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UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

Unemployment is a major factor responsible for poverty in the lives of Nigerians. When a person is unemployed he or she wouldn’t have a steady and reliable source of income, which makes it difficult for the person to carter for his or her personal needs such as food, shelter, clothing etc.

What is unemployment?

Unemployment is a term referring to individuals who are employable and seeking a job but are unable to find a job. It can also be defined as the level of joblessness in an economy that is often measured as a percentage of the work force. According to invest words, unemployment is a situation in the economy of a nation in which individuals looking for a job remain unemployed.

Nigeria, the giant of Africa is a big nation and ought to have a very strong economy capable of employing almost all employable citizens. But unfortunately, the employment rate is very alarming. Some of the causes are listed below:

1. **Lack of skills**: Most Nigerian youth especially undergraduates in the university have the belief that acquisition of skills is a waste of time and effort. They believe their certificate is enough to earn them a good source of income. With such mentality, these youth have grown into middle-age and even senior age without any skill thus becoming liabilities to themselves and others. On the other hand, a person who is full of skills would hardly suffer from unemployment. It is therefore advisable that graduates and even undergraduates should humble themselves and learn a skill like tailoring, baking, bead making etc. so that they would be able to fend for themselves when government jobs are not available.
2. **Corruption**: Corruption can be defined as immoral action which could involve bribery, embezzlement etc. Corruption is a cause of unemployment because those in government who are meant to use public money for building industries and infrastructures are busy embezzling the funds for their selfish interest. This has resulted in massive unemployment among the citizens of Nigeria. The corruption makes those in power to spend less on the welfare of the citizens of the country. In some government establishment, imaginary workers called ghost workers are usually added to pay rolls. At the end of the month, when it is time to pay up the salaries, some few corrupt bosses collect the salaries of these ghost workers without any work done. The result of all these immoral acts is increased unemployment for the masses.
3. **Negligence of agriculture and other natural resources**: Nigeria is blessed with many natural resources which are enough to engage every unemployed person. But the government has directed all attention to the oil industry. Thereby neglecting the importance of all these natural resources. In those days, Nigeria was known for the production of agricultural produce such as cocoa in the western part of Nigeria, groundnut in the northern part of Nigeria, coal from Udi in Enugu state while rubber and palm oil was produced in the mid-western part of Nigeria. All these natural resources contributed largely to the economy of the nation. It is therefore recommended that the government of Nigeria should establish mechanized farms in various part of the country to support many unemployed citizen.
4. **Rapid population growth:** Increasing population growth has created great number of job seekers, causing increase in the number of working class population. As a fact, the growth in population rate has caused high demand rate in labour market that result to higher growth rate of job seekers that are more than the jobs in supply at the market force.
5. **Bad electric power supply**: Lack of electric power supply is one of the causes of unemployment in this nation. Many foreign countries that would have invested in the country have changed direction to their neighbouring countries with good electric power supply. This bad electric supply has also affected many local companies which could not cope with the high cost of running generators all the time. It has also affected self-employed Nigerians like welders who require high electric current which only bigger generators or public powers can provide. This situation has made many unemployed as they could not afford bigger generators.

Unemployment has a serious implication on the effected people’s live patterns, mostly their social relationship with the society and equally those of their families who depend on them for survival. Below are the effects of unemployment on the country economy and on the society;

1. **Lower GDP for the economy**: When there is high rate of unemployment in a country, it shows that the economy of that country is operating below full capacity and is inefficient. The unemployed would not be able to purchase many goods, so this will contribute to lower spending and lower output. A rise in unemployment can cause a negative multiplier effect.
2. **Increase in social problems**: Due to unemployment, citizens especially the youths tend to engage themselves in criminal activities that can cause harm to people and properties. Examples of such activities are; internet fraud, arm robbery, vandalism etc. These leads to an increase in the crime rate of the country.
3. **Political instability**: High rate of unemployment leads to social unrest in a nation.
4. **High level of poverty**: Unemployment increases the rate of poverty as citizens would not be able to fend for their daily needs due to lack of a stable source of income.
5. **Increased rural-urban migration**: Unemployment has introduced massive movement from rural areas to urban areas, even outside the country, then causing pressure or over stretching available infrastructure facilities such as housing, road, transport, electricity etc.

Below are suggestions to solve unemployment problem in Nigeria;

**Change in the education system**: Schools and colleges should place more emphasis on vocational education. Government should invest on the education sector. Let education enable the youth to be self-reliance instead of job seekers through skills acquisition.

**High rate of capital formation**: The rate of capital formation should be increased. It should be particularly encouraged in such activities which generate greater employment opportunities.

**More assistance to self-employed people**: People who are self-employed should be giving more financial assistance and they can also be given raw materials needed for their job and technical training.

**Making agriculture more attractive**: This can be done by developing agriculture and those in it should earn more salaries and wages so other people can be attracted to it.

**Achieving industrialisation**: When more industries are created in Nigeria it would create many more job opportunities. Infrastructural building that will produce employment to thousands of people such as good roads, electricity, good power supply etc. should be embarked upon by the government,.

**Promotion of conducive atmosphere for investment**

In conclusion, the government of Nigeria should take the issue of unemployment as a serious national challenge that need urgent and determined attention. They should put more effort in ensuring that almost all university graduates have a good paying job and all those who are self-employed should receive assistance and encouragement from the government. Unemployment has shown a lot of social problem such as drug smuggling, internet fraud, money laundering etc. This is the reason the issue of unemployment must be addressed seriously to reduce the crime rate and make Nigeria a peaceful nation.