

RESTORING NATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY THROUGH EFFECTIVE SKILL ACQUISITION TRAINING PROGRAMMES

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Abstract

The state of insecurity is so pathetic in Nigeria that it has defiled all measures taken by the governments and the entire citizenry to reduce its intensity. Good number of the citizens have had bitter experiences that will linger in their minds for a long time. This ugly situation calls for timely intervention of all stake holders to invest in skill acquisition programmes that will effectively cater for the large number of the unemployed citizens engaging in crimes capable of disrupting the peace and security to the nation. The paper therefore examines the place of skill acquisition training in restoring peace and security of the nation. In order to achieve this, the paper discusses peace, security and skill acquisition training under conceptual clarifications. Furthermore, categories, examples, problems and career prospects of skill acquisition training were discussed in details; while factors working against the peace and security of the nation were also highlighted and elaborated upon. Finally, the paper discussed skill acquisition training as a means of restoring peace and security to the nation. Based on

the conclusion of the paper, it was recommended that successful skill acquisition graduates should be offered credit facilities with no or minimal interest to start their businesses. This gesture will help to reduce the number of people roaming the streets of the nation's cities aimlessly. It is important to note that an idle mind could be used as devil's workshop.

Keywords: Peace, Restoring, Security, Skill acquisition training programmes.

Introduction

The increase in the population of the nation citizenry is becoming worrisome. This increase is partially responsible for the plague of unemployment which stands as a barrier between the jobless citizens of working age and their personal development. Besides, the inability of the unemployed citizens to secure gainful employment has led to the emergence of many vices militating against the nation's development. These vices which manifest in forms of restiveness, kidnapping for ransome, militancy, armed robbery, insurgency, pipeline vandalization among others have proved to be the major causes of insecurity in Nigeria. Gbagolo and Eze (2014) affirmed that Nigeria as a nation has been witnessing series of security challenges for some years now. The insecurity situation has been partly attributed to unemployment in the country.

The gradual erosion of peace and security is evident in the loss of lives and destruction of properties that will take decades of years to regain. Security challenges in Nigeria are mainly responsible for the fears created in the minds of many Nigerians since no one can possibly guarantee his or her return after the day's work. This position was aptly corroborated by Clark and Ausukuya (2013) that we live in constant state of fear that is further compounded by economic crisis. Sometimes, the crisis experienced are effects of many employers' inability to pay their employees, thereby exacerbating the already tensed atmosphere of joblessness.

It is against this backdrop that the governments at all levels, well-meaning Nigerian (philanthropists) and individuals have decided to introduce various skill acquisition initiatives to cater for the ever growing populace of the country. Fatoki (2019) submitted that between 1986 and 2013, successive administrations in Nigeria had introduced various programmes. The major focus of these programmes is to promote vocational and entrepreneurship spirit among the beneficiaries through the creation of gainful self-employment opportunities, access to loan by citizens who wish to go into business without tendering any collateral and total reduction in the level of poverty among Nigerians (Fatoki, 2019). In order to create jobs, these outfits stage different skill acquisition training programmes in various trades with the view of making the trainees or beneficiaries become

self-reliant in their different fields of work. Uranta and Nlerum (2017) asserted that training of youths in various skills and trades will offer them the opportunity of generating jobs for others; and this will subsequently reduce the unnecessary tension in the various regions.

Conceptual Clarifications

Peace is said to be present in a place where sanity reigns. It is a phenomenon that propagates absence of war, violence of all forms, absence of restiveness, insurgency, militancy, armed robbery, kidnapping and a host other life threatening situations capable of confining people to a state of fear. Hornby (2001) defined peace as a situation or period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or in an area.

Peace is a situation devoid of unpleasant condition that could lead to destruction of lives and properties. According to Ahamefule (2013), peace is a situation in which there is no war between countries or groups; a situation in which you are not irritated by the noise of other people; a state when you are calm and have no worries. Peace could also be viewed as sincere attempts at reconciliation to pave way for healthy interpersonal or international relationships; a calculated effort geared at achieving prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare; an atmosphere that promotes equality among ethnic groups, religious groups and other groups of common interest; and a working political order that presents the interest of all and sundry (Akinbode & Olugbenro, 2016).

The absence of war and violence may not necessarily connote peace since other factors like poverty, uneven distribution of the nation's wealth, oppression of the poor by the governments, oppression of women, abuse and human trafficking among others still prevail in the country. Any of the aforementioned factor could trigger people's anger to revolt against the unjust treatment received from the influential people in the country. In totality, peace encompasses all situations where every citizen is calm, free from quarrels, worries, strife, disturbance, disagreement and every other situation that promotes harmonious relationship among the citizenry.

The term security could be used in different ways. It could be linked to food (food security), job (job security), equipment and devices put in place to bar people from having unauthorised access to facilities, automobiles, communication gadgets and other valuable assets. Security could also be seen as the result of the measure taken to safeguard safety of lives and properties so that they don't become vulnerable. It is a state of being safe from danger; a situation where one desires for secureness or stability. It is an assurance or confidence in regard to one's safety; absence of

risk, danger and other threat posing situations that can adversely affect people's lives (Martins, Idowu & Lawal, 2019).

The security challenges experienced by Nigerians especially those in the Northern and Middle Belt in the past few years has kept the whole nation in a permanent state of fear where no one is sure of his or her safety in the next minutes. Vanguard News (2019) reported that out of the one hundred and sixty three (163) independent states and territories ranked according to their levels of peacefulness, Nigeria is ranked 148 in the world and 40 among the 44 sub-Saharan African countries. It is also imperative to note that any nation which aspires to develop must fortify its security system with all necessary equipment, capital and other logistics since security which is described as a state of being free from danger, threats and other hazardous situations is non-negotiable if man must continue to exist.

In order to change this view and reality, the state of the nation's security must be addressed. Everyone must work towards achieving calm, sane and friendly environment that will promote social, cultural, political and economic activities required for the general development of the nation. It is also imperative to note that any nation that aspires to develop must fortify its security system with all necessary equipment, capital and other logistics since security which is described a state of being free from danger, threats and other hazardous situations is non-negotiable if man must continue to exist.

The teeming population of the jobless citizens of the working age in Nigeria is an evidence that the available white-collar jobs provided by the governments and private bodies cannot adequately cater for the large number of graduates produced yearly by higher institutions of learning. To this end, the acknowledgement of skill acquisition training is imperative as it will help to fill the vacuum created by unemployment in the country. Skill acquisition training entails all programmes of instruction put in place for the training of people in different skills with the aim of making them live independently.

Skill acquisition training encompasses all forms of training offered to group of individuals with aim of acquiring skills and knowledge for self-sustenance. Idoko (2014) reported that skill acquisition training involves training of people in different fields of trade under a legal agreement between the trainers and the trainees for certain duration and under certain conditions. Similarly, Uranta & Nlerum (2017) defined skill acquisition training as an adult education programme designed to impart various skills on the participants in order to meet their needs; especially those that bother

on jobs and self-reliance. Idoko further stressed that skill acquisition equips participants in the area of electronics, masonry, carpentry, electricity (wiring installation), hair dressing, barbering, driving, vehicle repair and maintenance, plumbing, fittings, mobile phone repair, computer repair and appreciation among others.

Skill acquisition training programmes are put in place to conform to the directives of the United Nations Declaration on sustainable Development Goals that propagate eradication of poverty and extreme hunger. Isaac (2011) noted that skill acquisition is a recipe for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by creating avenues for employment, thereby creating an avenue for jobs and wealth creation while instilling self-sufficiency and reliance.

In the words of Douli (2004), skill acquisition is the manifestation of idea and knowledge through training which is geared towards instilling in individuals, the spirit of entrepreneurship needed for meaningful development. Apart from the fact that skills acquisition affords individuals the opportunity of acquiring relevant skills needed for living a self-reliance life, it also helps to build the confidence of the participants, increases competition and cooperation among people, especially in the same locality.

Categories and Examples of Skill Acquisition Training

Skill acquisition training can be broadly categorized into four distinct types. These are vocational skill training, technical skill training, entrepreneurship skill training and life skills.

Vocational Skill Training: Vocational skill training is received by learners in lieu of formal institution degree. They are skills gained in a specific trade or profession. Good examples are skills in tailoring, plumbing, carpentry, bricklaying, catering, hair dressing, electrical work, automobile mechanic, welding and fabrication, photography e.t.c.

Technical Skill Training: Technical skill training include knowledge and abilities needed to function optionally in specific job related tasks. Technical skills are science oriented, hence they are mostly exhibited by personnel in engineering, technology of different types, manufacturing e.t.c. Examples include mechanical engineering, civil engineering, computer skills, phone skills, e.t.c.

Entrepreneurship Skill Training: Entrepreneurial skill training entails all training in both soft and hard skills. Examples are business management skill, teamwork and leadership skills, communication and listening skill, critical thinking skills, branding marketing and networking skills, organizational skills, customer service skill e.t.c.

Life skills:- These refer to skills that have to do with behavioural, cognitive or interpersonal skills that help individuals to succeed in their different areas of life (Hodge, Danish & Martin, 2013). According to Projapati, Sharma and Sharma (2017), life skills include creative thinking, decision-making, problem solving, critical thinking, coping with emotion, coping with stress, effective communication e.t.c.

Problems and Career Prospects of Skill Acquisition Training

Problems of Skill Acquisition Training

Various problems had been identified as the bane behind the slow pace of development in skill acquisition training offered to the teeming population of unemployed citizens of Nigeria. These problems include:

Poor funding: Skill acquisition training requires a huge amount of capital. A good look at the government owned skill acquisition training programmes reveals a number of anomalies especially in the areas of infrastructural facilities, equipment and remuneration of personnel. Likewise, privately owned skill acquisition centres are suffering the same fate since capital to procure facilities and equipment, as well as paying the personnel is not easy to come by. As cited by Idowu, Adewuyi and Akinkunmi (2020) in Oketch (2009), a close look at the funding of skill acquisition training programmes which also include vocational and technical education can shed light on the contradiction between the emphasis for skills and the limited funding that governments are willing to commit to it.

Shortage of qualified and competent trainers: Qualified and competent trainers in skill acquisition are few in number. The few number of this category of training personnel is evident in the fact that many graduates of skill acquisition training programmes often prefer to work in firms and industries where better salary and other juicy entitlements could be offered. Obayan (2002) submitted that technical managers in developing countries are essentially managers who have grown without any technical background or training.

Problem of curriculum: Large number of skill acquisition training outfits especially the privately owned ones operate on informal and non-formal basis. These outfits deliver their services without using the curriculum which would have served as a guide in the areas of content, instructional methods or techniques and processes in practical presentations.

Gross neglect of skill acquisition training: As at today, the orientation of many of the citizens especially the younger ones has changed from the initial campaign of hard work to campaigns for quick riches through series of fraudulent acts and money making rituals. To this end, many of these youth have bluntly refused to enroll in skill acquisition training programmes probably because they prefer joining the league of the yahoo boys and the money making ritualists while a good of those that have acquired different kinds of training are busy riding motorcycle popularly known as Okada to earn a living. Likewise, their female counter part is not left as many of the girls are involved in prostitution.

Lack of political will on the part of the political leaders: Many of the political office holders elected to pilot the affairs of the nation are not fair to the citizens. Once they assume duty, all the promises made during their campaigns are esponged from the list of their agenda while the masses groan in pains. Sometimes, the capital resources allocated to the educational sector are diverted, reduced or mismanaged without being checked. This accounts for the slow pace of development in the educational sector which serves as the major sector that harbours skill acquisition training programmes.

Career Prospects for Skill Acquisition Graduates

Skill acquisition training is an alternative to formal education. It also serves as a compliment to the theoretical knowledge gained in the formal education setting. Basically, skill acquisition training plays an essential role in helping different categories of people to become self-reliant in order to cope in the ever dynamic and demanding economy. Hence, graduates of skill acquisition training programmes are expected to function in the following areas.

Skill acquisition trainers/ instructors: Graduates of skill acquisition training programmes like vocational and technical education, entrepreneurial training e.t.c are the only trained professionals qualified to fill the position of trainers/ instructors in public and privately owned of skilled acquisition outfits.

Small and medium scale entrepreneurs: Graduates of skill acquisition training programmes are potential entrepreneurs. Hence, they are at an advantageous position to own and manage small and medium scale enterprises.

Proprietors and proprietresses of skill acquisition centers: Recipients of skill acquisition training in the course of their training must have acquired lots of managerial skills required to function

as proprietors and proprietress of skill acquisition training centres. Besides, they can also rise to occupy administrative and management positions in skill acquisition and related fields in Nigeria.

Global recognition: Many of skill acquisition training programmes have gained recognition both locally and internationally. This has also given their practitioners great opportunity to become famous globally.

Managers and heads of industries: Graduates of skill acquisition training are expected to act in the capacity of supervisors, heads of units/departments, directors e.t.c. This simply explains why some of these graduates are leaders in oil companies, construction companies and a host of other companies that offer services having to do with skill acquisition of various forms (Olelewe, 2016).

Factors Working against the Peace and Security of Nigeria

Nigeria is being confronted with myriad of security challenges that have their causative route from many other factors discussed below:

Poverty: People who do not have access to the basic needs of life often live without any iota of hope. Sometimes, when the situation becomes unbearable, they may resolve to taking part in illegal or criminal activities in order to survive. Okoro (2011) noted that increase in the crime rate is a form of protest against poverty, uneven distribution of the nation's wealth, inequality among others. Idowu, Adegbite and Egunjobi (2017) also affirmed that heightened levels of poverty may result to increased tension which could in turn lead to protest and violence.

Religions intolerance/bigotry/fanatism: Religions intolerance, bigotry and fanaticism often arise due to differences in religious beliefs.. Religious faithful who exhibit this kind of behaviour often have negative mental and psychological attitude towards other people religious beliefs (Idowu, Adegbite & Egunjobi, 2017). Religious intolerance, bigotry and fanaticism are demonstrated by religious faithful who do not see any reason for the existence of other religions. However, this attitudes may also be attributed to ignorance and illiteracy.

Unemployment: Unemployment has a very strong bond with poverty but in reality, it has its distinct features. Unemployment describes a situation whereby people who possess the basic requirements like qualifications and considerable years of experience are striving to secure jobs; even when the jobs are not in sight. Like poverty, unemployed people often lack capital resources to acquire their

needs hence; they may end up engaging in illegal activities which are capable of destabilizing the nation's peace and security to earn a living.

Cultural barriers: The issues of cultural barrier is so pronounced in Nigeria due to her multicultural, multi ethnic and multilingual nature. The citizen are of diverse culture and this stands as a strong factor that often work against their unity. More so, differences in people's culture sometimes dictate their interest and aspiration. It is pertinent to note that differences in people's culture may as well lead to conflict of interest which may eventually lead to dispute among the diverse tribes.

Greed and lack of political will: Many of the political leaders elected in to public offices are characterized by greed, self-centeredness and poor political will. They demonstrate these characteristics through their quest for riches. In fact, everybody wants to assume the status of prominence in the society and the urge sometimes drive people into criminal acts and corrupt practices (Yusuf, 2015). Kuye & Adewuyi (2016) corroborated this by stating that due to greed, politicians make discriminating statements which are used by sects, militants and minority groups to legitimise their unpatriotic actions of mayhem, violence and terrorist attacks.

Uneven distribution of the nation's wealth: Apart from the fact that the nation's wealth and resources are not evenly distributed among the states, individuals in many government agencies and parastatals are poorly remunerated when their salaries and entitlements are compared with the total take home of the elected political leaders at the helms of nation's affairs. Besides, many of the leaders enjoy free accommodation, cars, medical trips to developed countries and a host of other benefits while good number of their subjects pay through their noses to meet up with the harsh economic situation of the county.

Skill Acquisition Training: A Way of Restoring Peace and Security of the Nation

Skill acquisition training programmes are basically put in place to cater for the teeming population of the unemployed citizens in Nigeria. Through this training programmes, good number of the nation's unemployed citizens will become engaged regardless of their educational levels. Subsequently, their engagement in various skill acquisition programmes will keep them away from joining dreadful sets that take delight in disrupting the peace and security of the nation. Idowu, Adewuyi and Akinkunmi (2020) argued that these personalities sometimes graduate to armed robbers, militants, kidnappers,

fraudsters and other unscrupulous elements that work against the peace and security of the nation probably because they are unemployed.

Subsequently, engagement in skill acquisition programmes helps to improve one's expertise while productive capacity of such people is equally enhanced. Interestingly, African Union (AU) (2011) posited that the primary objective of any skill acquisition programme is to help alleviate poverty through employable skills. Besides, enhanced productive capacity is a right step towards escaping harsh economic condition being experienced by the large number of the populace. Zimmerer & Scarborough (2006) reported that creative and innovative skill acquisition programmes in form of vocational, technical and entrepreneurship education have led and will continue to lead the economic revolution that has proved repeatedly to improve the standard of living of people everywhere. It is worthy of note that improvement in the standard of living of people is a right step towards achieving a sane society.

Every form of education including skill acquisition training in its delivery propagates element of morals and knowledge of upholding and preserving the nation's core value system. Graduates of skill acquisition training programmes in the course of training must have learnt some things about morals and the need to uphold core values that are essential to living a purposeful life. Such values may include respect for life, respect for other tribes, ethnic groups, languages, religion, culture among others, integrity, honesty, culture of peace, demonstration of love, unity and other unique core values meant for promotion of peace and security in the country. Ideally, the exhibition and demonstration of morals and core values by good number of the citizenry is an indication of harmonious co-existence among the citizenry.

Apart from the issue of morals and core values, some skill acquisition training programmes attract juicy benefits which are enjoyed by the trainees at the completion of the programmes. Skill acquisition programmes organised and sponsored by the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) sometimes give out credit facilities (loans) to successful trainees in order to have a strong capital base required for starting their own businesses. This opportunity will subsequently transform them into employers of labour who will help to employ good number of citizens that would have become miscreants, thugs and street boys who may eventually transform to armed robbers, kidnappers, oil pipe vandals, militants, insurgents and a host of other deadly sects raised majorly to destroy lives and properties.

Skill acquisition training programmes have proved to be a good platform for the development of individuals. Idowu, Adewuyi and Akinkunmi (2020) maintained that skill acquisition training programmes aim at producing graduates who can withstand the ever changing, demanding and competitive global economy. With this unique attribute, it becomes very difficult for any graduate to abandon his legitimate business for illegal activities capable of disrupting the unity, peace and security of the nation.

Conclusion

Skill acquisition training in form of vocational, technical, entrepreneurship training and life skills have proved to be major means of equipping the beneficiaries with the necessary skills required to live an independent life. Besides, the engagement of the citizens in various skill acquisition training programmes has undoubtedly helped to channel away the mindset of many from the initial one characterised by religious intolerance/fanatism/ethno-religious struggle, struggle for land boundaries, the need for formation of deadly groups like bandits, militants, insurgents, armed robbery and a host of other groups capable of disrupting the peace and security of the nation to a more security conscious mind that embraces core values like peace, unity, respect for other ethnic groups, and their religions, respect of lives and properties, dignity, love among others.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

- (i) Successful skill acquisition graduates should be offered credit facilities with no or minimal interest to start their businesses. This gesture will help to reduce the number of people roaming the streets of the nation's cities aimlessly. It is important to note that an idle mind could be used as devil's workshop.
- (ii) Skill acquisition subjects like basic technology, carpentry among others should be included in the curriculum of the upper primary classes (Pry 5-6). This will go a long way to help give the pupils basic knowledge in skill acquisition that will subsequently usher them into skill acquisition training programmes at higher levels. The engagement of these trainees through different level of skill acquisition training programmes will also make them to be responsible and reliable citizens that will uphold the core values of the nation.

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