

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN 21ST CENTURY: IMPLICATION FOR AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between socio-economic development and job creation for the Nigerian youths in Akwa Ibom State in the 21st century. The objective of the study was to determine whether the following variables: foreign investments and industrialization have facilitated meaningful job creation for the youths. Two null hypotheses based on the variables were formulated to guide the study. The population for the study comprised all unemployed youths in Akwa Ibom State and they numbered about 5000. A survey research method was used. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire titled "socio-economic development and job creation questionnaire" designed by the researcher to obtain information from the respondents. Pearson product moment correlation statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings from the study revealed that foreign investments and industrialization have failed to provide meaningful jobs to majority of youths in Akwa Ibom State and credit facilities create jobs for the unemployed youths in Akwa Ibom State youths. Based on the findings conclusions were drawn, recommendations made and suggestions for further study offered.

Keywords: Socio-economic, Development, job creation, youth

INTRODUCTION

Youth employment in many societies all over the world is highly dependent on the overall level of the country's socio-economic development. In the past, it has been viewed in terms of the planned intervention on the structure of production such that while a country's GDP in agricultural production declines, that of the manufacturing industries rises. Professor Amartya Sen, the 1998 Nobel laureate in Economics conceived of socio-economic development of a nation as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, reduction of inequality and the eradication of poverty through the provision of basic needs and desires of the individuals, social groups and human capital development.

Thus, low or negative GDP growth, economic recession and low investments are direct causes in the shrinking demand for labour. According to the 2011 World Bank Report, Nigerian government should consider reforming its economy to allow more labour intensive industries to develop and provide conducive socio-economic environment capable of promoting employment policies especially for the youths. The consequences of neglecting the youths can be measured in terms of major losses attributed to persistent youth restiveness and its attendant evils. Human capital is proportional to the amount of time an individual has worked. Unproductive youth population is a great social problem to a nation in the sense that they do not generate income for the state. Secondly, as a result of poor work record, parents are likely to give their children poor education or none at all and this makes them not to qualify for career employment.

In Nigeria today, youth unemployment is not only a socio-economic problem but it has huge social implications on young people's personal lives. For millions of unemployed youths in Nigeria, the path to adult life is delayed with obvious repercussion on self-esteem and confidence.

It is highly commendable that in this 21st Century to the alarming rate of youth unemployment and redundancy in Nigeria are being gradually addressed through economic recovery and job creation programmes. The Federal Government in the year 2010 instituted a job creation committee and

thereafter hosted a presidential summit on job creation aimed at facilitating discussions between business leaders and Federal policy makers on how private, philanthropic and public gestures can be leveraged to building and sustains employable interventions nationwide for Nigerian youths.

Based on this socio-economic problem facing Nigerian youths and how our economy could be revived to create jobs for our jobless youths, the study, sought to examine the relationship between socio-economic development and job creation to youths in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria in the 21st century.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Accident Theory

The accident theory also known as chance theory was propounded by Charles Parrow in 1984. the theory explains the process of involving an individual in a particular job due to an unexplained exposure to an influence. According to the proponent, accident or change theory emphasizes factors over which an individual has little control and invariably has same powerful influence on one's choice of an occupation. He further explained that an individual's finds himself/herself in a particular culture by an accident of nature. His occupational choice is conditioned by not only what is available in the society but also what is exposed to him.

Accident factors limit the degree of freedom that an individual exercises in choosing a job. Some jobless youths were born into a family in which their subcultures influence them and they are highly conditioned by the jobless situation they find themselves. This is bound to have an overwhelming influence on their ability to secure a job. The implication is that the influence generated from one crippled economy has a backfire effect on the socio-economic development of the society and is also bound to have a relative effect on the process of creating jobs for the people.

Statement of the Problem

Underdevelopment is still a menace to the economy of many countries around the world. Nigeria is still struggling in the face of a developing economy and even with this; she is still lagging behind in socio-economic transformation and the ability to create sufficient job opportunities for her unemployed citizens. The study therefore, addresses socio-economic development and job creation in Akwa Ibom State for Nigerian youths in the 21st century.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated the extent to which socio-economic development has stimulated job creation in our country with particular referenced to Akwa Ibom State. The study, sought to determine:

- a. The relationship between foreign investments and job creation in Akwa Ibom State.
- b. The relationship between industrialization and job creation in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

1. To what extent has foreign investments stimulated job creation for youths in Akwa Ibom State?
2. To what extent has industrialization promoted job creation in Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypothesis

In order to direct the focus of this study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- I. There is no significant relationship between foreign investments and job creation in Akwa Ibom State.
- II. There is no significant relationship between industrialization of Akwa Ibom State and job creation for the youths in the State.

Research Significance

The study will enhance the creation of job across the country especially in Akwa Ibom State. The study will enlighten people and government to know ways of creating job to aid economic development in the country. The provision of basic amenities by government and able private individuals will be accorded greater attention in our state. Better standard of living will be achieved for the citizens through socio-economic development. The study will enhance the eradication of poverty and inequality among Nigerian citizens.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Socio-economic development generally refers to the sustained or concerted actions of policy makers and communities aimed at promoting the standard of living and economic health of a specific area. Such actions include the development of human capital, critical infrastructure, regional competitiveness, health, safety, literacy and other initiatives.

Fagbemi (2011) opined that Nigeria's socio-economic development is without job creation. The Federal Government confirmed this by declaring that the socio-economic development experienced in the country over the years has been achieved without job creation and employment generation. The Minister of National Planning and former Minister of Finance, Dr. Shamsuddeen Usman in 2011 confirmed this by stating that "Nigeria has achieved reasonable growth rate since 1999 with no significant effect on poverty alleviation and employment". He added that unemployment rate rose from 13.1 percent in 1999 to 19.7 percent in 2009 and 21.1 percent in the first quarter of 2010. Ironically, the Minister was saying that between 1999 and 2009, GDP increased from about \$250 billion to \$836 billion, while the number of unemployment people increased from 5.9 million to 17.5 million.

On every 20th November, the United Nation and the African Union Commission commemorate Africa Industrialization Day (AID) with the hope of raising awareness as well as spurring up actions that will lead to ensuring the sustenance of industries by African States so as to create more jobs. Pundits agree that the major monster in the socio-economic development situation in Nigeria is joblessness occasioned by a near total collapse of the manufacturing sector which hitherto employed hundreds of thousands of Nigerians.

Comrade Issa Areme, the Secretary General of the Nigerian Textile Worker's Union in 2010, stated that Nigeria is grappling with the twin problem of unemployment and poverty with their attendant solidarity in some parts of the country. He concluded thus "the African industrialization day gives us opportunity to evaluate the state of our industries and re-affirm our position that the real path to mass job creation, sustainable development is through industrial development. The journey to Nigeria's industrialization drive is not limited to the textile, footwear and leather sector, but also the local newsprint companies like Oku-Iboku, Iwopin and Jebba which have remained a mere shadow of a once vibrant sector.

Matty (1980), a resident Representative of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stitung (FES), a German independent non-profit organization in Nigeria also remarked that the recent socio-economic growth in Nigeria is without a corresponding rise in job creation as "even the large banking and telecommunication sectors only employ a handful of people, while a factory in Nigeria cannot give employment to a reasonable number of people".

RESEARCH METHDOLOGY

The study area of this study is Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. Akwa Ibom State occupies a total landmass of 7.2455.935sq/kms lying between latitude 4°33' North and longitude 7°35' and 8°35' East. Akwa Ibom State falls within the tropical zone with a dominant vegetation of green foliage of trees, shrubs and oil palms. It has a population of 2.4 million people (1991 Census), 31 Local Government Areas with Capital at Uyo. The State is bounded on a North by Abia State, South by Bight of Bonny,

West by Rivers State and in the East by the Cross River State. The major towns of the State include, Uyo, Eket, Abak, Ikot Ekpene, Ikot Abasi, Oron, Ikono, Etinan and Itu. Some of the local and foreign industries in the State include the Peacock Pain in Etinan; Champion Breweries in Uyo; Paper Mill Industry in Oku Iboku; Julius Berger in Uyo; Exxon Mobil in Ibeno; and Aluminum Smelter Company in Ikot Abasi.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all unemployed graduate youths in Akwa Ibom State. There are about 5000 skilled and unskilled labour force in the State that are unemployed.

Sample and Sample Technique

The sample of this study was drawn from the population specified above. 10% of the unemployed youths from graduate school in the University of Uyo, skill acquisition centres, churches, and open labour markets in Uyo were randomly selected for the study. This gave a total of 500 respondents for the study.

Research Instrument

A researcher-designed questionnaire was used for the study. The researcher constructed the instrument with the help of experts in test and measurement to ensure its reliability and validity.

The questionnaire was made up of items covering:

- a. Socio-economic development
- b. Job creation for youths in Akwa Ibom State.

Each respondent responded by indicating his/her degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement by marking a tick (✓) along the column provided.

The scoring of the questionnaire was done as follows:

Strongly Agree	(SA)	4 points
Agree	(A)	3 points
Disagree	(D)	2 points
Strongly Disagree	(SD)	1 point

Validity of the Research Instrument

In order to ascertain that the research instrument is valid, the questionnaire was given to research experts for comments, so as to review the items and place them in most suitable form. This helped to ensure the face and content validity of the instrument. The criticisms and corrections ascertained the adequacy, appropriateness and relevance of the items in measuring the variables under study.

Research Procedure

The researcher administered the questionnaire personally to a cross section of unemployed youths in churches, schools and other non-governmental organizations.

Method of Data Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was employed to measure the relationship between socio-economic development and job creation for youths in Akwa Ibom State. The significant level of acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses was 0.05.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis, examined the relationship between foreign investments and job creation for the Akwa Ibom State youths. It had the following statements and responses from the respondents.

Table 1

S/N	Section A: Foreign Investments	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Julius Bergers construction company gives more than 80% of its job opportunities to Nigerians	20	70	100	100
2.	Exxon Mobile company since its conception has provided about 70% employment opportunities to indigenous skilled labour force.	30	50	40	100
3.	Nigerians habitually patronize foreign comapnys more than the indigenous companies.	70	50	50	130
4.	Exxon Mobile company is dominated by expatriates with few employment opportunities for Nigerians.	60	40	90	110
	Grand Total	180	210	370	440
	Percentage	15	17.5	30.8	36.7

Source: Field Survey, 2012.

From the Table above, it was revealed that a larger proportion of the respondents strongly disagreed that foreign investments provide job creation for the Akwa Ibom State youths.

To empirically test this, Pearson statistics (rxy) was used to either refute or accept the null hypothesis.

Computed Pearson Statistic for Hypothesis 1

n	x	y	xy	x ²	y ²
1	90	210	1890	8100	4410
2	80	220	17600	6400	48400
3	120	180	21600	14400	32400
4	100	200	2000	10000	40000
Total	ΣX = 390	ΣY = 810	ΣXY=78100	ΣX²=38900	ΣY²=164900

Result of Hypothesis 1

From the result above, the calculated value is less than the table value (i.e 0.1814 < 0.5362). Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted that there is no significant relationship between foreign investmens and job creation in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between industrialization of Akwa Ibom State and job creation in the State. It had the following statements and responses from the respondents.

Table 2

S/N	Section B: Industrialization	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Industries in Akwa Ibom State are the largest employers of skilled labour force.	20	70	100	110
2.	Akwa Ibom State has a strong industrial base and this helps to boost employment opportunities for our youths within the locality.	50	60	90	100
3.	Alluminium Smelter company in Ikot Abasi generates more jobs for our indigenous companies.	30	70	50	150
4.	Champion Brewery has engaged more skilled labour force from Akwa Ibom State than it gives the expatriates job opportunities.	60	50	100	90
	Grand Total	160	250	340	450

Percentage	13.3	20.8	28.3	37.5
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Source: Field Survey, 2012.

From Table 2 above, the data analysis indicate that a larger proportion of the respondents strongly disagreed that industrialization creates job for Akwa Ibom youths with 37.5% respondents rate strongly disagreed. 28.2% respondents of disagreed, while 13.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that industrialization creates job opportunities to the youths of Akwa Ibom State.

Data in Table 2 were further subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics to ascertain the reliability of the analysis.

Computed Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics for Hypothesis 2

n	x	y	xy	x ²	y ²
1	90	210	18900	810	4410
2	110	190	20900	12100	36100
3	100	200	20000	1000	40000
4	110	190	20900	12100	4410
Total	$\Sigma X = 410$	$\Sigma Y = 790$	$\Sigma XY = 80700$	$\Sigma X^2 = 2610$	$\Sigma Y^2 = 84920$

Result of Hypothesis 2

From the results above at 0.05% level of significance, the calculated value is less than the critical table value (i.e. $0.4932 < 0.5362$). Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis (H_0), that there is no significant relationship between industrialization and job creation in Akwa Ibom State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings are discussed based on the variables tested in the study. From the analysis of data, the following findings were deduced:

1. There is no significant relationship between foreign investments and job creation in Nigeria, generally especially in Akwa Ibom State. This is because the foreign companies in the state come with their expatriate which forms the bulk of their labour work force. This makes the menial jobs in the companies to be reserved for our youths. Most graduates reject such offer and this therefore contributes to the rising number of our unemployed youths in the state.
2. There is no significant relationship between industrialization and job creation in Nigeria, especially in Akwa Ibom State. From the research conducted, it is observed that over 80% of the existing industries are mere shadow of a once vibrant sector for example, the Peacock Pain Industry, Etinan, Sunshine Battery Industry Essien Udim, Oku Iboku Paper Mill Industry, Itu, etc. are all mouribourn. Areme (2010), re-affirmed that industrialization remains the real path to meaningful job creation and sustainable development. Matty (1980) supporting this view maintained that for any meaningful job creation to exist, heavy manufacturing sector should be accelerated. Thus, industrialization in Akwa Ibom State has failed to create job opportunities for the unemployed youths because Akwa Ibom State does not have a functional industrial base to absorb the teaming population of even our skill-equipped youths.

CONCLUSION

From the data analyzed, interpreted and discussed, it is obvious that socio-economic development plays a vital role in job creation for the people. Socio-economic development emphasizes improvement in the general welfare due to an equitable distribution of the increased output of goods and services between individuals. Socio-economic development implies a reduction in the level of unemployment ratio. In this context, the focus has been on foreign investments, and industrialization

and how they have so far created jobs for Nigerian youths. The implications of the findings are that foreign investments have no positive impact on our socio-economic development.

Industrialization is a process of increasing the volume of production in industrial activities such as manufacturing, construction etc. It is a vital tool when it comes to socio-economic development and job creation. Most of our youths are not employed in the areas of their specialization due to lack of strong industrial base in our state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Agro-Allied industries should be sited in each Local Government Areas of the State.
2. Youths empowerment scheme should be introduced by both the government and non-governmental agencies.
3. Seminars on entrepreneurial skill development should be mounted regularly for capacity building and lucrative job opportunities for our youths.
4. Our economy should be diversified.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Basically, further research studies could be conducted on the following socio-economic issues.

1. The impact of unemployment on the Nigerian economy.
2. Job crisis and economic development in Nigeria.
3. Industrialization; a pace for socio-economic development in the 21st century.

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