

Curbing Youth Unemployment and Insecurity in Nigeria: Vocational and Technical Education Imperative

Jacob, David Gofwan¹, Goshi Mandung Shedrach², Jonathan Ishaya³

¹*Gse Department, School of Education Aminu Saleh College of Education Azare, Bauchi State*

²*Department Of Fine And Applied Arts, School Of Vocational And Technical Education.*

³*Gse Department, School of Education Aminu Saleh College of Education Azare, Bauchi State*

Corresponding Author: Jacob, David Gofwan

Abstract: The rate of youth unemployment is alarming in Nigeria. This could promote social vices like armed robbery, kidnapping, cultism, drug peddling, child trafficking, ritual killing, insurgency, and general security challenges. Therefore, functional and workable vocational and technical education programme is the needed panacea to curb youth vulnerability and insecurity in the country. This paper focuses on curtailing youth unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria through vocational and technical education. It examines briefly the concepts of youth; unemployment; insecurity; links between unemployment and insecurity; causes of unemployment; effects of youth unemployment on the society; vocational and technical education; role of vocational and technical education in curbing unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria; challenges of vocational and technical education development in Nigeria; ways of improving vocational and technical education. The paper went further to proffer some recommendations that if Nigerian Government and stakeholders take will in no small measure address the menace of unemployment and insecurity in the country.

KEYWORDS: Youth, Unemployment, Insecurity, Vocational and technical education.

Date of Submission: 01-02-2019

Date of acceptance: 18-02-2019

I. INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment is one of the most serious socio-economic problems confronting Nigeria as a nation. In fact, it has even become much more troublesome in recent years. However, the magnitude of this can be appreciated if accurate statistics could be obtained from the Federal Bureau of Statistics on the number of unemployed youths roaming in the streets of towns and cities in the country. In this regard, the National Manpower Board and Federal Bureau of Statistics shows that Nigeria has a youth population of over eighty (80) million representing over 60 percent of the total population of the country. Sixty four (64) million of Nigerians are unemployed while one million six hundred thousand (1.6 million) are underemployed (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010). The issue of unemployment is a major problem that has bedeviled the lives of many Nigerian youth causing frustration, dejection and dependency on family members and friends who also have their own problems to contend with. Akwara, Akwara, Enwuchola, Adekunle and Udaw (2013) posit that the scourge of unemployment has ravaged almost all nations of the world in different dimensions. Similarly, Adebayo (2013) agrees that youth's unemployment and its attendant rising wave of crime and insecurity are part of the major social problems affecting the growth and development of Nigeria and other developing countries for a very long time. Notably, it is not difficult to conclude that the high rate of unemployment among the youths in Nigeria has contributed tremendously to the high rate of poverty and insecurity in the country.

In recent times, there have been notable adverse social, economic and political developments in Nigeria, a consequence of youth unemployment, particularly exemplified by increasing militancy, violent crimes, kidnapping, armed robbery, destitution, prostitution, restiveness and political instability. The Nigerian situation is further compounded by the recent economic crisis that has crippled businesses and the prospect of securing jobs for young people. Musari (2009) concurs that when he said about 4.5 million graduates enter the labour market every year without any hope of getting employment for life sustenance. The precarious situation has left the youths in a vicious cycle of poverty that daily erodes their self-confidence and bright future thereby creating an atmosphere of insecurity.

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Youth:

In academic writing, several definitional interpretations have been identified in extant literature such as age category; transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, gender (boys and girls, young men and women) and so on. In this paper the focus is on youth as an age group. As such, in conceptualizing youth as an age category or group we draw from the definition provided by global intergovernmental organizations and its link to national definition or categorization. According to United Nations (UN), youth is an age group that is between 15 and 24 (Lyndsay and Erika, 2009). In Nigeria, adulthood is attained as stipulated in the constitution when an individual clocks 18 and obtains the right to vote and thus ceases to be a child (chapter iii section (4)-(a)). Furthermore, the first age group used by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) to generate data on rate of unemployment and employment is age group 15-24, indicating that the official or legal lower working age range is 15 years. It is based on the foregoing provisions that this paper situates its concept of youth as persons age 15-34 which reflects the NBS first and second age group category used to generate data on rate of unemployment and employment in Nigeria.

Unemployment:

Simply put, unemployment describes the condition of people who are without jobs (Okafor, 2011). The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines unemployed as the number of the economically active population who are without work but available and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. Youth unemployment, therefore, could be described as the conglomerate of youths with diverse background, willing and able to work, but cannot find any.

Insecurity:

Hasan (2005), defines insecurity as a fact of life for the poor urban citizens of many countries. According to him, it may arise from the lack of secure housing tenure, which means living with the constant fear of eviction or it may reflect high levels of personal insecurity stemming from police harassment, abuse in the hands of bureaucracies or the breakdown of public safety in the neighborhood. Insecurity therefore, implies the absence of security. It is the direct opposite of security. It is the absence of safety of individuals, state or organization against criminal activities.

Links between unemployment and insecurity:

There is a very close relationship between youths' unemployment and insecurity. According to Ayodele, (2006), the high rate of insecurity as exemplified in kidnapping, prostitution, and armed robbery has relationship with unemployment. Unemployment can trigger and as well serve as security threat to a country. The various security challenges been faced by Nigeria have been attributed to unemployment in many cases. According to the popular maxim, "The idle hand is the devil's workshop"; the situation whereby majority of the youths are jobless and unemployed, will, doubtlessly, engender high insecurity in the country. Thus, unemployment has driven many Nigerians into various activities that constitute a threat to the country's security. According to Adebayo (2013), unemployment in Nigeria poses many social, economic, political and psychological consequences, which directly and indirectly impacts negatively on national security. Similarly, Osakwe (2013) opines that, unemployment among the youths is responsible for all manner of social ills such as violence, crime, cultism and criminality. There have been instances in which young graduates were arrested for being involved in one form of crime or another. Most of these criminal graduates attribute their involvement in these crimes to the unemployment situation in the country. For instance, the cover story of The News Magazine (26 September 2011) was captioned "*Graduate Bandits on the Prowl*". According to the report, most of the graduate robbers that were interviewed argued that they took to crime for want of job (Adesina, 2011).

Causes of youth unemployment:

The causes of unemployment in developing countries like Nigeria are complex. Adegoke, (2015), identifies three major causes of unemployment as; first, there is the pressure of rapidly growing population especially of school leavers which means that year by year vast numbers of new job opportunities have to be created. Second, there is defective manpower planning coupled with appropriate bias in educational system in which disproportionate numbers of white collar job seekers are turned out at the expense of much needed technicians, technologies and scientists. Lastly, there is the fate of job seekers selectivity of job availability or location, posting or hankering after jobs unrelated to acquired training or skills. According to him, increasing population growth which is a major factor, has produced an overwhelming increase in youth population thereby resulting in an increase in the size of working age population. Other factors responsible for unemployment in Nigeria are as follows:-

Inappropriate school curricula: - Lack of employable skills due to inappropriate school curriculum is another factor contributing to the rising youth unemployment. Analysis has argued that in Nigeria generally, the skills that job seekers possess do not match with the needs and demands of employers (Mcgrath, 1999). According to him, the educational system in Nigeria has its liberal bias which indeed, over supplies the labour market with graduates who do not possess the skills required by employers. Many graduates in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial skills to facilitate self-employment.

Insecurity: - Insecurity is another factor that causes unemployment. Nigeria battles with security challenges. These security challenges have the damaging consequences which give signal to the rest of the world that Nigeria is not a safe and secure place for investment. According to Adegoke, (2015), insecurity is a risk factor which investors all over the world dread, as insecurity is not only considered a bad omen for business, it sends warning signals to investors to take their investible funds to another country.

Poor electricity:- Epileptic power generation is another factor that caused unemployment in Nigeria. Most companies and industries have folded up due to incessant power failure. Private firms that provide employment opportunities for Nigerians have gradually shifted base to other West African countries. Many manufacturers are experiencing low turnover in their businesses as they have to contend with incessant power failure, thus having to rely on generating sets which have to be fueled at exorbitant costs. As a result, many indigenous workers are retrenched (Adegoke, 2015).

Corruption: - This is also another factor that caused unemployment in Nigeria. High level of corruption in Nigeria has robbed the country of developing a vibrant economic base, in spite of her abundant natural resources, massive corruption is perpetuated in every sector and has permeated the entire social structure of Nigeria. Funds meant for development projects which could have generated employment have been misappropriated, diverted, or embezzled and stashed away in foreign banks. According to Okafor, (2005), endemic corruption has robbed the country of the chance of using billions of dollars estimated revenue from the sales of oil to develop a vibrant economy that would have created jobs for youths in the various sectors of the economy.

Effects of youth unemployment on the society:

The effects of youth unemployment in Nigeria are enormous. Unemployment among youth serves as a trigger to violent conflicts and a threat to national security. The exclusion of large population of youth either graduates or secondary school leavers, skilled and unskilled from attaining the level of development increase the risks of violence and insecurity. These youths may become viable tools for exploitation, hired as political thugs or militia as well as ethno-religious crusaders against perceived injustice. Gofwan, Goshi and Dogara(2015), stressed that a good number of graduates in Nigeria are roaming the street. According to them, these youths have become a problem to themselves and everybody in the society. They also maintain that Nigerians abroad feel extremely sad and restless for what unemployment and other socio economic vices have turned Nigeria into. To Egunjobi (2007), many social problems such as prostitution, robbery, alcoholism, domestic violence, social, religious and civil unrest and suicide to mention but few, become more severe in times of high unemployment. This contributes threats to national security and development because youths are not positively engaged in the productive process through suitable and adequate employment so as to become assets for national security and development, their energies and potentials are not harnessed to enhance national security and to positively contribute to socio-economic development.

The level of insecurity in Nigeria today is rising at an alarming rate. Robbery, prostitution, bomb blasts, assassination, religious crises and criminal acts have become the order of the day in our peaceful country. These acts are carried out by no other persons than the youth who are considered to be the future leaders. The question here is: why will the youth of a country resort to criminal acts? The answer to this question is not farfetched. Okafor (2011); Alabi and Alana (2012) contend that poverty, unemployment, frustration, hopelessness, and the total lack of the leaders' attention to the plight of the struggling Nigerian youths. Gilbert (2010) equally argues that the religious crises experience in some parts of the country could be traced to high level of youth unemployment and poverty.

Concept of vocational and technical education:

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2009) views (VTE) as learning, aims at developing skills in the practice of certain trades, as well as learning, aims at preparing students for entry into the labour market in general. The organization maintains that in both cases, learning may be geared towards direct access to the labour market or lay the foundation for access to higher education and training with joining specific trades in view. The organisation added that VTE encompasses programmes that provide participants with skills, knowledge and aptitudes that enable them to engage in productive work, adapt to rapidly changing labour markets and economies, and participate as responsible citizens in their respective societies.

Indeed, various contemporary definitions of the term “Vocational and Technical Education” (VTE) are evolving to reflect the fundamental changes in the scope of the programmes worldwide. Most recently, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) defines (VTE) as a comprehensive term is referring to those aspects of educational process involving, the study of technologies and related sciences, the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life in addition to general education. FRN (2013) lists the goals of VTE to include among others: provision of trained manpower in the areas of applied sciences, technology, business, advanced craft as well as providing training and related skills for self reliant and employment. Indeed, VTE is a potent means for fast-tracking technological progress, citizens’ capacities, economic growth and national development (Akhueomonkhan & Raimi, 2013). It is designed to train skilled and entrepreneurial workforces that are needed to create wealth that would help reduce the menace of poverty and unemployment (Maigida, 2014).

Technical Education may be defined in terms of the training given in order to advance an individual’s general proficiency especially in relation to his present or future occupations. It is also seen as systematic learning experiences, which are designed to prepare an individual for gainful employment (Okorie, 2001).

The role of Vocational and Technical Education in curbing unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria:

Youths have been identified to be more likely enticed to acts that are of security challenges to the society if left with nothing to do in the society. Therefore, the current trend in vocational and technical education in Nigeria is that, this type of education will equip its graduates with skills in areas of their trade. Balogun (2013) attests that young people particularly the secondary school leavers in industrialized nations go through vocational and technical education that prepares them for the world of work and thus they form one of the greatest investments for sustainable societal development.

High percentage of Nigerian youths are unemployed and have often been the ready tool in the hands of unscrupulous individuals or group to perpetuate a state of insecurity in the nation, and that vocational and technical education is a more effective tool in the hand of any government or nation to curb the problems of unemployment and insecurity. This implies that vocational and technical education has a major role to play in curtailing unemployment and security challenges in Nigeria. This is true in the sense that vocational and technical education can help one to be independent, autonomous, ambitious, and can take responsibility for their own future. It can help people to learn skills to gain jobs and become self-reliant and most importantly, candidates with vocational training can find work in several states and central government organizations, non-profit groups, academic institutions and sometimes even in private companies. Hence vocational and technical education gives individuals the skills to live, learn and work as a productive citizens in a global society.

Challenges of vocational and technical education development in Nigeria:

Despite the absolute essential nature and indispensability of vocational and technical education to human resource development in Nigeria, there are several problems and challenges, which have continued to bedevil the programme. .Uwaifo (2015) identifies the following among others as some of the challenges of vocational and technical education development in Nigeria. These challenges are as follows:

Societal stigma: There is still a highly defective value system prevalent in Nigeria. Even today people still place undue emphasis and value on general education to the detriment of vocational and technical education. Many people still believe that vocational and technical education is for the handicapped, poor and/or academically unfit or weak persons. Many students today choose the course only as a last resort that is when they are unable to secure admission into courses such as law medicine engineering, and so on.

Financial constraints: Vocational and technical education is largely, capital intensive because it is practical, utility course. It therefore, follows that adequate funding is germane to the successful implementation of this programme. Lack of or inadequate funds have been major constraints to the full and successful implementation of vocational and technical education in Nigeria.

The curriculum: A close look at the current vocational and technical education curriculum generally reveals some problems that border on inadequate course content, obsolete teaching methods and materials, outdated textbooks, to mention but a few. There seems to be an emphasis on the inculcation of job skills and competencies in the traditional manner without due reflection on the dynamic nature of the business world as well as the technological state of the society. In the process, other skills like that of employability (attitude, personality and ability to cope with the challenges and demand of work life) as well as entrepreneurial skills (techniques for successful self-reliance) are almost ignored.

Lack of regular training and re-training opportunities: Ignorance has kept most people from embracing vocational and technical education and others from developing themselves further in the area. Some people, especially the youth lack relevant and reliable career/job information that could enable them make objective and informed career/occupational decisions instead of subjectively molding themselves into stereotypes as it were.

Ways of improving vocational and technical education:

For government to achieve any meaningful progress in the development of vocational and technical education in Nigeria, the following steps are suggested:

- (a) It is important for the federal government of Nigeria to provide adequate funds to the various institutions of technology responsible for the training of vocational and technical education in Nigeria so that they can contribute meaningfully to the evolvement of an indigenous technology for Nigeria through research.
- (b) Government should bring together all scientists who have made discoveries in different technological areas of development and provide funds for the improvement and mass production of relevant technologies.
- (c) There is need to establish more technical schools and polytechnics that will actually develop our indigenous technologies through the use of our local raw materials.
- (d) All stakeholders and beneficiaries of vocational and technical education training should be involved in the funding of the programme. These include governments at all levels, industry, whether construction, manufacturing or service, commercial houses and similar or allied business. Others are parents of vocational and technical trainees, users of technology gadgets and expertise.
- (e) Government should take-over the upgrading of the knowledge of unskilled technical artisans, roadside mechanics, vulcanisers, bricklayers, etc through an expansion of the technical colleges to run an apprenticeship programme, since most of these people are not educated. A special training programme can be organized whereby at the end of their training, they will be given certificates. This certificate should be used as minimum criteria for artisans to run their shops in the country. This effort will further equip them for the challenges of their profession.

III. CONCLUSION

Nigeria's security is highly dependent on the positive utilization of the vigour inbuilt in our youths. It is a common saying that an idle hand is a devil's workshop. If everyone is gainfully employed and is self-reliant, there will be no problem about unemployment, which is the key factor that ginger youths or young school leavers to go into acts capable of causing havoc to individuals, states etc., all for the sole purpose of meeting up survival needs, hence vocational and technical education is a means of achieving that. It equips youths with the right technical knowledge, skills and trained proficiency to be self-reliant. Thus vocational and technical education is the gateway to the nation's industrialization and security stability.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Addressing youth's unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria requires an integrated holistic approach. Hence, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be a restructuring of the whole academic curricular in our institutions to give room for skill acquisition in different fields to our students.
2. Vocational and technical education requires adequate funding. All stakeholders and beneficiaries of vocational and technical education training should be involved in the funding of the programme. These include Governments at all levels, industry, whether construction, manufacturing or service, commercial houses and similar or allied business. Others are parents of vocational and technical trainees, users of technology gadgets and expertise.
3. The National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) should be reconstructed in such a way that the corps members would be exposed to different vocations in the orientation camp, in addition to their paramilitary training. They should be encouraged to form Coppers Cooperative and practice a practical vocation during their service year in addition to their primary assignments.
4. While appreciating the efforts of the government in the area of security, all hands must be on deck to solve the immense security challenges so that we will all have a better country to live; a country where peace and tranquility will reign and where the posterity will call a fatherland.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Adebayo, A. A. (2013). Youths Unemployment and Crime in Nigeria: A Nexus and Implications for National Development. *International Journal of Sociology and Antropology*, 5 (8).
- [2]. Adegoke, N. (2015). Youth Unemployment and Security Challenges in Nigeria: *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Studies*. Vol.3. No.1.
- [3]. Adesina, G. (2011). Graduate Bandits on the Prowl. *The News Magazine*, (26 September).
- [4]. Akhuemonkhan, I. A. & Raimi, L. (2013). Impact of quality assurance on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria. Retrieved on 3/6/2014 from www.iveta.org/Resources/Documents/about/.../Akhuemonkhan.pptx

- [5]. Akwara, A. F. ; Akwara, N. F.; Enwuchola, J.; Adekunle, M. & Udaw, J. E. (2013). Unemployment and poverty: Implications for national security and good governance in Nigeria. Retrieved on April, 20 2015 from <http://www.rcmss.com>
- [6]. Alabi, T. and Alana, O. O. (2012). Unemployment and Poverty: The Twin fertilizer for Criminality. *Global Journal of Social Sciences*. Vol. 2. No. 2.
- [7]. Awogbenle, A.C. & Iwuamadi, K.C. (2010). Youth Unemployment: Entrepreneurship Development Programme as an Intervention Mechanism. *African Journal of Business Management* 4(6).
- [8]. Ayodele, J. B.(2006). Obstacle to Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria. In Omotosho,F., Aluko, T.K.O., Wale-Awe, O. I., & Adaramola, G., (eds). *Introduction to Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria*. Ado Ekiti: UNAD Press.
- [9]. Balogun, B. I. (2013). Quality Business Education in Nigeria: The Role of Educational Administrators. *Sardauna Journal of Education*, 4(1).
- [10]. Egunjobi, T. A. (2007). Crime and Unemployment: An Empirical Analysis. A paper presented at Annual Conference of Nigerian Economic Society, August, 2006.
- [11]. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013). *National Policy on Education*, 6 th Ed. Lagos: NERDC Press
- [12]. Gilbert, I. D. (2010). Youth Militancy, Amnesty and Security in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. In Ojakorotu, V.
- [13]. Gofwan J. D., Goshi M. S. and Dogara, B. U. (2015), Functional Vocational and Technical Education as a long-term remedy to Security Challenges in North-Estern Nigeria. *Journal of Nigerian Association of teachers of Technology*. Vol.10. No.1.
- [14]. Hasan, A. (2005). A Tale of Three Cities: Karachi, Kingston and Lagos. In focus, UNDP Journal of International Poverty Centre (ICP) Brazil.
- [15]. ILO (2012). *Africa: No Real Growth Without Jobs*. World Economic Forum on Africa. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- [16]. Lyndsay, M. H. and Erika, F. (2009). Youth Exclusion, Violent, Conflict and Fragile States: Report Prepared for DFID's Equity and Rights Final Report. 30th April.
- [17]. Maigida, J. F. (2014). Building and sustaining partnerships through public private partnership for effective technical vocational education and training programme in Nigeria. Paper presented at the 2014 Annual International Conference of International Vocational Education Association (IVETA) at Tennesse, U.S.A. November 18-19.
- [18]. McGrath, S. (1999). *Education and Training for the Informal Sector: Reflections on an International Research Project*. In Transformation.
- [19]. Musari, A. (2009). Youth and the National Youth Employment Action Plan, Abuja, Guardian Newspapers, March 19.
- [20]. Okafor, E. E. (2005). Executive Corruption in Nigeria: A Critical Overview of its Socio-Economic Implications for Development. *African Journal of Psychological Studies*. Vol.1. No.8.
- [21]. Okafor, E. E. (2011). Youth Unemployment and Implications for Stability of Democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*. Vol.13 N.1.
- [22]. Okorie, J. U. (2001). Vocational Industrial Education League of Researchers in Nigeria, Bauchi, Nigeria.
- [23]. Osakwe, C. (2013). Youth, Unemployment and National Security in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3(21).
- [24]. UNESCO (2009) *Regional Contribution to statistical Information Systems Development for Technical and Vocational Education and Training*. Retrieved on February, 12 2014 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002160/216065e.pdf>
- [25]. United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization(2007). *Revised Recommendation Concerning Technical and Vocational Education*: Paris, UNESCO Press
- [26]. Uwaifo V. O. (2015). Challenges of Technical and Vocational Education and the for its Sustained Participatory Compliance in a Developing Economy. *Journal of Nigerian association of Teachers of Technology*. Vol. 10. No.1.

Jacob, David Gofwan. " Curbing Youth Unemployment and Insecurity in Nigeria: Vocational and Technical Education Imperative." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. vol. 24 no. 02, 2019, pp. 28-33.