

ISSUES FOR THE NIGERIAN EDUCATION IN JOB CREATION AND SUSTENANCE

Andrew A. Dosomah

*School of General Studies (Mathematics Section)
Edo State Institute of Technology and Management,
Usen, Benin City, Edo State*

Agharese R. Usiobaifo

*Department of Computer Science
Edo State Institute of Technology & Management,
Usen, Benin City, Edo State.*

Abstract

Expectations of solving unemployment problem by privatization or private entrepreneurship practice in a society with poor value system and social security may not yield the desired results. The tendency for government to 'step aside' and hand over its paralyzed businesses to private entrepreneurs will make some individuals richer but may not necessarily create more jobs. Frustrated citizens as a result of unemployment are likely to become haters of society and in searching for survival, may advance in violence, fraud, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug and human trafficking to the detriment of society. Although some individual successes have been recorded by some who have taken challenges but causalities and life threatening social problems are on the increase. By considering some factors of job creation and sustenance, the paper highlights issues for the Nigerian Education in job creation and sustenance.

Introduction

The scourge of unemployment in Nigeria has been a worrisome one. There are graduates that have remained in unemployment status for over ten years. Tide (2008) in Asuru (2009) stated that only 25% of over 150,000 graduates produced by our universities yearly are employed. The paper observed that the unemployment level that was 2% in 1980s is currently on a two digit level.

Furthermore, Observer Editorial of June 24th, 2010 stated that in a recent recruitment of 1557 teachers by the Lagos state Government, the state Deputy Governor disclosed that no fewer than 12000 applications were received by the Ministry of Education. Eweka (2010) stated that according to research in 1974, over 80% of graduates who completed the National Youth Service Corps Scheme (NYSC) got jobs within 3 months of

completion of service year. By 1984, 93 percent of those that completed their service years remained unemployed at the end of their service scheme in June. He further stated that research reveal that out of every 100 graduates in Nigeria today, 20 get jobs within a year of their graduation; of these 20, 8 get good jobs through highly influential people in power, 7 are into casual jobs collecting peanuts as salary, 5 are into regular civil service through the connection of some government officials. The remaining 80 graduates, it becomes survival of the fittest.

In addition to graduate unemployment, the Nigerian educational System is characterized by a high proportion of wastage of school leavers roaming about in frustration of inability to start a business, gain employment or undergraduate admission as a result of inappropriate education nurtured by malpractice or that competition is too high. Professor Babs Fafunwa in Bilewomo (2010) stated thus: "Today we have 104 Universities and unfortunately many of them are still struggling for lack of funds. We absorb less than 10percent of those who took the JAMB examinations". Furthermore, Wale Omole, former vice-chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria; in Bilewomo (2010) stated thus: "it is so difficult to get four or five credits that is how bad things are". Said Omole. Of the 1,058,806 candidates that sat for the May/June 2010 WAEC Examination, 337,071 candidates representing 24.94 percent obtained credits in English language, Mathematics and at least three other subjects. In talking about

job creation, we must be careful to exclude jobs that are injurious to the welfare of society for examples, dubious jobs (419), prostitution, armed robbery, kidnapping or jobs that put dangerous products on sale for selfish reasons to the detriment of the health of society. Observer Editorial of June 24, 2010 stated that the minister for women affairs said records indicate that trafficking in persons, especially women and children constitute the third largest profit yielding business behind arms dealing and narcotics. Oral interviews of some youths reveal that the use of computer for (419) activities popularly known as "Yahoo Yahoo" is a major attraction and a quick source of making big money for some Nigerian Youths. Furthermore, some yahoo yahoo youths now use charms in a bid to manipulate people to submit to their 419 proposals.

Essentials for success in job creation is creativity, risk taking by commitment to investing in the business and suitable business location. If jobs are created, they have to be sustained some essentials for success in job sustenance include ability to manage finance, ensuring satisfactory products and services from the business, business research to have a good understanding of business trends and taking prompt actions to overcome some effects of income fluctuations due to seasonality or business vagaries. Essentials for success in job sustenance also include recruitment of suitable qualified staff, staff motivation, training and supervision. Business expansion/diversification and safety considerations to prevent business accidents.

Although profit making is a motivation for business, there are physical and spiritual implications for a greedy wicked attitude to profit making. The physical implication might be loss of customers as a result of dissatisfaction with the quality of service/products or high price. For the spiritual implication, the Bible calls our attention to the following verses:

Amos 8 verses 4 – 8 states:

Hear this, O ye that swallow the poor and needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail. Falsifying the balances by deceit, that ye may buy the poor for silver and needy for a pair of shoes, yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat. The lord had sworn by the Excellency of Jacob surely I will never forget any of their works. Shall not the land tremble and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? And it shall rise up wholly as a flood, and it shall be cast out and drowned as the flood of Egypt.

Leviticus 19 verses 13 states: Thou shall not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him. The wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. Jeremiah 17 verses 11 states that as a partridge sits on eggs and hatches them not: so he that gets riches not by right shall leave them in the midst of his days and at the end shall be a fool.

Some Definitions of Job Creation/Entrepreneurship

Hornby (2001) defined job creation as “the process of producing opportunities for paid work, especially for people who are employed. He also defined entrepreneur as a person who makes

money by starting or running business, especially when this involves taking financial risks”. Job creation is not the exclusive preserve of Entrepreneurs. Although entrepreneurs create jobs government business can make profit, expand and create jobs if government workers are creative, committed and not fraudulent. Ronstad in MColiver and Nwagwu (2006) stated that entrepreneurship is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth. This wealth created by individuals who assume the major risks in terms of equity, time, and/or career commitment of providing value for some product or service itself, may or may not be new or unique but value must somehow be infused by the entrepreneur in securing and allocating the necessary skills and resources.

Factors Affecting Job Creation/sustenance

The following are some of the factors affecting job creation/sustenance:

1. **Nigerian Business Environment**

The Nigerian Business environment has both positive and negative aspects. The positive aspect is that Nigeria is a potentially great country blessed with abundant natural resources and the negative aspects are the fraudulent business character of Nigerians and wrong business orientation. For example, many Nigerian entrepreneurs, employers/employees see job creation as a process of cheating or killing people to make more profit for selfish considerations. The fraudulent

business character of Nigerians is well known both locally and internationally. For example, Vanguard Editorial of June 6, 2010 stated that a United States (US) Federal Judge sentenced a Nigerian couple, for forcing a widowed mother of six to serve in domestic servitude as a slave for 8 years. In the 8 years period, the widow received about 300 dollars and was sexually assaulted. The husband a naturalized US citizen was sentenced to 20years imprisonment, the wife 9 years behind bars and to pay 305,957.60 dollars in restitution. Why? The US jury believes that the US, a country founded on Fundamental Human Right cannot tolerate such wickedness. If it were in Nigeria, it is normal for a private employer to cheat his employees. If the US can show great concern for the welfare of an immigrant Nigerian widow how much concern will they show for their citizen? Does Nigeria value her citizens?

A News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) features in observer of April 3rd 2010 stated that a recent report by a Non-governmental organization (NGO) dealing with labour issues in Nigeria stated that 45% of Nigerian Labour force is made up of Casual workers. It contain reports of the devastating loss of a breadwinner of family of 3, a holder of diploma in Electrical Engineering and casual worker at kubwa unit of Power Holding

Company of Nigeria (PHCN) who was electrocuted when he climbed an electric pole for repairs. An uncle of the deceased was reported to have lamented that: the situation was particularly bad because the casual worker is not entitled to even a funeral grant. The fraudulent business character of Nigerians is not restricted to employers, employees are also fraudulent. Observer Editorial of June 24, 2010 stated the Ekiti State board of internal revenue service handed over 12 of its staff to the police for allegedly defrauding the state Government of ₦200 million.

Violence/Security Problems

Violence and security problems are critical high risk factors of the Nigerian business environment. The incessant activities of armed robbers, militants and illegal tax collectors pose a tremendous danger to job creation and sustenance. The following are some examples, an Observer Editorial of June 25, 2010 stated that a mobile policeman allegedly shot to death a taxi driver in Onitsha (Anambra State) after arguments over payment of ₦20 at a road block. Furthermore, Vanguard Editorial of June, 16, 2010 stated that Banking services were paralyzed in Okigwe, Imo State on June 15 as workers in 9 banks operating in the town embarked on a 5 days warning strike to protest incessant armed robbery attacks on banks.

2. **Government attitude to workers welfare as a killer of job creation/sustenance**

No one should call government a fool, yet many Nigerians by their actions, seem to see Nigerian government as wicked Rich Fool” because she is insensitive to their plight and unreliable. Indeed government’s unfaithfulness in prompt payments of pensions, gratuities and entitlements of workers especially the humiliation of teachers in terms of poor salary. For example as at 2004, a B.SC graduate teacher in Government secondary school in Edo State will take at least 15years to attain the starting salary of a fresh B.SC graduate of the same class of degree employed in a Tertiary institution. Yet promotions are often delayed in secondary schools such that a promotion due in 1994 may be received in 1997 with no promotion arrears. Furthermore, why should Federal Government announce a new minimum wage, pay only Federal workers and leave state workers to negotiate with their state government? Why should government wait for workers to go on a prolonged strike before they will pay what has been approved by government?

3. **Negative actions/reactions of Nigerians as killers of job creation and sustenance**

Most Nigerian citizens lack National consciousness because they have lost faith in Nigerian Government. Consequently, they think more as abandoned individuals propelled by a mindset of “honesty does not pay” although their initial grievance may be failure of government/family members to provide basic social securities for survival and reports of embezzlement of public funds and extravagance of some government officials/politicians. In their reaction to sad experiences of distress situations and government insensitivity to their plight, they go beyond seeking survival to greediness in attempts to reign by violence and fraud --- at the slightest opportunity they are willing to sell Nigeria’s property, loot Nigeria’s treasury into their private accounts and destroy Nigeria’s businesses by corruption, even teachers indulge in examination malpractice. The following are some examples of actions and reactions affecting job creation/sustenance.

- **Using Education as an official cover for embezzlement**

A Nigerian spends many years training as an Accountant or Auditor for examples upon employment in government service

he cannot practice the accounting or auditing he studied. Rather, he is paid to collude with fraudster managers to defraud government business he should have protected.

- **Unwholesome influence in employment**

In Nigeria, employment is not based on merit but influence. Some Nigerians seeking employment run to high ranking politicians/traditional rulers to get letters of introduction to influence their employment. After getting the job, they will be found grossly incompetent, chronic absentees, unruly and uninterested in the job they are employed but uses official time to further their personal concern. Observer Editorial of April 24, 2010 stated that the Governor of River State Nigeria, said that most civil servants in the state were redundant in their various places of work and end up roaming about during official hours.

- **Waste**

A lot of public funds are wasted on “white elephant projects” for selfish interest. Enahoro (2010) stated that special adviser to Edo State Governor on Education said it was sad that the building at Ewu Grammar School built by Niger Delta Development Commission was already collapsing even when it was yet to be occupied by the

students due to use of inferior materials by the contractor of the project. Furthermore, Vanguard Editorial of June 30, 2010 stated despite public outcry, the house of representative on 29th June approved a presidential proposal to spend ₦10billion to prepare for the nations at 50 independence celebrations.

- **Kidnapping**

The frequency in occurrence of kidnapping in recent times have reached worrisome proportions Nationally that in some cases it has resulted to strikes in protest of kidnapping of some persons. Observer Editorial of July 16, 2010 stated that “the Joint Action Committee of Unions at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (UUTH) declared full scale strike following the non-release of a Pediatrics surgeon, Dr. Usen Uwah who was abducted as he was returning home from duty.” Furthermore, distant relatives of the same country usually become close relative when they meet in foreign lands. Sadly the gravity of lack of National consciousness is revealed in recent reports that some Nigerians kidnap one another in foreign lands. Observer Editorial of July 9, 2010 stated that the Nigerian High Commissioner to Malaysia has decried the increasing rate of kidnapping of Nigerians by Nigerians in

Malaysia. Guardian Editorial of July 5, 2010 stated that no fewer than 116 Nigerians were deported by the Mali Government, for human trafficking, prostitution and other offences. Also a total of 59 Nigerians were deported from Spain at the weekend.

- **Government/Nigerian Businessmen and Job Creation**

In Nigeria, government is a major employer of labour. However the poor attitude to government business, fraud and corruption have made many Nigerians conclude that Government business cannot be efficient. Indeed most government businesses are neither growing nor functional yet they continue to employ, not on need but on politics. They are characterized by waste, low level of productivity, corruption, laxity, fraud and conversion of government customers to personal businesses, consequently most government business are worrisome liabilities. The tendency is for government to desire a handover of its paralyzed businesses to private entrepreneur and save government the trouble of high cost of running paralyzed businesses.

How come an individual will succeed in business in which government with all its vast resources failed woefully? Instead of government addressing the

problem of inefficiency, it prefers a good riddance of selling its business into private hands. Most private entrepreneurs take advantage of the high rate of unemployment, to pay “peanuts” to workers. Many of these businesses despite the huge profits they make and expansion of the business, evade commensurate tax, hardly employ workers rather they prefer to overwork existing workers for the usual or a little increase in “peanut” salary. Although Nigerian Society calls them successful entrepreneurs but are they job creators? Many of these businesses have no clearly defined welfare package for their staff. They prefer to use casual labourers. They are taskmasters for personal aggrandizement at the expense of the lives of families of their countrymen, women and children.

There may be nothing wrong in privatizing government business in a society with reasonably good value system and social securities. That is not the case with Nigeria. Nigerians are yet to see themselves as citizens of a nation. They feel no obligation to the progress of their country nor value the life of other Nigerians. Many of her leaders feel no obligation to Nigerians. Their allegiance is to their political sponsors and “juju doctors” whom they consult for protection and direction.

Consequently, it is not in the interest of majority of Nigerians for government to “Step aside” and leave job creation in the hands of selfish wicked entrepreneurs. Such a situation will leave many unemployed and frustrated and in their frustration are likely to be instrument in the hands of the devil to unleash a reign of terror on society. Other factors affecting job creation include:

4. **Poor transport/storage facilities** – There are several cases of goods that are badly damaged in transit, due to bad state of Nigerian roads. A visit to Nigeria Markets reveals great wastage of foodstuffs resulting from poor storage facilities. There are also tremendous delays in arrival times due to bad state of roads.
5. **Poor fire/security service** – Some markets are set ablaze as a result of carelessness, electrical faults or to cover up fraud. Consequently goods worth large sum of money, equipments, cash, and valuable documents are destroyed and welfare of families adversely affected.
6. **Attitudinal Factors** – ability to take challenge and discipline, hard work, perseverance, good business character, healthy habits are positive factors for job creations.
7. **Spiritual/Biological Factors** – Ability to discover your talent and

discipline to obey instructions from divine inspiration are vital to job creation and creativity.

General Observations

Wickedness attracts curses. No matter how enterprising a person is if he is under a curse, he will live his life in gloomy cycles unless he is delivered from the curse and changes his attitude to embrace good values. For example, the Holy Bible 2 Samuel 21 stated that there was severe famine which lasted for three consecutive years during the reign of King David of Israel. David inquired of the Lord and the Lord answered, it is for Saul and for his blood house, because he slew the Gibeonites. Even after Saul’s death, his sins caused famine in the land of Israel for 3 consecutive years. To atone for his sins, king David handed over 7 sons of Saul to the Gibeonites for hanging, to comply with the Gibeonites demand so as to save the land of Israel from the famine plague of the sins of Saul.

The past “sins” of many Nigerians trouble Nigeria. If the large sums of money that were stolen or wasted by Nigerians were wisely invested in Qualitative and practical education, social securities, necessary infrastructures and establishing solid basis for manufacturing industries in Nigeria, Nigerians will not be in the mess of unemployment and social vices that they are in now. The Nigerian craze for money by wicked means may bring plagues on society that will make money fail. The Holy Bible in General 47 verses 13 – 15 stated, thus: “And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so

that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine.....and when money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan all the Egyptian came unto Joseph and said give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? For the money faileth!”

Sadly, many Nigerians are still bent on troubling their fathers land by violence, fraud, waste, armed robbery, hired assassinations, shedding innocent blood, cultism, e.t.c. thereby presenting a dangerous spiritual, social and business environment that discourage investment and obstruct progress. Furthermore, the Nigerian practice of the presidential system of government is bogus waste of resources.

Recently, the authors observed the lamentations of some graduates over the unemployment problem. That many graduates are depreciating on daily basis and that interviews in Nigeria are held as “window dressing” to deceive the public that vacant positions were advertised when infact those that need not attend the interview had be taken before the interview date. They further decried the government slogan of entrepreneurship and self-employment as unrealistic because majority of unemployed graduates have difficulties in getting start up funds for business. Infact, some cannot even afford a transport fare of ₦50

Conclusion

Job creation is much more than vocational or entrepreneurship education although these are vital components of job

creation process. The paper considers some issues for the Nigerian education in Job creation and sustenance and opines that these issues are not yet challenges because Nigeria has not shown serious commitment for solving them.

Recommendations

1. Nigerians must begin to see every job not only as a means of livelihood or profit making but also as an opportunity to contribute to the development of their country and impact positively on the lives of people.
2. Nigeria should desist from pride, oppression, corruption, shedding innocent blood, etc.
3. Government should provide enabling environment for good business good roads, regular electric power supply, security of lives and properties.
4. Government should ensure and be committed to providing sound practical vocational and qualitative education in Nigeria and encourage creativity and skill acquisition.
5. The issue of Nigerian Nationality is critical and should be addressed with seriousness with Government committing resources to demonstrating in practical terms her love for Nigerians.
6. Government should encourage manufacturing industries in Nigeria.
7. Curricular Intervention in schools as a means of solving

unemployment will be too sluggish unless accompanied by an aggressive social intervention to create more jobs.

8. Government should commit resources to practical better lives and enlightenment for families so as to redirect Nigerians to embrace good values.
9. Students who fail should not be promoted. Promoting students who fail do not allow them to discover their talent.
10. There should be adequate on the job training and refresher courses for workers.

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