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13. Employability of Pre-service Computer Science Teachers in Colleges of Education Outreach Centres in Lagos State. **Oluwatomi Modupeola Alade & Olaotan Oladele Kuku**.....128
14. A Framework for Teaching Arabic Language for Specific Purposes in Universal Basic Education to achieve Sustainable Employment. **Kazeem Oluwatoyin Ajape**137
15. Comparative Survey of Heads of Schools' Perception on Basic Education Challenges and Responses in Central Region, Ghana and South-West, Nigeria. **Sunday Paul Odusanya & Adesoji A. Oni**146
16. Solving Employment Challenges on Sustainability Principles through Literature Education. **Oyenike A. Adeosun** 161
17. *Educating for Global Competence: Science Teachers' Level of Awareness and Practice of 21st Century Skills.* **Toyin Eunice Owoyemi**173
18. *Causes, Implications and Solutions to Youth Unemployment in Nigeria.* **Aminat Ozohu Aburime, Oyeyemi Jumoke Jekayinfa & Muslimat Adebanye Nuhu**180

CAUSES, IMPLICATIONS AND SOLUTIONS TO YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

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The purpose of this paper is to look into the causes, implications and solutions to youth unemployment problems in Nigeria. The rate at which unemployed graduates roam the streets after the National Youth Service constitutes social malice to the country as a whole. The data for this paper was collected from secondary sources using descriptive approach of previous researches to gather necessary data. The findings revealed that unemployment in Nigeria among youths is caused by six major problems and six major effects which have created tension and hatred between the haves and the have-nots, leading to communal clashes and the rise of such groups such as Boko Haram, Niger Delta Militant, armed robbery, prostitution and child trafficking constituting hiccups to security of lives and properties. Also, the findings revealed that unemployment in Nigeria increased from 21.1% in 2010 to 23.9% in 2011 with youth unemployment at over 50%. From 2011 to 2013 there was an increase of 16% unemployment growth rate in Nigeria. Significantly, the impact of this paper is that government should create labour market that works better for the youths employment and recommends that the government should invest heavily in education to enable the youths become self-reliant instead of job seekers through skills development and training.

Keywords: causes, implications, solutions, youth unemployment, Nigeria:

Introduction

In Nigeria, it is expected that both individuals and government at all levels should join hands to build a Nigeria where everyone is resourceful and useful. What is the guarantee that large army of unemployed youths will not engage in activities that would undermine the stability of democracy in Nigeria? The problem of chronic youth unemployment is very evident in Nigeria. Every year, thousands of graduates are turn out for whom there are no jobs. Nigerian streets are littered with youth hawkers and bike riders who ordinarily would have found gained employments in some enterprises; or would have demonstrated their skills and resourcefulness if there are enabling environments and reliable management structures on ground. Instead, the youths have now shifted their attention to cybercrime popularly known as "Yahoo-Yahoo".

This is the wrong use of technological innovation, which ordinarily should have been channelled towards technological advancement as witnessed in U.S.A, Canada, United Kingdom, Japan and China—the emerging world's production and economic power. The large number of youths who are unemployed is capable of undermining democratic practice as they constitute a serious threat if engaged by the political class for clandestine activities (Adepegba, 2011; Ibrahim, 2011; Lartey, 2011; Olatunji & Abioye, 2011). Simply put, unemployment describes the condition of people who are without jobs. Also, Adebanye (1999) stated that unemployment exists when members of the labour force wish to work but cannot get jobs. Governments at all levels should strive to create viable structure which will encourage the youths to

think rationally towards job creation rather than job pilferage and almost unending unemployment proliferation in vogue in Nigeria.

Youth unemployment, therefore, could be described as 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, and which they will be proud to do as their area of expertise. When the supply of labour outstrips the demand for labour, it causes joblessness and unemployment. Given the lack of sufficient employment opportunities in the formal sector, young people may be forced to engage in casual work and other unorthodox livelihood sources, thus leading to underemployment (Echebiri, 2005; Gibb & George, 1990; Onah, 2011).

Good Governance has to do with the perception of the higher number of the citizens on the general performance of their leaders, from local, state and federal levels; whether their socio-economic policies have affected their lives positively or negatively. Usually, the concept of good governance should provide structures where the youth segment of the society are gainfully employed either in the public or private sector of the economy through direct entrepreneurial activities. It also connotes a system where electoral processes give room for credible leaders to emerge; that is, those who must be accountable to the people and whom the people can collectively say no to any of his or her unfavourable social and economic policies at any time.

In Nigeria, accurate unemployment rates are difficult to access. However, according to Oyebade (2003), Nigeria's unemployment can be grouped into two categories: first, the older unemployed who lost their jobs through redundancy or bankruptcy and second, the younger unemployed, most of whom have never been unemployed. According to Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010), the statistics from the Manpower Board and the Federal Bureau of Statistics showed that Nigeria has a youth population of 80 million, representing 60% of the total population of the country. Also, 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 urban unemployed are ranged from 15-24 years old. Moreover, the educated unemployed tended to be young males with few dependents. There are relatively few secondary school graduates and the lowered job expectations of primary-school graduates. The author, however, admitted that there is no consistent trend of unemployment rates in Nigeria. An increase in one or two years is sometimes followed by a decline in the subsequent years. But the fact remains that the tree of unemployment is growing progressively in our contemporary Nigeria, except some radical measures are adopted to retard its growth by the deliberate actions and reactions of genuine leaders.

Research Methodology

Data for this paper were derived from secondary sources of previous researches and analysis of scholarly articles, government documents, newspaper as well as journal articles that are related to the subject of study.

Concept of Unemployment

Every economy is characterised by both active and inactive populations. The economically active ones are referred to as the population willing and able to work, and include those actively engaged in the production of goods and services and those who are unemployed. The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work

organisation grow and make more profit as the primary goal of every enterprise is to make profit. Often, this is attributed to the Nigeria's education system, with its liberal bias. Access to entrepreneurial training such as tailoring, computer, incubation is been constraints by access to capital to establish their own after the training. Henrik (2006) cited in Onno (2011) assert that low opportunities for young graduates create problem of violence due to lack of job and idleness, because without job they will not be able to play a useful role in the society.

The Rapid Expansion of the Educational System: The rapid expansion of the educational system which directly leads to increase in the supply of educated manpower above the corresponding demand for them, contributes to the problem of the youth unemployment in Nigeria. For instance, according to Manning and Junankar (1998), the total number of graduates turned out by the higher institutions in Nigeria, which were 73,339 in 1986/1987 which rose to 131,016 in 1996/1997. Presently, with over 147 universities in Nigeria (federal, state, and private) and the increasing demand for higher education, there has been the problem of suitable employment for the varieties of graduates who are turned out by these higher institutions every year. Ordinarily, this should not have been a problem, but the reality is that the Nigerian economy is too weak to absorb this large number of graduates (Utomi, 2011).

Lack of Steady and Sustainable Power Supply: The fact is that Nigeria is becoming hostile to investment due to lack of steady and sustainable power /energy supply in spite of the various attempts at reviving this sector leading to firms depending on generators for their operations whose costs of buying, fueling and maintenance are high, thereby increasing the cost of operation in Nigeria. Besides high and multiple levies and taxations being paid by these companies, energy crises have combined to make the cost of doing business in Nigeria to be very exorbitant. When the industries and factories closed shops or relocated to a friendlier economic environment, workers are laid off and prospect of recruiting new ones are dashed. All these exacerbated the crisis of youth unemployment in the labour market (Adeloye, 2010 & Onifade, 2012).

Corruption: Corruption, which has permeated the entire social structure of Nigeria, has robbed the country of developing a vibrant economic base. Funds meant for development projects have been misappropriated, diverted, or embezzled and kept in foreign banks, while some incompetent and corrupt contractors and administrators in the public enterprises and parastatals have liquidated these organisations (Oladun, 2010). The point being made here is that the collaboration of the political elites, local and foreign contractors in the inflation of contract fees have robbed Nigeria of the chances of using more than \$100 billion estimated revenue from the oil sale in the last 50 years to develop a vibrant economy that would have created jobs for the youths in various sectors of the economy, (Sanusi, 2012). The ruling political class failed because they replaced the vision, policy and strategy, which should be the thrust of their leadership with transactions (contract award and other mundane money-related activities). As each successive government took turns to prey on the nation's wealth, by using public power, resources, good will, policies, instrument of abuse, and personal gains (Okafor, 2005), thus, their actions have succeeded in wrecking the economy and engendering and exacerbating unemployment which creates abject poverty, anger and frustration.

Evaluation of Unemployment Problems in Nigeria

Following are some of the effects of unemployment in Nigeria:

Inequality of Income: Inequality of income is one of the effects of unemployment in Nigeria. The National Bureau of Statistics opined that in 2010, 65% of Nigeria's wealth was owned by 20% of the population, which manifests itself in so many dimensions such as concentration of wealth in the hands of few individuals while many are in abject poverty. (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Inequality of income, poverty and unemployment have led to increase in violent crimes in Nigeria. Hallary (2012) asserted that the crisis in Nigeria was a result of failure of governance to address socio-economic issues facing the nation.

Increase in Insurgency: According to the world Investment Report of UNCTAD, the economy witnessed a decline in foreign direct investment from USD 8.65 billion in 2009 to USD 6.1 billion in 2010 due to activities of Boko Haram (Hallary, 2012). Sanusi (2012) opined that Nigeria's slow growth rate could be attributed to corruption and political obstacles associated with the removal of fuel subsidy. In addition, unemployment resulted in increase in the activities of Boko Haram and many other crimes going on in the affected areas, especially the North-West and North-East of Nigeria which resulted in the closure of schools. In a place like Jos, people were divided along ethnic lines due to unemployment and poverty.

Decline in Quality of Life: Decline in quality of life is largely attributable to family income, insecurity, tension and conflict. Decline in access to shelter, education, healthcare and nutrition ultimately led to a reduction in lifespan. The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) in 2012 asserted that budding employment growth and improvement in the GDP had not transformed into social wellbeing, adding that unemployment had aggravated the spate of insecurity amongst other social vices in the polity.

Decline in the Tourism Sector: The tourism sector was also affected by the crisis in Nigeria. The sector is one of the biggest employers of labour and used to fetch the country 80 billion annually, but due to the activities of Boko Haram, Niger Delta militants, kidnappers, etc., the sector was in a shambles. The aviation industry has also witnessed low turnout of customers due to flight cancellations and fear of air crashes. A typical example was Dana Air crash that claimed more than one hundred and sixty (160) lives.

Statistics have shown that the unemployment rate is on the increase yearly in Nigeria – Table 1 and Table 2

Table 1: Statistics of Unemployment in Nigeria

Unemployment	2011	2012
Unemployment (%)	21.1	23.9
Population (Million)	158.8	168
GDP percentage	1,224	-
Purchasing power	2,160	-

(Adapted from Nigeria Economic Fact Sheet 2013)

Table 2: Nigerian Unemployment by Age

Age	2009	2010	2011
15-24	33.5	38.2	37.7
25-44	16.3	24.1	22.4
45-59	12.5	19.6	18.0
60-64	17.8	22.1	21.4

(Adapted from Danjuma, 2012)

From the tables above, it is clear that unemployment increased from 21.1% in 2011 to 23.9% in 2012. Most of the segments of the population affected by unemployment are within the middle age brackets of ages 15-24 year old. Females have a higher unemployment rate than males with a ratio of 24.9% to 17.7%. The region with highest rate of unemployment is the northern part of Nigeria, especially the North-West followed by the North-East (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). It is important to note that the figures above may not have captured in totality the youth unemployment situation in Nigeria; however, they point to the fact that the phenomenon is a very critical issue with far-reaching implications for the stability of democracy, good governance and socio-economic virility.

Job Insecurity: Job security is the panacea for any meaningful socio-economic activity, which has not been fully understood and integrated to our scheme of things. The South African White Paper on Defence (1996) defined job security as an all-encompassing condition in which every individual citizen lives in freedom, peace and safety, participates fully in the process of governance, enjoys the protection of fundamental rights, has access to resources and the basic necessities of life, and inhabits an environment which is not detrimental to their health and wellbeing. In the same vein in Nigeria, job security should be an all-encompassing condition in which every individual citizen lives in an environment where job opportunities are not provided for all citizens, not only for the rich and those with the highest connection. In Nigeria, job security is supposed to be a situation whereby one can have access to the type of job one is trained to do, which gives the individual job satisfaction. In Nigeria today, accurate unemployment rates are difficult to access. However, according to Oyebade (2003), Nigeria's unemployment can be grouped into two categories: first, the older unemployed who have lost their jobs through retrenchment, redundancy, or bankruptcy, and second, the younger unemployed, most of whom have never been employed.

Solutions to Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

First, the Nigerian Government must play its constitutional role by creating the enabling socio-economic and political environment including the provision of infrastructure to make the industrial climate friendly to investment. This will encourage investors to invest and thereby create jobs in order to absorb the unemployed youths. Recently, the minister of Youth Development, undertook a facility tour of the eight standard Youth Development Centres being constructed by the Nigerian Government across the country and established a pet project that would massively equip the youth with useful trade and entrepreneurial skills in automobile, agricultural production and processing, integrated science clinic, computer and information technology among others. Africa, with massive natural and mineral resources is an important and strategic member of the global community that needed understanding, patience, and support towards the socio-economic development of the continent.

According to Ayinde (2008), the implementation of the United Nations Credit Unit Programmes in Africa has the potentials to create 38,000 jobs in the agricultural sector within a year: 50,000 skilled and unskilled jobs in the real estate project, the pharmaceutical project will absorb over 1000 pharmacists and marketers. More so, the Credit Unit will partner with African Universities for the training of Nigeria and African youths as credit professionals, sponsor seminars and conferences. On conflict prevention and resolutions, based on our new approach to peace advocacy, the researchers are convinced that the current efforts of the UN to enforce the operations of United Nation Credit Unit in Africa will complement and strengthen the efforts of African Governments.

Other solutions include:

1. Expand and revise the Registered Apprenticeship Programme at the Department of Labour.
2. Establish a Career Internship standard in order to allow for a short-term alternative to the Registered Apprenticeship Programme.
3. Increase the financial incentives for employment. Expand earned Income Tax Credit targeting childless adults, including younger workers.
4. Reinstate the Youth Opportunity Grant (YOG) programme.
5. Create pathways to success for out-of-school, out-of-work youth by overhauling school dropout prevention policies.
6. Re-authorise and reform federal policies to improve Career and Technical Education.
7. Boost mentoring.
8. Encourage partnership to improve impact.
9. Engage employers in proffering solutions.
10. Invest in the existing high quality programmes that reconnect young adults to education and employment opportunities. (Ayers, 2013).

Conclusions

The findings revealed that unemployment in Nigeria increased from 21.1% in 2010 to 23.9% in 2011 with youth unemployment at over 50%. From 2011 to 2013 there is an increase of 16% unemployment growth rate in Nigeria. From all indications, youth unemployment is a menace in Nigeria and constitutes a real danger and threat to Nigeria's democracy. This is because these youths could be manipulated to undermine the stability of Nigeria's democracy at any point in time. Against this background, there is the need by government at all levels, international community and other stakeholders to embark on massive job creation to take these youths off the streets. Granted, there may not be a quick fix to this problem, but all the stakeholders must, as a matter of fact, do something urgently.

Finally, democracy is a journey, not a destination. For Nigeria, it is a learning process. As a matter of fact, it may not be a perfect system of government, but it has several advantages over other systems. People, including the Nigerian youths, must feel the positive impact of democracy in their lives. The situation whereby only a few privileged persons in positions of authority benefit from this system of government at the expense of the impoverished masses portends a great and real danger. This is because the nation may incur the wrath of the unemployed youths, if the menace of youth unemployment is not addressed urgently. Nigerian leaders should strive to promote good governance in order to engender youth empowerment, employment and socio-economic development.

Recommendations

1. Anti-corruption crusade should attack the root of corruption: Both the EFCC and the ICPC should look deeply into the root causes of corruption and address it so as to greatly minimise it.
2. Strengthening of existing institutions (higher educational institutions and government parastatals) by appointing decent people to head them, respect their tenure and appoint successors rather than political appointee.

3. Investment in education: government should invest heavily in education, the type that will enable the youths to become self-reliant/self-employed instead of job seekers. This can be achieved through skills development and training.
4. The school curriculum at all levels of education in Nigeria must be functional, comprehensive and practical enough to cater for the needs of the individual graduate and the industrial needs of the nation.
5. Provision of basic infrastructural facilities such as good roads, electricity, provision of portable drinking water, etc. should be embarked upon by the government of the day. All these have the capacity to help the growth of small and medium, scale businesses that will provide employment to thousands of people.
6. Create labour market that works better for the youth.
7. Promotion of conducive atmosphere for investment.

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