

## SECURITY CHALLENGES AND THE CRISIS OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA: A THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

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### Abstract

*Insecurity is one of the most serious social problems worldwide. Nigeria as a nation has been enmeshed in an increasing web of insecurity which has resulted in the current rising level of youth unemployment in the country. Many of you who graduated from the nation's universities are not engage in any gainful employment, despise their level of education and the wiliness to contribute to the economic develop of the country. Youths should be given the opportunity to display their energy possibly or else it can be diverted wrongly; youth unemployment represents a dangerous threat to human lives and constitute obstacle to economic development and poverty reduction. This paper argues that the high rate of insecurity in the country is strongly related with the high level youth unemployment in Nigeria, for any sustainable development to be achieved the government most seriously address the insecurity challenges in the country with a view of curvoing youth unemployment in Nigeria, the paper suggested that government should create employment opportunities with view of reducing poverty and unemployment in order to fight insecurity and ensure general development.*

**Keywords: security challenges, crisis, youth unemployment, theoretical discourse, Nigeria.**

### Introduction

Unemployment is one of the serious problems that are confronting the peaceful coexistence of Nigeria as a nation. The country is endowed with abundant human and material resources capable of forming a solid base for socio-economic development. It is unfortunate to say that despite its wealth, Nigeria still revolves in a pool of abject poverty as a result of high rate of unemployment. As a social problem, the menace of unemployment is directly related to

poverty, youth restiveness, kidnapping, prostitution, Fulani and farmers clashes and drug abuse. Unemployment is a condition whereby a government or private agencies can no longer employ. The unemployed by virtue of this state of being idle is vulnerable to social, psychological and economic distress. The unemployed experience unbearable condition such as neglect by friends and close associates, frustration, depression, hunger and hopelessness. In this regards Haruna &Iyaji (2019) pointed out that unemployment triggers youth unrest because when there is preponderance of poverty as a result of unemployment among youths, there is infestation of disillusionment and the frustrated youth become idle hands made ready and easy recruits for unrest.

Unemployment is a global pandemic that has destroyed and rendered human resources which could have been used for a genuine development useless. In Nigeria, unemployment has constituted a strong cog and slows down the speed of its development. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, (2021) the Nigeria's unemployment rate has witnessed increase. For instance, between 2020 and 2021 showed that the number of unemployed persons stood at 9.01 percent in 2020, 8.53 percent in 2019, 8.45 percent in 2018, 8.39 percent in 2017, 53.00 percent in 2022. In line with this, Ochonma (2011) noted that every year about 2.8 million graduates from all levels of education enter the labour market. Among this only 1percent are gainfully employed. Looking at this figure, it is obvious that Nigeria is currently experiencing the bitter part of unemployment as manifested in the increasing rate of insecurity, poverty, drug abuse, high cases of mental disorder among youths, prostitution, kidnapping, human trafficking (Nwagboso, 2012), etc. This is an indication that something is wrong in the system and the need to arrest the situation. It is in view of the severity of unemployment that spur successive government in Nigeria to design different approaches and programmes with the intention of ending unemployment in Nigeria.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

Insecurity, this can be referred to as a state of being exposed to danger due to lack of protection of individual members or community from harm. Insecurity simply means persistent fear or anxiety as a result of absence of protection of citizens from harm. When society members are no longer confident of their security architecture, or incompetence they see and feel a state of danger to their lives, they feel a life of hopelessness and life threatening conditions

Security: This refers to absence of fear as a result of adequate and competent instruments of defence and evidence for sufficient protection of society members from harm or danger. Security implies a condition in which crime, such as drug abuse, kidnapping, rape, poverty, illiteracy etc, are removed from the society through sustainable entrepreneurship education and provision of relevant skills to members of society e.g youths. According to Josif (2014:125), security is a state of peace of mind, or the absence of fear or absence of threat to acquired value. Security means a complete peace of mind, the ability to co-exist without fear or threats to life and property. Imobighe (2000) in Josif (2014:125) referred to security as an absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and cooperate existence of the state and its ability to maintain its vital institutions function towards the advancement of its core values, socio-political and economic objectives to engage members of the society achieve lawful values.

Security is referred to as freedom from fear of harm. It is a state of both psychological and physical safety or of feeling safe and confidence of pursuing things of value without fear of threats. Security enables economic, cultural and political activities to flourish and to meet the ultimate satisfaction of society members. Security in the view of Josiff(2014) imply safety from harm, it is the protection of individuals, state or organization against criminal activities such as terrorisms, kidnapping, stealing, robbery, gangsterism, riot, killing, arson etc.

Security is a condition in life which ensures people in society the freedom to go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives or properties. Akin (2008) described security as a situation that exist as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions. It ensures peace of mind and stability. Security allows or empowers people to initiate and develop their entrepreneurial abilities towards self sustenance and economic development. Adebayo (2010) in Haruna (2013) viewed security as a measure that enable people relate freely as they conduct their daily economic activities.

Security is a key player in economic growth and development. People are more productive when there is security of lives and properties. Also, it gives confidence and courage for investors both within and outside the country. When there is peace of mind, it implies that a total absence of fear, hopelessness, lack of confidence and lack of uncertainty in social life. It also connotes the removal or reduction of threat to life and peaceful coexistence of individuals, group and any other thing of value. Booth (2007) described security to mean the ability to perform roles, duties without fear or feeling of harm.

Unemployment: This is commonly referred to as joblessness or state of doing nothing for living. According to International Labour Organization (2018), unemployment to refer to people who are qualified and are seeking for work but could not find work. Thus, unemployment exclude people who are not qualify and are looking for work. According to Adebayo (1999), unemployment is said to occur when the active population of the labour force are not engaged in any work. In agreement with this perception, Mohammed, (2010) sees unemployment to mean that class of people who are jobless so much that they cannot provide basic requirements for survival. Unemployment has continued to be an obstacle to development in many countries of the world.

Unemployment is unwanted situation by the unemployed individual and the general society when one consider its devastating effects on the collective interest of the populace.

In recent times, the scenario of unemployment in Nigeria is directly linked to the increasing level of insecurity in countries where unemployment is so high. e.g. armed robbery, prostitution, destitution, kidnapping etc. This is to say that unemployment can result to various levels of crime in the society where opportunities for job seekers are blocked. The unemployed who are majorly youths remain idle without any hope of securing any legitimate job. This condition gradually introduces and incorporates youths into all forms of social vices. Tsaleni (2010) described unemployment as a situation whereby job seekers are willing to work on the prevailing wage rate, but could not get job. Job seekers are used to mean people who are without jobs and are desperately looking for job. This class of people are also referred to as the unemployed because they are qualified, healthy and are willing to work.

### **The Nexus between Security Challenges and Unemployment**

Security is a strong weapon in fighting unemployment. With security outfits members of society can engage in economic activities without any obstacle. Security opens doors for investors to freely move with their business and businesses are the vehicle for economic activities that will drive the economy forward to attain national economic development which can translate in youth employment. Security challenges in Nigeria are widespread and can hamper investment and slow down economic development. Ujah & Eboh(2006) reported in a study by world bank on investment climate in Nine African Countries in which it was discovered that 36% business operators in Nigeria perceived insecurity as a major constrain on investment.

Security challenges or insecurity on the other hand is defined variously to mean want of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty, inadequately guarded or protected etc. Beland(2005) defined insecurity as the state of fear or anxiety steaming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection. Under high insecurity situation, government expenditure on security increase and this can affect other key sectors in the society and it can also hinder economic development, because public funds that would have been used in generating power, education would be diverted to the maintenance of security. Kufour (2012) in line with the above stated that the bone of Nigeria development is insecurity. Insecurity retards economic development and slow down economic activities by individuals to enable households attain sustainable development.

Unemployment which is described as a state of joblessness and by implication non accessibility to the means of livelihood is considered a major cause for youth restiveness. Josit, (2014) viewed unemployment as constituting a hindrance to socio-economic development of most developing countries and the consequent increase in insecurity. Zakaria(2006) in collaboration with this position, stated that the unavailability of job opportunities among youths, especially graduates have been identified as one of the major factors responsible for youth restiveness such as prostitution, armed robbery, political thuggery, kidnapping, terrorism, oil bunkering, etc. In a state of high unemployment, there is also high level of crime at different levels. Unemployment degenerates into insecurity because the unemployed who are mainly youths and graduates from universities, with different disciplines resorts to any means of making a living including illegitimate means e.g. drug trafficking, trafficking human beings, kidnapping, religious conflicts, civil unrest etc.

### **Causes of insecurity in Nigeria**

There are many causes of insecurity in Nigeria for the purpose of this paper the following are going to be examine discuss

Lack of institutional capacity

According to Igbuzor (2011) observed that the state of insecurity in Nigeria are lack of institutional capacity and is greatly a function government failure or in justice. Huge revenue accruing from oil sales is not equitably distributed among Nigerians leading to material inequality and unfairness. It from this direction that Collins (2017) presented unemployment and poverty among Nigerians especially the youth as the major causes of in security and violent crimes in Nigeria. The failure of the government to address problems of youth unemployment has further aggravated the incidence of insecurity. Unemployment problem

in Nigeria is in the increase due to endemic corruption. Employment opportunities are sold to the few high bidders while the majority poor youth who are unable to buy remained perpetually unemployed resulting in frustration, hopelessness and depuration thereby contributing to intensity in violent crime mainly perpetuated and accentuated by the unemployed youths. The gap between the poor and rich is on the increase day by day resulting in a total neglect of the productive population comprised youth. This scenario constitutes a major factor in the rising level of insecurity in Nigeria. Collins (2007) stress that the manipulation of the nation's wealth by political class at the expense of the majority youth have created a sense of hopelessness among youth there by forcing them to consider other alternative including criminality.

### **Nature of Security Challenges and Unemployment**

When people are not certain or confident in government ability to protect their lives and property, it results in perpetual state of fear and psychological trauma among members of society. The Nigeria society has become so dangerous and unsafe due to the nefarious activities of criminals. Criminality in Nigeria is so pervasive and widespread, making the country the least peaceful in West Africa (GPI, 2012). The state of fear, danger and uncertainty in the behaviour of Nigerian citizens is further heightened in the midst of the current COVID-19 pandemic, to crimes such as rape, kidnapping, Boko Haram, Fulani bandits, assassinations, armed-robbery, cultism, ethnic and religious violence. Egunjobi (2007) posits that most social problems are linked to youth unemployment, from this view point, the increasing rate of social vices in Nigeria are as a result of the inability of government to provide employment opportunities to her teeming youths graduates. In such a situation, the unemployed youths felt disappointed and disillusioned by what they feel as gross injustices meted on them by the government. In the quest to satisfy basic needs, the unemployed youth resort to illegal activities as a means for survival. Unemployment has become a global phenomenon. According to International Labour Organization (ILO, 2005) the population of unemployed youths, comprised of both males and females throughout the world was put as high as 66 million. Similarly, the unemployment rate in Nigeria as reported by NBS(2016)revealed that a total of 52million graduates from different fields are not employed. In Nigeria today, unemployment has become a serious problem that requires urgent action from relevant authorities considering the harmful effects of unemployment especially among youths. The increasing rate of unemployment in Nigeria can be experienced in relation to the corresponding rise in crimes such as armed banditry, abduction of school children, kidnapping of passengers on the Nigerian high ways, terrorism and other armed conflicts. Rotimi (2011) in Haruna &(2019) linked the increasing rate of violent crime with unemployment. Unemployment can be seen as a dynamite that is manifested in varied social reactions, such as religious conflicts, ethnic conflicts, tribal conflicts, Fulani herdsmen and farmers' conflict. etc. Nigeria has reached its highest insecurity level with the deadly activities of *Boko Haram*. This sect claimed to protect the ideals of Islam through it's radical preaching and mission to purge the society at all evils. The *Boko Haram* attacks and killed both Muslims and Christians, this made it difficult for people to actually determine its focus and mission. To some extent people described it as a confused group that has lost focus. However, this group became more violent as its activities create fear and uncertainty in the behaviour of Nigerian. In January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Kano was attacked and 250 people were killed. Also in January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the Sabon Gari of Kano State was attacked, many sustained injuries at various degrees and many luxurious buses were destroyed. In Maiduguri which seems to be the home

of *Boko Haram* has been witnessing attacks of different impacts till date. The government of Jonathan and now Buhari seems unable to contain this dangerous and blood sucking sects. The bomb explosions carried out by this group has left people in state of perpetual fear and social tension in Nigeria.

Similar to the killing and bombing of people, the *Boko Haram* also shifted tactics to include abduction and kidnapping of people from their farms. The prevalence of kidnapping, assassination has taken different dimension and it has constituted another serious security challenge. Also involved in this business is the suspected Herdsmen, who are currently tormenting the Nigerian highways. In this game, students, passengers and prominent Nigerians have been kidnapped and kept in kidnappers den. These days, the cases of kidnapping, assassinations and abductions is always on media. On 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 over 200 students and staffs of Kagara secondary school Niger State were kidnapped for ransom. Similarly, over 300 students were kidnapped at Government Girls Secondary School (G.G.S.S.) Jangebe in Zamfara State as a result of fear of the unknown emanating from the insecurity, Kano State government on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, 2021 ordered for the immediate closure of all secondary schools. Also insecurity has affected the effective operation of agencies, institutions. For example, the economy has suffered from insecurity in the areas of investments, movement of goods and services and general decline in economic activities as a result of the inability of the government to arrest the situation.

### **Theoretical Explanations**

Various theories have been put forward to explain the existing security challenges and unemployment in Nigeria with a view of providing an insight into the nature of crime in Nigeria. The following theories have been selected for discussion.

#### **Frustration and Aggression Theory**

Frustration-Aggression theory can be traced to the works of Dollard Doeb, Miller, Mowrer & Sears (1939). This theory sees crime and deviant behaviours as a product of frustration which lead to aggression. In other words, the perspective believed that when people's opportunities and aspirations are blocked, they become hopeless and violent mostly expressed in crime commission. Bartol & Bartol (2005:15) in Haruna, (2013) observed that:

When behaviour directed at a specific goal is blocked, Arousal increases and the individual experiences a drive to reduce it. Behaviour is energized, but more significantly, the response that lead to a reduction in the arousal may be strengthened or reinforced. This suggests that people who employ violence to reduce frustration, under extreme frustration, become more figorous than usual, possibly even resorting to homicide. It also suggests that violent behaviours discredited at reducing frustration will be reinforced since it reduces unpleasant arousal by altering the precipitating event or stimuli.

In the views of this theory, frustration is triggered when an individual's chances to live a more fulfilling and responsible life is truncated. Under this situation government is mostly blamed for not been proactive. The major argument of the theory is that an individual's frustration for not meeting any of his needs generates anger which is directed to the entire society. In Nigeria, the deviants activities of Boko Haram, armed bandits, Kidnapping etc clear expression of aggression.

The theory throws more light on the increasing insecurity of Nigeria which can be attributed to the growing inequality, extreme poverty and rising level of unemployment in Nigeria. The majority of Nigerian youths, mostly graduates from tertiary institutions with the requisites potentials to work and are not provided with the opportunities to work feel disappointed when they perceived a huge obstacle standing on their way to attain their life goals, resulting in violence and other criminal behaviours.

### **Relative Deprivation Theory**

This theory can be traced to the work of Crosby (1976), Gurn (1970), Runcinen & Davis (1966) in Odivwri(2015). Relative deprivation is a theory that is concern with the feeding of dissatisfaction, hatred by a segment of the society due to what they consider as injustice relating to the distribution of resources, opportunities etc. This theory argued that people who feel deprived of something of value(money, rights, political power, etc) will organize and form a social movement dedicated to fight these privileges and it can result in violence or criminality. Runcinen, presented four (4) conditions that are associated with deprivation:

1. A person does not have something.
2. The person knows other people who have the thing.
3. That person wants to have the thing.
4. That person believes they have a reasonable chance of getting the thing.

The present insecurity situation in Nigeria can be understood better in the light of relative Deprivation theory. For instances the activities of Boko Haram, Fulani bandits, and Kidnappers are expressions or feelings of being deprived of other things of value. The Fulani herdsmen metamorphosed into armed banditry and kidnapping innocent people for ransom. Insecurity has assumed an alarming rate in Nigeria so much so that no solution seems visible due to its complexity and depth which is fuelled by communal clashes, ethnic/tribal conflicts religious riots/conflicts, militancy, and ritual killings, cultism, ethnic militia attacks and the farmers-herders conflicts.

Nigeria is operating capitalist economic system which allows some forms of inequality, unemployment, poverty, injustice etc. Under this capitalist arrangement there is perpetual and wide gap between the haves and the have nots. The poor are becoming poorer while the richer becoming richer. By virtue of their economic strength, they control mother institutions such the political institution, judiciary, the executive thereby making the poor more impoverish and violent.

### **The Good Lives Model**

The Good Lives Model (GLM) was propounded by Ward and Colleagues (2011). The theory asserts that crime is a product of maladaptive environment that make it difficult for members to achieve their aspirations and desires for self-reliance and well-being. The theory focused

on inequality among society members so much that some members are favoured while others are placed at a disadvantaged position based on that they lack the chances and opportunities to achieve their goals through pro-social means. The GLM see crime as a result of injustice and the inability of the state to provide opportunities equally to members thereby making it possible for the occurrences of social problems such as armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping, Yahoo Yahoo etc. The activities of these criminals are sometimes covered under religious, tribal and ethnic divides.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The persistence and dimension of insecurity in Nigeria is psychologically traumatizing and economically devastating due to consistent threats to lives and property. The effects of insecurity have grossly hampered businesses and slow down economic development. Unemployment, poverty, marginalization and inequality are the factors that trigger youth unrest and criminality e.g Boko Haram insurgency. The following suggestions are noted as solution to unemployment and insecurity in Nigeria.

Government Schools as a matter of urgency put an end or reduce the wide economic and social disparity between the rich and the poor. This can be made possible through the provision of employment and empowerment programmes with the view of making the less privileged class self-reliance and responsible members of society instead of the pool of frustrated people who are ignited easily by any event to be violent.

Government should fight corruption with all sincerity of purpose. Nigeria has all what it takes to create a conducive and human environment for its citizens to aspire, but this is not possible due to corruption in public offices at all levels. Corruption has disabled economic development and create a majority poor youths who are born into these impoverished families and also educationally disadvantaged and unemployed,. These unemployed youths engaged in illegal activities such as kidnapping, child abduction, robbery, etc.

The Nigerian leaders must be responsible and accountable to the people. Presently, Nigeria are suffering from lack of good governance. The leaders should be able to put aside personal interest and allow collective interest to prevail instead of the present greed, and self-centred attributes of political leaders in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations on How to Tackle Security Challenges in Nigeria**

For any form of development to take place there must be security of lives and property. A guarantee of security is a basic prerequisite to peace and development.

To achieve maximum security requires leaders to be patriotic and determined to fight insecurity with sincerity and all sense of purpose in decision making. Leaders should avoid taking decision that are self-centered and corruption laden. Policies and programs most reflect the principles of equity, justice and fairness to ensure that the gap between social classes is not widen.

The acts of law breaking is clear indication that something wrong with the system both the federal and state governments most collaborate to ensure that the root causes of crime are identified and uprooted. For example, unemployment, poverty poor general standard of



leaving and injustice must be addressed if development to be achieve. Government should be carefully to avoid taking decision in a hurry, also in fight insecurity all hands must be in deg especially individuals, groups, government, and non-governmental and security departments to enhanced reliable and effective information gathering. Security agencies especially the Police must be provided with adequate instruments and equipment's to tackle violent crime e.g. terrorism, kidnapping for ransomed arm robbery assassination etc.

### **Conclusion**

It's obvious that in security has become serious social problem that has eaten deep in the fabrics of the Nigerian state. There is no doubt to say that insecurity is a major barrier to economic development. Therefore, for any country to attend economic, political and cultural development most provide equal and sustainable security for its citizens.

The theoretical explanation in this paper has showed clear case of in justice and in equality in distribution of wealth as the major cause of in security in Nigeria opportunities are open to only a tinning, but economical powerful class in the society. The poor remain unemployed and aggressive due to a blockage in opportunity and life chances.

Therefore, for a meaningful development government most tackle problems of insecurity through the provision of poverty reduction programs, creation of employment and entrepreneurship education to citizen especially youths

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