



## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCIES OF UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG THE YOUTHS IN NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper examines the socio-economic effects of youth unemployment in Nigeria as well as its causes and implications. Youths are very important stakeholder in any society. They are not only the future of Nigeria, but also a major stakeholder and useful resource in nation building. However, available data show that youth unemployment is very prevalent in Nigeria with far reaching implications for stability of the society. Unemployment has a negative multiplier effect not only on the individual involved but on the society as a whole. This paper therefore identifies the main causes of youth unemployment in Nigeria which include: adoption of untimely economic policy measures, corruption, wrong impression about technical and vocational studies, the neglect of the agricultural sector, poor educational Planning and poor enabling environment, anchoring the explanation of the causes of these youth unemployment on neo-liberalism that created economic and social dislocations. The paper argues that many anti-social activities such as political thuggery, militancy, restiveness and other social vices evident among the unemployed and jobless youths are real dangers to the stability of the country. Youth unemployment has been identified as one of the core causes of the rising level of social disorder and insecurity permeating the entire country of Nigeria. The paper concludes that addressing the problem of youth unemployment must involve all the stakeholders. Suggestion from the analysis therefore are that effective policy measures such as Re-prioritization of the Agricultural Sector, reformation of educational system and Provision of Enabling Environment that will drastically reduce unemployment and poverty should be adopted to eradicate the menace of youth unemployment.*

*Key words: Unemployment, youth, crime, instability and social vices*

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## **Introduction**

The problem of unemployment has remained intractable even in the developed economies of the world i.e. USA, Germany, France to mentioned but a few. Available records (Ipaye, 1998; ISHR, 2006) show clearly that in the two proceeding decades of the independence of Nigeria as a sovereign nation (1960s, 1970s), unemployment and its attendant multidimensional effects were not of national concern as they are today. The nation's agricultural, industrial and the bubbling public service sectors where able to effectively absorb most of the labour force. The agricultural sector for instance generated about 70% of the nation's employment opportunities and accounted for about 80% of the gross domestic production (Okafor, 2011) with the advent of petroleum products and the crude oil in the mid-70s, the economy was further strengthened as it grew at an average of over 11% revenue. The ensuring political instability and inconsistencies in the socio-economic and educational policies of successive government however emerged as major factors that led to the manifestation of high level of joblessness in Nigeria. In addition to these factors associated with unemployment is corruption which has assumed an endemic problem in the last three decades.

Nigeria is economically underproductive, relative to its potential for significant development (Omotosho, 2009). Again Nigeria's capacity to employ its own population seems to diminish progressively despite the country's quantifiable fiscal ability resulting from the production sales of oil. The level of unemployment in Nigeria appears to grow geometrically every year, in contrast to its regional neighbors most of who have far less resources. Adebayo and Ogunriola (2006), stated that Nigeria will have no prospect of measurable development of improving the welfare of its people; unless it enhances the chances of employment for its graduates. Statistics of Nigeria unemployment seems to consist, not of uneducated, rural populations, who have been uprooted by failing agricultural production resulting from the absence of mechanization and decreasing income but also of some highly educated population as well, who normally would from the

core of the productive vanguard in a developing country. Nigeria's underemployment and low productivity especially among youth constitute a vicious cycle that explains the endemic poverty, youth restiveness, insecurity and other associated social problems facing the country (Alabi and Alanana, 2012). This paper therefore examines the social economic consequence of unemployment among youth in Nigeria.

### **UNEMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTION IN NIGERIA**

The unemployment incidence in Nigeria affects the job seekers within the ages of 20 -24 and 25-44 years more while there is less incidence of unemployment within the ages of 15-19,55-59 and 65 years and above (NBS 2012; ). The age distribution of unemployment signals a great threat to the domestic economic and the survival of the Nigerian nation. This is because many energetic youths with dynamic resources wonder around without gain fit. Engagements. For instance, in December, 1998, the urban centre unemployment within the age bracket of 25-44 years was as high as 48.8 percent for males and 42.9 percent for females while the rural centre recorded 36.9 percent for males and 33.3 percent for females (Treichel, 2010). In December, 1999, a figure of 41.5 and 29.8 percent were recorded for males and females unemployment rate respectively while the corresponding time in 2000 had a record of 36.1 percent for male job seekers and 34.9 for females in the urban centre. In the rural centre, official records 5h December 1999 indicated a total of 27.6 and 27.8 percent unemployment rate for males and females respectively. The 2000 figure saw the rate for males increasing slightly to 32.2 percent with as slight decrease in female unemployment to 26.4 percent.

The secondary school leavers were worse hit the unemployment crisis. In December 1998, a total of 66.3 percent of -male and 62.0 percent of female unemployment were recorded at the urban centres while the rural centres had an estimate of 47.1 and 45.1 male and female job seekers respectively. As at December 1999, school leavers unemployment rate had risen to 67.0 males and 68.8 percent for females in the urban centres while the rural centres was as high as 59.1 and 55.7 percent for males and female

respectively. As at December, 2000, there was a marginal decrease in urban centres school leavers' unemployment to 61.5 and 68.1 percent for males and females respectively. A similar trend was recorded at the rural centres that put the figure at 46.7 percent for male job seekers and 49.3 percent for the females. For the polytechnic and university graduate, the data shows a relatively low unemployment rate as compared to the school leavers experience for instance, during the period under investigation, a peak of 10.0 –percentage rate of unemployment was recorded for polytechnic female graduates in 1998 while the male graduate records had its peak in 1999 with 15.0 with-percentages point in the urban areas. The rural area had a relatively lower unemployment rate of 6.3 percent for male job seeker and 5.6 percent for females. The University graduate unemployment rate in the urban centres had 8.5 percent record high in September, 1999 for males and 4.5 percent in June 1999 for females during the period under investigation (Oni, 2007). It should be noted however, that unofficial sources estimate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria sharply differs from the official estimate for instance, unofficial statistic peaks graduate unemployment at over 30 percent in the urban centres as against official estimate of 15.0 percent during the period under investigation.

The trend in the unemployment rate of primary school leavers and persons without formal education seems to be generally different from the levels of unemployment. While school leavers and graduate unemployment phenomenon is more concentrated in the urban areas, unemployment primary school-leavers and persons without education job seekers are found more in the rural areas than in the urban centres. Unemployment person's reached its peak for males in March 1999. The two peaks were recorded in the rural centres, while the male primary school leaver's unemployment rate peaked at 30.0 percent in June 1999, the female record peaked at 29.5 percent in June 1999, the female record peaked at 29.5 percent in December 2000 with troth peaks equally recorded in the rural areas. The higher number of unemployment primary school leavers and uneducated persons in the rural areas is explained by the lack of competitiveness of such job seekers in the urban centre where school leavers have taken over

virtually all the job opportunities available to them. Overall unemployment rate amounted to 19.7% of total Labour Force in March 2009, indicating a shape increase from 14.9% in March 2008. When disaggregated by sector, gave 19.2% for Urban and 19.8% for the Rural. The national unemployment rate as at 2011 stood at 23.9% (see Table 1).

**(Tables 1: unemployment rates 1995-2014)**

Year	Rates
1995	5.5
1996	8.9
1997	8.6
1998	7.7
1999.	8.3
2000	13.1
2001	13.6
2003	14.8
2004	13.4
2005	11.9
2006	12.3
2007	12.7
2008	14.9
2010	21.1
2011	23.4
2012	23.3
2013	23.7

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2014

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA**

The socio-economic effect of unemployment in Nigeria, like most other African countries is very server and threatening to the citizenry and the economy as a whole. The unemployment episode has continued to pose so many challenges to the survival of the Nigeria nation. While some of these consequences bother directly on the unemployed, others like epidemics are limitless in effects. Youth unemployment is a crucial issue in Nigeria

because the youth constitute a major part of the labour force and they have innovative ideas, which among other factors are important in the development process of the country. Apart from economic waste, it also constitutes danger to political stability (Gbosi, 2005)

Unemployment in Nigeria has affected youth from a broad spectrum of social economic groups: highly educated as well as less educated, men as well as women. However, statistics have shown that youths are more particularly stricken than any other segments in Nigeria (Okafor, 2011; Alabi and Alanana, 2012 and NBS, 2012). From the forgoing, it is obvious that unemployment especially among the youths impedes Nigeria progress in many ways.

### **Unemployment and personal well-Being**

Ezie (2012) in his study of the implications of youth unemployment asserts that unemployment in Nigeria has a very serious negative effect on the personal well-being of the unemployment. Until recently when a very small number of the affected people benefited from the poverty reduction program of the government, the effect was quite server on those involved. In cross sectional regressions, there is dear evidence that unemployment is associated with lower levels of psychological well-being. The unemployment is somewhat worse than being divorced in its effect on subjective measures of personal well-being unemployment dehumanizes the unemployment and causes partial or total loss of esteem among peers. The unemployment feels inferior before his peer group and sees life as totally demeaning. This is the situation of many of the Nigeria Job seekers (Chudi-Oji, 2015)

### **Unemployment and poverty**

Okafor (2011) asserts that one of the core causes of poverty in Nigeria today is the inability of many job seekers to secure gainful employment. This has further worsened the income inequality crisis that characterizes most African economies. Largely, the increasing level of unemployment can explain the increasing level of poverty in Nigeria for which available information currently puts at 70 percent. This ugly trend of unemployment rate in the face of rising cost of living, has conditioned many people to a very

low and undignified standard of living in Nigeria and the African region as a whole.

### **Unemployment and social crimes**

Unemployment accounts for most of the social crimes perpetrated by youths in the Nigerian society today. The accelerating level of prostitution, armed robbery, rape and all facets of violence can be largely attributed to the incidence of unemployment. An examination of most of the apprehended criminals shows that a large number of youths that engage in criminal activities are those without gainful employment. Some of these criminals are people who have the potentials for gainful employment but have been denied such opportunity. Unemployment then can be seen as one of the core causes of the rising level of social disorder and insecurity permeating the entire country of Nigeria (Alabi and Alanana, 2012).

### **Unemployment and Economic Growth**

The adverse effect of high unemployment on the domestic economy cannot be quantified. The availability of abundant human resources if utilized could be a great catalyst to economic growth but if otherwise, could exert negative influence on the economy. The unutilized large quantum of human resources in Nigeria due to non-availability of employment in several ways. The resulting effect of unemployment such as perpetration of violence and general insecurity threatens economic growth and development to a large extent. Therefore, rather than being a source of growth stimulation, the army of the unemployed remains a potential threat to the well-being of the economy. It is imperative to note that at a social level, prolonged unemployment usually results in some form of social pathology, as reflected by an increased crime rate and violent activities. It breeds discontent against the state, and any slight provocative issue or incident may trigger violent demonstrations and social unrest, which may result in loss of life and damage to property, if the situation is not handled properly by the authorities (Okafor, 2011)

## **CONCLUSION**

From the studies carried out, it has been concluded that the increasing crime and poverty in Ilorin west local government Area is due to the increasing unemployment in the area and in Nigeria as a whole.

Limited number of government and private industries established which cannot meet up with the enlarged and increasing population. The public service is already crowded and the government already cannot meet the demands of the public servants of regular salary payment and therefore cannot employ new ones.

Increase in the number of young school leavers beginning from the primary to tertiary institutions.

Poor economy of the country is also another major cause of unemployment.

Having examined at length the consequences of unemployment in Ilorin west, it is obvious that the society and government have to pay in curbing the situation under study.

However, the implementation of the recommendations below which were made after thorough investigation of the phenomenon under study, will serve as the basic step towards curbing the incessant rise in unemployment in Ilorin west local Government Area.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Since unemployment result in a lot of society disorganization, it therefore require a multiplicity of policies to reduce it. Therefore, the following recommendations are hereby suggested in order to help in reducing all the prevailing social disorganizations which are the social consequences of unemployment.

- As a first step, the government should create more employment opportunities. This should be done by investing capital into industrial projects in urban and rural areas, since it has been discovered that one major cause of unemployment in the study areas was the relatively few



industries, which has led to the local government experiencing excess labour hence high level of unemployment , so when industries are set up this will offer employment opportunities for our teeming population.

- The government should also improve infrastructural facilities in rural areas to stem the rate of rural-urban migration bring lack of labour in rural areas. Better infrastructural facilities such s good roads, availability of pipe borne water, electricity, good medical facilities, recreational centers, schools, e.t.c. could be provide to fight unemployment.

Since most rural areas are well disposed to provide self employment particularly in agriculture, any investment that helps to bring about the betterment of rural areas and stop the migration of youths from the rural areas.

- The government should also promote technical and self employment education. Since lack of skills causes unemployment the situation could be corrected with the restructuring of educational programmes to make self employment possible and to improve upon skill out of all labour. The level of unemployment is higher in general labour where there is lack of skill. Acquisition of skills can be a sure way of making labour more employable thus reducing unemployment.
- The government should also diversify the economy. One of the major causes of unemployment is the great reliance on one major source of economic wealth (mono-product economy). For effective control of unemployment, the economy must be diversified. Thus all aspects of production must be carried out e.g industrial agricultural and service oriented production. The government should sponsor self-employment ventures, unemployment could be reduced or controlled when the government sponsors agricultural and small scale industries initiated in Nigeria under the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the activities of the employment Directorate. There should be also greater investment in agricultural provision of irrigation facilities could help make agricultural and all season activity as well as encourage more people to make agricultural as a profession. Direct government participation in

agriculture could also reduced unemployment in agricultural labour. There should also be diffusion of information. Many remain unemployed because of lack of information on job opportunities both in private and public sectors. It follows that diffusion of job information both rural and urban centres could help minimize unemployment as currently done through the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) programme launched by the federal government under president Babangida, and the Poverty Alleviation Programme.

On the other hand, crime could be effectively controlled by providing adequate employment for all job seekers, reducing or lowering the level of inequality in the society, equipping the police force for effective patrol, and instilling discipline and the spirit of Mass Mobilization for Economic Recovery, Self Reliance, and Social Justice (MAMSER) in the general citizen and men and officers of the Nigeria police force. It is hoped that effective implementation of the above recommendations will help in solving the unemployment situation and lead to a better society.



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