

Impact of the Programmes of the National Directorate of Employment on Graduate Employment and Unemployment in Kaduna State of Nigeria

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Abstract: The seriousness and gravity of the issue of graduate employment in Nigeria informed this study which was to appraise the impact of the activities of the National Directorate of Employment on graduate employment and job creation in Kaduna State. The study was aimed at determining the various programmes of the directorate and assessing the level of its success with respect to graduate employment creation in Kaduna State. Secondary data were collected as well as oral interview of personnel in the course of the study. It was found that the impact of the NDE on graduate employment in Kaduna State has not been particularly positive and much still needs to be done. Only modest achievement in the area of generation of graduate employment has so far been recorded. A thorough re-appraisal of its programme in order to overhaul the system is desirable.

Key words: Gravity, graduate, employment, data, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The Kuru Declaration of 2001 indicated the vision for Nigeria as: to build a truly great African democratic country, politically united, integrated and stable, economically prosperous, socially organized with equal opportunity for all and responsibility from all, to become the catalyst of (African) Renaissance and making adequate all-embracing contributions, sub-regionally, regionally and globally.

The task of achieving an economically prosperous country is a process which can only be achieved as part of the developmental process. Hence, Seers (1969) in his explanation of what constitutes development wrote that: the questions to ask about a country's development are therefore what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment and what has been happening to inequality? If all these three have declined from high levels to low levels then without doubt, this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if the entire three have then it would be inappropriate to call the result development, even if per capital income has doubled.

National Bureau of Statistics (2006) reported that the demand for employment opportunities in the country is ever-increasing with demand clearly outstripping supply. Policies and programmes that help to increase employment opportunities will therefore, assist in alleviating poverty, since the issue of unemployment has

been linked directly to poverty. The importance of the issue of job creation in national development in Nigeria was underscored by the fact Achegbulu undertook an appraisal of enterprises and development programme of the National Directorate of Employment in one of the states of the country.

Statement of the problem: The average rates of unemployment in Nigeria for the 1960s and 1970s were about 2.0 and 4.5%, respectively (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Since, the early 1980s, unemployment in Nigeria has been one of the most menacing social and economic problems the country has had to contend with. For instance in 1985, the national unemployment rate was 8.5% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Hardly can one find a family (whether rural or urban) in which nobody is either unemployed or threatened by unemployment.

Unemployment is partly responsible for social ills such as armed robbery, destitution, prostitution and other social vices. The latest unemployment figure in Nigeria according to the National Bureau for Statistics is 13.2% which when translated into labour, means that >13 million able-bodied Nigerians are unemployed. The >70% of the unemployed persons were relatively unskilled primary and secondary school leavers between the ages of 13 and 25 years. Graduate unemployment which hitherto was unnoticed, emerged and began to grow very rapidly.

This situation was extremely disturbing for the government, considering its socio-political implications as well as the economic wastage that could result.

Consequently, in March 1986, the Federal Government of Nigeria constituted a committee to come up with a strategy for dealing with the problem of unemployment, most especially among the youths. The acceptance of that committee's report by the Federal Government led to the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment, an agency that was inaugurated on November 19, 1986 with the task of implementing the committee's recommendations by articulating programmes for combating mass unemployment in Nigeria.

The problem being investigated in this study is the effects which National Directorate of Employment has on graduate employment and unemployment in Kaduna State of Nigeria.

A number of specific questions arose from the problem under investigation here and these were considered in the study:

- What programmes does the NDE have in place for unemployed graduates?
- Have such programmes impacted rate of unemployment positively in Kaduna State?
- Has employment been generated through the NDE programmes in Kaduna State?
- Is such employment that is generated among graduates sustainable?

Hypotheses tested: In order to answer the research questions, the following hypotheses were tested in the course of the study: the establishment of NDE in Kaduna State has reduced graduate unemployment in the state.

NDE has generated jobs to increase graduate employment in Kaduna State. The jobs created by NDE for graduates in Kaduna State have been sustainable.

Aim of the study: The present study was aimed at examining what sort programmes the NDE has set up to combat unemployment in Kaduna State. It is also to examine what type of job creation programmes the NDE has for unemployed graduates as well as the mechanisms that have been put in place to ensure sustainability of the jobs created for graduates.

Justification for the study: At the 2008 convocation ceremony of the University of Maiduguri, its vice-chancellor in trying to highlight the problem of unemployment in Nigeria, stated that Nigeria then had about 90 universities including those approved and those yet to take-off. Together, they turn out thousands of graduates each year. Such graduates eventually go into the job market to seek for the non-existent jobs thereby compounding the unemployment situation with its attendant social challenges.

An attempt by government to combat unemployment in Nigeria was the establishment of the NDE. This study has been rationalized by the motivation to fill in the gap in knowledge as to the aims and objectives of the National Directorate of Employment.

This study is of the view that the colossal amount of money being spent by government to educate graduates could amount to a mere waste if they are unable to contribute to national economic development after graduation due to no fault of theirs. An assessment of the role of NDE in the amelioration of graduate unemployment ought to be quite significant.

The focus of development agencies is usually sustainable development, it should be a significant study to ascertain the sustainability of graduate employment generated by NDE.

Objectives of the study: The study was conducted to appraise the activities of the National Directorate of Employment in Kaduna State and assess the impact of those activities on the generation of graduate employment.

Scope and limitations of the study: The present study focused on the impact of National Directorate of Employment in Kaduna State. The areas of concentration were:

- The aims and objectives of the National Directorate of Employment
- Programmes designed by NDE to combat graduate unemployment in Kaduna State
- Job creation programmes embarked upon by NDE
- The mechanisms put in place by the NDE to ensure sustainability of employment generated for graduates

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Location of the study: The study was carried out in Kaduna State of Nigeria between 1987 and 2006.

Method of data collection: In order to obtain necessary data and information, the Directorate is operational documents such as the brochures, annual reports, handbook and other documentary sources were consulted so as to establish the purpose of the directorate, its activities and direction of its programmes. A total of ten staff of the NDE were interviewed and these were selected by means of a simple random sampling process.

Literature review: The dimension of employment problem in the third world countries according to Todaro (1982),

goes beyond the simple shortage of work opportunities or the under-utilization and low productivity of those who work long hours. It also includes the growing divergence between inflated attitudes and job expectations, especially among the educated youth and the actual job available in urban and rural areas. In particular, the growing aversion to manual and agricultural work fostered in urban and white-collar oriented educational systems created severe strains for poor nations attempting to accelerate development.

In Korafor and Iwuyi (1975)'s views, open unemployment exists when there are people who are able to work, wishing to work, dependent on work for a livelihood but unable to obtain suitable employment. They further stated that the earliest information regarding the level of unemployment in Nigeria is available from the 1963 population census which yielded a figure of 1.9% for the total labour force population. This figure should however be taken with some caution because of the high degree of unreliability attached to that census.

The labour sample survey that was conducted in 1966-1967 produced an estimated labour force of 23.8 million in 1966 while the estimates for 1970 and 1975 were 26.1 and 9.2 million, respectively. The estimated labour force in 1975 was put at 29.2 million persons while 27.9 million or 95.5% were gainfully employed, leaving some 1.3 million or 4.5% of the labour force unemployed.

According to Ajalayo official statistics put the unemployment rate between 10 and 12% but this refers only to open unemployment. Later on, Korafor and Iwuyi (1975) asserted that it therefore becomes not only necessary but also urgent that ways be found for tackling this problem with a view to substantially reducing it or if possible, completely eliminating it altogether.

Umoden (1992) stated that the Manpower Board projected that the country would be burdened by an unemployment rate of 18.9% by 1986 and out to the 48.24 million Nigerians who would be aged between 15 and 59 years by 1989, some 12.73 million of them would be parading the streets without jobs.

The Babangida administration responded to this gloomy prospect by establishing the NDE and charged it with the mandate to create job opportunities for the unemployed Nigerians, particularly by training youths to establish their own small-scale enterprises in the private sector.

One of the four key programmes of the directorate, according to Umoden (ibid) was set up to encourage graduates to develop entrepreneurship through self-employment and to generate employment for others. By the end of 1991, an estimated 240,000 trainees had passed through the scheme, 2,332 of them had been given a total

of 69 million ₦ to set-up small-scale industries and it was estimated that these pioneers had created >141,000 jobs nationwide.

The former Director-General of the Directorate as quoted in the Job Creator as saying that since the directorate's inception in 1987 it has created >2 million jobs for the unemployed youths and other jobless citizens nation-wide.

In view of the importance of the NDE as a vehicle for economic development through combating of unemployment in Nigeria, this study was carried out to assess its impact on graduate employment and unemployment.

This study is basically to ascertain the impact of NDE on graduate employment and unemployment, another theory was considered. That is the Functionalist theory. The basic assumption of functionalism is that a society is a whole made up of different interrelated parts which function to maintain the whole (Harambos and Holborn, 2004). The functionalists usually examine a part of society in terms of its contribution to the maintenance of the social system. Functionalism begins with the observation that behaviour in society is structured, i.e., relationships between the parts of society are organized according to rules which translate specifically into guidelines. The NDE was established by a Decree, it had specific established roles which it is expected to play according to the rules in the country.

Secondly, functionalist analysis turns to a consideration of how that structure functions. The NDE has various programmes which altogether form the whole. Thirdly, the function of the parts forms the effects which they have on the whole. The NDE is a part created to have an effect on the whole of society (system). Hence, this study was geared towards the effects which NDE has on graduate employment and unemployment in Kaduna State.

Historical background: The NDE was established by Act CAP 250 of the laws of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The act was published in the Federal Government (extraordinary) Gazette No. 61 of 20th October, 1989. This followed the Chuckwuma Committee Report, set up in 1985 by the Federal Government to design strategies to create mass employment opportunities. Based on the recommendations of the committee, the National Directorate of Employment was established in November 1986 and its job creation programmes were launched in January 1987.

Mandate: The law establishing the NDE presented its mandate as follows:

- To design and implement programmes to combat unemployment
- To articulate policies aimed at developing work programmes with labour-intensive potential
- To collect and maintain a data bank on employment and vacancies in the country with a view to acting as a clearing house to link job seekers with existing vacancies in collaboration with other government agencies
- To implement any other policies as may be laid down from time to time by the board established under Section 3 of its enabling act

The NDE therefore, derives its routine functions from this mandate. The main function is to combat mass unemployment through skills acquisition, self-employment and a labour-intensive work scheme. According to a report published by National Manpower Board, the Nigerian Educational System turns out an average of 3 million school leavers and graduates, annually whereas the labour market could barely absorb 10% of this output. This group constitutes the majority of the unemployed population and are the most vocal and volatile hence the skills acquisition and self-employment programmes of the NDE are targeted at them (NDE, 2005).

Areas of intervention: Based on the above mandate, the NDE intervenes directly in the following areas:

- Employment counseling services
- Skills acquisition and entrepreneurship development training
- Provision of transient jobs
- Enterprise creation to trained beneficiaries

The major programmes that exist in the directorate include the following:

- Vocational skills development programme under which there are schemes such as National Open Apprenticeship, School-on-wheels, Waste-to-Wealth, Resettlement and disabled persons scheme and so forth
- Small-scale enterprises programme: the graduate and matured people scheme, 1 million Jobs, Start Your Own Job, Women Training and so forth

- Rural Employment Promotion Programme: Graduate Agriculture Self-Employment Programme (NDE, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006a)
- Special public works programme

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presentation and analysis of data impact of NDE on graduate unemployment in Kaduna State: The schemes that are specifically targeted at graduates are: Graduate Job Creation Scheme, Start Your Own Business, Graduate Farmers Scheme, Graduate Special Works Department and Professional Pupilage Scheme.

Table 1 shows that a total of 4,816 graduates had been registered by the NDE in Kaduna State between 1987 and 2006. A total of 4,720, representing 98% had never worked while 52 (1.0%) were retired and 44 (0.9%) had been retrenched.

It could be seen from data available that the total of unemployed graduates registered in Kaduna State was 4816 while the total who benefited from the training schemes specifically meant for graduates was 1,993, representing some 41.4% which is a bit low, especially considering the fact the NDE had been in existence in Kaduna State since, 1987. This suggests that the impact of NDE on graduate unemployment is low. Hence, hypothesis one has been disproved.

In order to establish the reasons for the low registration of unemployed graduates in the state, efforts were made to interview graduates but without success. This was due to time and financial constraints as well as problem of logistics. As a result, only interviews of the staff of the Kaduna State Branch of the Directorate were conducted. Out of a total of 55 staff, comprising of 30 senior and 25 junior staff, a total sample of five in each category were interviewed. The simple random sampling method was planned to be used. However, coincidentally, only five in each category were accessible during the researcher's visit to the state headquarters of the Directorate in Kaduna.

The respondents in the sample were simply asked to give reasons for the low registration of unemployed graduates in the scheme. Reasons that were adduced include: lack of awareness of the directorate, inadequate transport and communication facilities to spread the information and non-challant attitude of graduates towards registration.

Table 1: Achievements of the various employment creation schemes of the National Directorate of Employment in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Schemes	Graduate Job Creation Scheme	Start Your Own Business	Farmers Graduate Scheme	Graduate Special Work Programme	Graduate Pupilage Scheme	Total
Number of beneficiaries	145	782	481	560	25	1993

NDE (2006b)

Out of the 10 respondents, 5 (50%) attributed the observed low registration to lack of information and awareness by graduates. A total of 3 (30%) indicated that graduates were not indifferent to NDE programmes while 1 (10%) stated that NDE did not possess the necessary transportation and communication facilities to move around to create the necessary awareness. The remaining one person (10%) was of the opinion that graduates simply refused to come forward for registration.

The constraints listed in the Directorate's Annual Reports which could account for the low registration were: lack of adequate means of transportation; non-functional radio message equipment, lack of newspapers, small radio, television sets to keep the branch abreast of current happenings; inadequate staff in the Information and Public Relations Unit of the Directorate.

Impact of NDE on graduate employment: Graduates who benefited from the training programmes under the different schemes were usually supposed to be placed on attachment. However, it was not in all cases that graduates training on the schemes had placement. For instance, it was observed from the 2006 Annual Report that out of the 117 registered graduates, only 75 of these were placed. In 2005 although, 20 graduates were selected but could not be placed as a result of counter directive from NDE headquarters (NDE, 2005). If the graduates succeeded in completing the training and the attachment, each of them was supposed to have to have been given a loan to start a business or to create a job, since self-employment was the essence of the various schemes.

Obtaining information on the actual number of graduate beneficiaries of the scheme loans was unsuccessful. A total of 5,800,000 Naira was reported to have been disbursed as at December 11, 2006 (NDE, 2006a). However, the actual amount given to each graduate beneficiary could not be ascertained. The Graduate Job Creation Scheme recorded a total of 35 created jobs by graduates from 1987 through 1989. A total of 560 graduates benefited from the Special Public Work Programme (NDE, 2006b). It is apparent from the statistics presented that employment generation by graduates is still at a very low level. However, hypothesis number two could be said to be confirmed because some level of job creation was achieved.

In the case of hypothesis number three, it could be said that it has been confirmed. This is because certain mechanisms to ensure sustainability of jobs created had been put in place. This could be seen in the continuous counseling services provided for the graduates before their training or re-training as the case may be, before their attachment and after the resettlement loans were given to

them. Such continuous counseling was to instill into the graduates the value of self-employment and job creation. This was focused on attitudinal change in the graduates. The loans given to them with a mandatory repayment period were also some of the mechanisms adopted to ensure that the jobs that are created must be sustained in order to have money for their upkeep as well as ensure their loan re-payment.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study that the impact of the NDE on graduate employment and unemployment in Kaduna State cannot be assumed to be particularly positive. A lot still needs to be done towards making the programme more successful. It is recommended that a re-appraisal of the entire programme be done for an overhaul of system in order to enhance the achievement of its laudable objectives.

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