



## **Youth Empowerment: Home Care Services Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

*Massive unemployment of young educated citizens in Nigeria has necessitated search for alleviation of the situation. This is the articulation of many programmes by the governments of the country. Unfortunately, these programmes have not yielded desirable goals due to corruption and inadequate planning. However, since home care services has been working in the developed world as a good employment avenue. It is seen as a good option for Nigeria, provided the issues of training, orientation and law are addressed.*

### **Introduction**

The word unemployment became popular in the Nigerian lexicon in the latter part of the 20th century following unprecedented level of youth unemployment, especially well-educated youths. It was at this time that people and organizations including governments and non-government organizations become more methodical about the definition of youth. In Nigeria, youth was (for the convince of the state) taken to be synonymous with young school graduates. It was based on this perspective that many government agencies and programs were launched to engage the young school leavers in productive activities.

### **Antecedent to Youth Empowerment in Nigeria**

Youth unemployment is growing in leaps and bounds every year. Asaju, Aromes and Anyio (2014), observed that the incidence of unemployment in Nigeria in this 21st century is disturbing or alarming. Aganga (2010) and Ogunmde (2013) cited in Asaju et al (2014) pointed out that unemployment rose from 11.5percent in 2005 to 19.7 percent in 2009 and over 37 percent in 2013. International Labour organization (2012) as cited in Asaju et al (2014) put unemployment in the world at over 12.6 percent. Aganga (2010) observed that in comparison with some African countries such as South Africa and Ghana in West Africa, 2010

unemployment was 25 percent and 14 percent respectively, while Nigeria was 37 percent. Statistics by World Bank in 2014 (Asaju et al, 2014) came up with figure of Nigeria unemployment at 22 percent, while it put youth unemployment rate at 38 percent. Subair (2013) found that youth between 15 and 35 years olds constitute nearly 60 percent of the Nigeria's population, and 30 percent of the work force. Moreover, he found that four million (4 million) people entered into the labour market every year. Similar perspective on unemployment in terms of rate was employed. For example, Subair (2013) observed that unemployment in Nigeria averaged 9.52 percent from 2006 until 2016, getting to an all-time high of 19.70 percent in the fourth quarter of 2009 and a record low of 5.10 percent in the fourth quarter of 2010. According to them (Asaju et al and 2014 and Subair 2013), unemployment rate in Nigeria measures the number of people actively searching for a job as a percentage of the labour force.

### **Youth Empowerment**

Youth empowerment as defined by KarPascual and Chickering (1999) is the process by which children and young people are motivated to take control of their lives. The authors believe that this is achieved through improved accessibility to resources, especially factors of products and relevant education.

As a matter of fact, the ultimate objective of youth empowerment is to make them improve the quality of their lives. The youth is made to be aware of the various programmes created by Federal, State and Local Government and also some non-government organization (NGOs) to enable them become self-employed and possibly employ others.

Some of these orchestrated programs include;

- a. Youth Empowerment in Agriculture Programme (YEAP) which was launched in 2013 by the then president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan.
- b. Youth Enterprise with innovation in Nigeria (YOUWIN). This was established in 2011.
- c. Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies (SMEDAN) established in 2003.
- d. National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) established in 2001.
- e. Subsidy Re-Investment and Empowerment Programme (SUREP), Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) all established in 2012.



- f. National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) established in 2012.
- g. Youth Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture (YISA) established in 2013.

Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, which may include corruption and lack of political will, none of the programmes yielded desirable results, instead, the unemployment rate in Nigeria kept rising to unforeseen level year after year. However, one most agree that a properly articulated and executed youth employment programme is the panacea to the problem of unemployment in the country.

The exposition above pointedly shows that at all levels, the government and citizens of Nigeria acknowledge that unemployment is major national catastrophe, and that a most viable way out is through youth empowerment/employment. Hence, the need to explore all possible options, including professionalization of home care services.

The importance of those programmes and others not mentioned here was that they doused the anxieties of those in the leadership position and some well-to-do members of the society. Second, it may have provided some lucky youth or job seekers who somehow had godfathers with something to eke out their existence or livelihood.

### **Home Care Services**

In its international model, Home Care Services are relatively new in Nigeria and exists in subtle and diffuse ways. Additionally, the term has different meaning to different countries all over the world. According to Thome, Dykes & Hallberg (2003), Breedveld, (2004), many works about home care are bereft of clarity in the definition of the activities, objectives/goals including the actual groups of training programmes. Home care can be conceived of as any care provided behind someone's front door, or more generally, referring to services enabling people to stay living in their home environment (Genet, Boerma, Kroneman, Hutchinson & Saltman, 2012) especially the sick and elderly population. Mapping professional Home Care in Europe (EURHOMAP, 2012) studies as cited in Gener et al (2012) defined home care as care provided by Professional Carers within clients' own homes. Although home care services focus on final care that is provided by professional carers; informal care plays a complementary role, and is more often than not provided by spouse or family members, friends and volunteers as a

matter of culture, tradition and sometimes moral obligation and are usually free of charge.

However, in this part of the world, there are privately hired non-professionals who are paid by the clients concerned. The question that should bug our mind is whether there are home care services in Nigeria? If Yes, are they sponsored either privately or by some non-government agency (NGOs), or public/government (Federal, State or Local Government). One may hazard a choice by saying that what appears as home care services in Nigeria is one's relatives, children (if they grow up into adult and working for their daily bread), spouses, friends, in some cases religious group.

### **Home Care Services in Advanced Countries**

Formal Home Care Services originated in Western European and America. Perhaps, because they have less security problem, less socio-economic problems, absence of inter-tribal conflict and stable political environment, their creative energy, motivation and interests were channeled towards giving members of their society a sense of belonging and means of livelihood; and also opportunity to exist to and be cared for irrespective of unfortunate socio-economic gap or differences. The practice focuses most on accessibility to health service, home care in case of elderly or aged members of the society. Home care in America, for instance encompasses all care provided to a person in the home together with all the various payer sources. Home care also provides the social services to the person more often than not via each state's Area Agency on Aging (Alliance for Home Health Quality and Innovation, 20017). A Guide to Derbyshire County Council, Home Care Services (2017) used the concept of Re-ablement service to mean 6 weeks intensive support to help a client regain some or all his/her independence as a result of admission, illness, a fall, a dip in confidence etc; and it is offered free of charge. Other services Derbyshire County Council offers in House Home Care Services are personal care such as washing, dressing, going to the toilet, assistance with medication etc; practical support which involves help with house work, shopping, laundry and food preparation etc. and finally social care which is concerned with helping to maintain one's social contacts, support to enable the person do his/her shopping, setting services for career respite etc. the staff of the agency works with the person or client to produce a personal plan in which involves indicating how you wish your care to operate or be delivered to you according to Derbyshire county council Home Services, (2017) all services are available seven days a week, 365 days a year. The times of one's attendance or calls



depends on the arrangement with the client. Home Care Services or Services or Personal Care Services are confounded and the amount one contributes is relative to his / her income.

### **Home Care Services in Nigeria**

Home Care Services in Nigeria began as a measure of health care services to underprivileged people with serious illness or terminal illness. This is also meant to help such people have access to medical care during illness. According to Onyeka (2011), this medical service was meant to serve as a palliative care. This palliative care involves the physical, emotional, practical and spiritual aspects of the patient's suffering in the course of the illness (Harding, Powell, Downing, Connor, Mwangi-Powell & Defilipp, 2008). According to Onyeka (2011) palliative care was officially introduced to Nigerian Government policy makers and the public in 2003 by the Palliative Care Initiative of Nigeria (PCIN) which later became known as Centre for Palliative Care Nigeria (CPCN).

It became located at the University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan. Onyeka (2011) noted further that before then, few private owned and missionary hospitals existed in obscurity. Day-care hospitals with the UCH was launched by CPCN in 2007. In 2008, pain and palliative care unit was established as part of the multidisplinary oncology centre of the University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital (UNTH) Ituku-Ozalla, Enugu State (Onyeka, 2011). Nigeria government made the first attempt in 2006 to address the too many problems concerning palliative care needs of Nigerian citizens by setting up the National Consultative Committee on cancer control in which there was a palliative care subcommittee (Onyeka, 2011). Onyeka (2011) noted that only Ugandan Government in Africa set example by prioritizing palliative care and made it accessible to entire population of the country which is about 22 million people.

Home Care Services in Nigeria is comparatively a 21st century phenomenon and may be said to be at the gestation period. Given the economic down turn in the country, problems of unemployment and security, developing and sustaining home care services seems to be a viable solution, since it entails empowering young and able bodied individuals.

However, one must have to admit that there are certain peculiar factors that must be considered in Nigeria. One is that the extended family system is still very active in many parts of the country. Another is the poverty that is rampaging the citizenry due to decades of corrupt leadership.

These factors especially poverty is considered a hindrance to professionalization of home care services in Nigeria. Since professionals must be paid commensurately to sustain their services. Additionally, many a Nigerian youth still look down on some categories of employment perhaps because of the level of corruption and sleaze in the public services, which make politicians and their accomplices to emass wealth overnight.

Indeed, professionalization of health care services in Nigeria, although cogent requires three basic steps of orientation (creation of awareness) in the country, establishment of training protocol (curriculum) and establishment of necessary legal framework for its practice. If these could be achieved, then home care services may eventually become a major “employer” of labour in Nigeria.

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