

FOSTERING STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA THROUGH INTEGRATED YOUTH AND GENDER EMPOWERMENT PROCESS AND PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

The paper seeks to establish an essential approach to empowerment planning and administration in Nigeria, profering methodological solution to the importunate problems of poverty reduction. It points to different gradations of knowledge, insisting on the advancement of empowerment planners on the ladder of broad-mindedness and experience. This hopes to resolve the crux of the study, which infers that the poor showing of empowerment efforts in Nigeria due to incompetence and corruption, adversely affects development and stability. The paper considers appropriating an enlightened effort on youth and gender empowerment, as issues of stability, development, youth and gender empowerment are embedded in a symbiotic web of potential stimulation. Content analysis of extant documents is expected to portray the basic frame of distortion and failure in the programmes of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP); the departments charged with service provision for poverty reduction and empowerment in Nigeria. Findings from the analysis reveal that ignorance, laxity and corruption enlarge the coast of empowerment failure, which can be addressed through training as to promote poverty reduction, stability and development. Therefore, knowledge acquisition not only enhances supervision and evaluation skills of role players but also frustrates corrupt tendencies. Keywords: development, stability, youth and gender, empowerment, planning, poverty reduction

INTRODUCTION

The paper is concerned with ways and means of bringing about a progressive and stable socio-political and economic environment through a systematically enhanced empowerment process. The objective is to establish an empowerment approach that would transform role

players from a position of ignorance to knowledge-based planning and implementation as to match the pace of poverty reduction with population growth. It also hopes to broaden the course of stability and development.

After due consideration of keywords and their meaning, the paper takes on youth and gender empowerment as *sine qua non* for stability and development in Nigeria. Thereafter, the need to pursue a cognitive approach to empowerment planning becomes essentially apt to discuss. Effort in this direction will go to illumine and show-up factors of distortion evidently inherent in the empowerment process of existing institutions, as will be seen. To this effect, illustrative analysis of the content of some extant documents will be made to portray issues of process disorientation and purpose discordance in the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). The paper will also raise some recommendations in it's concluding section.

MEANING OF KEYWORDS

The meaning of keywords listed out in this work are here explained. While general meaning is sought, explanation will also be made to underpin the place and use of these keywords in the article.

The word “development” according to Markins, et al (1992), is the act or process of growing or developing. It involves coming to an advanced or expanded stage. Development can also be seen to refer among other things, to growth, evolvment, advancement, increase, expansion, enlargement, progress or improvement (Urdang, 1992). Rodney (1972) considers development at the individual level to imply increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. He also emphasized that the achievement of any of those aspects of personal development is very much tied in with the state of the society as a whole. In December 1983, the Brundtland Commission came into being with the appointment of Gro Harlem Brundtland by former UN Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, to rally countries to work and pursue sustainable development together. The Brundtland Commission considered the unity of environment and development and so coined the term sustainable development in the paper, “Our Common Future”, to mean the kind of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs (United Nations (WCED), 1987). A

humanistic perspective will align development to empowerment, observing it as the right of local people to be in charge of their lives, express their own desires and initiate solution to their problems.

Stability denotes a condition of being steady in position or balance. From the point of view of management of state affairs, stability means a predictable political environment, which in turn attracts investment and encourages growth. In its Governance, Justice, Law and Order (GJLOS) Sector Reform (2012), the Kenyan government through its Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs for instance, had hinged the applicability of its development reform agenda to the restoration of investors confidence in the country. It noted that investors require a stable and predictable environment devoid of patronage; an environment of certainty and predictability of the law as well as quick and fair arbitration of disputes. To achieve this, the Ministry adopted the vision of “a safe, secure, democratic, just, corruption-free and prosperous Kenya for all”. Conversely, an unstable environment offers no hope for this programme or other related ones elsewhere. According to Tambuwal (2013), many countries in Africa have failed to institutionalize transparent and objective political processes that can provide good governance. Consequently, conflict, poverty and social disarray continue to plague our countries in Africa, creating a vicious circle of instability that inhibits economic development. Therefore, it can be better appreciated to consider political instability in the views of Alesina, et al (1996), as the propensity of a government collapse. In other words, to achieve a stable political and economic environment, a trigger of commitment is necessary in the fields of human development, good governance, justice and poverty control.

The word “youth” refers to the quality or condition of being young, immature, or inexperienced; the period between childhood and maturity (Markins, et al, 1992a). Sometimes, the terms youth, teenager, young person, adolescent are interchanged and often applied to mean the same thing, and sometimes, differentiated. Youth also expresses a particular mindset, character or appearance. A young person is identified with such characteristics as vigour, freshness, adventurous etc. Kennedy (1966) overtly considered and advocated for a world stage that would assume and reflect these intrinsic qualities of youth, when he said, “This world demands the qualities of youth; not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity,

of the appetite for adventure over the life of ease”. Prester (2003) considers youth also as the stage of constructing the self concept and inferred that the self concept of youth is influenced by several variables such as peers, lifestyle, gender and culture. Youth is the early stage or period of human existence, growth and development.

The World Health Organization (2013), in an attempt to profer better understanding, has tried to distinguish between the terms “sex” and “gender”. While it sees “sex” as the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women, gender to it means the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. The above submission is made more plausible by Udry (1994), who also defined “gender” as a range of physical, mental and behavioural characteristics distinguishing between masculinity and femininity. For Haig (2004, 87-88) the term “gender” may refer to biological sex (ie the state of being male or female or intersex), social roles (as in gender roles) or gender identity. In this case perception will depend on one’s frame of reference. In succinct terms however, the WHO (2013a) further made a grouping of “male” and “female” as sex categories, while “masculine” and “feminine” are gender categories. An illuminous example to showcase the gender categorization is the case in Saudi Arabia where women are not allowed to drive cars like their male counterparts.

According to World Bank (2011), the word “empowerment” is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. The Bank noted in this process, the centrality of the action which both build individual and collective assets and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context, which govern the use of these assets. It made a well embedded elaboration by also identifying empowerment as the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people, in this case, women and youths to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.

Planning is the act of preparing a continuous series of action to achieve some specific goals. A plan is like a map, which if a person follows it effectively, can reduce much the necessary time and effort of achieving the goal (TechRepublic, 2006). Planning can also be referred to as the process of setting goals, developing strategies, as well as outlining tasks and schedules, geared towards achieving set targets. Cloete (1991) believes that once the mission, aims and

objectives are clear, the budget has been approved, and one or more plans or programmes have been constructed that will give rise to action, planning can be said to have taken place.

Poverty reduction involves improving the living conditions of people who are already poor; those who lack food, shelter, clothes, access to education and healthcare, land rights and other basic means of improving one's life. Poverty alleviation cannot work without proper planning. Therefore, the World Bank (April, 2013), living up to its *raison d'être*, has worked out a strategy that would be beneficial to countries seeking to reduce their poverty level. It involves courting policies and programmes that will minimize inequity, shocks and vulnerabilities, while encouraging evidence-based policy, poverty measurement and analysis, economic growth and employment. This strategic factor would provide a stand-on reference to our investigation.

IMPERATIVE OF YOUTH AND GENDER EMPOWERMENT TO STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

The importance of women and youth empowerment towards the growth and development process cannot be overemphasized, neither is its essentialness to stability questionable.

An empowerment process cannot be approached exclusively from economic point of view but consideration must also be given to the socio-political and cultural aspects. As a cross-cutting issue, empowerment activities take root from education, healthcare to governance and socio-economic policies, all of which are expected to increase development opportunities, enhance development outcomes and improve people's quality of life (World Bank, 2011a).

However, insensitivity to gender issues and under-investing in women retards efforts on poverty reduction and limits economic and social development. This argument is made relevant by the fact that gender parity is a long-term driver of competitiveness (World Bank, 2012), which in turn, is necessary to stimulate growth and economic development. Therefore, to encourage this condition, women must be made to enjoy equal opportunities to generate and manage income leading to increased realisation of women and children's rights.

Thus to enhance family well-being and stability, promote women empowerment and fulfill children's rights, gender equality in education, politics and governance must be encouraged. Equally important is the need to put in place legislative, financial and administrative measures

to encourage entrepreneurial spirit in women (UNICEF, 2007). In all, addressing gender equality and empowering women are necessary steps in overcoming poverty and furthering development as supported by the human development and capabilities approach and the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2000).

Youth empowerment via entrepreneurial skills and craft training and acquisition, employment, economic opportunities in investment, access to infrastructure, finance and participation in agriculture, encourages productivity hence, economic development. Young people belong to the generation of potentially productive force. In developing nations, they represent important opportunity for locally led economic growth, which can secure a prosperous future (RISE Networks, 2013). If therefore human development indicators are raised among the youth population, productivity would also be greatly achieved. This will in turn lead to economic growth as according to Rodney (1972a), there is a correlation between human development and the socio-economic conditions of a state.

While youth empowerment encourages economic growth, economic growth as opined Melamed, et al (2011), also has the indirect potential to alleviate poverty as a result of simultaneous increase in employment opportunities and increased labour productivity. In a nutshell, a county's economic development is related to human development, which encompasses health, education, employment and economic liberalization by way of extending property rights to the poor. The relationship between these factors and economic growth proves the point that growth and development go together much of the time.

In similar terms, youth and gender empowerment brings about a stable socio-political environment that facilitates macroeconomic stability, which in turn leads to economic growth and development. Therefore, all efforts aimed at dealing with unemployment, poverty and inequity must be concerted and properly primed to engage a greater number of the youth population. This is because unempowered and disaffected youths comprise most of today's regional armed groups. Consequently, Florquin and Berman (2005) infer that lack of economic development and wide spread unemployment make membership of organized armed groups a particularly attractive option for idle youths.

In Nigeria, crisis and instability has precluded the government to a large extent from implementing its economic transformation programme. There has been remarkable episodes of insurrection in the country, ranging from the Niger Delta, Jos Plateau, to the Boko Haram (a terrorist group, whose name translates to as “western education is sinful”) sectarian crisis. There is also subsisting level of criminality and armed banditry. This has been possible because of the sea-sand of unemployed and socially excluded young men and women roaming the streets, waiting to be recruited for any nefarious purpose. The activities of these groups have variously affected service provision, state of infrastructure and general economic performance.

Howbeit, the persistence and prominence enjoyed by these crisis situations is also as said, a result of the availability of poor and unemployed youths who are at each point willing to be recruited. These ones who Nigeria claims do not exist are the real bombs the nation must diffuse by discovering and remoulding them, if the country must live in peace (Olagunju, 2012).

The trend is the same in other societies where poverty and unemployment is prevalent. In Somaliland for instance, after their post independence crisis, the youths became the main perpetrators of criminal violence in urban centres (OCVP, forthcoming a, 2010). While criminal youths come from a variety of backgrounds, they are often school drop-outs with no stable income and employment prospects, as reports in page 24 of the OCVP forthcoming a, also suggest that Somaliland youths are prone to mobilization into clan militias in case of communal conflict, and that they represent a pool of easy recruits for other armed groups.

Friedman (2013) also wrote that the global financial crisis of 2008 has yielded in Europe, unemployment crisis, which will fairly quickly give way to a political crisis. He emphasized that poverty is hard enough to manage, but when it is also linked to loss of status, the pain is compounded and a politically potent power arises.

Consequently, providing these youths the opportunity to acquire self-reliance education and employment is key and should be the earnest concern of all governments particularly in Nigeria. Indeed Anumnu (2001) explicitly maintains that the greatest worry of any growing nation like Nigeria is how to fully utilize education to develop people’s ability to manage and

induce change; or how to improve the standard of living of her citizenry and effect national development.

Provision and administration of socio-economic incentives for women and youth development have been seriously hampered by corruption. It is also safe to say that corruption brings about conditions like bad economy, unemployment, poverty and hunger. Empirical evidence according to Mauro (1997), suggests that corruption lowers investment and retards economic growth to a significant extent. There is also the propensity of corruption to tempt government officials to choose government expenditures less on the basis of public welfare than on the opportunity they provide for extorting bribes. Such situation diminish the empowerment process and may trigger off crisis that would retard economic growth and development. The Nigerian government must on this basis, learn to ‘bite the bullet’ in an attempt to fight corruption. This factor cannot be left out, when consideration is made as to the causes of the failure of past poverty reduction efforts in Nigeria.

COGNITIVE EMPOWERMENT PLANNING

In his paper, “Exercising the mind with integrated development planning”, Ingle (2007) exposes the idea that people engaged in formal services or discipline are required to effectively apply their minds to knowledge. He appropriated Rumsfeld’s (2002) ‘unknown unknowns’ concept to prove that service planners and administrators should graduate from a position of ignorance, through knowledge, to the wisdom of experience. This indeed should be applied to form the pillar on which successful empowerment planning in Nigeria must rest. Borrowing a leaf from Ingle, a proper cognitive approach to empowerment planning would be achieved beginning with Mr. Rumsfeld’s postulation:

“There are known knowns. There are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we now know we don’t know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we do not know we don’t know”

To simplify this semantic twist is to extract the explanations attached to the statements as follows;

- There are things we know that we know
- There are things that we now know we don’t know

-There are things we do not know we don't know

The above statements provide a good point of reference to Nigerian empowerment planners and indeed officials in all other sectors. Most times, government officials feel and behave as though they know it all. Some even wallow in self-deceit, believing that no one else can fit into the position they occupy. Such officials, who do not know that they do not know, often trade the sense of humility and learning for arrogance. It is therefore commonplace to hear such question as, “do you want to teach me my job?” etc. Empowerment planners are to be properly guided to learn from (as it applies to) the United Nations Environment Programme (1972) that we can through fuller knowledge and wiser action, achieve for ourselves a better life. Otherwise, through ignorance or indifference we can do massive harm to our well being. Therefore to fix the existing empowerment challenges in Nigeria, demands launching formidable offensive against mediocrity, ignorance and corruption.

Albeit, the preponderance of affective and ascriptive orientation among Nigerians (this means having sympathy for relations and basing placement for existing opportunities less on merit) notwithstanding, those who by whatever means find themselves in positions of trust must appreciate their limitations and acknowledge the impossibility of one knowing everything. It is only then that the graduation earlier pointed out, (ie from ignorance, through knowledge, to experience) will take root.

It is absolutely necessary to adopt a massive capacity building exercise for empowerment planners who should be the athenaeum of knowledge and strategies for poverty reduction and empowerment. Furthermore, applying constructionist approach to empowerment administration will suffice as “man has constantly to sum up experience and go on discovering, inventing, creating and advancing ...man's capability to transform his surroundings... (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 1972a), especially when it comes to fighting corruption, negligence and ineptitude.

Government agency like the legislature may be inclined to fight corruption and official laxity in public institutions, but may not be properly disposed to doing so. This may either be as a result of lack of political will or dearth of the requisite knowledge to do so. In view of this, government should be enlightened to realise that corruption for example, flourishes where distortions in the policy and regulatory regime provide scope for it and where institutions of

restraint are weak. It is the same when an Organization or person has monopoly power over a good or service which generates rent, has the discretion to decide who will receive it, and is not accountable (Bannon, 1999).

The executive and legislative arms who institute, appoint, confirm and allocate budgetary provision for empowerment institutions, must for the above reasons, initiate collective assault on breach of operational guidelines. They should act to strengthen anti corruption agencies and build capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the country (Daily Independent online, August 29, 2013), through continuous training. In this sense, capacity building both for the regulators and role players is necessary.

By the above facts, the purpose of a knowledge-based empowerment programme would be to transform an ignorant situation to a situation built on knowledge rallied from solid investigations. In planning poverty alleviation and empowerment therefore, concerned institutions must base their actions and decisions on concrete and verifiable facts and data. Here experience is highly desirable and knowledge of open and available options would ipso facto be required to carry out a successful programme planning and implementation. Experience as said, will guide empowerment administrators to consider genuine performance evaluation applications.

DISCORDANCE OF PURPOSE IN NDE AND NAPEP

The quality of people who form the administrative clique of any institution in Nigeria today, is not an issue to call to mind. It no longer matters if a person from the faculty of Humanities ends up becoming a health or finance director. And since merit no longer fits in our senses, what should be of essence therefore, is the need to constantly put service providing institutions to scrutiny. This is with the intention to query their ingenuity and sincerity and put their commitment to knowledge-based planning, to task.

The necessity to cross-check the validity of an institution's planning data, provides the hope to keep empowerment institutions to their chores. However, dearth of planning, coordination and proper evaluation in the activities of these institutions has become a serious conundrum, and leaves much to be desired. This and other factors like corruption, lack of funding etc, form the stifling conditions under which previous empowerment programmes and projects

thrived. Programmes such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), People's bank, Better Life for Rural Women, Community Bank, Family Support Programme, DFRRI, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) lacked innovative drive for sustainable poverty eradication. Many of these responses to poverty reduction appeared to be ad-hoc, uncoordinated and more or less firebrigade (NEEDS Document, 2004), which explains their failure and ofcourse the current stage of unemployment in Nigeria.

Today, neither NDE nor NAPEP has been able to exonerate and or isolate itself from these phenomena. The mandate of the NDE established in November 22, 1986, was to create employment with emphasis on self-reliance and entrepreneurship in Agriculture and small-scale industries. As part of it's programmes, the institution took up the training of unemployed youths inside small-scale enterprises, akin to the normal traditional apprenticeship arrangement. The training as Adam (1994,) posits, was designed to equip trainees with practical workshop skills and basic vocational theory to enhance all round knowledge.

However, as she opined in her investigation understudied, the NDE failed to develop the necessary criteria for the basic level of equipment in an enterprise. It also failed to ascertain the trainers' standard of qualification to determine whether adequate training could be provided. The vocational skill development officers charged with supervision and coordination of training activities never got to work properly. Consequently, there was no control to determine whether the relation between the recruitment of trainees and facilities offered was in the right proportion. Again, the general lack of supervision opened the gate wide to corruption. The NDE's drive therefore, lacked innovativeness and responsiveness, which are necessary and fundamental administrative features. As a result, it adopted a chaotic programme implementation that did not follow guidelines and ended up causing a lot of suspicion concerning the proper allocation of the NDE funds.

NAPEP as a core poverty eradication agency of government was established in January, 2001, with the charge to coordinate and monitor all poverty eradication activities in Nigeria. It was designed to cover the gap by entervening in critical areas for the empowerment of the poor as to improve their living conditions (NAPEP, July 12, 2013). The agency was created to also

ensure mass participation of very poor Nigerians in the economic development process and to implement the Social Safety Nets programmes in Nigeria.

Regrettably, at the centre of the failure of NAPEP, are the same factors that defied the NDE efforts to deal with youth and gender empowerment issues. Comprehensively, Ojimele (2012) has listed such factors to include; social exclusion (lack of participation in their conception by beneficiaries), lack of political will, corruption and bureaucratic bottlenecks. Others are lack of defined policy framework with proper guidelines for poverty alleviation, interference and lack of continuity etc.

Above all, breach of operational guidelines and corruption had characterized NAPEP's operation that it is in doubt the extent to which an expanded knowledge and experience can aid performance in the face of such endemic corruption. According to the Senate Committee Investigation Report (2009) on NAPEP activities between 2001 and 2009, the operational guidelines, terms and conditions were mostly observed in breach. Again it was discovered in some states that NAPEP officials used their influence to approve for themselves directly or through their cronies amounts, which they used with no intention to repay. The report also recorded diversion of funds meant for certain beneficiaries, to others, thus making fund recovery impossible. Cases abound of partial release of funds, lack of proper monitoring and evaluation by NAPEP, political patronage with NAPEP funds, use of unfit micro-finance institutions and in some cases, skewing the relationship between NAPEP and some banks in favour of the banks etc.

Corroborating this 'dog's life' experience in NAPEP, Agbiokoro (2010) declared that out of about N24 billion received by NAPEP from 2001 till date, poverty level seems to be unresponsive to these windfall. He opined that the rate of unemployment and by extension poverty situation in Nigeria, has exacerbated. This was attributed to the deterioration in fiscal discipline, corruption and policy inconsistency in NAPEP, which had also undermined past efforts.

The above operational discrepancy in NDE and NAPEP has left the Nigeria poverty situation in bad shape. According to the World Bank's Nigeria Economic Report (May, 2013), economic growth has not brought about enhanced job creation or poverty alleviation.

Unemployment rate has progressively risen from 12% of the working age population in 2006 to 21% in 2010 and 24% in 2011 with an expectation of continued upward progression in 2012 and beyond. However another statistical account affirms that unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 23.90% in 2011 from 21.10% in 2010. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2013), Nigeria unemployment rate averaged 14.60% from 2006 until 2011, reaching an all time high of 23.90% in December of 2011 and a record low of 5.30% in December of 2006. This ofcourse measures the number of people actively looking for a job as a percentage of the labour force.



Source: www.Tradingeconomics.com

The above reports indicate that, while the officially reported growth rate of GDP subsists, poverty reduction and job creation have not kept pace with population growth, implying social distress for an increasing number of Nigerians.

Building institutional capacity by way of improving the administrative and management capacity of poverty alleviation institutions has therefore become an important step towards the poverty reduction and job creation process. The International Monetary Fund (2002) listed efforts at enhancing the role of capacity-building in poverty reduction to include the following;

- improving the ability of empowerment officials to collect the statistical information needed for effective policy implementation,
- having the skill to effectively plan government expenditure and delivery of public service at all levels.

These are the capacities the management of NDE, NAPEP and indeed other empowerment institutions need to effect proper supervision, monitoring and evaluation of poverty alleviation programmes. Improvements in statistical capacity are particularly crucial for better poverty and social impact analysis and to facilitate more effective monitoring of progress of empowerment efforts (IMF, 2002a).

Therefore, a fall-back on the concept of knowledge-based planning becomes necessary in the case of NDE and NAPEP. Besides Ojimele (2012a) argues, how can you fight that which extent you do not know? In other words, how do you alleviate poverty, when you have not defined the threshold of poverty, when you have not taken the census of the poor and when you excluded them from the design and implementation of the scheme intended for them?. Where these concerns form a positive image in the minds of empowerment planners, then it turns to a case of 'known unknown', which is capable of dragging planners back to the drawing board.

CONCLUSION

In Nigeria, efforts have been made to improve human development through different past programmes, which flopped and yielded no positive results. Currently also it is observed that the Nigerian government is posting records of economic growth, which disjunctively speaking, has in no way or manner translated to improved welfare for the people.

Counting the opportunities wasted by NDE and NAPEP, it becomes right for empowerment planners to follow the path of discipline, commitment and sound-minded effort. This is because the two reviewed institutions have been diagnosed of corruption, lack of proper planning and of not acting 'by the book'. Ignorance and incompetence has spelt their activities to the extent that monitoring and evaluation, which are normal procedural strategies are disregarded and the situation becomes a case of 'anything goes'. This has unfortunately resulted to a low level of human development and unstable socio-political environment.

THE WAY FORWARD

Indeed the Nigerian economy needs thoroughly planned and delivered empowerment scheme as necessary hang-on spring to uplift the development stage and maintain a stable socio-political environment. The government must at all cost avoid the practice of recycling 'dead

woods' (public officials), who are bereft of new and strategic ideas to successfully run empowerment programmes. Re-aligning the management of NDE, NAPEP and other poverty alleviation programmes to the knowledge-based empowerment model will improve insourcing of data gathering and analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation strategies. This will re-inforce a link between learning, planning and programme execution. The government should of necessity, review the code of conduct guiding role players to urgently bring about discipline and strict observance of rules of engagement and as much de-emphasize playing politics with such serious issues as unemployment and poverty.

A properly executed empowerment programme would take people off the streets and make them productive. Through a well modelled empowerment programme, idle youths who would have been recruited to destabilize the State would be working, and adding to economic growth and development, while stability of the State also goes unchallenged. Therefore, in Nigeria where unemployment and poverty has reached crisis level, it is necessary that empowerment efforts must be placed in the hands of the very 'cream of the crop'. Above all, government must initiate vibrant economic policies and programmes capable of creating more employment opportunities and/or encouraging self employment among the teeming unemployed Nigerian women and youths.

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