

## **Unemployment and Security Challenges in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*Unemployment is one of the most serious problems facing Nigeria like many other countries in the world. However, there is also a growing level of security challenges facing the country, which calls for serious concern. The rising level of unemployment in the country can be attributed for the increase in security challenges in the country. Many school leavers and employable adults are unable to secure jobs and the government is unable to act fast enough in finding a solution to this problem. This paper argues that the high rate of unemployment in the country is directly responsible for the increasing security challenges in Nigeria. For sustainable development to be achieved, the government must urgently address the unemployment crisis facing the country so as to be able to adequately tackle its security challenges. The paper suggested various measures the Nigerian government can put in place to arrest this situation.*

### **Introduction**

Unemployment is a global phenomenon whereby eligible workforce of a nation is disengaged in the service of the nation. It is not only a serious economic issue but has social implications that affect almost all countries and all people either directly or indirectly. It causes social disquiet and is the harbinger of the spate of crimes, perennial youth unrest and unstable socio-economic structure that has bedeviled several nations. The state of unrests witnessed recently in the Middle East, North Africa and even the riots in the United Kingdom in 2011 as well as several others could be attributed to the increasing rate of unemployment in those nations. The world and most particularly developing nations like Nigeria are currently facing serious job challenge and widespread decent work deficits, a development that is capable of increasing the spread of poverty.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), over 900 million persons are living below the \$2 a day poverty line. It is estimated that 456 million workers around the world are living in extreme poverty (below \$1.25 a day). The ILO further stated in its report on "Global Employment Trends 2012" that the situation would worsen in Africa and parts of Asia unless governments at all levels unite against the "global threat". It noted that 400 million new jobs would be needed over the next decade to avoid a further increase in unemployment, adding that it was high time politicians invested more in productive job creation rather than continuing with excessive recurrent expenditures. The intensity of unemployment within the global economy can be seen from the fact that unemployment rate is steadily increasing each year. According to Nigeria's 2011 Annual Socio-Economic Report of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the unemployment rate of the United States of America (USA) for example has increased from 5 per cent in 2007 to 9 per cent in 2011. Spain has increased from 8.6 per cent to 21.52 per cent United Kingdom (UK) from 5.3 to 8.1 per cent, Ireland currently stands at 14.3 per cent from 4.8 per cent, Latvia from 5.4 per cent to 16.5 per cent, Greece from 8.07 per cent to 18.4 per cent and Italy from 6.7 per cent to 8.3 per cent.

The average for the Euro area is 10.7 per cent. Even within the African continent, unemployment has risen with South Africa, Africa's largest economy having a higher rate than Nigeria at 25 per cent, Angola at 25 per cent, Botswana at 17.5 per cent, Egypt at 11.8 per cent, Kenya at 11.7 per cent and Namibia at 51 per cent. Nigeria's rate increased to 23.9 per cent in 2011 compared to 21.1 per cent in 2010 and 19.7 per cent in 2009. Such high unemployment situations lead to serious security problems for the respective nations. Hence, one of the factors adduced for the increasing security challenges in Nigeria is unemployment.

The rapid rise in the country's unemployment rate has become a major source of concern. Several school leavers and employable adults are either finding it difficult to secure employment or are laid off work for one reason or the other. It is no longer about going to school and graduating or learning a trade, but about how to face the reality of graduating and joining the brigade of the unemployed with little hope of what the future holds. Unlike what obtains in most developed countries, in Nigeria, there is no social security system in place to cater for the unemployed. Thus, as the unemployed do not receive unemployment benefits from the government, most, if not all, are unable to fend for themselves. Many have thus resorted to engaging in activities that constitute security challenges to Nigeria.

Broadly, the objective of this study is to examine the link between unemployment and security challenges in Nigeria. It examines unemployment as a major cause of the increasing security challenges in the country. The study argues that the government needs to urgently address the unemployment crisis facing the country in order to tackle the issue of security challenges in the country.

### **Explaining Unemployment**

Before proceeding further, there is a need to have a clear understanding of the concept of unemployment. Unemployment is a very complex phenomenon for which there is no standard definition. Instead various countries adopt definitions that suit their local priorities. In broad terms, the term unemployment denotes a condition of joblessness or lack of employment. In other words, anyone who is fit and available to work but fails to get one may be considered as being unemployed for the concerned period.

In computing the country's unemployment rate, Nigeria employs the ILO definition of unemployment. According to the ILO,

the unemployed population is made up of persons above a specified age who are available to, but did not, furnish the supply of labour for the production of goods and services. When measured for a short reference period, it relates to all persons not in employment who would have accepted a suitable job or started an enterprise during the reference period if the opportunity arose, and who had actively looked for ways to obtain a job or start an enterprise in the near past.

The ILO approach to defining unemployment rests on what can be termed the 'labour force framework', which at any point in time classifies the working age population into three mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories according to a specific set of rules. The categories are: the employed, unemployed, and out of the labour force - where the former two categories constitute the labour force, i.e., essentially a measure of the supply of labour at any given time. Although the definition of unemployment has since 1954 been periodically revised, its basic criteria remains intact. Accordingly, a person is to be considered unemployed if he/she during the reference period simultaneously satisfies being:

- a) 'without work', i.e., were not in paid employment or self-employment as specified by the international definition
- b) 'currently available for work', i.e., were available for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and
- c) 'seeking work', i.e., had taken specific steps in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment.

The 'without work' condition serves to distinguish between the employed and the unemployed, and thus guarantees that these are mutually exclusive categories of the working age population, whereas the latter two criteria separate the non-employed into the unemployed and the out of labour force. The purpose of the availability for work condition is to exclude those individuals who are seeking work to start at a later date, and thus is a test of current readiness. The intention of the seeking work criterion is, on the other hand, to ensure that a person will have taken certain 'active' steps to be classified as unemployed. Unemployment is therefore an economic condition where an individual or individuals seeking jobs cannot manage to get themselves economically employed. The level of unemployment differs with economic conditions and other market forces.

## **Types of Unemployment**

Several scholars, including Fajana (2000) and Alao (2005), identify the following types of unemployment, which are also experienced in Nigeria:

(a) **Structural Unemployment:** Structural unemployment occurs when there is a change in the structure of an industry or the economic activities of the country. This may be because people's tastes have changed or it may be because technology has outmoded and the product or service is no longer in demand. It is mostly to be found in the developing countries of Asia and Africa. This type of unemployment is due to the deficiency of capital resources in relation to their demand. It occurs when there is a mismatch of skilled workers and occupational vacancies in the labor market. Some of the causes of the structural unemployment are geographical immobility (difficulty in moving to a new work location), occupational immobility (difficulty in learning a new skill) and technological change (introduction of new techniques and technologies that need less labor force).

(b) **Frictional Unemployment:** Frictional Unemployment is a temporary condition. This unemployment occurs when an individual is out of his current job and looking for another job. The time period of shifting between two jobs is known as frictional unemployment. It may also be caused by industrial friction in which jobs may exist, yet the workers may be unable to fill them either because they do not possess the necessary skill, or because they are not aware of the existence of such jobs. The employable may remain unemployed on account of shortage of raw materials, or break down of machinery. Therefore, the better the economy is doing, the lower this type of unemployment is likely to occur.

(c) **Seasonal Unemployment:** Seasonal Unemployment is due to seasonal variations in the activities of particular industries caused by climatic changes, changes in fashions or by the inherent nature of such industries. In the tropical region, ice factories are less active in rainy season because demand for ice is low. Thus, seasonal oriented industries are bound to give rise to seasonal unemployment. The industries that are affected by seasonal unemployment include hospitality and tourism industries and also the fruit picking and catering industries.

(d) **Cyclical Unemployment:** Cyclic unemployment, also known as Keynesian unemployment, occurs when there is an economic recession. When there is a downturn in an economy, the aggregate demand for goods and services decreases and demand for labor decreases. At the time of recession, unskilled and surplus laborers become unemployed. In essence, during the times of depression, business activity is at low ebb and unemployment increases. Some people are thrown out of employment altogether and others are only partially employed. This type of unemployment is due to the fact that the total effective demand of the community is not sufficient to absorb the entire goods that can be produced with the available stock of capital. When the businessmen cannot sell their goods and services, their profit expectations are not fulfilled. So the entrepreneurs reduce their output and some factors of production become unemployed.

(e) **Residual Unemployment:** Residual unemployment is caused by personal factors such as old age, physical or mental disability, poor work attitudes and inadequate training.

(f) **Voluntary Unemployment:** This is an unemployment that people face because they choose to be unemployed. This occurs usually when individuals are bent on getting particular types of jobs they consider more rewarding than the existing ones. They remain unemployed until they find what they consider lucrative jobs.

(g) **Disguised Unemployment:** Disguised unemployment or underemployment is a situation of a labor not having enough paid work or not doing work that makes full use of his skills and abilities. It can be measured by the number of hours worked per week. Generally, in Nigeria, the official period of working time per week is forty hours for which many workers fall short of due to non-availability of work. In some instances, available work is rationed (work sharing) especially among the low skilled workers and casual laborers even in the formal sector.

## **Causes of Unemployment in Nigeria**

Various studies on unemployment in Nigeria including Adebayo (1999), Alanana (2003), Echebiri (2005), Ayinde (2008), Morphy (2008), Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010), Njoku and Ihugba (2011) and Okafor (2011) have identified several causes of the high level of unemployment being experienced in the country. This is in spite of the massive oil wealth and Nigeria being the 6<sup>th</sup> largest producer of oil in the world.

Some of the fundamental factors that account for the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria include the following:

### **1. Low Economic Growth Rate**

The overall situation in the country in the 1980s, 1990s and even in this decade has been very hostile to economic growth and development. The high level of corruption, mismanagement of public funds, harsh economic policies and the insecurity of the Nigerian environment coupled with long – term despotic rule of the military among other factors have affected economic growth for a long time (Bello, 2003). In essence, low economic growth is manifested in low economic activity and investment rates, which do not generate enough additional employment. The combination of both low economic activity and high population growth results in a scarcity of jobs, meaning that hiring is based more on experience and education, the very assets young people are struggling to acquire.

### **2. Adoption of Untimely Economic Policy Measures**

Another crucial factor that has elicited unemployment problem is the type and timing of various economic policies adopted in the country. For instance, with the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in September 1986 that ushered in liberalization, deregulation and the devaluation program of the domestic currency, many of the teething domestic firms in the country collapsed. This resulted in the loss of many jobs and thereby rendering many people unemployed. The negative effects are still being felt in the country till today. Although, these policies were designed to jump start the growth of the economy, but given the structure of the Nigerian economy, some of the policy packages became out rightly inimical to the system due to wrong timing.

### **3. Wrong Impression About Technical And Vocational Studies**

The wrong impression of students about the place of technical and vocational education also accounts for the deteriorating state of unemployment in Nigeria. There is an enduring societal biased attitude against technical and vocational education. A large number of job seekers lack practical skills that could enhance self - employment. That is why rather than providing jobs for others, the graduate unemployed persons keep depending on the government and the non-vibrant private sector for job offers (Bello, 2003).

### **4. Neglect of the Agricultural Sector**

The agricultural sector has been the leading provider of employment in Nigeria especially in the sixties and in the seventies when the sector provided employment for more than 60 percent of the Nigerian population. However, unfortunately, in the wake of oil discovery, the attention on this anchor of the economy was gradually drawn away to the oil sector where employment capacity is very low. The resulting effect is the large number of job seekers who have no place in the oil industry. Even with the expansion of the industry, unemployment has continued to grow at an alarming rate.

### **5. Poor Enabling Environment**

The poor economic enabling environment that characterizes the economy over the years has continued to pose serious challenges to employment generation in Nigeria. This, coupled with poor security environment has continued to hamper investment drives and thereby reducing the prospects of employment generation. Many job seekers who would have embarked on self - employment programs are unable to do so because of the hostile production environment. Others who make attempt are forced to wind up due to absence of infrastructures and the overall heat of the investment environment.

### **6. Rural-Urban Migration**

The rapidly growing urban labor force arising from rural urban migration has been identified as a cause of unemployment. Rural-urban migration 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 (Okafor, 2011). 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 meant that the rural areas are neglected in the allocation of social and economic opportunities.

## **7. Rapid Population Growth**

The 2006 census in Nigeria puts Nigeria's population 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). Also, according to the NBS, the population of the country has risen to 164,385,656 in 2011. 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 labor force relative to the absorptive capacity of the economy (Okafor, 2011).

## **8. Education System**

The outdated school curricula and lack of employable skills of many school leavers have also been adduced for the high level of unemployment in the country. It has been argued that the average Nigerian graduate does not possess the skills needed by the employers of labor for a formal employment and could therefore be said to be unemployable. According to Dabalén, Oni and Adekola (2000),

Employers complain that graduates are poorly prepared for work. They believe that academic standards have fallen considerably over the past decade and that a university degree is no longer a guarantee of communication skills or technical competence. As a result, university graduates are commonly viewed as "half baked."

Often, this problem is attributed to the country's education system, with its liberal-arts bias (Gbosi, 2005). Every year, the country's higher educational institutions turn out thousands of liberal arts graduates who are not in higher demand in the labour market. Additionally, 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.

## **9. Rapid Expansion of the Education System**

There is a rapid expansion of the educational system which leads to increase in the supply of educated manpower above the corresponding demand for them. This contributes to the problem of the youth unemployment in Nigeria. According to the NBS (2011), over 1.37 million students were enrolled in universities, polytechnics and colleges of education in 2006 and another 1.98 million in 2007 (See Table 4). Given that most courses are completed in four or five years, many of these 3.2 million students that enrolled in 2006 and 2007 entered the labor force in 2010/2011. These do not include the number of Nigerians of working age that dropped out at secondary school level for various reasons and entered the job market in the rural and urban areas out of the 21 million that were enrolled in 2006 and 2007.

## **10. Gradual Collapse of Manufacturing Sector**

There is no vibrant manufacturing sector which has the capacity to absorb unemployed youths in Nigeria. There are over 800 collapsed industries in Nigeria and over 37 factories closed shops in 2009. About half of the remaining operating firms have been classified as "ailing," a situation that poses a great threat to the survival of manufacturing in the country in the next few years. According to a survey carried out as part of its membership operational audit in January 2010 by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), the 834 figure represents the cumulative aggregate of firms that have shut down their operations in 2009 across the country. The MAN survey usually covers five manufacturing enclaves, into which the country is divided, in terms of manufacturing activities. These include the Lagos, northern, southeast, south-south and southwest areas. The report of the survey showed that in 2009, a total number of 176 firms became terminally sick and collapsed in the northern area. In the southeast area, a total number of 178 companies were shut down during the period. While in the south-south area, 46 companies shut down operations before December 2009. According to the survey, the southwest area, lost 225 companies during the year. It said that the Lagos area, followed closely with 214 manufacturing firms closing shop before the end of 2009 (Okafor, 2011).

### ***Magnitude of Unemployment in Nigeria***

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2011), the Nigerian Labour Force is made up of all persons aged 15 – 64 years excluding students, homekeepers, retired persons and stay-at-home parents, and persons unable to work or not interested in work.

The labor force of a country as defined by NBS is a set of people or citizens of a country who are willing and are able to make available at any given point in time their efforts for gainful employment. Unemployment Rate is defined as the proportion of the Labour Force who was available for work but did not work in the week proceeding the survey period for at least 40 hours.

According to Oyebade (2003), Nigeria's unemployment can be grouped into two categories:

- (1) The older unemployed who lost their jobs through retrenchment, redundancy or bankruptcy.
- (2) The younger unemployed, most of who have never tasted what it is to be employed

In the light of this, according to statistics from the NBS, Nigeria's overall unemployment rate amounted to 23.9 per cent of total Labour Force in March 2011, indicating a sharp increase from 14.9 per cent in March 2008 to 19.7 per cent in March 2009 and 23.9 per cent in 2011 (See Table 1). When disaggregated by sector, 17.1 per cent of these are in the Urban areas, while 25.6 per cent are from Rural areas. The surveys also shows that persons aged 0-14 years constituted 39.6 per cent, those aged 15-64 (the economically active population) constituted 56.3 per cent, while those aged 65 years and above constituted 4.2 per cent. According to the NBS, the Labour Force in 2011 stood at 67,256,090, of that 51,181,884 are employed while the unemployed are 16,074,205. This provides a large reservoir of potential recruits by terrorists or criminal gangs for various criminal activities.

Although, it is possible that the figures released by the National Bureau of Statistics may not have captured the total picture of the unemployed in Nigeria, but it is obvious that unemployment rate has reached a very alarming proportion in Nigeria. What is more alarming is that a greater number of the unemployed are secondary school leavers and university graduates (See Table 3). The situation has recently been compounded by the increasing unemployment of professionals such as bankers who were disengaged as a result of the bank consolidation exercise by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Also, gender wise, unemployment rates were higher for females than their male counterparts.

**Table 1: National Unemployment Rates (2000 - 2011)**

Year	Rates
2000	13.1
2001	13.6
2002	12.6
2003	14.8
2004	13.4
2005	11.9
2006	12.3
2007	12.7
2008	14.9
2009	19.7
2010	21.1
2011	23.9

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2011)

**Table 2: Overview of Employment Situation in Nigeria (2006-2011)**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Nigeria Population</b>	140,431,790	144,925,607	149,563,227	154,349,250	159,288,426	164,385,656
<b>Economically Active</b>	78,922,666	81,448,191	84,054,533	86,744,278	89,520,095	92,384,738
<b>Labour Force</b>	57,455,701	59,294,283	61,191,700	63,149,835	65,170,629	67,256,090
<b>Employed</b>	50,388,650	51,763,909	52,074,137	50,709,317	51,224,115	51,181,884
<b>Unemployed</b>	7,067,051	7,530,374	9,117,563	12,440,517	13,946,515	16,074,205
<b>Newly Unemployed</b>		463,323	1,587,189	3,322,954	1,505,997	2,127,691

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2011)

**Table 3: Unemployment Rate by Educational Level, Age, Sex and**

<b>Age-group, Sex and Sector (2011)</b>			
<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Composite</b>
Never Attended	19.0	22.8	22.4
Primary School	15.5	22.7	21.5
Modern School	14.5	27.5	24.3
VOC/COMM	34.5	27.0	28.7
JSS	16.6	36.9	33.4
SSS 'O LEVEL'	13.9	22.5	20.1
A LEVEL	34.1	29.7	31.0
NCE/OND/NURSING	17.2	22.5	20.2
BA/BSC/HND	16.8	23.8	20.2
TECH/PROF	5.0	27.9	20.6
MASTERS	3.2	8.3	5.1
DOCTORATE	11.1	7.7	9.1
OTHERS	31.3	36.1	35.5
<b>Age Group</b>			
15-24	33.5	38.2	37.7
25-44	16.3	24.1	22.4
45-59	12.5	19.6	18.0
60-64	17.8	22.1	21.4
<b>Sex</b>			
MALE	16.9	25.1	23.5
FEMALE	17.2	26.1	24.3
<b>National</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>23.9</b>

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, General Household Survey (2011)

**Table 4: Enrolment Rate, 2006-2011**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
All Universities	765,522	1,401,888	661,493	577,029	605,068
Federal Universities	464,025	61,0072	433,950	340,524	339,364
State Universities	277,043	448,618	187,279	191,565	218,861
Private Universities	24,454	37,369	39,264	44,940	46,843
Colleges of Education	290,318	305,829	315,426	346,006	-
Polytechnics	303,190	258,877	233,045	222,273	229,862
Monotechnics	19,623	16,789	14,690	17,321	13,239
All Primary Schools	22,861,884	21,632,070	21,294,517	20,080,976	20,663,805
Public Primary Schools	21,717,789	2,0469,395	18,980,395	18,818,544	19,042,167
Private Primary Schools	1,144,095	1,162,675	1,011,914	1,262,432	1,621,638
Secondary Schools	5,637,783	6,009,869	-	-	-
Public Secondary Schools	5,013,531	5,067,787	-	-	-
Private Secondary Schools	624,252	880,194	-	-	-
Nomadic	408,705	432,411	415,426	483,557	484,694

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2011)

### Nigeria's Security Challenges

In recent times, Nigeria has been facing several security challenges. These include rise in armed robbery, kidnapping, insurgency by the Niger Delta militants, ethnic conflicts, and recently, activities of the Boko Haram sect. Hundreds of Nigerians and some foreigners resident in the country have been killed as a result of one violent crime or the other, while property worth millions of naira has also been lost to insecurity in the country. Fundamentally, no one and place is considered totally safe within the country. While those in the southern parts of the country grapple with kidnapping and other violent crimes, Nigerians in the North live in utter terror not knowing where and when the next set of bombs will explode. The country's security challenge took a terrorism dimension with the 1 October 2010 bombing near the Eagle Square in Abuja, venue of the country's 50<sup>th</sup> independence celebration. Since then, series of bomb attacks have occurred in several parts of the country including Suleja in Niger state, Jos, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Bauchi and Kano.

The country has also witnessed several ethnic and religious crises which appear to be escalating at an intolerable scale. These crises and criminal activities individually and collectively create insecurity and breach of the peace that are likely to or indeed affect legitimate social and economic activities in the country (Abubakar, 2005). These security challenges have the very damaging consequence of giving the signal to the rest of the international community that Nigeria is not a safe and secure place and as such not suitable for economic investment and activities. This is particularly important in view of the efforts being made to create the desired atmosphere to attract foreign investment. Insecurity is a risk factor which investors all over the world dread, as security uncertainty is not only considered a bad omen for business, it sends warning signals to investors to take their investible fund to another country where there is adequate or a semblance of security.

Also, the general state of insecurity in the country is sending a wrong signal to the international community about traveling to Nigeria. Many international agencies and countries have intensified their warning to their citizens of the risks involved in traveling and doing business in some parts of the country. For instance, in a release dated 12 January 2012, the U.S. Department of State (Bureau of Consular Affairs) warned its citizens of the avoidable risk involved in traveling to some parts of Nigeria. The Travel Warning reads:

The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the risks of travel to Nigeria, and continues to recommend U.S. citizens avoid all but essential travel to the Niger Delta states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers; the Southeastern states of Abia, Edo, Imo; the city of Jos in Plateau State, Bauchi and Borno States in the northeast; and the Gulf of Guinea because of the risks of kidnapping, robbery, and other armed attacks in these areas. Violent crime committed by individuals and gangs, as well as by persons wearing police and military uniforms, remains a problem throughout the country. This Travel Warning replaces the Travel Warning for Nigeria dated October 13, 2011.

Also, according to the release, in 2011, there were five reported kidnappings of U.S. citizens in Nigeria. The most recent occurred in November when two U.S. citizens, along with a Mexican national, were taken hostage in international waters off the Nigerian coast and held captive for over two weeks in the Niger Delta. Others have occurred in Lagos and Imo States. Also, a British and an Italian national were kidnapped in Kebbi state in May 2011. Since January 2009, over 140 foreign nationals have been kidnapped in Nigeria, including seven U.S. citizens since November 2010. Six foreign nationals were killed during these abductions, while two U.S. citizens were also killed in separate kidnapping attempts in Port Harcourt in April 2010. Local authorities and expatriate businesses operating in Nigeria assert that the number of kidnapping incidents throughout Nigeria remains underreported. Though the security services are under intense pressure to address the security challenges, the problems can be overwhelming due to the high level of unemployment.

### **Nexus between Unemployment and Security Challenges in Nigeria**

From the picture of the high level of unemployment in Nigeria painted above, it is easy to see how this population of unemployed persons can serve as security threat to the country. The various security challenges been faced by the country have been attributed to unemployment in many cases. According to the popular maxim, "The idle hand is the devil's workshop"; the situation whereby majority of the people are poor and hungry and a lot of youths are jobless and unemployed, will, doubtlessly, engender high insecurity in the country. It is now the norm to see thousands of the unemployed turn up in response to advertisement for jobs where only a handful is to be employed. The country is faced with a gross abuse and under utilization of human resources with direct impact on national productivity and competitiveness.

Thus, unemployment has driven many Nigerians into various activities that constitute a threat to the country's security. There have been instances in which young graduates were arrested for being involved in one form of crime or another. Most of these criminal graduates attribute their involvement in these crimes to the unemployment situation in the country. For instance, the cover story of The News Magazine (26 September 2011) was captioned "*Graduate* Bandits on the Prowl". According to the report, most of the graduate robbers that were interviewed argued that they took to crime for want of job.

Furthermore, due to collapse of infrastructures including electricity supply and good road network that is supposed to be taken care of by the government, small and medium scale businesses, which provide employment opportunities for jobless people, are fast eroding. Many artisans such as furniture makers, welders, aluminum window fitters, tailors and so on who cannot afford power generators are today out of work. In desperation, a large chunk of Nigerian youths have taken to riding commercial motorcycles, while others are into street hawking just to keep body and soul together (See for instance, The News Magazine (28 March 2011) captioned "*Graduate* Okada Riders: The Wasted Generation"). The unlucky ones like the late Mohammed Bouazizi of Tunisia get their wares seized for violating anti-hawking regulations. The entire world is familiar with what happened thereafter as so many countries are yet to know peace, especially with globalization playing its own part to ensure the spread across national boundaries. Also, recently, as a result of banking reforms witnessed in the country, the banking industry which is one of the highest employers of labour is forced to downsize its workforce, thereby increasing the number of the unemployed. This has not stopped as the recent acquisition of Intercontinental Bank by Access Bank and Oceanic Bank has led to more bankers being laid off.

Furthermore, companies and industries like textile industries, steel companies, and the Nigerian Railways are folding up. Private firms that provide employment opportunities for Nigerians are gradually shifting base to other West African countries like Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and South Africa. Many manufacturers are experiencing low turnovers in their businesses as they have to contend with incessant power failure, thus having to rely on generating sets which have to be fueled at exorbitant cost.

As a result, many indigenous workers are retrenched by most of these companies when they migrate to other countries. Some of those who are privileged to remain in employment can hardly make ends meet as the entire monthly salary package may not last half of the month due to increasing costs of housing, food and transportation.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Unemployment in Nigeria has become one of the most critical problems the country is facing. Years of corruption, civil war, military rule, and mismanagement have hindered the economic growth of the country. Despite being endowed with diverse and infinite resources, both human and material, years of negligence and adverse policies have led to the under-utilization of these resources. These resources have not been effectively utilized in order to yield maximum economic benefits. There is, thus, an urgent need for arresting the high level of unemployment in the country in order to address the security challenges the country is facing. Let us examine some of the ways by which this can be achieved.

#### **A. Enabling Environment**

There is a need for the provision of enabling environment for businesses to thrive in the country. Currently, the business climate in Nigeria is too harsh. The most debilitating is the lack of basic infrastructure. The epileptic power situation in the country has forced many companies to either shut down or move their production plants to smaller neighbouring countries where power is available and stable. If the issue of power supply is solved, there is assurance that the manufacturing sector will be resuscitated. These will lead to the flourishing of small and medium scale enterprises, translating into the creation of more jobs.

#### **B. Diversification of the Economy**

There is a need for the diversification of the country's economy. Nigeria is over-dependent on oil, which is subjected to global oil price fluctuation. Apart from the fact that the country has so many other mineral resources yet to be explored, the country should venture into other sectors like agriculture, tourism and entertainment. It is noteworthy that revolutions in the ICT sector especially regarding mobile communications, created a lot of jobs in Nigeria. Other sectors of the economy can do same.

#### **C. Bail Out Fund**

The Nigerian government should set up a fund for rescuing industries that are at the verge of bankruptcy like is being done in most developed countries. If money is injected into ailing industries, they will be able to resuscitate, reducing the rate of downsizing and retrenchment.

#### **D. Job Creation**

Government at all levels in the country could create more employment opportunities to address the unemployment problem. Although some states have some job employment projects, they are still a far cry from solving the crisis at hand. For instance, recently, the Oyo State Government created 20,000 jobs through its YES-O Scheme launched on December 1, 2011. Though this is small, other states could take similar steps to improve on this. Also, the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWin) project launched by President Goodluck Jonathan in 2011, which is aimed at employing about 370,000 youth, though laudable, is not enough. The private sector and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to create more jobs to accommodate the unemployed in the country.

#### **E. Emphasis on Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurial Education**

There is a need to place more emphasis on technical as well as vocational education in the country. This will enable more and more people to acquire practical skills that will help them to be self-employed and not to continue to seek white-collar jobs. Courses tailored along these lines could be introduced into the curricular of schools to encourage the students to learn how they can use these skills to better their lots as well as for them to become employers of labour.

### **Conclusion**

Ensuring the wellbeing of the citizens and residents of a country still remains the most important responsibility of government. Thus, safe guarding the lives and property of Nigerians as well as the provision of enabling environment for job provision are very essential. In fact, once security is not guaranteed in any nation, its economic development will be gravely affected since no investor invests in an environment of crisis.

More so, the citizens can only exert their best potentials in the right peaceful environment. The insecurity in Nigeria has taken a dangerous dimension which if not tackled will frustrate all developmental efforts of the government. There is, therefore, a need for urgent measures to be put in place to address the problem of unemployment and security challenges the country is facing, considering the country's position on the continent and in the international community. Nigeria is ranked the 6<sup>th</sup> largest oil producer in the world. Yet, the country's unemployment rate is one of the highest in the world. Nigeria needs to adopt a skill-oriented education principle to train skilled technical manpower, to build and maintain its critical infrastructure to drive the economy and also, to create employment. There is also a need to promote sound morals and ethical values in the country. There is a need to inculcate discipline in Nigerians, especially the youth, in order to ensure that they do not get drawn into criminal activities all because they are unemployed or out of work for one reason or the other. Although, this may be meaningless if the country's leaders do not lead by example.

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