

# Youth Employment as Catalyst for Nigerian Growth Recovery

AJAYI Adeola<sup>1</sup> & OLAYUNGBO David Oluseun<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Email: ajayiayoola1@gmail.com

Phone NO: +2348038905131

<sup>2</sup>(PhD), Department of Economics, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

Email: doolayungbo@oauife.edu.ng

Phone: +2348035344258

## Abstract

*Unemployment is one of the major critical problems facing the country. Nigeria is endowed with diverse and infinite human and maternal resources. However, years of unbridled corruption and mismanagement have hindered the economic growth of the country. Consequently, the resources have been left underutilized leading to unemployment which experts believe may scuttle the attainment of the millennium Development Goals in Nigeria. It is on this note that this paper examines Youth Employment as catalysts for Nigerian economic growth recovery. Secondary sources of data were utilized for the study. The findings from literature review revealed that Youth employment is the only catalyst*

*for economy growth recovery as it would curb widespread poverty, youth restiveness, terrorism and other criminal activities. The paper concluded that should embark on massive developmental programmes in all the states of the federation and introduce technical skills acquisition in the curriculum of tertiary institutions in order for them to have employable skills.*

**Keywords:** Youth Employment, unemployment economic, growth, empowerment,

## Introduction

Onwubiko (2011) stated that Nigeria is a country with numerous business and investment potentials due to the abundant vibrant and dynamic human and natural

resources it possesses. However, unemployment is one of the major problems bedeviling the country.

Unemployment in Nigeria looms large and its concomitant consequences are alarmingly especially as youth are the worst hit. The Nigeria economy since the attainment of political independence in 1960 has undergone fundamental structural changes resulting to structural shifts which have not ensured adequate employment opportunity for her youth (Emeh, 2012).

The high rate of unemployment can be blamed on the lack of adequate provision for job creation in the development plans, the ever expanding population growth and the desperate desire on the part of youths to acquire university education irrespective of course and course contents. As a result of these factors, a number of skills required from the university appear dysfunctional and irrelevant (Okafor, 2011).

Consequently, the lack of employment has led youth into criminal activities such as armed robbery car snatching, pipeline vandalization, oil bunkering and prostitution. This inhibits the development of the nation as more than half of the Nigeria populations are under the age

of 35. This was buttressed by National manpower Board and Federal Bureau of Statistics that Nigeria has a youth population of eighty (80) million representing 60 percent of the total population of the country.

In recent times, there have been notable adverse social, economic and political developments in Nigeria, a consequent of Youth Unemployment particularly exemplified by increasing, militancy violent, crimes kidnapping, restiveness and political instability. The Nigerian situation is further compounded by the recent global financial crisis that has crippled businesses and the prospect or securing jobs for young people. (Fanimio and Olayinka, 2009).

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO publication, 2007), labour markets in many countries are presently unable to accommodate the expanding pool of the skilled young graduates.

Therefore, youth employment has been recognized as vital stage of life for building the human capital that allows young people to avoid poverty and live better more fulfilling life.

## Objective of the study

The objectives of the study are to

- i. assess youth unemployment in Nigeria
- ii. highlight factors which promote unemployment
- iii. examine hindrance to youth employment and;
- iv. identify causes and consequences of youth unemployment in Nigeria.

## Literature Review

Youth employment are vital stages in life for building the human capital that allows young people to avoid poverty and local better more fulfilling life, Thus making sure that youths are well prepared for their future is enormously important to the course of poverty reduction and growth. Despite the yearly increase in the number of children attending school and those completing education, million of the young, people face bleak employment opportunities (Abati, 2009: Awogbenle et. al 2010).

Salami (2013) stated that Youth unemployment across the world has reached a new high and is likely to climb further. The youth population in Sub-Sahara Africa

was estimated at 138 million people in 2002-2003, with 28.9 million or 21% of them unemployed. He stated further that youth unemployment in African is generally higher in the urban areas than in rural areas.

Moreover, Youth unemployment in Nigeria is a consequence of several factors. One major factor is that of population growth, Nigeria has contained 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 Youths. This rate rural-urban migration has continued to create youth unemployment in the country (Ajufu, 2013)

According to Daily Trust (2010), Youth unemployment has been increasing because most graduates are not employable. This Federal government of Nigeria also acknowledged that about 85 percent of Nigerian youths are unemployed while 10 percent are in employment while 10 percent are underemployed.

According Salami (2013), the unemployment rate in Nigeria is presented in table 1 and 2.

**Table 1: Growing Unemployment in Nigeria**

	2006	2009	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total population	140.11	144.02	149.56	154.34	159.28	164.38
Economically Active	70.92	81.44	84.05	86.74	88.52	92.38
Labour Force	57.45	59.29	61.19	63.14	65.17	67.25
Employed	50.38	51.76	52.07	50.7	51.22	51.18
Unemployed	7.07	7.53	9.12	12.44	13.95	16.07

Sources: Salami (2013)

**Table 2: Nigeria Unemployment Rates by Age Group and Sex**

Age Group	Unemployment Rate
15-24	43.2
25-44	19
15-59	71.2
60-64	14.5
Gender Analysis	
Male	29.1
Female	25.2

Source: Salami (2013)

These above tables have indicated that Youths have higher employment rates than other age groups in Nigeria

**Factors Which Promote Unemployment in Nigeria**

According to Salami (2013), unemployment in Nigeria is promoted by five major factors. They are highlighted below:

- 1) Structural factors
- 2) Cultural factors and get rich quick syndrome
- 3) Lack of political will by the government
- 4) Poorly coordinated intervention programmes such as Directorate of Food Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Family Support Programme (FSP) and National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS).

- 5) Skewed to budgetary allocation of local, state and federal governments of Nigeria.

### **Hindrances to Youth Empowerment in Nigeria**

Youth empowerment is hindered by the factors below. They are:

- i) Absence of Infrastructural facilities
- ii) Inadequate working capital
- iii) Low standard of Education
- iv) Lack of adequate training and;
- v) Other economic social and political factors (NOUN, 2012)

### **Causes of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria**

Awogbenle (2013) argued that low or negative EDP growth, economic recession and low investment are direct causes of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria. Emeh (2012) opined that the causes of unemployment are lack of developmental plans, low job creation, increased population growth, downsizing in private and public sector.

Salami (2013) agreed with Awogbenle but included lack of relevant marketable skills, low economic growth and

activity as causes of Youth unemployment in Nigeria.

Shadare et al (2012) identified the following as major factors causing Youth unemployment in Nigeria:

- i) The long period of initial unemployment among university graduates in Nigeria.
- ii) Faulty manpower planning and expansion of educational facilities.
- iii) The economic recession
- iv) Continued proportional expatriates in employment in Nigeria
- v) Youth attitude to type of jobs
- vi) Use of capital intensive technology
- vii) Informed – informal sectors differentials
- viii) The collective bargaining process; and
- ix) Rural-urban migration

Having stated this it is importance to discuss the consequences Youth Unemployment in Nigeria.

### **Consequences of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria**

Since 1999, the country has experienced unprecedented rise in crime wave armed robbery, political assassinations religious riots, due to the increasing Youth unemployment rate in Nigeria (Fanimu, et al, 2009).

According to Awosusi (2012), there is unprecedented increase in prostitution, and robbery and examination malpractices due to Youth Unemployment in Nigeria. He further stressed that the social consequences of Youth unemployment are: ill health and death frustration, an anxiety and despair, and other criminal activities.

Another consequence of Youth Unemployment is their use for political and military ends. Youth who are unemployed are actively mobilized by politicians and armed groups. Youth unemployment also has security implication for the country since desperation often lead young people to fall prey to warlords, criminal gangs or illegal migration syndicates (Emeh, 2012).

Finally, the negative consequences of Youth Unemployment include poverty, psychological problems of frustration, depression, hostility, abduction, murder armed robbery and all manner of criminal behaviours causing general insecurity or life

and property (Adebayo, 1999, Egbuna, 2011, Alanana, 2003; Okonkwo, 2005).

### **Solutions to Youth Unemployment in Nigeria**

Ajufo (2013) listed the following as solutions to Youth unemployment in the country.

- i Career guidance
- ii. Sustenance of technical and vocation education.
- iii. Youth entrepreneurship production.

Emeh (2012) also recommended the following as part of solution to reduce unemployment in Nigeria.

- i. Good governance
- ii. Faithful prosecution and execution of corrupt leaders in Nigeria
- iii. Rural development to avert rural-urban drift
- iv. Remodeling of school curriculum
- v. Training and development of youth for skills acquisition
- vi Entrepreneurship development and;

vii. Management of population of the country to avoid explosion.

From the above literature review the following are the solutions to youth unemployment in Nigeria.

1. There is need for Nigeria youth to revalue their orientation. The get rich-quick syndrome should be jettisoned for hard work.
2. Universities should include entrepreneurial education in their curricular.
3. Government should emphasis agriculture and provides a conducive investment climate.

Finally, all three tiers of governments should develop their innovative strategies to promote entrepreneurial activities for the country.

### **Conclusion**

Findings from literature review discovered that youth unemployment is a national albatross and should be handled with urgency and the emergency it deserves.

Also, government must have the political will to fight corruption and universities should introduce technical skills

acquisition in the curricular of Nigerian Universities

In the same vein, government should provided enabling environment, infrastructural developmental programmes in all the states of the federation in order to reduce youth unemployment in the country.

### **Recommendations**

- i. Government should ensure that the financial institutions grant soft loan to potential and prospective youth entrepreneurs in order to encourage small scale business.
- ii. All three tiers of government should embark on rural development to curtail rural-urban drift.
- iii. Government should embark on massive youth development programmes in all the states of the federation with entrepreneurial skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development as key target of youth unemployment reduction.
- iv. National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) should be re-modeled to suit today's trend of Youth employment.

- v. Nigeria school curriculum should be remodeled to inculcate technical skill acquisition which will help secondary and tertiary institution graduates to have employable skills.
- vi. Career guidance should be made compulsory and provided for all levels of education to help students in making the right career choice.

## References

- [1] Abati, R. (2009) "Nigeria Unemployment Crisis". <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com>
- [2] Adebayo, A. (1999) "Youth Unemployment and National Directorate of Employment Self Employment Programmes Nigeria", *Journal of Economic and Social Studies*: Vol 41(1), pp 87-102.
- [3] Ajufo, B.I. (2013) "Challenges of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria: Effective Career Guidance as a Panacea", *International Multidisciplinary Journal*: Vol. 7(1) 28
- [4] Alanana, O.O. (2003) "Youth Unemployment in Nigeria: Some Implications for the Third Millennium", *Global Journal of Social Sciences*: Vol. 2 (1) 21-26.
- [5] Awogbenle, A.O. (2010) Youth Unemployment: Entrepreneurship Development Programme as an Intervention Mechanism" *African Journal of Business Management*, Vol. 4 (6), pp a. 831- 835
- [6] Awosusi, B. (2012) "Solution to Youth Employment in Nigeria" *Vanguard Newspaper* August a. 2013
- [7] Egbuna, E.N. (2001) "Food production: An African Challenges". *Economic and Finance Review* 39 (1): 13
- [8] Emeh, I.E.J. (2012) "Tackling Youth Unemployment in Nigeria: The Lagos State Development, and Empowerment Programmes Initiates" *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 13 (3) Quarter iv
- [9] Fanimu, D. and Okere, R. (2009) "Nigeria bemoan rate of unemployment seek action:" *The Guardian Tuesday, 7, 2012.*
- [10] NOUN, (2013) "Entrepreneurship Development",



- ENT 407, National Open University of Nigeria Course Study Material, *NOUN Press*
- [11] Okafor, E.E. (2011) “Youth Unemployment and Implication for Stability or Democracy in Nigeria’, *JSDA*: Vol. 13, No 1 <http://www.jsdafrica.com>
- [12] Okonkwo, I. (2005) “Poverty and Unemployment Alleviation Strategies in Nigeria,  
*a. Nigeria matters Nigerians*”, *American Publisher*
- [13] Qnwubiko, C.M. (2011) “Nigeria and the Imperative for Youth Entrepreneurial Development” (downloaded from the internet, June 18, 2014)
- [14] Salami, C.G.E. (2013) “Youth Unemployment in Nigeria: A Time for Creative Intervention”, *International Journal of Business and Marketing Management*. Vol. 1 1(2): pp 18-26
- [15] Shadare, O. and Elegbede S.T. (2012) “Graduate Unemployment in Nigeria: Causes, Effects and Remedies”, *British Journal of Arts and Social Science*, Vol. 5 (2) pp 142.
- [16] Zuehike, E. (2009) “Youth Employment and Underemployment in African” *Population Bureau a. Reference Report.*