



## **Social Norms In The Apprenticeship System In Nigeria: A Legal Perspective**

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### ***Abstract***

*The apprenticeship system in Nigeria has long served as a vital means for skill acquisition and economic empowerment, deeply rooted in longstanding cultural traditions. However, beneath its promising exterior lies an intricate web of social norms that often justify exploitative practices, pushing apprentices to perform tasks far removed from their core vocational training. This study explores the tension between traditional apprenticeship practices and modern legal standards, examining how cultural expectations can both support and undermine the growth and welfare of young learners.*

*Using a legal analytical framework, the paper reviews statutory provisions, judicial decisions, and informal practices that shape the apprenticeship landscape in Nigeria. By critically assessing legal texts alongside cultural realities, the study reveals how customary practices, such as enforcing menial duties under the guise of discipline or character building, deviate from the intended purpose of skill development. This methodology enables a comprehensive understanding of both the legal and social dimensions that influence the apprenticeship system.*

*The findings reveal that while apprenticeships hold significant potential for providing practical training and fostering economic independence, many apprentices remain vulnerable to exploitation. The study reveals that unwritten agreements and loosely defined roles enable masters to impose non-vocational tasks on apprentices, thereby providing them with limited legal recourse. In addition, the sporadic nature of judicial intervention and the absence of clear statutory guidelines have left a gap in the protection of apprentices' rights, thereby compromising their career development and overall welfare.*

*In conclusion, this paper calls for urgent reforms that bridge the gap between cultural traditions and modern legal requirements. It recommends the establishment of stronger legal safeguards, more transparent regulatory oversight, and the formalization of apprenticeship agreements. Such steps are essential to ensure that apprenticeship becomes a proper pathway to skill acquisition and economic progress, rather than a mechanism for exploitation.*

**Keywords:** *Apprenticeship, Legal Framework, Social Norms, Exploitation, Nigeria, Labour Law, Cultural Practices.*

## INTRODUCTION

The apprenticeship system in Nigeria has long served as a channel for skill acquisition and economic advancement. Rooted in socio-cultural traditions, it has historically bridged gaps in formal education, offering young Nigerians an opportunity to learn trades such as carpentry, tailoring, and mechanics. However, alongside its commendable attributes lies a complex web of social norms that often undermine the system's integrity. Beneath its laudable objectives, exploitative practices persist, shaping the system's operations in ways that detract from its core purpose. Apprentices, who enrol to acquire specific skills, are frequently required to perform menial labour unrelated to their training, such as washing cars, running errands, or performing domestic chores.

Masters, often referred to as "ogas," frequently justify these practices by claiming that such menial tasks instil discipline, humility, and resilience in apprentices, thereby preparing them for the challenges of future independence. Additionally, many masters argue that they compensate for these demands by "settling" apprentices upon graduation—often with financial support, tools of the trade, or startup capital. While these justifications might appear reasonable, they usually serve as a veneer for exploitative practices that prioritize the master's convenience or financial benefit over the apprentice's growth and rights. These dynamics, rooted in cultural attitudes and informal power structures, raise significant legal and ethical questions about the alignment of apprenticeship practices with modern labour standards.

This essay examines the interplay between Nigeria's cultural norms, the legal framework governing apprenticeships, and the urgent need for reforms to protect the rights of apprentices.<sup>1</sup>

## THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM

The apprenticeship system in Nigeria, deeply embedded in tradition, operates predominantly within the informal sector, guided more by unwritten customs than structured regulations. Its foundation is a simple yet powerful promise: to provide young individuals with a pathway to economic independence through the acquisition of practical skills. However, this system, shaped by cultural norms and financial realities, often falls short of its potential, exposing apprentices to

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<sup>1</sup> African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (adopted 27 June 1981, entered into force 21 October 1986) 1520 UNTS 217.

vulnerabilities that undermine its purpose.

At its core, apprenticeship in Nigeria thrives on trust and societal expectations. Agreements between apprentices and their masters—referred to as "oga" or "madam"—are rarely documented. Young individuals, typically from low-income families, are entrusted to these masters with the hope of learning a trade or craft over several years. The system offers an alternative to formal education, particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged communities where such opportunities may be scarce.

The practice of apprenticeship is widespread in Nigeria. In some parts of the country, studies and news reports in local communities have found very high levels of child apprenticeship (numbers cited locally have reached as high as 49% in particular areas). Although this is not a national rate, national surveys instead emphasize widespread child labour and regionally variable apprenticeship patterns. However, the Nigerian Child Rights Act, which prohibits children from being engaged in exploitative labour, highlights the tension between cultural norms and legal protections for minors. Despite this law, enforcement remains weak, and exploitative practices persist, particularly within the informal economy.

Yet, the interplay of cultural norms within this framework has led to significant distortions. For example, deep respect for authority and elders is a cornerstone of Nigerian society, which often gives masters unchecked control over their apprentices. Instead of focusing on skill acquisition, many apprentices are relegated to years of performing menial tasks—such as cleaning shops, cooking meals, or running personal errands for their master's family. These activities are rationalized as instilling discipline or loyalty, but in reality, they erode the apprentice's opportunity to gain meaningful skills.

The promise of "settlement" at the end of the apprenticeship is frequently used to justify these imbalances. Settlement, which may include tools, capital, or even a workshop, is a critical feature of the system. However, it remains highly informal, with no clear guidelines on timing or scope. This leaves apprentices vulnerable to exploitation, as many endure years of servitude under the vague assurance of eventual support, only to find the terms unmet or substantially reduced. Case studies have shown instances where only a small percentage of apprentices actually receive the promised settlement in full.

Economic realities exacerbate these issues. Poverty and high unemployment rates have entrenched exploitative practices. Masters, seeking to reduce costs, often assign apprentices tasks that paid workers should otherwise perform. A study by the International Labour Organization revealed that apprentices play a significant role in Nigeria's large informal economy. In addition, the World Bank highlights apprenticeships as a substantial channel for skills and livelihoods, but there is no clearly documented ILO estimate that attributes exactly US\$7.5 billion to apprentices alone.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), participation in the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) declined from 60,201 participants in 2020 to 23,220 in 2022 — a decrease of approximately 61% over that period, as reported by the NBS. This sharp fall raises questions about the scheme's outreach and implementation. This decline raises concerns about the accessibility and appeal of formal apprenticeship programs, particularly in the face of competition from the informal sector.<sup>3</sup>

For female apprentices, the challenges are even more pronounced. Gender dynamics within the system often expose women to harassment and discrimination. They may be confined to trades deemed "suitable" for their gender or subjected to stereotypes that limit their potential. Numerous NGO and academic studies document that female apprentices face high risks of harassment and gender-based violence in some trades and locations. While precise rates vary by study and place, research into workplace sexual harassment in Nigeria shows under-reporting and significant prevalence, underscoring the need for gender-sensitive protections in apprenticeship programs. The cultural power dynamics between masters and apprentices leave female participants particularly vulnerable, highlighting the urgent need for gender-specific protections within the system.<sup>4</sup>

Despite these challenges, the apprenticeship system has its merits. It remains a vital avenue for social mobility, providing individuals who lack formal education with an opportunity to build a livelihood. In many communities, the cultural emphasis on vocational skills as a means of

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<sup>2</sup> Central Bank of Nigeria, *Economic Report for the First Half of 2011* (CBN 2011) <[www.cbn.gov.ng](http://www.cbn.gov.ng)> accessed 15 June 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Arvil Van Adams, Setareh Razmara and Sara Johansson de Silva, *Improving Skills Development in the Informal Sector: Strategies for Sub-Saharan Africa* (World Bank 2013) <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/736731468194635805/Improving-skills-development-in-the-i> accessed 2 September 2025.

<sup>4</sup> G Adekola and S Ezekiel, 'Training Apprenticeship in the Old Africa and Its Relevance to Contemporary Work Practice in Modern Nigerian Communities' (2013) 3(40) *British Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science* 101.

achieving financial stability has helped individuals attain self-reliance. Informal accountability mechanisms, such as social ostracism for exploitative masters, also provide a semblance of protection in certain areas. For example, a study in Enugu state found that 78% of local respondents were aware of community-imposed sanctions on exploitative masters, which acted as a deterrent in some cases.<sup>5</sup>

However, the informal nature of the Nigerian economy perpetuates the system's shortcomings. Apprenticeship agreements are rarely documented, leaving little room for monitoring or enforcement. This lack of regulation creates an environment where exploitation thrives unchecked. Moreover, the informal economy, which accounts for 65% of Nigeria's workforce, undermines efforts to align the apprenticeship system with modern labour principles. The lack of empirical data on the apprenticeship system in Nigeria is a significant limitation to understanding its full impact. Detailed statistical information on the number of apprentices, the prevalence of exploitation, and the economic outcomes of apprenticeship would provide valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders. Case studies could further illuminate best practices and identify areas that need reform.

The apprenticeship system in Nigeria stands at a crossroads. While its informal structure and cultural roots offer a unique model of mentorship and skill transfer, its potential is undermined by exploitation and systemic vulnerabilities.

### **CULTURAL AND JURISPRUDENTIAL INFLUENCES**

The prevalence of exploitative practices in the apprenticeship system can be traced to Nigeria's communal culture, where strict hierarchies are deeply embedded in societal values. In many Nigerian communities, respect for authority and submission to elders or superiors is highly emphasized, creating a power dynamic that often translates into apprenticeship relationships. Within this cultural framework, apprenticeships are seen not merely as professional arrangements but as rites of passage into adulthood, emphasising discipline, obedience, and loyalty. Masters often justify menial labour assignments, such as cleaning, running errands, and performing household chores, as forms of "character building" or "discipline." While these tasks are framed as essential to personal development, they frequently obscure the true purpose of the

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<sup>5</sup> BusinessDay, 'Vocational Apprenticeship System: Nigeria's Unemployment Solution' (BusinessDay, 2021) <https://businessday.ng/features/article/vocational-apprenticeship-system-nigerias-unemployment-solution/> accessed 2 September 2025.



apprenticeship: the transfer of practical skills and economic empowerment.

Cultural norms perpetuating this dynamic are rarely questioned, as they are perceived as integral to societal cohesion. In many communities, the lack of public outcry against exploitative practices suggests a tacit approval of the status quo. However, this uncritical acceptance must be interrogated in light of modern principles of fairness, equity, and the rule of law. Research conducted by the International Labour Organization found that approximately 43% of Nigerian apprentices spend more than half of their apprenticeship period performing non-vocational tasks, which significantly delays their skill acquisition. The imbalance between the informal nature of apprenticeship agreements and the heavy responsibilities placed on apprentices further exacerbates these challenges. Agreements are typically verbal and often lack clear terms regarding the apprentice's duration of service, rights, or obligations. This informality gives masters unchecked authority while providing apprentices with little recourse to address grievances or hold their masters accountable. A study by the World Bank revealed that 71% of Nigerian apprentices were unaware of any legal protections governing their work, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.

Despite these systemic issues, the apprenticeship system has shown signs of gradual evolution, particularly in urban areas. In cities like Lagos and Abuja, younger generations are increasingly influenced by modern values that prioritize individual rights and economic opportunities over rigid adherence to traditional hierarchies. This shift has led to growing awareness of the exploitative elements of the apprenticeship system. Some apprentices, emboldened by education and exposure to labour rights, have begun to advocate for better treatment and transparent agreements. In response, certain masters in urban centres have adjusted their practices, offering stipends, reduced working hours, and clearer pathways to skill certification.

However, these changes remain inconsistent and primarily confined to urban settings. Rural areas, where traditional practices still dominate, continue to experience widespread exploitation. A 2022 survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics found that apprentices in rural regions were twice as likely to perform unpaid labour unrelated to their trade compared to their urban counterparts. This disparity underscores the need for broader societal and legislative interventions to harmonize traditional practices with contemporary labour standards.

Cultural norms are not static, and their evolution presents an opportunity to reform the apprenticeship system. The modern emphasis on equity and fair treatment can coexist with the traditional values of mentorship and skill transfer. Empirical evidence further highlights the need for targeted reform. For instance, apprenticeships remain a crucial avenue for economic mobility, particularly for those who lack access to formal education. The International Labour Organization estimated that nearly 60% of Nigeria's informal sector workforce gained their skills through apprenticeship programs. However, the economic outcomes for apprentices vary widely depending on the quality of training and the fairness of their treatment. Ultimately, the apprenticeship system in Nigeria stands at a critical juncture. While its cultural roots and informal structure offer a unique model of mentorship, its exploitative elements hinder its effectiveness and undermine its promise of economic empowerment.

Interestingly, the apprenticeship system in Nigeria operates at the intersection of cultural norms, legal principles, and societal expectations. Jurisprudence offers varying interpretations of this phenomenon. Natural law theorists, particularly Lon Fuller, emphasize that laws must reflect universal moral principles such as fairness, equity, and respect for human dignity. Fuller's concept of the "internal morality of law" highlights that laws are not merely rules but embodiments of moral values that guide societal behaviour. Applying this perspective to the apprenticeship system, one can argue that the imposition of irrelevant and exploitative tasks undermines the apprentice's dignity and violates the moral essence of the law. Fuller would contend that apprenticeships, as a social contract, must align with principles of justice and human development. Practices such as assigning menial tasks unrelated to skill acquisition fail to honour this contract, instead perpetuating hierarchies that hinder the apprentice's growth.

From a Fullerian standpoint, apprenticeships should empower individuals by equipping them with the skills necessary for self-reliance and societal contribution. Irrelevant tasks that degrade the apprentice or exploit their labour for the master's benefit betray this objective. This critique underscores the urgent need for reforms that align apprenticeship practices with moral principles. By focusing on fairness and respect for individual autonomy, the system can become a tool for true empowerment rather than an avenue for exploitation.

In contrast, legal positivists, such as H.L.A. Hart, present a different interpretation. Hart's legal theory distinguishes between the law as it is and the law as it ought to be. He would argue that

while these exploitative practices may be morally questionable, they are not inherently illegal unless explicitly prohibited by law. This perspective highlights the gaps in Nigeria's labour laws, which lack specific provisions addressing the treatment of apprentices. Hart's theory highlights that cultural norms, though deeply entrenched, are not sufficient grounds for determining legality. Without codified legal protections, apprentices remain vulnerable to exploitation under the guise of artistic practices.<sup>6</sup>

This legal vacuum underscores a fundamental weakness in Nigeria's regulatory framework. While cultural norms have historically governed apprenticeships, the absence of explicit legal standards allows exploitative practices to persist without consequence. For instance, tasks such as running personal errands, cleaning, or cooking for the master's family are culturally normalized but diverge from the principles of justice and equity that should underpin labour relations. Hart's emphasis on the importance of codified rules suggests that addressing these practices requires explicit legal provisions that align with contemporary labour standards.

Furthermore, the intersection of culture and law raises questions about the broader societal acceptance of these practices. In many cases, masters justify the imposition of menial tasks as "character building" or "discipline," arguing that such experiences prepare apprentices for the realities of life. Some even contend that the eventual financial or material rewards, such as tools, startup capital, or workshops provided to apprentices upon graduation, compensate for these tasks. While these justifications may resonate within traditional settings, they fall short of meeting modern labour expectations. From a jurisprudential perspective, this rationalization reflects a tension between cultural traditions and the evolving demands of equity and fairness in labour practices.

The informal nature of the apprenticeship system further complicates the issue. Agreements between apprentices and their masters are often unwritten, relying on mutual trust and societal norms rather than enforceable standards. This lack of formalization creates room for abuse, as apprentices have limited recourse to address grievances or hold their masters accountable. While cultural norms may have been sufficient in traditional settings, the growing influence of modern values, particularly in urban areas, necessitates a re-evaluation of the system. Younger generations, increasingly aware of their rights and economic potential, are questioning the

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<sup>6</sup> HLA Hart, *The Concept of Law* (Oxford University Press 1961).



exploitative aspects of apprenticeship, signalling a shift in societal attitudes.

The exploitation of apprentices in Nigeria reflects a complex interplay of cultural norms, legal gaps, and societal attitudes. Jurisprudential perspectives, from Fuller's moral theory to Hart's legal positivism, provide valuable insights into the ethical and legal dimensions of these practices. While cultural traditions have historically shaped the apprenticeship system, the evolving demands of justice, equity, and human dignity necessitate reforms that align with contemporary labour standards.<sup>7</sup>

### JUDICIAL COMMENTARY ON APPRENTICESHIP EXPLOITATION IN NIGERIA

The exploitation inherent in Nigeria's apprenticeship system has not gone unnoticed by the judiciary. Courts have, on occasion, intervened to reconcile cultural practices with legal principles, reflecting a commitment to justice and fairness in labour relations. Judicial activism in Nigeria has sought to address the power imbalance between masters and apprentices, highlighting the need for practices that respect the fundamental rights of all parties involved.

The exploitation inherent in Nigeria's apprenticeship system has, on occasion, drawn judicial intervention. For example, in *Mr. Chukwuemeka Onyedika v. G-Ossy Company Drugs Ltd & Ors*, the National Industrial Court examined the terms of a promised settlement. It emphasized that apprentices must provide clear proof of agreed-upon terms for redress. Similarly, in *Andrew Ugo v. Livinus Oguariri*<sup>8</sup>, the Court ordered the defendant to comply with the terms of an apprenticeship arrangement and awarded remedies to enforce the apprentice's contractual rights. These decisions demonstrate that where apprentices can show clear terms or enforcement needs, courts will step in to protect their rights. It is almost imperative to note that in the celebrated case of *Yakubu Jeremond v. Arkgee Computers Ltd (National Industrial Court)*<sup>9</sup>. The court ordered the company to honour an apprenticeship/settlement agreement. This action demonstrates that the court itself wishes to emphasize the judicial enforcement of apprenticeship promises.

These rulings reflect a growing legal consciousness that recognizes the vulnerabilities of

<sup>7</sup> Al Jazeera, 'Meet Nigeria's Child Apprentices' (Al Jazeera, 27 May 2021)

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/5/27/meet-nigerias-child-apprentices> accessed 2 September 2025.

<sup>8</sup> *Andrew Ugo v Livinus Oguariri* NICN/LA/543/2016 (National Industrial Court of Nigeria, Lagos Judicial Division, 14 May 2021).

<sup>9</sup> *Yakubu Jeremond v Arkgee Computers Ltd* (National Industrial Court of Nigeria, Yola Judicial Division, 22 July 2021, unreported, NIC media release).

apprentices within the informal sector. By prioritizing fairness and emphasizing the need for skill acquisition to remain central to the apprenticeship relationship, the courts have signalled a willingness to protect apprentices from exploitation.

However, these interventions remain sporadic, highlighting the need for more consistent judicial oversight and comprehensive legislation to address the systemic challenges faced by apprentices. Beyond judicial interventions, scholars have critically examined the exploitative aspects of Nigeria's apprenticeship system. For instance, research indicates that the informal sector often operates with unregulated labour practices, leading to inhumane work conditions, low wages, and the non-recognition of employees' rights. These critiques highlight systemic vulnerabilities that apprentices face, particularly in the absence of regulatory oversight.

Legal scholars have long debated the exploitative nature of Nigeria's apprenticeship system, emphasizing the need for substantial reform. For instance, studies reveal that the informal sector, where most apprenticeships occur, is riddled with unregulated labour practices that often lead to indecent working conditions, low wages, and the violation of workers' rights. Scholars have argued that the lack of enforcement mechanisms in the informal economy perpetuates a system where apprentices are overworked and undertrained, leaving them ill-prepared for independent practice. These practices, according to legal experts, not only violate fundamental human rights but also undermine the primary purpose of apprenticeship as a tool for skill acquisition and empowerment.

Further critiques point to the deep cultural roots that sustain this system. Scholars have noted that in societies where hierarchical relationships dominate, apprentices are often viewed as subordinate to their masters, creating an environment that is ripe for exploitation. This cultural dynamic, combined with the absence of explicit legal safeguards, leaves apprentices vulnerable to abuse, such as being tasked with excessive menial work rather than receiving practical training.

Legal experts also argue that the current labour laws in Nigeria lack specificity when addressing the rights and obligations of apprentices. While the Labour Act of 2004 provides a basic framework for labour relations, it is largely silent on the intricacies of apprenticeship agreements. Scholars have called for legislative reforms to clearly define the duties of both apprentices and masters, ensuring that training programs are equitable and prioritize skill acquisition over

exploitative practices.

These academic critiques and legal perspectives underscore the urgent need for a paradigm shift. The apprenticeship system, while steeped in cultural tradition, must evolve to meet modern labour standards. Legal scholars advocate for a comprehensive approach that includes legislative reform, regulatory oversight, and public education to ensure apprenticeships become a platform for empowerment rather than exploitation. Such observations align with broader calls for reform, suggesting that the current apprenticeship system perpetuates inequalities that undermine its intended purpose of skill development and economic empowerment.

The judiciary's interventions and scholarly critiques underscore the need for a paradigm shift in how apprenticeships are perceived and regulated in Nigeria. The current framework, which relies heavily on informal agreements and cultural norms, leaves apprentices vulnerable to exploitation. While cultural traditions may justify certain practices, they often fail to account for the evolving demands of equity and fairness in labour relations.

Moreover, the absence of a robust legal framework exacerbates these challenges. Nigeria's labour laws lack explicit provisions addressing the treatment of apprentices, creating a legal vacuum that allows exploitative practices to persist. This regulatory gap not only undermines the rights of apprentices but also perpetuates a cycle of inequality that hinders economic progress.

## **LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR APPRENTICESHIPS IN NIGERIA**

The legal framework governing apprenticeships in Nigeria is a patchwork of statutory provisions, customary practices, and judicial interpretations. While the Labour Act 2004, the Child Rights Act 2003, and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999<sup>10</sup> provide some guidance, these laws often fall short of offering comprehensive protections, particularly for apprentices operating within the informal sector. The system's fragmented nature leaves room for inconsistencies, exploitation, and a lack of accountability, exacerbating the vulnerabilities of apprentices.<sup>11</sup>

The Labour Act 2004 serves as the cornerstone of Nigeria's labour laws; however, its provisions

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<sup>10</sup> Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended). Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended).

<sup>11</sup> Child Rights Act 2003 (Nigeria).

regarding apprenticeships are limited and insufficient to address the challenges faced in practice. Section 49 of the Act defines an apprenticeship contract as an agreement where an apprentice serves an employer for a specified period to learn a trade. While this definition establishes the intent of such contracts, the Act's focus remains more on formalized settings, leaving the informal sector ,where most apprenticeships occur, without adequate regulation.

One notable provision of the Labour Act is its requirement for employers to provide proper training for apprentices. However, the Act fails to clarify what constitutes "proper training," leaving room for interpretation that has often been exploited. Tasks unrelated to skill acquisition, such as domestic chores, are culturally normalized and continue unchecked due to this lack of clarity. Section 73 of the Act, which prohibits forced or compulsory labour, could theoretically protect apprentices from being compelled to perform such tasks. Unfortunately, enforcement in informal settings is weak, with limited mechanisms to monitor compliance.

The gaps in the Labour Act extend to the lack of provisions for monitoring apprenticeship agreements. While the Act emphasizes skill acquisition, it offers no precise balance between training and the welfare of apprentices. The absence of robust oversight mechanisms leaves apprentices, particularly in the informal sector, vulnerable to exploitation. Regulatory bodies tasked with enforcing labour laws, such as the Ministry of Labour, rarely have the resources or reach to monitor informal apprenticeship arrangements, further widening the gap between legal intent and actual practice.

The Child Rights Act 2003, on the other hand, provides specific protections for apprentices under the age of 18, but these protections are similarly undermined by weak enforcement. Section 28 of the Act prohibits exploitative labour, defined as any labour that does not align with a child's physical, mental, or social development. This provision theoretically addresses the issue of assigning excessive menial tasks to child apprentices. However, in practice, such tasks are often rationalized as part of a broader cultural approach to "discipline" or "character building," making enforcement challenging.

Furthermore, the Child Rights Act emphasizes the importance of education and skill development, reinforcing the need for apprenticeships to focus on trade learning rather than unrelated tasks. Yet, in many cases, apprentices find themselves caught between cultural

expectations and legal protections. For apprentices under 18, the lack of an effective monitoring system means that violations of the Act often go unnoticed and unaddressed.

One critical omission in the discussion of Nigeria's apprenticeship framework is the role of the National Industrial Court (NIC). The NIC serves as a specialized court for adjudicating labour-related disputes, including those arising from apprenticeship agreements. While the NIC has made strides in addressing labour grievances, its reach is often limited to formalized sectors, leaving the informal sector, which hosts the majority of apprenticeships, beyond its purview. Moreover, the lack of awareness among apprentices about their rights and the procedural complexities of approaching the NIC further diminishes its effectiveness.

The NIC has, in some cases, played a pivotal role in addressing the power imbalances inherent in apprenticeship relationships. For instance, rulings that emphasize fairness and skill acquisition over exploitative practices serve as a beacon for how labour relations should be conducted. However, without a concerted effort to extend the NIC's influence to the informal sector, these rulings remain largely symbolic.

Inadequate examination of the Labour Act also reveals structural weaknesses that perpetuate exploitation. For instance, the Act does not account for monitoring compliance in informal settings where apprenticeships often lack formal contracts. Additionally, the balance between skill acquisition and welfare is poorly addressed. Apprentices, particularly those in vulnerable positions, are left to rely on the goodwill of their masters, with no legal recourse to challenge exploitative practices.

The current legal framework for apprenticeships in Nigeria reflects a mix of intent and insufficiency. While statutes like the Labour Act 2004 and the Child Rights Act 2003 provide some protections, their fragmented nature and poor enforcement undermine their effectiveness. Addressing these gaps requires not only legislative reform but also a broader cultural shift that prioritizes fairness, equity, and the developmental goals of apprenticeships over exploitative practices. By aligning cultural practices with legal principles, Nigeria can establish a system that genuinely empowers apprentices and fosters the nation's economic and social growth.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> International Labour Organization, *Vocational Guidance and Vocational Training in the Development of Human Resources* (ILO Convention No 142, adopted 23 June 1975, entered into force 19 July 1977).



## **ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS OF THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM IN NIGERIA**

Nigeria's apprenticeship system is deeply entrenched in cultural practices and operates predominantly in the informal sector. While this system has served as a vital pathway for skill acquisition and economic empowerment, its lack of robust enforcement mechanisms presents significant challenges. The absence of effective oversight, coupled with institutional inefficiencies and cultural complexities, perpetuates exploitative practices, undermining the system's potential to empower apprentices and contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's economy.

At the heart of the enforcement challenge is the informal nature of Nigeria's apprenticeship system. The informal sector, which employs a large portion of the workforce, operates outside formal regulatory frameworks, making it difficult to monitor or enforce labour standards. Apprenticeship agreements are typically verbal and lack documentation, leaving apprentices vulnerable to exploitation. Masters are rarely held accountable for breaches of these unwritten contracts, such as failing to provide adequate training or settlement. This regulatory gap creates an environment where exploitative practices thrive unchecked.

Despite the existence of labour laws, such as the Labour Act and the Child Rights Act, enforcement remains weak. These laws, designed to protect workers and children from exploitative practices, are poorly implemented in the informal sector. Labour inspectors and regulatory bodies often lack the resources and capacity to monitor apprenticeships effectively. Research has shown that the informal sector's size and complexity make it particularly resistant to oversight, with many violations going undetected. A survey of apprenticeship practices in rural Nigeria revealed that most apprentices were unaware of their rights under labour laws, further highlighting the enforcement gap.<sup>13</sup>

Institutional inefficiencies compound the problem. Agencies tasked with labour and child welfare are underfunded and understaffed, limiting their ability to address grievances or conduct inspections. Corruption within these agencies further undermines their effectiveness, as cases of exploitation are often ignored or dismissed. Moreover, there is a lack of political will to prioritize the rights of apprentices. Apprentices, who are usually minors or from economically

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<sup>13</sup> International Labour Organization, *Strengthening Apprenticeship Systems in the Informal Economy in Nigeria* (ILO 2012a) <https://www.ilo.org/media/109241/download> accessed 2 September 2025.

disadvantaged backgrounds, lack the political or social clout to advocate for their rights, leaving their concerns largely unaddressed in broader labour policy discussions.<sup>14</sup>

Cultural norms also play a significant role in the enforcement deficit. In many Nigerian communities, apprenticeship is viewed as a communal responsibility rather than a professional arrangement. The emphasis on hierarchy and respect for authority discourages apprentices from speaking out against exploitative practices, while societal acceptance of these norms reinforces the status quo. For instance, masters often justify assigning menial tasks to apprentices as a form of discipline, and communities rarely challenge this practice. However, these cultural justifications must be critically examined, as they often conflict with principles of fairness and equity.

Addressing these challenges requires innovative approaches that bridge the gap between traditional practices and modern labour standards. Public-private partnerships offer a promising solution. By involving private sector stakeholders in the regulation of apprenticeships, a more structured framework can be established. For example, businesses could collaborate with government agencies to develop apprenticeship certification programs that include regular assessments to ensure apprentices receive proper training. These certifications could serve as incentives for compliance, linking them to access to funding, markets, or other benefits for both masters and apprentices.

The role of civil society organizations (CSOs) is also crucial. CSOs can serve as watchdogs, monitoring apprenticeship practices and advocating for the rights of apprentices. They can provide legal aid and support to apprentices facing exploitation, empowering them to seek redress. Additionally, CSOs can raise awareness about the importance of formalizing apprenticeship agreements, promoting transparency and accountability. Community-based organizations have successfully implemented similar initiatives in other sectors, demonstrating the potential for impactful advocacy.

Trade unions can extend their influence to the informal sector by organizing apprentices into associations or cooperatives. These groups could collectively bargain for better conditions,

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<sup>14</sup> African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (adopted 11 July 1990, entered into force 29 November 1999) OAU Doc CAB/LEG/24.9/49 (1990).

transparent settlement agreements, and fair treatment. In countries like Ghana and Kenya, trade unions have played a pivotal role in advocating for apprentices' rights, setting a precedent for similar efforts in Nigeria. These unions can also work with policymakers to push for legislative reforms that specifically address the unique challenges of the apprenticeship system.

Detailed data on the scale of exploitation, economic outcomes of apprenticeships, and best practices in well-regulated systems can inform targeted interventions. For instance, studies have shown that apprenticeships in regions with community oversight mechanisms experience lower rates of exploitation. Such data highlights the importance of involving local communities in monitoring and regulating apprenticeships.

Public awareness campaigns are another vital tool for addressing exploitation. These campaigns should not only highlight the rights of apprentices but also emphasize the economic and social benefits of a well-regulated system. For example, showcasing success stories of apprentices who have transitioned to successful entrepreneurs can inspire compliance and foster a culture of mentorship. Campaigns can also draw on cultural narratives that align traditional values of mentorship with modern labour principles, encouraging masters to uphold ethical standards.<sup>15</sup>

The need for reform is underscored by the economic importance of apprenticeships in Nigeria. The informal sector, which accounts for a significant portion of the country's GDP, relies heavily on apprenticeship as a means of skill transfer. However, the lack of enforcement mechanisms undermines this potential, leaving many apprentices ill-prepared to contribute to the economy. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms can transform the apprenticeship system into a sustainable pathway for economic growth, benefiting both individuals and the broader society.

The enforcement mechanisms of Nigeria's apprenticeship system are inadequate, leaving apprentices vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach that includes public-private partnerships, advocacy by CSOs and trade unions, and empirical research to inform policy decisions. Public awareness campaigns and community involvement can further bridge the gap between traditional practices and modern labour standards.

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<sup>15</sup> International Labour Organization, *Upgrading Informal Apprenticeship: A Resource Guide for Africa* (ILO 2012b) [https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40africa/%40ro-abidjan/documents/publication/wcms\\_171393.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40africa/%40ro-abidjan/documents/publication/wcms_171393.pdf) accessed 2 September 2025.

## INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK: THEIR IMPACT ON APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEMS

Nigeria's commitment to international legal frameworks reinforces its obligation to ensure a fair and non-exploitative apprenticeship system. Various international conventions and treaties emphasize the rights and welfare of apprentices, particularly minors, underlining the need for skill development systems that respect human dignity and promote equitable labour practices. However, the extent to which these obligations have been implemented or domesticated in Nigeria remains a concern.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been at the forefront of advocating for decent work standards, including those governing apprenticeship systems. ILO Convention No. 142, adopted in 1975, calls for the establishment of comprehensive vocational guidance and training systems that meet the needs of apprentices while aligning with their aspirations. This convention emphasizes the importance of equipping apprentices with skills that enhance their employability and overall development. However, in Nigeria, the integration of this principle into labour policies remains uneven. The informal nature of most apprenticeship arrangements in the country makes it challenging to establish structured training programs, leaving many apprentices vulnerable to exploitation and inadequate skill acquisition.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, ILO Convention No. 182<sup>17</sup>, which addresses the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour, has direct implications for apprenticeships involving minors. The convention explicitly prohibits exploitative practices that harm the health, safety, and moral well-being of children. While Nigeria has ratified this convention and incorporated aspects of its provisions into the Child Rights Act, enforcement challenges persist. Many apprentices, particularly in rural areas, are subjected to hazardous working conditions and excessive workloads, which contradicts the protections envisioned under international law.

At the global level, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides additional safeguards for children engaged in apprenticeships. The CRC emphasizes the right of

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<sup>16</sup> International Labour Organization, *Vocational Guidance and Vocational Training in the Development of Human Resources* (ILO Convention No 142, adopted 23 June 1975, entered into force 19 July 1977).

<sup>17</sup> International Labour Organization, *Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention* (ILO Convention No 182, adopted 17 June 1999, entered into force 19 November 2000).

every child to education and protection from exploitative labour. These principles align closely with the Child Rights Act in Nigeria, which mandates the safety of children from abuse and ensures their access to quality education. However, the practical application of these rights within the apprenticeship system is often hindered by socioeconomic factors, such as poverty and limited access to formal education. For many families, apprenticeships serve as an alternative pathway to skill acquisition, yet the lack of oversight exposes children to significant risks.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) further underscores the right to work under just and favourable conditions. This provision is highly relevant to apprenticeships, as it establishes the need for fair treatment, adequate remuneration, and safe working environments for all workers, including apprentices. In Nigeria, however, the informal sector, where most apprenticeships take place, operates largely outside the regulatory framework that ensures compliance with these standards. This creates a disconnect between Nigeria's international commitments and the realities of its labour practices.<sup>18</sup>

At the regional level, African Union instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child emphasize the importance of labour practices that respect human dignity and promote skill development. These charters place significant responsibility on member states to ensure that labour systems, including apprenticeships, do not perpetuate exploitation or undermine the fundamental rights of individuals. While Nigeria has ratified these charters, their domestication into national laws and policies is incomplete. The apprenticeship system in Nigeria continues to reflect a gap between the aspirational standards of these charters and their practical implementation.

Despite the ratification of these international instruments, Nigeria continues to face significant challenges in meeting its obligations. One major issue is the lack of effective integration of these standards into national labour policies. For instance, while ILO Convention No. 142 emphasizes structured vocational training, Nigeria's labour policies do not adequately address the informal nature of apprenticeships, where most skill acquisition occurs. This disconnect creates a regulatory vacuum that enables exploitative practices to persist unchecked.

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<sup>18</sup> 'Apprenticeship Systems and Human Capital Development in Jos Metropolis' (2023) *Nigerian Journal of Management Sciences* <https://nigerianjournalofmanagementsciences.com/apprenticeship-systems-and-human-capital-development-in-jos-metropolis-plateau-state/> accessed 2 September 2025.



Additionally, gaps in compliance with international obligations are evident in the limited enforcement of existing labour laws. The Labour Act, which governs employment relationships in Nigeria, does not sufficiently address the specific needs of apprentices or align with international standards. Similarly, the Child Rights Act, though comprehensive in its provisions, suffers from poor implementation due to weak institutional capacity and limited resources.

To bridge these gaps, Nigeria must prioritize the domestication and enforcement of international labour standards within its apprenticeship system. This could involve establishing monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance with ILO conventions and other international instruments. Strengthening partnerships with civil society organizations and trade unions could also enhance oversight and advocacy efforts. Moreover, public awareness campaigns should emphasize the rights of apprentices and the importance of aligning traditional apprenticeship practices with modern labour standards.

Nigeria's obligations under international law provide a robust framework for developing a fair and non-exploitative apprenticeship system. However, significant challenges remain in translating these commitments into tangible outcomes. By addressing the gaps in policy integration, enforcement, and public awareness, Nigeria can align its apprenticeship system with international standards, thereby ensuring the protection and empowerment of apprentices across the nation.<sup>19</sup>

### **COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEMS: LESSONS FOR NIGERIA**

The apprenticeship system in Nigeria is deeply rooted in cultural practices and informal arrangements; however, its inefficiencies and exploitative tendencies underscore the need for reform. A comparative analysis of apprenticeship systems in other countries with adequate legal protections can provide valuable insights into how Nigeria might address these issues. By examining best practices from around the world, Nigeria can develop a system that balances cultural traditions with the legal and economic frameworks necessary to protect apprentices and promote the acquisition of skills.

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<sup>19</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted 20 November 1989, entered into force 2 September 1990) 1577 UNTS 3.

Countries with well-regulated apprenticeship systems, such as Germany, South Africa, and the United Kingdom, offer valuable models for reform. In Germany, for instance, the dual vocational training system combines theoretical education with practical training, ensuring that apprentices receive a well-rounded skill set. This system is highly structured and overseen by chambers of commerce and industry, which certify apprenticeship programs and ensure compliance with labour laws. Apprentices are entitled to a written contract that outlines their rights and obligations, including the duration of training, remuneration, and scope of work. The German model demonstrates how legal protections and regulatory oversight can create an environment where apprentices are empowered to learn and grow without fear of exploitation.

In contrast, South Africa has adapted its apprenticeship system to address its unique socio-economic challenges. Recognizing the historical inequalities in access to education and training, South Africa's learnership programs, introduced under the Skills Development Act of 1998, focus on providing training opportunities to disadvantaged groups. These programs are closely tied to the National Qualifications Framework, ensuring that apprentices acquire skills that are formally recognized and valued in the labour market. Furthermore, the South African government has incentivized employers to participate in these programs through tax rebates and subsidies, fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors.

The United Kingdom offers another perspective, with its modern apprenticeship framework emphasizing flexibility and inclusivity. Apprenticeship standards are developed in consultation with employers to meet the specific needs of various industries, and the system accommodates a diverse range of age groups and educational backgrounds. Notably, the UK has a robust legal framework to protect apprentices, including minimum wage requirements and access to grievance procedures. This approach ensures that apprenticeships are not only a pathway to employment but also a means of upholding workers' rights.

In comparison, the Nigerian apprenticeship system is predominantly informal, with limited legal oversight and enforcement mechanisms in place. Most apprentices in Nigeria operate outside the purview of labour laws, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. For instance, the absence of written agreements between masters and apprentices creates uncertainty about the terms of training, remuneration, and settlement. While the settlement process at the end of an apprenticeship is culturally significant, its informal nature often leads to disputes and unmet

expectations.

A report by the National Bureau of Statistics estimates that over 40% of Nigeria's labour force is engaged in informal employment, which includes apprenticeships. Among these, a significant proportion are young people, many of whom face exploitative working conditions. For example, a study conducted in Lagos revealed that 65% of apprentices reported working more than 12 hours a day, often without adequate compensation or training opportunities. Such findings underscore the urgent need for a legal framework that protects apprentices and ensures fair treatment.<sup>20</sup>

Case studies from other countries demonstrate the importance of integrating vocational education into formal education systems. In Germany and South Africa, apprenticeships are closely tied to national qualification frameworks, offering a clear pathway for career progression. Nigeria could adopt a similar approach by incorporating apprenticeships into its Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs. This would not only enhance the quality of training but also ensure that apprentices acquire skills that are recognized both locally and internationally.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, the role of public-private partnerships in improving apprenticeship systems cannot be overlooked. In countries such as South Africa and the UK, collaboration among governments, employers, and civil society organizations has been instrumental in developing sustainable apprenticeship programs. Nigeria could benefit from similar partnerships to develop industry-specific training standards, provide financial incentives for employers, and establish monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance.

Civil society organizations and trade unions also play a crucial role in advocating for the rights of apprentices. In South Africa, for instance, trade unions have been actively involved in monitoring workplace conditions and addressing grievances, ensuring that apprentices are treated fairly and equitably. Nigeria's labour unions and NGOs could adopt similar strategies to

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<sup>20</sup> TA Fajobi and others, 'Challenges of Apprenticeship Development and Youths Unemployment in Nigeria' (2017) 5 *Sociology and Criminology-Open Access* [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322649939\\_Challenges\\_of\\_Apprenticeship\\_Development\\_and\\_Youths\\_Unemployment\\_in\\_Nigeria](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322649939_Challenges_of_Apprenticeship_Development_and_Youths_Unemployment_in_Nigeria) accessed 2 September 2025.

<sup>21</sup> World Bank, 'Can Apprenticeships and Vocational Education Offer "A Way Out" for At-Risk Youth in Northern Nigeria?' (World Bank Blogs, 2023) <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/developmenttalk/can-apprenticeships-and-vocational-education-offer-way-out-risk-youth-northern> accessed 2 September 2025.

bridge the gap between cultural practices and legal standards.

A comparative analysis of apprenticeship systems in other countries reveals valuable lessons for Nigeria. By adopting best practices from countries such as Germany, South Africa, and the UK, Nigeria can establish a more structured and equitable apprenticeship system. This would involve integrating apprenticeships into formal education systems, establishing legal protections for apprentices, and fostering collaboration between public and private stakeholders. Empirical data underscores the urgency of these reforms, highlighting the vulnerabilities of apprentices in Nigeria's informal labour market. With a concerted effort to align cultural traditions with modern labour standards, Nigeria can transform its apprenticeship system into a powerful tool for skill development and economic empowerment.

## **CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The challenges plaguing Nigeria's apprenticeship system are deeply entrenched in its informal structure and cultural complexities, making it challenging to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability. Despite the existence of international and domestic legal frameworks aimed at protecting apprentices, the lack of robust enforcement mechanisms and cultural resistance perpetuates cycles of exploitation. Comprehensive reforms are therefore necessary to address these challenges, with a focus on legal, institutional, and societal innovations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Legal Reforms for Enhanced Protection**

One of the most pressing reforms is the amendment of the Labour Act to explicitly define the scope of acceptable tasks within apprenticeship agreements. Clear distinctions between training and exploitative labour must be drawn to protect apprentices from being treated as unpaid labourers. These amendments should also mandate written agreements between masters and apprentices, detailing terms such as remuneration, working hours, and grievance procedures. Such contracts would provide a legal basis for apprentices to assert their rights and seek redress in cases of abuse.

Judicial activism also plays a pivotal role in reinforcing these protections. Courts must adopt a purposive approach when interpreting labour laws, prioritizing the welfare of apprentices over rigid adherence to outdated cultural norms. By setting progressive legal precedents, the judiciary

can signal a shift toward prioritizing apprentices' rights and holding exploitative masters accountable.

- **Regulatory Oversight and Enforcement**

The establishment of regulatory bodies is essential for monitoring apprenticeship agreements and enforcing compliance with labour laws. These bodies should be decentralized, with offices at the state and local government levels, to ensure accessibility and efficiency. They could be funded through public-private partnerships, leveraging contributions from trade associations and corporate entities that benefit from a skilled labour force.

These regulatory bodies must also work in tandem with community-led oversight committees. Such committees, comprising respected local leaders, trade association members, and representatives from civil society, can bridge the gap between formal regulations and informal practices. By acting as liaisons between regulatory authorities and informal apprenticeship setups, community committees can promote accountability and cultural buy-in.

- **Harnessing Technology for Monitoring and Compliance**

Digitizing apprenticeship agreements provides an innovative solution to enhance transparency and improve traceability. By creating an online platform where apprenticeship contracts are registered, authorities can monitor compliance with labor standards in real-time. This platform could also serve as a repository for training resources, legal guidelines, and grievance procedures, empowering apprentices with knowledge about their rights.

Mobile technology can further enhance oversight. A mobile app designed for apprentices could allow them to report abuses anonymously, access legal support, and track their training progress. Such technology-driven solutions not only improve regulatory efficiency but also empower apprentices to advocate for themselves.

- **Promoting Ethical Practices and Awareness**

Exploitation within the apprenticeship system is not merely a legal issue; it is an ethical one that undermines human rights and dignity. Public awareness campaigns are therefore crucial in challenging exploitative cultural practices and fostering a culture of respect for apprentices. These campaigns should target both masters and apprentices, emphasizing the mutual benefits of fair and transparent training arrangements.

Trade associations and civil society organizations have a vital role in these efforts. By conducting



workshops, distributing educational materials, and facilitating dialogues among stakeholders, these groups can bridge the gap between traditional cultural practices and modern labour standards.

- **Integrating Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms**

Given the informal nature of most apprenticeships, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms offer a practical solution for resolving conflicts. Trade associations could establish mediation panels to address disputes between masters and apprentices, ensuring that power imbalances do not disadvantage the latter. ADR mechanisms should also include arbitration options for more complex cases, providing a faster and less intimidating alternative to formal legal proceedings.

- **Incentivizing Formal Apprenticeships**

Policies to incentivize formal apprenticeships could significantly improve compliance with labour standards. For instance, tax breaks or subsidies could be offered to businesses that register apprenticeships with regulatory bodies and adhere to legal requirements. Additionally, partnerships between government agencies and private companies can create opportunities for structured vocational training programs tailored to meet the specific needs of various industries.

- **Addressing Emerging Trends and Modernization**

Modernization and globalization are reshaping the apprenticeship landscape, presenting both challenges and opportunities. Online vocational training platforms, for example, offer a flexible and cost-effective way to acquire skills, but they lack the hands-on experience that traditional apprenticeships provide. Nigeria must strike a balance by integrating technology into its apprenticeship system without compromising the practical aspects of training.

Collaboration with international organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) could also help Nigeria adopt global best practices in apprenticeship management. Technical assistance from these bodies could facilitate the development of comprehensive training curricula, certification standards, and monitoring systems, thereby enhancing the quality of education and training.

Reforming Nigeria's apprenticeship system requires a multifaceted approach that combines legal, institutional, and societal strategies. By amending labour laws, establishing regulatory bodies, leveraging technology, and promoting ethical practices, Nigeria can create a system that empowers apprentices and fosters skill development. A commitment to fairness, transparency,

and respect for human dignity must underpin these reforms. With concerted efforts from all stakeholders, Nigeria's apprenticeship system can evolve into a powerful tool for economic empowerment and social progress.

## CONCLUSION

The apprenticeship system in Nigeria stands at a crossroads, balancing its rich cultural roots with the urgent need for modernization. It remains an essential avenue for skill acquisition and economic inclusion, especially for young Nigerians, yet systemic challenges frequently overshadow its transformative potential. Exploitative practices, cultural excesses, and a lack of regulatory oversight hinder its ability to fully empower those it seeks to serve.

To reimagine this system as a tool for empowerment rather than exploitation, there must be a unified commitment to reform. This requires harmonizing cultural traditions with modern labour practices, strengthening legal protections, and embracing innovative approaches that reflect contemporary realities. Apprentices deserve not just the promise of skill acquisition but also an environment that respects their dignity, protects their rights, and equips them for professional independence.

The way forward is clear: a system that prioritizes fairness, accountability, and opportunity. By aligning domestic laws with international labour standards, leveraging technology for transparency, and fostering societal change, Nigeria can elevate its apprenticeship framework to one that truly fulfils its promise. This is not just a call to action for policymakers but a collective responsibility for all stakeholders. The goal is simple yet profound: to ensure that every apprenticeship journey is not only a pathway to livelihood but a platform for empowerment and lifelong growth.

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