UN-EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO IN-SECURITY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Poverty and Unemployment constitute major challenges facing mankind in general across known boundaries in fact developed countries inclusive. However it remains much more endemic among the third world countries and particularly Africa with the worst case in Nigeria. It is believed that, security strategies remain in complete as long as they do not address the issue of poverty and unemployment. A society bedeviled with the problem of endemic rate of unemployment and poverty especially among its productive segment of the population as it is currently the case in Nigeria will have its stability and peace shattered. Therefore, the paper adopts Marxist theory for analysis which believes that, poverty, unemployment and insecurity come in to being as a result of the struggle between two dominant socio-economic classes. On one hand is the class of those who control the means of production, on the other, those who rely on their labor for survival. Data were obtained through document analysis.

Keywords: Un-employment, poverty, developing countries, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

The threat of poverty and unemployment has spread almost all nations of the world in different dimensions and shades. But in Nigeria, as Akande and Okwu (2009) pointed out, the unemployment challenge is captured by the growing number of unemployed youths roaming the streets all over the country. It is seen in the informal Sector of the economy as under-employment; declining real wages; reduced incentives; Reduced private investment in all sectors of the nation’s economy; and a reduction in the quality of education and training given to the citizens in our educational institutions across the Country. Poverty and rising crime wave are consequences of this phenomenon. In other words, unemployment in Nigeria carries with it a number of attendant social, economic, political and psychological and security challenges.

This paper therefore looks at the problems of poverty and unemployment in the country and the attendant security challenges they pose, and suggests that there is the Need for a paradigm shift in the outlook of our leaders; a review of some of our national Policies; and a review of our educational curriculum with a view to making Nigerians Imbibe the philosophy of transparency, accountability and self-reliance. This would help to reduce the security challenges posed by unemployment and poverty in the country.

2. METHODOLOGY
Data were generated through secondary sources like text books, journals, newspapers, magazines, publications on the web because the research use document analysis as a method of data collection.

3. THEORETICAL CONTEXT

This paper adopts Marxist theory to explain the existing links between unemployment, poverty and insecurity by using Nigeria as our case study.

Marxist theory emerged out of concern over the unequal ownership and distribution of the means of production which divide society into two antagonistic classes—the class of ‘haves’ and class of ‘have-nots’ in other words, the working class: proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Marxist theory further exposes the exploitative tendencies and appropriation of the supposed commonwealth to the few at the detriment of the masses. According to the theory, unemployment, poverty and insecurity arises out of the struggle between two dominant socio-economic classes. On one hand is the class of the wealthy who control the means of production with the state power at their disposal and on the other, those who rely on their labor for survival—the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Marxist theory concludes that since the relations of production based on equality, moral affection collapsed, class antagonism will continue to prevail in the society. In a nutshell, in order to do away with the problem of poverty, unemployment and insecurity in a society there is a need of equal distribution of the means of production.

4. POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

National security, unemployment and poverty are the biggest problems facing most nation states in these days, whether they are developed or developing. They are impediments or threat to social progress, and lead to waste of material and human resources. However it is believed that, security strategies remain incomplete as long as they do not address poverty and unemployment. Lack of employment opportunities has contributed to youth involvement in conflicts and violent militancy that confront the Nigerian nation today. The increased rate of crimes, sectarian violence, and terrorism are connected with unemployment (Rotimi 2011). Where the youths cannot get clean jobs, they make themselves available for odd jobs just to stay alive which takes any imaginable criminal dimension.

As a root of violence and insecurity tends to be complex, sometimes people resort to violence when they are discriminated, oppressed against, socially isolated or economically deprived. Awake (2012) states that about 90% of all violence related deaths have occurred in the world’s less prosperous nations; and the poorer neighborhoods of cities are often high-crime areas; Akande and Okuwa (2009) states that youth unemployment and poverty are playing a major role in African conflict experiences which Nigeria included. The prevailing socio-economic environment is enticing youths to turn to war, crime and violence as a means of livelihood. The collapse of the social institutions and the failure of the economic system to generate sufficient means of livelihood for people is an explanation for youth’s increasing involvement in conflict and war situations all over Africa.

Nigeria national security is threatened when unemployed youths are involved in conflict situations such as ethnic and religious conflicts. For example, the conflict situations in the Niger Delta are spearheaded by youth’s, all of whom were unemployed and poor. At the very least, there is a correlation between economic
hardship (occasioned by unemployment and poverty) and those accused of taking part in the orgy of violence or violent disorder taking place in Nigeria are the youths. Therefore, it is discerning that unemployment pre-dispose people to poverty and the two problems co-jointly influence national security by creating insecurity situation. Rising crimes waves are therefore the consequence of poverty and unemployment.

Poverty is an abject state of being, in which an individual is incapable of utilizing resources around him to improve himself politically, economically, socially, or otherwise. It could be due to lack of opportunities for education which is the basic to any human development. Poverty could occur as a result of misinterpreted or indolence religious beliefs (Chigbo 1996). It could also be a state of the mind or a psychological disposition that places the individual in question in material or spiritual want. Materially, it involves the want for food, clothing and shelter. Spiritually, it involves want of peace of mind, the spirit and the inner man. According to Okoronkwo (1996), poverty ordinarily stands for a situation where by one cannot meet average requirements. Any situation under which one cannot afford a good meal at any given time is real poverty. One is poor when he cannot plan for tomorrow, because he has failed for today. Poverty means inability to afford decent food, shelter, clothing and recreation (Jolaosho 1996). Poverty implies the absence of the basic requirements essential for the survival and comfort of man.

Poverty is therefore about the absence of basic necessities of life for any person or a human group. The first human need is water, it is the first thing needed to live, without it, a plant, an animal or a baby dies. Second is food, without enough food, life is miserable and short. Third, once water and food are won, is health, otherwise the human beings become sick. Fourth is education, once human being has water, food and health, he needs to learn new horizons and unlock new possibilities. And there is the fifth which is peace and order. Without these, none of the four basic needs can be sustained (UNDP 1996).

The unemployed refers to the numbers of the economically active population who are without work, but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. (ILO 2007). According to Adebayo (1999), unemployment exists when the labour force wish to work, but cannot get jobs.

Okafor (2011) believes that unemployment in Nigeria is related with political, social, economic and psychological consequences. One of its social consequences on the Nigerian youths is the high level of youth unemployment. A phenomenon which encourages the development of street youths that grows up in a culture that encourages criminal behavior. Unemployment has also contributed to increasing feminization of poverty among young women, which has encouraged prostitution as a means of survival and leads to trafficking of young women across international borders with transnational security implications.

Psychologically, the unemployed, usually experience trauma, anger, frustration, low esteem, negative life satisfaction, unhappiness and mental disorder, including depression and acute stress. According to Encarta dictionary (2009), national security means protection of a nation from attacks or other dangers by maintaining adequate armed forces and guarding state streets. It is the mission of the liberal state to guarantee security, prosperity and overall growth of its own part of the global society of its citizens socially. But Nigeria has failed to do so socially by sustaining unequal access to education, employment and social opportunities. This failure signifies a
A very broad understanding of what constitutes a national security concern in Nigeria includes political assassination, disease, violent crime, kidnapping, ethno-religious conflicts, civil war, terrorism and environmental degradation. Many developing countries like Nigeria have huge and growing population of poor and unemployed citizens, many of whom have few choices other than economic activities that endangered the environment, thereby threatening the nation’s national security.

It is clear that, in-security rises with poverty and unemployment (Kirby 2011) because unemployment leads to loss of income which affects the people’s ability to pay their bills and provide basic necessities for their house-holds and dependent relatives. It is because of the in-security posed by un-employment that advanced countries like Israel make social security payments to the unemployed to keep them off the streets until they get jobs. This has helped to make their nation-states safer than countries like Nigeria, where no forms of assistance are given to the unemployed.

Lamido (2013) states that, un-employment is generally caused by improper orientation of the youths, absence of policy on social welfare, societal attitude towards vocational and technical education, and in-adequate teaching facilities. These have manifested in the alarming rate of armed robberies in the south-west region; militancy in the south-south region; terrorism in the north-west, north-east and north-central regions; and kidnapping in the south-east region. All these problems have impacts on the security situation in the country, and on business and investments; socio-political processes and governance. They for example, raise the cost of governance. The un-employed must find a means of livelihood and this; they do by engaging in crimes and making themselves available to the political class as a thugs and assassins. Political violence, ethno-religious conflicts and terrorism rife in Nigeria today are no doubt consequences of un-employment and poverty. If most of the youths are employed, there would be drastic reduction in the level of crime and in-security in the country. A large number of the nation’s youth are un-employed and the employed are very poorly remunerated and have large number of dependents. After taxation, their take home pay cannot take them home.

The law enforcement agents are very poorly remunerated and equipped, and they are in-sufficient in number to police all nooks and crannies of the country. And the educational system is dysfunctional in its curriculum and has not thought of introducing entrepreneurship development in the academic curriculum. The financial institutions cannot provide loans to young and honest school leavers to start their own businesses, but would rather give loans to politicians who cannot pay back these loans when they failed elections; while the poverty eradication programs designed by the governments are cornered by the politicians and those in charge of the programs in the various regions for political patronage.

From all indications, poverty and un-employment are social menace in Nigeria, and constitutes a threat to national security. Evidently, un-employment creates poverty and poverty leads to in-security. It therefore follows that both poverty and un-employment have implications for national security. This is because, poor and un-employed people especially the youth could be manipulated to undermine national stability and cause violent disorder in the country.
It can be concluded at this juncture that, one of the greatest threats to stability and national security in Nigeria is the large army of poor and unemployed people. Okafor (2011) stated that, present graduate un-employment in Nigeria is over 50%, while poverty (of less than $2 per day) rate is experienced by over 70% of the population. These have led to the general in-security in the country.

5. UNEMPLOYMENT AS THE CAUSE OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is presently rated as one of the poorest Nations in the world, with debilitating youth’s un-employment. For example, Aganga (2009) observed that, over ten million Nigerians were un-employed by March 2009, and un-employment is running at around 19.7% on average (National Bureau of Statistics Report 2009). This figure geometrically increases yearly with less realistic efforts by the managers of the state to abate the rampaging un-employment problem. Nigeria, like many other developing countries has about 70% of its population living in poverty (Otto and Ukpere 2012, 6767). Majority of the population seem to lack access to pipe borne water, health care facilities, electricity and affordable quality education.

Youth un-employment seems to have contributed in the rising cases of violent conflict in Nigeria. Un-employment could be seen as the numbers of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have voluntarily left work (International Labour Organization cited in World Bank 1998, 63). It constitutes the total number of people that are out of work. Arguably, un-employment seems to be a global trend. However, Nigeria’s un-employment situation deteriorated sequel to state inability to put in place appropriate mitigating mechanisms to control its impacts. Former Nigerian minister of finance state that, over ten million Nigerian were un-employed by March 2009 and un-employment is running at around 19.7% on average. National Bureau of Statistics Report (2009) breaks it down that, national un-employment rates for Nigeria between 2000 and 2009 showed that, the number of un-employed persons constituted 31.1% in 2000; 31.6% in 2001; 12.6% in 2002; 14.8% in 2003; 13.4% in 2004; 11.9% in 2005; also in 2006 it was 13.7%; in 2007 14.6%; in 2008 14.9%; in 2009 19.7% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2009:238).

From the above, it can be stated that, un-employment has a severe negative implication on National development in Nigeria as most of its productive force are unemployed. What this means theoretically is that, poverty and un-employment increase the number of people who are prepared to kill or be killed for a given course at token benefit (Salawu 2010). It could predispose one to engaging in illicit activities that would undermine security of the environment.

More succinctly, Jega captures the symptoms that cause in-security in Nigeria, when he observed that, Nigeria is one of the Nations in the world whose political landscape has been filled with and deeply enmeshed in broad range of recurring complex conflicts ranging from resource, communal, to political and ethno-religious conflicts (Jega 2002, 35). The implication of all these setbacks is poor implementation of policies, rising un-employment, hardship, economic and political stagnation that gives rise to the present threatening in-security which seems to be developing beyond the capacity of the state.

CONCLUSION
According to Quality of Life, an independent survey report published in April, 2015, 130 million people (76.47% of the population do not have access to the essential factors required to enjoy a good quality of life (The Sun 2015). Following the rebasing of the Nigerian economy in 2014, the country was rated as the largest in Africa with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) believed to be in the region of $510 billion (The Sun 2015). However, the survey reveals that in spite of the significant economic growth recorded over the past years, basic infrastructure is still rated poorly by the majority of Nigerians in terms of their impact on the quality of life in the country (The Sun 2015).

One of the startling revelation made by the report was that, an overwhelming majority of the respondents blamed poverty, unemployment as the causes of insecurity which pave way for the lack of basic infrastructure such as food, shelter, potable water, electricity, health facilities and road networks to became order of the day (The Sun 2015).

REFERENCES


