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Insecurity and Unemployment: The Rivers State Experience

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Abstract

This study investigated the correlation between insecurity and unemployment in Rivers State, Nigeria. In order to direct this study, four research questions, four objectives and four hypotheses were developed. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study consisted of 1,714,189 unemployed residents of Rivers State. A total sample of 400 unemployed residents in Rivers State, aged 25 to 45 were used for this study. Stratified random sampling technique was employed for this study. The instrument titled "Unemployment and Insecurity Variables Questionnaire (UIVQ)" was used for data collection for the study. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha method was used, and the test yielded a coefficient index of α=0.87. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study revealed that there was a strong and positive significant relationship between kidnapping, arm robbery, human trafficking, and cult-related activities and unemployment in Rivers State. It was therefore recommended that the government should diversify from oil to other industries that will boost employment prospects for young adults like agriculture, ICT, communication, manufacturing, etc. Also, that counsellors should engage the youths through seminars on the negative impact of crime and counsel the youths against syndrome of get rich quick without hard work.

Keywords: unemployment, insecurity, kidnapping, human tracking, robbery

Introduction

Unemployment is a worldwide phenomenon where the eligible workforce of a country is not engaged in the service of the nation. It is a serious economic problem, but one that affects social life - directly or indirectly - almost all countries. It results in a social unrest and is the admonition of a new spate of crimes. A perennial youth unrest and an unstable socio-economic structure have also bedevilled several nations. The recent unrest in Nigeria, along with in a number of other African countries, can be attributed to the current unemployment rate and lack of employment. Nearly all parts of the world, especially developing nations, are now facing severe job challenges and widespread recent work shortages, which is a development that is able of spreading poverty.

Nigeria's alarming unemployment rate and insecurity is causing serious worry among Nigerians. In the past, youth were thought to be the leaders of the future, or leaders in waiting in anticipation of their involvement as leaders and decision makers of the long term. However, these young adults are suffocated with the danger of cultism, prostitution, kidnappings, armed robbery, and all kinds of deviant behaviour which has created a state of lawlessness or anomie in the country. You will find reports in all areas of the country of a rise in criminality and lawlessness. The current tension in many parts of the nation (including Abuja, the seat of power) can attest that the protection of life and property is no longer assured in Nigeria as several communities have given up their homes to seek refuge outside their town due to cult crisis, unknown gunmen attack, kidnapping, fear and assassination of the unknown.

Others have questioned the entire concept of the modern-day politics where human life is not assured. These days, the crisis of unemployment, poverty and leadership failure had led to the security problems which Nigerians are confronting today. Adegbie (2018) pointed out that, Nigeria's unemployment rate jumped from 18.8 % in the final quarter of 2017 to 23.1 % in the third quarter of 2018 and it is believed to reach thirty-five % in 2023. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) found that on Dec 19, 2018, the international locations in the sub- Saharan Africa are mainly struck by this particular in case and crisis these nations don't take huge step in preventing this particular issue, it could impact the development of the sub region especially Nigeria.

The National Bureau of Statistics (2020) noted that Nigerian unemployment rate remains unchanged at 27.1 percent since second quater in 2020. Unemployment remains a major concern in the country particularly affecting several school leavers and employable adults who find it difficult

to secure jobs despite the abundant resource in the country. Furthermore, unemployment among the youth is perceived as one of the key ingredients that influence Nigerian youths to join rebel movements and militia. Similarly, a study by Makinde and Adegbami (2019) argued that idle youths in Nigeria are a potential threat to themselves and their environment. The study emphasized a number of factors that limit youth absorption into the labour market such as: insufficient labour demands; incoherent government policy; lack of sound legal and regulatory framework and absence of vocational and educational opportunities which generally create long-term unemployment, social exclusion and marginalization, particularly in urban areas where a person's social status is associated with his/her career. The study further added that youth marginalization and exclusion from the labour market can cause frustration and desperation that eventually incite youths to become violent and unresponsive, hence causing insecurity.

Security is a state of being free from danger or threat. Security is the degree of protection to safeguard a nation, union of nations, person or persons against danger or damage. National Security is therefore the requirement to maintain the survival of the State, through the use of economic diplomacy, power projection and political power. National Security can be explained as the public policy of maintaining integrity and survival of the Nation State through the use of economic, military and political power or the exercise of diplomacy in times of peace or war (Nwagboso, 2013).

Youth unemployment in Nigeria continues to threaten peace and security in the country. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2017), unemployment has led to lack of inclusive growth and reduced absorption and participation of youths in the labour market. Insecurity in Nigeria is caused by frustration as a result of unemployment and lack of regular salaries for people working with the government. In addition, the Survey points that lack of job opportunities for urban youth is a leading cause of increased cases of gang activity in the major cities in Nigeria. Some of the unemployed youths have also been involved in crimes and other "unpalatable economic activities". For instance, unemployed youths do engage in prostituting, thuggery, hooliganism, pickpocketing, drugs addicting and peddling, armed robbery or even hired killers, hence, fit to be used as tools in the hands of politicians to achieve their inordinate goals.

Adegbie (2018) stated that, widespread crime and insecurity in Nigeria is caused by many factors that include ethnic violence, political unrest and economic deprivation such as unemployment that result to extortions at gunpoint and violent crimes by many of the unemployed. They further revealed that due to the porous borders, the population has easy access and knowledge of weapons. It is common to hear the sounds of gunfire particularly at night. Nonetheless, crime threats and violent crimes such as murder, armed robbery, burglary and non-violent thefts are pervasive. On the other hand, outside the capital cities, road ambushes and banditry are fairly common and often involves violence. However such crimes mostly affect the local population living in the outskirts of the

cities. As of today it is not surprising that no area of Nigeria is immune to crime and often neighbourhoods where wealthy government officials, business professionals, Non-Governmental Organization staff, and foreign diplomats live are particularly targeted by criminals (Adegbie, 2018).

The current state of insecurity and unemployment in Nigeria is worrisome given the increased rate at which innocent individuals fall into the hands of criminals in Nigeria, because religious leaders, kids of political elites as well as the weakest class have all fallen victim to this menace. Every day in Nigeria, there are reports of unknown gunmen kidnapping innocent citizens and taking their lives. Who do these gunmen belong to? Can they be unusual individuals in a typical population? Are they familiar to us? The rhetorical questions might not require answers, but it is disturbing that Nigeria remains a polluted state, despite billions of naira being voted for safety by the state and the federal and local governments.

Ahmadu (2018) argued that the peace, survival and tranquillity of a nation is linked to the manner by which the federal government implements a programme of measures to bring down the unemployment rate and decrease the numbers of willing adult and youths that are the basic resources used in insurgent activities. Due to the abundance of natural and material resources that providence places at its disposal, Nigeria has no business with unemployment or poverty. The opponents of this particular insurgent act used unemployment and or maybe poverty, and those are the direct ingredients of this fundamental weapon to blackmail their followers into submission. And so goes the African adage, "A hungry person is an angry man." most people therefore give in to the proposition of the insurgent matter. In particular, the government has a crucial and crucial role to play in bringing down poverty and unemployment among its citizens to the barest minimum. A nation that is well fed is peaceful. The insurgency cost our country dearly in terms of lives lost and material resources. Budget allocations intended for the wellbeing of the citizens are allocated for military equipment as security votes to the detriment of various other areas of the economy as education, health care, agricultural expenditures and the development of infrastructural facilities (Ahmadu, 2018).

The present pattern of unemployment and insurgency that is ravaging the Nigerian state, have been argued by Castaneda, Serrani and Sperotti (2016), that it's a direct indictment of all of us and our government past and present. The resurgence of violence and all kinds of insecurity in Nigeria, especially in Ogoni (in the River State), Abuja- Kaduna highway, North East and South East, leading to kidnappings, unknown gunmen, the killing and cult clashes of dozens of people. The recent spate of violence in the country, particularly in the Niger Delta, the South East & the North East, has created a great deal of stress in the towns. The wanton destruction of people’s lives and kidnapping can't be equated with atonement for just about any grievance we might wish to address, as it is now canvassed by the fresh insurrectionist groups in Nigeria. Increasing cases of murder and piracy in the

rivers, cult related killings, vandalism of pipelines, kidnappings and assaults on people both military (or maybe unknown security personnel) and civilian is dishonouring the dignity of the victims, their families, plus an incalculable damage to the country as a whole.

These developments provide civil society organizations a great deal of concern as work has been put for over 15 years to support peaceful resolution of insecurity and unemployment within Nigeria appears to be squandered efforts. We recognize and acknowledge that the root causes of insecurity have not been addressed in Nigeria. Bursik and Harold (2013), Retrogression into the recent past where armed conflict has led to the waste of human lives can stop being an answer at this point or any other time.

Chukwudi and Ugbomah (2022) examined insecurity and unemployment in Nigeria: an evaluation of Rivers State. Researchers looked into Insecurity and Unemployment in Nigeria. Rivers State.. The number of people in the study was 6,985 unemployed youngsters from Obio / Akpor and Port Harcourt Local Government Areas. The study adopted correlational research approach. The instrument titled "Unemployment and Insecurity in Nigeria (UIN)" as the method of collecting data. The study found that unemployment is the main reason for the insecurity in Rivers State.

Gongs, Famave, Maxwell, Annagu (2021) investigated factors influencing kidnapping in the Shendam Local Government Area of the Plateau State, Nigeria. The study used a cross sectional quantitative survey approach to figure out factors influencing kidnapping by using a clustered random sampling technique of residents in Shendam. For data collection, questionnaires were used. Of the 400 questionnaires administered, 374 were retrieved (93.5 %) for analysis and hypothesis testing. The survey results showed that 69.0 % of the sample of respondents believed that kidnapping was influenced by unemployment. The survey results also showed that 62.6 % of respondents observed that the pattern of abduction tends to rapt on travellers. As much as 78.1 % opined that abductor targeted wealthy and wealthy victims. Of those surveyed, 37.4 % said kidnapping amounts were high and 74.6 % said abductors capture particularly targets in remote towns. As a solution to kidnapping, 64.4 % referred to employment and empowerment. The outcome of the hypothesis test indicated that X2 (2, 374) = 8.860, p =, 012.

Gbenemene and Eric (2017) examined the link between the unemployed and armed robbery in Port Harcourt City (2000-2010). This study concentrates on the escalating unemployment rate and armed robbery in the Port Harcourt City, particularly between 2000-2010. A sample frame of 3771 persons was randomly selected for a survey of 300 registered unemployed people and 100 convicted gun robbers. The finding revealed a correlation between armed robbery, peer pressure, religious integration, level of education, family background, and unemployment.

John (2019). The role that unemployment plays. He noted that unemployment is the factor that most facilitates human trafficking in developing countries like Rwanda. Findings

showed that R = 0.30 and R-square = 0.09, that is a strong link between the dependent variable and the independent variable. The importance of F statistic is 0.000, under 0.05. This implies that the null hypothesis is thrown out and concludes that there is a connection between human trafficking and unemployment. The proposed model suggests that unemployment (Beta = 0.257) was probably the most crucial in affecting human trafficking, and the Y intercept is 1.476, so the model can be written as: Y = 1.476 0.257X. According to the report, Human trafficking is prevalent in Rwanda in the form of sexual exploitation and labour. In order to bring down unemployment and thus human trafficking, the federal government of Rwanda must create additional jobs.

Nwabueze and Maduawuchi (2020) examined the Community crisis (cultism) and development difficulties in Ibaa Community in the Rivers State of Nigeria (2008-2019). This research aims at evaluating community crisis and development from 2008 to 2019 in Ibaa community of Rivers State. Three questions were adopted in the paper that served as a guide for the study. In addition, the research design utilized for this study was descriptive. This design is used to handle all issues applicable to the research. The study used both secondary and primary data sources. The research location is Ibaa area. The in-depth interview was utilized as the primary data source. The findings of the study demonstrate that the community crisis has contributed to development difficulties in the Ibaa community. The study also showed that the sources of community crisis are focused on leadership failure, cult related activities, chieftaincy tussles and poverty. Through its recommendations, the study concludes that government must do the necessary to bring down insecurity and that government must guarantee quality leadership among other things.

Statement of Problem

In Nigeria there's high rate of poverty, leadership failure and unemployment. The majority of the citizens have little trust in the government and political structure. Some Nigerians sought asylum in Europe, America, Asia, as well as some African nations. Some abandoned their communities and moved for safety to other communities in the country, countries and or internally displaced persons 'camps (IDP). Nigeria is a large state densely populated with a lot of unemployed individuals, and that has given rise to various insecurity issues like militancy in the south, particularly in the Niger Delta area, unknown gunmen in the south East, Boko Haram insurgency in the North, kidnappings, cult clashes, armed robbery attacks, and so on. In this context, researchers sought to examine the connection between insecurity and unemployment in Nigeria, using the Rivers State case study as a model.

Aim and Objectives

This study is aimed at investigating the correlation between unemployment and insecurity in Rivers State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine the relationship between increasing cases of kidnapping and unemployment in Rivers State.
2. Investigate the relationship between increasing cases of human trafficking and unemployment in Rivers State.
3. Determine the relationship between increasing cases of arm robbery and unemployment in Rivers State.
4. Ascertain the relationship between increasing cases of cult-related activities and unemployment in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What the relationship between increasing cases of kidnapping and unemployment in Rivers State?
2. What the relationship between increasing of human trafficking and unemployment in Rivers State?
3. What the relationship between increasing cases of arm robbery and unemployment in Rivers State?
4. What the relationship between increasing cases of cult-related activities and unemployment in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between increasing cases of kidnapping and unemployment in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between increasing cases of human trafficking and unemployment in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant relationship between increasing cases of arm robbery and unemployment in Rivers State.
4. There is no significant relationship between increasing cases of cult-related activities and unemployment in Rivers State.

Methodology

The research design for this study is correlational research design. Correlation is necessary because this design measures the relationship between two variables as it studies whether an increase or decrease in one variable corresponds to an increase or decrease in the other variable hence the study adopted it. Maduabum (2018) described correlational design as a type of research design that determines the relationship that exists between variables. Onunkwo in Ogidi (2018) defined correlation as a statistical tool used to determine the level of relationship between two variables, and among three or more variables. The population of the study is 1,714,189 unemployed residents of Rivers State. (**Source:** National Bureau of Statistics, 2024 Statistical Bulletin).

A total sample of 400 unemployed residents in Rivers State were used for this study. Taro Yamene's sample size determination formula was used to obtain this sample. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 400 unemployed residents in the study area. The instrument utilized for this particular study was a self-designed questionnaire titled "Unemployment and Insecurity Variables Questionnaire (UIVQ)". The instrument consisted of 30 items that had been created by the researchers. The instrument was built making use of a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed that had been scored as four, 2, 3, plus one point respectively. The instrument was validated by specialists in Measurement and Evaluation. The instrument (UIVQ) was tested for reliability through Cronbach Alpha method, with a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = 0.87$, ascertained through the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic.

Approval was granted from the neighbourhood chiefs prior to the administration of the tools on the inhabitants within the selected communities in Rivers State. The total of 400 copies of the questionnaire (UIVQ) administered and 400 copies retrieved were properly filled, and thus used for further analysis. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical tool was used to answer the research questions and also used to test the null hypotheses at $\alpha=0.05$ alpha degree of significance. The PPMC statistical tool was used because the information acquired was an interval data.

Result

Research Question 1: What the relationship between increasing cases of kidnapping cases and unemployment in Rivers State?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between increasing cases of kidnapping and unemployment in Rivers State.

Table 1: PPMC Analysis (r) of the Relationship between Increasing Cases of Kidnapping and Unemployment in Rivers State

Correlations			
		Kidnapping	**Unemployment**
Kidnapping	Pearson Correlation	1	.988**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Unemployment	Pearson Correlation	.988**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

**. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Data in table 1 shows that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between increasing cases of kidnapping and unemployment is r = 0.988. This implies that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between increasing cases of kidnapping and unemployment in Rivers State. It also means that the increase in unemployment association tends to increase kidnapping cases. Since p< .05, the null hypothesis one was rejected (r = 0.988; p = 0.000).

Research Question 2: What the relationship between increasing cases of human trafficking and unemployment in Rivers State?

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between increasing cases of human trafficking and unemployment in Rivers State.

Table 2: PPMC Analysis (r) of the Relationship between Increasing Cases of Human Traffacking and Unemployment in Rivers State.

Correlations			
		Human Trafficking	**Unemployment**
Human Trafficking	Pearson Correlation	1	.972**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Unemployment	Pearson Correlation	.972**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

**. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Data in table 2 shows that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between increasing cases of human trafficking and unemployment is r = 0.972. This implies that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between increase cases of human trafficking and unemployment in Rivers State. It also means that the increase in unemployment association tends to increase human trafficking cases. Since p< .05, the null hypothesis two was rejected (r = 0.972; p = 0.000).

Research Question 3: What the relationship between increasing cases of arm robbery and unemployment in Rivers State?

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between increasing cases of arm robbery and unemployment in Rivers State.

Table 3: PPMC Analysis (r) of the Relationship between Increasing Cases of Arm Robbery and Unemployment in Rivers State

Correlations			
		Arm Robbery	**Unemployment**
Arm Robbery	Pearson Correlation	1	.994**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Unemployment	Pearson Correlation	.994**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

**. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Data in table 3 shows that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between increase cases of arm robbery cases and unemployment is r = 0.994. This implies that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between increase cases of arm robbery and unemployment in Rivers State. It also means that the increase in unemployment association tends to increase arm robbery cases. Since p< .05, the null hypothesis three was rejected (r = 0.994; p = 0.000).

Research Question 4: What the relationship between increasing cases of cult-related activities and unemployment in Rivers State?

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between increasing cases of cult-related activities and unemployment in Rivers State.

Table 4: PPMC Analysis (r) of the Relationship between Increasing Cases of Cult-Related and Unemployment in Rivers State

Correlations			
		Cult-Related	**Unemployment**
Cult-Related	Pearson Correlation	1	.987**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Unemployment	Pearson Correlation	.987**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400

**. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Data in table 4 shows that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between increase in cult-related activities and unemployment is r = 0.987. This implies that there

is a strong and positive significant relationship between unemployment and increase in cult-related activities in Rivers State. It also means that the increase in unemployment association tends to increase cult-related activities in Rivers State. Since p< .05, the null hypothesis four was rejected (r = 0.987; p = 0.000).

Discussions

Kidnapping and Unemployment in Rivers State

The above objective one was verified on the basis of the first research question and additionally analyzed against the first hypothesis. To answer this question, the items 1-5 of the questionnaire in the section B were carefully constructed. Data in Table 1 demonstrate that there is a substantial relationship between increase in kidnappings and unemployment in Rivers State (F = r = 0.988; p = 0.000). Since the p value is below 0.05, it suggests that the relationship at the 0.05 degree of significance is very positive and significant; therefore the null hypothesis one was rejected. The present study concurred with the finding of Gongs, Famave, Annagu and Maxwell (2021), which investigated factors influencing kidnapping in the Shendam Local Government Area of the Plateau State, Nigeria. The survey found that 69.0 % of the sampled respondents believed that kidnapping by unemployment youths was influenced by unemployment.

Human Trafficking and Unemployment in Rivers State

Research question two and tested hypothesis two were used to verify the above. To answer this question, the items 6 - 12 were very carefully constructed in the B portion of the questionnaire. Data in Table 2 revealed that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between increase in kidnapping cases and unemployment in Rivers State. It also means that the increase in unemployment tends to increase kidnapping cases. Since p< .05, the null hypothesis two was rejected (r = 0.988; p = 0.000). The finding of present study is in agreement with the finding by John (2019), which determined the prevalence of human trafficking in Rwanda: The role that unemployment plays. The study showed that unemployment and human trafficking have a positive significant relationship.

Arm Robbery and Unemployment in Rivers State

Research question three and tested hypothesis three were used to verify the above. In order to answer this question, the items 12-17 of the questionnaire were thoroughly constructed in the section B. Data in Table 3 shows that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between increase in human trafficking and unemployment in Rivers State. It also means that the increase in unemployment tends to increase human trafficking cases. Since p< .05, the null hypothesis three was rejected (r = 0.972; p = 0.000). The finding of the present study in agreement with the finding of Eric and Gbenemene (2017), confirmed the link between the unemployed and armed robbery in Port Harcourt City (2000-2010).

The results showed that there is a correlation among armed robbery, peer pressure, religious integration, family background, unemployment and level of education.

Cult Related Activities and Unemployment in Rivers State

Research question four and tested hypothesis four has been utilized to verify the above. The items 18-22 of the questionnaire in the section B had been carefully created to answer the question. Data Table 4 indicate that there is a strong and positive significant relationship between increase in arm robbery cases and unemployment in Rivers State. It also means that the increase in unemployment tends to increase arm robbery cases in Rivers State. Since $p < .05$, the null hypothesis four was rejected ($r = 0.994$; $p = 0.000$). The result of the current study is in agreement with the conclusion of Godbless (2019) who carried out an investigation on cultism and its consequences on human development: A case analysis of the Rivers State coming from (2003-2019) Also, it was discovered that there is a link between cultism and the acquisition of wealth. Also, there was a significant connection between cultism and political patronage/ appointment. It was additionally discovered that the higher the cult-related activities, the higher the rate of death and also destruction of business activities in Rivers State.

Conclusion

The study investigated insecurity and unemployment: the Rivers State experience. However, the findings of the study indicated that there was a substantial relationship between increase in kidnappings and unemployment in Rivers, that there was a strong and positive significant relationship between increase in kidnapping cases and unemployment in Rivers State, there was a strong and positive significant relationship between increase in human trafficking cases and unemployment in Rivers State and there was a strong and positive significant relationship between increase in arm robbery cases unemployment in Rivers State. The implication of this result is the unemployment is main reason for the high rate of insecurity in Rivers State and Nigeria at large.

The worldwide distribution of kidnapping, arm robbery, human trafficking, and cult activities is consistent with the same pattern as the distribution of unemployment today. Developing nations such as Nigeria tend to be vulnerable to kidnapping, human trafficking, cult-related activities and arm robbery overlap those that suffer unemployment. Nigeria's unemployment rate has reached the point that the government needs to declare an emergency.

Implications for Counselling

1. Counsellors should organise seminars and create awareness on the dangers of “get rich quick syndrome” that has ravaged our society today.

2. Counsellors should engage NGOs and government functionaries on skills training that can make unemployable youths to be self-employed and some also employed by multinationals and companies within the state.
3. As a matter of urgency, counselling units should be established in the 23 local government councils where professional counsellors can engage our youths and counselled on a daily basis on anti-social behaviour, drug abuse and criminal activities.

Recommendations

Considering the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Diversify from oil to other industries that will boost employment prospects for young adults like agriculture, ICT, communication, manufacturing, etc.
2. Encourage self-employment by providing soft loans from government and private companies with very little or no interest.
3. Make the business environment much more favourable for foreign and local investors so that there will be an increase in employment for the youths.
4. Hold regular seminars, job shop for self-employed youths by the government and private organizations with little or no charge.

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