries.
2. Provision for an expanding agricultural market for non-agricultural products.
3. Generation of savings for investment in agriculture as well as other sector and release underutilized local resources in the economy.
4. Generation of foreign exchange earnings.

Nigeria is naturally endowed with a lot of agricultural resources and opportunities. Nigerians can explore these opportunities. By leveraging these opportunities, the youths can be meaningfully engaged to advance their entrepreneurial prospects and the same time contribute to national growth and development.

### **Investment In Small And Medium Scale Industries**

The small and medium scale industries usually dominated by users of local knowledge, skills, processes and other resources, which form more than 50% of the total investment in Nigeria. The establishment of small and medium-scale industries could take the form of establishing many viable enterprises across the various local settings of the Federation. Some of the major activities of this sub-sector in the broader non-oil sector include production of pure bottle and sachet water, packaging of fruit juice, small scale printing and press, sewing of clothes and other ventures of good promise. Currently, block moulding machines, palm kernel cracking machines, palm oil pressing machines, weaving machines, cassava grinding machines and many more are locally constructed siting these kinds of machines in the rural and urban areas by the governments in the non-oil sectors and at the same time giving the project a full support will boost small and medium scale industries in the sector. Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2020) maintained successful diversification strategies of resources in the small and medium-scale enterprises offers youths, the opportunities to be productive and secure financial independence. It will also empower the youths and as well create jobs for the people. Ansoff (2020) described the SMEs sector as one full with untapped potentials which needed demanding commitment from the government and private stakeholders for such potentials to be maximized. Anekwe, Ndubuisi and Attah (2022) stated that creation of more viable small and medium scale industries will serve as an alternative strategy to tackle some of the socio-economic problems that bedevil some nations, especially the problem of high unemployment and poverty. Small and medium industries occupy a very high significant position in promoting the non-oil sector in Nigeria. This is attributed to their contribution to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), job creation for the youths as well as impact on wealth creation.

### **Investment In Scientific Research And Technology**

Scientific research deals with a systematic approach to gather information leading to acquisition of knowledge through the scientific methods or processes. Technology refers to the phase of application of knowledge, skills, tools and methods acquired through scientific processes to create products, services, systems to improve information, social and economic wellbeing of the human society. Scientific research and technology are conceptualized as significant milestones in the non-oil sector. The famous and well-known champions in this sub-sector have made waves in building their individual's nation's economy to a robust state through creation of jobs and discovery of new methods and technologies. Okoye and Agwuna (2010) noted Bill Gates, an American entrepreneur and a co-founder of the world's largest software company Microsoft, as an individual who invested in Microsoft that has been recorded a huge success and performance. Today, he is described as a model in the computer revolution. He became among the world's richest men up to date and he is widely respected by people who see his wealth as a product of intelligence and foresight.

Thus in 2025, Microsoft had a revenue of \$261.80 billion and employs over 221,000 employees in 103 countries and regions of the world (Wikipedia, 2025). The yearly yearnings of Microsoft are higher than the budgets of some Nigerian states and that of some African and Asian countries. Nigeria is blessed with young geniuses in almost all fields. It is expected that more responsibilities should be given to this genius to help find solution to youth unemployment in the non-oil sector states, as his counterpart, Bill Gates did in America. Unfortunately, a lot of these brilliant, science and technology-oriented youths are roaring round the Nigerians' streets due to government blatant failure to provide enabling environment for them to fly with the prospect of offering contribution to the nation's economy and employment generation. The few youths were able to overcome hurdle have emerged today as key players to shaping our nation's economy. A good example is one N.A. Ozumba of Parasitology and Entomology Department, UNIZIK

who has variously gone around African sub-region show-casing the produce from *Moringa olietera* plant that are of vital importance to human needs and problem. Oil from Moringa leaf is a good substitute for olive oil and also used for cooking, illumination and soap making. The seed kernel of moringa olietera tree contains natural coagulants which is very good for water purification. These trees and other similar local resources are abundantly available and any states that invest in the productions of these plants/trees would have no business importing water treatment chemicals or quality oil plants from abroad. Proceeds from moringa are also used to treat many health problems as diabetes, intestinal worms, abdominal disorder, anaemia, skin infection, HBP and numerous health problem (Okoye & Agwuna, 2010) Also, Reko Okoye of vocational Educational Department, UNIZIK, has also in his own area and capacity put together diodes and transistors to produce amplified speakers, multi tone saren, wireless transmitters, AC/DC converters, electrical outfit capable of activating and controlling machine operation at a desired speed. There are many more Nnajis, Emeagwalis, Agiwes, Ozumbas and Okoyes East of the Niger and elsewhere in the non-oil sectors and indeed in the country that if they are encouraged, most of these scientific discoveries and technologies could be expanded to create jobs and also empower the youths for improved economy.

Scientific research and technology are strategies in the non-oil sector that have the power to influence youth empowerment and economic growth and development in any society. Both scientific research and technology or technological innovations have a lot of growth potentials, and can make youths to be gainfully placed in the Nigerian society. Simon (2024) addressed scientific research and technology as fresh tools in the non-oil sector created to improve efficiency and development of entrepreneurial skills in any given society. Scientific research and technology build the non-oil sector through: Creation of new knowledge and skills, creation of new markets, making better decisions, improved efficiency. Scientific research and technological innovations also expose youths in nation like Nigeria to:

1. Opportunities for innovative idea generation: Scientific research findings and technology offer society the strength to create and manufacture goods and services for wealth maximization.
2. Acquire knowledge to access and tap unutilized local resources: Youths in the country can apply scientific knowledge and technology to gather information, raw materials and other resources to enhance their creativity and innovation.
3. Building problem-solving attitude and orientation: Scientific research and technology help youths with insights and information to understand gaps in the country's market space and provide solutions to these by producing goods and services within the societal expectations.
4. Embracing changes and adaptability: knowledge and new technology acquired by youths can position and place them to be flexible and resilient to approach new strategies that meet up market needs.

### **Information And Communication System**

The rate of youth unemployment is becoming an increasingly troublesome social phenomenon in many parts of the global village. In Nigeria, youths contribute to a larger percent of most serious socio-economic problems confronting the country. Information and communication system have become one of the fast and well-known strategy of youth empowerment and development in the world today. The youth wing of modern society most among the developing countries who seek to gain meaningful, secure, income-generating work make up a sizable proportion of the population. The GSM world is one major component of Information and communication technology (ICT) that has over the years been gaining ground. Since it was introduced in Nigeria in 2001 through Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) many network systems are effective in Nigeria. Among them are mobile telephone Network (MTN), Zain, Gblobal Communication (Globacom) Etisalat, Sarcom, Zoom mobile, Multiple links and others. Each of these networks is netting millions of naira on daily basis. Nwokoye in Okoye and Agwuna (2010) stated that each telecommunication is visualized to competing to out-od the other in various promotions and sponsorships, running into millions of naira millionaires are created on daily, weekly and monthly basis as a result of play/text and win programmes mounted by them. Most of these communication systems

achieve success because they are purely managed as separate firms avoiding the bureaucratic bottlenecks of the government. Various non-oil sector governments could invest in these communication breakthroughs and the youths could in that way be further empowered. Ejeka, Chinwe and Onyechinyere (2017) maintained that youths in Nigeria need to be empowered and prepared for the future and ICT can assist in this process. Adequate provision of Information and Communication System-based facilities, training, knowledge and skills acquisition programmes will serve as a great measure to control youth restiveness and unemployment in the country.

#### **Investment In Soft Drink Production**

Soft drink production is one of the key sub-sectors in the non-oil field. An investment in soft drinks such as Pepsi, coca cola 7 Up, sprite, Fanta, Sunkist, Crush, ginger beer, and related drinks and malt would not only be profitable but would create the required job statistics for youth empowerment. Outside the return in investment, the level of youth empowerment would be highly significant. Coca Cola is the most popular soft drink in the world. It has a brand value up to 5% of USD 35 billion which was established in Atlanta, George on May 8, 1860 by a renowned pharmacist, Dr. John Styth Pemberton. Today, the product is the largest and mostly sought for and it has the most individual production and distribution network in the world. Seven-up is also trailing behind coca cola. What seven-up requires is sustenance and it would pay up. It has also wide area of consumption as coca cola and would effectively compete with coca cola. Besides, if fruit juice could be preserved it is possible that many more liquid like consumable could be preserved. From instance, in many Izon speaking states in Nigeria such as Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Edo, Ondo and some parts of Lagos, tapping of raffia trees is a highly profitable and youth-oriented business venture that provides valuable training and employment opportunities for young people. Through this sustainable practice, youths in these areas learn the skills necessary to extract palm wine, fostering economic stability and empowerment. It is possible that palm wine from this source can be preserved for a longer period for further secondary or tertiary use. Okoye and Agwuna (2010) averred that stakeholders in the non-oil sectors where palm trees are found could sponsor research on possible preservation of palm wine. Success in that will be a breakthrough in scientific findings in this part of the world, where natural alcohol is preserved for human consumption. It would also create a very large brewery industry capable of creating job for numerous youths in the country.

#### **Plastic Manufacturing**

Investment in the plastic sector is another strategic attempt to curb youth unemployment in the country. The invention of plastic in Ghent, Belgium in 1907 by Leo Handrik Baekeland was an eventful outing when he unveiled the world's first fully synthetic plastic at a meeting of the New York Chapter of the American Chemical Society Nwokoye in Okoye and Agwuna (2010). It was later realized 9Serway, 1990) that plastic as seen today could be fashioned into moulded insulation for electrical insulators, value parts, pipes, billiard balls, knobs, buttons, knife handles and all manner of items. Plastics in the present age have become a material of thousand uses and application. Most radio covers, television housing, video packaging, distributor caps and telephone casings are all plastic materials. In 2025, the US plastics market sales is projected to reach \$4.3 billion, with the market force and size of the plastics industry estimated \$4.3 billion. Today, the plastics sub-sector of the non-oil industrialization is rising astronomically rise in the last twenty years.

In the Nigeria scene, plastics have become a household name buckets, plastic chairs, table, coolers, jugs, packers and cups are variously used in homes, hotels, social gatherings, churches and name them. Beside homes, plastics are used for the manufacture of some car parts, motorcycle parts, personal computers, printers, jerry cans and writing materials such as biro and pen. Plastics have also started replacing wooden properties, iron chairs, radio cassettes made of iron, and many more others. Nigeria has many plastic industries with Anambra state in the lead. The three major cities of Onitsha, Nnewi and Akwa have tens of plastic industries.

Nevertheless, youth empowerment in plastic industries is overwhelming. Hundreds of other unexplored areas are still untouched. It such areas are explored and investment made on them, the problem of youth



unemployment with thousands roaming the streets in search of non-existent jobs would be turned into empowerment for the youths. For instance, if youths acquire the skill and technique involved in casting and moulding as required for plastic wares production and adequate loan provided to them, it will eventually turn them from job seekers to job givers.

### **Investment In Mineral Exploration**

In the local environment, many minerals and ores as well as industrial rocks abound. In Enugu there is coal lignite is brown coal, which provide raw material to industries for electrical power generation and production of oil and liquid fuel. Coal is also used as solid fuel in cement factories and locomotives. High reserves of coal seams occur in Udi, Ukana, Okpatu, Ezimo and Inyi Towns in Enugu State, Owukpa, Okaba and Ogboyaga in Benue State and Lafia-Obi in Nassarawa State. There is limestone in Nkalagu, Ebongi state and in Agwu, Enugu state. Limestone and marble are the primary raw materials for the manufacture of cement. Another usefulness of coal is in the manufacture of fertilizer.

At Agwu area, in Enugu state, gypsum which is also an essential ingredient in cement production is available. Gypsum as a vapour controls the setting time of cement. It is also used for fertilizer production and for making plaster and plaster board. Its crystal in tertiary and cretaceous clays and shales are also found in Ogun, Benue, Kogi, Gombe and Sokoto States. Tin deposits are found in association with younger granites in Jos and Bukuru, Plateau State. Small but rich deposits also occur in older granite pegmatite at Kware, Benue and Niger States. Tin is used universally in food-canning, making of solder, sheet metal, and bearing metals. Collapsible tubes employ large quantities of tin. Also, the compounds of tin are used in eyeing and fire-proofing. Iron-ore is found in large deposits at Agbaja, Plateau State and Itakpe Ksu (near Okene) in Kwara State, Muro Hills in Plateau State and South-East of Abuja. Iron-ore is used for steel production. If the non-oil sectors should sponsor labour force in the analyses and extraction of these mineral and ore deposits in their various areas, it is expected that would boost revenue of the states and as well create job for the teeming population of their youths.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the theoretical findings, the present paper concludes that:

The non-oil sector plays a central role in youth empowerment and national development. From the available literature, it is crystal clear that, giving adequate attention to the non-oil sectors of this country on areas of possible investment would provide adequate youth empowerment and economic advancement. There is a significant evidence and fact that without adequate support in terms of research and funding, the path to youth empowerment and accelerated national development in the non-oil sectors may be unrealizable. There must attention needed to make the non-oil sectors of this country economically buoyant naturally abound and any meaningful exploration and investments on these outlets would surely enhance not only the non-oil sectors economy but would also project the image of this country economically and technologically too. The author believe that the solution will emerge from coordinated efforts and ideas and by creating enabling environment where sustainable educational research will thrive. The solution will also emerge when the educational programmes in the country and especially in the non-oil sectors would encourage entrepreneurial spirit in individuals.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper recommends that:

1. Vocational trade centres should be established with facilities. Alternatively, the existing vocational/technical colleges in all states of the Federation should adequately be rehabilitated and refurbished.
2. Incentive efforts should be put in place to encourage vocational students (trainees).
3. Government at all tiers should device measures by which youths should willingly be attracted to engage in occupations that promote skills exhibition and adequate follow-ups to remunerate such feat designed.

4. Government should offer topmost priority to the implementation of non-oil sector-based policies and strategies. For example, a talented individual could be sent to overseas for formalized training in a proven field of endeavor. In this way, many youths could be attracted to use their hands manually for livelihood.
5. Plantation of various agricultural (economic) plants should be nurtured appropriately across the six geopolitical zones. In the same manner, efforts should be made and subjugated to other areas of research in respect of fruit trees, crops and plants in the non -oil states of the South East zone in affiliation with the university dons in the area.

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