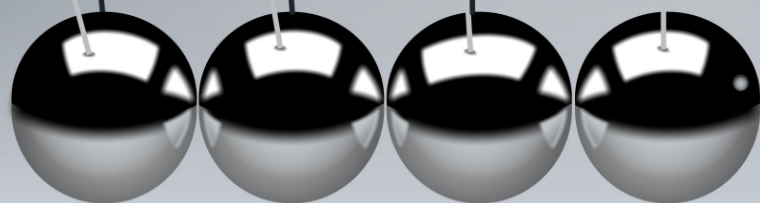


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Socio-Economic Impact of Recession and Youth Unemployment: the Nigerian Experience

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Abstract

This paper appraised the socio-economic impact of recession and youth unemployment in Nigeria. The current condition of Nigeria in the recent time calls for urgent attention. The emphasis is on some specific interplay of factors in the process of recession and youth unemployment. Content analysis based on existing literature was applied in examining the impact posed by economic recession and youth unemployment in Nigeria. The study observed that millions of people who graduate from the university every year but could not find a suitable job to earn a living. As such, unemployment has been on the increase irrespective of governments' efforts to ameliorate the sufferings of the youth which has not yielded much fruit. The study equally observed that life styles of some youths in Nigeria have changed drastically. Most youths now engage themselves in social vices such as armed robbery, kidnapping, impersonation, forgery, internet fraud etc in order to make both ends meet. Finally, the study proffered alternative strategies on how to salvage the socio-economic impact of recession and youth unemployment in Nigeria.

Keywords: Impact, Recession, Socio-economic, Unemployment, Youth

Introduction

Nigerian youths have been terrorized by economic recession and unemployment. More specifically the economic recession has brought in its wake enormous increase in the level of unemployment. Opeyemi (2008) observes that there are cases of unemployment, retrenchments, downsizing and layoffs, which served as indications to a troubled economy. The International Labor Organization (ILO) recently revealed that as many as 51 million workers were fired in 2010 globally, while 30 million more jobs are at risk. The global unemployment rate is estimated at 7.5 percent in 2010, up from 6.5 percent in 2009 and 6.7 percent in 2008. This implies that the global economic recession is already resulting in the number of people joining the labor market and swelling the rank of the unemployed, creating a "labor market epidemic". Nigeria is basically in trouble if that be the case. The consequences

of unemployment in Nigeria are very severe and threatening to the citizenry and the economy as a whole (Bello, 2003).

Unemployment according to ILO, is among the biggest threats to social stability in many countries (including Nigeria), putting the global rate at 12.6% (ILO, 2012). When compared with her counterparts in the continent, Nigeria's unemployment crisis is more serious. For instance, South Africa's unemployment rate is currently standing at 25.2%, and in Ghana is about 14% in 2010, while Nigeria is around 37%. Recent statistics by the World Bank has put the unemployment rate in Nigeria at 22 percent, while the youth unemployment rate is 38 percent. The report shows that the bracket age of 15-35 years olds account for close to 60 percent of the Nigeria's population and 30 percent of the work force. The report also indicates that approximately 4 million people entered into the labour market every year (Subair, 2013). According to Kayode, Arome & Anyio (2014), this situation is pathetic considering the fact that the country that is blessed with a lot of human and natural resources capable of providing employment for the teeming youths in Nigeria. As noted by the World Bank report, the youth holds the key to achieving the Vision 20: 2020. The fundamental questions that naturally arise from these facts is that why is the rate of unemployment on the increase during the decade of about 7% (GDP) economic growth? What is wrong with the various intervention programmes during this period of recession and high unemployment cum GDP? What are the socio-economic implications? These questions informed the basis of this paper.

Therefore the objective of this paper is to examine the magnitude and dimensions of the socio-economic impact of recession and youth unemployment in Nigeria. This paper undertook a qualitative research to answer these and many other questions begging for answers using secondary sources (government publications, journals, Local and international statistical reports). The content analysis was utilized to analyze the data collected from these instruments.

Statement of Problem

Obviously, economic recession and youth unemployment has contributed and could be a measuring yard stick impeding on the growth and development of the Nigeria state. Apart from the economic waste it brings to the nation, it also constitutes political unrest for the country. It is unhide ably obvious to even the ignorant Nigerian that unemployment situation in Nigeria is disturbing and even more disheartening that the country's economic condition cannot absorb on optional proportion of its labour force. Thus could be attributed to the contributive factor that increases crimes and other social vices experienced in our society in recent times because it is generally said that "an idle mind is always the workshop of the

devil''. Though, it would not be out of place to identify lucidly the various issues and contents that are recourse to economic recession and youth unemployment. Cases such as environmental degradation, economic sabotage, fall in national output, increase in rural–urban migration, waste of human resources, high rate of dependency ratio, poverty, internet fraud, depression, frustration, all sorts of immoral acts and criminalities etc are effects of youth unemployment on the socio- economic sectors of any state. Also pertinent of note, the level of unemployment in Nigeria is justifiable by available financial statistics phenomenon. This is because, the nature of unemployment in the country where many job seekers do not see the register with the Directorate of Employment as unemployed or where many few individuals who are self employed claimed they are not employed, thus harnessing the sharp disparity between the official statistics on the phenomenon and the reality on ground (Bello, 2003). Because of social and economic hazard that accompany recession and unemployment, it is therefore no surprise that unemployment is a frequent topic of political debate.

It is pertinent to note that mere political debate on unemployment cannot solve the problems of unemployment except when the outcomes of the debate are put to implementation backed with political will.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

Economic Recession

Economic recession according to National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) (2015) is “a significant decline in economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months, normally visible in a real gross domestic product (GDP), real income, employment, industrial production and wholesale-retail sales.” Economic Recessions generally occur when there is a widespread drop in spending (an adverse demand shock). This may be triggered by various events, such as a financial crisis, an external trade shock, an adverse supply shock or the bursting of an economic bubble.

Unemployment

There seem to be a consensus on the definition and usage of the concept, unemployment. According to Udu and Agu (2005), unemployment is “a situation in which persons capable and willing to work are unable to find suitable paid employment”. As defined by International Labour Organisation (2007), unemployed workers are those who are currently not working but are willing and able to work for pay, currently available to work and have

actively search for work. Hornby (2010) defines unemployment as the facts of a number of people not having a job; the number of people without a job; the state of not having a job.

Underemployment

Underemployment is unemployment in disguise. Harold (2009) described underemployment as when people are employed only on part time or at work that is ineffective or unproductive, with a correspondingly low income that is insufficient to meet their needs.

TYPES OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

Economists have distinguished between the various overlapping types (or causes) of unemployment. Some types of unemployment in Nigeria are explained below:

a. Seasonal Unemployment

According to Udu and Agu (2005) seasonal unemployment occurs mostly in industrial sector, and in the enterprise that are seasonal in nature. Such activities engage labour temporarily during peak periods. For example, during the rainy season, many men who are engaged in fishing and building may go out of work during bad weather. Fishing, for instance is not usually done during the rainy season in many parts of Nigeria. More so, during Christmas season, shop owners and companies employ extra hands for the seasonal sales. These extra hands are usually relieved of their jobs when demand for products decreased.

b. Structural Unemployment

Structural unemployment occurs when a labour market is unable to provide jobs for everyone who wants one, because there is a mismatch between the skill of the unemployed workers and the skill needed for the available jobs. Structural unemployment could also results from persistent cyclical unemployment, that is, if the economy suffers from long-term low aggregate demand and in the techniques of the industry, unemployment could occur (Udu and Agu, 2005; Harold, 2009). For example, as time goes by, there may be permanent fall in the demand for certain products which may be due to a change in taste. The brick industry in Nigeria, is suffering permanent fall in demand now because people prefer to use cement blocks to build their houses instead, this has caused sharp unemployment in that industry.

More so, long lasting low demand could make the unemployed disheartened while their skills become rusty and obsolete, and as a result they may not fit the job vacancies that would

be created when the economy recovers. Some technological unemployment which occurs due to the replacement of workers by machines might be counted as structural unemployment.

c. Frictional Unemployment

There seems to be divergence on the meaning and causes of frictional unemployment. For example, Udu and Agu (2005) asserted that, there is frictional unemployment when certain occupations have surplus workers in one part of the country, while vacancies for similar jobs occur and are not filled in other parts of the country. To them, immobility of labour and imperfect knowledge of the existence of opportunities elsewhere is the main cause of frictional unemployment.

In contrast, Harold (2009) and Anyanwuocha (2010) agreed that frictional unemployment is the time period between jobs, when a worker is searching for job or transitioning from one job to another. It occurs because workers seeking jobs do not find them immediately. Friction here refers to the incongruity between the demand for and supply of labour (Harold, 2009). For example, frictional Unemployment could occur between the time a student completes his studies and the time he is able to find a job (Anyanwuocha, 2010). This type of unemployment is always present in an economy and is more common with specialised labour.

d. Transitional Unemployment

Udu and Agu (2005) refer to this as normal unemployment, because it is short duration. It does not harm the economy. In construction industries or contract jobs which rely heavily on manual labour, workers are temporarily laid off at the end of major assignments. Such workers are re-engaged when other jobs becomes available. Others may drift to other ongoing projects.

e. Classical Unemployment

This occurs when real wages for a job are set above the market – clearing level, causing the number of job-seekers to exceed the number of vacancies. Most economists have argued that increased government intervention in the economy leads to increase in the rate of employment of a nation. For instance, the minimum wage as stipulated by Labour Law has also raise the cost of unskilled or low skilled labour above the market equilibrium. This led to a drastic reduction in the employment of these categories of labour. Many in these categories of labour force who even wish to work at the formal wage rate could not be employed due to this Law, consequently, adding to the high number of the unemployed in the country. Furthermore, laws restricting lay-offs made businesses less likely to hire in the first place, as hiring becomes

more risky, leaving many young people unemployed and unable to find work (Kayode, Arome & Anyio, 2014).

f. Hidden Unemployment

Hidden unemployment is the unemployment of potential workers that does not usually reflect on official unemployment statistics, due to the way the statistics are collected. In many countries only those who have no work but are actively looking for work (and/or qualified for social security benefits) are counted as unemployed. Those who have given up looking for work (and sometimes those who are on government retraining programmes) are not officially counted even though they are unemployed. The same applied to those who have taken early retirement to avoid being laid off, but would prefer to be working. The statistics also do not count those with part time or seasonal job who would rather have full time jobs as unemployed. In addition, those who are of working age but are currently in full-time education are usually not considered unemployed in government statistics. Because of hidden unemployment, official statistics often underestimate unemployment rate.

However, a critical examination of the various types of unemployment shows that unemployment can be voluntary or involuntary. Though, there have been several definitions of voluntary and involuntary unemployment in the economic literatures, a simple distinction is applied. Voluntary unemployment is attributed to individual's decision which includes workers who reject low wage jobs. Whereas, involuntary unemployment exists because of the socio-economic variables (such as the market structure, government policies, etc.) which permeate the environment in which one operates. It includes workers fired due to an economic crisis, industrial decline, company bankruptcy or organizational restructuring. Hence, structural unemployment, and classical unemployment are largely involuntary in nature. In addition, most cases of unemployment in Nigeria are usually involuntary.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored on Keynesian theory. This theory is relevant to the study as it holds the view that unemployment occurs when there is not enough aggregate demand in the economy to provide job for everyone who wants to work. According to Keynesian theory when demand for most goods and services falls, less production is needed and consequently fewer workers are needed, wages are sticky and do not fall to meet the equilibrium level, and mass unemployment results.

Nigeria seems to be one of the worst hit. For instance, while many government agencies and parastatals lay embargo on employment in the last two decades, within the same period, governmental reforms disengaged about 121,731 workers from the public service between 2006 and 2007. During the first phase of the downsizing process of the 2005 public service reform, about 30,000 officers of the core civil service were disengaged from service. (Adegoroye, 2006). The banking industry also suffered adverse effects of the financial crisis. Some banks in the sector massively ‘swept out’ their work force in a bid to remain in business and this has drastically increased the rate of unemployment in Nigeria (Kayode, Arome & Anyio, 2014).

The Keynesian theory argue further that the number of unemployed workers exceeds the number of job vacancies, so that even if full employment were attained and all open jobs were filled, some workers would still remain unemployed due to some mismatch in the economy. Some associate this theory with frictional unemployment because the factors that cause the friction are partly due to cyclical variables. For example, a surprise decrease in the money supply may shock rational economic actors and suddenly inhibit aggregate demand (Kayode, Arome & Anyio, 2014).

Hence, Keynesian theory sees the lack of demand for jobs as potentially resolvable by government intervention. Their prescription for reducing unemployment is deficit spending by government to boost employment and increase in aggregate total demand. They further suggested intervention through an expansionary monetary policy that increase the rates thereby leading to an increase in non-government spending (Haris, 2005), and policies that encourage more private investment (Obadan and Odusola, 2010).

CAUSES OF ECONOMIC RECESSION AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Economists have not been able to offer a generally acceptable approach to curb unemployment as economic recession has been on high rate (Shadare and Tunde, 2012). The Keynesian explanation is that firms demand too little labour because of the declining demand for its output, which create unemployment. Kayode, Arome and Anyio (2014) enumerated in their study nine major factors responsible for the rising unemployment in Nigeria. These Factors are; corruption, poor management practice, neglect of agricultural sector, infrastructural decay, absence of purposeful leadership and good governance, poor framework for government reforms agenda, unfavorable standings and circumstances placed on jobs systemic problems in education sector, the challenges of globalization and absence of enabling business environment, all these are the mother of recession aggravating unemployment. Noko

(2016) argued that recession cannot only be determined by negative real GDP growth rate since a recession can quietly begin before the quarterly Real GDP is out. It can also be from the angle of persistent inflation when he noted that, recession is a generalized increase in the level of price sustained over a long period in an economy, that is, a persistent rise in the price levels of commodities and services, leading to a fall in the currency's purchasing power.

In the context of Nigeria, Recession has been attributed to many factors, Noko (2016) argued that Nigeria current recession is caused by poor economic policy, fall in oil output due to activities of the Niger – Delta militants and subsequent fall in oil price, others include over dependence on oil export, inflation due to ban on some basic foods like rice, and infrastructural decay in the country (Noko, 2016).

The traditional theories of unemployment though provided a solid foundation for comprehending causes of unemployment in an economy. However, in the case of Nigeria, the underlying theme of these theories cannot fully elucidate the major causes of Nigeria's unemployment problem (Gbosi, 2005). In contemporary times, a number of factors have also been recognized to be accountable for the problem. These factors are declining economic growth rate, implementation of disjointed economic policy, erroneous impression about technical and vocational education, the neglect of the agricultural sector and poor infrastructure to create the right business environment.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RECESSION AND UNEMPLOYMENT ANALYSIS

In this era, Nigeria has been no doubt subjected to economic recession in correlation to unemployment. Talking about rise in dollar, the fact remains that the global economic recession describes the growing economic, political, technological and cultural linkages that connect individuals, communities, businesses, governments and countries around the world and the negative impacts it carries with it as felt in the economies of different states and countries. The general cycle of recession has brought about imbalance in socio-economic management which aggravates the unemployment of Nigerian youth. Nigeria on neutral perspective today is a nation under several forms of economic, political and social unrest. The state of unemployment according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2012), in Nigeria stands at 19.7%. This indentifies unemployment as one of the major challenging confronting the Nigeria – economic development.

The Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics like most countries in the world uses a variant of the ILO definition such that the unemployment is the proportion of those in the labour force (not in the entire economic active population, nor the entire Nigerian population) who were actively looking for work but could not find work for at least 20 hours during the reference period to the total currently active (labour force) population. Accordingly, you are unemployed if you did absolutely nothing at all or did something but for less than 20 hours during the reference week. Underemployment however occurs if you work less than full time hours, which is 40 hours, but work at least 20 hours on average a week and /or if you work full time but are engaged in an activity that underutilizes your skills, time and educational qualifications.

Consequently, rural farmers only farming seasonally will be considered underemployed if they only work on their farms during the planting and harvests period and do nothing in between. If farmers are however working in dry and wet seasons as is increasingly becoming the case, they will then be involved in full time employment. This applies to drivers, cooks, cleaners, bankers, teachers etc who in most cases work well over 40 hours and hence are considered full time employed as their working hours and skills meet the adopted methodology. It is important to note that the international definition of unemployment, underemployment or employment is not a function of the quantity/suitability of wages earned nor is it a function of job satisfaction. Rather employment, underemployment and unemployment are treated as a function of a person's involvement or otherwise in economic activity even if that activity is performed solely to make ends meet and not for satisfaction or enjoyment. The suitability of wages or job fulfillment is covered under other indices such as the living standard, poverty rate or happiness index, but not in determining whether one is employed, unemployed or underemployed, which is a function of economic engagement.

THE CHALLENGES OF ECONOMIC RECESSION AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Nigerian youths have been terrorized by economic recession and unemployment. More specifically the economic recession has brought in its wake enormous increase in the level of unemployment. Opeyemi (2008) observes that there are cases of unemployment, retrenchments, downsizing and layoffs, which served as indications to a troubled economy. The international labor organization (ILO) recently revealed that as many as 51 million workers were fired in 2010 globally, while 30 million more jobs are at risk. The global unemployment rate is estimated at 7.5 percent in 2010, up from 6.5 percent in 2009 and 6.7 percent in 2008. This implies that the global economic recession is already resulting in the number of people joining

the labor market and swelling the rank of the unemployed, creating a ‘‘ labor market epidemic’’. Nigeria is basically in trouble if that be the case. The consequences of unemployment in Nigeria are very severe and threatening to the citizenry and the economy as a whole (Bello, 2003). Below are the consequences;

1. Unproductive labor force: According to Njoku and Ihugba (2011), the most direct impact on the economy of an unproductive labor force is lost output in terms of goods and services, with no income tax to collect and the loss of receipts from indirect taxes payers.
2. Contributes to crime and violence: The gap between the rich and the poor kept growing, resulting in the social vices and tensions which affects the entire spares of the communities, states and the country.
3. Effect on health: Lack of steady income also leads to malnutrition and adversely affects health of the youth and their families.
4. Drug addiction: Due to frustration that results in the inability of engaging in a gainful employment, most people turn to drug addicts.
5. Family support: Civil servants retire when they are not tired and there is no social security net, very often families depend on their son or daughter graduating from school to take up employment in order to support the entire family. When that does not happen, the financial woes are unimaginably sorrowful.

The failure of state-owned enterprises in the achievement of socio-economic development in Nigeria

The performances of the SOEs in Nigeria have left much to be desired. Many of them are not responsive to changing requirements of a growing and dynamic economy and do not seem to possess the necessary tools for translating into reality the hope of successful commercial operations (Omoleke, 2010). Notwithstanding the huge investments on these enterprises, their performances are far from being satisfactory. It is the general belief of most Nigerians that SOEs are inefficient. The performance of most public utilities provides adequate testimony for this inefficiency. Perhaps this informed Laleye (1986), who asserted that reports of investigatory panels set up by government on all the parastatals testified to the fact that inefficiency, had reached scandalous proportions. The huge national investments on the SOEs justify the general outcry about inefficiency. All these inadequacies made organisational goals to suffer and heaped serious problems on the society. The inefficiency of SOEs can be traced to:

- a. Absence of proper planning, goals and meritocracy in employment strategy

- b. Excessive government control and interference with operational decisions of SOE managers; this suffocates managerial initiatives,
- c. Politicisation of employment, poor choice of product and location of the enterprises.
- d. Absence of a competitive environment to encourage better SOE performance.
- e. Inadequate tech no-managerial capacity to respond to changing economic environment and
- f. Inadequate funding and late release of funds, as the enterprises are often tied to annual budget with its attendant bureaucratic corruption and red tapism.

For Balogun (1983), the inefficiency of Nigerian SOEs is traceable to the environment in which they operate, whereas Obadan (2000) identifies poor maintenance culture as the bane of the SOEs. For him, SOEs in many developing countries, as in Nigeria, have been attacked for being economically inefficient and wasteful of resources. This is because they make significant demands on government resources, as well as on domestic and foreign credit and yet these demands have been associated with low profitability and inefficiency. These organisations have failed to show a profit. Operating on a deficit, they have proved to be a massive drain and economic parasites on government's resources through transfer and subsidies.

In order to substantiate the above assertion, in 1998, there were 588 SOEs in Nigeria and this meant that government was responsible for over 5,000 board appointments, thus constituting an economic drain on government's purse. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the drain of SOEs in 1998 was equal to 5 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (Nigerian Business Magazine, 2000) gradually dragging the economy into recession. Also, in 1998 alone, for example, the amount spent on Nigerian SOEs, was N265 billion (Imhonopi, 2010).

These monies, naturally, could have accrued to the government coffers as income and could have been utilised for very important developmental and socio-economic projects that would yield employment and better the lives of Nigerians. But such waivers, tax exemptions, unmerited revenues and grants to state-owned enterprises meant they continued to enjoy government's patronage and support, making no visible contribution to the economy. This status quo might have informed the lack of initiative and enterprise on the part of the SOEs since, whether they performed or not, the government would always come to their rescue to clean up their mess and cover their inadequacies and structural flaws.

From the foregoing, it is clear that government's desire to achieve socio-economic welfare through the evolution and financing of state-owned enterprises failed to meet the objectives of government. Instead, SOEs have been a drain on government's already lean coffers; this is not

to mention the toll the entrenched corruptive tendencies of government representatives and officials had and are still having on the liquidity of government business. This scenario prompted the push for different privatisation models in the country.

Policies, programmes and efforts of government towards socio-economic development

Nigerian governments, over the years, have evolved well-articulated policies and programmes aimed at achieving socio-economic development in Nigeria. These include:

First, the Operation Feed the Nation and the Green Revolution programmes of General Olusegun Obasanjo in the late seventies and President Shehu Shagari in the early eighties, respectively. Agriculture was the mainstay of the national economy before the discovery of crude oil in commercial quantities in the mid-fifties. The programmes were aimed squarely at restoring agriculture to its pride of place in the country while enabling the country enjoy stability and self-sufficiency in food production.

Second, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the Babangida administration in 1986 which was in response to the paradigm shift from a public-sector dependent economy to a private sector-led enterprise and partly forced on the country by the steady drop in its revenue profile (Adamu, 2006). The programme was supposed to restructure and diversify the productive base of the economy, in order to reduce dependence on the oil sector and imports; achieve a fiscal and balance of payment viability over the medium term and laid the basis for a sustainable non-inflationary growth over the medium and the long-term. Under the programme, government embarked on partial or full privatisation of its companies and parastatals. Seventy-three of the 95 government enterprises put on the block were privatised (Imhonopi, 2010).

Third, the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy, NEEDS, which was launched on May 29, 2004, by the Obasanjo civilian administration. According to Chief Obasanjo, the NEEDS was "in response to the development challenges of Nigeria." He said that the programme would "lay a solid foundation for sustainable poverty reduction, employment generation, wealth creation and value reorientation." The same programme at the state and local government levels were known as State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local-Government Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (LEEDS) respectively. NEEDS rested on the following pillars, which were, reforming the way government and its institutions worked, boosting the private sector, implementing a social charter for the people and reorienting people's values. A unique feature of NEEDS was that the federal government supported it

with comprehensive reforms in the public sector. The banking consolidation, where twenty-five mega banks emerged each with a minimum capital base of 25 billion naira, was also a point in this direction. The banks were strong enough to support private initiatives and entrepreneur-ship. Following the NEEDS were also Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by the year 2015. These goals encapsulated a national desire to deal with "poverty, educational development, gender equality, child and maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, the malaria scourge, environmental sustainability and international cooperation" (Adamu, 2006).

Fourth, others were the 7-Point Agenda, the Eight-Point United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the American AGOA, the African NEPAD and the sudden Food Crisis policies of the late President Umar MusaYar'adua (Imhonopi, 2010).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having looked at the challenges militating against government's genuine efforts to achieve a recession free economy and reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria, the following are suggested ways by which the present challenges can be addressed.

a. **Reinvesting in the Agricultural Sector**

Until early 1970s, agriculture remains the mainstay of Nigerian economy. It constitute the major income earning for the country and the largest employer of labour as over 90 percent of the populace worked and earn their daily income from this sector. Following the rise in the price of petroleum (oil boom) in 1970s, and the attendance huge foreign income, the agricultural sector suffered a substantial decline till today. The huge finances from the oil sector have brought about the growth of public and private enterprises which are concentrated in the urban centres. This later resulted in rural- urban migration in which able body men who were farmers left their farm land to pick up menial jobs in the urban centres which are scarce and inconsistence. Corporate Nigeria (2007) puts the country's labour force statistics as follows: 70% in agricultural sector; 10 % in the industrial sector; and 20 % in the service sector of the economy. Many analysts have argued that there is a strong relationship between the neglect of agricultural sector and high rate of employment in the country. Agriculture remains a panacea for reducing the high rate of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. The monopolistic nature (over reliance on oil) of the economy remains a contradiction.

b. Development of home-grown technology

Today's global economy is governed and controlled by those who own the technologies in place. Nigeria, for many years, has remained a consumer nation and this will continue to frustrate the genuine efforts to transform our economy. As long as Nigeria remains at the receiving end of the technology trade continuum, the desire to achieve a recession free economy will be far-fetched.

c. Infrastructural Development

This is yet another dismal factor that has rendered millions of Nigerians unemployed. Haris Dafaranos, a former Greek Ambassador to Nigeria is one of those who believed that if the infrastructure is improved and empowered policies are put in place, people will have opportunity to employment and use their talent in sectors like textile which is capable of absorbing both skilled and semi-skilled workers (Abbah, 2009).

No doubt that the inability of successive administration to tackle the problem in power sector has done an incalculable harm to all facets of the economy especially the manufacturing enterprises in the country. Currently, there are barely 200 operators in the real sectors of the economy. For example, Dunlop Nigeria Plc which was a dominant manufacturing enterprise in the country has been shutting shops; Michelin, a tyre manufacturing company followed suit. The last surviving textile mill in Kaduna, the United Textile Mills (UNT) Plc has been shut down for long.

The United Nation Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) statistics indicated that over 170 textile companies have closed shop and 120,000 employees are rendered jobless on account of poor power and water supply, high cost of fuel and massive smuggling of counterfeit products into the country from Asia (Kolade-Otitoju, 2009).

d. Entrepreneurship development

Globally, countries are beginning to look inwards towards developing and empowering their small businesses, creating a climate that supports small business growth and encouraging citizens and young graduates to create businesses rather than seek employment. By investing in the growth and development of small businesses in the country, the massive result to be realised from this effort can facilitate a recession free economy for Nigeria

e. Strong Political Will

The commitment of government to a recession free economy is key to achieving economic development. Government, at whatever level, must refuse to pay lip service to the

question of economic growth, development and independence for the country. Government needs to put its money where its mouth is by making a genuine commitment to efforts aimed at achieving socio-economic welfare for Nigerians.

f. Accountability

One of government's greatest challenges is lack of accountability of its resources. The political leadership and public office holders have taken advantage of the loopholes in government accounting system, poor financial monitoring and the absence of the digitalisation of government financial records to steal from government coffers. However, the present massive digitalisation and computerisation of government business, that is e-government, will help to reduce government's exposure to the activities of political fraudsters and thieves.

Secondly, the empowerment and independence of anti-corruption agencies: The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), are two agencies of government created to stem the growing tide of political and other forms of corruption in the country. For these agencies to effectively discharge their functions, the government needs to empower them and let them have total independence from government interference and encroachment so as to dispense justice as they carry out their duties.

g. Renewal of Ethical Standards

The government of the day must evolve programmes aimed at reviving the fallen ethical standards and morals such as sincerity, credibility, transparency, truth and honesty. It should have a zero tolerance for those who engage in sharp and questionable practices whether in and outside government, while, individuals who are found to support this paradigm shift are to be encouraged through a reward system to be put in place. Also, along this line, government business needs to integrate global best practices like professionalism, creativity, innovation, meritocracy, performance-based reward systems and planning.

Finally, consistency in policy formulation and implementation: To achieve a recession free economy, government needs to be consistent in its policy formulation and implementation.

CONCLUSION

The alarming socio-economic impact of recession and unemployment in Nigeria can be traced to the unconsolidated economy partly due to the inglorious role of the military in Nigerian politics. These strangers to political power, with no basis for political intervention in

the management of the state, and with no training and competence in handling the affairs of the state, further plunged Nigeria into the abyss as different gladiators from this class undertook massive exploitation of the state resources for personal aggrandisement and to perpetuate themselves and their cronies in power.

It will be hard for Nigeria to attain the "Vision 2020" without addressing squarely the problem of youth unemployment, poverty, inequality and the mono-product economy structure. Recession and high unemployment rate in Nigeria is the bane of social policy, it is widening inequality. It is certainly inhibiting growth and poverty reduction efforts. High inequality is a double handicap (Martins, 2009). Depending on the sources of inequality; notably how much comes from inequality of opportunity, it means lower growth and that the poor share less in the gains from that growth. Nigeria must adopt pro-poor policies in order to attain her vision. The extent of adoption of pro-poor policies depends on the degree of empowerment of the poor people. The policy reform campaigns of the government cannot be fully realized without reaching a minimum level of pro-poor empowerment. Once this minimum level is reached, Nigeria's reform can be rapid. Pro-poor reforms will create empowerment (jobs) for the poor, by raising their command over economic and political resources and household consumption demand, thereby enhancing their influence over policy. Social policy has a direct impact on agriculture, education, health and unemployment. Improvement in infrastructure such as roads, railways, electricity, communication, water, housing, health and education infrastructure implies a reduction in unemployment.

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