

MANAGEMENT OF NIGERIA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND THE MENACE OF UNEMPLOYMENT: A MISMATCH

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Abstract

On the basis that the manpower dividend will be enjoyed by the economy, successive governments in Nigeria have invested on education, yet over the years, the economy has not been able to absorb majority of its output. What could be termed 'unemployment' has now reached a level where parents, government, institutions' administrators and other education stakeholders are worried. In this paper, the issue of unemployment of majority of outputs from the educational system in Nigeria is examined, with particular focus on its causes and consequences. Giving priority to science and technical courses in the educational institutions instead of the humanities, review of the curriculum of the educational system, tackling the prevailing energy crisis are among the measures suggested for the menace to become a thing of the past in Nigeria.

Introduction

In Nigeria, education is an issue of priority to government. It is recognized as an instrument per excellence for effecting national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Government has also been demonstrating its commitment to it through the establishment of educational institutions, at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels (Federal Ministry of Education 2007; 2009). A lot of financial, human and material resources are also committed to its development (Yaqub, 2001) so as to ensure that its quality is improved. Parents, guardians, international and Non-governmental Organizations have also been complementing government's efforts in the funding of education in Nigeria. Both governments', parents' and other stakeholders' efforts in the funding of education are in form of investment with the expectation that such investments will yield dividends at the end. However, the increasing rate of unemployment in Nigeria is casting doubt in the efficacy of Nigeria educational system in meeting the needs of the individuals and collective aspiration of the country. The attention given to education in Nigeria by various stakeholders is in strong belief and faith that it is a catalyst to the transformation and development of the society. Nwadiani (1998) posited that educational management is the proper planning, effective implementation and monitoring of educational system to achieve goals of the system. One of such goals is equipping the learners with useful and relevant skills and competencies that will make them productive and useful to the society. Today, in Nigeria most graduates from the Nigeria educational system at all levels irrespective of their course of study are infected with the virus of unemployment.

There is an inverse relationship between the quantity and quality of education provided in Nigeria and socio-economic status of the products from the system. The high incidence of poverty, unemployment, crime rate, insecurity, youth restiveness and insurgency in some parts of the country calls for proper planning and management of Nigeria educational system. Agholor (2004) asserted that an adequately managed educational system would bring about the production of efficient and effective workforce which will ultimately transform into a vibrant economy; a product of adequately prepared personnel.

Concept of Unemployment and Types

Iguisi (2000) conceptualized unemployment as a situation where there is no opportunity for those who are willing to work despite being academically qualified and physically fit to do so. International Labour Organization as cited in Dabo, (2008) defined it as a situation where a large number of economically active populations are not employed but are available and seeking for jobs. Englama (2001) also saw it as a situation where somebody is able and willing to work but does not have the work. From the definitions, unemployment can be regarded as a measure of non-availability of jobs for every individual who wishes to work and an indicator of wastage of human resources in a society. It is worthy of note that an individual who is unemployed has skills but cannot demonstrate this due to lack of opportunity.

There are different types of unemployment. It can be disguise, technological, voluntary, involuntary, cyclical, under-employment, frictional, as well as seasonal. Seasonal unemployment occurs when people are laid off seasonally due to the nature of job they do. Unemployment is said to be disguised when people take up jobs that are unrelated to their areas of specialization. Underemployment is a condition where people are employed in less skilled jobs than they are qualified to do. There is also sectoral unemployment when it affects certain professions because of over population of graduates in such areas while technological unemployment is caused by technological changes or new methods of production in an industry or business (Okebukola 2001; Borisade 2001; Englama 2001; Bajomo 1996).

Status of Unemployment in Nigeria

Statistics and Reports (Sanyalu, 2007; Kester, 2002 as cited in Aminu, 2006; Oyebola, 2009) show that unemployment has reached a disturbing level in Nigeria. Without mincing words, it is easier for a Carmel to pass through the eye of needle than for a graduate of educational institution getting job in Nigeria. Ojedele (2000) (as cited n Aminu, 2006) admitted that the joy that used to greet the graduation ceremonies in Nigeria in the past, has been replaced with sober reflection except the children of the privileged who may be lucky to secure jobs through connection. Data in Table 1 shows the rate of unemployment in Nigeria within the period 2003 and 2009.

Table 1: Unemployment Rate in Nigeria: 2003-2009

Year	Unemployment Rate (%)	% Change
2003	28.0	
2006	3.90	-89.64
2007	5.80	100.00
2008	4.90	-15.52
2009	4.90	0.00

Source: CIA: World Facts Book (2007)

Data in Table 1 shows that unemployment rate was 28.00% in 2003 but decreased to 3.90% in 2006. It increased slightly to 5.80% in 2007, decreased to 4.90% in 2008 but maintained the level in 2009.

Table 2: Unemployment Rates in Some Countries in Africa

Country	Unemployment Rate (%)	As At Year
Botswana	7.5	2007
Egypt	13.20	2013
Gabon	21.0	2006
Kenya	42.0	2009
Mali	30.0	2004
Mozambique	60.0	2009
Namibia	51.2	2008
Nigeria	23.9	March, 2011
Zimbabwe	80.0	2011
Zambia	16.0	2005

Source: The World Fact Book (2014)

Data in Table 2 shows the unemployment rate in Nigeria in comparison to the rates in some countries in Africa. As indicated in the table, as at 2011, unemployment rate in Nigeria was 23.9%. It further rose to 25.7% as reported by Central Bank of Nigeria (2012).

Causes of Unemployment in Nigeria's Context

What are the causes of unemployment in Nigeria are multi-dimensional. Some of which include:

Growing Insecurity: It is obvious that cases of civil unrest which were triggered by political, religious and tribal issues had been observed in Nigeria. Between 1967 and 1970, the country experienced the civil war. Within the two decades, there has been demonstrations and wars in cities such as Kaduna, Ife and Modakeke, Kano, Jos, Warri, Port Harcourt, Umuleri-Augleri (in Anambra State); Borno, Yobe, Niger, Bauchi, Adamawa and Jigawa States over boundary dispute and other issues. The recent 2011 election also led to riots in some northern states. These demonstrations were accompanied by loss of lives and properties worth huge sums of money. The rising cases of kidnapping and abduction of foreign oil workers and investors since 2009 has brought a setback in the economic activities in Nigeria. The atmosphere of insecurity across the country does not and cannot encourage private sector's investments which could have been providing jobs for graduates of educational institutions.

Increase in Population: There has been tremendous increase in Nigeria's population over the years. The population, which was estimated to be 88,514, 98 in 1991 (FOS, 1998) grew to over 140 million in 2006 (National Population Commission, 2006). The increase in the population of the country has led to an increase in the population of the school-age children and the demand for education at all levels (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007). Consequently, there has been upsurge in the enrollment at all levels of the educational system which has also resulted to the production of too many graduates thus overheating the economy than its carrying capacity.

Advancement in Science and Technology: Ironically and unfortunately, the breakthrough in science and technology has reduced the demand for skilled manpower. Jobs which were hitherto done manually are now being carried out with the aid of computer and sophisticated technology. Thus, science and technology has considerably reduced the manual labour requirement in many organizations including educational institutions thereby increasing the rising tide of unemployment in the country.

Influx of Migrants from Foreign Countries: The leadership status which Nigeria has assumed among the comity of countries in Africa now makes it imperative for it to protect the interest of the neighbouring African countries, particularly when they are facing one challenge or the other. Over the years, many nations from other countries, particularly those involved in wars and threatened by poor economy, have migrated to Nigeria. Within the last decade, refugees of countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, South Africa and Namibia have migrated to Nigeria. According to 1991 population census, 477,135 foreigners were in Nigeria including male and female (Federal Office of Statistics, 1998). The foreigners are however fond of competing with Nigerians for the available jobs. Bajomo (1996) observed that the foreign job seekers, especially those from the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) are prepared to accept lower wage than Nigerians for the same type of work. Owing to entrepreneurs' belief in maximum production with less cost, the foreigners are at times preferred to Nigerians, who in most cases do demand for more wages. It is unfortunate that in the oil sector, many expatriates are still occupying positions today, despite indigenization and nationalization policy in Nigeria.

Energy Crisis: Energy supply which is the main engine of production, has been in comatose in Nigeria. In many cities, there are frequent blackouts. Many people are fond of sleeping in darkness most of the times while the artisans do not usually have light to power their engine (Oloruntegbe, 2008). The situation, has been forcing many industries, small-scale businesses and organizations to close operation and retrench some of their staff so as to reduce cost. About 100 textile factories closed operation across the country

within one year. It is even unfortunate that those that depend on power generator as alternative to power production, are now discouraged by the high cost of fuel and maintenance.

Production of Irrelevant Manpower: Since the advent of formal education in Nigeria, it has been playing significant roles in the production of manpower who had contributed to the economic, political, social, cultural and technological development of the country. Nwadiani (1988) observed that higher educational institutions in Nigeria are playing ambivalent role in this area of manpower production. It is of note that one of the goals of higher education in Nigeria, is to make optimum contribution to national development, through the training of relevant manpower (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). In order to enhance the low scientific and technological development in Nigeria, higher institutions have been mandated to produce more graduates in the area of science and technology than in the humanities. Federal government also introduced 60:40 science/humanities admission policy for the universities and 70:30 for the polytechnics, monotechnics and colleges of education to comply with. However, both enrollment and outputs of higher institutions in Nigeria are skewed towards the humanities thereby leading to a glut of manpower in the labour market. Findings of unemployment survey by Ondo State government in 2008 reveals that about one-third of the unemployed studied science based courses while two-third studied arts and management courses (Ministry of Economic Planning, Ondo State 2008). Data in Table 3 show the disparity in the outputs of humanities and arts at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels in the universities in Nigeria.

Table 3: Graduate Outputs of Universities Levels in the Universities in Nigeria

Discipline	2000/2011	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
Administration	14847	14078	19513	12893	8530
Arts	6656	7645	8743	6692	3829
Law	2927	4398	5896	3877	1681
Social Sciences	11689	18909	17355	14122	7283
Total	36,119	45,030	51,507	37,574	21,323
Sciences					
Agriculture	2247	2966	3012	2869	974
Engineering/Tech	5852	6497	7227	5808	2012
Environ Sc.	1787	1811	2187	1822	1502
Medicine	1921	2665	2895	2644	732
Pharmacy	355	494	417	710	42
Science	9174	9060	11308	8353	6702
Dentistry	41	68	97	79	2
Veterinary Med	119	205	254	118	61
Total	21,496	23,766	27,397	22,403	12,027
Science: Humanities Ratio	37.31:62.69	34.55:65.45	34.72:65.28	37.35:62.65	36.06:63.94

Source: Federal Ministry of Education (2007) Statistics of Education in Nigeria: 1999-2005

As reveals in Table 3, outputs in humanities were 36,119 in 2001 but increased to 45,030 in 2001/2002 and to 51,507 in 2002/2003. In 2003/2004, it decreased to 37,574, and further to 21,323 in 2004/2005. Outputs in science were however 21,496 in 2000/2001 but increased slightly to 23,766 in 2001/2002 and further to 27,397 in 2002/2003. It however decreased to 22,403 in 2003/2004 and further to 12,027 in 2004/2005. The table further reveals that in 2000/2001, science: humanities outputs ratio was 37.31:62.69, 34.55:65.45 in 2001/2002, 37.35:62.65 in 2003/2004 and 36.06:63.94 in case of 2004/2005. From the data, it implies that outputs of sciences were lower than humanities during the period. Consequently, products of higher institutions that are humanities oriented have been flooding the labour market in search of jobs. Like a paradox, while many unemployed graduates now abound in the labour market, many jobs are unclaimed due to inability to get people of the required skill.

Mismatch of Economic and Educational Growth Rates: There has been disparity in the education system's growth rate and that of the economy on which it depends. Ashby Commission reported that the outputs of

higher education in Nigeria were 300 although Federal Government then envisaged 10,000 students by 1970. Six years after independence (i.e. 1966), the target was exceeded. The five universities then had a total enrolment of 8000 students, which could have reached government’s target of 10,000 by 1968 i.e two years behind schedule (Fafunwa, 1974). Forty-nine years after this commission, both enrolment and outputs of higher education had risen tremendously (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007). Consequently, outputs of higher education have over heated the economy more than its carrying capacity.

Added to this problem is the fact that admission is no longer given to students based on the manpower needs of the country. This has been sacrificed on the alter of access to university education, by those who agitate for it purely for political and social reasons as against economic need disposition of the country. For instance, in table 4 below, University of Benin, Benin City alone within the period of four years churned out 20,165 products to the economy of Nigeria that cannot absorb of one third of the products from 129 universities in Nigeria in a year. What a colossal waste of resources?

Table 4: Graduate Output of University of Benin between 2008/2009 – 2011/2012

Degree	2008/2009			2009/2010			2010/2011			2012/2013			Total		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Ph.D	43	4	47	38	13	51	25	8	33	34	12	46	149	37	177
Masters	535	275	810	212	124	336	146	37	183	306	81	387	1199	517	1716
Post-Graduate Diploma	71	65	136	46	66	112	1	5	6	15	2	17	133	138	271
First Degree	2779	1784	4563	3178	2049	5227	2423	1603	3026	2012	1154	3166	10392	6590	16982
Sub-Degree	318	311	629	108	147	255	20	22	42	38	55	93	484	535	1019
Total	3749	2439	6185	3582	2399	5981	2615	1675	4290	2405	1304	3709	12348	7817	20165

Source: University of Benin, Benin City Pocket Statistics (2013)

Low Transition Rates at the Lower Education Levels: Transition rate indicates the number of pupils/students in the terminal class of an education level who eventually secured admission and enrolled in the first class of the next education level. It has been observed that the rate of transition at the lower levels of the educational system in Nigeria is low which implies that many outputs of primary and secondary schools are discontinuing their education. Federal Office of Statistics (1998) reported a transition rate of between 43.11 to 47.45% from primary to JSS1, from 1999 to 1993. Reports (Joint Admission & Matriculations Board 2009; Federal Ministry of Education, 2007) also confirm that there is unsatisfied admission demand for higher education in Nigeria which implies that not all the products of secondary education are having access to tertiary education. Many out of the unlucky candidates do retreat to the labour market to seek for jobs.

Unfavourable Policies: Government’s policies can attract foreign investments into the economy of a nation. When policies are however harsh, the investors will be discouraged since every investor wants maximum profit from his/her investment. In the past, policies such as the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), deregulation of the oil sector, increase in the prices of petroleum products, privatization of industries were implemented in Nigeria, which encouraged the retrenchment of many workers. Increase in the tax payable by companies was another policy of government that has discouraged investment consequently the provision of jobs for graduates of educational institutions. At time, the decision of government to liberalize importation of goods and services do affect the local industries thus leading to retrenchment of many workers and non-provision of jobs for graduates of educational institutions.

Downturn of Economy: It is obvious that Nigeria’s economy has been in parlous state. Many companies and industries which could have been providing jobs for the citizens can no longer be sustained. Cases of retrenchment of workers by different organizations now abound in the print and electronic media (Oloruntegbe, 2008). The poor economic situation in Nigeria is seriously undermining government’s effort to establish industries that can absorb many of the outputs of the education sector. Unfortunately, many

industries can no longer be sustained in Nigeria due to financial insolvency. This is why Federal Government has decided to privatize many of its industries/companies which led to loss of jobs.

Neglect of Agriculture for White Collar Jobs: Agriculture has been the mainstay of Nigeria's economy. Prior to the discovery of oil in 1950s, most citizens relied on farming for their sustenance while the revenue of government was then based mainly on Agriculture. During period before independence, agriculture accounted for more than 60% of the GDP and at independence in 1960, it accounted for more than 65% of the GDP and 70% of exports (Federal Ministry of Education, 2005). With the discovery of Oil, attention has been shifted from agriculture to white collar jobs. Since the available industries and organizations cannot absorb in all the unemployed graduates in the society whose dreams are to work in fully air-conditioned offices.

Rising Trend in Corruption: If there is any issue that has been the bane of development in Nigeria, it is corruption. It is a menace, which is prevalent in every sector of the economy. It is unfortunate that Nigeria was reported as the most corrupt nation in the world in year 2000 (Transparency International, 2000). To buttress the level of corruption in the country, Wasagu (2008) reported that twenty six (26) out of the thirty six (36) states in Nigeria were to refund N2.6 billion that was stolen from the education sector. Due to the high-level of corruption in Nigeria, money meant for establishing industries and providing services had been diverted to private coffers due to the belief that money that is meant for government is a national cake. Consequently, foreign investors are no longer willing to invest in Nigeria because they are afraid of losing their money (Ibeh 2009).

Consequences of Unemployment

Unemployment has been a menace in Nigeria, which is having serious and grievous consequences. It is an issue of concern to the economists, institutions' administrators, educational planners, policy makers, and stakeholders in education. Notable among the consequences of this menace are:

Increase in Poverty among the Citizens: It is aggravating poverty level in the country. Despite its possession of abundant natural resources, official statistics show that in 1980, the national poverty incidence in Nigeria was 28.1% of the population, which increased to 65.6% in 1996 and further to 70% in 2000 (Obadan 2010). According to CBN (2012), the poverty rate in Nigeria slightly increased to 72% in 2012. The population of Nigerians living below \$1.25 a day between 2000-2007 was also estimated to be 64.6% (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2007).

Increased Crime Rate in the Society: The issue of unemployment is a factor behind the increasing crime rates in the country. Due to frustration, many unemployed youths are now drug addicts, traffickers, oil bunkers, vandals, internet fraudsters, assassins, political thugs and Advance Fee Fraud (a.k.a '419') agents. Through their illegal activities, a lot of money that could have been used to develop the economy and even used by individuals to sustain themselves, are lost. It is not gainsaying that armed robbery is now very rampant in the country. A lot of robbery cases now abound in the electronic and print media. At the point of execution, many robbers had linked their involvement in robbery to unemployment (Englama 2001).

Increase in Examination Malpractice: Some unemployed graduates are often recruited as mercenaries during examinations (Adeyemi & Ige 2002) thus contributing to the loss in the quality and originality of such certificates paraded by job seekers and students seeking higher education.

Increased in Civil Unrest/Insecurity: There is no doubt that cases of civil unrest and insecurity now abound in Nigeria. In the Niger Delta region, militancy is now a lucrative business. The politicians, many wealthy individuals, some of those in government including the expatriates at oil stations, are intimidated and kidnapped. The perpetrators of these criminal activities are fond of demanding for huge sums of money as a condition for the release of their victims. A report in Punch of 18th March 2008 indicates that six gunmen abducted the wife of a member of a particular State of House of Assembly and demanded for a sum of 400 million naira for her to be released. The wanton destruction of lives and property and the recent kidnapping of 217 chibok girls in Borno State by Boko Haram members in North East is another case in

question. No doubt the worrisome insecurity and growing insurgency in some parts of this country is traceable to unemployment.

Brain Drain: Brain drain has been a serious issue in Nigerian educational system. Many unemployed professionals such as doctors, lawyers, nurses, pharmacists, teachers, have left the country for greener pastures abroad due to inability to get jobs in Nigeria. At the 10th Annual Conference of Nigerian People and Organizations, held at Atlanta in September 17th – 18th, 1998, Nigeria was reported to be having the highest number of educated foreigners in United States of America. According to a World Bank report, migration of professionals from Nigeria increased per year during 1975 to 1984. By 1987, it reached 23,000. Within the last decade, the issue of visa lottery has become the toast among the youths. It is noteworthy that majority of those that do participate in this lotteries are unemployed youths who prefer to behave like 'Andrew' than to remain in Nigeria and become wasted. Instead of contributing to the development of the nation's economy, the migrated professionals have been contributing to the development of foreign economies.

Begging: In Nigeria, street begging has become a lucrative business. The cities are now turgid of beggars who ordinarily are not disabled but have decided to join the list of beggars because of the need to keep their bodies and souls together. There are now educated beggars in Nigeria. Any time one passes through the major cities, the demand for money by able bodied youths makes one to be embarrassed and feel disturbed about the future of the country. It is indeed a story of a wasted generation in the 21st century.

Loss of Faith in Education: The issue of unemployment in Nigeria is making many parents and children to lose faith in education. Many parents now believe that investing in education does not worth the trouble, more so that the end will not justify the means. The glooming picture of an educated child now makes many children to think of alternatives to education. 'Get rich quick syndrome' is now the slogan among the youths in Nigeria. They prefer to engage in fast businesses and make money quickly rather than to get educated and remain idle at the end. Many parents are even refusing to enroll their children in schools because of the fear that at the end, they might not get jobs (Nwadiani, 2000). It is not surprising that in the Northern part of Nigeria, the issue of early marriage has been prevalent because the money being paid to the parents (bride price) by the intending husband can make them survive the hardship in the society.

The Way Forward

It is imperative that the issue of unemployment be addressed in Nigeria, in view its negative consequences. Within the last decade, the country witnessed dismal economic fortune, which has been the 'Achilles hills' to its development. To curb the menace of unemployment, government should grant interest-free loan or loan with reduced interest to interested graduates so as to establish small-scale or cottage industries. National Directorate of Employment should be fortified to widen its scope. More foreign and local investors should be wooed by government so as to invest in the economy. Conducive fiscal and monetary policies should however be introduced by government to be able to achieve this feat. There should be provision of basic amenities in the rural areas so as to reduce the influx of youths into the urban areas. Government should provide the enabling environment for industries and business organizations to thrive. This can be achieved through the provision of basic infrastructures, electricity, water and virile means of transportation.

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria should give priority to science education rather than the humanities. The 60:40 and 70:30 science-humanities ratio, already established by government for conventional universities, polytechnics, and the colleges of education respectively, should be implemented. There should be periodic review and appraisal of course structures and the curriculum of tertiary education in Nigeria so as to be in line with the developmental trends. Manpower demand approach to the planning of education should be adopted by relevant stakeholders in the management of higher education in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship development courses should be inculcated into the curriculum of tertiary institution. There should be periodic employer tracer studies so as to provide information for higher institutions' administrators and government. There should also be proper guidance and counseling of students in

educational institutions so as to prepare, guide and encourage them to read courses that could guarantee them job after graduation.

Government should expedite action in solving the prevailing and embarrassing energy crisis in Nigeria, so as to encourage the international and local investors towards establishing industries in the country as well as discouraging the closure of available industries and business organizations. Government should continue to give priority to Agriculture. Loans should be provided for the graduates of educational institutions for them to embark on mechanized farming. Such loan should however be of reduced interest rates so as to make it easier for graduates to repay. More technical schools and skill acquisition centres should be established while the existing ones should be fortified so as to discourage over-reliance on white-collar jobs and encourage entrepreneurship in the country. Inculcate functional entrepreneurship proficiencies in students so as to become employers rather than employees at the end of their training. The employers of labour in Nigeria should not be discriminatory in the process of recruitment of applicants. There is need for re-evaluation of implementation strategies of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and Entrepreneurship programmes in order to reduce the high rate of unemployment. The Sure P programme should be responsible for the training of young graduates in technical and vocational skills that can make them create wealth rather than depending on the depleting economy of the nation.

Conclusion

Nigeria is a country that is blessed with abundant resources. Unfortunately, the resources have not been fully harnessed to its advantage. Like a paradox, while the country is having lots of natural resources, majority of the citizens are poverty ridden. Presently, Nigeria remains a developing country with low economic, social, political, cultural and technological indicators (Akpan 2003). The issue of unemployment has been a bottleneck and clog in the wheel of progress of the educational system in Nigeria. Nigeria is in the dawn of the 21st century where much is being expected from educational institutions, particularly the production of quantitative and qualitative manpower that can serve as catalysts for its development. Thus, efforts must be expedited towards ensuring an improved management of education in the country in order to guarantee meaningful employment opportunities for sustainable socio-economic development.

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