

EMPOWERING THE YOUTHS FOR SELF RELIANCE: A PANACEA TO UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The problem of unemployment among youths is no longer news in recent times. This has taken a different dimension in the 21st century with good number of youths roaming the street in search of job. It is well acknowledged that in today's labour market, the numbers of youths that are looking for job are more than the available jobs. This therefore leads to scrambling, survival of the fittest and scarcity of job. Against this background, this paper is going to examine how youth empowerment for self reliance is a remedy for the continuous rise in unemployment and the writers will make use of secondary data in this work. The paper reveals that in order to reduce the number of youths that are unemployed, their empowerment is sine qua non because it is practically impossible for the government to provide enough job opportunities for all the youths. The paper also reveals that empowerment of the youths will help in the reduction of crime and in the promotion of the nation's GDP, hence this should form part of government's agenda. The paper concludes that when the youths are empowered, it will make them to be independent and engaging, thereby reducing the rate of kidnapping, theft, killing and all sorts of criminalities that are prevalent in the society today. It therefore recommends that the government should make it part of their agenda to always empower a certain number of youths yearly which will help in the reduction of the burden of more job expectations from her. It also recommends that the church and other nongovernmental organizations should make their contributions in reducing the rate of unemployment.

Keywords: Empowerment, Youth, Self-reliance, Panacea, Unemployment, Nigeria.

Introduction

Nigeria is a country which is endowed with abundant human and natural resources, stands as the largest economy in Africa. However, beneath the veneer of economic potential lies a stark reality of widespread unemployment, especially among its youthful populace. With a burgeoning youth demographic comprising a significant portion of the country's

populace, the imperative to address the unemployment crisis is not merely a matter of economic policy but a moral obligation to ensure the prosperity and stability of the nation. The youth bulge presents both an opportunity and a challenge, where harnessing the potential of this demographic dividend requires a concerted effort to empower youths for self-reliance. Empowering the youths for self-reliance represents a paradigm shift from dependency on formal employment to fostering entrepreneurship, skills development, and innovation. At its foundation, self-reliance entails equipping youths with the requisite knowledge, skills, and mindset to create their own opportunities, thereby reducing their dependency on the formal job market. This approach not only cultivates a culture of innovation and resilience but also unlocks the latent potential of Nigeria's youthful population as drivers of economic growth and social change.

Central to empowering youths for self-reliance is a comprehensive strategy that encompasses education, skills development, and access to finance, mentorship, and supportive policy frameworks. Investing in quality education that is relevant to the needs of the labor market is paramount in equipping youths with the requisite skills and competencies to succeed in the 21st-century economy. This entails a shift towards a more practical, experiential learning approach that fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial mindset from an early age. Furthermore, creating an enabling policy environment is essential to incentivize youth entrepreneurship and innovation while removing bureaucratic barriers and red tape. This includes streamlining business registration procedures, providing tax incentives, and implementing supportive regulatory frameworks that protect the rights of entrepreneurs and investors. Targeted interventions to address gender disparities, promote social inclusion, and empower marginalized youths are essential to ensure that the benefits of empowerment are equitably distributed across society. Empowering the youths for self-reliance holds the key to unlocking Nigeria's vast economic potential and addressing the scourge of unemployment. This can be done by investing in education, skills development, and access to finance, mentorship, and supportive policy frameworks; also collaboration between educational institutions, industry stakeholders, and government agencies to ensure that curricula are aligned with the demands of the labour market. Vocational training programs, apprenticeships, and internship opportunities can provide youths with hands-on experience and exposure to various industries, thereby enhancing their employability and entrepreneurial prospects.

Nigeria can harness the creativity, energy, and innovation of its youthful population to drive sustainable economic growth and social development. As the nation charts a course towards a brighter future, it must prioritize empowering its youths as agents of change, resilience, and prosperity. Only then can Nigeria truly fulfill its promise as the giant of Africa and a beacon of hope for future generations. This research sets the stage for an

exploration into the multifaceted dimensions of unemployment in Nigeria and the transformative potential of empowering its youths for self-reliance.

Concept of Unemployment

The conception of unemployment has raised dust among scholars of various disciplines. Nwagwu (2014) conceives unemployment as the number of the economically active population who are without work but available and seeking for work. Nwagwu's conception is not out of place as Ajufo (2013) confirms that youths are a particular segment of the national population that is sensitive, energetic, active and the most productive phase of life as citizens. For Nwagwu, there are many youths who are capable to work, yet no job is available; this includes people who lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left their work. This idea shows that some people are unemployed, not because there is no job, but that they willingly abandon their former jobs in search of a better one, or that they do not want to be actively involved in the labour market. However, Akintoye (2008), faults the application of the Nwagwu's definition across countries, especially for the purpose of comparison and policy formulation, as countries characteristics and commitments are not the same towards resolving unemployment problems. For example Agbodike, Igbokwe and Umeifekem (2015), argue that the preponderance of housewives who possess the ability and willingness to work, the definition of the age bracket, all stand as limitations to the definition given by Nwagwu. Adebayo (1999) describes unemployment as:

When members of the labour force wish to work but cannot get job...youth unemployment is the conglomerate of youths with the diverse background. Youth unemployment is the conglomerate of youths with diverse background, willing and able to work but cannot find any or cannot find the type of job that they are trained to do at their area of expertise. When the supply for labour outstrips the demand for labour, it causes unemployment. Given the lack of sufficient employment opportunities in the formal sector, young people may be forced to engage in casual work and unorthodox livelihood source, thus leading to underemployment. (p. 90).

Adebayo's idea suggests that some are unemployed, not because there is no job but that the skills and knowledge they possess may not be required in labour market or in the particular firm they are seeking for employment. Also, Adebayo's view is correct, but it is pertinent to observe that while some of the youth engage in casual work as a result of unemployment, others might indulge in social vices like kidnapping, drug abuse, armed robbery, prostitution among others. Englama (2001) maintains that the inflow to unemployment can also come from people not previously in the labour forces; school leavers (new entrants), and people who once had a job, then ceased even to register as

unemployed, and are now coming back into the labour force in search of job, that is re-entrants. The population of every economy is divided into two categories, the economically active and the economically inactive. Njoku and Okezie (2011) states that “the economically active population (labor force) or working population refers to the population that is willing and able to work, including those actively engaged in the production of goods and services (employed) and those who are unemployed” (p.210).

Coming to youth unemployment, it is paramount to point out that youths occupy a prominent place in any society. They are one of the greatest assets any nation can have. Apart from being the leaders of tomorrow, it could be observed that they out-number the middle-aged and the aged in our nation. National Youth Development Policy (2001) asserts that the youth are the foundation of a society; their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pattern of development and security of a nation. Through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides. Youths are also most volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population in terms of social-economic, emotion and other aspects. Ajufo (2013) attests that they constitute about 40 percent of the more than 140 million people of Nigeria. She further opines that the Nigeria’s unemployment rate is projected at over 11 percent compared to the average rate of 9.5 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa, young people aged between 15 and 24 years account for 52.9 percent of unemployed people while those aged between 25 and 44 years accounted for 41.1 percent. Therefore, those in age bracket of 15 and 44 years account for 94 percent of the total unemployed persons in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the dynamic interplay between personal factors, environmental influences, and behaviour. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) provides a lens through which we can understand and promote empowerment among youths for self-reliance. In this theory, individuals learn and develop behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Firstly, SCT highlights the importance of positive role models in inspiring and guiding youths towards self-reliance. By showcasing successful individuals who have achieved self-reliance through entrepreneurship or other means, youths can observe and emulate their behaviours and strategies. Secondly, SCT emphasizes the role of self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations. Empowerment programs should focus on building youths' confidence and self-belief by providing them with opportunities for mastery experiences, social persuasion, and vicarious experiences. Lastly, SCT underscores the significance of behavioral modeling in shaping youths' attitudes and behaviours towards self-reliance. Through experiential learning, hands-on

activities, and positive reinforcement, youths can acquire and internalize the skills and mindset necessary for self-reliant behaviour. By leveraging these principles of SCT, empowerment initiatives can equip youths with the necessary tools, confidence, and motivation to pursue self-reliance, thereby reducing unemployment and fostering sustainable economic development in Nigeria.

History of Unemployment in Nigeria

Although it may be difficult to trace the history of unemployment in Nigeria, it could be said that before the colonial period our people were mainly farmers until the era of civilization which brought White collar jobs and the need to be educated in order to gain employment. Agriculture and White-collar jobs thrived in the early 60s but the oil boom in the 70s made both the government and most citizens to decline interest in Agricultural sector and focused more on the oil sector which could only provide employment to few educated and those who have the technical know-how in the oil sector. Oye, Ibrahim and Muhammad (2011) confirm that youth unemployment in Nigeria is high, even at the period of oil boom of the 1970s, it was rated at (6.2%), 1980s (9.8%) and the 1990s (11.5%). Falae (2004) states that “the balance of payment and budget deficits of 1978, made worse by the misuse of import license between 1980-1982, had plunged the domestic economy into deep crises by 1981 when hyperinflation coexisted with unemployment and gross underutilization of industrial capacity” (p.33). Akintoye (2008) points that national unemployment rate rose from 4.3 per cent in 1970 to 6.4 per cent in 1980. This fluctuated around 6.0 per cent until 1987 when it rose to 7.0 per cent. Ezeanya (2011) posits that by the end of 1985, the unemployment situation in Nigeria had reached desperate and alarming proportions. Okafor (2011) observes that:

Out of 80 million Nigeria youths, 64 million of them are unemployed, while 1.6 million are under-employed. The 1990-2000 data on youth unemployment showed that the largest group of the unemployed is the secondary school graduates. Also, 40% of the unemployment rate is among urban youth aged 20 - 24 and 31% of the rate is among those aged 15-19. Also, two thirds of the urban unemployed are ranged from 15-24 years old. (pp. 362-363).

It is important to note that the figures above may not have captured in totality the youth unemployment situation in Nigeria. From the above it could be deduced that unemployment problem in Nigeria rose in the early 1980s and has continued till date.

Causes of Unemployment in Nigeria

Corruption

High level of corruption in Nigeria has robbed the country of developing a vibrant economic base in spite of her abundant natural resources. Massive corruption is perpetuated in every sector and has permeated the entire social structure of Nigeria. Okafor (2005) asserts that:

Fund meant for developing projects which could have generated employment have been misappropriated, diverted or embezzled and established away in foreign banks. Endemic corruption has robbed the country of the chance of using more than \$ 500 billion dollars, estimated revenue from the sale of oil in the last 50 years to develop a vibrant economy that would have created jobs for the youths in the various sectors of economy. (p.3).

It is corruption that would make aged workers who are supposed to retire to fortify their ages to stay more years in office. Others register their family members who may not be alive or not working in that office, to be receiving salaries, while some employ people from their ethnic group whether qualified or not, while qualified job seekers are neglected. In Nigeria, corruption in the civil service and other sectors has led to employment to be given to ghost workers while the qualified and available youths who are ready to work are neglected.

Neglect of the Agricultural Sector

The neglect of the agricultural sector has no doubt contributed to unemployment in Nigeria at large. Acres of land lie fallow without being cultivated over the years and the few youths who are farmers are not adequately financed by both the state and federal government nor adequate modern farm implements given to them; which does encourage and motivate other youths to join the business. Agbodike, Igbokwe and Umeifekem (2015) observe that before now, agricultural sector has been the leading provider of employment in Nigeria, especially in the sixties and in the seventies when the sector provided employment for more than 60 percent of the Nigerian population and also its products were major stay of our economy. However, in the wake of oil discovery and oil boom in the late 70s, the attention on this anchor of the economy was gradually drawn away to the oil sector where employment generation capacity is very low. The resulting effect is the large number of job seekers who have no place in the oil industry and the multi-national co-operations. Even with the expansion of the industry from oil to gas, unemployment has continued to grow at an alarming rate. The neglect of the agricultural sector has been to the extent that Nigeria can no longer grow enough grasses to supply to

ranches, as She imports grasses from other nations to be able to supply to Fulani Herdsmen in order to curb the clashes between farmers and Fulani Herdsmen. Agricultural sector is very important as it will not only provide food security but employment especially to the able-bodied youths hence, it is because of the great role it plays that made President Buhari to tell Nigerians (youths) to go back to the farm yet no effort has been made in provision of modern farm equipment and making them available for youths in order for them to active part in commercial agriculture.

Economic Recession

It is obvious that the economy of Nigeria has played into recession due to poor administration, corruption, over dependency on oil. Unemployment rate increases whenever the overall economy undergoes into a recession. During this recession, many workers in various states including were laid off especially by the private sector due to lack of finance to pay them which increases unemployment rate.

Insecurity and Poor Enabling Environment

The poor enabling environment that characterizes the economy over the years has continued to pose serious challenges to employment generation in Nigeria. This, coupled with insecurity in the country, has continued to hamper investment drives and thereby reducing the prospects of employment generation. Okafor (2011) points out that it is pertinent to note that no responsible or sane investor would want to invest in a country characterized by insecurity, confusion and uncertainty. Besides the reluctance of new investors to come in to invest in insecure and unstable environment, the existing investors may wish relocating their investments to safe haven. Many job seekers who would have embarked on self-employment programmes are unable to do so, because of the hostile and frustrating environment where there is epileptic power supply, multiple taxation and even if they buy generating sets for stead electricity, they still pay high bills. Others who make attempt are forced to wind up due to absence of basic infrastructures such as inaccessible roads and the overall heat of the investment environment. All these on the run long will exacerbate the crisis of youth unemployment and further reduce the economic fortunes of Nigeria

Presence of Ghost workers

This is a major problem being experienced in the civil service of our country as some highly placed officials use their position to fix in their relations and friends who do not come to work but are in the pay roll of the government while youths who are qualified are not employed. Obaze (2016) opines that:

High among the problems bedeviling Nigeria's public service is the scourge of ghost workers. The problem is now affecting the national economy. In a nation where personnel costs represent forty percent of government to recurrent expenditure, milking of government through ghost workers constitutes a chunky position of recurrent expenses. After a verification exercise among military retirees, the number of pensioners was reduced to 19,203. Translating to a downward revision of monthly pension expenses by N575 million. Finance Minister Kemi Adesoun, revealed 23,000 ghost workers were detected in the federal ministries departments and agencies. Recount ghost workers discoveries within the states include, Plateau 5,000, Kano 8,000, Anambra 850, Kebbi 9,300, Osun 71 and Niger 7,000. By extrapolation, the remaining thirty states could easily have between 100,000 to 151,000 ghost workers. Prevailing figures indicate that there are ghost workers in Nigeria's public service. Reportedly, some 71, ghost pensioners exist on the federal pay roll. (pp. 10-11).

Ghost workers essentially represent dysfunctionality in governance. They exist, because every bureaucracy creates its own weakness. From the statistics above ghost workers exist in Anambra. The presence of ghost workers that is bedeviling the state and Nigeria at large has worsened the menace of unemployment in the country.

Lack of Meritocracy in Public and Private Sector

The Principle of Federal Character in Nigeria could be said to have contributed to lack of meritocracy in employment. This practice is not farfetched in the various states in the country. According to Kolawole (2013):

As Nigeria gallops towards 100 years of amalgamation, one of the most contentious issues has been the place of quota system and meritocracy. Campaigners argue that Nigeria is backward, because public offices are not filled on the basis of merit. We promote mediocrity under the guise of federal character, by not giving the jobs to the best candidates. In other words, let there be open competition for both the elective and appointive positions, so that the most qualified will always occupy them. This stand point means that there should be no zoning or rotation of political offices. There should be no quota system and federal character. (p. 2).

The above assertion means, for instance, that all the ministers of the federation can come from one state as long as they are the best or the most qualified. Even in Anambra state it could be that there exists quota system in employment among the local governments, this may not augur well at reducing unemployment among youths who are qualified. Lack of meritocracy in employment in both public and private sectors has resulted to

unemployment which has hindered and continued to hinder the development of our nation.

Mono Economy (Oil Trade)

Since the discovery of crude oil at Olobiri in 1956, it has contributed immensely to Nigeria's revenue. Although there are other sectors in Nigeria, greater focus has been given to oil sector at the expense of other sectors. And with the fall in price of oil in the international market, our economy has been affected and revenue allocation to states has reduced. Due to the inability of the oil sector to employ a large number of our talented youths, it could be said that mono economy (oil trade) has limited the rate of youth employment.

Nepotism and Favouritism

This contributes to unemployment of youths in Nigeria at large. It could be said that most times those in the helm of affairs in some public and private establishments employ their kinsmen, whether they are qualified or not at the expense of able-bodied youths capable to work and have the required skills. Okagba (2017) laments:

I am convinced that nepotism (favouritism) granted to relatives, friends and political benefactors in various fields is one of the worst forms of corruption. It is not only the root or foundation of corruption in Nigeria, it is also the fuel that feed graft, impoverishes the nation and sets off one section (those who are benefiting from nepotism) against the others (those being made to lose out. (p. 5).

It could be observed that the problem of nepotism and favouritism, is a hindrance to the national development. For instance, in Nigeria the current administration seems to favour the Northerners and the Southerners as most of prominent posts are occupied by them, while the Easterners could be said to be the least favoured. Even in Anambra state, key political positions may probably be given to people from the side of the governor. This attitude now seems to become a norm in Nigeria where leaders first and foremost favour their kinsmen with major official posts (even though they claim that they are qualified and suitable for the positions) before considering others which suppose not to be so. Many youths have been denied employment not that they are not qualified, but because the employers focus their employment target on their kinsmen.

Dependency on White Collar Jobs

It is no more news that the rising level of unemployment in Anambra and Nigeria at large is due to youths over dependency on white collar jobs. Some youths think that it is only

white-collar jobs that pays higher income and attracts social respect than other means of employment, while others have refused to learn entrepreneurial skills to earn a living thus, have no meaningful job. Okeke (2004) laments that so many youths have stayed at home over the years due to inability to secure non-existence or at best scarce white-collar jobs.

Population Growth/ Youth Rural-Urban Migration

Nigeria has continued to experience high rate of population growth. This increasing population growth has produced an overwhelming increase in the youth population thereby resulting in an increase in the size of the working age population. Related to the rapid population growth is the massive rural-urban migration by the youth. According to Ajufo (2013), the high degree of geographical mobility of youth in Nigeria is in form of rural to urban which has been influencing youth unemployment. In Anambra, youths migrate to the cities more than other migrants and in the cities; job opportunities are very limited due to poor enabling environment. Thus, the high rate of youth rural-urban migration has continued to create unemployment.

Lack of Employable Skills due to Inappropriate School Curricula

This is another factor contributing to the rise of youth unemployment. Mcgrath (1999) cites that analysts have argued that in Nigeria generally, the skills that job seekers possess do not match the needs and demands of employers, Kent and Mushi (1995) enunciate that the education system in Nigeria has its liberal bias which indeed over supplies the labour market with graduates who do not possess the skills required by employers. It could be observed that many graduates were not serious with their studies while in school as some of the males join cult groups, while the females involve in prostitution. At the end of their stay in the university, most of them cannot defend their discipline as they have poor results that cannot avail them a meaningful placement in the Nigerian labour market. Oladele, Akeke and Oladunjoye (2011) elucidate that many graduates in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial skills to facilitate self-employment. Many departments in Nigerian universities do not allow their students to go for Industrial Training (IT) which is one of the means of acquiring entrepreneurial skills. According to K. Nwadiakor (personal communication, 23rd March 2024) states that students in Faculty of Arts Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka do not go for Industrial Training thus, the former Dean of the Faculty Prof. B.A.C. Obiefuna and other concerned lecturers are making efforts to see that very soon students from that faculty will be allowed for Industrial Training. This will create avenues for them to learn skills that will prepare them for future opportunity.

Poor Economic Growth Rate

The atmosphere in Nigeria since the late 80s has been very hostile to economic growth and development. “The high level of corruption, mismanagement of public funds, harsh and unrealistic economic policies, and insecurity in parts of the country coupled with long term despotic rule of the military among other factors has dampened the spirit of economic growth for a long time. The situation in the 90s was so terrible that analysts described the period as a lost decade to Nigeria in terms of economic growth and development” (Damachi, 2001). Presently, there is poor economic growth as Nigeria becomes a country where almost greater number of the goods and services are imported while our industries are left to die. When these industries are functional it will boost employment rate.

Dangers/Consequences of Unemployment in Nigeria

Social Effects

Unemployment causes increases in crime rate in the society such as robbery, kidnapping, prostitution, cultism, drug trafficking, online fraud and so on. Online fraud popularly called *Yahoo Yahoo* is the most crime which is evoke for youths now as many youths see it as a short cut to quick wealth and many unemployed youths are involved in it. Some unemployed youths involve in these crimes as a means to earn a living. While others who do not want to join these high rated crimes involve in examination malpractices, gambling. This teaches the younger generation negative options available for survival and creates insecurity of live and properties in the society.

Economic Effect

It could be observed that, as far as unemployment affects the individual, the most economic effect is loss of income and that unemployment is in the first place of problem of poverty. Dayomi (1992) avers that the economic effect of unemployment include; fall in national output, increase rural-urban migration, waste of human resources, high rate of dependency ratio, poverty among others. The reduction in employment has left many youths without purchasing power as some of them who have lost their jobs due to one reason or the other do not have what it takes to buy Tricycle or open their own shop.

Psychological Effect

There is this psychological effect which an unemployed person suffers. Nexis (2009) opines that:

Unemployment, particularly when unexpected or in voluntarily, may take its toll on: Mental health. A large body of scientific evidence demonstrates convincing evidence that unemployed people manifest lower levels of psychological well-being

than their employed peers. Unemployment has been linked with a number of psychological disorders; particularly anxiety, depression and substance abuse, dangerous behaviour includes suicide and violence toward family members or others also correlate with un-employment. (p.17).

Nexis' line of thought is affirmative; the shame of unemployment makes many youths to involve in alcoholism and use of hard drugs to forget their problems. With time, they become addicted to hard drugs and alcohols. Prolonged unemployment and poor working condition can be very damaging to one's health. Agbodike, Igbokwe and Umeifekem (2015) view that:

Young men and women, who have put in a decade or two in schools and colleges, have dreams and aspirations. These are dreams of securing satisfying jobs following their years of struggle, meeting basic necessities of life (food, clothing, shelter and healthcare) graduating to a life of comfort and dignity and, eventually, enjoying the luxuries of life. The trauma of seeing their dreams shattered week after week, month after month, can and does lead to deep psychological scars that are very difficult to face at such a young age. These can impact any individual's self-esteem and can lead to clinical depression. (p. 23).

Political Instability

Okafor (2011) asserts that it is evident that youth unemployment in Nigeria will have a lot of implications for stability of democracy in Nigeria. It is misplaced to argue that one of the greatest threats to democratic stability and sustenance in Nigeria is the large army of unemployed youths. Bubbling with energy and innovations, these youths could be used for destabilizing influence in Nigeria by the politicians who may wish to capture power at all cost or unleash mayhem to their political opponents. Sometimes, most of the unemployed youths are used as thugs during election periods. Some politicians give them guns to kidnap political enemies and once in office they do not settle these youths and cannot make efforts to retrieve the guns from them. Anyanwu (2009) agrees to this and attests that the former governor of Anambra state was kidnapped in 2003 by members of his political party who opposed his visionary scheme. Akpan (2010) avers that:

The most notable criminal gangs in Nigeria are used and dumped political thugs, most of them were used during election and dumped at swearing-in, still armed and without any compensation. On the strength of the sophisticated weapons at their disposal, the members regroup their members and target their political mentors or enemies. (p. 40).

Most of these teeming unemployed youths use the guns to start searching for daily bread at the expenses of other's earnings while some become fugitive roaming the streets.

Effect on Health

Sometimes an unemployed person may not have the money for adequate medical care especially in Nigeria where most federal and state hospitals lack adequate medical facilities and such could be found in few private hospitals at expensive rate. Agbodike, Igbokwe and Umeifekem (2015) attest that it is equally easy to visualize that lack of steady income could, apart from the above ills, also lead to inadequate nutrition and adversely effect on health of the youth and their families. This could lead to low life expectancy. As some unemployed youths get addicted to hard drugs and alcohols to forget their sorrow such addiction could lead to the damage of their internal organs leading to premature death.

Actors in Youth Empowerment in Nigeria

National Directorate of Employment (NDE)

According to Ezeanya (2011), on 26th March 1986, the President IBB appointed a committee to deliberate on strategies for dealing with mass unemployment under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity. The report of the Chukwuma Committee, as it became popularly known, was approved by the Federal Government in October, 1986. Based on its recommendations, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established on November 22, 1986 and its initial core programmes were formally launched on 30th January, 1987. The NDE is the nation's apex agency for employment creation through programmes of direct intervention among school leavers and graduates. The main function is to combat mass unemployment through skills acquisition, self-employment and labour-intensive work scheme.

NDE Programmes

National Youth Employment and Vocational Skills Development Programme, Small Scale Industries and Graduate Employment Programme, Agricultural Sector Employment Programme and Special Public Works Programme.

National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)

Eleagu (2014) points that the National Poverty Eradication Programme was introduced in 2001 and was designed to be a central coordination point for all anti-poverty efforts from local to the national level, aimed at sufficiently eradicating poverty through job creation and employment. NAPEP was established due to the failure of various other efforts by the past government to significantly reduce the poverty index in Nigeria. In order to ensure effective poverty eradication, the government arranged NAPEP into four schemes namely: Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) to generate employment to the youths, Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS), Rural Infrastructural Scheme (RIS) and National Resource Development and Conservative Scheme (NRDCS). The impact of

NAPEP's schemes on job creation and poverty eradication in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. NAPEP has made efforts to deliver its best in keeping to its aims in Nigeria despite set back.

Subsidy Reinvestment and Empower Programme (SURE-P)

Nwosu and Ugwuera (2014) opt that on the 13th February 2012, president Jonathan of Nigeria, inaugurated the SURE-P committee, whose mandate was to deliver service with integrity and to restore people's confidence in the government. SURE-P has Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) to create direct employment for over 50,000 graduates across the country.

N- Power

N-POWER is a programme initiated by Goodluck administration but implemented by the administration of Buhari in his first tenure as a civilian ruler. Olawale (2018) asserts that this programme is under the social investment programme for job creation and empowerment initiatives. It is a programme aimed at reducing unemployment by helping youths to create jobs and engaging them in activities while unemployed. Hence, eligible participants are Nigerians between the ages of 18 and 35. The goal of the programmes of N-Power includes: To reduce the rate of unemployment in the country. To bring about a system that would facilitate transferability of employability, entrepreneurial and technical skills. To bring solutions to ailing public service and Government diversification policy. The programme is designed in such a way that it can be divided into three classes: N-POWER Teacher Corps. N-POWER Knowledge and the N-POWER BUILD. Olawale (2018) explains N-POWER programmes below:

N-Power Teacher Corps

This programme is a voluntary one where 500,000 unemployed graduates would be trained and engaged. They would then get computing devices, each to contain information for their own specific programme under this programme. These engaged graduates will provide teaching, instructional, and advisory solutions in four units.

N-Power Teach

Individuals under this programme would serve as assistant teachers in primary and secondary schools, they would also help take education to remote areas. This programme would help them gain work experience and help mold them better for the work environment.

N-Power Health

Part of the 500,000 graduates that would fall under this group would be trained to serve as public health assistants. They would also be trained by professionals to provide basic health diagnostic services in their deployed areas.

N-Power Community Education

Members that had been chosen for this would be deployed to communities to serve as instructors in such areas as adult educators and civil educators.

N-Power Agro

The volunteers deployed under this programme would serve as intermediaries between researchers and farmers to help them with tips for better farming practices to make Nigeria self-sufficient in terms of food. One very good thing about this programme is successful applicants will benefit from a compulsory employability and Entrepreneurship skills development programme.

N-Power Knowledge

This programme is a train to job initiative that would speed-up advancements in technology and creativity which would lead to a diversified economy. Over 25,000 non-graduates would be engaged in this and each would get a computing device and other information products he would need to excel. This also is divided into sections, these are:

N-Power Creative

This programme would engage 5,000 young people to train them and bring out the creativity in them so they could become exporters of world-class services. They would be trained in either of the following; animation, graphics design, post-production and script writing.

N-Power Tech Hardware and Software

This would empower 10,000 young Nigerians into the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry by training them to be hardware technicians. This would be practically oriented and participant learns to service and manufacture tech hardware such as mobile phones, tablets, computers and other tech hardware. In the software aspect 10,000 young Nigerians would be trained about software developer for the local and international markets.

N-Power Build

This is a skill to job (training and certification) programme aim at engaging 75,000 young unemployed Nigerians to become skilled and competent technicians, artisans and service professionals. The industries will focus on include; automotive, utilities, construction, building services, aluminum, gas and built environment services. The programme is a good one if fully implemented according to the plan; it would drastically bring about

changes that would turn our youths into a working population rather than the idle situation we are already experiencing. Generally, interested Nigerians can keep track of the new applications on their official website.

Conclusion

Unemployment rate in Nigeria has gotten to unprecedented point especially with the ban of motorcycle which was a source of employment to many youths. It has reached alarming stage and has taking a worrisome dimension. Youth unemployment in Nigeria is endemic. Its concomitant consequences on both the youth and the entire society cannot be relegated to the background, hence, the Church can be a key mediating institution for addressing youth unemployment as her wide spread presence and structures can be a resource to intervene through establishment of skill acquisition centers, establishment of infrastructural developmental projects, investment in agriculture, donation of tricycles to youth, entrepreneurship programmes and so on.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are required for this research:

- i. The agricultural and tourism sector should be revitalized to boast employment and increase food security.
- ii. Wealthy Nigerians should assist the government in provision of public utilities, embark on infrastructural developmental projects that can endanger employment.
- iii. The church should partner with government to establish skill acquisition centers and make them accessible to indigent youths in Awka.
- iv. Employment of youths in public and private sectors should be transparent and devoid of corruption, nepotism and favouritism.

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