

TACKLING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA; THE LAGOS STATE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES INITIATIVES

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ABSTRACT

Unemployment in Nigeria looms large and its concomitant consequences are alarmingly daring, especially as youths are the worst hit. A cursory look at the rush into Lagos state by unemployed and unproductively engaged youths depicts the calamitous and outrageousness of the problem, yet the government of Lagos state have continued to strive to contain the contagious effect of youth unemployment by providing youth development and empowerment programmes. This is in response to the clarion call by the federal government of Nigeria to develop and empower the Nigerian youths to enable them contribute to the development of the nation today and take over the leadership of the country tomorrow as they are the future leaders, especially in considering the persistent and consistent uprising of the issue of unemployment. It is in this regard this paper sought to find out how Nigerian government have fared in engaging youth unemployment with youth development and empowerment packages and Lagos state was the study area. The paper employed both primary and secondary sources in generating its data and utilized tables and charts for data presentation and the simple percentage for analysis. And the paper made series of findings among which is that unemployment in Nigeria is real and alarming; that youth development and empowerment can curb youth unemployment and that there is high unemployment in Lagos state owing to the influx of people from every corner of the country in search of greener pasture and that the government of Lagos state reeled out many youth development and empowerment programmes to handle youth unemployment in the state.

Keywords: Unemployment, Youth Development, Empowerment Programmes, Government.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian economy since the attainment of political independence in 1960 has undergone fundamental structural changes resulting to structural shifts which have however not resulted in any significant sustainable economic growth and development to ensure adequate employment opportunity for her youths. Recently, available data show that the Nigerian economy grew relatively in the greater parts of the 1970s, with respect to the oil boom of the 1970s whose extreme profits resulted to wasteful expenditures in the public sector leading to dislocation of the employment factors and also distorted the revenue bases for policy planning. This among many other crises resulted in the introduction of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) in 1986 and the recent economic reforms. The core objective of the economic structural reform is a total restructuring of the Nigerian economy in the face of population explosion (Douglasson et al, 2006).

However, these economic and financial structural reforms put in place did not yield significant results, hence in recent past; there has been an alarming increase in the rate of youth unemployment and its attendant social and economic problems. Unemployment is one of the developmental problems that face every developing economy (Patterson et al, 2006), and Nigeria is not exempted. Its impact has been felt more by the youths. Nigerian youths from all corners of the country rush to Lagos state in search of white-collar jobs, especially, the graduates. This is because of the believe that Lagos state, being the former Federal Capital State and centre of excellence has more (job) opportunities than other states, necessitating the scuttle to Lagos for greener pastures. This rush has led to the profligacy of the rate of unemployment in the state. This is not to say that unemployment is absent in the other states of the federation or even less, hence the general observations from many researchers on Nigerian unemployment such as Alanana (2003), Echebiri (2005) and Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010), Okafor (2011).

In their research endeavors, they have brought to the fore that youth unemployment across the world has reached a great height and is likely to climb further. Okafor (2011) documented that in Sub-Sahara Africa, youth population was estimated at 138 million people in 2002-2003, with

28.9 million, or 21 percent of them unemployed (ILO, 2004). It has also been reported that youth unemployment in Africa has a geographical dimension as it is generally higher in the urban areas than in rural ones such as Lagos state and several factors have been adduced to account for higher youth unemployment rate in Africa, most notably low economic growth, low economic activity and low investment. These related factors contribute to low job creation and because of sustained (increased in some cases) population growth the small labour market is unable to absorb the resulting army of job seekers in Nigeria.

He further buttressed that for most developing countries like Nigeria, Governments and policy makers are increasingly finding it difficult to grapple successfully with youth unemployment. This high rate of unemployment can be blamed on the lack of adequate provision for job creation in the development plans, the ever expanding educational growth and the desperate desire on the part of youths to acquire University education irrespective of course and course contents. As a result, a number of skills acquired from the University appear dysfunctional and irrelevant (Okafor, 2011).

In Nigeria, the federal government in 2008 acknowledged that about 80 percent of Nigeria's youth are unemployed and 10 percent underemployed (Daily Trust, 2008). In 2011, the Minister of Youth Development, Bolaji Abdullahi reported that 42.2 per cent of Nigeria's youth population is out of job. Depo Oyedokun, the Chair of the House Committee on Youth and Social Development revealed that of the over 40 million unemployed youths in the country, 23 million are unemployable and therefore susceptible to crime, hence the need to articulate what could be done to salvage the situation. The pace is increasing because most graduates lack relevant marketable skills.

More than half of the Nigerian populations are under the age of 30 (National Population Commission, 2001). Therefore it can be asserted that the economy of Nigeria is a youth economy (Oviawe, 2010). Expectedly, today's youth will become in a short decade tomorrow's parents, leaders, labour force and armies. However, the Nigerian youths are said to be confronted with poverty, unemployment, urbanization, lack of capacity and skills needed to move the economy

forward. This is because the youth faces unemployment and lack of necessary productive skills to keep body and soul together.

Statistically, Okafor (2011) cited a national survey jointly sponsored by NUC and the Education Trust Fund (ETF) in 2004 sought to determine the labour market needs; revealed that 44 percent of the 20 organizations rated Nigerian science graduates as average in competence, 56 percent rated them as average in innovation, 50 percent rated them average in rational judgment, 63 percent as average in leadership skills and 44 percent as average in creativity. On needed skills like literacy, oral communication, information technology, entrepreneurship, analytical, problem-solving and decision making, 60 percent rated them as poor. By any standard, the above statistics reflect a poor assessment of Nigerian university graduates and further buttress the argument that Nigerian university graduates are unemployable (Okafor, 2011).

Resultantly, the lack of employment potential makes crime a more attractive option for some Nigerian university graduates. This is because in Nigeria it is common to find some graduates still roaming the streets, five years after graduating in search of jobs that are not thereby lending force to crimes such as armed robbery, car snatching, pipeline vandalization, oil bunkering, and prostitution among the youths.

This situation poses great challenges to the very existence of individuals in Nigeria thereby calling for the training of men and women who can function effectively in the society in which they live in. Available information by National Universities Commission (NUC) (2004) reiterated that the massive unemployment of Nigerian universities graduates in the country is traceable to the disequilibrium between labour market requirements and lack of essential employable skills by the graduates (Diejonah and Orimolade, 1991; Dabalen et al, 2000). This critical skill gaps inhibits the development of youths and the entire development of the nation, as more than half of the Nigerian populations are under the age of 30. This is dependent on the fact that Nigeria's population is predominantly youth.

Therefore, youth development and empowerment have been recognized as vital stages in life for building the human capital that allows young people to avoid poverty and live better, and possibly have a more fulfilling life. The human capital formed in youth is thus an important determinant of long term growth that a nation can invest and rely on. Hence, making sure that youths are well prepared for their future is enormously important to the course of poverty reduction and growth. This is because millions of the young people face bleak employment opportunities and investigating the viability of engaging such devastating and catastrophic situation with youth empowerment is the thrust of this paper with special emphasis on Lagos state, hence the objectives of the study- to find out if unemployment in Nigeria is as real as it sounds in the literature or whether it is an exaggeration; to examine the relationship between youth development and youth unemployment to see if youth development and empowerment as a panacea to unemployment in Nigeria and to examine youth development programmes in Lagos with the view to finding out if they have what it takes to reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria and in Lagos state.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

Youth Unemployment

Unemployment occurs when people are without jobs and they have actively sought for job within the past four weeks (ILO 2007). Fajana (2000) refers to it as a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. (Patterson et al, 2006) defined it as a situation in which people who are willing to work at the prevailing wage rate are unable to find jobs. It is one of the macro-economic problems which every responsible government is expected to monitor and regulate. The higher the unemployment rate in an economy the higher would be the poverty level and associated welfare challenges. Unemployment is one of the developmental problems that face every developing economy in the 21st century, and Nigeria is not exempted. Its impact is felt more by the youths, leading to youth unemployment.

In terms of scope, Okafor, (2010) observed that unemployment is a global trend, but occurs mostly in developing countries of the world, with attendant social, economic, political, and psychological consequences. Thus, Oyebade, (2003) added that massive youth unemployment in any country is an indication of far more complex problems. Nigeria's unemployment can be grouped into two categories: the older unemployed who lost their jobs through retrenchment, redundancy or bankruptcy; and the younger unemployed, most of who have never tasted what it is to be employed.

Furthering the discussion are scholars such as Echebiri, (2005) Gibb & George, (1990) and Onah, (2001) who described youth unemployment as the conglomerate of youths with diverse background, willing and able to work, but cannot find any. When the supply of labor outstrips the demand for labor, it causes joblessness and unemployment. Given the lack of sufficient employment opportunities in the formal sector, young people may be compelled to engage in casual work and other unorthodox livelihood sources, thus leading to underemployment. According to statistics from the Manpower Board and the Federal Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria has a youth population of 80 million, representing 60% of the total population of the country. 64 million of them unemployed, while 1.6 million are under-employed. The 1990 - 2000 data on youth unemployment showed that the largest group of the unemployed is the secondary school graduates. There are also 40% unemployment rate among urban youth aged 20 - 24 and a 31% rate among those aged 15 - 19. Two-third of the urban unemployed ranges from 15 – 24 years old. Moreover, the educated unemployed tended to be young males with few dependents. There are relatively few secondary school graduates and the lowered job expectations of primary-school graduates. There is no consistent trend of unemployment rates in Nigeria. An increase in one or two years is sometimes followed by a decline in the subsequent years (Okafor, 2011).

A published report from Punch editorial of June 10, 2003 referred to a report by the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in 2001 saying that the 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 job. Although NAPEP admitted that the figures were not available on the actual number of the

unemployed, the agency said that 50% of the unemployed is assumed to be youths (The Punch Newspaper, 2003).

The Root Causes and Consequences of Youth Unemployment

In the words of Oviawe, (2010), the level of unemployment is a reflection of the state of a nation's economy. It therefore suffices that youth unemployment is highly dependent on the overall status of the economy. Economic activity, measured by GDP growth, is probably the single factor that most influences the chances of young people finding a job. Low or negative GDP growth, economic recession and low investment are direct causes in the shrinking demand for labour. A direct illustration to this linkage is witnessed in the Nigerian economy in the 1970s, when the country had a per capita income growth rate of over 4%. The government of the day had a boisterous civil service brought about by the growth. When global economic recession set in from 1981 a negative growth was experienced for most of the 1980s and 1990s, with a per capita income growth rate of 2% in 1998 (World Bank, 2001).

This trend impacted significantly on the proportion of the country's human capital such that by the end of the 1980s, the World Bank and the IMF ordered their borrowers to downsize their public sector and civil services (ILO Publication, 2005). Lawsonson noted that Nigeria reduced its workforce by 40% in less than two years. The effect was felt more by the women and youths, who often have jobs that are vulnerable to economic shocks. As a last resort, the Nigerian informal economy flourished, with jobs such as hawkers, traders, repairers- jobs less likely to grow the economy- now accounting for almost all the new jobs accessible to the young people. Persistence in youth unemployment became the result of the losses in human capital (Lawanson, 2007). Human capital here means practical life skills in the form of unattainable social, political and economic status that defines them as adult. Human capital is proportional to the amount of time an individual has worked. It declines when an individual is unemployed. Perhaps, the greatest challenge on youth unemployment is their use for political and military ends. Deprived of employment opportunity and livelihood, youths are actively mobilized by politicians and armed groups alike. Youth unemployment also has security implications for almost every country in Africa, since desperation often leads young people to fall prey to warlords, criminal

gangs, or illegal migration syndicates (Unowa, 2005). As Argenti rightly asked ‘Where would war makers be without youths?’ the militarization of these young people originates with the idea that youths constitute ‘potential’: a commodity that can be plundered alongside natural resources and public fund to serve the agenda of warfare (Argenti, 2002).

Attempts at Curbing Youth Unemployment

Acquisition of special and relevant skills and creation of jobs have remained a focal point in the Nigerian Government policy overtime, at least on paper, hence between 1986 and now, various administrations’ initiatives to promote self-dependence and self-reliance in the generation of gainful self-employment have been profound. Starting with the acquisition of vocational skills, it is believed that the education system operated since the post-independence placed emphasis on academic excellence rather than skill acquisition which can prepare the individual for a more useful and fulfilling life within the society. Vocational skills acquisition it is believed would be more relevant to the development of the nation. Hence, a new national policy on education was promulgated in 1977, introducing vocational courses in the educational curriculum (Chinedum, 2006).

The ineffectiveness of the vocational courses in the school curriculum to address youth unemployment which assumed alarming proportion, prompted the Federal Government to set up the Chukwuma Committee on 26 March, 1986 (Omoruyi and Osunde, 2004). The report of the Committee led to the creation of the National Directorate of Employment in November 1986 and charged with the responsibility of promoting skills acquisition; facilitate the spirit of creativity, self-reliance and independence. To this day, vocational skills’ training is receiving greater attention as many centres have been established. However, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) document 2004 claimed that many of the responses to poverty reduction appeared to be ad-hoc, uncoordinated and more or less fire-brigade (NEEDS document, 2004). A chronicle of about 28 projects and programmes with poverty reduction thrust has been undertaken from 1975 - 2001. Programmes such as Community Bank, DFRRI, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), People’s bank, Better

Life for Rural Women, Family Support Programme were some of such projects aimed at addressing various manifestations of poverty. The NEEDS document concluded that “while none of these programmes were completely without merits, the truth is that they did not have a significant, lasting and sustainable positive effect” (Chinedum, 2006).

Accordingly Chinedum, (2006), observed one of the fundamental steps taken by the Nigerian government to reduce the problem of unemployment in Nigeria was the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), which was established in November 22, 1986 with the general objective of promptly and effectively fighting unemployment by designing and implementing innovative programmes, which are directed towards the provision of training opportunities through the guidance and management support services to graduate farmers and small scale entrepreneurs. The objectives of NDE spanned across the following programmes: Agricultural development programme; Youth employment and vocational skills development programme; Special public works; and Small scale industries and graduate employment programme

The aim of the agricultural programme, he furthered is to generate employment for graduates, non-graduates and school leavers in the Agricultural sector, with emphasis on self employment in agricultural production and marketing. The programme is monitored by a team of Agricultural professionals in the Agricultural department of the directorate. However, factors which include inadequate funding and late release of funds from the federation account among others have impaired the effectiveness of the NDE agricultural programmes (Chinedum, 2006).

Youth Development

In conceptualizing youth development, attention should be paid to the fact that the concept of “youth development” is made up of two key words: Youth and development. Therefore, both words shall be individually conceptualized.

A youth is a young person especially a young man or boy; it refers to young people collectively. It can be seen as the freshness and vitality characteristic of a young person (Wordweb Dictionary, 2010).

Development, on the other hand is a state in which things are improving. It also means ‘to change gradually, progressing through a number of stages towards some sort of state of expansion, improvement or completeness or a state in which the subjects true identity is revealed (Word web Dictionary,2010).

Generally, youths are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have and therefore, need to be developed and empowered. Not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are, potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country’s development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their vitality, responsible conduct and roles in society is positively correlated with the development of their country (Zonal Youth Summits, 2000). Nigeria’s population is predominantly young (National Youth Policy, 2001). Therefore the present Nigerian government, having given due consideration to the significance of the youth in socioeconomic and political development, has found it most desirably necessary and urgent to initiate the National Youth Development Policy so that there will be a purposeful focus, well articulated and well directed efforts aimed at tapping the energy and resourcefulness of youth and harnessing them for the vitality, growth and development of the country in this 21st Century. This commitment to the development of the youth has been reinforced by resolution of various international organizations which draw attention to the need to concretely address the problems of the youth and empower them (Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment, 1998).

According to Nigeria’s National Youth Development Policy (2001), the youth comprises all young persons of ages 18 to 35, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This category represents the most active, the most volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population. They are individuals (male or female) above ten but below thirty years of age. The youth has also defined as the period in an individual’s life which runs between the end of childhood and entry into the world of work (Onuekwusi and Effiong, 2002). People in this age bracket definitely constitute a sizeable chunk of a nations population on which the burden of

nation building falls. The youth also constitute the major resource base for any country that want to embark on any meaningful development. Investment in the youth is the only way to ensure the future growth and development of any country. Therefore, increasing number of young people must be trained and as quickly as possible to provide leadership in agriculture, industry, government and rural development projects. These youth must be developed intellectually, morally, socially and with relevant skills to face a rapidly advancing technological world (Lagun, 2002).

A review of studies such as Fenley (1986), Odusanya (1972) and Olujide (1999), have also revealed that the youths constitute the highest percentage of the Nigerian population, and therefore are seen as “vital sources of manpower for development. They are rightly seen as leaders of tomorrow. Hence, the kind of education (formal or informal) that youth are exposed to or have access to will determine the nation’s overall development (Odusanya, 1972, Olujide, 1999).

Ocho, (2005) added his voice when he averred that Nigerian youths face daily series of problems, ranging from poverty, unemployment, conflicts and diseases. Tackling them is not an easy task. These problems therefore demand that the youths be empowered with creative problem-solving skills. The training of educated individuals who can function effectively in the society for the betterment of self and the society will require special attention as the system will be deliberately set to concern itself with the development of sound human capital required for national development (Ocho, 2005).

But through well planned and executed entrepreneurship education, Oviawe (2010) observed, the Nigerian youths will learn to be happy and fulfilled, as they will be productive and committed as employees or employers of labour. They will allow their unique abilities to be used for the development of the national and global goals rather than abandon their country for greener pastures (Oviawe 2010).

Hence the provision of right skills to the youths to help them tackle the problem of unemployment and live a more prosperous life should be given precedence in the scheme of things in Nigeria. Experts have suggested some techniques that can play important role in curbing youth Unemployment in Nigeria. These include Sports schools- an evening clubs that teach kids to play football, swim etc, Computer training schools and clubs that specializes in teaching programming softwares such as Java, Oracle, ASP, Cold fusion, JSP, digital photography, video editing, etc. Language schools, teaching foreign languages; like French, Spanish, and Chinese, Setting up of provisional work agencies, which will provide temporary staff to small companies. People with good web and programming skills can think of starting the following projects in order to deal with the problems of youth unemployment in Nigeria - program unique JAVA based applications to be used in 3G phones, a project to structure a complete phone directory of all Nigerian phone numbers, online map project of major Nigerian cities, and project, which can provide sufficient information about everything in Nigeria. Other projects such as building solar powered water pump for use in rural areas, solar powered streetlights, hybrid powered generators using solar and battery power, can also generate employment in the Nigerian economy.

Theoretical Discourse

The systems approach connotes the systems theory hence Ezeani argued that systems approach is systems theory applied in public administration. For the purpose of analysis, the systems theory cum systems approach is utilized. Systems Theory is the transdisciplinary study of the abstract organization of phenomena, independent of their substance, type, or spatial or temporal scale of existence. It investigates both the principles common to all complex entities, and the (usually mathematical) models which can be used to describe them (Ezeani, 2006).

It was proposed in the 1940's by the biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy (General Systems Theory, 1968), and furthered by Ross Ashby (Introduction to Cybernetics, 1956). Von Bertalanffy was both reacting against reductionism and attempting to revive the unity of science. He emphasized that real systems are open to, and interact with, their environments, and that they can acquire qualitatively new properties through emergence, resulting in continual evolution. Rather than

reducing an entity (e.g. the human body) to the properties of its parts or elements (e.g. organs or cells), systems theory focuses on the arrangement of and relations between the parts which connect them into a whole (cf. holism). This particular organization determines a system, which is independent of the concrete substance of the elements (e.g. particles, cells, transistors, people, etc). Thus, the same concepts and principles of organization underlie the different disciplines (physics, biology, technology, sociology, etc.), providing a basis for their unification. Systems concepts include: system-environment boundary, input, output, process, state, hierarchy, goal-directedness, and information.

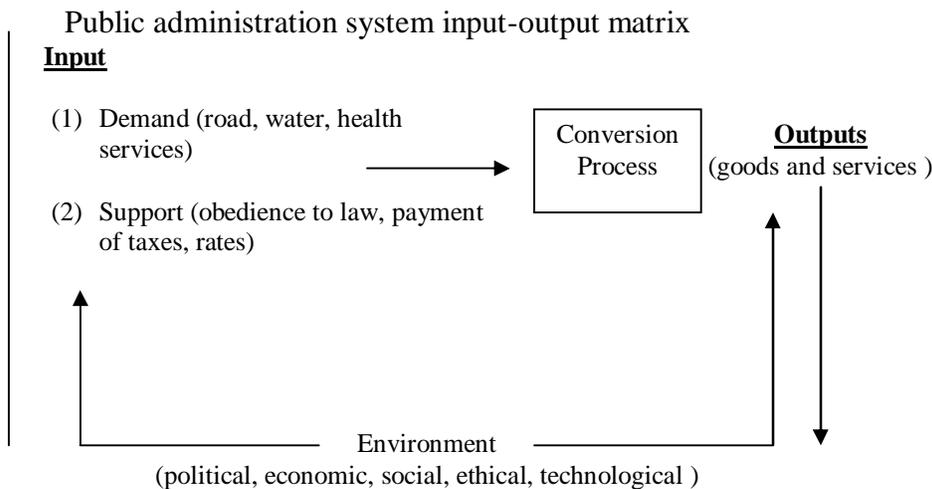
The developments of systems theory are diverse and its applications include engineering, computing, ecology, management, and family psychotherapy. Systems analysis, developed independently of systems theory, applies systems principles to aid a decision-maker with problems of identifying, reconstructing, optimizing, and controlling a system (usually a socio-technical organization), while taking into account multiple objectives, constraints and resources. It aims to specify possible courses of action, together with their risks, costs and benefits. Systems theory is closely connected to cybernetics, and also to system dynamics, which models changes in a network of coupled variables.

Almost every process can be divided into INPUT, PROCESS and OUTPUT; same is applicable in public administration as the systems approach to the study of public administration revealed. Unemployment and youth unemployment per se is under the study of public administration and the solution embedded in youth development is also of public administration concern. Therefore a study of youth unemployment and youth development in Nigeria should be studied with systems approach and to ensure that, the systems theory becomes eminent.

According to the systems theorists, “a system is essentially an assemblage of things interconnected or independent, so as to form a complex unity” (Koontz in Ezeani 2006). All systems except perhaps the university interact with and are influenced by their environment (political, social, economic, ethical, technological etc) and in turn, influence its environment. An

important element in the systems approach is the emphasis on input-output analysis (Ezeani, 2006).

Worthy of note is that a system needs support from environment in order to survive. Thus, it receives inputs of support such as payment of taxes, obedience to rules and regulations etc. equally important is the fact that consequent upon the outputs, some new inputs are generated and fed back into the system through the feedback mechanism. These are, again, processed and converted to output. Thus, the systems approach is cyclical (Ademolekun in Ezeani 2006). Thus is shown in the diagram bellow:



Source: Ezeani, (2006) Public administration system input-output matrix in Fundamentals of Public Administration.

A public administration system is represented as receiving inputs from the environment in the form of the demands of citizens for the maintenance of law and order and the provision of goods and services. The public administration processes these demands within the governmental

administration... the results at the end of the processing stage are collectively regarded as the outputs. They consist of the relative orderliness of the society, the quantity and quality of good and services and the timeliness of their delivery.

The systems approach requires that when public administrators plan, they have no choice but to take into account, environmental factors (political, social, economic, technological, ethical etc). In other words, it requires interrelated elements with daily interaction between environments external and internal (Ezeani, 2006).

This means that to solve the problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria, a consideration of the political, economic, social, ethical and even educational environments is important. This is because, for a problem like youth unemployment, its solutions are not sacrosanct with the governmental provision of jobs but others sources which can emanate from the environment. For instance, individuals who are well placed financially usually build companies, schools, banks etc for the purpose of employment and thus help in reducing unemployment in the country. Their decision to build and employ workers is influenced the environment and also influences the environment.

The issue of youth development is not of the government alone but for all, especially the individual youths. Afters, there are people who have developed themselves from scratch to something and at the same time, there are people whose people have the means to develop them to any level and standard and in any ramification yet such people outrightly refused to be developed. This is why we tend to study unemployment and youth development in Nigeria as a system with its processes as follows:

Inputs: These are human and material factors supplied to the system which are transformed into productive services. As an open system, the Nigerian government utilizes input demands in the form of claims and demands made by individuals or communities for actions to satisfy their interest while support is rendered when individuals or communities pay their taxes, rate, licenses, obey the bye-law and the staff contribute their best in administering the social services. Such

demands in this research is the provision of job by the government or the introduction and implementation of other policies and programmes that can help generate job for the youth such as programmes on entrepreneurship development, advancing policies that will encourage private sector led economy that will augment the government in employment generation bid. However, these are just demands made by the citizens on their government.

Conversion Processes: The inputs (demand for job creation and opportunity for advancement of private sector led economy which will encourage youth involvement in entrepreneurship), have to be converted. And this why this process is called conversion process. This is the process by which inputs are changed into output and is referred to as transformation. In Nigerian as an open system inputs like public funds, various categories of staff are utilized to provide services and other amenities such as roads, schools, water supply, health centres and employment opportunity as well as programmes for youth development to the people, such as the ministry of youth development and that of labour and productivity. Included also is the National Assembly and in fact, all the governmental arms and agencies. This is why it is a system as their decisions, actions and inactions convert the inputs into outputs.

Output: The services which the government sent out to the people as end product is known as output. In the case of Nigerian government, its outputs include provision of motorable roads, portable water supply, good and accessible markets and motor parks, health centres etc., to the people of the area. But most specifically, jobs created to quell the unemployment and other conditions put in place to cushion the ill-effects of unemployment in any given economy.

Feedback: The various cycled nature of the system is accounted for by the feedback. In other-words, some of the systems outputs are sent back into the system as new inputs or demands which lead to future output and so on in a continuing-never-ending flow of the system. Government as a system receives input in the form of people's demands on them and their subsequent comments on the services and amenities provided for the people based on their erstwhile demands. In our context, the government having provided employment opportunities for her citizens, the people will comment on the adequacies or otherwise of the job provided and

such information sent serve as new input which will call for addition job creation or device another means of helping the unemployment situation. Our emphasis here is that it is this feedback mechanism that makes systems theory/approach complete

Interdependence: This is the inter-working relationship between the parts of the system and the whole system. This shows that when a part of the system is affected in the course of any action, the various departments in the Nigeria government which include ministry of youth development, labour and productivity, finance, internal affairs, education, power and steel, the National Assembly, the states and local government as well as the civil societies and all well meaning Nigerians are all interrelated to each other because they are all working towards the same goal the provision of social amenities and services such as job creation and employment opportunities.

This is why the problems of the unemployment in Nigeria should be solved to enable a cohesive unit of Nigerians motivated towards the attainment of the goal of developing the country. However, the theory warned that when attention is paid to development of youths the other factors, such as funding and good governance should also be stepped up.

METHODOLOGY

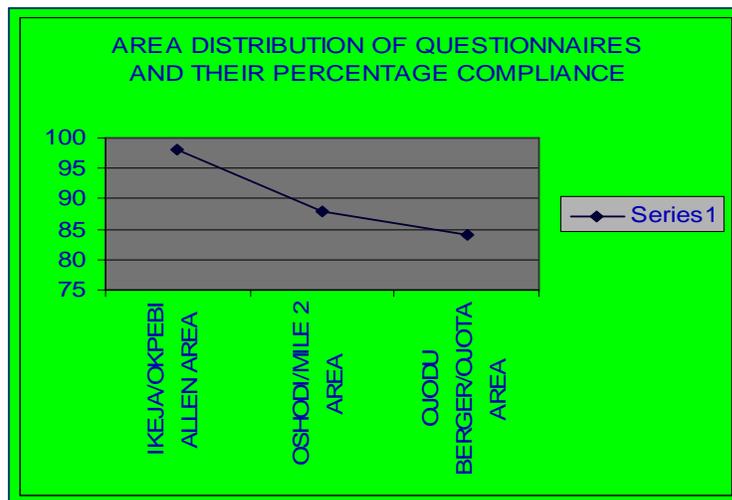
Data for this study were generated through primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary source of data collection was anchored on the distribution of questionnaires to the randomly selected respondents, while the secondary source of data collection includes materials consulted such as; books, journals, newspapers, periodicals, seminar and conference papers, unpublished theses and internet materials.

In designing the research, the probability sampling method was adopted. We considered probability sampling methods convenient for the researcher. The probability sampling technique deployed for this study is the simple random sampling technique through which questionnaires were administered to the randomly selected respondents.

The population of the study comprises of the entire Nigeria, because they all bear the brunt of youth unemployment. One may wonder why the entire Nigerian population instead of the entire youths, considering the fact that the investigation is on youth unemployment and youth development but the real burden of youth unemployment is not bore by the youths alone, even though they do on first hand but such other societal ills that are as a result of youths' unemployment like kidnapping, bombing, armed robbery, political thuggery and other social vices are bore by the entire Nigerians. Again, the making of the policy that will ensure youth development and employment generation is not done by the youths. This is why our population is the entire Nigeria.

The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. For the primary data, questionnaires were considered and for the secondary data, related reference materials such as books, journals, newspapers, seminar and conference materials, internet resources and periodicals were considered.

The target population of this study is 270 respondents from Lagos state. The respondents were picked randomly in the Ikeja /Okpebi Allen area, Oshodi, Mile 2, and Ojota / Ojodu Berger areas. Constituents of the target population varied as some are traders while others are workers and some job seekers. This was to ensure adequacy of data and its viability. The original schedule was 300 questionnaires distributed but it was only 270 that was completed and returned in good shape for the purpose of the research with 90% completion.



Data derived from the questionnaires were presented using frequency tables and simple percentage method of analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the first objectives of the study to find out if unemployment in Nigeria is as real as it sounds in the literature or whether it is an exaggeration, 212 respondents, out of the 270, representing (78.5%) of the total responses agreed that there is unemployment in Nigeria. Again, of the 270 respondents, 250 respondents, representing (92.6%) of the sampling size agreed that unemployment in Nigeria is mostly among youths. 242 respondents, representing (89.6%) averred that there is unemployment in Lagos state. On the rating of the effects of unemployment on the Nigerian youths, 40 respondents (14.8%) rated the effects of unemployment on the Nigerian youths as Devastating, 70 respondents (26%) rated it as frustrating, while 100 respondents (37%) rated it as Disorganizing, 50 respondents (18.5%) rated it as Embarrassing, 10 respondents (3.7 %) rated it as relaxing; means that unemployment in Nigeria is impacting negatively on the Nigerian youths.

Therefore, it was substantially and significantly observed that there is unemployment in Nigeria and the youths are the worst hit of it.

On the second objectives of the study- to examine the relationship between youth development and youth unemployment to see if it is a panacea to unemployment in Nigeria, 190 respondents, representing (70.4%) of the total responses agreed that youth development reduces youth unemployment in particular and unemployment in general. Again, in inquiring if there is a relationship between youth development and unemployment in Nigeria, 180 respondents, representing (66.7) agreed to a relationship between youth development and unemployment in Nigeria. Also in seeking out what measures can be employed to solve youth unemployment in Nigeria, among the lists, Training and development of youths for skills acquisition, and Entrepreneurship development topped the list with 50 respondents representing (15.8%) apiece. A feat it shared with ensuring Good governance/leadership. These showed that youth development salvages (youth) unemployment in Nigeria.

In line with the third objective of the study: to look at youth development programmes in Lagos with the view to finding out if they have what it takes to reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria in general and in Lagos state in particular, 190 respondents, representing (70.4%) of the respondents agreed that youth development and empowerment have thrived in Lagos state enough to help control youth unemployment in Nigeria. It therefore becomes clear that youth development and empowerment programmes have thrived in Lagos state and therefore have been helpful in reducing unemployment in Nigeria.

The implication of our findings is that unemployment in Nigeria is as real as it sounds in the literature and not an exaggeration hence Okafor (2011) writing on youth unemployment and implications for stability of democracy in Nigeria said “Unemployment is a global trend, but it occurs mostly in developing countries of the world, with attendant social, economic, political, and psychological consequences. Thus, massive youth unemployment in any country is an indication of far more complex problems. And that in Nigeria, accurate unemployment rates are difficult to access”. Also, Amusan (2007) writing on Kano, Lagos Lead In Youth Unemployment averred “about 3, 334,139 Nigerians were currently unemployed with Kano State topping the list with about 369,139 unemployed persons. Lagos is second with a figure of 353,097 unemployed persons representing about 11.07 percent of the national total. The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) recorded the lowest figure with 34,638 unemployed persons representing about 1.04 percent of the national total.

However, Oyebade (2003) grouped Nigeria’s unemployment into two categories: first, the older unemployed who lost their jobs through retrenchment, redundancy, or bankruptcy; and second, the younger unemployed, most of whom have never been employed. Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) revealed that that statistics from the Manpower Board and the Federal Bureau of Statistics showed that Nigeria has a youth population of 80 million, representing 60% of the total population of the country. Also, 64 million of them are unemployed, while 1.6 million are under-employed. The 1990-2000 data on youth unemployment showed that the largest group of the unemployed is the secondary school graduates. Also, 40% of the unemployment rate is among

urban youth aged 20 - 24 and 31% of the rate is among those aged 15-19. Also, two-thirds of the urban unemployed are ranged from 15-24 years old. Moreover, the educated unemployed tended to be young males with few dependents. There are relatively few secondary school graduates and the lowered job expectations of primary-school graduates. The authors, however, admitted that there is no consistent trend of unemployment rates in Nigeria. Howbeit, National Bureau of Statistics (2009:238; 2010:2), reported that the national unemployment rates for Nigeria between 2000 and 2009 showed that the number of unemployed persons constituted 31.1% in 2000; 13.6% in 2001; 12.6% in 2002; 14.8% in 2003; 13.4% in 2004; 11.9% in 2005; 13.7% in 2006; 14.6% in 2007; 14.9% in 2008 and 19.7% in 2009.

In terms of the causes of (youth) unemployment in Nigeria, in their study of unemployment in Nigeria, Adebayo (1999), Alanana (2003), Echebiri (2005), Ayinde (2008), Morphy (2008) Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) Okafor (2011) and Anyadike, et al (2012) have identified the main causes of youth unemployment in Nigeria, ranging rapidly growing urban labour force arising from rural urban migration to rapid educational expansion. Rural-urban migration Okafor (2011) elucidated is usually explained in terms of push-pull factors. The push factors include the pressure resulting from man-land ratio in the rural areas and the existence of serious underemployment arising from the seasonal cycle of climate. The factors are further exacerbated in Nigeria by the lack of infrastructural facilities, which makes the rural life unattractive. Youths move to urban areas with the probability of securing lucrative employment in the industries. In addition to this, there is the concentration of social amenities in the urban centers. This means that either the rural areas are neglected in the allocation of social and economic opportunities or that somebody somewhere is busy embezzling the allocations for the development of the rural areas.

Accordingly, rapid population growth was secondly identified hence going by the 2006 census in Nigeria, the nation's population was put at 140,431,790 and projections for the future indicate that the population could be over 180 million by the year 2020, given the annual growth rate of 3.2 percent (National Population Commission & ICF Macro, 2009:3). With this population, Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa. It is argued that the high population growth rate

has resulted in the rapid growth of the labor force, which is far outstripping the supply of jobs. The accelerated growth of population on Nigeria's unemployment problem is multifaceted. It affects the supply side through a high and rapid increase in the labour force relative to the absorptive capacity of the economy, especially when considering the estimation of about 168 million populations. (NPC, 2012)

Outdated school curricula and lack of employable skills was identified by Okafor as a third causal factor of youth unemployment in Nigeria hence the argument of some scholars and commentators that as far as the formal sector is concerned, the average Nigeria graduate is not employable and, therefore, does not possess the skills needed by the employers of labour for a formal employment leading to series of job examinations and aptitude tests and interviews after interviews to sieve out an employable few amidst the million unemployed graduated youths. This trend has been attributed to the Nigeria's education system, with its liberal bias. The course contents of most tertiary education in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial contents that would have enabled graduates to become job creators rather than job seekers.

He also identified as the fourth causal factor, the rapid expansion of the educational system which he says directly leads to increase in the supply of educated manpower above the corresponding demand for them; contributing to the problem of the youth unemployment in Nigeria. To appreciate the truth in this fourth causal factor, Manning and Junankar (1998) cited in Utomi (2011) observed that the total number of graduates turned out by the higher institutions in Nigeria, which were 73,339 in 1986/1987 which rose to 131,016 in 1996/1997. Presently, with over 97 universities in Nigeria (both federal, state, and private) and the increasing demand for higher education there has been the problem of suitable employment for the varieties of graduates are turned out by these higher institutions every year. Ordinarily, this should not have been a problem, but the reality is that the Nigerian economy is too weak to absorb this large number of graduates. Okafor also added that the absence of vibrant manufacturing sector with the capacity to absorb the unemployed youths in Nigeria has led to this colossal amount of unemployed youths in Nigeria.

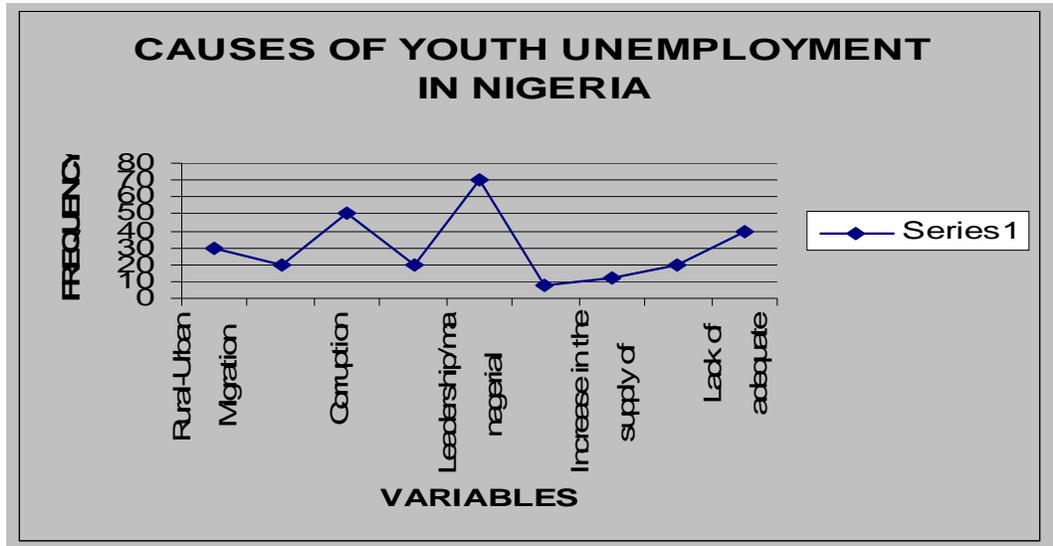
The last casual factor, Okafor (2011) identified is the issue of corruption, when he wrote 'corruption, which has permeated the entire social structure of Nigeria, has robbed the country of developing a vibrant economic base. Funds meant for development projects have been misappropriated, diverted, or embezzled and stashed away in foreign banks, while some incompetent and corrupt bureaucrats and administrators in the public enterprises and Parastatals have liquidated these organizations (Okafor, 2007). The point being made here is that the collaboration of the political elites, local and foreign contractors in the inflation of contract fees have robbed Nigeria of the chances of using more than \$500 billion estimated revenue from the oil sale in the last 50 years to develop a vibrant economy that would have created jobs for the youths in various sectors of the economy. The ruling (political) class failed because they replaced the vision, policy, and strategy, which should be the thrust of every leadership with transaction (contract award and other mundane money-related activities). Each successive government took turns to prey on the nation's wealth, by using public power, resources, good will, utilities, instrument of abuse, and personal gains (Okafor, 2011).

The table below shows the responses of the respondents as regards the causes of (youth) unemployment in Nigeria.

Table 1
Causes of Unemployment in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Rural-Urban Migration	30	11.1
Rapid Population Growth	20	7.4
Corruption	50	18.5
Outdated School Curriculum	20	7.4
Leadership/managerial problem	70	25.9
Lack of Employable skills	8	3
Increase in the supply of educated manpower	12	4.4
Poverty	20	7.4
Lack of adequate youth development programs	40	15
Total	270	100

Source: field study (2012)



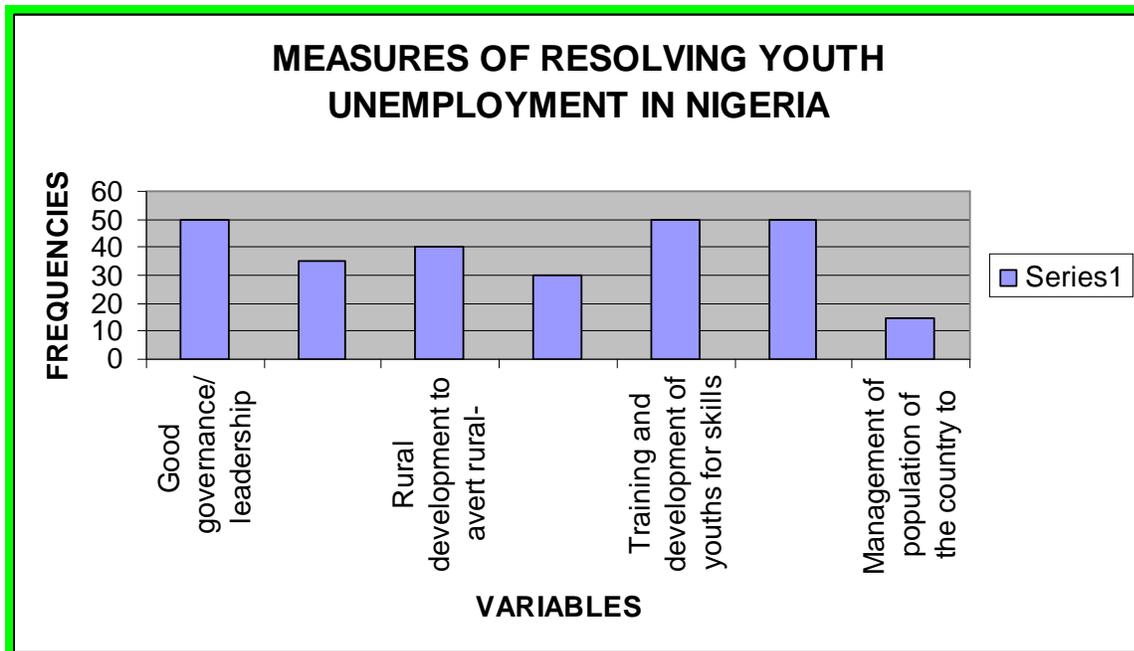
Several causes of youth unemployment in Nigeria have been adduced such as; Rural-Urban Migration; corruption with its attendant grave embezzlement; Rapid Population Growth ; Leadership and managerial problem; Outdated School Curriculum; poverty; Lack of adequate youth development programmes; increase in the supply of educated manpower. Topping the list is leadership/managerial problems with 70 respondents (25.9%), followed by corruption with 50 respondents (18.1%). Lack of adequate youth development programs was next at 40 respondents (15%) etc. This means that all the variables are the causes of unemployment in Nigeria.

Having listed the observations of the respondents on the causes of (youth) unemployment in Nigeria, measures to be adopted to resolve the ugly trend were listed as displayed in the table below.

Table II
Measures to resolve youth unemployment in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Good governance/ leadership	50	15.8
Faithful prosecution and execution of corrupt leaders in Nigeria	35	12.9
Rural development to avert rural-urban drift	40	14.8
Remodeling of school curriculum	30	11.1
Training and development of youths for skills acquisition	50	15.8
Entrepreneurship development	50	15.8
Management of population of the country to avoid explosion	15	5.6
Total	270	100

Source: Field study (2012)



In ascertaining the measures to employ in resolving the problems of youth unemployment in Lagos state in particular and Nigeria in general; the respondents identified the following

variables in their order ranks; Good governance/ leadership, Training and development of youths for skills acquisition, Entrepreneurship development simultaneously with 50 respondents representing (15.8%) apiece. Followed by Rural development to avert rural-urban drift with 40 respondents (14.8%) and Faithful prosecution and execution of corrupt leaders in Nigeria with 35 respondents (12.9%)

Recommendations

- i. That there should be a massive reduction in the political corruption index of the country to enable youth development to thrive. This is because corruption, which has permeated the entire social structure of Nigeria, has robbed the country of developing a vibrant economic base as funds meant for development projects have been misappropriated, diverted, embezzled and stashed away in foreign bank accounts, while some incompetent and corrupt bureaucrats and administrators in the public enterprises and parastatals have liquidated their organizations. It is a pity that each successive government took turns to prey on the nation's wealth, by using public power, resources, good will, utilities, instrument of abuse, and personal gains
- ii. That the government may not be able to create job enough for the teeming millions of Nigerian unemployed youths, and therefore should embark upon massive youth development programmes in all the states of the federation with entrepreneurial skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development as a key target hence a viable intervening tool for unemployment.
- iii. That the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) being the highest mobilizer of Youths and graduates who are mostly faced with the youth unemployment saga should be re-modeled to suit today's trend of youth unemployment. By re-modeling, i mean that government should stop using NYSC to create cheap and unsolicited labour, instead, the mobilized graduates should be made to identify any skill of their choice which they will like to continue as business after NYSC should white collar job is not forthcoming. But for those in the education sector, they should use nine

months to learn the act of teaching proper in an established institution and use the remaining three months to do teaching practice, so that at the end of the service year, the mobilized youths (graduates) will have been acquainted and equipped in the act of entrepreneurship and would have learnt a basic employment generateable skill, get certified and then wait for the government to sponsor their identified entrepreneurial project.

- iv. That government should embark on rural development such as rural industrialization and electrification to curtail rural-urban drift. In engendering rural development, rural roads should be built, infrastructures provided to ensure that the rural areas are attractive to live in. this will enable the possibility of youths staying in the rural areas and getting productively engaged.
- v. That the general school curriculum should be remodeled to inculcate technical skill acquisition which will help even secondary school graduates to have employable skills. This is against the complain that Nigerian graduates are unemployable leading to youths unemployment.

CONCLUSION

That youth unemployment in Nigeria is endemic is stating the obvious. Its concomitant consequences on both the youth and the entire country cannot be relegated to the background hence the waning of agricultural practices, lingering poverty, hunger, social vices and insecurity at a very alarming rate have so characterized the Nigerian society. This is considering the fact that about 70% of the entire Nigeria's 150 Million populace are Youths whose about 71% are unemployment majorly graduates who are from 20 years and above, affecting adversely the workforce utility of the country.

It is a pity that youths and graduate who are qualified, willing and able to work cannot find a job and as such earn nothing. They cannot handle any family or societal responsibility which broods at them every second. Such individuals are frustrated hence time bond. They are vulnerable and

can be used by scrupulous elements in the society to pervade all sorts of crime and mayhem, which they would outrightly abhor should they were productively engaged or gainfully employed; A succor that youth development brings to both the individuals and the society at large.

As obvious as it is that youth empowerment and development are the magic wands that can change the story overtime, yet it has not been duly explored and many scholars, commentators and observers have argued that corruption is what steers unemployment, as very many youths who are unemployed want to be self-reliant and self-employed but for inadequate access to loan schemes couple with the issue of collateral and high interest rate on loan from financial institutions, and lack of managerial prowess and the zeal and will to take risks, youth development and empowerment becomes paramount and quintessential.

Many have argued that government have key role to play to ensure that youth development as a means of quelling youth unemployment and so should to put in place some measures to salvage the unemployment situation of the country. Some of these measures include first, an auditing of all the policy programmes aimed at youth development and empowerment activity to avoid duplication and clashes in spheres of operation. Also, programmes should not be sacrificed on the altar of political expediency, rather, they should be judged by their abilities to accomplish the objectives for which they were created. Government should get the credit institutions committed to spreading their activities beyond the “comfort zones” in which they currently operate, Such as local government and National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). Finally, sustained education and enlightenment programmes on the opportunities that abound in the environment should be put in place.

If the Nigerian government must revitalize its economy, reduce unemployment progressively, and generate more employment opportunities, a paradigm shift in policy that is critical to effective entrepreneurship development becomes imperative.

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