

Effect of Unemployment Induced Crime among Youths and Tenable Solutions

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ABSTRACT

Youth unemployment is a global phenomenon, although it is more pronounced in developing countries of the world. In Nigeria it has become a monster of some sort that is getting out of hand if something is not done urgently. It is well documented that the youth population of any nation, if not gainfully employed deploy their energies into wrong endeavours. The phenomenon of crime has impacted negatively on the economic, social and political life of the nation over time such that a growing level of security challenges now faces the country. Violent crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping, cult wars, terrorism, pipe-line vandalism, have reached an alarming stage in the past two decades due, from research findings, to the high rate of unemployment in the country. This paper argues that there is a strong link between youth unemployment, whether voluntary or involuntary, and crime. The paper further suggests some measures through which the government of Nigeria can arrest the precarious situation.

Keywords: Unemployment, Youth, Crime, Violence, Nigeria, Unemployed

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1. INTRODUCTION

The level of unemployment in Nigeria today is very high and this has contributed significantly to an increase in the level of frustration and the high rate of crimes in the country. The situation has led to some economic and social problems. The country's higher institutions of learning churns out graduates – baked or unbaked – every year compounding the situation. The expectations of these graduates are shattered because they are immediately thrown into the already saturated labour market that has nothing to offer them. In addition, many secondary school drop-outs also join the bandwagon. The percentage of labour force that is without job is alarming while the army of the underemployed and unemployed youths continues to rise. This is the reality in Nigeria today.

Research suggests that unemployed youths are disproportionately more likely to be perpetrators, as well as victims of crime and violence (Okafor, 2011). The growing gap between the rich and the poor affects the society through increased violence. The self-employed have become despondent as scant infrastructure makes it impossible for them to ply their trade (Okafor, 2011). Economically, underemployment reduces the purchasing power of the citizens, which invariably leads to less consumption. Less consumption leads to a lower rate of production, which clogs the wheel of economic growth. Socially, it increases the rate of crime.

In its Economic Report on Nigeria released in May 2013, (Vanguard Newspaper 2014) the World Bank noted that “Nigeria’s annual growth rates that averaged over seven per cent in official data during the last decade, place the nation among the fastest growing economies in the world noting that the growth has been concentrated particularly on trade and agriculture, which would suggest substantial welfare benefits for many Nigerians. Nevertheless, poverty reduction and job creation have not kept pace with population growth, implying social distress for an increasing number of Nigerians.” An earlier research found that global unemployment remained stable at 8% between 2010 and 2011, according to Gallup Surveys of 148 countries. Unemployment was highest in the Middle East and North Africa (22%) and Sub-Saharan Africa 17% (Marlar, 2012). However, according to Ekpo (2015), from 1999 to 2013, the rate of unemployment published by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicated that unemployment was not only a major challenge in Nigeria but the trend in unemployment was mostly affecting the youth. For example, in 2010, the rate of unemployment stood at 21.4 per cent and rose to 27.4 per cent and declined to 24.7 per cent in 2013. These high rates clearly indicate that the economy has an unemployment problem.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2009:238; 2010:2; 2012), the national unemployment rates for Nigeria between 2000 and 2011 showed that the number of unemployed persons constituted 31.1% in 2000 and it reduced to 11.9% in 2005 but again increased to 23.9% in 2011. Anselm (2013) also, quoting the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said that Nigeria’s unemployment rate averaged 14.6% from 2006 until 2011, reaching an all-time high of 23.9% in December 2011. By 2012, according to Daniel (2013), the NBS again reported that (a whooping) 54% of Nigerian youths were unemployed. This, he said, was contained in the 2012 National Baseline Youth Survey Report” issued in Abuja by the NBS in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Youth Development. Surprisingly, Information Nigeria, as posted by Daniel on September 24, 2014, released an interesting caption – “Good News: Nigeria Records 85% Employment in First Half of 2014 – NBS”. Quoting NBS, it reported that Nigeria recorded 85% employment in both the first and second half of 2014 and that this was made up of the three cadres of managerial, professional, technical and related office workers. This information was contained in a statement issued by Dr. Yemi Kale, the Statistician-General of the Federation. According to him, managerial and professional cadres recorded 1,085,071 employees while the technical and related office workers employed were 943,652 in the first quarter; and 1,091,096 and 930,652 respectively in the second quarter of 2014. Ekpo (2015) also reported that NBS used a ‘new’ methodology in calculating the rates of unemployment to get the rate for the last quarter of 2014 which stood at 6.4 per cent and the rate for the first quarter of 2015 was 7.5 per cent. This, he found worrisome. Udo (2015) also disagreed with the Statistician-General’s (NBS) announcement that Nigeria’s unemployment rate, which stood at about 28% by the first quarter of 2014 had dramatically plummeted to 6.4% in the last quarter. These rates cannot be true as unemployment in Nigeria is very glaring. It is unfortunate that the Bureau (NBS) seem not to have reliable statistics on the rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

Akande (2014) reported that with almost 180 million Nigerians, half of which are youths between the ages of 15 and 34 years, who constitute the larger proportion of the labour force, over 5.3 million youths are unemployed, with an estimated 1.8 million annual growth of fresh unemployed graduates (The Sun, April 9, 2014). Although a surge in unemployment was witnessed in 2009 due to global/local economic meltdown, the World Bank estimated that 74 million people between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed, which accounts for 41% of all unemployed persons (UN-Habitat, 2008). Nigeria’s unemployment situation continues to increase. According to Anselm (2014), Nigeria’s Minister of Finance, Dr. Okonjo-Iweala, stated that the unemployment figure had been accumulating over the years, adding that the nation’s inability to track the number of people coming into the labour market is a part of the problem of managing the new entrants into the market. Although, the Government of Nigeria said it created 1.6 million jobs in 2013 there are no visible signs that, given the claim to be true, the statistics of the unemployed has dropped in any way.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) disclosed in 2015, that the nation's unemployment rate has in the second quarter (Q2) of 2015 risen to 8.2 per cent from the 7.5 per cent rate which was recorded in the preceding quarter. The Bureau explained that the economically active population or working age, comprising persons within the age range of 15 to 64, increased to 103.5 million in the second quarter (Q2), up from 102.8 million in the first quarter (Q1). This was as it disclosed that the labour force population, comprising those within the working age, who are willing, able and actively looking for work, increased to 74.0 million in Q2 from 73.4 million in Q1, indicating an increase in the labour force by 0.81 per cent. This indicates that 574,498 economically active persons within 15 to 64 joined the labour force in the second quarter of 2015. (Bolashodun, 2015)

2. CAUSES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

The rate of unemployment increases annually and the causes for this unpleasant situation are rooted in the failure of the government of the nation to provide and ensure the enabling environment for job creation. However, it can be said that the government found itself in this situation because of the institutionalized and sustained level of corruption, by politicians and public servants alike. In addition, mismanagement of abundant natural, mineral and human resources have combined to compound the problem. The corruption that has plagued and riddled the ranks of the civil service as well as the private sector has seen to the neglect of agriculture, colonization of the oil industry by a few mega rich individuals and inattention to the possibilities of the yet to be fully tapped wealth of the natural minerals littered in industrial quantities across the breath of the nation. Thus, rather than opening up opportunities for job creation through wise and guided exploitation of these resources, the doors are getting closed one after the other. The resources are not effectively utilized to maximize their economic benefits. (Atufe, Okojie, Echenim, Ogunmola, & Bello, 2014). The focus of the economy at the oil industry (to the neglect of all others) which has become colonized by a few very powerful and extremely wealthy individuals and the unimaginable patronage of politics in Nigeria, are all part of the causes of unemployment.

The rate at which people are rushing into politics is astronomical. This is because politics has created an easy source of employment and wealth for politicians at different levels. At the lowest level there are political thugs who carry out the whims and caprices of their political god-fathers up to those who seek power at the top of the political hierarchy. What is worrisome about this is that many viable and endowed professionals who could, under a normal economic environment, have created job opportunities for the teeming unemployed youths, in their various professional practices and businesses decided instead to join the political class. There are many professionals in politics, such as doctors, who could easily have set up practices and employed many youths; there are engineers, lawyers and so on.

Outside politics, there are many other factors that have contributed to this high rate of employment in the country. The lack of basic amenities, most especially electricity, has rendered manufacturers and prospective job creators helpless, many of them folding up their businesses. Although the Government has made funds available to enable individuals and/partners float small scale businesses, the cost of starting and maintaining such businesses and industries that would have created employment opportunities for the unemployed is exorbitant when you have to generate your own power in terms of electricity. The insecure climate occasioned by the wave of armed robbery, kidnapping, communal and cult-related clashes, and recently, terrorist insurgency, scares away prospective investors from the country. Consequently businesses and industries crumble, the workforce is downsized and eventually such businesses and industries fold-up. The ranks of the unemployed swell as those who were hitherto employed lose their jobs.

3. CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

3.1 Unemployment

There is a need to define who an unemployed person is. When we refer to someone as unemployed, most people have in mind a state consistent with the International Labor Organization's (ILO) definition; namely, a person who does not have a job, is available for work and is actively looking for work. More precisely, "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 searched for work. (ILO, 2007). Individuals who are actively seeking for jobs must make the effort to be in contact with an employer, have job interviews, send out resumes, submit applications, and respond to advertisements or other means of active job search. Simply looking at advertisements and not responding will not qualify the individual as actively seeking job placements. Hornby (2010) defines unemployment as "the state of a number of people not having a job; the number of people without a job; the state of not having a job" The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary describes the unemployed as one without a job although able to work. Unemployment occurs when individuals are jobless but willing and able to work at the going wage rate. The consensus in these definitions is that the person is willing to work, able to work, actively looking for a job, but cannot get a job.

3.2 Underemployment

We talk so much about unemployment. There are millions of Nigerians who are also under-employed. Underemployment can be said to be a type of unemployment. People who are able and willing to work, but having searched for job for a long time, settle for jobs that are really not in tandem with their qualification or expertise, in terms of their academic qualifications or areas of specialization. Harold (2009) described underemployment as the employment of people on part time basis or people working below their capability, with a correspondingly low income that is barely sufficient to meet their needs. This implies that the underemployed are individuals who are working outside their areas of specialization due to lack of jobs and so, could not be paid commensurately to their qualifications or expertise. If the factors of production are not being used to full capacity, there is underemployment (Anyanwuocha, 2010). For example, a University graduate applying for clerical job in a government establishment or even applying as a driver. The case of graduates, including PhD holders who applied for recently botched immigration jobs (Nigeria Immigration Service employment saga) reminds us of the scourge of unemployment in Nigeria.

3.3 Unemployment Rate

People, generally, are concerned about the number of unemployed individuals. However, it is necessary to calculate for comparative purposes, across countries. Generally, the unemployment rate is expressed as a percentage, and is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Unemployment Rate} = \frac{\text{Unemployed Workers}}{\text{Total Labour Force}} * 100\%$$

There are also different ways national statistical agencies measure unemployment. For Example, Udo (2015) quoted the Statistician-General of the Federation, Yemi Kale as saying that Nigeria's "new" unemployment rates were based on scientific method based on acceptable international best practices. NBS calculation, therefore, brought the unemployment rate in the last quarter of 2014 to 6.4 per cent and in the first quarter of 2015 to 7.5 per cent meaning that the country does not have unemployment problem since 5.0 – 5.5 per cent is the global full employment rates. This revised methodology for computing unemployment statistics reduced Nigeria's official work hour benchmark from 40 to 20 hours a week, leaving the possibility of categorizing millions of underemployed Nigerians as "employed". (Udo, 2015)

4. TYPES OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

Unemployment occurs at different levels in the economy of a country. There is, therefore, a necessity to explain some types of unemployment:

4.1 Frictional Unemployment

There seems to be divergence on the meaning and causes of frictional unemployment. Thomas (2015) defined frictional unemployment as unemployment that occurs because of people relocating or changing occupations. Udu & Agu (2005) asserted that, there is frictional unemployment when certain occupations have surplus workers in one part of the country, while vacancies for similar jobs occur and are not filled in other parts of the country. On the contrary, Harold (2009), Anyanwuocha (2010), and Wikipedia Encyclopedia (2011) agreed that frictional unemployment is the time period between jobs, when a worker is searching for, or transitioning from one job to another. It occurs because workers seeking jobs do not find them immediately. It is sometimes called search unemployment and can be voluntary based on the circumstances of the unemployed individual. For example, frictional Unemployment could occur between the time a student completes his studies and the time he is able to find a job (Anyanwuocha, 2010). Another school of thought (Economics online) believes that in frictional unemployment, there is a job for the unemployed worker, but the worker and the job have not 'found' each other. Frictional, therefore, represents people looking for jobs that are indeed out there for them. This type of unemployment suggests that full employment is impossible at any one time because some workers will always be in the process of changing jobs. And this is why full employment rates are fixed between 5.0 and 5.5 per cent.

4.2 Structural Unemployment

Structural unemployment occurs when certain industries decline because of long term changes in market conditions. It is defined as unemployment arising from technical change such as automation, or from changes in the composition of output due to variations in the types of products people demand. For example, a decline in the demand for typewriters would lead to structurally unemployed workers in the typewriter industry. Another example is jobs on a production line being replaced by robots, for example motor manufacturing, online banking and online retailing. It can also be defined as a mismatch between the workers' skills and the requirements of the new job opportunities. This is known as occupational and geographical immobility of labour. The term 'technological unemployment' is linked to structural unemployment (Wikipedia Encyclopedia 2011).

4.3 Seasonal Unemployment

Seasonal unemployment exists because certain industries only produce or distribute their products at certain times of the year. Asaju, et al (2014) citing Udu & Agu (2005) described seasonal unemployment as the type of employment that occurs as a result of the activities in some particular seasons. Industries engage temporary labour during peak periods of their economic activities. For example, construction companies relieve some of their workers of their job during the rainy season, increasing unemployment; and they employ more hands during the dry season. Some manufacturing companies also employ more hands during festive periods, for example, Christmas season and some shop owners and companies employ extra hands for the seasonal sales. These extra hands are usually relieved of their jobs when demand for products decrease. Industries where seasonal unemployment is common include farming, tourism and constructions. Seasonal unemployment may be seen as a kind of structural unemployment.

4.4 Classical Unemployment (Classical Theory)

Classical Unemployment appears because the real wage is above the competitive level or the market-clearing level. This causes the number of job-seekers to exceed the number of job vacancies. This type of unemployment occurs when something gets in the way of market forces and the presence of a legal minimum wage is commonly pointed to as one such factor. The minimum wage only affects a portion of the workforce, however - people who are relatively unskilled, including many teenagers. But unemployment tends to affect people at all wage levels. Classical economists suggest that there might be other "market interference" reasons for unemployment.

The legal minimum wage leads to a drastic reduction in employment as many employers of labour cannot afford to pay the wage, and many who wish to work at the prevailing rate could not be employed due to the labour law (Anderton, 2006)

Classical theory of unemployment advocates for a shift of wage equation and labour demand: The negative shift of the wage equation would move the curve leftwards provoking an increase in the level of real wages and unemployment. (Ackerman, et al (2013).

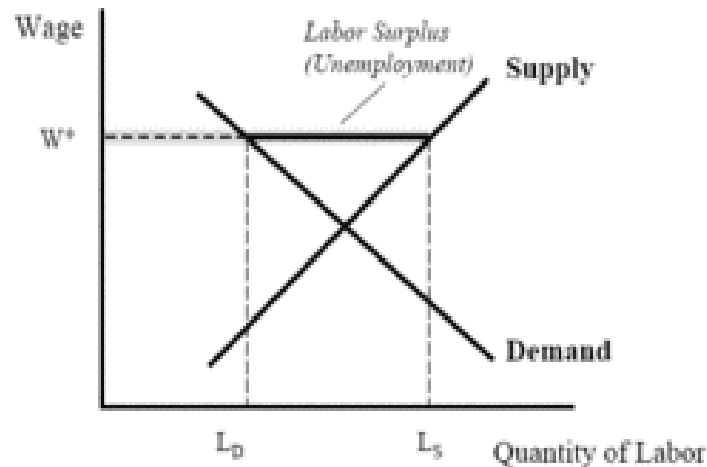


Figure 7.4 Classical Unemployment

Fig. 1: Classical Unemployment

(Source GDAE: Ackerman, et al (2013)

<https://econ101-owers.wikispaces.com/Keynesian+Theory+of+Unemployment>

In a Classical Market for labour, the only thing that can cause true unemployment is something that interferes with the adjustments of free markets, such as a legal minimum wage. (Source: GDAE)

4.5 Cyclical Unemployment (Keynesian Theory)

Cyclical Unemployment is involuntary unemployment as a result of which workers lose their jobs due to business cycle fluctuations in output, i.e. the normal up and down movements in the economy as it cycles through booms and recessions over time (Thomas, 2015). This is also referred to as Keynesian or demand-deficient unemployment. When this happens, firms are likely to reduce employment to cut costs and/or maintain profits. Keynes believed that the root cause of unemployment is the desire of investors to receive more money rather than produce more products, which, he says, is not possible. (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2011)

Sayer & Morris (2009) quoted that Keynes (1936) in his book "The Theory of Employment, Interest and Money" theorized that the equilibrium is determined by aggregate demand and that aggregate demand is the amount of goods and services all buyers demand at various prices. According to Keynes, when there is increased demand in the economy, this will encourage companies to make more goods or provide more services. Because the economy was determined by demand, the cut in wages would reduce employee income and decrease consumer spending. This reduces demand for products, leading to a reduction in production, forcing companies to not only cut wages, but lay off employees. The retrenched employees (i.e. former employees) are now even more unable to spend, decreasing both consumer spending and demand.

Rather than blaming unemployment on "the wage being too high," as given in the Classical Theory, Keynes identified the cause of cyclical unemployment as insufficient labor demand in many individual labor markets, economy-wide, leading to a glut of workers overall. Fixing the problem of unemployment in a recession or depression, then, to Keynes and his followers, is not just a matter of making labor markets work more smoothly. Rather, aggregate demand in the economy has to be increased in order to stimulate employment. Low aggregate demand for goods and services could lead to a vicious cycle of unemployment, reduced production and services, low incomes, and low spending in the economy as a whole.

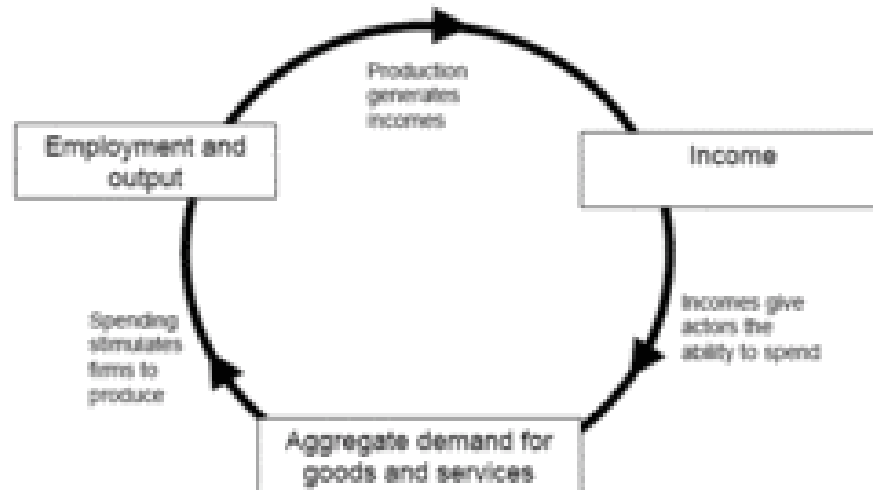


Fig. 2: The Keynesian Model of Employment Determination
 (Source GDAE: Ackerman, et al (2013))

In the Keynesian Model, aggregate employment depends on the level of aggregate demand in the economy as a whole. If total spending is low, then employers will not want to produce a great deal because they do not want to end up with unsold goods. If production is low, they will not need many workers. If few workers are hired, then aggregate income will be low – in what can become a vicious cycle (Source GDAE).

4.6 Summary

Examining the various definitions of unemployment one will conclude that unemployment can be voluntary or involuntary. A simple distinction is that voluntary unemployment is attributed to individual's decisions which include workers who reject low wage jobs or refuse to relocate to where jobs are available for him, whereas, involuntary unemployment exists because of the socio-economic variables (such as the market structure, government policies, etc.) which permeate the environment in which he operates. This may include workers relieved of their jobs due to an economic crisis, industrial decline, company bankruptcy or organisational restructuring. Classical, structural and cyclical unemployment are largely involuntary in nature while frictional unemployment is voluntary since it reflects individual search behaviour. (Wikipedia Encyclopedia 2011:4)

5. EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is widely regarded as a major social and economic global problem. The adverse consequences of unemployment have obvious and well-documented links to economic disadvantages and this has also been connected in some discussions to higher crime rates, especially among the youth. High and persistent unemployment has a negative effect on the economic growth of a nation. In the first place, it is a waste of human resources, widens the gap between the rich and the poor, drives people to poverty, erodes self-esteem, and promotes social dislocation, results in unrest and violence in the society. Unemployed youths are therefore readily available for anti-social criminal activities that undermine the stability of society.

5.1 Individual and family consequences

For an individual who is used to working, unemployment can be devastating. People who are unemployed lack the wherewithal to purchase goods and services. The lack of income and the resulting hardships to the individual and his family is the most tangible and direct effect of unemployment. Unemployed individuals also feel a sense of insecurity even if they have enough financial resources to tide them over the period of unemployment. There is a natural feeling and greater level of anxiety about how that missing source of income is going to be restored. According to a study published in Social Indicator Research (Newswise: Wikipedia 2011), even those who tend to be optimistic find it difficult to look on the bright side of things when unemployed. A meta-analysis by Paul and Moser (2009) reinforces these findings - unemployment was associated with depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, low subjective well-being, and poor self-esteem.

The fact that unemployed individuals are unable to earn a living presupposes that they cannot meet financial obligations. The children will have no educational opportunity, the individual cannot pay house rent (which may sometime make him a fugitive in the society), and they will be susceptible to cardiovascular diseases, depression, alcoholic and drug addiction, violent behavior and sometimes to suicide. Another significant effect is the loss of one's career identity. People become accustomed to the routine of getting up, getting dressed in working clothes and going to the work place. When this is removed from one's life, it can spur depression and a depressed person ironically, is less likely to pursue the challenge of finding new employment. (Iberiyenari). Other negative effects are increased vulnerability of family members especially women and children to domestic violence as well as low birth weight among babies born to underemployed women (Dooley & Prause, 2004).

5.2 Societal Consequences

The impact of unemployment extends beyond individuals and families to communities and neighborhoods. High unemployment and poverty go hand in hand, and the characteristics of poor neighborhoods amplify the impact of unemployment (Wilson, 1996). Inadequate and low-quality housing, underfunded schools, few recreational activities, restricted access to services and public transportation, limited opportunities for employment - all characteristics of poor neighborhoods - contribute to the social, economic, and political exclusion of individuals and communities, making it more difficult for the unemployed people to return to work. The consequences of unemployment can be as grave as homelessness due to failure of the unemployed individuals to pay house rents. In most cases, families must down-size their home and move, sometimes living apart. This causes an inordinate amount of stress to children's psychological and educational wellbeing. The rate of homelessness rises, as do the rates for mental and physical illness. Unemployment anxiety may also affect co-workers who have not lost their jobs, as they too may become anxious that they will soon be fired.

High unemployment can also cause social problems such as crime; if people have less disposable income than before, it is very likely that crime levels within the economy will increase. Unemployment brings about widespread criminality, societal ills and social vices such as hooliganism, armed robbery and prostitution. In most cases, young graduates who are caught in criminal acts such as armed robbery, kidnapping and prostitution attribute their involvement in those crimes to the unemployment situation in Nigeria.

In recent times, the high rate of communal crisis, youth restiveness, hired killings and assassinations, kidnapping, vandalism, 419 and other forms of criminality and even the Niger Delta uprising and the recent 'Boko Haram' insurgency in the northern part of the country were attributed to the high rate of unemployment, especially among the youths in the country. (Asaju, et al, 2014).

5.3 Socio-political Consequences

High level of unemployment can be a source of civil unrest, in some cases leading to revolution, and particularly totalitarianism. The fall of the Weimar Republic in 1933 and Adolf Hitler's rise to power, which culminated in World War II and the deaths of tens of millions and the destruction of much of the physical capital of Europe, is attributed to the poor economic conditions in Germany at the time, notably a high unemployment rate of above 20%. (Leopold 2010). Rising unemployment has traditionally been regarded by the public and media in any country as a key guarantor of electoral defeat for any government which oversees it. This was very much the consensus in the United Kingdom until 1983. (BBC News 2011)

6. CRIME AS A CONSEQUENCE OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Crime can be categorized under two subheads, namely: property crimes (burglary, arson, motor vehicle theft, etc.) and violent crimes (abduction, homicide, rape, assault, cultism, terrorism, etc.). Unemployment breeds restiveness among the youths who, in the face of nothing to responsibly engage them, take to whatever keeps them busy, in most cases, criminal activities. These include: armed robbery, kidnapping, ritual killings, cyber-crimes, prostitution, etc. which are daily occurrences in our society today. Joblessness creates a number of material and psychological problems which could lead to social vices. Young people are trying to find a way to achieve self-realization, and when they encounter difficulties, they find alternative ways to make a living. This alternative ways may sometimes be negative, for example, they are readily available for anti-social criminal activities that undermine the stability of society. An unstable society increases the risk of the market.

The challenge of unemployment has given rise to youth restiveness and other social vices in the country which have discouraged foreign investment. The unrelenting social upheavals in the forms of increasing crime wave and insecurity in the country which scares investors, are the unfortunate consequences of high unemployment rate. The consequence is that investors leave the country, and unemployment increases further. It is a vicious circle. Jorge Saba Arbache of the Africa Region of the World Bank says 'unemployed and underemployed youth are more exposed to conflicts and illegal activities - many of them falling prey to armed and rebel conflicts'.

The magnitude of the danger which youth unemployment poses to the society is better understood when, according to Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) over 64 million youths are unemployed and 1.6 million are underemployed. The frustration and desperation that daily torment these unemployed youths creates a fertile ground for crime to thrive. Adejumo and Tayo-Olajubulu (2009) contended that unemployment has been identified as the major cause of social vices like armed robbery, destitution, prostitution, political thuggery, kidnapping, cult-wars, and pipe-line vandalization and, more recently, ATM vandalization and many other crimes. Edward (2011) agreed that the problem of violent crimes in Nigeria has greatly increased because of the high rate of unemployment and economic hardship which has pushed many jobless youths, some of whom are graduates, into various deadly crimes.

Ajufo (2013), in agreement, also added that in recent times, there have been notable adverse social, economic and political developments in Nigeria, a consequence of youth unemployment and underemployment, particularly exemplified by increasing militancy, violent crimes, kidnapping, restiveness and political instability. By December 2015, armed insurgencies ravaging the oil-rich and volatile Niger Delta region had resurfaced. The country, now trying to find ways of resolving the economic downturn, is suffering more losses as the Niger Delta militants commence the destruction of oil and gas infrastructures within the area. Wanton destruction of lives and properties by Boko Haram insurgency in the North is yet to subside while corruption by the political class and kidnapping, unfortunately, are now all competing for space in international headlines.

The UN-Habitat study on crimes and violence stressed that socio-economic inequality and lack of opportunities for social advancement and employment are some of the root causes of crime and violence in the world. Children and youth from disadvantaged families are vulnerable to fall prey to criminal networks. Of the estimated 1 billion people living in slums, over half are under the age of 25, and 40% are estimated to be under the age of 19. They are the primary victims of social exclusion through unemployment, lack of access to health and education (UN-Habitat, 2008). This also applies to the situation in Nigeria. Furthermore, an empirical survey of Children and Youth in Organized Armed Violence in Nigeria reported that disenchantment and frustration of young people due to mass poverty and unemployment, has increased the number of aggrieved youths and resulted in the emergence of youths known as “area boys” in the South and “Almajiris” in the North. These boys target the very society that alienated them (Ibrahim, 2006). A survey concluded that armed militant groups in Nigeria namely Bakassi Boys, Oodua People’s Congress (OPC) and Egbesu Boys were made up of youths and approximately 60% of them were unemployed (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010).

Bennel (2000) submitted that urban society is becoming increasingly criminalized, especially with the proliferation of youth gangs. Neither homes nor markets are safe in Nigeria because of frequent occurrence of armed robbery incidents. Unemployment problem, which now seems beyond remedy, has produced an army of idle hands, mostly youths, and some of them have decided to punish the society that fails to provide them with means of livelihood and dignity by robbing its members of their property at gunpoint (Ideyi, 2005). The police cannot perform effectively because they are overstretched by the amount of cases that awaits them daily, and this is worsened by outdated instruments they use that are no match to the modern sophisticated weapons used by the criminals.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Any hope of making the country safe for foreign investors must start with combating unemployment. As unemployment rate in the country drops, the human development index and living conditions of the citizenry will improve and social vices and increasing crime wave which discourage foreign investment will equally reduce.

There are ways in which government can tackle these social ills affecting the country. One of the ways is that government should invest massively in agriculture and also direct youths’ interest towards this by making agricultural business exciting, creative and innovative enough to stir and spur youth interest. Another is that government should vigorously pursue vocational and technical education to the extent that youths are able to learn and master different vocational skills and become job providers. At the end of this training, government should also provide soft loans to the trained youths as take-off capital and also encourage banks to give them loans with minimal interest rates.

Government should provide an enabling environment for industries to survive. The current situation where companies that are supposed to employ the youths are closing down or are down-sizing, is not good for the country.

Many of the youths who migrate to the urban areas in search of the elusive greener pastures end up being jobless in the cities. Eventually many of them become criminals in order to survive. For this reason, rural-urban migration should be discouraged through the provision of essential social amenities that will make life in the rural areas also attractive to the youths.

8. CONCLUSION

Unemployment scourge is so grave and mind-boggling and it is evident that the federal government cannot achieve sustainable reductions in unemployment alone. All tiers of government including the private sector must see unemployment as a serious danger to the overall wellbeing of the country and work hard to reduce the high unemployment rate. The aim of every government should be to create enabling environment to promote investments. This includes provision of electricity, maintaining law and order, and adequate security. The justice system in the country must also be strong and reliable to facilitate strong contracts and protect mutual trust

Education curriculum must be immediately revised to incorporate skills and enterprise development. The former Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Fashola, once cited the fact that no Nigerian university is offering any course in transport planning and management, even though, this is a prime issue and problem in Africa as a whole. The implication of this is that, most of the giant construction companies in the country are owned by foreigners. The youths must jettison the mindset which gives them the idea that, on graduation, they have white collar jobs waiting for them. They should redirect such attractions to vocational and skill-oriented jobs, which will not only bring about self-employment but also create employment for others.

Osoju Alexander (2014) courageously called on the President of Nigeria to garner the political will to fight corruption. He insisted that changing the current mono-cultural economy of the country by economically diversifying, fixing the epileptic and erratic power supply, increasing the capital expenditure in our national budget, while drastically cutting down on recurrent expenditure, especially the amounts spent on government officials and politicians, will see to meaningful development, which would in turn open up job opportunities.

Finally, it is expected that reduction in youth unemployment will ultimately translate into reduction in crime, and engender sustainable national development.

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