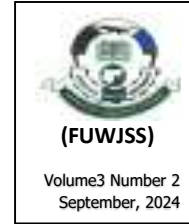


YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND RISING CRIME RATES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Peace and security are central to national development but the unemployed youths involvement in immoral acts or criminal acts do lead to breakdown of law and order. Also, unemployed youths are often manipulated in taking up arms to fight as militants during religious and ethnic conflicts, riots and as political thugs during election. Some of these youths are killed and masses of people are displaced from their ancestral or traditional homes and properties destroyed causing rising incidence of refugees and internal displaced persons. Through exclusive documentary analysis, this paper examines how activities of unemployed youths affect socio-economic development in Nigeria. Findings revealed that unemployed youths in Nigeria manifest behaviours such as alcoholism, prostitution, armed robbery, loss of self-actualization, laziness, family crisis, stealing, riots, thuggery, kidnapping, insecurity and drug smuggling. The paper recommends that government and private organizations should team-up to establish a body which would educate the unemployed youths on how to engage in positive self-appraisal.

Keywords: Crime rate, development, unemployment, youths

Introduction

Presently, the youth unemployment situation in Nigeria is a background of year manifestation of many factors such as over dependence on oil revenue which created the neglect of agriculture sector, implementation

of white elephant projects and polices, increase in corruption among the politicians, bureaucrats and type of education that is practiced in educational system which is based on wages employment not towards entrepreneurship orientation (Awo Gbenle 2010) most of successive governments have introduced various programs and organization to fight youths unemployment in order to reduce criminal behaviors, such as Community Bank, DFFRRI, National Directorate of Employment (NDE) People's Bank, Better Life for Rural Women, Family Support Programs, National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), Subsidy Reinvestment and Employment Program (SURE-P). In other words, these programs and organizations were established mainly to address various ways to reduce youth unemployment.

Recently is the establishment of National Economic Employment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) and the N-Power programme. These programmes were established based on sound merits, but the truth is that they did not generate a significant, lasting and sustainable positive effects on national employment. It is worrisome that despite vast human, material and natural resources bestowed or established were grossly mismanaged through high recurrent spending, poor leadership, corruption by public official which have not allowed for optimal utilization of these resources in such a way which would bring maximum socio-economic benefit and employment generation to the youth.

Therefore, the absence of no meaningful programmes and establishment of jobs to sustain youth, some of them settle for many obnoxious trades such as child trafficking, gambling, prostitution etc. to make ends meet and some even idle away due to unemployment. While some roam the street on daily basis looking for jobs that cannot be found or ready and some are hired for thuggery and assassins by those in power for political reasons. On the other hand, some end-up as armed robbers, posing threats of insecurity to the nation and ultimately putting their already bleak future to incomprehensible jeopardy (Ogbasonu 2015)

Onyekpe (2007) observed that youths are the intermediate population group of the nation and they are basic resources for national building through their significant means and ends of socio-economic development. Youths are leaders of tomorrow, they are outnumber the middle age (ageing) and aged. Mostly, youths represent vital stakeholder in the nation and constitute a major part of the labour force based on their creative and innovative strength and capacity. Therefore, the youth unemployment creates absence of regular income and means livelihood to ensure life substance on community, state and nation. Basically, the

frustration of unemployed youths in the nation transformed into the juvenile act and criminality such as crime, prostitution, thuggery, armed robbery, drug trafficking or smuggling, kidnapping, insecurity, gambling syndrome etc. which place enormous burden on national development.

Conceptualizing Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

The concept of youths varies in cultures and nations. In Nigeria, there is a progressive movement from a childhood to youth; which involves some systematic rites of passage. These rites determine that the people should participate or play symbolic roles in each new stage status and position. The new status has a significance value in culture, which should be recognized and accommodate in community. On the other hand, the basic concept is traced from the transition from childhood to youth and from youth to adulthood through processes of shifting and passing into each new status stage which developed in different systems. Hence, the people changing pattern have no predication of the past negotiation existence; the youth age concept is difficult task to accept globally.

According to United Nations (UN; 2004), the youth age range 15 – 24 but others for statistical purposes, and many scholars argued the distinction create gaps for some countries; besides, the statistical definition or meaning of the term youth which is dynamic based on political, economic, socio-cultural background of continent been studied. For instance, African countries the youth transition to adulthood is traced on achieving economic and duties and obligation which determine the people stability through engagement or employment which always within early twenties and mid-thirties. Therefore, the contemporary realities such as socio-economic and political conditions are the qualities or characteristics of both young males and females age 18 – 35 years using the study of Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Consequently, the definition of youth is broad being observed that this is a period in life patter when many young people are going through dramatic changes in their life stages, they move from childhood to adulthood. The young people in this age period need social, economic and political strength to reach their full realized potential. In other words, youths are young people characterized by energy, enthusiasm, ambition, creativity, promise or full potential life existence. Moreover, youth are the young people who are faced with high levels socio-economic uncertainty and volatility mainly becoming the most vulnerable age group of the population; but they are again most active, most volatile yet most vulnerable age group of the population in every nation.

Unemployment has affected the youths which create the rising waves of juvenile act or criminality and has devastating impacts in the nation, is traceable to various factors such as poverty, idleness, hopelessness, greediness etc. Ademola et al (2009) argued that unemployment has been identified as one of the major causes of social vices including armed robbery, destitution, prostitution, political thuggery, kidnapping etc. Anderson (2000) views that when the government fails in socio-economic role many people mostly the youths go underground and take to crime. They seize negative opportunity means as the avenue to seek revenge on a system that has provided them nothing but frustration.

Obaro (2012) observe that the most of those who engage in criminality in Nigeria are mostly the youth who complain about unemployment, malnutrition and hunger; which pushed them into drug business, kidnapping act, yahoo yahoo business, ritual killing, 419 syndicate, oil bunkering activities, secret cult etc. National Bureau of Statistics (NBS; 2016) reports that the figures provided by the Nigerian Prisons Service indicated that the number of people aged 18-35 years convert prisoners was doubled astronomically to 96.8% within a period of 2 years. Again, according to Nigerian Police Crime Record and Statistics (NPCRS, 2009) reports that 8,925 robbery suspects were arrested and the majority of them were youths.

Currently, kidnapping is now invoking criminal act for the unemployed young people. According to Nigerian Police Crime Statistical Records (NPCSR; 2017) reports that over 2,285 cases of kidnapping were recorded for the past four and half years. The youths arrested accused the government for failure to provide adequate employment opportunities which lured them into criminality. Thomas (2018) views that the social condition of this period of high unemployment rate, over population, urbanization, conflict and ethnic crisis always cause increase in delinquent act and crime rate. In other words, the contemporary socio-economic situation of the nation exposes unemployed youth to involve in different types of social deviant and crime activities.

Mostly, Ogbasonu (2011) observe that Nigeria Tertiary Institutions graduate many youths who possess paper qualifications without technological acquisition or skills; and those young people are unemployable in the labor market. The tertiary institutions design or programme only cause youths on daily basis to roam the street looking for jobs they cannot be employed but create youth joblessness. The youth joblessness or idleness is devil workshop which ultimately manifest

sociological, psychological, physiological and economic hardship on youth. Therefore, some youth end-up been hired for thuggery and assassins by those in political power; while others engage in juvenile act or criminality which possess a serious social problem to society and turning future of the nation to incomprehensible risk or jungle justice state.

Socio-Dynamics of Youth Unemployment and Crime Rates in Nigeria

Adebayo (2016) in his book titled "Youths Unemployment and Crime in Nigeria" observed that there are some nexus and implications for national development through explaining the major causes of youth's unemployment and increase in crime activities such as: Firstly, corruption which has robbed the socio-economic national development despite of our abundant natural resources. Indeed, corruption is seen every sector or entire structure of the nation. The funds meant for developmental projects and which would have generated employment have been misappropriated, diverted or embezzled and carted away in foreign banks. Okafor (2017) views that endemic corruption has robbed the nation of the chance of using more than \$ 500 billion dollars estimated revenue from the sale of oil in the last over 50 years to develop a vibrant economy that would have created jobs for the youths and other people in the various sectors of economy. The records or data reveal that the majority of perpetrators of the criminal activities are youths and majority of these youths are unemployed, who are likely finding a way out of the traps of poverty or seek a way to survive in the society.

Secondly, Akek et al (2011) argued that Nigeria Educational Curriculum are designed in a Conventional Pattern, where the structure of education system lacks entrepreneurial and scientific skills and training which would enable graduates to become job creators rather than job seekers. In other words, the Nigeria Education Policy confused graduates because the education policy makes graduates to view employment as a tool of working for government, companies and organizations base on monthly payment or salary. This perception influence graduates to seek for formal section jobs which do not exist. Then, the graduates seek for other ways of survival, which are the anti-social vices.

Again, Onifade (2013) observe that lack of steady and sustainable power supply cause firms dependance on generators for their operation whose cost of buying fuel and maintenance are high which increases the cost of operation. Moreso, the continues high and multiple levies and

taxations on existing companies and industries increase the cost of production and cause firms to exist at a break-even of productivity. Therefore, the hostile socio-economic environment creates no prospect for companies and industries recruitment of workers but a situation of laid off workers in the labor market, creating more unemployment than employment condition in Nigeria.

Okafare (2017) views the rate youths move from the rural areas to the urban centers in search of greener pasture is increasing rapidly; this is traced on the popular concept of the push-pull factor. The lack of infrastructural facilities in the rural areas, which makes the standard of living in the rural areas, unattractive. On the other hand, industries, companies and social amenities are concentrated in the urban areas, the youth migrate to the urban creates to seek employment in the industries, companies and ministries as well where there are social amenities for their comfortabilities. But all these factors are limited in their modern Urban areas based on the population density. Lastly, Tolu (2014) observe that the capacity of the manufacturing sector to absorb youths into the workforce has been hindered by the continuous decline in the labour market. Mostly, in 2010 over 867 industries have collapsed and shut down; and about half of the existing industries are operating under break-even where any situation that poses serious threat to the survival of these industries in the nation.

According to the manufacturers Association of Nigeria (Man, 2014) the figures of 867 industries represents the Cumulative aggregate of industries that have shut down operation in 2010 in the nation. Therefore, MAN survey mostly covers five manufacturing encloses which the nation is divided into zones of manufacturing activities such as; Lagos, Southwest, Southeast, South South and Northern areas. The MAN survey report in 2010 shows that in Lagos a total number of 219 manufacturing fire were closed down covering Ikeja, Apapa, Ikorodu and other industrial divisions within the state. While in the Southwest area, which comprises Kogi, Kwara, Ondo, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti and Oyo State lost 228 manufacturing firms. In the Southeast area, which comprises Anambra, Enugu, Imo and Abia State, a total number of 185 manufacturing firms shut down during this period. While in the South South area, which consists of Cross River, Akwa Ibom and River States 56 manufacturing firms shut down operation. Finally, in the Northern Zone which comprises Kano and Kaduna States, a total of 177 manufacturing firms collapsed before the end of 2010.

Theoretical Framework

The relative deprivation theory according to Ted Robert Gurr in 1970, he explained if any obstacle is created to the way of the people achievement their objectives and demands, they will become subject to relative deprivation, base on natural and socio--biological outcome of such a situation creating harm to source of deprivation. Then, relative deprivation is a result of interval understanding by the people as existence between their value expectations (demands) and value capabilities (belongings). Therefore, Gurr views that there is existence of discrepancy between what people demands or expectations (employment) and what people actually have or seen (unemployment). In other words, the theory want us to know that youth unemployment and crime rate are products of Nigeria higher education institutions graduating thousands of students every year without commensurate rate employment opportunities which create opportunities for frustration among Youths. In other words, youths have high spirit and great expectations when they graduate from higher education institutions, but these expectations or dreams gradually fades away and replaced with frustration after many years of joblessness. When frustration continues, the deprivation feeling expectation increases, which create the multiple effect of demands and values capabilities of belongingness which decreases. Indeed, the illegitimate activities of youth actualize their expectations in their existence in crime living or causing them to get involved in crime.

Research Methodology

The Study depended entirely or exclusively on documentary analysis. The source of data for this work was the secondary data and was obtained from library works, mostly through the review of relevant literature revolving around the topic. This secondary source involved textbooks, journals, newspapers, magazine, unpublished materials, official documents, internets, library etc.

Consequences of Youths Unemployment in Nigeria

The youths unemployed crime rate is destructive to the National Building or development; they unemployed youth manifest the behavior of immoral acts such as alcoholism, prostitution, armed robbery, loss of self-actualization, laziness, family crisis, steading, riots, thuggery, kidnapping, insecurity, drug smuggling. Consequently, the unemployed youths at their stage of life involve making choices and compromise, also taking advantages of opportunities which lead to uncertain outcomes;

where the use of tobacco and alcohol become a means of escaping from frustration or situations, they feel powerless to change and at this youth period substance use begins. Kate (2012) argued that alcohol and cigarette are most common substances abused by youths and constitute gateways to the use of other substances use and illicit drugs. Youths usually take these substances as a social habit and a way of proving that they have come of adulthood.

Moreso, the youth later step-up to the use of illicit drugs like cannabis, petrol, sniffing glue, tranquilizers, sleeping -pills, benzodiazepines etc. Boardman (2013) observed that the vulnerability of youths to drug abuse has become a social problem. The wide spread of drug abuse and trafficking by the unemployed youths are too apparent and the street violence is the result of drug abuse and illicit drug outcome which can leads to physical and psychological damage and pre-mature death. Again, the unemployed youth smoking rate is high increasing and youth women number of stepping up in smoking is also increasing in the country.

On the other hand, Bassey (2014) views that the unemployed youths tend to be attributed primarily to hunger, malnutrition and no job factors causes their involvement into financial and internet crimes known as Yahoo Business which affect the international image of the nation. Mostly, these unemployed youths are street children who have been exposed to crime and violence in their immediate social environment neither as observers or victims, also they feel that product of group association of cult activities are supreme; through upsurge of cult activities as a way of belonging or survival but this ideology affects the youth development in the nation.

Furthermore, World Health Organization Reports (WHO, 2015) that the unsafe sexual practices among unemployed youths results in high incidence of HIV/AIDS and other sexual transmitted infection among the age 15 – 20 years and 21 – 25 years respectively in Nigeria. The preceding of survey gives a frightening indication of the rapidity of transmission occurring among youths. And, when heterosexual transmission of HIV is dominant, more women youths are infected than men youths. Therefore, HIV and AIDS and other transmitted infections are placing the future generation lives in jeopardy; and which would affect the nation in years to come.

Finally, Peace and security are centre for national development; but when there is existence of breakdown of law and order in conflict situation, unemployed youths are manipulated in taking up arms to fight

as militants during religious and ethnic conflicts and political thugs during election. Many masses of people are displaced from their ancestral or traditional homes and communities and properties destroyed, creating rapid of rank of refugees and internal displaced persons. And these manipulate are unemployed youths during conflicts or riots which they become victims or perpetrators.

In Nigeria, there is no doubt that the issues of unemployed youths and crime rate are becoming a social problem. The increasing population of unemployed youths and their desperation activities and affecting the national development. In other words, the nation future of peace and Security are threatened by the growing number of unemployed youths who lack prospects of ever being able to be employed for a decent living work. Therefore, the economic growth, health sector, social development and political stability will equally remain unattainable until this issue is settled. Indeed, the frustration that accompanies the existence of the unemployed youths and crime act reflects on political and ideological unrest and violence. Moreover, the unemployed youths in long term questions government authority and causes of the problem on the leadership. As a matter of fact, unemployed youths are political and security instrument and the social- economic weapon; because of their causes and effects which are traced on the both factors. In other words, the desperate unemployed and alienated youths are always ready to take arms in exchange for small amount of money. Who are easily recruited as political thugs and ready to eliminated opponents at the flimsiest excuse; also unemployed youths are at the centre of conflict and crime. Basically, these ill activities which unemployed youths are used in-turns increases unemployment which reflect the further effects on security, economic growth, local and foreign investors confidence and social-political instability. Therefore, the key instrument to curtail youth unemployed crime act is job creation in the Nation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The consequences of crime rate among unemployed youths have enormous effect which cannot be quantified or over emphasized; and if not checked seriously would cause great problem in national development. Indeed, the government and all stakeholders should check this trend and comfort it seriously at an early period before it degenerates into an uncontrollable condition. Unemployed youths are accompanied with crime rate activities which are social problems in social-economic

growth of the nation. Therefore, the unemployed youths have attitude of desperation for survival which drive them into living out-law existence. On the other hand, the resources that would have been invested in sound education and sustainable social facilities are used for crime control and prevention; the increasing unemployed youth would be a threat to nation security because they have little or no prospects of their comfortable livelihood; when unquestionable ill-gotten wealth or resources are constantly displayed where there is global social-economic challenges. As a fact, unemployed youths experience poverty which causes their challenging national security and peace in the nation. Again, unemployed youth experience idleness and jobless which causes them to be used for tools of destruction to the nation, where these factors supposed to be channel into proper national perspective. But the successive government have not created any conducive environment or good labour market for jobs creation for the unemployed youths; due to the exiting corruption and non-vision leadership or poor governance. Basically, the existence of joblessness or unemployment, poverty, idleness and crime act would continue to increase where prospective projects that would have generated decent job creation for the unemployed youths are abandoned by government officials who selfishly allocated to themselves, relatives and friends the funds meant for the national development and job creation.

Nigeria government should redesign the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions curriculum to impact school leavers and university graduates with employable vocational skill which are relevant to the need of the economy. In other words, education planner should structure and taking the cognizance of self-employment and self-sustainability base engaging youths in self-system of entrepreneurship.

Again, the Nigeria Anti-Corruption Crusade should be serious and view the root causes of corruption and address the ugly situation of corruption from the beginning to reduce the menace. And, restructuring all institutions by appointing decent personalities to head all government parastatal not through political appointment. Mostly, government should introduce unemployment allowance or scheme should be paying unemployed youths to reduce the environmental insecurity which creates criminality. Moreso, there should be social infrastructural development such as construction of Federal and State housing construction scheme, construction of express roads, establishment of modern electricity project, provision of portable drinking water project, establishment of ultra-modern markets etc, which would provide employment or create

labour market for unemployed youths and they youths would be busy; all these mechanism would promote national conducive environment for peaceful and progressive existence. Furthermore, government should develop programs which should be designed to promote tolerance and better understanding among juvenile and youths, with a sound knowledge of eradication of ethnic chauvinism, religious bigotry and any form of discrimination in the sub-region, to reduce riots, rampant killing and destruction of properties in the nation. Also, youths and juvenile involvement activities would be controlled by provision of youths with increased economic opportunities, professional training and entrepreneur education.

Lastly, government and private organization should team-up to establish the youth and Juvenile crimes prevention programmes which would be equipped to deal with the present upsurge and future existence. The body would involve in assisting the youths and juvenile to learn how to engage in positive self-appraisal, resolve conflict, control aggression etc, through organizing information campaigns educational and training programmes in order to sensitize the juvenile and youths the consequences of violence, riots and crimes on national development.

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