

IMPLICATIONS OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the implications of youth unemployment in Nigeria. These implications are social, economic and political. It is highlighted in the paper that youth unemployment is potentially dangerous as it sends disturbing signals to all segments of the society. The rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria is high, even during the periods of economic normalcy, i.e. the oil boom era of the 70s, unemployment was at (6.2%), 1980s (9.8%) and the 90s (11.5%). According to the National Bureau of Statistics Nigeria's unemployment rate increased to 23.9% in 2011, compared to 21.1% in 2010 and 19.7% in 2009. The country has a youth population of 80 million, representing about 60% of the total population with a growth rate of 2.6% per year, and the national demography suggests that the youth population remains vibrant with an average annual entrant to the labour force of 1.8million between 2006 and 2011. In 2011, 37.7% of Nigerians were aged 15-24 years and 22.4% of those between 25 and 44 were willing to work but did not get jobs (Olabanji, Ese 2014). Ignoring the political, economic and social roles they play amounts to threatening the very survival of Nigeria. The paper further sees hope for Nigeria only if youths are mobilized by way of genuinely socializing them into their roles in the stratification system. It therefore recommends

*educational system restructuring, reprioritizing the reg-
sector, provision of enabling environment among the ways that
will bring down to the barest minimum the youth unemployment
level.*

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, Unemployment, Political, Social,
Economic, prioritization, labour force.

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment is socially 'bad' just as output is socially 'bad'
The harm caused by unemployment (especially involuntary
unemployment) is measured in terms of the output cost to the
whole economy and the individuals who are affected.
Unemployment affects the business environment in a negative
direction as it represents a fall in the productivity level of the
economy. A rise in the level of a country's unemployment
means a fall in the level of the country's expected productivity
level, those people holding a job or registered as being willing
and available for work.

Some people without a job are really looking for work but have
not bothered to register as unemployed. These people are
normally not included in the official unemployment statistics for
registered labour force from an economic view point; such
people are in the labour force and are unemployed.

WHAT IS UNEMPLOYMENT?

Unemployment refers to a situation whereby factors of
production are not utilized in productive activity. With respects

to labour, when a person is willing and able to work and cannot get a suitable paid job, he is said to be unemployed. Amongst the two major classifications of unemployment are voluntary and involuntary unemployment, this work is concerned with involuntarily unemployment. This occurs when a person is willing to accept a job at the going wage rate but cannot get a job. (Lipsey F. G. et al 1987). When unemployment is involuntary, people are suffering more and the case for helping them is stronger.

WHO IS A YOUTH?

According to Ando and Magliani in Baumoul W. J. (1962), they divided the life cycle into 3. They are ages from 0-16 (autonomous consumers), 16-63 (labour force because they earn income), 63 and above (old age dependants).

EFFECTS OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

1. Unstable Political Environment:

Specially, no foreign government will allow its citizen to go and do business in a country that is politically unstable. To this effect, all the benefits associated with foreign investments will be drastically reduced especially that of creating new employment opportunities. It can be observed that Nigeria's current unemployment problem is caused by a combination of economic, social and political factors. In fact Bajoma (1996) has classified the causes of unemployment in Nigeria into three major categories. They are economic, social and political. Under the economic causes, he included factors such as the legacy of colonial rule, the boom era (1974-1981), and the consumption

patter. Social causes include factors such as rural-urban migration, demographic factors and educational factors. Political factors include: Political instability, ethnic problem, emigrants from neighbouring countries and the political economy of unemployment.

2. Unemployment and Social Crimes:

Unemployment accounts for most of the social crimes perpetuated by youths in the Nigeria society today. The accelerated level of prostitution, armed robbery, rape and all facets of violence can be largely attributed to the incidence of unemployment of youths. An examination of most of the apprehended criminals shows that a large number of youths engage in criminal activities are those without gainful employment but have been denied such opportunities. Youths can be seen as one of the core causes of the rising level of social disorder and insecurity permeating the entire country. Hagan J. (2006).

3. Youth Unemployment and Economic Growth and Development

The negative effects of high unemployment cannot be overemphasized. The abundant human resources if utilized could serve as great catalyst to economic growth and development but if otherwise could cause negative influence on the economy. The unutilized large human resources in Nigeria due to non-availability of employment opportunities have continued to impede on the prospect of growth and development in several ways. The resulting effect of youth unemployment

such as perpetration of violence and general insecurity threatens economic growth and development to a large extent.

4. Youth unemployment and Poverty:

One of the core causes of poverty in Nigeria today is the inability of many job seekers to secure gainful employment. Largely, the increasing level of unemployment can explain the increasing level of poverty in Nigeria for which available information puts at 70%. (Mary Coran and Martha S. (1980).

This ugly trend of unemployment rate in the face of rising cost of living have conditioned many people to a very low and indemnified standard of living in Nigeria (Ezike (2012). According to Saraki (2012), he said that “this is time we need to be careful in the issue of youth unemployment”. There are challenges before now and the key is issue of unemployment, particularly as it affects youths. The executive and legislative arms of government should evolve a policy on job creation. That’s why I commend the Federal Government on youth scheme introduced to produce 10,000 jobs across states and at public/private levels. According to Pedro T. et al (2004), there are two main effects of youth unemployment which make policy makers very much worried.

First, is that it produces economic waste of labour; secondly, it can cause human suffering. It can cause severe hardship and misery when the period is long. During this period of heavy long term youth unemployment like is obtainable in Nigeria now, the social and economic effects can be felt by everyone

including those employed. Heavy and prolonged unemployment among the youth can cause major social upheavals.

CONCLUSION

Combating or overcoming the challenges of the rising unemployment in Nigeria is a major task for the policy makers and economy managers alike. The consequences of growing youth unemployment phenomenon are such damning that no economy can afford to ignore them. The implications as noticed in the Nigerian economy can be traceable to non-availability of jobs for our teeming youth population. The need to address this ugly development becomes paramount. While the government takes the leading role in the task of employment generation by providing the enabling environment for economic activities, it is necessary to note that the battle against youth unemployment in Nigeria is like a war that is too important to be left for the generals alone; it cannot be left for the sole efforts of the government. All stakeholders must therefore work together to get over the problems of youth unemployment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Employment Generation through Educational system Restructuring:

Given the high level of unemployment in Nigeria, the development of entrepreneurial skills and initiatives should be of paramount importance especially in the higher education sector in order to facilitate the employment of graduates who will increasingly be called upon to be not only job seekers, but

above all, to be job creators. (Okebukola, 2001) in Ezie (2012). Nigeria is at its lowest ebb in human capital development and utilization because of its inadequate educational system which lends to produce more of those who lack job skills for employment than those the economy requires to remain vibrant. In view of this, to attack unemployment then, there is the need to restructure the educational system in respect of manpower production for the needs of the economy. Vocational skills should be given high priority as it is capable of generating self employment. The technological institutions in the country should be properly funded and equipped to ensure efficiency. Prior to entrance into high institutions, students ought to understand the implications of large number of people acquiring academic certificates without practical skills. This would motivate the youths to opt for disciplines that would earn them job independence afterwards.

2. Re-prioritizing the Agricultural Sector:

Nigeria is primarily an Agrarian economy. The current challenges demand that the Agricultural Sector should be prioritized again. This can be done not necessarily through the erstwhile cheap monetary policy program or the like but through the actualization of the resource ownership glamour as this would send the current indolent zones in the country back to agriculture which they have abundant resource endowment. (Ezie, (2012:57).

3. Provision of Enabling Environment:

The poor state of infrastructure in Nigeria has continued to remain a monumental problem to the Nigeria economic growth

and development in all facets. Self-engagement is seriously inhibited due to poor or lack of infrastructures; hence, the dependence of virtually all the unemployed youths on the government. The economic environment has continued to remain hostile to cottage, small and medium scale industries. There is the need for the government to efficiently meet the challenges of infrastructural envelopment in the entire country as this will help to lunch the private sector into full potentials. This will stimulate private investment and induce remarkable economic growth much more than government direct involvement in investment. This is because the empirical evidence for most African countries that private investment has significantly stronger effect on growth than does government investment probably because it is more efficient and perhaps less closely associated with corruptions (Tairu, 2003) in (Ezie 2012:58).

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