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REVITALIZING THE TRADITIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM IN NIGERIA: A KEY TO UNLOCKING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Uju Obuka*

Abstract

One of the major socio-economic issues facing Nigeria today is youth unemployment. This issue transcends all the societal strata, and has remained unabated despite the increase in the number of youths with formal education. The high level of unemployed youths in Nigeria has resulted in young Nigerians engaging in unorthodox livelihoods like drug addiction, armed robbery, and armed militancy while others engage in casual work which is highly irregular. This invariably portends a grave danger to the society. It is clear that formal education can no longer guarantee employment after school, and that something radical is needed to engage the teeming population and secure their future. Accordingly, this paper appraises how the traditional apprenticeship system can be revitalized to create employment for the youths in Nigeria. The paper employs doctrinal research methodology. The paper concludes by recommending an overhaul of the traditional apprenticeship system to bring it in line with modern realities.

Keywords: Traditional, apprenticeship, youths, revitalizing, employment, Nigeria

1. Introduction

The trend of graduates' unemployment in Nigeria is presently worrisome.[1] Providing employment opportunities for its millions of young people has been a daunting challenge for a developing country like Nigeria. The country's formal education system has repeatedly failed to equip graduates with the practical skills and hands-on experience required by the modern workforce. Many graduates do not secure employment contrary to their thought and hope to get a white-collar job after so many years of studies in their various higher institutions in Nigeria.[2] Even the uneducated ones in the rural communities who would have learnt one trade or the other equally migrate to urban centers in search of greener pastures in the form of white collar jobs that are in short supply or non-existent. The overall effect of this surge in urban areas is frustration and high unemployment on the part of the youths. This has necessitated a clarion call by social crusaders for the revamping or revitalization of the traditional apprenticeship scheme as a key component of job creation for the youths. The traditional apprenticeship system hitherto was once a cornerstone of skills acquisition and entrepreneurship in Nigeria but in recent times has largely fallen by the wayside. The quest for white collar jobs and the get rich syndrome has negatively impacted the employability skills of the vast teeming population of Nigerian youths.

Revitalizing this time-tested system offers a promising solution to Nigeria's youth employment conundrum. By updating and adapting traditional apprenticeship to meet the demands of the 21st-century economy, Nigeria can provide its young people with the skills, training, and mentorship needed to succeed in the workforce. This, in turn, can help drive economic growth, reduce unemployment, and foster a more prosperous future for generations to come. By examining successful models and best practices, we can begin to rebuild and revitalize this vital system, providing Nigeria's youths with the tools and training they need to thrive in an increasingly competitive world. This article explores the potential of revitalizing the traditional apprenticeship system in Nigeria, highlighting its benefits, challenges, and opportunities for growth. The work is

***Uju Obuka**, PhD, LL.M, LL.B, B.L, Senior Lecturer and HOD, Department of Customary & Indigenous Law, Faculty of Law UNN. Email- uju.obuka@unn.edu.ng.

[1] Projectmaster.com.ng, Effects of Apprenticeship System on Job Creation, <www.iproject.com.ng> accessed 12 February 2024.

[2] Ibid.

divided into five parts. Part one is the general introduction, and it gives an insight into the work. Part two deals with the historical origin of the traditional apprenticeship system. Part three deals with the apprenticeship model practiced in Nigeria. Part four deals with the challenges facing the present apprenticeship scheme. Part five focuses on the ways of revitalizing the traditional apprenticeship system in Nigeria and opportunities for growth. Part six is the conclusion and recommendations.

2. Historical Origin of the Traditional Apprenticeship System

The work system is as old as the human race. The early man started his life in a very crude manner but as time went on, he learnt how to influence his environment to meet his needs.[3] He invented various instruments such as stone axe, making fire by striking two hard stone together and later bow and arrow with which he kills animals for food, and with gradual development in the process of influencing his environment to suit his purpose, the early work types such as hunting, farming and smiting started.[4] The issue of tribe and the family system emerged with the increase in the population giving rise to the attachment of a peculiar types of work to individual families. As Adekola[5] captured it, tribes and family gradually become established, each family soon became to be known to engage in a particular type of work that soon became a monopoly of such family. It soon became the norm that the type of work engaged in by the people is a reflection of their culture. As part of the culture, the work system in the traditional society was handed down from one generation to the other through the process of indigenous education.[6] Skill acquisition then was from the father to his male children.

There was no established system of skill development for the youths as all learning activities were integral part of the indigenous education learnt through observation, imitation and constant practice.[7] Thus, formal training was unknown in the indigenous African setting, and the youths were left with no option than to learn the family trade as the opportunity of learning outside one's family was not practicable. The intendment of the insistence on leaning the family trade was to prepare the youth for adult life. As Fafunwa[8] rightly pointed out, the objectives of this training system were mainly to produce an individual who was skilled, cooperative and could conform to the social order. The influx of European traders into Africa following the industrial revolution marked the beginning of the introduction of new types of jobs like electrical wiring, radio and television repairing, photography, driving, mechanic, painting, printing, etc that were the offshoot of industrial revolution. Thus, the era of family monopoly soon gave way to choosing work outside of the family, and parents started sending their children to learn from people who are skilled and knowledgeable in the endeavors chosen by their children and wards. This marked the beginning of the modern day apprenticeship system not only in Africa but Nigeria.

3. Apprenticeship Model System in Nigeria

An apprenticeship system is a system of learning whereby an individual learns a professional skill practically through a structured programme of on-the-job training.[9] It usually involves acquiring knowledge, mechanical skills, and the development of an attitude or discipline for a particular job.[10]

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[3] G Adekola, 'Traditional Apprenticeship in the Old Africa and Its Relevance to Contemporary Work Practices in Modern Nigerian Communities' (2013) 3(4) *British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science* 397-406.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] See B Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*. (London: George Allen and Union; 2004).
[7] Adekola (n 3); See also IO Osokoya, *History and policy of Nigeria education in world perspectives*, (Ibadan: AMD Publishers; 1989).
[8] Fafunwa (n6).
[9] BS Akande, 'Apprenticeship Training in Nigeria: A Neglected Variable in Nation',< www.globalacademicgroup.com> accessed 10 February 2025.
[10] Ibid.

According to Craig and Bittel,[11] apprenticeship is a combination of on-the-job training and related technical instruction in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a skilled occupation, craft, or trade. Apprenticeship is the process of learning/skill acquisition through enlistment with a master craftsman.[12] According to Minns and Wallis[13] apprenticeship entails skills transfer over an extended period, where both parties to the contract – apprentices and masters, expect positive net benefits as training outcomes. Apprenticeship is the principal form of education for going into any occupation or profession, and a system whereby a young person was apprenticed to a master craftsman who taught him the skill of a vocation and after many years of learning, he was allowed to start his own workshop or business.[14]

The apprenticeship system is a training and skill development initiative practiced all over the world and it has long been used to prepare workers to gain occupational skills in many countries.[15] The system varies from country to country and sometimes from one region to the other even within the same country.[16] However, the common feature is that the system focuses on developing a new generation of practitioners of a trade or profession with on-the-job training which is sometimes accompanied by study.[17] In some countries, the apprentice gets some certification or license to practice a particular trade or profession at the end of the training period.[18]

The apprenticeship system is a tool for the replication of the workforce and also to keep in existence generational and traditional businesses that ordinarily would have been jettisoned to modernization and civilization.[19] The apprenticeship system has been an integral part of the traditional educational system which has existed before the coming of the British colonial masters.[20] The whole idea of an apprenticeship scheme is the enrolment of young people in learning a craft or trade under the tutelage of a master for a specific period after consultation and agreement between the parents or guardian of the apprentice and the master.[21] Apprenticeship also incorporates a system of guidance and counseling as most apprentices are required to live with their masters to acquire the necessary attitude, diplomacy, and decorum required for the job. It is the combination of these depositions that make graduates of apprenticeship training entrepreneurs instead of job seekers.[22]

The traditional apprenticeship system is initiated by the child choosing a career of his choice with the consent of the parents after consultation with the oracle. A fundamental aspect of this system is that without the parents' consent, the apprentice cannot be enlisted with a master, and where the parents for any reason are not available to give consent, then anybody in loco-parentis to the child will give the requisite consent. Following the parental consent the child will then be enlisted with the chosen craft master who may accept or reject the intending apprentice. On acceptance, the craft master enters into an apprenticeship agreement with the parents of the apprentice which may be oral

[11] RI Craig and LR Bittel *Training and Development Handbook* (New York: Me Craw Hill Inc.1967).
[12] Adekola (n 3).
[13] C Minns, and P Wallis, The price of human capital in a pre-industrial economy: Premiums and apprenticeship contracts in 18th century England, *Explorations in Economic History*, (2013) 50, 335 -350.
[14] MAL Omole, *Industrial Education and Human Resource Development*, (Ibadan: Alafas Nigeria Company; 1999).
[15] R I Lerman, 'Can the United States expand apprenticeship? Lessons from experience'. (2012) IZA Policy Paper No. 46.
[16] Eje Orusa and Destiny Lloyd, 'Reinventing the 'Nwa - boi'Apprenticeship System: A Platform for Entrepreneurship Promotion in Nigeria' (2019) Vol. 8(8) *International Journal of Advanced Research*, p.98-130.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] BA Odunaike and SA Idowu, 'Apprenticeship System among 'Elewe-omo' in Ojo Area of Lagos, Nigeria', *Global Journal of Applied, Management and Social Sciences*; (2015) Vol.10 p.81-90.
[20] GO Akanbi, 'Incorporating Traditional Vocational Education System: Problem and Prospects', *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* (2012) Vol.2 (8) p.179-187.
[21] Adekola (n 3).
[22] BA Odunaike and SA Idowu (n 19).

or in rear occasions a written agreement. Items covered by the agreement include but not limited to accommodation of the apprentice, duration, feeding and other ancillary matters.

There are two major types of apprenticeship system that the apprentice may opt for. Either learning a craft or skill or learning a trade. Learning a craft or skill entails the apprentice being enlisted with a professional craftsman or master for mentorship and training over an agreed period. The period of training lasts for 3- 5 years depending on how fast the apprentice can learn the craft or skill. Learning a trade on the other hand involves an apprentice being handed over to a successful businessman for mentorship and training. The period of training for this type of apprenticeship is usually between 3-7 years which is still dependent on how fast the apprentice learns the trade.[23] In either of these two cases mentioned above, these apprentices are often not paid, they are provided accommodation, transportation costs (where necessary), feeding, and clothing (ie physiological needs).[24] During this period of training also, the apprentice develops entrepreneurship skills and learns all the intricacies involved in the business such as supply chain management, quality control, marketing and dealing with customers, forecasting, human relations, bookkeeping and accounting, negotiation skills, inventory control, and analysis and opportunity.[25]

In all forms of apprenticeship schemes, the master is not paid for the training and mentorship of the apprentice. Because there is no payment of any sort, it is expected that the apprentice will serve the master in whatever capacity the master wills (including domestic chores) while undergoing the apprenticeship. According to Olulu and Udeorah,[26] payment is usually accompanied by some drinks meant for the entertainment of witnesses who are usually relatives, fellow tradesmen, or craftsmen within the environment in which the trade or craft is to be learned. It is to be noted that whether payment is made or not, the requirement for the provision of drinks for the entertainment of witnesses is a mandatory requirement in apprenticeship schemes. It is a kind of rites and induction process for the apprentice.

The traditional apprenticeship system is devoid of any established curriculum or formal procedure for the acquisition of skills. The apprentice only learns through observation, imitation and trial and error method.[27] There is usually no established curriculum, formal learning procedure, or pedagogies and so the apprentice learns from or through observation, imitation, and in some cases, trial and error. Thus, the apprentice learns on the job by direct instruction and could be punished for making silly mistakes.[28] A cardinal principle of the traditional apprenticeship scheme is that it is an informal system where the master is free to run the scheme as he pleases even to the detriment of the apprentice. As Fafunwa[29] observed, the apprenticeship system does not encourage questioning or offer of suggestion by the apprentice. The master craftsman teaches and establishes his authority on learning and the learner in an autocratic manner, and there are no standard regulations guiding the process, except what the master craftsman sets.[30] The overall success or failure of the scheme is highly dependent on the master and resilience and determination on the part of the apprentice. At the expiration of the agreed period, the apprentice is set free with a seed capital that will enable him to establish his new business.

[23] Adekola (n 3).
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] RM Olulu and SAF Udeora, 'Contract of Apprenticeship and Employment Generation in Nigeria' *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, (2018) Vol. 11(3) pp.335-344.
[27] Adekola (n 3).
[28] Ibid.
[29] Fafunwa (n 6).
[30] Adekola (n 3).

a. Contemporary Practice of Apprenticeship in Nigeria

Traditional apprenticeship scheme has evolved over time following dearth of white collar jobs, and increase in youth unemployment in the country. There are a lot of changes in apprenticeship system following massive interest in the scheme as a means of self-reliance. As Dowson[31] rightly observed, apprenticeships are becoming the most legitimate and popular route into work as unemployment becomes an issue on every graduate and carrier changer's mind. Speaking on the development, Adekola[32] has this to say:

> *in the traditional society the apprenticeship system was not based on any requirement but today, many master craftsmen and organizations require apprentice to possess certain educational qualifications before he can fit into the vocation. This is usually found in vocations such as printing, tailoring, electronics, surveying etc. The idea of issuing certificate to apprentice during freedom is also a new innovation in the practice of apprenticeship system. Similarly, fees are now being paid by the apprentice or his sponsor and terms documented and signed by parties involved at the commencement of the apprenticeship period.*

Governments at both state and federal level are now mapping out strategies to ensure self-reliance on the part of the youths. To this end, some states have introduced apprenticeship schemes in various vocational fields with the aim of reducing idleness on the part of the youths. Oyo State for instance introduced the Oyo State Integrated Self Employment Scheme (OSISES) in 1986 with the sole aim of organizing the youths to undergo apprenticeship training in various vocational fields which will make them entrepreneurs at the completion of the programme. At the federal level, the Federal government in 1986 established the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) with the mandate to organize Nigerians youths to undergo apprenticeship training under selected master craftsmen and organizations in so many vocations. The main objective of the establishment of NDE was to assist youths to acquire skills and knowledge that will make them self-reliant, and to stimulate the economy by providing employment opportunities for the Nigerian youth through training and resettlement.

To ensure the realization of its objectives, the directorate set up some programme that will help it actualize its dreams. Among these programme are the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme, the School on Wheels Scheme, and the Waste to Wealth Programme. The National Open Apprenticeship Scheme aim is to provide youths with the requisite vocational skills needed to thrive in the society. To this end, professional craftsmen, ministries, and companies with adequate training facilities were commissioned to assimilate youths already registered as apprentice with the scheme. The School on Wheels Programme was set up to take fully equipped mobile vocational training facilities in a specially designed truck to the rural areas to train the youths on specific vocation relevant to the individual and community development.[33] This undoubtedly has the potential of discouraging urban migration. The Waste to Wealth Programme on the other hand was designed to encourage youths to cultivate the habit of transforming waste into useful products thereby encouraging resourcefulness.

The apprenticeship system has helped many young people, particularly those from poor homes who could not afford formal education to acquire useful skills to become self-employed, self-reliant, to create wealth, and to contribute meaningfully to society.[34] In addition to the foregoing, the wealth redistribution aspect of the apprenticeship scheme ensures that wealth is spread from the rich to the poor (the apprentices and their families). To a great extent, the NDE apprenticeship scheme is an improvement on the traditional apprenticeship scheme in that it accommodates both graduates and

[31] C Dowson, *Apprenticeship for students, parents and job seekers*, (United Kingdom: Kogan Page Ltd; 2012).
[32] Adekola (n 3).
[33] Ibid.
[34] BA Odunaike and SA Idowu (n 19).

non-graduates, and it provides for the payment of monthly stipends to the trainees to ensure regular attendance and welfare. To encourage the craftsmen, they are also paid allowances depending on the number of trainees under them.

Furthermore, to ensure discipline in the scheme, the NDE through the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the directorate provides monitoring services on the performance and behaviours of the trainees on the job. The craftsmen are equally encouraged to provide regular reports on individual trainees. The NDE may where necessary discipline a trainee. Where the craftsman is performing below standard, the organization may withdraw his licence. Upon graduation or completion of the training, the NDE provides to the trainee the necessary equipment and take off grants necessary to establish his business. It is worthy to note that the innovations infused into the apprenticeship scheme by the NDE are what made the scheme stand out and attractive to the youths, making it an avenue for both graduates and non-graduates to participate. But beyond these innovations, there are challenges still bedeviling the system.

4. Challenges facing the Traditional Apprenticeship Scheme

Although the traditional apprenticeship scheme has transformed a lot of lives in Nigeria, the system is still fraught with a lot of challenges. Most of these challenges hinder effective performance on the part of the apprentice and the master. These challenges are examined hereunder.

4.1 Attitudinal Problem

A major problem facing the apprenticeship scheme up till this moment is that it is widely perceived that the scheme is for the poor in the society, or the people who cannot do well in the formal education sector. This particular problem makes it difficult to attract young graduates and youths of school age into the system.[35] It is assumed that people undergoing apprenticeship are 'never do well' people and they are not given deserved respect like their counterparts in the formal school system.[36] This invariably has psychological effect on intending applicants, and accounts for low patronage of the scheme. The attitude of the masters is another setback to the practice of apprenticeship. The fact that the masters are not versed in the act of teaching makes it difficult for them to inculcate in the trainees under them the required skill. Speaking on the development, Onasanya[37] opines that this is caused by the fact that they are not trained in the act of teaching. This often times lead to high drop-out and lack of sustained interest on the part of the apprentice.

4.2 Absence of Written Contract

Absence of a properly documented evidence of the apprenticeship agreement is one of the major challenges facing traditional apprenticeship system in Nigeria. The implication therefore is that in the event of any dispute or issue, there will not be anything to rely on in determining the rights, duties, and obligations of the parties to the transaction. This makes it difficult to determine when there has been an infringement of the agreement, and the party at fault.

4.3 Absence of a Structured Curriculum

Another challenge facing the traditional apprenticeship scheme is the absence of a structured curriculum for the training. The master teaches anything that comes to his mind without reference to any note. Thus, learning is monotonous and the apprentice only learns the available job type in the workshop daily. In practice therefore, the apprentice is exposed to a learning that does not follow any specific design or pattern, not structured, and does not migrate from simple to complex. In addition, there are no specific course content for the training, the apprentice learns the available

[35] K Sonnenberg, 'Traditional Apprenticeship in Ghana and Senegal: Skills Development for Youth for the Informal Sector', *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, (2012) Vol. 15(2) pp.93-105.
[36] Adekola (n 3).
[37] SAB Onasanya, *Effective Personnel Management and Industrial Relations* (Lagos: Center for Management Development, 2005)369.

topics under the scheme haphazardly without reference to any specific mode of assessment. This accounts for most of the trainee's loss of interest midstream into the programme.

4.4 Wrong Career Choice

Another challenge affecting the traditional apprenticeship scheme is the choice of wrong career by the apprentice. As earlier noted, most people go into apprenticeship at a very tender age when they can barely make a good choice of what they want in life. Most times the choice are made by parents or guardians of these apprentices without any consideration of the capability, interest and ability of the apprentice. The implication is that the apprentice is made to accept and undergo a training he would ordinarily not consent to, and this in turn affects the attitude of the apprentice all through the process, and results in high rate of drop-out.

4.5 Inadequacy of Regulatory Framework for the System

This is another major challenges facing the traditional apprenticeship system in Nigeria. Although the Labour Act[38] provides for apprenticeship, but a careful analysis of the provisions of the Act will reveal that the provisions of the Act relating to the mode of operation, regulation, rewards, structure, and implementation is grossly inadequate when compared to other countries. Besides, no programme has been put in place to promote the awareness of the Labour Act to the populace, masters, and the apprentices, neither are there mechanisms to sanction those whose actions contravene the letters of the Act.[39] Moreover, the provisions of the Labour Act relating to the laid down rules and regulations are neither adhered to nor implemented. Therefore, order and formalization which the Labour Act was trying to create was a mere pretense and Nigeria still operates an unorganized, unregulated, and broadly informal apprenticeship system without a defined vocational profile or framework.[40] Most of the businesses that take in the apprentices are part of the informal economy and this makes it difficult to bring them under the ambit of the laws governing the apprenticeship scheme in Nigeria and for government to introduce new initiatives and for them to raise capital.[41]

4.6 Poverty

This is another challenge facing the traditional apprenticeship system. The economic condition of most parents has made it an uphill task for the parents to sponsor their wards for apprenticeship training. More so when it is often considered that the vast majority of people who go into apprenticeship are from low income class. Even on the side of the masters, most of them cannot afford to buy the necessary equipment and materials needed for the training. In most cases, they find it difficult to equip their workshop with necessary equipment that can improve efficiency and make them meet up with contemporary technological needs.[42] Their inability to provide suitable collateral for bank loans still compounds the problem; even the Microfinance Banks set guidelines that make accessing loans by graduates of the apprenticeship scheme a difficult task.[43] The overall effect of the above is that the lack of the requisite funding is a hindrance to a lot of people undertaking apprenticeship training.

4.7 Child Labour and Abuse

The traditional apprentice system is such where young and underage children from poor families are sent out to learn a trade or vocational skill. These underage children are subjected to all manner of domestic abuse in the course of the training since they are expected to do household chores in the course of learning, and at the same serve their masters in other capacities at their place of training. This is in

[38] Cap. L1 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.
[39] R.M Olulu and SAF Udeora (n 26).
[40] BA Odunaike and SA Idowu (n 19).
[41] Ibid.
[42] Adekola (n 3).
[43] Ibid.

spite of the laws in Nigeria prohibiting child labour and other forms of abuse. Clearly, these two-fold responsibility can be very daunting on the apprentice and undoubtedly is an abuse on the part of the apprentice. Herein lies the necessity for a specific legislation that will set the age limit for apprenticeship, spell out the rights and obligations of the parties, and penalty for breach of any of the provisions.

4.8 Breach of the Apprenticeship Agreement

A fundamental element of every traditional apprenticeship agreement whether oral or in writing is the provision of the seed capital or take off grant to the apprentice to enable him start off his own business. However, it often happens that most masters look for a way to evade this obligation close to the end of the training by fabricating negative stories all in a bid not to fulfill this obligation. On the side of the apprentice, due to perceived fears of being sent away empty handed, and sometimes due to intrinsic deceit, apprentices also run away with their Master's money or properties. No doubt this type of mistrust is an obstacle to the future and survival of the system.[44]

5. Revitalizing the Traditional Apprenticeship System in Nigeria

In spite of the challenges examined above, unlike the apprenticeship system in other parts of the world that prepare people for employment and the professions, the apprenticeship system in Nigeria is unique in the sense that people are prepared to become entrepreneurs.[45] This model no doubt is best suited for a developing economy like Nigeria that cannot assimilate all her graduates in her workforce. The challenges identified above are pointers that radical solutions are needed to revamp the present apprenticeship system in order to unlock the benefits attendant with a revamped apprenticeship system. To this end, a lot of work is needed to make the traditional apprenticeship system suitable for contemporary usage. Eje Orusa & Lloyd[46] have opined that the starting point for transforming the apprenticeship system is the realignment, refocusing, reframing, and reinvention of the dimensions of the entrepreneurship ecosystem to ensure that weaknesses are turned into strengths and threats to opportunities.

Omole[47] and Fluitman[48] have equally opined that for the apprenticeship system to be able to contribute meaningful quota to the national economy, there should be change in the structure and method adopted in the system. This invariably entails strengthening the weak structural guidelines of the system through a combination of factors aimed at bringing the present system up to the standard of contemporary practice. Apart from structural changes, there are other policy directives that could help in transforming the traditional apprenticeship system. They include:

Regulatory framework: legislation is at the heart of every human endeavor. It sets the pace for successful institutions. For apprenticeship system to pride itself in the scheme of things it should be regulated by law. Legislation is necessary for high quality apprenticeship system to safeguard rights and responsibilities of the main partners. Government should therefore provide laws to regulate the practice of apprenticeship and confirm her formal recognition of traditional apprenticeship.[49] However, the parties should be allowed to determine the content of the apprenticeship, assessment and certification. It is important for legislation to recognize the unique status of apprentice as learner and secure his right to high quality training, set minimum duration for apprenticeship and secure provision for career progression and set out the right of apprentice to training allowance commensurate with their productive contributions.[50] If handled properly, many unemployed youths would definitely be attracted to the scheme. Again, there is need for the development of a comprehensive curriculum for the scheme that will allow apprenticeship training to follow a specific pattern. Similar provision should be made for the training and retraining of the masters to ensure that they are up to date with the course content and the

[44] RM Olulu and SAF Udeora (n 26).
[45] BA Odunaike and SA Idowu (n 19).
[46] Eje Orusa and Destiny Lloyd (n 16).
[47] Omole (n 14).
[48] F Fluitman, Traditional apprenticeship in West Africa: recent evidence and policy, (Geneva: International Labour Organization (ILO) Publications; 1992).
[49] Adekola (n 3).
[50] Ibid.

method of delivery. Periodic self-assessment and leadership training exercise should be made mandatory for the trainers since their personality go a long way in shaping the trainees.

Furthermore, entrepreneurship and skill acquisition centres that that truly reflects the needs of the computer age youths should be established in all the local government areas to facilitate the learning and acquisition of skills by apprentices. Emphasis should be placed on accessibility of the centers by the youths, otherwise the essence of the establishment will be defeated. Equally, since infrastructure is the heartbeat of every enterprise, and invariably apprenticeship will thrive better with good infrastructure, there is need for the apprenticeship system to be integrated with Enterprise Support Networks that can provide funds to establish the apprentices after acquiring the needed skills.

Funding is another essential need for the transformation of the traditional apprenticeship system. Both the apprentice and the master need adequate financial support for sustenance. Whereas the apprentice needs stipends to take care of his immediate needs, the master needs to be remunerated for his services otherwise they will not be motivated to continue. Although the NDE gives quarterly stipends to apprentice presently under one of its schemes, this may not be adequate under the present dispensation going by the present economic realities of the country. A trainers' workshop is a necessity, and should be supported with modern equipment to improve their skill, efficiency and general performance.[51] In addition, post–training financial support should be given to the trainees. This should be in terms of establishment of workshop, provision of equipment, take- off grants etc.[52]

Human capital development is another essential factor in the transformation of traditional apprenticeship system. Periodic training and retraining in well-established organisations for hands on the job training are essential prerequisites for growth in industries. It is unarguable that apprentice needs this for their development. This will invariably help the apprentices to become better managers and to run their businesses efficiently and effectively when they become entrepreneurs. The engagement of career counsellors along the line to give guidance on career choice, and other issues confronting the apprentice will help reduce the spate of drop outs in the scheme.

Raising funds for investment and equity ownership is another innovation that should be introduced in the current apprenticeship scheme. This may come in handy to settle the issues that normally erupt at the end of traditional apprenticeship system when the master is not financially buoyant to fulfill his obligations towards the apprentice. If masters are made to contribute to a common fund and grow such funds, then they can always draw from such funds whenever the need arises. The establishment of modalities that will make entrepreneurs retain experienced apprentices as partners on the determination of their training with an option of share ownership instead of starting them on a new business is equally a better way of settling the apprentices than sending them away empty handed.

6. Conclusion

Unemployment amongst the youths is the greatest driver of crime and restiveness. The economic reality globally has necessitated that something beyond white collar job is really needed to take care of the teeming population of the youths. The apprenticeship system has proved to be an alternative means of providing not just employment but creating entrepreneurs. Apprenticeship in its present form cannot achieve the desired goal. Revitalizing the traditional apprenticeship system in Nigeria can be a game-changer in addressing youth unemployment. By leveraging this time-tested approach, young Nigerians can acquire valuable skills, gain practical experience, and become more employable. With proper support and regulation, the apprenticeship system can help bridge the gap between education and employment, fostering a more skilled and productive workforce. By embracing this initiative, Nigeria can unlock the potential of its youth, drive economic growth, and build a brighter future for generations to come.

[51] Adekola (n 3).
[52] Ibid.