

## **Assessing the Influence of Mobile Apps Betting Advertising on the Habit of Youth in Enugu Urban**

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### **Abstract:**

The study assessed the influence of mobile apps betting advertisements on the habit of youth in Enugu urban. The objectives were to determine if the Enugu urban youth residents are exposed to the mobile apps betting advertisements; check the advertisements they are most often exposed to; ascertain whether the advertisement influenced their behavioural pattern and finally know if the betting companies fulfilled the desires of the Enugu urban youth as stated in their advertisements. Survey research design was used for the execution of the study. Taro Yamane statistical formula helped the researchers to get the sample size of 400 from the population of 1,138,918 validated by the National Bureau of Statistics. Systematic sampling procedure was used to administer 28 copies of the questionnaire in each of the 14 layouts in Enugu urban which equalled to 392 copies while eight (8) copies of the questionnaire were not useful for the analysis. Findings indicated that the youth are strongly exposed to such mobile apps betting advertisements, have more interest in sports betting, influenced their behavioural pattern greatly and betting companies did not fulfil the desires of the majority of the youth in Enugu urban yet the youth fail to understand the game of the business. In conclusion, the betting advertisements actually influenced the youth greatly which affected the youth behavioural pattern against positive thinking of creativity and hard work. The paper recommended the closure of betting shops in the metropolis, rehabilitate the youth with workshops and varied skills, as well as introducing entrepreneurship skills from the primary to the tertiary institutions in Enugu metropolis.

### **Keywords:**

Mobile Apps, Betting, Youth, Deceptive Advertising.

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## **Introduction**

### **Background of the Study**

Through the ability to successfully communicate with a diverse audience, advertising on social media platforms significantly increases the visibility and awareness of a business. To begin, it makes it possible to accurately target individuals by taking into account their demographics, interests, and behaviour online, which ultimately results in an increase in the relevance of advertising (Motta, Muralikumaran, Kalaiarasi, Vigneshkumar, 2023, p.7747). A sense of community may be developed and relationships can be strengthened through the use of social media, which enables brands to directly engage with their target audiences (Brown, 2018, p.15).

Gambling can be considered as the process of playing a game for money by placing bets or playing the odds in the hope of winning. With the shift in the technological platforms of gambling, betting has been made easier and has been able to reach far and wide into developed and developing nations as well (Mwai & Mberia, 2021, p.244). Thus, gambling advertising can be described as the strategies done by casinos, lotteries, bookmakers or other betting companies/organisations to promote and provide the opportunity for an individual to play bet. It is usually conducted through a variety of media or through sponsorship deals, particularly with sporting events or people (Hing, Cherney, Blaszczyński, Gainsbury & Lubman, 2014).

Furthermore, Elem, Ugochukwu, Orji-Egwu & Mmaduabuchi (2022, p. 31) argue that gambling is a worldwide game which people engage in to get rich quick. Even the already well to do in the society also get involved in gambling in order to get richer. The promoters of gambling often make use of advertising to sway the intended and unintended ambitious individuals to invest in the business. Arguably, advertising has impacts on people. Advertising impact in this context is defined as perceived changes in gambling involvement, awareness towards gambling, or knowledge about gambling forms and operators induced by gambling advertisement (Hanss, Mentzoni, Griffiths & Pallesen, 2015, p.484).

Betting, especially sports betting has become a trending issue among Nigerians, especially the unemployed youths, not just in urban areas, but also in rural areas. On a daily basis, these Nigerian youths want to get rich quickly with less stress. Therefore, they indulge in betting/gambling. They place bets on football, car racing, sports racing, as well as the AI-generated content known as “virtual.”

Modern gambling advertising is frequently shown on social media platforms as against television which was the order of the day about 10 years ago. Gambling advertising on social media is targeted at youth, as it is designed to create and/or increase their desire to partake in gambling. The messages only show those winning millions of Naira and how to stake bets. The most predominant of all the betting is football.

Today in Nigeria, many betting companies exist, such as: Bet9ja, Nairabet, Betway, Bet Pawa, Access Bet, Bet King, Sportybet, 1960bet, Bet365, Oga Bet, etc. These betting companies all have their social media handles ranging from Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), etc. Also, there are individual who come to social media to advertise betting services where they add people to WhatsApp groups or Telegram channels and drop predictions for sports bets, which they tag “fixed games”.

With a growing population of nearly 200 million, with the high rate of unemployment among the youths, a good number of youths have channelled their energy towards betting. With increase and addition of betting companies in Nigeria from five years ago, it points to the fact that the business is booming. It also indicates that unemployment is increasing. These bettors do not take a break even when the European football league season is on break. They either switch to international football (friendly matches and tournaments like European Championship, Copa America, and the AI-generated virtual games).

Oparaugo (2021, p.9) avers that Nigerian youth also devote major parts of their time playing video games such as FIFA, PES, PS, Fantasy Football Manager, etc. Some even play these bets with their house rents, feeding money, school fees hoping to win a pay back, but end up losing. They sometimes resort to stealing to pay back the money. Uzuchukwu & Ohiri (2021, cited by Aondowase, Udoudom & Pam (2023, p.2), stated that “while most forms of gambling on sports have been stable or decreased over the last few years, online betting has nearly doubled its prevalence rate in 2009-2014 periods.” Going further, Killick & Griffiths, (2018) cited by Aondowase, et al (2023, p.2), added that this is due to the popularity of sports among people of different generations hence participants see it as an avenue to enjoy their favourite leisure time while earning from the game they love. Supporting the foregoing, Aondowase, et al (2023, p.2) submit that young men are the target market for sports betting companies, and their goal is to use persuasive appeals to stimulate this vulnerable and gullible group into staking a bet. Research has shown that youths who are highly exposed to gambling advertising are likely to be influenced by it (Hing, 2014, p.8; Monaghan, Derevensky & Sklar, 2008, p.269).

## **Aims of the Study**

Little studies have been carried out on the influence of social media advertising on the betting habit of youths in Nigerian society as most studies have focused on influence of televised European football matches on Nigerian youths, which then captures this area of study as part of its problem statement. The promotion of sports and race betting in Nigeria has been described as ubiquitous, unavoidable, pervasive, and intrusive (Hing, Russell, Li, & Vitartas, 2018). While attractive product offerings, competitive pricing, and easy access are critical for marketing success, the promotional efforts of betting operators are arguably the most noticeable element of their marketing strategies (Hing et al, 2018). The main promotional tools used have been commercial advertising in traditional media, sponsored

advertising during live and televised events, and digital and direct advertising; along with sales promotions offering a wide range of wagering inducements (Hing et al, 2018). These inducements include stake-back, multi-bet, match your stake, rewards programme, cash out early, and various recruitment offers. These offers are typically encouraged with bonus bets, cash rebates, reduced risk, or better odds (Hing et al, 2018).

The main objective of the study is to assess the influence of social media betting advertising on the habit of youth in Enugu urban. The study however examined the following specific objectives:

1. To determine if the Enugu urban youth residents are exposed to the mobile apps betting advertisements.
2. To check the mobile apps betting advertisements which Enugu youth residents are most often exposed to.
3. To ascertain if youths in Enugu urban are influenced on their betting behaviour as a result of their exposure to sports betting advertising on mobile apps.
4. To find out if betting companies fulfill what is promised in their mobile apps advertisements.
5. The following research questions were raised to guide the study:
6. What is the level of exposure to mobile apps betting advertisements among youths in Enugu urban?
7. Which mobile apps betting advertisements are Enugu youth residents most often exposed to?
8. Are youths in Enugu urban influenced on their betting behaviour as a result of their exposure to sports betting advertising on mobile apps?
9. Do sports betting companies fulfill what is promised in their mobile apps advertisements?

## **Literature Review**

Mobile apps such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, as well as less popular sites, such as Google+ and MySpace, have been described as a tool that allows users to form a web-based profile that permits easy communication. Evidence has established that social media application has cut across diverse areas such as advertising, public relations, strategic communications and political communication. Omeje and Oparaugo (2021, p.23) see advertising as all forms of print, electronic or online media messages written or spoken and paid for by a sponsor aimed at target audience with the objective of selling or marketing a product or services. Pahwa (2023, n.p) added that advertising is “a process of developing a paid communication message intended to inform people about something or to influence them to buy, try or to do something.” Social media impact consumer-to-consumer communication but,

as a new hybrid element in the promotion mix, also largely influences company-to-consumer communication (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

In a rapidly changing gambling environment, with the development of new, easily accessible products, and the alignment of these products with major sporting codes, research has shifted from addiction-based models that seek to understand individual vulnerability factors, towards public health frameworks that seek to understand the influencing determinants to gambling (Nyemcsok et al, 2018). There have been very few studies, especially from a qualitative perspective, that have explored how gambling advertising influences young people's gambling attitudes, behaviours and future consumption intentions.

With the proliferation and acceptance of gambling in the society, gambling advertisements have become increasingly prominent. It has been observed that this increase in public visibility and availability of gambling has been accompanied by an increase in gambling behaviour and related problems (Mwai & Mberia, 2021, p.244). Using the influencer's already established audience to strengthen a brand's message and credibility on social media is accomplished through the formation of relationships with social media influencers. By putting an emphasis on visual material, businesses are able to artistically display their products, which in turn increases the level of engagement with advertising (Motta et al, 2023).

Sports betting commercials have significant influence on youths by making them want to try gambling as well as imagine or dream about what they could buy with their winnings. These illusory thoughts often lead youth into indulging in sports gambling activities with the hope of winning a jackpot someday. Advertising is a powerful force influencing a lot of social disorders and deviant behaviours of youths in our contemporary society (Saawuan et al, 2023, p.11). The distorted images of gambling portrayed in betting advertisements generally fail to provide the youthful consumers with portrayals of responsible gambling. The positive portrayal of gambling and its associated glamour and excitement in sports betting advertisements may encourage youths to inadvertently engage in risky gambling with the belief that it may lead to a similar glamorous lifestyle and reinforce the erroneous belief that they possess the skills to repeatedly beat the odds (Monaghan & Derevensky, 2008).

Mwai and Mberia (2021) studied "Television betting advertisements and the gambling behavior of undergraduate university students aged between 18 and 25 years in Kiambu County, Kenya". The general objective of the study was to establish the effect of television betting advertisements on the gambling behaviour of undergraduate university students aged between 18 and 25 years in Kiambu county Kenya. This study applied a descriptive research design. The study administered copies of questionnaire randomly to select the sample size of 384 from an indefinite population of over 10,000. Findings revealed that the gambling behaviour of undergraduate university students in Kenya is influenced by the television betting advertisements on the gambling behaviour of undergraduate. It was

concluded that irresponsible gambling behaviour attributed to high frequency of television betting advertisements. The study recommended that the government needs to ensure that the policies and regulations governing the gambling in Kenya are equitable and just to all market players.

Aondowase, Udoudom and Pam (2023) assessed "Perception and social influence of sports betting advertisements on gambling behaviour of youths in Makurdi metropolis: An assessment". The objective of the study was to assess the perception of sports betting advertisements and influence on the gambling behaviour of youths in Makurdi metropolis. Survey research method was adopted for the study. Copies of the questionnaire was employed as instrument for data collection. Findings revealed that youths in Makurdi perceived sports betting advertisements as part of sports which has no harmful influence on them thereby justifying their regular participation in sports betting activities. The study concluded that the ubiquity of sports betting advertisements, the pressure from peers and the proliferation of bet shops have been found to be the cardinal determinants to the surge of sports betting activities among youths in Makurdi metropolis. The study recommended that the current regulatory systems for gambling advertising are ineffective. The study recommended urgent restrictions across a range of media channels to prevent exposure to promotions that may encourage young people's interest and involvement in sports gambling. APCON should continually evaluate existing and newly implemented advertising techniques to ensure that promotions of sports betting products or contents are not unduly targeting youths or increasing the risk of gambling among youths.

Elem, Ugochuwu, Orji-Egwu, Mmaduabuchi (2022) investigated "Influence of Television Advertising On the Gambling Behaviour of Students in Tertiary Institutions: A Study of Three Selected Schools". The purpose of this study was to explore how TV advertising influences the students in tertiary institutions to engage in gambling as a means of making money. The study was anchored on stimulus-response model which focuses on: Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (AIDA) model. Findings from the study show that students in tertiary institutions are exposed to TV advertisements of betting; television advertising lure students to place more bets; television advertising of betting influences the betting habits of students. The survey research method was used in the execution of the study. The study concluded that gambling advertising on TV has negative effects on the students in tertiary institutions. This has serious economic consequences on the students. The study recommended that students should avoid exposure to TV betting advertisements to avoid being lured to betting by such adverts; the management of tertiary institutions should include gambling education in the orientation of new students to make them aware of the risks involved in betting; laws against gambling should be introduced in every tertiary institution to punish students caught in the act of betting and discourage potential students gamblers; parents should warn their children against gambling before sending them to tertiary institutions.

Korn, Reynolds, and Tim, (2015) examined Commercial Gambling Advertising: Understanding the Youth Connection. The purpose of this research was to examine the possible impact of commercial gambling advertising on the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behavioural intentions of youth. A three-stage approach, utilizing a mixed method design, was used in this study to further examine the impact of commercial gambling advertising on youths' knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behavioural intentions. First, the occurrence of commercial gambling advertisements in all media was documented and analyzed over the winter quarter of 2005 to determine placement and frequency of ads. During the second phase, in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 youth along the gambling continuum (i.e., non-, moderate, at-risk, and problem gamblers), from across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), and 9 key informants from various gambling and non-gambling related organizations. Finally, a self-administered questionnaire was delivered to over 1033 youth, from 6 secondary schools across the GTA. Findings revealed that young people have been "overexposed" to commercial gambling advertisements during several youth popular television shows.

Binde (2009) explored The impact of gambling advertising on problem gamblers. The objective of this study was to qualitatively explore the impact of gambling advertising on problem gambling by interviewing twenty-five people with current or past gambling problems. The qualitative research method was used for the study. Interviews were relatively long and involved the participants' viewing numerous examples of gambling advertising. Findings revealed that gambling advertising had no impact on their problems, slightly over half of them reported that advertising had a marginal impact, and one fifth reported a tangible impact. The study recommended that if advertising is increased, high involvement in gambling and/or will be harder to stick to a decision to gamble less or not at all.

Håkansson and Widinghof, (2019) investigated Television gambling advertisements: Extent and content of gambling advertisements with a focus on potential high-risk commercial messages. The objective of the study was to examine the Extent and content of gambling advertisements with a focus on potential high-risk commercial messages. The researchers used survey research design. Findings revealed that nineteen percent (11–28% across different channels) of advertisements promoted gambling, with online casino being by far the most common type of gambling exposed. The study concluded that online casino was by far the most common type of televised gambling advertisements. Several risky messages were identified, and female gender, as well as messages promoting the rapidity and facility of gambling, were more commonly addressed by online casino companies. The study recommended the consideration of public health aspects when advertising gambling.

Abarbanel, Gainsbury, King, Hing and Delfabbro (2017) examined Gambling games on social platforms: How do advertisements for social casino games target young adults? Policy and Internet. The objective of the study was to examine social casino gaming, which simulates gambling games on social platforms.

The content analysis research method was used in the study. The results showed that the advertisement imagery typically featured images likely to appeal to young adults, such as bright colors, character images of young adults, cartoon animal characters, gambling and sporting activities, references to popular culture, and references to Las Vegas. The study concluded that nearly 90 percent of the advertisements contained no responsible or problem gambling language, despite the gambling-like content. The study recommended among others that adding warning messages to advertisements for gambling-themed games and ensuring that marketing messages should be done to discourage excessive gambling.

Binde (2010) investigated You could become a millionaire: Truth, deception and imagination in gambling advertising. The objective of the study was to provide a critical review of research on gambling advertising, with particular attention to studies that concern the impact of such advertising on participation in gambling and the prevalence of problem gambling. Content analysis was used for the execution of the study. Findings revealed that Gambling advertising is ubiquitous today: insistent exhortations to participate in various forms of gambling are common in virtually all kinds of media. The study recommended that future studies and research programs could combine methods and approaches in new and innovative ways that are not discussed in this review.

## **Methods and Data**

The researchers used the survey research design to gather information from the youths who are social media literates through copies of questionnaire as the instrument for the measurement. The researchers used the Taro Yamane statistical formula to get the sample size of 400 from the 2006 population census by the National Populations Commission of 1,138,918, which was also validated by the National Bureau of Statistics due to the projection.

The researchers used the systematic sampling technique to administer the copies of questionnaire to the fourteen layouts in Enugu urban comprising Government Residential Area, Iva Valley, New Haven, Asata, Ogui/Ogui New Layout, Ogbete/Coal Camp, Independence Layout, Abakpa Nike, Emene, Trans-Ekulu, Achara Layout, Idaw River, Uwani/Uwani Extension and Maryland. Each layout were administered with twenty-eight (28) copies of the questionnaire which totaled to 392 copies. The rest of the eight (8) copies were not useful for the analysis. We also used research assistants to quickly facilitate our research because of flat system of living in each layout.

## **Results**

The simple percentage tables were used in analysing the data. The analyses are made hereunder:



Research question 1: What is the level of exposure to mobile apps betting advertisements among youths in Enugu urban?

<b>Response category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Highly Exposed	250	63.78
Exposed	50	12.76
Minimally exposed	40	10.20
Unexposed	30	7.65
Can't say	22	5.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 1: Level of exposure to mobile apps betting advertisements among Enugu urban youth residents (Field survey, 2024)

Data generated from table 1 above indicated 250 (63.78%) of the respondents are highly exposed to mobile apps betting advertisements, 50 (12.76%) of the respondents are exposed to mobile apps betting advertisements, 40 (10.20%) of the respondents are minimally exposed to mobile apps betting advertisements, 30 (7.65%) of the respondents are unexposed to mobile apps betting advertisements, and 22 (5.61%) of the respondents cannot express their level of exposure to mobile apps betting advertisements. This means that most of the Enugu urban youth residents are highly exposed to mobile apps betting advertisements.

Research question 2: Which mobile apps betting advertisements are Enugu youth residents most often exposed to?

<b>Response category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Bet 9ja	242	61.72
Sporty Bet	50	12.76
Bet King	50	12.76
Others	50	12.76
Can't say	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 2: Mobile apps betting advertisements which Enugu urban youth residents are most often exposed to (Field survey, 2024)

Results from the analysis of table 2 showed 242 (61.72%) of the respondents are often exposed Bet9ja mobile apps advertisements more than any other betting company, 50 (12.76%) of the respondents are often exposed Sporty Bet mobile apps advertisements more than any other betting company, another 50 (12.76%) of the respondents are often exposed Bet King mobile apps advertisements more than any other betting company, and another 50 (12.76%) of the respondents are often exposed other mobile apps advertisements more than any other betting company. This means that most of the Enugu urban youth residents are most often exposed to Bet9ja mobile apps advertisements more than any other betting company.

Research question 3: Are youths in Enugu urban influenced on their betting behaviour as a result of their exposure to sports betting advertising on mobile apps?

<b>Response category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Highly Influenced	280	71.43
Influenced	30	7.65
Undecided	30	7.65
Uninfluenced	30	7.65
Highly Uninfluenced	22	5.62
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 3: Extent of influence of mobile apps betting advertising on the betting behaviour of youths in Enugu urban (Field survey, 2024)

The table 3 above revealed 280 (71.43%) of the respondents are highly influenced by the mobile apps betting advertisements which changed their behaviour to betting, 30 (7.65%) of the respondents are influenced by the mobile apps betting advertisements which changed their behaviour to betting, another 30 (7.65) of the respondents are undecided to the question whether or not they are influenced by the mobile apps betting advertisements which changed their behaviour to betting, another 30 (7.65) of the respondents are uninfluenced by the mobile apps betting advertisements which changed their behaviour to betting, and 22 (5.62%) of the respondents are highly uninfluenced by the mobile apps betting advertisements which changed their behaviour to betting. This means that most of the Enugu urban youth residents were mostly influenced by the mobile apps betting advertisements which changed their behaviour to betting.

Research question 4: Do sports betting companies fulfill what is promised in their mobile apps advertisements?

<b>Response category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strongly Agree	82	20.92
Agree	40	10.20
Undecided	20	5.10
Disagree	150	38.27
Strongly Disagree	100	25.51
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 4: Finding out if the sports betting companies fulfill what is promised in their mobile apps advertisements (Field survey, 2024)

The data above revealed that 82 (20.92%) of the respondents strongly agreed that sports betting companies fulfill what is promised in their mobile apps advertisements, 40 (10.20%) of the respondents agreed that sports betting companies fulfill what is promised in their mobile apps advertisements, 20 (5.10%) of the respondents are undecided on whether sports betting companies fulfill what is promised in their mobile apps advertisements, 150 (38.27%) of the respondents disagreed that sports betting companies fulfill what is promised in their mobile apps advertisements, and 100 (25.51%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that sports betting companies fulfill what is promised in their mobile apps advertisements.

This shows that the data generated from table 4 is an irony as why many Enugu urban youth residents' promises were not fulfilled, they still resort to the betting.

## **Discussion**

Research question 1: What is the level of exposure to mobile apps betting advertisements among youths in Enugu urban?

Table 1 indicated that most of the Enugu urban youth residents are highly exposed to mobile apps betting advertisements. This is supported by the findings of Korn, Reynolds, and Tim, (2015) who found that young people have been "overexposed" to commercial gambling advertisements during several youth popular television shows.

Research question 2: Which mobile apps betting advertisements are Enugu youth residents most often exposed to?

Table 2 showed that most of the Enugu urban youth residents are most often exposed to Bet9ja mobile apps advertisements more than any other betting company. Apart from sports betting, Bet9ja also have

horse race, car race and casinos and Enugu urban youth residents are exposed to all these advertisements on mobile apps. This is supported by the findings of Håkansson and Widinghof, (2019) who found that that nineteen percent (11–28% across different channels) of advertisements promoted gambling, with online casino being by far the most common type of gambling exposed.

Research question 3: Are youths in Enugu urban influenced on their betting behaviour as a result of their exposure to sports betting advertising on mobile apps?

The table 3 showed that most of the Enugu urban youth residents were mostly influenced by the mobile apps betting advertisements which changed their behaviour to betting. This is supported by the findings of Mwai and Mberia (2021) who found that the gambling behaviour of undergraduate university students in Kenya is influenced by the television betting advertisements on the gambling behaviour of undergraduate. Irresponsible gambling behaviour which is attributed to high frequency of television betting advertisements. The finding however, contradicts that of Binde (2009) who found that gambling advertising had no impact on their problems, slightly over half of them reported that advertising had a marginal impact, and one fifth reported a tangible impact.

Research question 4: Do sports betting companies fulfill what is promised in their mobile apps advertisements?

Table 4 was an eye opener to the deception of some business persons who deceive the gullible and the insensible youths to a business of hope without fulfilling them. This is supported by the findings of Aondowase, Udoudom and Pam (2023) who found that youths in Makurdi perceived sports betting advertisements as part of sports which has no harmful influence on them thereby justifying their regular participation in sports betting activities. This is in line with why they keep playing despite losing massively and betting companies not fulfilling their promises.

## **Conclusion**

The study assessed the influence of mobile apps betting advertisements on the habit of youth in Enugu urban. There is high level of exposure to mobile apps betting advertisements among youths in Enugu urban as majority of them are mostly exposed to Bet9ja mobile apps betting advertisements. However, the youths in Enugu urban are influenced on their betting behaviour as a result of their exposure to sports betting advertising on mobile apps as sports betting companies fulfill what is promised in their mobile apps advertisements.

The high rate of unemployed youths and some of them who think of the “get-rich-quick-syndrome” are gullible to mobile apps betting advertisements. The betting companies use deceptive advertising to influence the behaviour of the Enugu urban youth residents to patronize their business.

Having concluded the study, the following recommendations were made based on the findings:

1. Betting companies should be closed down to enable the youths be creative and work hard for their selves.
2. Youths should be rehabilitated in various skills to enable them be useful to themselves now and in the future.
3. Government should introduce entrepreneurship skills from the primary to the tertiary level.

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