

# Managing Education towards Solving Youth Employment Problem in Nigeria

**Josephine Eleojo Haruna (Ph.D)**

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Federal University Lokoja.

**Ali Abubakar Kadiri (Ph.D)**

Department of Languages and Linguistics, Taraba State University Jalingo  
Taraba State

doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bje.2013/vol12n141422>

Published December 08, 2024

---

**Citation:** Haruna J.E. and Kadiri A.A. (2024) Managing Education towards Solving Youth Employment Problem in Nigeria, *British Journal of Education*, Vol.12, Issue 14,14-22

---

**Abstract:** *Education is an instrument for national development and social change. It is designed to prepare an individual to work and be useful to him/herself and the society. Unfortunately, there is a mismatch between the nature of education provided by Nigeria educational system and the industry. This paper examines the youth and employment crisis in Nigeria. It x-rays youth employment crisis, specifically exploring the causes and consequences. Solutions to the crisis are also proffered. It is believed that addressing youth employment crisis in Nigeria requires collaboration amongst all the stakeholders in education, captains of industry and the youths. It is recommended amongst others, that Nigeria education should be overhauled to become more practical and functional so as to equip her products with employability skills. Also, the school curriculum at all levels should be amended to reflect the needs of the contemporary society, so that the education acquired by the youths would keep them adequately engaged.*

**Keywords:** management, youth, employment, crisis, Nigeria.

---

## INTRODUCTION

Education is seen globally as a panacea for change and social development. One of the main purposes of education is to make the individual useful to himself / herself and the society. And one of the ways this can be achieved is through the individual's active participation in the world of work. Unfortunately, Nigeria educational system is saddled with a lot of challenges making it difficult for a large number of youths to be gainfully employed either in the public or private sector. Youth employment crisis is a global phenomenon affecting both the developed and the less developed countries. Alabi (2014) maintains that while the developed countries are taking serious steps to avert the threat and restructure their economies, Nigeria seems not to be doing

enough. Meanwhile, at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2012) Conference titled “The Youth Employment Crisis: Time for Action”, it was emphasized that the depth and breadth of the youth employment crisis have reached unprecedented proportions and therefore require urgent attention. Vremudia in Alabi (2014) confirms this assertion that globally, four out of every ten unemployed persons are young men or women.

No matter the form the definition of youth takes, it is an established fact that the youthful age is full of energy, strength and zeal. As Anasi in Oduwale (2015) observes, the youths are also said to be the most volatile and vulnerable part of the population in respect of social, economic, emotional and other aspects. So, the youths need to be engaged in one form of work or the other in order to take care of themselves, plan for their future and also contribute their quota to the development of their immediate environment and Nigeria.

Employment can be seen as the act of engaging someone or hiring a person to work. Someone can also be said to be employed if he or she establishes an outfit for himself. But anyone who is able and willing to work but cannot find a job is said to be unemployed. Youth unemployment according to the United Nations is the situation of young people between the age of 15-24 who are looking for job, but cannot find a job.

### **Youth Unemployment Rate in Nigeria between 2017-2021**

According to National Bureau of Statistics (2018), the youth unemployment rate in Nigeria between 2017-2021 are as follows: 2017- 25.2%, 2018-32.8%, 2019-36.5%,2020-40.8% and 2021- 53.4%.The unemployment rate shown in the figures above indicates a rise in the unemployment rate from 2017-2021. The highest rate is seen in 2021 with 53.4% increase. In short, youth unemployment is said to constitute 40% of total unemployment rate in Nigeria (Vanguard Newspaper, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2022).

Many authors have given numerous reasons for youth unemployment in Nigeria. This study will discuss extensively some of the causes of unemployment that invariably lead to youth employment crisis. They include:

**Population growth:** Nigeria has the largest population in Africa, thus, the name giant of Africa (**National Bureau of Statistics, 2022**). Nigerian population is growing at a rapid rate. And a projection of population growth envisaged that the proportion of the population of the youth to the overall population will continue to rise over the next 20 years. The United Nations projection is that it will reach about 401.31million by the end of year 2050.The growth rate also increases the ratio of workers to the total population. Uddie & Uddie in Duru & Anyanwu (2020) supported this projection when the authors stated that the labour force grew at a fast rate as a result of the high rate of population growth, which exceed the labour supply.

Many authors have given numerous reasons for youth unemployment in Nigeria. This study shall discuss extensively some of the causes of unemployment that invariably lead to youth employment crisis. They include:

**Population growth:** Nigeria has the largest population. Thus, the name Giant of Africa (**National Bureau of Statistics, 2022**). Nigeria population is growing at a rapid rate. And a projection of population growth envisaged that the proportion of the population of the youth to the overall population will continue to rise over the next 20 years. The United Nations projection is that it will reach about 401.31 million by the end of year 2050. The growth rate also increases the ratio of workers to the total population. Uddie & Uddie in Duru & Anyanwu (2020) supported this projection when the authors stated that the labour force grew at a fast rate as a result of the high rate of population growth, which exceeded the labour supply.

**Non - functional Education:** This point can be discussed from many perspectives. Firstly, the rapid growth in population has led to a high rise in school enrollment or number of intakes into all levels of education and also increases in the number of graduates from higher institutions yearly. Secondly, the available physical resources are overstressed and cannot meet up with the needs of the students and staff. Human resources are also inadequate and the ones available may not put in their best because of burn out, stress and inadequate motivation. The Government is not doing much to help the situation. For example, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria has been on strike since February 14, 2022. The non-teaching staffs - Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU) and Non Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASSU) and the National Association of Technologists (NAAT) have also been on strike since March, 2022 due to unfavourable work conditions and welfare issues. Anytime the strike is suspended or called off as the case may be, the students will be under pressure to cover the curriculum. How will one expect the students to graduate with much potential to secure a job under this condition? Thirdly, Makata (2015) observed that the educational curriculum is outdated and too theoretical. Thus, some average Nigerian graduates lack employable skills. Makata, stressed further that there is mismatch between the education acquired and the skills needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century work place. Therefore, access to employment opportunity is limited, hence employment crisis.

**Lack of entrepreneurship:** Agbeze (2012) observed that entrepreneurship activities and innovation have developed in the following areas in Nigeria: Agro allied industries, power and transport; information and communication technology, event management or hospitality and tourism, oil and gas, financial banking, insurance, waste management, engineering and fabricating, building and construction. Other viable entrepreneurial activities include the fashion industry, hair making bead making, make - up artistry, music and entertainment. These skills have made it possible for the youths to be gainfully employed. Unfortunately majority of the youths in Nigeria are still roaming the streets or involved in one vice or the other because they

neither have the necessary skills nor the access to credit facilities to acquire proper training. Even the few that are skilled have no patience to train properly before jumping out, thus, making them less productive and lacking the ability to satisfy and sustain their customers.

**Inadequate facilities:** The cost of undertaking business in Nigeria is very high due to lack of, or inadequate infrastructural facilities. For instance, power supply is epileptic or nonexistent in most parts of Nigeria. Most businesses resort to the use of power generating sets or solar system as source of energy. This brings additional costs to the business. Many investors that cannot cope close down their business or relocate to more business friendly countries. This results to laying off of workers who are majorly youth. Anyadike, Emeh&Okechukwu, (2012) observed that energy crisis has led to increased cost of doing business in Nigeria and the category of workers losing their jobs are youths.

**Rural urban migration:** This refers to the movement of capable men and women mainly the youths from the rural to the urban areas in search of greener pastures (job). Absence of infrastructural facilities and white collar job in the rural areas are some of the major causes of rural urban migration. Most rural areas are neglected in the provision of social amenities. Therefore, the urban area is congested and not able to meet up the employment demands of the youth, resulting in employment crisis. Ogheneruonah & Imutinyan (2019) observe that unemployment is on the increase because many young Nigerians relocate from the rural to urban areas.

**Negligence of the agricultural sector:** The neglect of most graduates of Agricultural Science in Nigeria by the stakeholders in the sector in engaging the graduates in the practice of their acquired knowledge and skills. This has made them to prefer working in other sectors rather than putting into practice the knowledge they have acquired from the universities. Some of them see farming as a sector meant for the poor. Giroh & Nachaniya (2022) view this from another dimension maintaining that the agricultural sector was neglected when the oil sector was discovered.

**Corruption:** This is the abuse of public power for private gain. It entails misappropriation of public funds, bribery or manipulation of laws / regulations for personal interest. It is any conscious attempt or deliberate diversion of resources from the satisfaction of the general interests to that of the selfish personal or particular interest ( Lawal and Tobi, 2006). It has affected negatively the quality of education at all levels of education in Nigeria. Its ills have affected all the stakeholders in the Nigerian educational sector. Corruption in education is often seen as the norm by most Nigerian youths who perceive examination malpractices as normal practice to obtaining certificate from both public and private schools in Nigeria. This has impeded the role of education in supporting their personal development and building the required

skills for workforce in the society, hence, the lingering unemployment crisis among the Nigeria youths.

**Poor Communication skills:** Communication skills depend largely on basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. There are observations that most graduates of Nigeria's higher institutions in English are unemployable because they do not have good communication and other employable skills.

### **Consequences of Youth Unemployment**

The youths are the engine room of the work force and the future of Nigeria. If the energy, skills and aspirations of the youth are not fully utilised, then the following consequences will occur:

**Terrorism:** This refers to the use of violence which causes fear, destruction or even death. An idle mind is said to be the devil's workshop. Due to unemployment, many youths are readily available to be used as tools to cause mayhem in the society. Many youths become agents for terrorism. In recent times, politicians have used some youths as thugs against their political opponents. Oduwale (2015) noted that youths are involved in socio-political, cultural, religious, ethnic distrust and poor governance crisis. Akinyemi (2012) also maintained that graduate unemployment tends to make the unemployed youth anxious, depressed and unhappy compared to those who have jobs. Akinyemi stressed that a desperate person is a dangerous person. Thus, many youths are into criminality and terrorize the populace. The criminal acts include cultism, drug abuse, armed robbery, political thuggery, banditry, amongst others. It is a noted fact that insecurity is exemplified by various terrorist attacks currently experienced in almost all parts of Nigeria. Youths are used as suicide bombers by Boko Haram, herdsmen and farmers clashes; communal clashes are perpetrated by the youths. Anyanwu & Duru (2020) added that unemployment is a platform for the breeding social problems, frustration, dissatisfaction, embarrassment, sadness and unfriendliness. In short, unemployment makes the youths to become vulnerable to all kinds of crime.

**Brain drain:** This is another consequence of youth employment crisis. Many qualified youths have moved out of Nigeria to other parts of the world in search of greener pastures. Recently, it was recorded that many medical doctors relocated abroad for better jobs opportunities. Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria stated that over 100 medical consultants left Nigeria recently for other countries. In another development, daily trust (2022) reported that Nigeria lost over 9000 doctors in two years. Kaigama (2022) also observed that youths are forced by harsh and cruel realities in the country to lose hope. Some youths have relocated to other countries. Kaigama reiterated that the youths are frustrated, by serious unemployment and security problems and many of the best brains have migrated. This is not good for the development of Nigeria because the brains that are supposed to contribute positively to the growth and development of the country move to other countries.

**Human trafficking:** This is another dimension of the consequences of youth employment crisis. Some young girls are kidnapped or deceived and lured into traveling with their human traffickers to an unknown destination. In most cases, the girls are raped, killed and their body parts sold, while others are put in brothels, clubs among others and used as sex slaves.

**Rising crime rate:** High crime rate in Nigeria is another consequence of youth unemployment. Almost every part of Nigeria is bedeviled with one form of crime or the other. When travelling by road, rail or even by air, one is exposed to all kinds of hazards. Abuja Kaduna train was attacked in Katari, Kaduna in March, 2022. Some passengers died while others were kidnapped. The media is filled with all kinds of bad news on a daily basis. Most of the perpetrators of this crime are the youth.

**Youth restiveness:** Employment crisis can also manifest in the form of restiveness. This is experienced in different forms. At every slight provocation, youths take to the streets. For example, the END SAR\$ protest and its effects are still fresh in the memory of Nigerians. If the youths are engaged in productive activities, clashes will be minimal.

### **Ways of Curbing Youth Employment Crisis**

Considering the importance of harnessing the potentials of the unemployed youths for the development of Nigeria, FMOYD in Anyanwu & Duru (2020) made the following observation: The energy, skills and aspirations of young people are invaluable assets that no country can afford to squander, and helping them to realize their full potential by gaining access to employment is no doubt a precondition to poverty eradication, sustainable development and lasting peace. Rather than seeing unemployed young people as a burden to society, the creation of a youth job template offers the Government a unique opportunity to focus on employment and job creation for young people in the country (FMOYD 2009:vi in Anyanwu & Duru, 2020).

Nigeria education should be overhauled to make it more functional and practical- oriented. School curriculum at all levels should be amended to reflect the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This will equip the youths with employable skills thereby solving the problem of the mismatch between education and the skills needed by the industry and other employers of labour. Education has a vital role to play in eradicating youth employment crisis. Therefore, there should be collaboration between all the stakeholders in education to revamp the educational system, to make it viable. Efforts must be made to reach an agreement with ASUU, SANU, NASU, NATT and other unions to ensure a smooth running of the higher educational institutions. If this is done, the staff will put in their best; the students will graduate as at when due with employable skills and may be gainfully employed.

In addition, training the trainers' seminar or workshop should be organized at intervals. This will keep the academic and non-academic staff abreast of the innovation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and they

will also improve in their service delivery to the youths. Haruna (2023) stress that training the trainers provides opportunity to gain more knowledge and job related skills. With this, both the academic and non academic will be able to manage the youths that they are training.

Furthermore, entrepreneurial skills should be embedded into the curriculum at every level of education so that the youths will be conversant with at least one skill before graduating from the school. It is a fact that many Universities in Nigeria have introduced entrepreneurial ship courses as Core courses for all the students. But the extent to which the students have access to the practical skills is minimal. Many Directorates of Entrepreneurial ships lack facilities. And where the facilities are available, there will be inadequate personnel.

Inadequate finance is one of the major challenges been faced by the youth. Therefore, both the Government and the private sector should provide start up funding. The youths should have access to credit facilities and favourable business environment to encourage youth entrepreneurship. In addition, the Government can also establish programs like business hub, business incubators and accelerators. And if these programs are properly managed, the youths will be attracted to embrace them.

The rural areas should be developed to encourage the youths to remain there and help in its development instead of migrating to the urban areas. This is in line with the view of Nwaogwugwu (2021). Cooperatives, social enterprises, subsidizing credit, guaranteeing loans and supporting micro credit facilities should be introduced in the rural areas. "Promoting employment for young people in rural areas" is an example of a global project going on in sub-Saharan Africa Country from 2018-2024. Nigeria government should establish more of such programs in the rural areas to serve as sources of encouragement.

It is a fact that Nigerian population is growing at a fast rate. Efforts should be made by families to use healthy family planning facilities and control birth-rate.

## **CONCLUSION**

Education is a vital instrument for the development of any country and since the youths are one of the important natural/ human resources and the most productive age in any country, their potentials must be developed to actualize development through gainful employment. Functional education is the key to achieve employment. The current educational system in Nigeria does not adequately prepare the youths for the labour force on one hand, and on the hand, both skilled and unskilled jobs are inadequate. Therefore, there should be a synergy between the government, industries and educational institutions in order to reduce the mismatch between education acquired and the skills needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century work place. In addition, the youths are part of the solution. So, their voices should be heard; deliberate efforts should be made to engage their

creativity. Their rights should be respected in looking for solution to youth employment crisis. This will go a long way to solve youth employment crises in Nigeria.

## REFERENCES

- Agbeze, C. (2012). Entrepreneurship: The bed to create wealth... why not now. *Ohafia Today*. 2(32)7-12.
- Alabi, T. (2014). Youths' unemployment and crime control: an analysis of Nigerian experience. *European Scientific Journal*.10(2). Retrieved 5th may 2022 from <https://www.researchgate.net>.
- Akinyemi, S. Ofem, O. & Basse, I. (2013). Graduate turnout and graduate unemployment in Nigeria. Retrieved 20th, 2022 from <https://www.researchgate.net>.
- Anyadike, N; Eneh. I.E.J & Ujah, F.O (2012). Entrepreneurship development and employment generation in Nigeria: problems and prospects. *Universal Journal of Edu and Genstu* Vol. 1(4) pp. 088-102.
- Anyanwu. S. O. & Duru. I. I. (2020) Youth unemployment in Nigeria: Implications for Development. Retrieved 20th April, 2022 from <https://www.researchgate.net>.
- Anasi, S. N. (2010) Curbing Youth Restiveness in Nigeria: the role of information and libraries. Library philosophy of practice.
- Edomwanyi; O. S. & Edomwanyi: L. C. (2020). Is Unemployment the root cause of Insecurity in Nigeria? *International journal of Social Inquiry*. Vol 13/issue 2, 2020 pp 487- 507.
- Federal Ministry of Youth Development (FMOYD, 2009).
- Giroh, Y. D. & Nachandiya, N. (2022). Assessment of the effect of petroleum Dependency on food crops production in Nigeria. Retrieved 20 April, 2022 from <https://svuijas.journals.ekb.eg>
- Idris, I. (2016). *Youth unemployment and violence: Rapid literature review*. Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.
- International Labour Organization (2012). Global Employment Trends for youth 2012. Retrieved 5th May, 2022 from <https://www.ilo.org>.
- Lawal, G. and Tobi, A., (2006). "Bureaucratic Corruption, Good Governance and Development: The Challenges and Prospects of Institution Building in Nigeria". *Journal of Applied Sciences Research*, 2 (10) 642-649.
- Makata, E. (2015). Education, employability and the crisis of unemployment in Nigeria: Entrepreneurship Education to the rescue.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2018). Retrieved April 15<sup>th</sup> from <http://tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/youth-unemployment-rate> statista.
- Nwaogwugwu, N. O. & Angba. C. W. (2021). Strategies for integrating the youth into rural agricultural extension services in Orumba-Nortg Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. *International journal of agricultural policy and research*. Vol. 19.(5). pp. 138-144. Retrieved from <http://www.jopurnalissues.org/IJAPR/>



- KaigamaI. (2022). Tackle issues behind brain Drain. Retrieved 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2022 from <http://www.vanguardngr.com>
- Oduwale, T. A. (2015). Youth unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research. vol. 1, No.2, pp 33-39. Retrieved 15th April, 2022 from [www.eajournals.org](http://www.eajournals.org)
- Ogbuanya, T.C & Ofonmbuk M. (2015). Achieving youth employment and national security in Nigeria. TVET Imperatives. Journal of Education & Practice. ISSN 2222-1735 (paper) ISSN 2222-288x (online). Vol. 6.33.
- Oghenevonah, E. & Imuetinyan, F. (2019). Rural urban migration and youth Unemployment in Nigeria: why public programmes fail. Retrieved 10th April from <https://www.urbanet.info>.
- Saidu, R. F. (2021)) Crisis management among youths for attainment violent free society in Lagos: Women Counsellor's perspective In Osuji, U. S. A. Educational issues, Developments and innovations. Abuja National Open University of Nigeria.
- UNESCO (2015). Making Education a priority in the post 2015 Development Agenda: Report of the global Thematic consultation on education in the 2015 Development Agenda. Retrieved from [unesco.org/post2015/sites/post2025/files/making\\_education\\_apriority\\_in\\_the\\_post\\_2015\\_development\\_agenda.pdf](http://unesco.org/post2015/sites/post2025/files/making_education_apriority_in_the_post_2015_development_agenda.pdf)