

EMPOWERING, REGULATING AND CONTROLLING APPRENTICESHIP IN NIGERIA FOR EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Apprenticeship, as it is being regulated and supervised by the old medieval guilds is not so today. Government enacts apprenticeship programs for youth empowerment, while some centuries ago, social thinkers were unanimous in their thought that apprentices, grown into artisans and entrepreneurs were to be the mainstay of the economy. This thinking is showing relevance today, with the increase in unemployment in the nation due to inadequate apprenticeship skill learning, regulating, enforcement and control of this process to self reliance and development. With this study we went into this area of labour relation, apprenticeship and skill development and we noted that apprenticeship and skill development has not been new to society. It was a way of training in the informal sector for those who were unable to get formal education that would lead to a white collar job. Today the jobs are scarce, and there is need that people acquire skills and trades to be self reliant, employers of labour, if they do not get the official post in the government.

Apprenticeship training and skills learning is the remedy to this situation. But it is not being regulated, and controlled as it is done by the old guilds. Government enacts apprenticeship programs for youths empowerment and Developments but does not enforce its functionality with internal controls and regulations. As a result programs are enacted as the “political thing” but not achieved. In the course of this study we saw that Nigeria has the manpower and places to train young school leavers in various skills like the Nnewi Industrial centre, the Ariara shoe makers manufacturers centre in Aba, the Lagos Computer Village, Electronic dealers, and the Agodi Gate motor spare parts and mechanics in Ibadan. These places could be pivot centers for training our school leavers and graduates in apprenticeship and skills acquisition, if well supervised, regulated, controlled and financed adequately. They could help the government in training youths to be self reliant and entrepreneurs themselves, thereby developing the nation.

The paper discovered that lack of proper regulation, control, and enforcement of the existing objectives of the apprenticeship program and skills mars its fruitful achievement.

The paper therefore recommended that for the realization of its objectives in this sector, government should partner with the private sector and financially fund both masters and apprentices adequately, with take of grants, setup up labour control councils for Apprenticeship trainings, who would go about to enforce, regulate and control the apprentices and their masters constantly to see that they oblige to the obligations of the contract to its fruitful end.

KEYWORDS: Apprenticeship Trainings, Self Determination

INTRODUCTION

With a high population and numerous universities in Nigeria turning out thousands of graduates each year, with no ready market to employ them, we must have need to rely on “self determination”. Our youths and young graduates with non graduates should therefore learn and practice skills acquisition for self and national development (Godwin Omena, 2012).

Many of our graduates do not secure employment as they think after so many years of studies in their various higher institutions in Nigeria. Those uneducated ones in rural areas who supposedly would have learnt a trade migrate to the urban cities looking for or prefer white collar jobs that are non existence or in very short supply. The urge for livelihood and existence is dawning on them as an utopia, as labour scholars and social movements call on the need for apprenticeship control and enforcement. Apprenticeship has been a traditional method of acquiring skills and trades in most African and developing countries as a training for places in the middle level and higher manpower, but today things have changed. The higher level manpower students could make a good living getting into apprenticeship and become a successful entrepreneur, with the empowerment, enforcement and regulatory control of government on apprenticeship and learning. Gone are the days when apprenticeship skills were learnt only by those who took it as an alternative to formal/higher education because of economic motives of low intelligence. Today's realities makes it obvious to all classes, even to universities and higher school graduates that skills acquisition through apprenticeship is the bane for future self reliance, sustainability and development. This study is meant to investigate how apprenticeship is so far regulated, controlled and enforced to include the youths, school leavers even graduates of higher institution into the apprenticeship system so as to develop themselves and the society.

APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeship has been a method of training youths and the middle aged to learn a trade or craft for their future wellbeing and livelihood.

An apprentice is one bound by legal agreement to work for another for a specific amount of time in return for instruction in a trade, art or business- one who is learning a trade ([www the free Dictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com)).

This practice started in ancient Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome, as well as in modern Europe and to some extent the United States of America.

Typically in medieval Europe a master craftsman dedicates to instruct and train a youth, giving him food shelter and clothing, and also to cater for him during illness so that he could learn a trade. The apprentice in exchange would bind himself to work for the master for a given period of time, after which he could master the trade, become a journeyman and work for his master, or setup himself as a master of his trade to which we call in the modern day entrepreneur.

In Nigeria the practice of apprenticeship is also an old story, as it grew up in Nupe when the guilds and craftsmen in the area tried to protect their trade and proclaimed guidelines and measures for new entrants (Wogu Ananaba 1969, E. Uvieghara 1984).

As regulators the medieval guilds supervised the relations of master and apprentice, as government, should do today. According to the African tradition males born into a family are expected to learn a trade, either that of the family line or that of any of his kinsman that he sees will benefit him to prosper in the future., It is through this trade that identifies

one with being a member of such family, proficient in the lineage craft (Uwamelye and Iyamu 2002). Trades in the apprenticeship category like, black smiths, welders, trading, block molding, Tailoring, motor mechanics, barbers, farmers, manufacturers, Cloths trading, Electronics, motor parts appliances and hospitality skill have helped youths in past to acquire skills and work on their own, or helped them to gain employment from their masters. Most of these big masters are now entrepreneurs irrespective of their educational background, as far as they have basic skills and leadership trainings for the success of their enterprise, they must make profit.

THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria and all over Africa apprenticeship is strongly rooted in our tribal structures. As early as the 1912 the apprenticeship system was seen in the organization of blacksmiths, carvers, weavers and other artisans trades.

Elias writes, that craft men such as ironmongers, bronze workers, blacksmiths, woodcarvers, leather workers, cotton weavers and tailors have been associating together to regulate admission and dismissals from their profession, and to lay conditions under which persons, apprentice would be allowed to learn and practice their profession, that amongst the Nupes of Nigeria, Nadal also writes that following the organized crafts, blacksmith, brass and silversmiths, glass makers, weavers, bead makers, builders, woodworkers, carpenters and butchers, guilds, were hereditary in a number of families.

Outsiders can join the profession only through formal adoption, after a period of apprenticeship” (E.E. Uvieghara (1984). It is common tradition therefore for people to engage in one apprenticeship or the other. Uwameiye and Iyamu (2002) noted that traditionally males born unto a family tend to learn a trade, probably from the family line to uphold a continuity of that family line profession or he goes out to learn another vocation as an apprentice to another master for the sake of obtaining a skill for future self employment and livelihood.

In Nigeria at a time to engage youth in apprenticeship involved parents handing over their youths who they could not train beyond the elementary education level to master a trade, some times without a formal agreement and tutelage the period of agreement for apprenticeship ranged from 3 to 5years. Some tricky or unscrupulous masters would submit these apprenticeship to regimented training and work. If they learn the trade successfully they could become masters of their own (entrepreneurs) if they are financially well to start on their own or work with the master as a journeyman. Many are also treated badly by their masters and sent away without their masters fulfilling the agreed terms after a period of 5years. They are littered under the excuse or the other, so as not to abide by the term of agreement. This is one of the reason why this study is embarked upon for regulating, and controlling the apprentice system in Nigeria for self sustenance and development.

In the medieval age the standard apprenticeship lasts for seven years. But the industrial revolution brought with itself a new type of apprenticeship in the United States the system of apprenticeship established in 1937 in modeled according to the Wisconsin Law that enacted the programme for training of youths in vocations like plumbing and carpentry. The industrial masters took to training factory workers, after which they made them work in their own industries. So the need for these factories workers led to the development of vocational and technical schools in Europe and the United States.

In Nigeria today with population explosion, high level of youth unemployment and the search for few existing white collar jobs, it is imperative that our youths even our undergraduate must learn and acquire skills in order to be self sustaining and perhaps become entrepreneurs.

APPRENTICESHIP AGREEMENT/CONTRACT

Traditionally in our system the form of apprenticeship contract could be by oral agreement between the master craft man and the apprentice, or his or her parents or guardian. The agreement stipulates the number of years the apprenticeship will last and the rules regarding the apprentice mode of conduct and behavior “most of the time the agreement is drawn in favour of master craft man which is unregulated or controlled as done by the guilds of old medieval times. Others could be in writing, some oral or not written at all, but agreed on the grounds of good faith, personal or family recognition or known relationship.

In some develop countries like Germany and Italy the apprenticeship contract is a form of partial employment. The basic requirement such contract needs is the relationship between the master employer and the apprentice employee.

According to Mohammed J. SC. “This is to state that much of employment Law is contained in statutes and statutory instruments, the legal basis of employment between a master and apprentice is the contract of employment, legally stipulated and binding on both parties.

Chioma Agomo (2011) said this in part III of the labour act which contains provision on what it describes as “special classes of workers,” of which apprentice are one of it. And section 49-53 of the same labour act provides that parents (or if an orphan, guardians) of a young person above the age of 12 but below the age of 16 years may apprentices that person to an employer to be systematically trained for a trade or employment in which art or skill is required or for domestic servants for a term not less than 5years. “this requires that the person executes the term written or agreed in the contract of apprenticeship” but does this really go through to the end of the contract? Are the laws enforced, regulated and controlled for effective apprenticeship survival and development as we try to study? Section 50(1) of the same labour act provides that every contracts of apprenticeship shall be in writing, attested to and made with the approval of an authorized labour officer. Before attesting to any contract of apprenticeship, the labour officer is to be satisfied that the apprentice has consented to the contract freely without due coercion or undue influence as a result of misrepresentation or mistake.

Under section 52, the minister may make regulations providing for the form of contracts of apprenticeship which may be lawfully entered into with the duties and obligations of apprenticeship and their masters therein.

The laws as described in the act are: and only on paper, a paper law without enforcement, unregulated and uncontrolled. They do not help in the work, employment and development of our apprentice youths.

If most of these agreement are informal, oral and unregulated, it may lead to abusivism, of the child and youths, unemployment, unproductivity, impede development, sustainability and bring some other social ills. Sometimes due to these some apprentices are kicked out, at their last year or in the middle of their training, thereby wasting part of their youthful years.

The ideal situation should be, that government should strictly regulate the work of apprenticeship which is becoming a national issue of serious concern, by creating a flexible and conducive environment for training, learning, and remunerations, well regulated, controlled and enforced by law enforcement agencies or labour supervisors. This will go a

long way to produce youths employable and self employed graduates with requisite skills and capacity to live and earn good livelihood in the society.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Some centuries ago social thinkers and industrial relations analyst were unanimous in their thoughts that artisans in any society were to be the mainstay of the economy. The early Greeks Philosophers thought this of its citizens and so did the Americans when they enacted the labor act of Wisconsin in 1937 which initiated programs and trainings for youth in various vocations and skills.

The Europeans had a long age history of apprentices with the guilds as regulators and controllers of the program. In Africa apprenticeship was practiced and crudely regulated by the artisan group themselves.

Today this thought is showing tremendous concern and relevance with the increase in unemployment in our society, youths roams the streets to combat for the few existing white collar jobs and our graduates wait for years after graduation before they can get a job, if very lucky. This is because there is a lack of useful skill and training to be self employed coupled with the governments inadequate regulations and control to foster a full development of this sector of the labour relations management. It is therefore important that people acquire skills, to be self reliant employers of labour if they do not get official posts in government.

Research from Markinson global international reports estimates that 2.9 billion jobs in the world in 2010 would be increased to 3.5billion in 2030 with majority coming from new entrepreneurship and private employment. (Guardian Newspaper, Nov.27, 2012).

To Godwin Omene (2012) "Unemployment is a great determinant of a countrys progress, so it should be taken seriously and tackled. Individuals, youths, and our young graduates must from hence fort acquire one skill or the other to be self employed entrepreneurs in the event they do not have a job 'this is why we have this highlight on the apprenticeship and skill acquisitions that is imparting on changing global trends on self employment and labour relations in Nigeria.

There is apprenticeship in Nigeria but the situation is so precarious. There is apprenticeship but there is, so to say, no mind and specie regulating the haves in this area to control parties in this relation so that developmental goal could be archived. Many apprentices today are abandoned to whatever fate they come across, some are thrown out after spending a lot during the period of training not even to talk of their promised take off capital after graduation. This is so because there are unregulated and uncontrolled system to make efficient this aspect of apprenticeship relation to be fruitful to the parties by the powers that be. It is on this premise that this study seeks to argue for effective regulation and a control frame work in this aspect, (apprenticeship) of our national life, and in the present Nigerian context.

People engaged in apprenticeship and training relating to these especially in the eastern and western part of the country are likely to experience marginalization or exploitation of one form or the other in the course of the apprenticeship, the lack of standardized instruction and the lack of respect to contractual party (Nwanoino, 2004) the reason for the above are legion, ranging from their humble background, and circumstances, to age, sex, family ties and the pre- occupational attitude to learn a skill, or job that would lead one to entrepreneurship and development. It is necessary to bring them into the mainstream of the labour force and relations through well conceived result oriented Laws and policies by Government and employers within the context of a progressive, regulated and controlled labour and industrial harmony in Nigeria.

In this way bringing in employment and development by also involving the present graduates into learning a skill for self employment and sustenance.

The present legal provision for apprenticeship training as embedded in part III of the labour Act Sect 49. defines categorically or can we say vaguely those it described as special people for apprenticeship.

This makes the provision for what it vaguely describes as “special class of workers namely apprentices, children, and young persons and women. In relation to apprentices it should be noted that they are persons who are mainly involved in the business of learning some trade, work or business with a view to eventually being discharged from their “master” (employers) upon due completion of their service training or apprenticeship program with all the benefits entitled to it. Both unfortunately some of these promises are not fulfilled as some of these apprentices are prematurely discharged from the training or program for one excuse or the other. Some are indirectly accused of stealing, disobedience, insubordination, the lack of insufficient fund for their training, or debt on the part of their parents or guardian to continue the training, consequently wasting the apprentice youthful years and hope to be employed or self employed.

There are detailed provisions in sections 49 to 53 of the labour Act regulating the employment of apprentices. For instance section 49 (1) of the Labour Act. provides that the parent (of an orphan, guardian) of a young persons above 12years of age but below 16 years of age may apprentice that person to an employer to be trained systematically for a trade or employment in which art or skill is required, as a domestic servant, for a term not more than five years. The section also requires that the young person executes the written contract of apprenticeship. The act stipulates thus: “Any person, 16 years of age or above can apprentice himself for a term not more than five years to learn a trade or skill, section 48(3), section 48(15) provides for the assignment of the apprenticeship contract by the employer with the consent of the parties” But given the unbridled and pathological predilection of our society for lawlessness and trust, it is very doubtful whether this clean, lucid and vivid statutory provisions have been or would be meticulously adhered to in labour relations with particular emphasis in apprenticeship and skills learning activities. We are not aware of apprentices, especially in the eastern or western part of the country where this system is well entrenched from time, who are armed with a valid contract of apprenticeship, regulated, guided and controlled from the start to finish till the liquidation of the contract. It is in this regard what we are in this study trying to see if we can stimulate the interest of the legislature to review the current legislation in this vital area of our labour and industrial relations with a view to significantly enhancing, regulating and controlling the current regime by making it illegal for young persons or any person to embark upon or commence any apprenticeship training in the country (Nigeria) without a valid and effective contract of apprenticeship, stipulated and obtained by the parties to the contract under the tutelage of the labour unions and the ministry of labour. Also for this purpose an a thorised labour officer may act on behalf of the apprentice or authorize the apprentice where the apprentice “ad litem” may be appointed on his behalf.

It is pertinent to note that section 50(1) provides that every contract of apprenticeship shall be in writing, (not oral as its done by most confidants) attested to and made with the approval of an authorized officer of labour. It is within the contemplation of this provision that before attesting any contract of apprenticeship the labour officer is to be satisfied that the apprentice has consented to the contract freely without coercions or under influence or as a result of misrepresentation or mistake.

It is in these regards that the study went into the areas where these apprentices are heavily concentrated to question their views and opinion on how apprenticeship is being operated, regulated, controlled and enforced to see what youths are trained in various skills and trade to be self reliant, self employed, and moreover as entrepreneur who could be employers of labour in the near future to help in the development of Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study involved the activities of the Nnewi apprenticeship and entrepreneurial organization which really started at Nnewi before it spread to many parts of the country. Nnewi is the industrial hub of the eastern part of Nigeria what Taiwan is to China. Infact it is being called in industrial development parlance the "Taiwan of Nigeria", other such areas are the Ariara, shoe makers association in Aba, an unstructured Nigerian shoe factory and the Agodi gate motors parts mechanics association in Ibadan and the computer village Electronics and computer dealers in Lagos. In these places are found skilled entrepreneurs who sometimes passed through apprenticeship before they became self sustained entrepreneurs. The volume of business in the area is so high that apprentices find it a haven to learn skills there in order to become self employed and consequently employ others. Graduates from Nigerian higher institutions could be encouraged, empowered, to learn skills from these masters, as their university training did not offer enough curriculum for skills and training to be self employed and sufficient.

To get more facts for this study, a convenient sampling technic was adopted as questionnaires were distributed to a number of entrepreneurs and apprentices available at these business locations. One hundred and Twenty (120) questionnaires were distributed to Nnewi, Aba and Lagos areas. A total of one hundred were properly answered and from the respondent. The structure of the questionnaires required that the respondents supply information regarding such areas as qualifications, the number of years required to acquiring skills and methods, the number of apprentices on training, how much money can be used to start up business. Government incentives if any, and the apparatus for regulation and control of the apprenticeship system.

DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Qualification of Respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary education	29	27
Secondary education WASC	70	63.7
Tertiary education, HND, NCE, BSc.	0.1	10.1
Total	100	100

Table one above indicates to us that the majority the apprentices fall within the qualifications of the secondary and the elementary school leavers, 63.7% of secondary school leavers, while 27% were the primary school leavers. This shows that adequate skills and entrepreneurial leadership will be so much lacking without plenty of the middle and higher manpower students of higher tertiary education in the training.

Table 2: The Number of Years Spent on Skill Acquisition

Number of Years	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 3	11	10%
3 – 5	52	47
6 – 9	37	43
Total	100	100

The number of years respondent normally spend in leaving and acquiring of skills, according to our study falls in the majority of three to five years, representing 47%, while 43% have been there for 6 years and above. The majority of apprentices lease to acquire the skills from three to nine years which is proportionally long but which should favourably guarantee self development and reliance for employment. It also shows that there is need for this training with the hope that it must guarantee future profitability in the business. It must never be years wasted. If all agreement are respected the apprentice graduates after having been found fit by the master, the master or government should give him the sum of money required as a start off capital.

Table 3: Setup Capital for Apprenticeship

Capital	Frequency	Percentage
50,000 – 100,000	18	16%
100,000 -400, 000	20	17
500 – 900,000	45	40
1,000,000 and above	17	27
Total	100	100

Start off capital to start on his own sometimes becomes dubious as the masters do not obey the agreement to the contract and get away with it. That is why government should make serious regulatory and controllable laws, use them to help these vulnerable apprentices to realize their dreams of becoming self reliant and employed.

Apprenticeship is a serious tool to modern development, for entrepreneurs and skills holders, the educational level of the apprentices and the master craft man should be increased to learn the modern ingredients of entrepreneurship and skill education.

Table three of our study indicates that of apprentices, only about 40% receives from 500 to 900,000 naira as take off grant from the master craft man after graduating, while 17% take from 100.00 to 400.000 and 16% with or below 100,000. Though this shows an increased intention by the master craftsman to develop entrepreneurship, making their apprentice have hands on their field. It calls on government to come up with more equitable financial capital that should support the pursuance of apprenticeship development with the national wellbeing and intent of bringing employment for our youths, as it is done in most developed countries, the start up capital of two hundred thousand naira is so small for a start up business that in economics and business practical terms would start to make profits and stability within a period of five years, if still in business.

The last investigations from, the questionnaires submitted to the entrepreneurs and apprentices revealed that the apprentices and their trainers rarely received government support. Majority said that they received only government advice and promises, which till the date of this study has not been implemented. That many of their members have left the trade because of lack of incentives and machines to work with and have resorted to the job of commercial motorcycle transport popularly known as “Okada” in order to make money for a living as their skill and trade is dying out.

“Chinese people came to Aba, took designs and samples of our shoes and brought it back better in large quantity with a special type of gum and machine which we do not have.

As to the regulating, controls and enforcement of apprenticeship learning, no such activity is being carried out except on government activities as the National Directorate of Employment programs (NDE), the SURE. P. programs, the state owned Empowerment programs and other programs that are being established and run by government which do

not totally solve the problems of apprenticeship learning and skills acquisition for the mass unemployed. It is observed that government does not carry out or implement functional internal controls and regulating in its objective of using apprenticeship and skills empowerment in its intention for creating jobs, entrepreneurship and the transformation of the employment base of the youths. As a result, programs are activated but not achieved, neither is unemployment reduced to the minimal level.

In the course of this study, this has been found out, so it is and has become imperative that apprenticeship while being empowered, must be regulated and controlled by government agents or supervisors, and parastatals engaged in labour relations, the labour ministry and that of trade and those concerned for the unemployed. These enforcements, regulations and controls would go a long way to increase apprenticeship security, and a good exit of the apprenticeship program and skill acquisition initiative.

According to Numeih the President of Powerline shoe Manufacturers of Ariaria International market Aba, we have asked the present leaders of government to give us machines and soft loans to help young school leavers join the business as apprentices and stop depending on white collar jobs. Aba could be a center for entrepreneurship skills development for Nigerians and neighboring countries of Cameroon, Ghana, and Equatorial Guinea who come to Aba to buy finished products of shoes, bags, belts and other wares. (Guardian Jun. 2, 2013).

During Obasanjo's government, his intelligent economic policies helped the industry to grow and made African countries rush to Aba, order and pay cash for shoes and bags to be built for them. Production and apprenticeship was high because there was market.

"Every country has a business that is traditional, which its fore fathers left and so handed it down to generations, the Chinese has this in agriculture, the Varese in Italy in gold smiting, the Nnewi people in business and smelting from in Awka. The Aba people the "Aba made shoe is the only industrial product of Nigeria. Some of these nerve centers like the computer village in Lagos, a Telecommunication based center, and the Automobile spare part dealers with such places like Nnewi and Ariaria could be nerve centers for Nigeria's skill developments and apprenticeship technological centers that should be encouraged and controlled to achieve the transformation goals of the country Nigeria as these people has the capacity to reduce unemployment and the country's need for foot wears and others.

DISCUSSIONS

The study examined whether apprenticeship learning as a skill for employment and development has so far been thoroughly regulated, controlled and enforced for effective implementation and the achievement of its goals and objectives. The objectives of alleviating youths unemployment in Nigeria.

Our findings reveal that apprenticeship has not been forcefully controlled; its agreement is sometimes not heeded to or enforced to meet these goals by the masters, supervisors, government and its labour relations agencies. It has been seen that the government makes efforts within its own politically motivated establishments, "political thing" like the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the "You Win" program, the Tradesmen, and Artisans capacity Building Scheme of Lagos state, and others.

But "in the past three decades we observed that different administrations in collaboration with the private sector have embarked on youth employment program and apprenticeships leading to the establishment of the NDE – the national

Directorate for Employment, the Small and Medium Enterprise Scheme, the poverty Alleviation program, the Subsidy reinvestment and Empowerment Programme(SURE-P) and the youth Enterprise with innovation in Nigeria (YOU - WIN). These programs however have been partisanship in nature lacking government efficient regulation and control towards its final realization. Sometimes it emanates from adhoc reactionary circumstances rather than the realities of the time” (Guardian Editorial 2013 “ On World bank report, on Unemployment in Nigeria 2008 – 2012).

As noted from the Ariaria shoe manufacturers group and enterprise, these programs cannot be enough if private sector masters and apprentice trained are not supported in financial and machinery to carry out their works. These masters and the apprentices have to be monitored, given adequate aid, protected and controlled for the fruitful outcome of the programs.

In most civilized countries like Singapore. S. Korea, Britain, Italy and Germany, processes are established for the training of apprentices for skilled work. They are being regularly supervised by labour officials or government agents. Their masters are controlled, regulated and are seen to, that they carry out their obligations to the apprentices on training. Some governments even pay the masters, or give them some tax reduction incentives according to how many apprentices in their care or form. In Germany the co-determination law signed by the government, labour Unions and management of companies provides that youths after college must undergo 2 – 3years compulsory skilled program before they can enter gainful employment or become entrepreneurs on their own (Daniel, Quinn Mulls 1989) (Achugo. E 2013).

In Italy the government sends out youths to different masters to learn the skill of their choice. The masters are under regulations and control by the inspectors of work (inspectorate del lavoro) and are given monthly pay or allowances for the apprentices, and given a startup loan of about Thirty thousand Euro, (about 6million naira) and tax free period for about five years, the economic expectant period of new successful business to grow. This is a wholesome example that can be emulated in Nigeria, by using these methods to empower, regulate and train its youths so as to be self employed and grow to employ others. Nigeria already posses some industrial skill centers which can be effectively annexed, utilized effectively for apprenticeship programs. Such centers, like the computer village in Lagos, the Nnewi skilled workers, (the Taiwan of Nigeria) and the Ariara international shoe manufacturing center at Aba, could be used as Apex skill development centers for Nigerians and even Africans. For example, let us take the power line shoe manufacturing association of Nigeria in Ariara international market in Aba, Abia state. It is an unstructured Nigerian shoe factory, grown out of apprenticeship. In the past it had grown and produced in the 1970’s and 80’s apprentices and has exported its finished products of bags, shoes, belts and wallets internationally to the neighboring countries. Currently this sector trains apprentices and employs more than 50,000 youths, it has been a grooming ground for skilled training in the shoe making and other allied products manufacturing. The apprentices and their masters greatly contributes to the states and federal government revenues. Likewise is that of Nnewi and Lagos computer village respectively.

The government has consistently neglected this apprenticeship sector in these parts of the country. According to Mr. Numeri, the president of this power line shoe manufacturers of Nigeria “we have been attending seminars, organized by the government and private companies for the past three years with a view that government would encourage us. We asked them to encourage us to label our products “made in Nigeria”. We have also asked the government to give us machines and soft loans to help young school leavers join the business and stop depending on white collar jobs, but nothing has been done (Guardian Business June 2013). This is an optimistic centre of apprenticeship and skill training which the

government should be very interested in and partner with it to realize its goal and agenda for self reliance and entrepreneurship in the area of labour and unemployment. Countries like China, Singapore and South Korea all started this way. Recently at the first trade fair for made in Aba products, in Abuja, Adelani Adepegba, 2013, writes that traders seek national acceptance of Aba products as they exhibited foot wears, hats, shoes, tailored dresses and fashion designed dresses. He asked government to support these local manufacturers with funding, saying that cloth designing is profitable and can aid youths employment and apprenticeship. It could generate about one million jobs in a year. One of the expositionist said he has fifteen youths in his employment as workers and apprentices (punch Nov 21 2013). The Ariara shoe manufacturers, the Nnewi/Akwa Iron smelter and the computer village works in Lagos provides market and skills for citizens from Cotonou, Togo, Cameroon, Ghana and Equatorial Guinea for the making and buying of shoes, bags, belts and wallets why should the government of Nigeria not use these areas to train our unemployed youths in apprenticeship and enterprunual skills so as to reduce unemployment, be self reliant and employed. This research also discovered that in Nigeria about ten million people work in the information and allied sector as owners of small business enterpruners. So there are limited opportunities for skills and development of enterpruners in Nigeria if policy makers should focus on making our educational centres functional (Wole Oyebade-Guardian 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

This paper examined apprenticeship as an element of skills learning and training that should be legally regulated, enforced and controlled for its effectiveness. It was discovered that apprenticeship has been existing for a long time as a means of learning skills for future self reliance, employment and entrepreneurship, mostly for the informal sector. Today both the formal and informal sector are in need for employment, as unemployment crisis beholds the youths from these sectors. The research also concludes that government has not really been realistic in the regulation, enforcement and control of the apprenticeship training scheme, and have only been able to give advices without adequate financial support as is seen with the Ariara international shoe manufacturers in Aba. A good appreciable amount of money should be given to masters and apprentices to support their trainings, and after successful completion of the scheme a reasonable take of grant of about 1million to 5million naira should be given to the apprentices, with a tax exemption grant for five years as its done in most countries like Italy who want to get its citizens out of unemployment. Quantitative controls ensures that qualitative graduates of apprenticeship are produced to be self reliant, self employed and entrepreneurs who can therefore employ others, thereby boosting employment and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based in the findings, discussions and conclusion of the study we proffer the following recommendations. That the government going by its policies as we have seen cannot go a long way in solving unemployment problems through apprenticeship skills training alone unless it partners with the private sector to train skilled apprentices by giving them adequate financial support, regulating their contracts and controlling its activities to a fruitful end.

Government can do so by engaging the labour ministry, the labor unions and productivity supervisors to see that all works and contracts are abided to as stipulated.

Government and bigprivate business and individuals should follows the steps of the likes, like Dr. Fayemi Kayode the governor of Ekiti State, the former president of Nigeria chief Obasonjo. Dr. Fayemi employed, trained the youths in his state after their apprenticeship with the take off grant five hundred thousand to 2.9 million naira per entrepreneur.

(Guardian July 12, 2011,). While chief O.Obasonjo center for human security and his library, directed by Mr. Okebukola said the library is to train 40.000 youths in 4years. “The entrepreneurial, training centre for the unemployment of youths would help in the eradication of graduates unemployment in the country and teach the acquisition of skills to start and manage small and medium scale entrepreneurship among the youths. Okebukola emphasized that unemployment is perhaps the greatest epidemics plaguing development in Nigeria and indeed Africa. It is a ticking time bomb which president Obasonjo has been concerned and is mobilizing other world leaders about (Guardian, July 30, 2013,).

We also recommend and shared the idea of Babatunde Odufuwa (Guardian,2013,) who asked that the government should through the industrial Bank procure start off loans from Bank and financial house by involving our graduates in the scheme by using their NYSC certificate Degrees as collaterals for financial support for these young entrepreneurs in order to stair them to activity. (Guardian, 2013). Encourage vocational training maybe an answer to youth unemployment if sincerely involved on by both Federal, State government and private sector. Large scale agricultural and large scale training project to push the youths into this will build up banks of skilled workers and labour for the nation. Moreover “there is need for a conscientious manpower planning system that would incorporate the labour and social needs assessment of the country and the development of appropriate funds pushed into special areas of national interest at any given time and with space for the country’s growth. This is the practice with many nations that had to confront joblessness and unemployment in her society (Editorial Guardian Aug.13, 2013).

The United Nations representative Dr. Marinelis said of Nigeria, that it is a country of about 100million destitute and poverty stricken, out of her 160million population. This is said because they, (United Nations) lonely managed, monitored and executed its aid package to Nigeria. It implemented controlled and executed all its projects by itself without involving persons in Nigeria to do it for them. This shows that the problems with Nigeria are corruption, lack of monitoring, controls and the implementation and execution of public projects. Lastly the laws and labour act laws regarding apprenticeship should be modified for it is clear to everyone that agreement of apprenticeship are unfortunately unstructured and largely unregulated, as such fall outside the purview (at least in practical terms) and pale of the relevant laws meant to protect, regulate and control this vital area of our national labour force. There is an urgent need for the various governments at all levels to give the legislative framework a tooth and provide an overseeing agency to ensure that apprenticeship is put on a more robust pedestal in our national developmental policy. And also to effectuate the painstaking and meticulous observance of the terms and conditions of contract of apprenticeship, and the laws and regulation relating thereto. The normative and purposive situation should provide for the apprentice a genuine and result oriented opportunity and conducive environments for training and learning the skill, trade or business, with the aim of producing a young adult with knowledge and capacity to earn a living for himself which in turn will mitigate, and reduce the endemic problems of unemployment in Nigeria. This is currently lacking in Nigeria today. It is advised also that it should be imperative to extend the apprenticeship fully to the formal sector-the graduate of our tertiary institutions with the need to be funded adequately for start up or initial business undertakings

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