

Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Training for Youth, a Panacea for Unemployment and Nigerian Insecurity

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Abstract

Human resources is a blessing to any nation because of diverse opinions/views that will be shared on issues affecting such nation but when the able bodied youths, educated who are to take over the leadership or governance are unemployed after years of graduation looks frustrating and thus posed as security challenges to such nation. Skills acquisition and entrepreneurship training for the youths will serve as succor to ameliorate the high rate of unemployment rather than allowing the youths to roam the street and thereby engage in unwholesome practices to earn a living. In our findings, we explored the recent employment saga in Nigeria, the effect of unemployment and youth vanguard and the consequences of youth unemployment and security challenges. In conclusion, we advocated that the insecurity in Nigeria as a sectarian violence should be discarded rather it is caused majorly by unemployment.

Keywords: Skills acquisition, Entrepreneurship, Youths. Unemployment and Insecurity

1.Introduction

Nigeria the most populous nation in Africa and the second-largest economy in the continent is endowed with both human and material resources but years of unbridled corruption, mismanagement and sheer waste have hindered economic growth in the country. Consequently, the nation's resources have been left under-utilized leading to unemployment and abject poverty (Bakare, 2013). The importation of foreign policies that were workable in developed economy failed to improve the economic system with soaring rate of unemployment of our able-bodied youths.

Education in Nigeria is the shared responsibility of the federal, state and local governments. The federal ministry of education plays a dominant role in regulating the education sector, engaging in policy formulation and ensuring quality control. At the tertiary level, the system consists of a university sector and a non-university sector. The later is composed of polytechnics, mono-technics and colleges of education. The tertiary sector as a whole offers opportunities for undergraduate, graduate, vocational and technical education (Clark & Ausukuya, 2013). They state further that in Nigeria, there are 59 federal, 38 state and 51 private universities, polytechnics 78, mono-technics 27, and colleges of education 281.

Nigeria with a population of over 160 million and 250 ethnic groups with diverse background of equally diverse individuals with youth demographic approximately 75% (Business Day, (2013) continue to witness more than 150,000 graduates churn-out annually and available jobs remain inadequate to keep pace with the ever expanding army of jobseekers (Bakare 2013). At such, the unemployment rate continues to increase, an unhealthy situation for a developing nation.

Nigeria as a nation has been witnessing drastic and frantic security challenges for some years now and the insecurity situation has been partly attributed to unemployment in the country. The position was confirmed by the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Mr. Lamido Sanusi (2013) in a paper he presented at the 1st Ochendu Youth Empowerment Lecture Series held in Umuahia, Abia State. He affirmed that insecurity can be triggered and fuelled by factors such as unemployment among others. He gave the statistical rate of unemployment to be 20% in 2009 – 2011 as against 15% in 2002 – 2008 and Bakare (2013) but the recent World Bank statistics, revealed youth unemployment rate at 38 per cent. Realistically, she opined, 80 per cent of Nigerian youths are unemployed, with secondary school graduates mostly found among unemployed rural population accounting for about half of this figure.

Though, the crisis surfaced in forms of communal, religious, political and social economic resulted in loss of lives and properties. Judging from the happenings it is seen as phantom sectarian violence that is responsible as it started in the regions.

Today in Nigeria, we live in fears, a position corroborated by Clark & Ausukuya (2013) that we live in absolute suspicion and constant presentiment of an impending disaster as most economic activities have been grounded and crippled resulting the inability of employers to pay their employees thereby exacerbating the already tensed atmosphere of joblessness.

It is against this backdrop that BusinessDay in collaboration with the ministry of industry, Trade and Investment, as well as small and medium enterprise development agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) chose the maiden edition of university entrepreneurship development programme (UNEDEP) initiative as a platform to promote entrepreneurship across Nigerian universities and to create in students the hope about the opportunities

within the country.

The Minister, Mr. Olusegun Agangu said that his ministry stretched the mandate on entrepreneurship to the university level with UNEDEP because of the need to cultivate the culture amongst Nigerian youths. The minister revealed further that there is a global focus on MSMEs adding that more countries are making the development of this sector a priority because it is the only sector that continues to employ while larger corporations are making staff redundant. He enjoined the students to take advantage of the various discussions as it will give them the necessary guidance in developing their business ideas.

The aim of this initiative is to empower undergraduates for job and wealth creation as well as poverty alleviation (BusinessDay, 2013).

In another training programme organized for unemployed graduates by the Centre for Human Security, Olusegun Obasanjo Presidential Library in collaboration with Kwara State University in Ilorin, the former Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC), Professor Peter Okebukola said that Nigerian Universities have been asked to make entrepreneurship compulsory for all graduates of tertiary institutions to reduce graduate unemployment in the country and besides, in few years to come, the measure would have prepared graduates for entrepreneurship towards moving Nigerian forward (Nigerian Tribune, 2013).

2.Statement of the Problem

One of the endowment of Nigeria as nation is human resource and the country has 534 tertiary institutions that turn-out graduates yearly into the labour market but there were no commensurate industries, corporations or government parastatals to absorb them in spite of our huge material resources.

In the process therefore, many are left with no job after many years of graduation apart from privileged few. And as such, the unemployed graduates out of frustrations and wrong orientations joined or formed groups. Some became oil theft syndicates, armed robbers, kidnappers, militants and insurgents while most of the females may end up as prostitutes in order to make ends meet thereby causing problems in the country today among which, is the insecurity.

3.Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is intended to identify the important points on Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Training for Youth, a panacea for unemployment and Nigeria insecurity.

- a) To disabuse the minds of many Nigerians that the insecurity is not caused partly by unemployment of our youths.
- b) To examine effect of youth unemployment on youth vanguard.
- c) To determine the consequences of youth vanguards on national insecurity.

4.Concepts of Unemployment

Unemployment is defined as follows:-

- a) As a state of an individual looking for a paying job but not having one.
- b) When a people are without work and actively seeking work.
- c) An economic condition marked by the fact that individuals actively seeking jobs remain unhired.
- d) Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS) see it as people who do not have a job, actively looked for work in the past four weeks, and are currently available for work. Also, people who were temporarily laid-off and are waiting to be called back to that job.

5.Causes of Unemployment

The causes of unemployment in Nigeria can be enumerated below:

- a) An upsurge in the output from tertiary educational institutions and the inelastic absorptive capacity of the labour market for the services of university and polytechnic graduates.
- b) The imbalance between the kinds of workers wanted by employers and those looking for jobs. The imbalances may be caused by inadequacy in skills, location, or personal characteristics.
- c) Workers with inadequate education or training and young workers with little or no experience may be unable to get jobs because employers believe that they will not produce enough to be worth paying the legal minimum wage or the rate agreed on with the union.
- d) Corruption in high places.
- e) Competition in specific industries or companies.
- f) Advanced technology, such as computers or robots – by replacing worker tasks with machines.

6.What is Youth Entrepreneurship Education?

- a) Youth entrepreneurship is a source of job creation, empowerment and economic dynamism in a rapid globalizing world. Effective youth entrepreneurship education prepares young people to be

responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneur or entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic development and sustainable communities (UN-Habitat, 2004).

- b) Entrepreneurship education is essential in raising awareness about business among young women and men so that those who so choose can take the difficult but rewarding steps needed to transform their business dreams into reality. Some of the basic skills and attributes required to be a successful entrepreneur, such as confidence, presentation skills, networking, motivation and drive, are best developed early through the formal education system (Wikipedia).
- c) Entrepreneurship is the recognition of an opportunity to create value, both economic and social, and the process of acting on this opportunity, whether or not it involves the formation of a new enterprise.
- d) The ILO sees entrepreneurship as a means to create decent and productive work, recognizing that, for youth in particular, the development of entrepreneurial skills can contribute to their capacity to access employment opportunities.

7. Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment can be defined in two levels viz at the individual and organizational levels.

- a) Youth empowerment at the individual level is exercising power over ones life by being skilled, critically aware, and active in creating community change.
- b) Youth empowerment at the organizational level is the implementation of a culture, vision, and system that supports youth empowerment at the individual level.

8. Skill Development

The process of strengthening the skills of youth so that they know how to effectively make decisions, positively interact with their peers and act as community advocates.

Evidence of youth Unemployment



Vanguard Newspapers (2013) reports that “2012 National Baseline Youth Survey Report” issued in Abuja by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Youths Development that 54 per cent of Nigerian youths were unemployed in 2012. “Of this, females stood at 51.9 per cent compared to their male counterpart with 48.1 per cent were unemployed.” It said out of 46,836 youths recorded against different types of crimes, 42,071, representing 75.5 per cent were males, while the remaining 24.5 per cent were females.

9. An Ugly Development in Unemployment Circle

It was reported by Tribune Newspapers (2008) that no fewer than 20 people died and many others on danger list in various states of the federation at the recruitment exercise conducted by the Ministry of Interior to the Nigeria Prisons Service, Nigeria Immigration Service and Customs Service. In Kaduna, eight candidates, three of whom were women, lost their lives in the fitness exercise conducted by the Immigration Service. Nigerian Tribune gathered that three applicants died while five are on danger list in Osun State at the end of a 3.2-kilometre race which took place between Akoda and the NYSC orientation camp, Ede. In Umuahia, Abia State, two female applicants who were participating in the Nigeria Immigration Service recruitment exercise lost their lives in a stampede, while two other applicants died in Awka, Anambra State. It was also gathered that several others fainted and suffered injuries in both Enugu and Awka and were later rushed to the Federal Medical Centre, Umuahia. In Enugu, four of the job seekers died and 21 others were seriously injured while forcefully opening the gate leading to the venue of the screening exercise. In Ilorin, Kwara State, two persons lost their lives while hundreds sustained injuries during the recruitment exercise which took place at the Cherubim

and Seraphim College, Ilorin. In Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, a young graduate whose identity could not be immediately ascertained collapsed and died while participating in the recruitment exercise.

Furthermore, four applicants in Delta State were on danger list as a result of the injuries sustained during the exercise, as many applicants who were in the queue fell down as they trampled on one another with many of them sustaining serious injuries, while some lost their lives before they could be rushed to the hospital for medical attention. 195,000 candidates were jostling for 3000 available vacancies all over the federation. The above story was also corroborated by the Nation Newspapers.

In a report contained in the *BusinessDay* Newspaper (2013) that a Federal Government agency put up an advertisement for recruitment and on the D-day, the mammoth crowd of applicants was too much for the officials of the agency to control, resulting in the death of some of the applicants due to exhaustion. Similarly, another agency of the Federal Government recently opted for recruitment through online registrations; perhaps to prevent the kind of mayhem above and to reduce the number of applicants but at the end of it, 120,000 applications were received all jostling for 25 vacant positions.

The unemployment rate was further raised by the banks employment rationalization. For instance, *Punch* newspaper recorded that it was a black Christmas for over 200 workers of the Enterprise Bank Limited and Keystone Bank Limited as they were sacked some days to the festive period of 2013. Mainstreet Bank Limited sacked 670 workers of the bank without due process; Diamond Bank Plc sacked over 100 workers including all the union executives because they demanded for their rights. Since the completion of business combination between Access Bank Plc and Intercontinental Bank Plc; Ecobank Plc and Oceanic Bank International Plc; First City Monument Bank Plc and Finbank Plc; with the emergence of Access Bank, Ecobank and FCMB as core investors have laid off several workers. Access Bank sacked 1,110 in January, 2013 while Ecobank relieved over 1,850 workers on their pay roll.

Lastly, *Sun Newspaper* (2013) reported that the Federal Road Safety Corps to curb the activities of scammers who had created a fake recruitment portal, as a guise for extorting money from desperate unsuspecting young Nigerian job seekers to join the Corps, nabbed Ogidi Uko Ezekiel who was jailed 4 years by a Magistrate sitting at Omi Adio in Lagos state.

10.Recent Unemployment Saga in Nigeria

On March 16, 2014 another tragedy struck during the interview conducted for Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS). According to Nnenna Ibeh of *Premium Times* that the Civil Society Network Against Corruption (CSNAC) said that it was criminal for NIS to allow over 520,000 applications for 4,556 available job opportunities whereby each applicant paid the sum of N1,000.00 each for the form. 18 job seekers including pregnant women lost their lives. Furthermore, Stanley Ogidi of *Punch Newspapers* reported that of the 18 applicants that lost their lives, 3 pregnant women died at the interview venue in Edo State, 3 died in Niger State of 11,000 candidates at Women Day Secondary School, Minna, when security agencies fired tear-gas at anxious applicants, 5 persons including a pregnant woman lost their lives at Rivers State of 35,000 applicants during stampede at the Liberty Stadium, venue of the interview and 7 died in Abuja due to overcrowded 60,000 capacity National Stadium. They also reported that 4 slumped in Osun State at St. Charles Grammar School, centre for the interview due to exhaustion, 10 fainted in Plateau Command Secondary School and in Oyo State, a woman slumped during the stampede and 2 required emergency treatment for exhaustion.

The Federal Government of Nigeria following the ugly incident announced the cancellation of the interview and further offered automatic employment to three members of each of families of the dead victims. Also automatic employment to those who got injured during the exercise.

11.Effect of Unemployment and Youth Vanguard

According to Tenuche (2003) Nigeria in recent times has witnessed a massive resurgence in ethnic and religious identities, which has constituted themselves into primary forms of identity and consciousness. Examples include the Egbe Omo-Oduaa in the South-West of Nigeria, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) and its youth forum, National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), Supreme Egbesu Assembly also known as Egbesu Boys, Ijaw Youth Council, Bayelsa Youth Federation, Federated Niger Delta Ijaw communities and Niger Delta Volunteers Force all in Niger Delta Area of the country, Ohaneze Ndi Gbo and the youth wing, Movement for Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafara (MASSOB) in the East and the Arewa Peoples Congress (APC) and its youth wing, Arewa Youth Forum (AYF) from the North and now Boko Haram in the North. As the names suggest, these ethnic based associations have their youth wings who seek to advance the specific interest they seek to promote by recruiting the jobless able bodied youths in order to make ends meet. Tenuche (2003) says violent crimes among unemployed youth often become the means not only for expressing the crisis of youth identity, but also for accessing political power and societal relevance. Furthermore, the ability to display raw courage and inflict punishment on opponents has also created access to positions of authority and even employment for the youth as fierce youth gangs often get engaged to provide security for top

Government officials, secure contracts and scholarships in a few cases to pursue higher education. In return they are guaranteed uninterrupted access to acquisition of arms and ammunition, in addition to protection from arrest and detention by security operatives. This was the reasons why most Nigerians see it is phantom sectarian violence.

12. Consequences of Youth Unemployment and Security Challenges

a) It may lead to many of our youth graduates been eventually recruited into the rank of oil theft syndicates, armed robbers, kidnappers, militants and insurgents while their female counterparts may end up as prostitutes (BusinessDay, 2013).

b) It causes immediate and long-term economic damage: It means young adults take longer time to get married, have a home and begin families. In the long-run, it means slower economic growth and lower tax receipts.

c) It may result in social instability: Youth unemployment may lead to economic weakness whereby skilled young workers often receive below average wages and are engaged in work for which they are either overqualified or under-qualified. As much as two-thirds of the young population is under-utilized in our developing economies, meaning they are unemployed; in irregular employment, most likely in the informal sector; or neither in the labour force nor in education or training. Also, it creates an additional cost burden for tax payers in the form of lost revenue, the need for government to provide health care, increased crime etc.

d) The unemployed army of young people in poor urban neighbourhoods is closely related to involvement in various forms of offences, including expressive and acquisitive offenses, such as, vandalizing, petty crimes or more serious crimes such as, burglary and robbery.

Furthermore, researchers have also lent their views to the consequences of youth unemployment based on their findings in insecurity/violence in various parts of the country as cited by Tenuche (2003).

- Akintoye (1999) recorded the involvements of the youths in the Zangon-Kataf crisis of 1992. The uncontrollable violent action of the Ayap and Hausa youths after February 1992 conflicts between the two ethnic groups resulted in the violent crisis of May 1992. Most of the youths were said to be unemployed.

- According to Imomoh (2002), unemployed youths are mostly in the vanguard of the crisis that often erupt in the oil producing areas between oil producing companies and their host communities. The youths often hold oil company workers hostage because, they feel the oil companies must provide solutions to all their problems.

- Bako, (1994) opined that the Almajirai and the Yandaba group who are largely unemployed are in the vanguard in the execution of violence in the recurring ethnic/religious violence in Kano. Bako argued further that the root of violence among the youth can be located in the unprecedented poverty as well as the massive unemployment, hunger and deprivation among the youths thus providing avenue for their involvement in the ethno religious conflicts across the country.

- Albert (1999) observed that the youth who played prominent role in the Ife-Modakeke crisis are mostly unemployed and had poor knowledge of the history of the conflicts but partook in setting ablaze the properties of perceived opponents. They have no genuine reason for engaging in the conflicts.

- The strong link between unemployment and youth violence is supported by the views of many respondents (Tenuche, 2003) who submitted that violent conflicts in Ebira land were at their lowest ebbs between 1980-1985, when installation of machines and equipment at the Ajaokuta Steel Project was at its peak and provided employment to a large number of youths from Ebira land. This is in line with the proverbial saying "the idle mind is the devil's workshop".

13. Discussion and Conclusion

Unemployment evidently plays a pivotal role in exacerbating young people's vulnerabilities and susceptibilities to becoming involved in such activities as kidnapping, violent, prostitution etc. Youth unemployment and out of work people are highly likely to suffer from deprivation of manifest functions, such deprivation may generate depression, disillusionment and isolation (Tenuche, 2003) and therefore could trigger and aggregate psychological and physical problems, boredom, disenchantment and rampant engagement in risk-taking practices such as engagement in violence and excessive alcohol or drug use.

According to Ademola (2013) unemployment in Nigeria, particularly in the form of graduate unemployment, has become pronounced in the last two decades due primarily to an upsurge in the output from tertiary educational institutions and the inelastic absorptive capacity of the labour market.

Foreign policies do not work in Nigeria because it do not address our peculiar problems and Ademola (2013) opined that we need to draw up programmes that will address our own problem and not just copy programmes abroad and implement them. Government to formulate empowerment programmes to address the problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria with specific areas of attention on intervention programmes to address the challenges locally.

Therefore, entrepreneurship education is essential in raising awareness about business among young women and men so that those who so choose can take the difficult but rewarding steps needed to transform their business dreams into reality. Some of the basic skills and attributes required to be a successful entrepreneur, such as confidence, presentation skills, networking, motivation and drive, are best developed early through the formal education system.

The insecurity in Nigeria as a sectarian violence should be discarded because the position is that the desperate desire to access scarce State resources has serious implications for youth involvement in violence. Tenuche, (2003) emphasized that the elite, who constitute a small group and who more often than not are aspirants to and competitors for power and privileges are the primary users of sub-ethnic sentiments as a mask to defend vested class interest. The process of democratization provides a fertile ground for the unleashing of primordial sentiments. The process associated with democratization such as party system and elections provide a congenial atmosphere for the negative manipulation and mobilization of the youth and clannish identities. These identities become a tool of competition for the elites for scarce public goods such as contracts, employments, political appointments, scholarship and access to land as well as opportunities for lucrative trade and commerce (Tenuche, 2003). In corroboration, Jega (1999) asserted that this situation is accentuated because of the fact that the State in post-colonial Nigeria plays a leading role in the development process; economic resources are therefore largely controlled by the State. This has the extended implication of making the State a coveted prize to be won at all cost by the various class fractions that create division in society to attain their goal. The youth are thus, used when required during intra class struggle for State control. Therefore, these identities have been known to serve as platforms for religious and ethnic crisis to defend certain vested interests and this is not unconnected with Sanusi Lamido (2013) statement as improper orientation of the youth in a paper he presented at the 1st Ochendu Youth Empowerment Lecture Series held in Umuahia, Abia State. Finally, Tenuche (2003) opined that the increased violence among the youth, which is also attributable to the State, is derived from the fact that the State has not been able to elevate itself to the position of an objective force standing above the contending interests in the society.

Conclusively, we agreed with Tenuche (2013) that the high rate of unemployment among the able bodied young men and women makes them vulnerable for elite mobilization for violence especially in a democratic setting. But with the full implementation and inclusion of entrepreneurship education as compulsory in tertiary institutions curriculum in the country, will to a large extent checkmate youth involvement in violence and reduce unemployment since they are sure of brighter future outside paid employment.

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