Youth Unemployment, Deprivation and Educational Planning Intervention in Nigeria.

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Abstract
Youth unemployment poses grave economic and social problems for Nigeria and requires urgent attention. Youth are the engine room that propels any society to greater heights. This paper looks at the youths’ unemployment situation, deprivation and policy interventions. These youths have become a “generation at risk” because of the lack of sufficient or sustainable decent work making them extremely vulnerable. The paper also examines the theoretical theory to underpin it as well as consequences of youth unemployment and recommendations. The paper concludes that youth unemployment in Nigeria is endemic. Combating the challenges of the rising unemployment level is a major task for the Nigerian educational planners in their planning processes.

Keywords: Youth, unemployment, intervention, deprivation

Introduction
Globally, unemployment is a crisis with most developing countries with the high rate of unemployment. It remains a major challenge of modern economics around the world today. Nigeria is no exception. The unemployment situation in Nigeria has assumed a multi-dimensional phenomenon cutting across all facets of age groups, educational strata and geographical entities (Dandago & Muhammad, 2014). Unemployment is unevenly distributed across the age groups with youth between the ages of 15-24 carrying the greatest burden. More disturbing today, is ever rising trend of youth unemployment in the country. Education is a compulsory and a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, Social status, religion or ethnic background Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013). As unemployment looms large, youths are the worst hit. Unemployment in Nigeria has affected youths from a broad spectrum of socio-economic groups, both the well and less well educated, although it has particularly stricken a substantial fraction of youth from low income backgrounds and limited education. It is obvious that unemployment, especially the unemployment of graduates impedes Nigeria’s progress in many ways. Apart from economic waste, it also constitutes
danger for political stability (Ezie, 2012). International Labour Organization ILO (2012) added its voice when it averred that unemployment of the youth is the biggest threat to social stability in many countries of the world. Countries vary considerably in their definition of youth. The United Nations (UN) consider individuals under the age group of 15-24 years as youth (Awogbenle Iwuamadi; 2010). Nigeria however, a youth is defined by the National Policy on Youth Development as any individual who is a citizen of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, between the ages of 18 and 35 years (Youth Policy, 2007). Nigeria’s unemployment crisis is more serious. Subair (2013) documented that the unemployment rate of the youth is 38 percent and the bracket age of 15-35 years olds account for close to 60 percent of the Nigeria’s population and approximately 4 million youth entered into the labour market every year. While the developed countries are taking the threat seriously and restructuring their education and social security system to abate its growth and escape the eminent catastrophic retrenchments, Nigeria seem not to be doing enough (Alabi, 2014)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work (World Bank, 1998) Dictionary. Com defines an “Unemployed” persons as one “without a paid job but available to work”. The same site defines an “Unemployable” person as someone who is “not able to get paid employment because of a lack of skills or qualifications. Unemployment refers to a situation in which people who are capable of working and who are qualified by age to work but cannot find employment (AASSER, 2012).

Unemployment is a situation in which people who are capable of working on wage employment or self-employment, and who are qualified by age to work legally but cannot secure employment. Such employment can be of permanent, contractual or part-time nature. The most frequently cited measures of unemployment is the unemployment rate. In Nigeria, the unemployment rate measures the number of people actively looking for jobs as a percentage of the labour force.

According to Fajana (2000), unemployment refers to a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. It is one of the macro-economic problem which every responsible government is expected to monitor and regulate. The higher the unemployment rate in an economy the higher would be the poverty level and associated welfare challenges.

Unemployment in Nigeria today has become every youth’s nightmare. Six out of every ten unemployed persons are young women or young men (Vremudia, 2010). The general observation from researchers on youth unemployment, there is also a decline in the quality of employment available to youth as well as challenge of social and crime control become a serious issues as the rate of
unemployment becomes increasing unchecked.

Education should be planned in such a way that beneficiaries should be able to make use of skills and knowledge acquire in order to contribute meaningfully to the development of the society. It is against this backdrop that Coombs in Udoh and Akpa (2010) asserted that in planning education, the focus is making education more effective and efficient in responding to the needs and goals of the youth and society.

The age categories used to define youths are often fluid or elastic. According to ILO (2012) for employment statistics purposes however, youth are classified as individuals between the age of 15 and 24 years. There seem to be a consensus on the definition and usage of the concept, unemployment. According to Udu and Agu (2005), unemployment is a situation in which persons capable and willing to work are unable to find suitable paid employment. As define by International Labour Organization (2007), unemployed workers are those who are currently not working but are willing and able to work for pay, currently available to work and have actively search for work. Hornby (2010) defines unemployment as the facts of a number of people not having a job; the number of people without a job; the state of not having a job. In the same vein, an operational definition of unemployment will mean people who are able and willing to work are without jobs or cannot find work that is effective and productive to do. The unemployment situation in Nigeria is pathetic considering the fact that the country that is blessed with a lot of human and natural resources is not capable of providing employment for its teeming youth. As noted by Asaju, Arome and Anijio (2014), the youth holds the key to achieving the vision 20:20:20. The questions that arise from this facts is that why is the rate of youth unemployment.

The System theory will be used to underpinned this paper.

The systems approach requires that when public administrators plan, they have no choice but to take into account, environmental factors (political, social, economic, technological, ethical etc). In other words, it requires interrelated elements with daily interaction between environments external and internal (Ezeani, 2006).

This means that to solve the problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria, a consideration of the political, economic, social, ethical and even educational environments is important. This is because, for a problem like youth unemployment, its solutions are not sacrosanct with the governmental provision of jobs but others sources which can emanate from the environment. For instance, individuals who are well placed financially usually build companies, schools, banks etc for the purpose of employment and thus help in reducing unemployment in the country. Their decision to build and employ workers is influenced the environment and also influences the environment.

The issue of youth development is not of the government alone but for all, especially the individual youths. After all,
there are people who have developed themselves from scratch to something and at the same time, there are people whose people have the means to develop them to any level and standard and in any ramification yet such people outrightly refused to be developed. This is why we tend to study unemployment and youth development in Nigeria as a system with its processes as follows:

**Inputs:** These are human and material factors supplied to the system which are transformed into productive services. As an open system, the Nigerian government utilizes input demands in the form of claims and demands made by individuals or communities for actions to satisfy their interest while support is rendered when individuals or communities pay their taxes, rate, licenses, obey the bye-lay and the staff contribute their best in administering the social services. Such demands in this research is the provision of job by the government or the introduction and implementation of other policies and programmes that can help generate job for the youth such as programmes on entrepreneurship development, advancing policies that will encourage private sector led economy that will augment the government in employment generation bid. However, these are just demands made by the citizens on their government.

**Conversion Processes:** The inputs (demand for job creation and opportunity for advancement of private sector led economy which will encourage youth involvement in entrepreneurship), have to be converted. And this why this process is called conversion process. This is the process by which inputs are changed into output and is referred to as transformation. In Nigerian as an open system inputs like public funds, various categories of staff are utilized to provide services and other amenities such as roads, schools, water supply, health centres and employment opportunity as well as programmes for youth development to the people, such as the ministry of youth development and that of labour and productivity. Include also is the National Assembly and in fact, all the governmental arms and agencies. This is why it is a system as their decisions, actions and inactions convert the inputs into outputs.

**Output:** The services which the government sent out to the people as end product is known as output. In the case of Nigerian government, its outputs include provision of motorable roads, portable water supply, good and accessible markets and motor parks health centres etc, to the people of the area. But most specifically, jobs created to quell the unemployment and other conditions put in place to cushion the ill-effects of unemployment in any given economy.

**Feedback:** The various cycled nature of the system is accounted for by the feedback. In other words, some of the systems outputs are sent back into the system as new inputs or demands which lead to future output and so on in a continuing-never-ending flow of the system. Government as a system receives input in the form of people’s demands on them and their subsequent comments on
the services and amenities provided for the people based on their erstwhile demands. In our context, the government having provided employment opportunities for the citizens, the people will comment on the adequacies or otherwise of the job provided and such information sent serve as new input which will call for addition job creation or device another means of helping the unemployment situation. Our emphasis here is that it is this feedback mechanism that makes systems theory/approach complete.

**Interdependence:** This is the inter-working relationship between the parts of the system and the whole system. This shows that when a part of the system is affected in the course of any action, the various departments in the Nigeria government which include ministry of youth development, labour and productivity, finance, internal affairs, education, power and steel, the National Assembly, the states and local government as well as the civil societies and all well-meaning Nigerians are all interrelated to each other because they are all working towards the same goal the provision of social amenities and services such as job creation and employment opportunities.

This is why the problems of the unemployment in Nigeria should be solved to enable a cohesive unit of Nigerians motivated towards the attainment of the goals of developing the country. However, the theory warned that when attention is paid to development of youths the other factors, such as funding and good governance should also be stepped up.

**Consequences of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria**

Youth unemployment leads to anti-social behaviours such as; emergence of street children, involvement of youth in crimes and in armed conflict (militancy in the Niger Delta, and currently the Boko Haram crisis which is fuelled by youth unemployment and poverty in addition to religious and other related factors, and increased prostitution among young women, as well as exposure to HIV/AIDS (Curtain, 2000, Chingunta, 2002; Alabi & Alanana, 2012). In the Niger Delta, lack of employment opportunities was highly correlated with the high incidences of youth restiveness and conflicts (UNDP, 2006). An unwholesome aspect of youth unemployment in many cities in Nigeria is visible’ idleness whereby youth congregate at bars and eating places to drink, watch football matches, converse or smoke marijuana for substantial park of the day (Chigunat, 2002). Such places encourage the development of street gangs and criminal activities. They youth being denied of legitimate means of livelihood, grow up in culture that encourage criminal behavior. Unemployed youth roaming youth the streets have been given various names in different cities such as “Area boys” in Nigeria (Somavia, 2013).

Youth unemployment has also promoted ‘gangsterism’; many youth now engaged in violence, armed robbery, kidnapping, car snatching, illegal bunkering and fuel sales, and illegal important of arms, most of which have reached alarming levels in several Nigeria cities. Among you women, lack of employment opportunities has contributed
to poverty. It has also encouraged prostitution as a means of survival in several towns and cities (Somaya, 2011). Supporting the above, Gilbert (2010), Alabi, (2012) stated that lack of employment has also encouraged prostitution. Girls trafficked from Nigeria come mainly from Niger Delta states such as Edo State, Delta, Imo and other states in the southern part of Nigeria.

Thus youth unemployment poses grave economic and social problems for Nigeria and requires urgent attention. Youth should be made a priority group for employment and poverty reduction programmes. It should be noted that any society that fail to utilize its skilled manpower adequately in a national economic pursuit, cannot achieve its education and economic goals (Nwadiani; 2000).

According to European Youth Forum (2013), Unemployment among young people could also leads to reduced level of happiness and mental health problems. Youth unemployment brings about the phenomenon of adult children who despite their relatively advanced age still live with and depend on their parents due to lack of job and financial capacity. They have remained the children they were when they were adolescents in the secondary school. They have reached marriageable age but could not afford to marry or be married. The implication for this scenario in the future is that we are going to have men and women in their 60’s who will still be raising babies.

The large number of youths who are unemployed is capable of undermining democratic practice as they constitute a serious threat to democracy if engaged by the political class, for clandestine activities such as political assassination thuggery and the like (Adeolu, 2014). Ambitious young people facing bleak prospects at home often seek opportunities elsewhere sometimes risking their lives. Many have died in the process of escaping to the developed countries.

What Government has done to address problem of Youth Unemployment

Different programs have been introduced by various administrators over time to address youth unemployment, which has been an issue of significant public policy concern since the days of the structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). In fact, youth unemployment became the focus of the social policy of the military government that ruled Nigeria for much of its years as an independent nation. The initial reaction of the government was to draft unemployed youth to public programmes such as Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) and the Directorate of Food Road and Rural Infrastructure (DIFRRI), which provided immediate and direct jobs to participates interested in agriculture. More coordinated and planned measures later followed, and these are classified into three categories: labour demand, labour supply and labour market interventions.

Labour demand strategy focused on creating jobs immediately through strategy public workers or creating certain jobs in the private sector aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and skills enhancement.

Labour supply strategy dealt with the training and education of prospective jobs seekers. The labour market intervention
strategy focused on improving the labour market and matching demand and supply interrelationships. Certain institutional arrangements and agencies have been established to promote employment among youths. Two of the most prominent programs include the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment, Program (SURE-P), the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YOU-WIN). The SURE-P is the flagship of recent efforts to provide jobs opportunities to graduates of tertiary institutions. It is more or less a whole range of activities and programmatic Schemes, including the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), Community Services Scheme (CSS), Vocational Training Scheme (VTS), and Community Services, Women and Youth Empowerment (CSWYE).

Conclusion

Youth unemployment in Nigeria is endemic. Combating the challenges of the rising unemployment level is a major task for policy makers and economic managers alike. The consequences of growing unemployment phenomenon are such that no economy can afford to despise. This is considering the fact that 70% of the entire Nigeria’s 150 million populace are youths whose about 71% are unemployed majorly graduates who are from 20 years and above, affecting adversely the workforce utility of the country.

Recommendation

1. **Genuine Statistic on unemployment**: A step towards tackling unemployment would be a database of all unemployed Nigeria’s. This could become a source of information about unemployed Nigerians and include details like age, gender, skills and length of unemployment and eventually make it easier to introduce unemployment benefits.

2. The School Curriculum should be changed to accommodate inculcation of technical skill which will help the youths acquire employable skills.

3. Nigerian attitude towards made in Nigeria Products As a Key part of the industrial revolution embarked upon by the Federal, Government, States, ministries, departments and agencies will now be compelled to buy made in Nigeria products in line with the local content provision for government procurement. This is aimed at increasing the productive capacity of local industries for job creation, wealth generation and ultimately economic growth and development.

4. **Business Friendly Environment**: The government has to make it easier and cheaper for the private sector to start and run business in Nigeria. A situation where companies are taxed in multiples, where there is no preference given to industries in terms of power supply and provision of infrastructure cannot lead to sustainability for private sector businesses. When the private sector cannot sustainably grow its business operations how can it
when service without laying off workers to cut costs.

5. **Promotion of investment in agriculture.** The government should provide generous loans, land infrastructure (ie homesteads, electricity, water, roads) to youths who will take up farming in industrial scale farm settlements. All loans, land and infrastructure will be paid for by the farmers over the long term and this will ensure that their farming operations are driven by the nature of the free market –profit seeking, high efficiency, accountability.

6. Deregulation of the oil, water and power industries will encourage investment in these industries, generate jobs and ensures availability of petroleum products, potable water and electricity to more Nigerians.

7. Make use of direct-labour and local content in executing public works projects. This will save foreign exchange, limit capital flight from the economy and improve technical skill set of youths who can then utilize these skills when they set up their companies in the future. For more technical projects a few foreigners can be invited to supervise the local content to execute these projects. By so doing there will be transfer of skills to the local population. Incentives such as tax breaks can also be giving to the private sector to encourage them to utilize local content in their economic activities.

References


