

## PROBLEMS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND ITS EFFECTS IN NIGERIA: IMPLCATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

<sup>1</sup>SANI AHMED KATSAYAL & <sup>2</sup>IBRAHIM SHU'AIBU

<sup>1 & 2</sup>Department of Education, Faculty of Education Sule Lamido University Kafi Hausa, Jigawa State.  
saniakty@yahoo.com; ibrahimshuaibu5252@gmail.com

### Abstract

This is a survey design oriented paper using secondary sources. Its main objective is to highlight some issues relating to unemployment as a source of contemporary social problems in Nigeria. Undoubtedly, the most striking problem militating against the development and welfare of most of the Nigerian youths is unemployment. Not only youths, even among the adults there exist some problems such as either unemployment or underemployment. In other words there are numerous contemporary social problems emanating from unemployment or underemployment in Nigeria which adversely affect the citizenry and even the government. Unemployment gives birth to social alienation and frustration among youths; this could become a catalyst for criminality and violence, which in turn threatens the National economy, security, stability and integration. It is in line with this, the paper intends to explain concept of unemployment, its types, causes, and effects. Recommendations were also given for the ways to find possible solutions.

**Keywords:** Unemployment, Contemporary, Social Problems, Counselling

### Introduction

High level of unemployment keeps rising day after day in Nigeria. The number of unemployed youths and the ones who simply have jobs and not an actual occupation is very high. Now it is a big problem in Nigeria and a factor resulting in other societal problems. Unemployment is a great problem to any economy like Nigeria. Its impact and effects cannot be overemphasized. That is why we see it as part of the root causes of most of the contemporary social problems in Nigeria.

### The concept of unemployment

Unemployment is used to describe a situation whereby a certain category of people ready to work is unable to get something doing. The International Labor Organization (ILO) (2018) defines the unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. Unemployment is a situation which arises when an employable individual is actively but unsuccessfully seeking work. It can also be seen as a condition that exist when a person who is able to work, is wishing to work, is dependent on work to survive but is unable to get a job.

Yesufu (2000) defines unemployment as “the non- utilization of the labour force which is available, capable and willing of productive employment”. It is phenomenon which arises when members of a country’s labour force are faced with obstacles in the attainment of their goals of participation in gainful occupation either through self account or wage paid endeavours (National Bureau of Statistics 2007:10). Unemployment is a pathetic situation whereby an able bodied person who has obtained academic qualification or has learnt a trade or vocation but is not gainfully engaged in any meaningful occupational activity. This frustrating situation usually leads to emotional upsets, distress and depression. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2017) is when persons above a specified age (usually above 15) are not in paid

employment or self-employment and are currently available for work during the reference period. The state of being without any work yet looking for work is called unemployment.

### **Underemployment**

This is a situation that exist when there are people who are able to work, wishing to work, but failed to obtain suitable employment, instead they are just employed to keep the mind and the soul together.

Yesufu (2000) in this regard asserts that “unlike unemployment which tantamount to complete or open non-utilization of labour, underemployment means inadequate or underutilization of labour”. Underemployment results when labourers or workers are not utilized for a maximum time or to full advantage.

### **Types of unemployment**

Unemployment is of various types here are some of the most common ones according to Reserve Bank of Australia(2023) :

1. Structural unemployment: this is simply related to foundational problems in the economy of a nation and inefficiencies inherent in labour markets, including a discrepancy between the supply and demand of labourers with necessary knowledge and skills. Structural arguments emphasize causes and solutions related to disruptive technologies and globalization.
2. Classical, or real-wage unemployment: this refers to a situation where real wages for a job are set above the market-clearing level causing the number of job-seekers to out- number available vacancies
3. Frictional unemployment: simply means when there are voluntary decisions to work based on each individuals' valuation of their own work and how that compares to current wage rates plus the time and effort required to find a suitable job.
4. Cyclical unemployment – Occurs when there is inadequate vacancy is in the economy to provide jobs for everyone who wants to work. This particularly relates to business fluctuations in an economy. This gives rise to retrenchment of workers in private enterprises. For example when a company or a bank is bankrupt, the workers will obviously have to be retrenched.
5. Hidden, or covered, unemployment: is the unemployment of potential workers that are not reflected in official unemployment statistics, due to the way the statistics are collected. In many countries, only those who have no work but are actively looking for work (and/or qualifying for social security benefits) are counted as unemployed.
6. Natural Unemployment: This is where new job seekers (e.g. fresh graduates) are looking for jobs but still unsuccessful.
7. Frictional unemployment – This refers to the time and chances lost in changing jobs or moving from one stage in life to another. David Begg et al (1984) described Frictional unemployment to “include people spending short spells in unemployment as they hop between jobs in an economy where both the labour force and the jobs are continually changing”.
8. Seasonal Unemployment – Results from variations of in activities during the year due to climatic conditions or other seasonal changes in supply and demand of labour. e.g. what happens to dry season farmers or wet season farmers.
9. Technological Unemployment – It involves labour displacement due to advancement being witnessed nowadays, whereby a machine or computer can do a work of many people in a very short time e.g. calculations, computation, analysis e.t.c.
10. Wages distortion – Occurs as a result of imperfections of the labour market, and this probably leads to underemployment rather than the real unemployment. In other words, it is a situation resulting due to the

inability of the employer to pay the employee more than certain amount due to general profitability of the business (reducing wages of workers).

### **Causes of Unemployment**

Many factors are responsible, but due to time constraint, we are going to discuss some of them such as:

- i. Urbanization – This is the process of utilizing the agricultural land for building houses, hotels and other residential as well as commercial sites. This contributes to acute shortage of farmlands and hence render many farmers to become jobless.
- ii. Engineering, Information and Communication Technology – In this modern time, responsibilities and schedules of duties of numerous able bodied workers are assigned to a single simple machine, and this leads to serious unemployment among our youths and even adults who are capable and looking for work. An example is a machine that mixes cement, sand and gravels in construction industry thereby displacing many labourers.
- iii. Rural-Urban Wage Differential – The higher the wage the lower the demand of labour required. The wage rate influences both demand and supply of labour.
- iv. Continuous Degradation and Collapse of the Industrial Sector – while the number of graduate from various tertiary institutions is increasingly alarming, our industries in Nigeria are progressively becoming incapacitated or collapsing due to either inadequate capital or energy/power supply.

### **Unemployment rate in Nigeria**

Based on the 2006 population census by age and sex, there are about 41 million youths in Nigeria aged between 18 – 35 years constituting over 30% of the entire population of about 140 million (National Population Commission 2006:15). The rate of employment in Nigeria has grown worse over the years due to weak economy. It is estimated that about 70% of those who are unemployed in Nigeria are young people between the ages between the ages of 13 – 25 year (Youth position paper 2007:4). More than 80% of the Nigerian Youths are 10% in employment are burdened and depressed with near total dependence of relatives and family members on them (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006:33).

### **Effects of Unemployment**

Unemployment problem in Nigeria has many devastating effects on Nigerian populace leading to serious social problems. Unemployed individuals are unable to earn money to meet financial obligations.

Some of the effects of unemployment in Nigeria include:

1. High rate of crimes: Owing to the fact that jobs are not available, some citizens take to violence and dubious ways to make ends meet. They involve in things like theft, fraud, cyber-crime, banditry, kidnapping, human trafficking, prostitution, rituals theft, murder, armed robbery, 419, money laundering, drug abuse, drug trafficking, .e.t.c. to make money.
2. Frustration: Unemployment can cause depression and frustration on the populace. Most people end up committing suicide because of the trauma of not been able to make ends meet. Some take to hard drugs and alcohol thereby risking their health.
3. Inequality of income: This means a situation where money is concentrated in the hands of few people (the rich) while the others which is a greater proportion are wallowing in poverty and shame. The income is concentrated in the hands of the rich.
4. Increase in death rate: As a result of unemployment, there is increase in death rate. People die either because they are malnourished or because they cannot afford hospital bills.
5. Increase in birth rate: When people are unemployment, there is the increase in birth rate because they spend so much time at home and as such procreation in the result.

6. Insurgency: This is another problem of unemployment in Nigeria. When people are ready to work and the work is not available, they mingle with bad people and vices and start fighting the government. In Nigeria, insurgents in the south were granted amnesty and given jobs both vocation. This helped to check the rate of insurgency and terrorism
7. Increase in maternal death: With no jobs, people are unable to provide for the pregnant wives and even the new born when they fall ill. It also leads to lack of the essential needs of life like good food.
8. Poor education: Unemployment affects the populace in the area of education. Parents are unable to afford books and pay school fees. As a result, children roam about the street for survival and they end up causing nuisances to the society at large.
9. High Rate of Criminal Acts – Which involves theft, murder, armed robbery, 419, drug abuse, drug trafficking, prostitution .e.t.c.
10. Over Crowdedness of Urban Centers – This leads to excessive demand and utilization of public utilities. e.g. shortage of water, traffic congestion e.t.c. This occurs when there is high rate of rural – urban migration by job seekers.
11. Spread of Communicable Diseases – When there is too much congestion of people in a small residence, there is likelihood of spreading such diseases.
12. Intra and Inter – Tribal and Religious Conflicts – Mostly, the youths are the frontiers in most of the tribal and religious intolerance leading to serious clashes involving massive killings, injuries and loss of wealth, thus threatening National integration.
13. Development of Ethnic Militias – Due to state of redundancy, many youths in Nigeria today are enrolled in ethnic militias, vigilantes and criminal gangs (Surajo, 2011). Unemployed youths have joined ethnic armies, militias that are involved in many ethno-communal conflicts, which threatens the public order, peace, National social stability and security.

(i) Promoting Political Violence – Groups of unemployed youths are usually being used by politicians during campaign rallies and electoral process to threaten counterparts and participate in rigging, thuggery, and other electoral malpractices.

### **Possible Solutions to Unemployment Problems in Nigeria.**

Many plans and programmes were tried in solving unemployment in Nigeria, but still the problem prevails. This is probably due to corruption, political bias or unrealistic implementation and monitoring in the programmes. In 1995, the Federal Government invited the International Labour Organization (ILO) to assist in the formulation of comprehensive national employment policy that would aim at accelerating employment generation, reduce the high rate of unemployment and ultimately assist individuals attain full productive and freely employment status. This effort, plus many other efforts and programmes such as N.D.E, Peoples Bank, S.A.P, NAPEP, NACRDB, PEP, Micro Finance Banks , NPower, ANCOR Borrowers, Bank of Industry, SMEDAN, e.t.c. were tried, some are still at stake, but is unemployment decreasing or increasing?

Here are some possible ways of solving unemployment problems:

- a. Creation of more employment opportunities.
- b. Increasing more effective vocational training centers.
- c. Massive enlightenment and re-orientation campaign for youths.
- d. Provision of more micro-credit facilities for the unemployed.
- e. Provision of more rural infrastructures.
- f. Resuscitating our small scale and larger industries.
- g. Payment of allowances for the unemployed to reduce poverty.
- h. Reviewing and making the education system more, relevant to the changing world and societal as well as individual needs.

## Conclusion

Unemployment is a serious problem in Nigeria, as it affects the unemployed people themselves, their families, their immediate communities and the nation at large. It is caused by many factors such as deterioration of the industrial sector, mismanaged programmes, urbanization, technological advancement, poor economy and negligence from the part of the government and other stakeholders. The problems posed by unemployment if not properly managed will lead to more contemporary social problems that can adversely affect Nigerian social stability, unity, peace, development and security. Conversely, addressing this can minimize the prevalence of many social vices in the country. This paper has presented and outlined the concept, causes and detrimental effects of unemployment. There is need therefore for urgent efforts in reducing the menace before things get worst.

## Recommendations

Consequent upon the forgoing, the following recommendations were made:

1. Provision of sincere, functional and well-monitored youth empowerment programmes should be initiated and fully implemented by government for every community in Nigeria.
2. Nigerian governments should review the National youth policy to address unemployment issues in Nigeria.
3. Employment programmes should be implemented realistically without political, ethnic or religious bias.
4. Unemployed should be given allowances that will reduce their hardship/cost of living.
5. Micro-credit facilities should be provided for the unemployed people.
6. Government should make strong efforts in reviving the collapsed industries, so that many unemployed could get employed.
7. Formulation of comprehensive moral re-orientation for the youth should be initiated and fully implemented by the government.
8. Provision of functional school and out of school guidance programmes for every community in Nigeria.
9. Nigerian youth should change their thoughts and embrace self-employment through the use of little opportunities available e.g handicrafts, farming, hawking, fishing etc.

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Unemployment is of various types here are some of the most common ones according to Reserve Bank of Australia(2023) :

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12. **Classical, or real-wage unemployment:** this refers to a situation where real wages for a job are set above the market-clearing level causing the number of job-seekers to out- number available vacancies

13. **Frictional unemployment:** simply means when there are voluntary decisions to work based on each individuals' valuation of their own work and how that compares to current wage rates plus the time and effort required to find a suitable job.

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20. Wages distortion – Occurs as a result of imperfections of the labour market, and this probably leads to underemployment rather than the real unemployment. In other words, it is a situation resulting due to the inability of the employer to pay the employee more than certain amount due to general profitability of the business (reducing wages of workers).

### Causes of Unemployment

Many factors are responsible, but due to time constraint, we are going to discuss some of them such as:

v. Urbanization – This is the process of utilizing the agricultural land for building houses, hotels and other residential as well as commercial sites. This contributes to acute shortage of farmlands and hence render many farmers to become jobless.

vi. Engineering, Information and Communication Technology – In this modern time, responsibilities and schedules of duties of numerous able bodied workers are assigned to a single simple machine, and this leads to serious unemployment among our youths and even adults who are capable and looking for work. An example is a machine that mixes cement, sand and gravels in construction industry thereby displacing many labourers.

vii. Rural-Urban Wage Differential – The higher the wage the lower the demand of labour required. The wage rate influences both demand and supply of labour.

viii. Continuous Degradation and Collapse of the Industrial Sector – while the number of graduate from various tertiary institutions is increasingly alarming, our industries in Nigeria are progressively becoming incapacitated or collapsing due to either inadequate capital or energy/power supply.

### Unemployment rate in Nigeria

Based on the 2006 population census by age and sex, there are about 41 million youths in Nigeria aged between 18 – 35 years constituting over 30% of the entire population of about 140 million (National Population Commission 2006:15). The rate of employment in Nigeria has grown worse over the years due to weak economy. It is estimated that about 70% of those who are unemployed in Nigeria are young people between the ages between the ages of 13 – 25 year (Youth position paper 2007:4). More than 80% of the Nigerian Youths are 10% in employment are burdened and depressed with near total dependence of relatives and family members on them (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006:33).

### Effects of Unemployment

Unemployment problem in Nigeria has many devastating effects on Nigerian populace leading to serious social problems. Unemployed individuals are unable to earn money to meet financial obligations.

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14. High rate of crimes: Owing to the fact that jobs are not available, some citizens take to violence and dubious ways to make ends meet. They involve in things like theft, fraud, cyber-crime, banditry, kidnapping, human trafficking, prostitution, rituals theft, murder, armed robbery, 419, money laundering, drug abuse, drug trafficking, .e.t.c. to make money.

15. Frustration: Unemployment can cause depression and frustration on the populace. Most people end up committing suicide because of the trauma of not been able to make ends meet. Some take to hard drugs and alcohol thereby risking their health.

16. Inequality of income: This means a situation where money is concentrated in the hands of few people (the rich) while the others which is a greater proportion are wallowing in poverty and shame. The income is concentrated in the hands of the rich.

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18. Increase in birth rate: When people are unemployed, there is the increase in birth rate because they spend so much time at home and as such procreation is the result.
19. Insurgency: This is another problem of unemployment in Nigeria. When people are ready to work and the work is not available, they mingle with bad people and vices and start fighting the government. In Nigeria, insurgents in the south were granted amnesty and given jobs both vocational. This helped to check the rate of insurgency and terrorism.
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21. Poor education: Unemployment affects the populace in the area of education. Parents are unable to afford books and pay school fees. As a result, children roam about the street for survival and they end up causing nuisances to the society at large.
22. High Rate of Criminal Acts – Which involves theft, murder, armed robbery, 419, drug abuse, drug trafficking, prostitution .e.t.c.
23. Over Crowdedness of Urban Centers – This leads to excessive demand and utilization of public utilities. e.g. shortage of water, traffic congestion e.t.c. This occurs when there is high rate of rural – urban migration by job seekers.
24. Spread of Communicable Diseases – When there is too much congestion of people in a small residence, there is likelihood of spreading such diseases.
25. Intra and Inter – Tribal and Religious Conflicts – Mostly, the youths are the frontiers in most of the tribal and religious intolerance leading to serious clashes involving massive killings, injuries and loss of wealth, thus threatening National integration.
26. Development of Ethnic Militias – Due to state of redundancy, many youths in Nigeria today are enrolled in ethnic militias, vigilantes and criminal gangs (Surajo, 2011). Unemployed youths have joined ethnic armies, militias that are involved in many ethno-communal conflicts, which threatens the public order, peace, National social stability and security.

(i) Promoting Political Violence – Groups of unemployed youths are usually being used by politicians during campaign rallies and electoral process to threaten counterparts and participate in rigging, thuggery, and other electoral malpractices.

### **Possible Solutions to Unemployment Problems in Nigeria.**

Many plans and programmes were tried in solving unemployment in Nigeria, but still the problem prevails. This is probably due to corruption, political bias or unrealistic implementation and monitoring in the programmes. In 1995, the Federal Government invited the International Labour Organization (ILO) to assist in the formulation of comprehensive national employment policy that would aim at accelerating employment generation, reduce the high rate of unemployment and ultimately assist individuals attain full productive and freely employment status. This effort, plus many other efforts and programmes such as N.D.E, Peoples Bank, S.A.P, NAPEP, NACRDB, PEP, Micro Finance Banks, NPower, ANCOR Borrowers, Bank of Industry, SMEDAN, e.t.c. were tried, some are still at stake, but is unemployment decreasing or increasing?

Here are some possible ways of solving unemployment problems:

- i. Creation of more employment opportunities.
- j. Increasing more effective vocational training centers.
- k. Massive enlightenment and re-orientation campaign for youths.
- l. Provision of more micro-credit facilities for the unemployed.
- m. Provision of more rural infrastructures.
- n. Resuscitating our small scale and larger industries.
- o. Payment of allowances for the unemployed to reduce poverty.

- p. Reviewing and making the education system more, relevant to the changing world and societal as well as individual needs.

## Conclusion

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## Recommendations

Consequent upon the forgoing, the following recommendations were made:

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