Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.5 No.1 March, 2022; p.g. 23 – 37; ISSN: 2695-2319 (Print); ISSN: 2695-2327 (Online)

THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES ON YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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Abstract

This paper analyses the impact of Poverty Alleviation Programmes on youth unemployment in developing countries especially Nigeria. Nigeria has National Alleviation or Eradication Programmes. To achieve the objective of this paper, the study employed two research questions, which includes; has poverty alleviation programmes positively influenced youth unemployment and socio-economic development in Nigeria; and how mismanagement of resources had and corruption affected youth empowerment scheme in Nigeria. Qualitative research design was employed in eliciting and analyzing reliable information gathered in this study. The results show that mismanagement of resources and corruption have considerably rendered the capacity enhancement programme ineffective in Nigeria and developing countries at large. Thus, youths remained incapacitated to transformed and take advantage of their environment. It recommends that pragmatic approach should be employed towards reducing unemployment indices in Nigeria. It concluded by recommending that enlightenment program which can change the orientation of political office holders should be organized biannually. Secondly, Nigerian government should institute vocation training centres in every local government for continuous training of the youth. Finally, more job opportunities would be created in different states to absorb the massive increase in the number of unemployed youth.

Keywords: Impact, Poverty, Poverty Alleviation Programmes, Youth, Developing Countries.

Introduction

1. Background to the Study

In both developed and developing economies, there is growing evidence of a shift in the age distribution of poverty, with youth taking the place of the elderly as the group at highest risk of poverty. The alarming rise in youth unemployment and high levels of young people who work but still live in poverty show how difficult it will be to reach the global goal to end poverty by 2030. The poor quality of employment continues to disproportionately affect youth, albeit with considerable regional differences. Over seven decades, world has been experiencing tremendous population growth that has propelled increasing concern on the implication of this scenario on sustainable development efforts of developing countries (Ugwoke, Umeh and Nnadi, 2020). Young people constituted the larger part of the population with little or no means of survival. In 1950, world population was approximately 2.6 billion people. Unexpectedly, it clocked 5 billion in 1987 and increase to 6 billion in 1999. All the same in 2011, the global population was estimated to be 7 billion and then, the world population reached 7.7 billion in 2019 with developing countries accounting for some 5.7 billion, and economically advanced nations accounting for only 1.6 billion (United Nations, 2019).

Explicitly, young people aged 15-24 years globally constitute 1.2 billion globally in 2015, accounting for one out of every six people worldwide. Currently, Urban Development Graduate, Cities Alliance (2020) projected that the world population will hit 10 billion people by 2055. It further states that 95% of this growth will take place in low and middle - income countries while Africa will account for 57% of growth (1.4 billion people). The report points that the population of sub-Saharan Africa will double by 2050. Almost 60% of Africa's population is under the age of 25, making Africa the world's youngest continent. Demographic segregation of the world population indicates that youths form the largest segment of the population. Africa has the world's youngest population and it is growing rapidly. At present, young people aged between 15 and 24 years constitute 19.4 per cent of the total population, while children under 15 years are nearly 41 per cent of the total population. By sheer numbers alone, the choices, opportunities and constraints of young people will continue to play a major role in shaping Africa's development. As well the According to African Union (2019) Young people between the ages 15 and 24 constitute roughly 20 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's population, making it the youngest continent in the world.

The report also indicates that approximately 4 million people entered into the labour market every year. It is obvious that youth make up the greater part of Nigerian population, and they suffer greater impact of poverty in our society. Many of these young people see their potential hindered by extreme poverty, discrimination or lack of information. Explicitly, universities and other tertiary institutions in the country produce an average of 120,000 graduates each year while another 500,000 school leavers or college graduates are turned out each year, without the hope of any meaningful job (Ahmed Joda Panel Report, 1999). Thus unemployment looms in Africa and Nigeria in particular. Unemployment, also referred to as joblessness, occurs when people are without work and are actively seeking employment. During periods of recession, an economy usually experiences high unemployment rates. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) states that unemployment took place when people who don't have a job, have actively looked for work in the past four weeks, and are available for work.

Specifically, pathetic situation of poverty in Nigeria is that there are simply not enough productive employment opportunities in the formal sector to accommodate new entrants to the labor force – a major way to eradicate poverty and hunger. Globally, finding a decent job threatened socio-economic development in developing countries. Commenting on the effect of unemployed youth on development effort of many developing countries, United Nations Development Programme (1999:13) stated that;

> Sustainable human development cannot be achieved without decent work and living wages. Income losses and joblessness diminish human and social capital, are associated with poorer health and educational outcomes, and contribute to long-term and intergenerational poverty and inequality, weaker resistance to shocks, and weaker social cohesion. The world population will increase by over 400 million within a decade, posing additional pressures on the labour markets in developing countries, which have high proportions of young people.

Addressing the challenges of youth poverty and empowerment has continued to be one of the Government's top priorities. Commenting on the essence of the growing youth population in Nigeria, British Council Report (2010:2): "Youth, not oil, will be Nigeria's most precious resource in the twenty first century if shown the way." Youth empowerment is the process whereby youth gain control of their lives through capacity development. Youth empowerment is a process whereby young people gain the ability and authority to make decisions and implement change in their own lives (Omotere, 2011). More elaborately, youth empowerment is focused on creating a greater community changes that, in its methods, relies on the development of the young individual capacity (Meredith, Bronwyn, Dairaghi, and Parrish, 2013). Youth empowerment involves the process and outcomes oriented, empowering youth with skill development and opportunities, and creating empowered youth who have greater control in the organization and community decision making. Nigerian government realized that it cannot tackle poverty in society where economically active poor youth abound without tackling youth empowerment.

Accordingly, National Poverty Eradication Prrogramme was launched and enforces to replace PAP. NAPEP was categorized into four schemes: Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS), and National Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRCDS) (Aliyu, 2003). Youth Empowerment Scheme was positioned to eradicate long aged unemployment problem in the country through provision of opportunities in skill acquisition to unemployed youth, empowerment and wealth creation. Capacity building is in terms of skills acquisition such as welding, carpentry, mechanic, fashion designing, tailoring, interior and exterior decoration among others. As a way to achieve the project intents, it was subdivided into three categories; capacity acquisition, mandatory attachment programme and credit delivery programme.

All the same, National Poverty Eradication Programme appeared to be like other poverty reduction programmes that siphon merge resources that would have been used to improve the socio-economic of the poor without visible evidence of its impacts. The National Coordinator and Special Assistant to the President Dr. Magnus Kpakol revealed that since the implementation of NAPEP in 2001, the programme has received N11.8billion as budgetary allocation, N4billion for procurement of Keke NAPEP, N10billion from State government and

commercial banks for multi-partnership programme and N8.2billionfrom the Millennium Development Goals (Daily Champion, 2009).However, the Special Assistant on Sustainable Banking, CBN, Dr. Aisha Mahmood, disclosed that unemployment remains a severe threat to Nigeria's economy, as 80% of Nigerian youth are without job. The scholars are puzzled as why the unemployment rate in Nigeria is still high despite the huge financial resources that had keyed into this very programme.

It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to evaluate the activities of National Poverty Eradication Programme on youth empowerment in Nigeria as a means to disclose the factors that hindered it success.

2. Statement of the Problem

Youths are the foundation of a society. Their energy, inventiveness, character and orientatio n define the pace of development and the security of a nation. Through the creative talent and labour power, a nation makes great strides in development and socio-political attainment. According to the NPC (2001) more than half of the Nigerian populations are under the age of 30. Predominantly, youth constitute the majority of Nigeria population; nevertheless many of them are worthless to Nigerian economic development as they remained unemployed. The major problem that plagued socio-economic development of Nigeria is inability to harness human resources to socio-economic development. Nigeria has a youth population of 80 million, representing 60% of the total population of the country and that 64million of them are unemployed, while 1.6 million are underemployed (National Bureau of statistics, 2010).

The prevailing socioeconomic problem cannot be tackled in the presence of unemployment. Several poverty alleviations programmes that have been implemented were full of shame to Nigeria as little or nothing has been achieved towards employment provision. outstanding among such policy directed towards eradication of poverty and boosting of our economy include the Operation Feed the Nation (1976), the Green Revolution (1979), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)(1986), Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFFRI)(1988), Poverty Alleviation Programme(1999), National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS)(2004) and a host of others. The impact of these laudable policy measures had been regression to national development in our society. The only way to reduce poverty in the LDCs without resort to international welfarism or international migration is through the development of productive capacities of the LDCs and the concomitant expansion of productive employment opportunities within them (UNCTAD 2006). In line with the above, the Nigerian Economic Society (2012:2) stated that: youth unemployment and youth poverty are inter twined. As a result, any strategy or policy that separates unemployment and poverty is likely to fail. When the youth are employed in decent jobs, they are more likely to escape from poverty and vice versa.

Lack of gainful employment leads to poverty which Aluko (1993) defined as a lack of command over basic consumption needs. This segment of population lack employment; and needed capacity and skill required to promote Nigerian economy. Federal government during the civilian administration of Obasanjo in 2001 established NAPEP as means to tackle poverty through youth unemployment. To tackle poverty, unemployment must be checked through a very effective employment policy (Odeh, 2014). That was why the government declared in November 1999 that the N470 billion budgeted for year 2000 was to relieve poverty. Before

the National Assembly even passed the 2000 budget, the government got an approval to commit N10 billion to National Poverty Eradication Programme. In the 2001 budget, the government increased the allocation to poverty alleviation programme by 150%. Specifically in 2001, N6 billion was approved as take-off grant for NAPEP. The significant action raised the hope of many Nigerians

This remarkable action of the government raised the hope of many Nigeria that prolonged unemployment which has stifled development would now be redressed. Ironically, since the introduction of National Poverty Eradication Programme and its empowerment project, it appears that poverty rate has increased. Capacity building activity is often meant to train intended beneficiaries in the various skills and trades as a way to prepared them for the world of work which will at the long run makes them to become self reliant and to contribute to overall development of the society.

This results to dilemma among the scholars on reality of poverty alleviation programme in capacity enhancement of youths in Nigeria. Thus, the paper focuses on evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme in enhancing self reliance of the youth with the view to unveil the challenges that constraints programme from achieving its primary target in Nigeria. The study is guided with the following research questions:

1. Has National Poverty Allievation Programme positively youth employment opportunities and socio-economic development in Nigeria?
2. What is the effect of mismanagement and corruption on youth empowerment schemes in Nigeria

3. Conceptual Clarifications

National Poverty Eradication Programme and Youth Empowerment in Nigeria

Nigeria is endowed with preponderance material and human resources. According to the national population commission's estimate and 2006 census report Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and indeed in the black nation of the world with a population of 163 million people with more than half its people under 30 years of age, putting a severe strain on a nation suffering from a slowing economy and declining revenue to provide enough schools and health facilities. The Nigerian economy and revenue generation had been dwindling since national development plans had not made any significant impact in youth empowerment and employment generation for its fast growing population. The first national development plan served the interest of the westernized country that provided financial aids. Obviously, First National Development Plan 1962-68 led to accumulation of foreign debt. The high dependence on foreign aid for the implementation of the project exposes the country to problem of debt deficit. The foreign aids was on the basis of conditional assistance whereby the assisting countries decide specific areas the plan was tailored to. This resulted to the first national development plan benefiting unintended beneficiary-the white. Stressing the much dependence in foreign aids for programme implementation, (UNISCO 1968: 4) stated thus: "For the programme to be carried out it is necessary to count on large increase of aids from abroad. Some aid has already been forthcoming on bilateral and multilateral basis from government, and also from philanthropic foundations".

According to Nnadozie (2004), the objectives and targets of the 1962-68 plan were too large and over-ambitious and therefore out of tune with financial, technical and managerial

capabilities of the country. Emphatically, Nigerian encyclopedia (2000) Stated that the plan was prepared by the minister of Economic Development in concert with United Nations and Ford Foundation experts including the late economist Wolfgang Stolper. This indicates that then Nigeria lack managerial ability required in initiating and enforcing development plan. This made the plan to lack clarity and precision on issues concerning youth empowerment in the formulation of objectives and targets (Onah, 2010).

Despite the above, the Second National Development Plan (1970-74), Third National Development Plan (1975-80), Fourth National Development Plan 1981-85 and three year rolling plans between1990 and 1998 had little or no provisions for youth who constituted the asset of the Nigerian development. The objectives of the plan were: increase in per capita income; more even distribution of income; reduction in the level of unemployment; increase in the supply of higher level manpower; diversification of the economy; balanced development and indigenization of economic activities (Obi, 2006). Mere observation of the plan gave the impression that federal government prioritized youth empowerment, but the meager allocations to agriculture and social development schemes did not indicate sincere intention of the government to achieve the objective. According to Okigbo (1989) in the third National Development Plan (1975:1980) agriculture and social development scheme (education, housing, health, welfare etc) that would have had the direct bearing on the youth empowerment received only 5 per cent and 11.5 per cent respectively of the financial allocations contained in the plan

Babangida administration launched and enforced the National Directorate of Employment. Four cardinals youth empowerment programme were articulated in National Directorate of Employment. These are:

a) National Youth Employment Programmes;
b) Small Scale Industrialist and Graduate Employment Programmes;
c) Special Works Programme; and
d) Agricultural Programme

These programmes were backed by necessary administrative, monitoring and support personnel, thus enabling optimum use of resources and prompt response to the requirements of the public in 1996, the core employment generation programmes of the NDE were re-organised into:

i. Vocational skills Development (VSD) Programme;
ii. Small Scale Enterprise (SSE) Programme;
iii. Special Public Works (SPW) Programme; and
iv. Rural Employment Promotion (REP) Programme

Before President Ibrahim Babangida, the initiator of the programme left office in 1992 the NDE under its National Open Apprenticeship Programme (NOA) is said to have trained 104,370 people. About 25,000 persons are said to have established their own business and 200,000 Nigerians have been given entrepreneurship training. Under all its target programmes the NDE is said to have created 1.5 million jobs nationwide (CBN, 2000). In contrast, the registration of unemployed persons in the 774 Local Government Areas in the country unfold that a total of 1,819,395 persons were still unemployed. Geographically, North-west has 589,890 registered, North-East 301,785, North-Central267,080, South-West 202,216, South-

East174,113, And South-South 284,311 unemployed persons (NDE, 2003). In the similar view, Tenibiaje and Adegoroye (2009) stated that in spite of attempts by Babangida regime to improve the lot of Nigerian youths, the condition of the Nigerian youth still leaves a lot to be desired. A lot more needs are to be done to empower them, re-energize them and get them seriously involved, with the task of nation building and socio-economic development. Past attempts at addressing the problems of the youth were characterized by much rhetoric and little in terms of concrete action

Consequently, the level of poverty and youth unemployment increased in Nigeria. According to World Bank reports (1999) Nigerians Human development index (HDI) was only 0.416 and about 70 percent or the population was vegetating below the bread line. Secondly, the Federal Office of Statistic (1999) reports that from 1980-1996, the population of por Nigerian increased four folds in absolute terms. The percentage of the core poor increased to from 62% in 1980 to 93% in 1996 whereas the moderate poor only rose from 28.9% in 1992 to 36.3% in 1996. When Olusegun Obasanjo came to power in May, 1999, expressed deep concern about the rise of poverty in Nigeria and youth unemployment. Series of reports on poverty increase in country prompted the then Olusegun Obasanjo administration to take strategic measures in alleviating poverty and promoting youth unemployment. Firstly, the administration embarked on reviewing and harmonizing the past poverty alleviation programmes through the three panel committee set up by the federal republic of Nigeria. The panel includes; the Presidential Panel on the Rationalization and Harmonization of Poverty Alleviation and Agencies headed by Alhaji Ahmed Joda; Presidential Technical Committee on the Review of all Poverty Alleviation programmes headed by Professor Ango Abdullahi; and Committees on Youth Policy, Concept of the youth Empowerment Scheme and the Blueprint for Poverty Eradication Programme headed by Professor A.B. Aborishade.

Sequel to the finding of the panels the government declared in November 1999 that the N470 billion budget for year 2000 was "to relieve poverty." Before the National Assembly even passed the 2000 budget, the government got an approval to commit N10 billion to poverty alleviation programme. In the 2001 budget, the government has increased the allocation to poverty alleviation programme by 150%. In addition, the recommendations of these presidential panels resulted in the formation of the National Poverty eradication Programme (NAPEP) in January 2001.NAPEP is the central agency that is responsible of coordinating all the anti-poverty eradication measures in the local, government State government and federal government. The overall objectives of the programme were to eradicate extreme poverty in Nigeria through monitoring and coordination of all poverty eradication efforts. Furthermore, these tasks were to be actualized through the established National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC) (Okoye and Onyukwu, 2007). The agency serves as the secretariat of the National Poverty Eradication Programme Council (NAPEC), which is the apex body for the formulation of policies on poverty reduction in the country. NAPEP was structured into four sectoral schemes.

These are;

- Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES). This incorporates capacity acquisition, mandatory attachment, productivity improvement, credit delivery, technology development and enterprise promotion among youth.
- Rural Infrastructure Scheme (RDS). This is concerned with the provision of portable and irrigation water, rural transport, rural energy and power supply.

- Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS). The SOWESS deals with provision of the social services which includes including quality primary and special education, strengthening the economic power of farmers, establishment and maintenance of recreational centres, rural telecommunication facilities, provision of mass transit and maintenance culture.
- National Resources Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS). This scheme has the target of bring about a participatory and sustainable development of agricultural, mineral and water resources through the following sub-divisions:
  - Agricultural Resources Programme,
  - Water Resources Programme,
  - Solid Minerals Resources Programme and
  - Environment Protection Programme.

The target of the National Poverty Eradication Programme is to completely wipe out poverty from Nigeria by the year 2010. Three stages in the attainment of this ambitious target have been identified as:

a. The restoration of hope in the mass of poor people in Nigeria. This involves providing basic necessities to hitherto neglected people particularly in the rural areas.
b. The restoration of economic independence and confidence; and
c. The wealth creation.

4. Theoretical Framework

Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory was propounded by Solomon in (1976). It is a theory of economic practices that proposes that economic condition of the State can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights (Gutierrez, and Dubois, 2001). This theory becomes economic development tool in Nigeria and other African countries after the great economic depression in late 1980's. This led scholars/economist to challenge and question the effectiveness and efficiency of dominance of the economic activities by the public sectors. The advocates of this theory posit that government authority should understand that by empowering and collaborating with the private sector they stand more chance of achieving their development objective and improving their revenue base.

Empowerment theory includes both processes and outcomes, suggesting that actions, activities and structure may be empowering and that the outcome of such processes may result in a level of being empowered (Swift and Levin, 1987, and Zimmerman, 1992). Empowerment process at the community level includes the collective action to access government and other community resources (Douglas, 1995) It is a theory of change in development process due to access to economic resources, man's innovation and utilization skills, and knowledge in the transformation of man's physical, social and economic environment (Perkins, 1987). Empowerment is the ability of individuals to gain mastery and control over their lives, and a critical understanding of their environment.

These abilities according to this theory stem from access to information, knowledge and skills; decision making; and individual self efficacy, community participation and perceived control (Zimmerman and Rappaport, 1988). Rappaport (2006) States that empowerment

centered on the emancipation of the marginalized groups and disadvantaged segment of community so that they can satisfy basic social needs and contribute productively to the general development of the society. Empowerment oriented intervention enhances wellness while they aim to ameliorate problem, providing opportunity for participant to participate, knowledge and skill and engage the professionals as collaborators instead of authoritative expert (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995).

Furthermore empowerment theory centers on understanding the natural settings in which individuals may gain a sense of empowerment and describe how and why interventions designed to empower individuals are necessary. Lee (2001), further stressed that three concept are central to empowerment theory. These include; developing a more positive and potent sense of self; constructing the knowledge and capacity to achieve a critical perspective on social and political realities; and cultivating resources, strategies and competence to attain personal and collective goals. Empowerment theory provides an effective support system for individual, groups and communities that have been blocked from achieving collective goals. Payne (2005) asserts that empowerment practice helps individuals and groups to overcome social barriers, and moving self–fulfillment within existing social structure. Similarly, Deiner (1999) stresses that educating children with diverse abilities in school will guild the child to acquire relevant knowledge and skill and to participate in decision making process.

4.1 Tenet of the Theory

1. The theory focuses on the execution of action which would results to change. It is action oriented intervention which includes both processes and outcome, suggesting that action, activities or structure may be empowering and outcome of such processes can result in a level of being empowered.
2. It identify the capability of man which if activated can make him or her have control over his social, economic and political environment. empowerment theory enhances wellness through ameliorating problem, providing opportunities for participant to develop knowledge and skill, and engage professional as collaborators instead of authoritative experts
3. The theory postulates that both personal, interpersonal and community resources are needed to update skill and knowledge and motivate people to achieve their social goals.
4. In the social structure, there is existence of class which can only be abolished through designing of strategies and utilization of resources to enhance the abilities of the disadvantaged segment of the community.
5. The theory seeks to eliminate the inequality in the society which affects the economic active poor segment of population. When the latent capacities of the poor are reactivated through provision of capital, skills and knowledge, the already established gap can be bridged.

4.2 Application of the Theory

The central concern of Empowerment theory is to enhance the capability of marginalized groups in the society who lack the access to information and State resources. Empowerment is a process that challenges our assumptions about the way things are and can be. It challenges our basic assumptions about power, helping, achieving, and succeeding. Empowerment theory is an economic approach that sees investment in human potentials as a means to drawn

the active poor into the mainstream of the State productive sectors thereby reducing the inequality in the society. Specifically, this is the main objective of the federal government while designing the national poverty alleviation programme in Nigeria.

Nigeria cannot be boasting of achieving sustainable economic development while over sixty percent of its' population lacks access to employment opportunities in formal and informal sectors. Youth empowerment programme evolved as an empowerment approach intended to empower the vulnerable part of a given society, both young men and women (Irobi, 2008). According to Amadi and Abdullah (2012) youth empowerment scheme is a capacity-building that implies vocational training and skills development that prepare the youth to be more productive in society.

Poverty alleviation scheme creates opportunity for the active poor to be empowered economically and to enable them acquire the necessary skill and knowledge. The outcome of the process is that it makes the beneficiaries to gain control over their social and economic environment. It provides the opportunity for self employment, increase investment and therefore accelerates the socio economic wellbeing of the poor, thereby promoting sustenance development in the long run.

6. Methodology

Research design is a plan or blue print which specifics how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyse Nworgu (2006). Research design specifies the method and procedure for acquiring the information needed to the structure and research problem. The research design of this design of the study is documentary research design. Documentary research design is a useful technique which helps in gathering investigating and analyzing information or material already in existence either publish or unpublished.

7. Youth Unemployment and Its implication on Socio-economic development

Youth unemployment has become a serious socio-economic challenge that confronts not only the developing countries but developed countries. The growing rate of youth population and little or no employment opportunity in our society has crippled the development efforts of most of the countries. The youth population is growing in geometric progression while employment opportunity is being provided in arithmetical progression. Specifically, much of this segment of population dwell in less developing countries with less opportunities to meet their basic needs and to contribute to overall socio-economic and political development of Nigeria. Commenting on the geographical distribution of youth and their fewer chances for survival, Global Roundtable working for Youth (2018) noted that;

> About 85 percent of the world's population of youth lives in developing countries. Nearly half (45.9 percent) live in low-income countries, while another third (34.1 percent) live in lower middle-income countries. The remaining fifth (20 percent) of youth live in upper middle- and high-income countries. Approximately 238 million youth live in extreme poverty" that is, they live on less than $1 a day; 462 million youth survive on less than $2 a day. About 255 million young people live in the 19 countries with the largest poverty gaps; 15 of these 19 countries are in sub-Saharan Africa.

In the same perspective, United Nations (2012) rightly stated that youth unemployment is not only a problem in developing countries: young people all around the world face the challenges of unemployment and underemployment. Expressing the depth of youth unemployment, UNDP (2014) Stated that current employment statistics are not encouraging. Young people make up 37 percent of the global working-age population but 60 percent of the total unemployed. As many as two thirds of youth in developing economies are either without work, not studying, or are engaged in irregular informal employment.

Realizing the demographic dividend of this fast growing population depends on the right investment on the capacity building and meaningful job creation that meets the needs of the youths. Regrettably, Nigerian government pays less attention on issues concerning youth capacity enhancement for effective participation in workforce and parliament. In line with the above, African Union (2011) Stated that 60% of population of Nigeria who are young men and women under the age 35 continue to face: unemployment, underemployment, lack of skills, relevant education, access to capital, unmet need for health-related information and services. When young people face uncertainty and insecurity about prospects for education, employment and income, poverty is bound to occur as limited access to education and employment gives rise to poverty increase. Similarly, the inability of the government to address the challenges facing youth in our society erode the potential of this energetic and economically versatile portion of our population to contribute towards the socio-economic development of the country. Furthermore, many unemployed youths engaged in social and political vices that have the potential to undermine democratic practices, peace and stability of the nation.

Generally, in Africa, youth's unemployment has been a major problem giving rise to other criminal tendencies in the youths and threatens the social-economic peace and stability of the continent (Ajufo, 2013). There is unprecedented rise in crime wave, armed robbery, political assassin, religious riots, intra and inter ethnic clashes due to increasingly unemployment theft. In support of the above, Okafor (2011) stress that youth unemployment make socio-economic and political environment hostile, unstable, insecure, unsafe and rancorous. In detailed explanation of the relationship between unemployed youth and insecurity **(**Cramer, 2015:2) notes;

> youth unemployment gave rise to participation in insurgencies, prompts people to join violent gangs, drives people to extremism, and that it is the primary reason behind domestic violence, unemployed young men have a low opportunity cost for engaging in violence and joining armed groups. Therefore, where there is high unemployment, especially among young males, this is one of the main factors 'predicting' civil war incidence.

Youth unemployment, underemployment and poor wages among the youths trigger a vicious cycle of intergenerational poverty and vulnerability that can adversely impact on sustainable human development. Economic hardship coupled with lack of opportunities to meaningfully participate in the society puts youth at risk of long-term social exclusion; this compromises countries' social cohesion and can lead to political instability. In another dimension of effect youth unemployment, the large number of youths who are unemployed is capable of undermining democratic practice as they constitute a serious threat if engaged by the political

class for clandestine and criminal activities (Adepegba, Ibrahim, Lartey, Olatunji Abioye and Okafor, 2011).

Youth unemployment in the world especially in African and Asian countries tends to turn this growing population to a curse to these continents instead of a blessing. Due to the high increase in the number of the youth who are unemployed in many of the low income countries, poverty tends to increase in those countries. For instance; chronically poor people are found in all parts of the world, the largest numbers live in South Asia (134 to 188 million). The highest incidence is in sub-Saharan Africa, where between 30% and 40% of all present day 'US$1/day' poor people are trapped in poverty: an estimated 90 to 120 million people. East Asia has significant numbers of chronically poor people, between 54 to 85 million, most of who live in China. Youth unemployment is approaching high levels as it has become increasingly challenging for young people to find jobs. Emphatically, the international Labour Organisation (2008) Stated that as the youth population grew faster, the share of the youth who are employed in the youth population declined from 49.2 to 44.5% between 1997 and 2007 and the total number of unemployed increased from 63 million to 75 million between 1997 and 2007, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa (from 8 to 10 million) (ILO, 2008c).

Precisely, youth unemployment in Nigeria is an indication of far more complex problems. More than half of the Nigerian populations are under the age of 30 (NPC 2006). Hence, the precious assent of Nigeria does not rely on oil but growing youth population in our society. Unfortunately, the majority of this segment of the population remains unemployed. For instance the Daily Trust (2021) states that 80 % of Nigerian's youth are unemployed while 10 % were underemployed. In fact, Statistics from the Federal Manpower Board and the Bureau of Statistics in 2011 noted that the Nigerian youth population is about 80 million, representing 60% of the total population of the country. Sixty four million of youths are unemployed, while 1.6 million are under-employed. Many qualified youth in great number Nigeria are not employed resulting to high risk of poverty, disease, terrorists and banditry.

Table: I. Youth Unemployment Trend in Nigeria from 2017-2012



Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2021

Since 2017, there has been increased number of young people that were unemployed. Thousands of graduates are churned out on a yearly basis from our tertiary institutions, with no jobs and no hope for the future. Recent studies have shown that many of these graduates are unemployable because they lack the required knowledge, skills, talents, adaptability and creativity to survive and thrive in a highly competitive globalized work environment. This

crisis is largely connected with poor education and the failure of university curriculum to meet modern demands. Nigeria has no single world-class university. In the 2021 rankings of world universities by Webometrics, no Nigerian university featured on the world's best 1000 universities. It means that in terms of international university performance dictated by the core missions of teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook, Nigeria is nowhere. No wonder our educational institutions are not at the cutting edge of robust scholarship on public policy debates. In the new world order, education, skills and creativity are the key drivers of prosperity. No nation that wants to succeed will take the education of its citizens for granted the way our country makes nonsense of the future of its youth.

8. The Impact of Mismanagement and Corruption on Youth Empowerment Scheme in Nigeria

The private gain obtained by corrupt public officials, who have been entrusted with guiding and implementing public policy and service, is at the expense of both the common good and of those who don't "cheat the system. "Corruption is costing the developing world billions of dollars every year according to UNDP (2012) it siphons off scarce resources and diminishes a country's prospects for development in a country where corruption is endemic, the consequences are disproportionately borne by the poor. For instance, former military head of State, late General Sani Abacha paralysed the machinery of governance and pauperized the citizenry in five years of dictatorship and frenetic looting (Tell, 2006). He was reputed to have stolen US$1.13 billion and 413million British pounds sterling, apart from US$386.2million defrauded through fictitious and inflated contracts. This, Ake (1995:1) insists, should ordinarily not happen to a State "because when it happens, the State effectively ceases to exist as a State and compromises its ability to pursue development".

All the same, many States in sub-African nation had experienced high level of corrupt practices that have rid the development programmes their efficacy to address poverty. The Nigerian State is a victim of high-level corruption causing the retardation of national development and a ceaseless cycle of crisis arising from peoples' discontent against the government. Graham and Wendy (2002:) laid bare the major cause of poverty in Africa thus:

> The cause of poverty in Africa is not insufficient aid but the way in which almost all of these countries have been mismanaged since their supposed liberation from the colonial yoke. He stressed that In Africa, political mismanagement, corruption and disregard by the authorities for the bulk of the people have prevailed, indeed flourished, in the half century that has followed the first withdrawal of colonial rulers. What African leaders such as Amin, Mobutu, Mengistu, Moi and most recently Mugabe have created in their countries are conditions that are distinctly unfavourable for the development of people's abilities, motivations and political institutions. They have ruled their countries like medieval fiefdoms, looting their faltering economies and through shocking mismanagement creating hardships and famines for people who do not get the opportunity to vote them out.

Obviously, Wikipedia (2007) noted that over $500 billion (U.S.) has been sent to African nations in the form of direct aid. Nevertheless the money has had little long-term effect· Most African nations have owed substantial sums of money. However, a large percentage of the money was either invested in weapons or was directly misappropriated by corrupt

governments. As such, many newly democratic nations in Africa are saddled with debt run up by totalitarian regimes. Large debts usually result in little being spent on social services, such as education, pensions, or medical care.

9. Conclusion/ Recommendations

Youth unemployment is a plague that challenges the socio-economic development of developing countries, particularly Nigeria. Nigeria has continued to experience increase in young population, who remained incapacitated to transformed and take advantage of their environment. Subsequently, this segment of the population is drawn into social vices that narrowed the development of Nigeria. This study recommends pragmatic approach towards reducing unemployment indices in Nigeria. Firstly the political office holder will be subjected to enlightenment program that would change their orientations on siphoning the insufficient resources into their private pocket; and secondly Nigerian government will embark on will embark on launching vocation training centre for the youth. Finally, more job opportunities will be created in different states to absorb the massive increase in number of unemployed youth.

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