



# Youth Empowerment: The Key Solution to Nigerian Security Challenges

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## Abstract

There is no doubt that fact that insecurity has been one of the major concerns to both past and present governments in Nigeria. This is as a result of the Nigerian history and development challenges that have been continuously rooted in conflicts and instability. Various governments have made several efforts aimed at addressing the situation ranging from the creation of various security agencies and several reforms of the existing ones as well as various forms of youth empowerment, yet the security challenges continued. Therefore, the objective of this study is to find out if the rate of unemployment and lack of youth empowerment in the country especially in the Federal Capital Territory is the reason why the country has continued to remain unsafe for the citizens. The study was anchored on human security theory as its point of departure while quantitative research design which made use of the survey method was employed to accomplish the purpose of the study. The data for the study were generated through structured questionnaire items and focus group discussions. 400 respondents were purposively selected from the study area. Three points Likert-type scale was employed in data collection and to measure the magnitude of the responses. Data collected were analyzed using percentages. The findings show that youth unemployment and lack of empowerment as well as the character of the Nigerian state are the major causes of insecurity in Nigeria. It equally shows that the government has not made serious efforts to address the unemployment rate and acquisition of skills, especially for the youths. The paper, therefore, recommends among others that governments at all levels should empower the youths a productive and skills manpower development as a security measure. Also, the government should empower the youth through a soft loan to enable them to start some businesses of their own, while the government continues to monitor the beneficiaries, offering them advice and guidance where necessary.

**Key Words:** Security Challenges, Youths Empowerment, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria.

## Introduction

There is no doubt the fact that nation-states the world over have had a fair share of security challenges, whether developed or developing. In developed nations such as France, the United States of America, Britain, Germany and a number of other such superpower countries, an entourage of insecurity concerns have been experienced. They include, but not limited to terrorism, youth restiveness, political crisis/violence attacks (as in the case of

recent killings at Robb Elementary School in the southwestern Texas town of Uvalde on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022), drug peddling such as narcotics and cocaine, gun-running, amongst under-aged children in high schools, alcohol addictions, gangsterism, and so on. These forms of criminal acts have had to unfold economic, social, behavioral, and political implications not only on the victims of the crime but also on the nation at large.

In the Third World context, and specifically in the Nigerian case study, security has eluded us as a people. From historical facts, quite a number of security challenges have been witnessed; from local tribal wars to the fight against colonial conquest; a fight that ensued, for example, between the British colonizers and their opposing subjects. The case of the incursion of the Lagos Colony by British overlords as well as the annexation of the Lagos Empire around 1861 remains fresh in our memory. Unarguably, it can be said that the events that occurred during the pre-independence days have helped to shape the contemporary epoch. From the extant works of Tsuwa, Ikyase, and Nwagbo (2018), Nigeria appears to have graduated to a level of sophistication in terms of insecurity. In recent times, the nation has witnessed increasing rates of terrorism, insurgency, communal conflicts, rape, herders-farmers clashes, and very recently, kidnapping. The latter has taken a new dimension where several school children have been whisked away in droves around states like Yobe, Borno, Katsina and Niger states, respectively. However, the most recent attack on Kaduna train on 28 March 2022, where at least eight passengers were reported to have been killed in the incident and 168 others were kidnapped or declared missing is still very fresh in the minds of Nigerians. Similarly, an attack on St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church Owo on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022, which left more than 40 people dead and several others injured, is a case in point.

In the Federal Capital Territory, the case is not different, prompting Olawale and Kingsley (2021) to opine that most people sleep with one eye open as those who escape burglars, kidnapping, and other security threats are kept awake all night by booming sounds of gunshots. Inside the capital territory, car vandals is on the increase on a daily basis as motorists lose their car batteries, windscreen, side mirrors, brain box, and tires among others to armed robbers. Those who withdraw cash from the banks are not safe, as hoodlums follow and snatch such monies from them at gunpoint even in brdaylight. Nevertheless, insecurity in Nigeria and FCT, in particular, is not a recent phenomenon as there have been various forms of insecurity. Most of this insecurity are both economically, and politically motivated and have existed for a long time. To address the economically motivated

violence and insecurity in the country and Ebonyi State in particular, various governments have come up with different initiatives aimed at curbing the menace. At the national level, the government has initiated such programmes as, Poverty Eradication Programmes, Community and Social Development Programme as well as the establishment of National Directorate of Employment and the most recent N-Power programme, while in the Federal Capital Territory, the government has been more focused in forming vigilante groups, youths Assembly, Neighborhood watch all aimed at curbing insecurity in the state. With all these efforts, available records still show that the more some of these programmes evolve, the worse the situation gets. There is no doubt that these security challenges pose serious threat to the socio-economic and political stability of Nigeria. Although several factors could have contributed to this situation, there is no doubt that lack of access to means of livelihood, illiteracy, and hopelessness among the youths have contributed immensely to the level of the present security challenges in Nigeria and FCT in particular. Young people all over the world are a critical and important segment of the society in which they live, as disciplined, focused and law-abiding youth can create a bright future for nation-building (Anasi, 2010). However, recent unemployment rate in the country as published by Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (2020) puts unemployment among young Nigerians between 15-34 years as the highest in the country, with 21.72 million or 42.5 per cent of the 29.94 young Nigerians in the labour force unemployed, while the national unemployment rate stood at 33.3 per cent as at December 2020, indicating that unemployment rate particularly among youths in Nigeria has continued to rise. The youths are the most affected groups who in turn due to frustration, resort to violence, compelling Ezeji and Okorie (1999) to argue that unemployment has become chronic and intractable and has become the brain behind youth restiveness in the country. This conforms to the popular saying that an idle mind is the devil's workshop. Most of the youth who acquired various certificates including degrees are idle and stranded, unlike in the past when acquisition of such certificates were considered as a sure ticket to a paid employment in either the public or private sectors of the economy. These angry youths take to crime as a means of survival. In the FCT, the government has not given consideration attention to youth restiveness over the years, a situation that makes the youth to seem to have been forgotten by the government thereby forcing them into social vices such as thuggery, vandalism, kidnapping among others. This development prompted Ajaegbu (2012) to argue that the problem of insecurity in Nigeria lies with the negligence of the youth by the government.

Successive administrations in Nigeria have made different efforts at curbing the menace yet, the more these efforts are made, the worse the security situation increases. While some blame the government for not doing enough to bring the situation to an end, others were of the opinion that the problem of insecurity in Nigeria and FCT in particular were as a result of the neglect of the youth by the government especially in the areas of employment. Despite these allegations, available studies gave little or no attention to the issue, especially the lackadaisical attitude or lack of political will by the government to address unemployment situation especially among the youth in FCT. This study therefore seeks to unravel the relationship between empowerment among the youth and insecurity in the FCT. In doing this, the paper is divided into eight sections with the introduction as first. The second section focuses on conceptual clarification; the third is the literature review which discusses youth empowerment as a panacea to security challenges in Nigeria, fourth section is the theoretical framework of analysis, fifth section is the methodology, while the six section is data analysis and presentation. The sixth section discusses the findings. The eight and last section is the conclusion and recommendations.

## **Conceptual Issues**

### **Youth Empowerment**

The concept of youth has attracted various interpretations that have escalated to a state of controversy. This controversy arises because of the diversity in reaching an agreement on the age bracket that should constitute the acceptable youth age. Many countries see youth as ending at the age when a person is given equal treatment under the law – often referred to as the “voting age”. In many countries, this happens when the young person is 18 years old. After this age, the young person is considered as an adult. In spite of the disparity, it is generally agreed that youth is the period that marks the physical, psychological and social transformation into adulthood. Based on this characterization, many government policies consider to include people aged 13 to 25 years old (Wyn and White, 1997). The pan-African Youth Charter (2006) on the other hand defines youth as “every human being between the ages of 15 and 30 years”. This corresponds with the English convention which classifies the period of youth as falling within the ages of 15 to 30 years (Wokocha, 2002). The peculiarity of the Nigeria situation has led to the invention of social and economic definitions, which treat youth as a thing of the mind and so admits people up to the age of 40 years and beyond. Economically, the lateness of the period

of independence for the average young Nigeria leaves them socializing in the realm of youth for as long as they remain dependent on their parents or guardians and this could be well beyond the age of 30. It is, however, pertinent to state that despite these debate, the most vital point is that, the youth are an indispensable facet of any given society. The task of developing them to enhance societal growth rests squarely on the shoulder of the state that beholds them.

On the other hand, empowerment is commonly used to refer to a widely participatory process of directed social change in a society, intended to bring about social and material advancement including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities-for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment. Therefore, empowerment means the granting of political, social or economic power to an individual or group. It is also the process of supporting a person or persons to discover and claim personal power (Zimmerman, 1995). According to Page and Czuba (1999), empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. Essentially, it is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, communities and society, by acting on issues they deem it important for self development. Empowerment may be perceived as “a process where individuals learn to see a closer correspondence between their goals and a means of how to achieve them, and a relationship between their efforts and life outcomes (Mechanic, 1991).

From the above definitions it is evident that for a person, persons or organizations to be said to have been empowered they must have the capacity to take charge of their day-to-day living. As Zimmerman (1995) put it “empowerment is both a value orientation for working in the community and a theoretical model for understanding the process and consequences of efforts to exert control and influence over decisions that affect one’s life, organizational functioning and the quality of community life”. Zimmerman emphasized that, the value orientation element of empowerment put in place or sets goals, aims, and plan of actions geared towards achieving change, while the theoretical element of empowerment presents the principles and framework for organizing individuals’ knowledge and understanding of empowerment processes. However, for empowerment schemes to be successful, empowerment programmes and projects are expected to help the target groups gain access to resources and aid essentially in the understanding of the politico-socio-economic environment within

which such programmes and projects are implemented. Without such access to resources and understanding of the politico-socio-economic milieu the target groups would not be able to contribute meaningfully to the overall development of the society. To this end, youth empowerment is a process where children and young people are encouraged to take control of their lives.

## Security

The concept of security is multifaceted and hence, defied definitional unanimity. To most scholars, security is a relative concept and its usage depends largely on the ideological leanings and conviction of the user concerned. Buttressing the fact that security is contestable in its meaning and etymology, Alemika (2015) cited in Uthman (2016) opined that security concept could mean different things to different set of people. This is as a result of the fact that to Alemika, security for one group could mean some kind of insecurity to yet another group in society. So many debates have been raging in the academia about what exactly constitutes security. To a large extent, the rightist scholars have argued that security only defines a person's state of mind based on the reality of the time. Again, security could be so defined in line with one's feeling, emotions and prevailing circumstances. On the other hand, those on the left view see security as human rights. The outright contravention or fracture of the said rights by institutions of government or otherwise could be considered as security rift. Looked at from both of the two extreme perspectives, security in the view of this paper could therefore be used to mean a fair application of human fundamentals or existential each of which is capable of not only engendering a considerable amount of trust in a person in relation to society where he or she lives, but also those attributes that are disposed to allaying fears, confidence and a high sense of patriotism and nationalism in people.

## Youth Empowerment as Key Solution to Nigerians Security Challenges

It is pertinent to note that, Youth being a stage in life between adolescence and adulthood constitute large percentage of Nigeria's population however, despite their critical role in national development, it is often observed that Nigerian state has not invested seriously in youth; which in turn makes them an army involved in unprofitable activities. Analysts believed that individual insecurity, which can be financial, job, material, economic and psychological will transformed into insecurity in the society when it is not adequately addressed at the individual level.



There is no doubt the fact that the youth form the engine room of the labour force and represent the future of nation state. A vision of successful, peaceful and technologically-advanced society certainly is unrealistic in an environment where youths are not properly groomed and positioned. This is due to the fact that the energy, skills and aspirations of the youths are invaluable assets that no state can afford to misuse. Also, the youths are regarded as the bedrock of the development agenda of the country. Indeed, if Nigeria is to be sustained as a viable entity particularly as it affect high rate of insecurity, there must be a very good plan to tap that energy and resourcefulness of the youth and adequately empowered (Aiyede, 2010). Really, sustainable empowerment lies at the heart of the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) which constitute one of cardinal objectives embarked upon by the present administration of President Muhammadu Buhari when he assumed office in 2015, and regarded as a vehicle for youth empowerment among the teeming population of Nigerian youth (Chepkemi, Watindi, Cheron, Ng'isirai & Rono, 2012).

The Social Investment Programme (SIP) is a collection of schemes introduced by the Buhari government in 2016 to reduce poverty, fight hunger and contribute to general socio-economic well being of Nigerians thereby promoting social inclusion and participation in affairs of the country. The SIP covers issues in health, education/skill acquisition, economy and so on. The scheme is domiciled in the office of the Vice President and is chaired by the National Coordinator. However, it was later moved to the office of the Ministry of Humanitarian and Disaster Management and headed by Sadiya Faruq. Broken into four suites, it is Nigeria's version of Social Investment Programme (SIP) worldwide which was put in place across the globe. Therefore, the concern of this study is limited to N-Power programme which is the one of the category of National Social Investment Programme. This N-Power category is sub-divided into several arms which are; N-Power Agro, N-Power Health, N-Power Tech, N-Power Build and N-Power Tax.

As earlier stated in this study, N-power is a National Social Investment scheme introduced initiated by the Federal Government of Nigeria aimed specifically to create job for teeming population of unemployed youth in Nigeria through human capital development. In essence, one of the objectives of the programme was to boost the human capital of the Nigerian labour force (N-Power Information Guide, 2017). The human capital boost

appears to be in area of youth employment which was intended to be addressed through youth empowerment. Youth empowerment was to be ensured through skill acquisition and development of youth in critical sectors such as education, health and agriculture. The core objective of the programme seem to hinge on skills acquisition and development of the Nigerian youth, both educated and non-educated, who had minimal hope of securing jobs, even at the minimum level needed to survive or raise a family (Okoro and Bassey, 2018; N-Power Information Guide 2017). In addition, the scheme was designed to fill the unemployment gaps in the teaching profession in primary schools and to assist in taking basic education to children in remote areas, especially the marginalized communities. Furthermore, the scheme was also created to provide manpower to primary health care centers in communities that appear to be under staffed while also providing manpower in the area of agricultural business (Okoro and Bassey, 2018).

N-Power programme is one of the pack of NSIP introduced in Nigeria to help young Nigerians within 18-35 years bracket, skilled and unskilled in or out of school acquire life long skills that will assist them become great and innovative players in both domestic and global markets. Beneficiaries thereof are usually placed on a monthly stipend of thirty thousand naira (₦30,000) for a period of two years after which it elapses. The suite is divided into two main groups of graduate and non graduate categories (Onah & Olise, 2019).

However, creating empowerment for the youths is vital on many levels. Politically, empowerment opportunities give the population a stake in the peace process by providing young men and women with alternatives to violence. Economically, empowerment provides income to poor families, revives domestic demand for goods and services and stimulates overall growth. Socially, empowerment promotes social healing and improves social welfare. As a matter of fact, an idle youth could be seen as a devil's workshop in that various kinds of social vices are being identified with such youth.

Therefore, the empowerment of youth has positive implications for economic growth, political stability and national security. National security could be seen as a precondition for maintaining the survival, growth and development of a nation state.



Security challenges is made up of certain elements which include environmental challenges, economic, military security and political security. Environmental security deals with environmental issues which threaten the national security of a nation in any manner. Economic security involves the creation and protection of jobs that supply defense and non-defense needs. Also, military security implies the capability of a nation to defend itself and/or deter military aggression. Political security is about the stability of the social order (Ajaegbu, 2012).

However, in Nigeria, security challenges could be threatened when unemployed and unskilled youths are involved in conflict. Therefore, sustainable national security could be established through the creation of empowerment opportunities for the youths in all its ramifications. The present employment situation in Nigeria has its roots in the country's economic development and performance since 1960 (Akpan, 2010). At independence, agriculture was the main stay of the Nigerian economy, accounting for 71.7% of her total employment (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

Owing to overdependence on oil which was catalysed by the huge revenue accrued to it, the agricultural sector was abandoned. The consequence is increase in unemployment rate characterized by the birth of various forms of social vices which of course could transform into security challenges.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted Hyman Security Theory as its point of departure. The theory was propounded by Menon Sudha, Mary Kaldor, Kofi Anan, Thomas and Roberts. The use of human security theory though not a new concept in the social sciences can be traced back to pre-cold, cold war and post- cold war era (Menon, 2007). It is however pertinent to note that while the traditional goal of national security emphasized the defense of the state from external aggression, the major argument of human security approach is that since insecurity emanates from individuals, that security should therefore focus on individuals since it is the collective view of people that are required for national, regional and global stability. This is based on the fact that threats to human life emanate not only from situation of violent conflicts but other non-conflict sources of threat such as poverty occasioned by lack of access to means of livelihood (Aminu, et al 2015). The central concern of the theory is all about whether the individual has a job; live in dignity, access cheap food, water, education especially the youths to give chances and voices to secure their own security to life. In addition, human security theory bothered with

the protection of individuals from critical and life threatening dangers such as poverty. This development however prompted Beland (2005) to perceive human security as a condition of existence which entails basic material needs. When individuals at their productive age stay without jobs and means of livelihood, there is every tendency that they resort to available means including violent means to make the two ends meet.

Despite the importance of human security theory, its associated with series of criticisms from scholars, particularly as it failed to take note of states peculiarities in the global arena. The historical and or political developments of nations defer, and so are their systems of government. In most developing nations and especially African countries leadership failure has remained a major hindrance to the implementation of policies. The full application of the theory in Nigeria for instance will remain a mirage. The Nigerian state right from independence has been a very lucrative business for the corrupt political entrepreneurs. The Nigerian state has remained in the hands of these elites who never had the masses at hand but their own selfish interests.

However, in spite the observed shortcomings, human security theory is most appropriate for this study since most of the insecurity beseeching the country today are perpetrated by the youth who are jobless and lack adequate empowerment, which in turn becomes imperative that security should be tackled by providing protection for individuals in the areas of employment and empowerment which is the anchor of this study. Unless the leadership is able to honestly initiate, formulate and implement people oriented policies, insecurity will continue to thrive in different regions of the country.

### **Research Methodology**

The study adopted quantitative research method and applied cross sectional survey design. The study was carried out in the Federal Capital Territory where Peyi, Oshaga and Pambara communities in Bwari Area Council were selected in addition to staff of some selected institutions which include: Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Ministry of Defence, and Ministry of Sports and Youth Development, as well as some residents of Bwari Area Council. The choice of this area council was as a result of their understanding, exposure and greater knowledge of the issue under study particularly on recent hideouts in the area.

The total population of the study area is two hundred and seventy six thousand, nine hundred and nine (296,753) being the population of the three communities in Bwari Area Council and some residents Bwari metropolis while the sample size of the study is 400, applying Taro Yamene's mathematical model. The proportion allocation formula is used to determine the sample size for each targeted communities under study.

The study used primary source of data with the instrumentality of structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contained three Likert scale questions (Yes), (No), and (Undecided) which were distributed to the respondents by the researcher. The descriptive statistical analytical methods involving frequency tables were employed for data analysis.

**Table 1: Data Presentation and Analysis**

| S/N | Questionnaire Item  | Responses      |                |           |               |
|-----|---|----------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|
|     |   | Yes            | No             | Undecided | Total         |
| 1   | Federal Government has not been able to provide empowerment programmes for the youth in the Federal Capital Territory.                        | 211<br>(56.3%) | 158<br>(42.1%) | 6 (1.6%)  | 375<br>(100%) |
| 2   | Federal Government has not empowered its youth for many years now.  | 275<br>(73.3%) | 89<br>(23.7%)  | 11 (2.9%) | 375<br>(100%) |
| 3   | N-Power scheme introduced by the Federal Government has not in any way addressed poverty situation among the youth in the FCT.                | 314<br>(83.7%) | 51<br>(13.6%)  | 10 (2.7%) | 375<br>(100%) |
| 4   | There is high rate of unemployed youth in the FCT.  | 345 (%)        | 21<br>(92%)    | 9 (2.4%)  | 375<br>(100%) |
| 5   | Security challenges in the Federal Capital Territory is caused by unemployed youth.   | 205<br>(54.7%) | 157<br>(41.9%) | 13 (3.5%) | 375<br>(100%) |
| 6   | There is strong relationship between unemployed youth and security challenges in the FCT.   | 277<br>(73.9%) | 83<br>(22.1%)  | 15 (4%)   | 375<br>(100%) |
| 7   | The unemployed youth in the FCT resort to criminal activities as a survival mechanism.  | 200<br>(53.3%) | 168<br>(44.8%) | 7 (1.9%)  | 375<br>(100%) |
| 8   | Unemployed youth take to crimes as a result of frustration in the FCT.  | 266<br>(70.9%) | 100<br>(26.7%) | 9 (2.4%)  | 375<br>(100%) |
| 9   | Security challenges will be addressed in the FCT if the youth are empowered.  | 351<br>(93.6%) | 19<br>(5.1%)   | 5 (1.3%)  | 375<br>(100%) |
| 10  | There is need for the youth to engage in productive activities to curb security challenges in the FCT.  | 364<br>(97.1%) | 10<br>(2.7%)   | 1 (0.3%)  | 375<br>(100%) |
| 11  | The youth in the FCT need to be empowered to be self reliant.   | 311<br>(82.9%) | 60<br>(16%)    | 4 (1.1%)  | 375<br>(100%) |
| 12  | There is need for Federal Government to show commitment and Political will in youth empowerment as panacea for peace and security in the FCT. | 357<br>(95.2%) | 15 (4%)        | 3 (0.8%)  | 375<br>(100%) |

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Responses on item 1 in the table above shows that 211 respondents, representing 56.3% agreed that Federal Government has not been able to provide empowerment programmes for the youth in the Federal Capital Territory. 158 representing 42.1% were of the contrary view, while 6 respondents representing 6.1% were undecided. On the 2nd item, 275 (73.3%) says that there has not been any form of empowerment by the federal government of Nigeria for many years now, especially as it concerns the youth. This was followed by 89 respondents representing 23.9% of the total respondents disagreed while 11 (2.9%) declined comments. This implies that the federal government has not provided adequate empowerment platform for many years now.

On the other hand, responses to item 3 shows that, 314 respondents, representing (83.7%) agreed that N-Power scheme introduced by the Federal Government has not in any way addressed poverty situation among the youth in the FCT, 51 (13.6%) disagreed by saying no to this question, and 2.7% of the rest of the respondents were unsure. Responses on the 4th item shows that 345 (92%) agreed that there is high rate of unemployed youth in the Federal Capital Territory. 21 (5.6%) disagreed while 9 (2.4%) did not respond to the question. Also, the 5th question as contained in table above, 205 (54.7%) agreed that insecurity in the FCT is caused by unemployed youth. This was followed by 1570 respondents (41.9%) said no to this and 13 (3.5%) of them were undecided.

Furthermore, responses on item 6 shows that 277 respondents representing 73.9% of the total respondents agreed that there is strong relationship between unemployed youths and insecurity in the Federal Capital Territory. 83 (22.1%) said they have not experienced high level of poverty in the FCT while 15 (4%) of them decided not to respond to this question. Responses to item 7 shows that 200 respondents representing (53.5%) agreed that unemployed youths in the Federal Capital Territory resort to criminal activities as a survival mechanism. 168 (44.8%) disagreed to this view while 7 (1.9%) respondents were undecided.

In a similar vein, 266 respondents, representing (70.9%) agreed that unemployed youths in the FCT State take to crime out of idleness and frustration. This was followed by 100 (26.7%) who disagreed that most of the crimes committed are not out of frustration and idleness, while 9 (2.4%) of the rest of the respondents failed to respond to the question. Responses on item 9 shows that 351 representing 93.6% of the total respondents agreed that insecurity will be reduced in the Federal Capital Territory if the youths are adequately

empowered and employed particularly through various social investment schemes like N-Power. 19 (5.1%) disagreed to this view while 5 (1.3%) were undecided.

Additionally, on item 10, 364 respondents (97.1%) agreed that youth need to be engaged productively in order to enthrone security in the FCT. This view was opposed by 10 (2.7%) respondents that even some youth who are engaged are some sometimes guilty of criminal activities, while only 1 (0.3%) of them did not say anything. On item 11, 311 respondents representing 82.9% agreed that youths in the FCT need to be empowered to be self-reliant for the city to be safe. 60 (16%) disagreed with this view while 4 (1.1%) declined to respond. On the last item as contained in table above, 357 respondents representing 95.2% agreed that the Federal Government need to show commitment and political will in youths empowerment which will serve as bedrock for security in the Federal Capital Territory. This view was opposed by 15 (4%) respondents while 3 (0.8%) were undecided.

### Discussion of Findings

Attempt was made to investigate the importance of youth empowerment as a channel for addressing dynamics of security challenges in Nigeria. The survey has revealed that there is high rate of unemployed and youth in the Federal Capital Territory and these youth stay idle all day, yet they must feed and take care of some essential needs. As a survival mechanism since they have no other means of attending to their immediate, needs, these youths resorts to all sorts of criminal activities ranging from armed robbery, Kidnapping (particularly along Abuja-Kaduna road), burglary, murder, rape, violent and conflict thereby heighten security challenges in the Federal Capital City. The federal government of Nigeria has not shown much commitment and political will to tackle the problem of youth's empowerment in the FCT, as most of the approaches were based on short term benefit for the privileged few that they use as thugs during elections and recently resort to kidnapping of citizens in and around the FCT. It is on this premise that Akpan (2010) and Ajaegbu (2012) are of the opinion that youth resort to criminal activities as last option since they graduate and stay idle at home for several years coupled with the prevailing cost of living and the rate of corruption in the country to justify their actions.

Based on aforementioned, the need for the government to draw the educational curriculum to suit our local environment where students could be empowered to address the problem of youth empowerment particularly in the FCT cannot be over emphasized.

## Conclusion

Unemployment especially among the youth play a critical role in exacerbating youth's vulnerabilities and susceptibilities of becoming involved in such criminal activities such as kidnapping, violent, armed robbery, prostitution, rapping, assassination, and conflict among other vices. A good number of these youth ordinarily would not have engaged themselves in such criminal activities if they had hope of survival, but since they feel neglected and abandoned by the society without hope for tomorrow, they get frustrated in life especially after spending a lot of financial and material resources by both the parents and these youth to acquire education. Such deprivation generates depression, and could trigger aggregate psychological and physical problem, thereby forcing them to be involved in social vices. It is when the issue of engaging the youths in meaningful socio-economic activities are adequately addressed that the problem of insecurity will be solved. The elite who ought to be seeking for solution to unemployment rather see the vulnerable unemployed youth as political tools to silence their political enemies, while at the end, they surround themselves with security personnel and protect themselves from these aggrieved youth, thereby leaving the consequences of insecurity to the majority of the helpless citizens. However, with show of commitment and political will on the part of government through implementation of appropriate empowerment programmes that would enable the youth to engage themselves in productive means of livelihood after their education, the challenges of insecurity in the Federal Capital Territory will be ameliorated.

## Recommendations

In order to overcome the aforementioned challenges and adequately empower the youths, the following recommendations are pertinent:

1. As revealed in the literature, that the Social Investment Programme (SIP) is a vehicle for youth empowerment. Therefore, the N-Power programme of the Federal Government should be partnered with by the State government (mostly especially the FCT) to see that the beneficiaries actually acquire the



- knowledge and skills as designed in the programme, while also encouraging them to save part of their monthly stipend for investment in their different areas of participation during the period.
2. For the fact that it will never be possible for government to employ all the youth in the Federal Capital Territory, the government should empowerment the youth through soft loan to enable them start some businesses of their own, while the government continues to monitor the beneficiaries, offering them advice and guides where necessary.
  3. The Federal Capital Administration can as well encourage the youth to queue into the agricultural programme of the federal government by acquiring land and other farm inputs at subsidized rates as well as making tractors and other equipment available and can go further by assisting the farmers sale their produce at appreciable rate through marketing board within the confine and strength of the FCT administration.

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