

Youth and Unemployment in Nigeria's Democratic Environment: Implications for National Security and Development

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Abstract: *Unemployment is a global social phenomenon and a concern for governance as high rate of unemployment in an economy retards rate of growth and national development. Globally an estimated 201.8 million people were reported as jobless and youth constitute the biggest casualties, with 74.5 million aged 15-24 unemployed in 2013. Youth unemployment rate in 2013 for East Asia; Middle East and North Africa; and Sub-Saharan Africa were 10.1; 28.3 and 11.9 compared to adult rate of 3.6; 7.9 and 6.0 respectively. In Nigeria, unemployment rate has worsened over the years due to weak economy and more than 60 per cent of youth are unemployed. This paper highlights the implications for national security and development using secondary materials. The finding is that as the pillar for national security and development, unemployed youth energies are challenged towards negative ventures like perpetration of violent conflicts and criminal activities. 90-95 per cent of violent conflicts are perpetrated by unemployed youths and more than 300 forms occurred between 1999 and 2014, making the polity an insecure environment scaring away investors and deterring development. The conclusion is that the potentials of the over 200000 youths that graduate annually from tertiary institutions are not harnessed for national security and development. We recommend the urgent mobilisation of all sectors and political commitment to address youth unemployment as an endemic disease devouring human potentials, national security and development.*

Keywords: *Youth, Unemployment, National Security and Development*

I. Introduction

Unemployment is one of the developmental problems that both developed and developing economies of the world are confronted with in the 21st century. And since the global economic crisis that erupted in 2008, the number of unemployed people around the world base on International Labour Organisation estimates increased from 198 million in 2009 to 201.8 million in 2013. Youth constitute the greatest casualties for unemployment with 74.5 million ages 15-24 being reported as unemployed in 2013. Generally youth are the most affected by unemployment globally and there are great differences in unemployment rate among countries and between developed and developing economies. For instance in 2009 the youth unemployment rate shows 9.4; 13.9; 9.8; 23.8; 17.4; and 12.1 for East Asia; South-East Asia and the Pacific; South Asia; Middle East and North Africa (MENA); European Union Region; and Sub-Saharan Africa compared to 3.4; 3.0; 2.7; 7.0; 7.1 and 6.0 for adults respectively. This rate of unemployment have implications for economic and other developments and in realisation of the negative effect of youth unemployment on an economy, our attention is drawn to the report of ILO's primary concern focusing not on the human cost of deepening joblessness but rather on the implications for economic growth and political discontent. In respect of this the ILO impotently pleaded with governments to moderate "aggressive" austerity measures in order to help create "the incentive required for economies to expand and create jobs" (ILO in Mike, 2014: 1-3).

Focusing on Nigeria, a developing economy and the most populous nation in Africa, blessed with abundant human and natural resources, we then pose this phenomenal question: are Nigerian youths faring better in terms of employment opportunities than their counterparts in other parts of the globe? In other word are Nigerian youths gainfully employed and their potentials harnessed for enhancing national security and engendering development? A meaningful response to these questions will require an enquiry into youth and unemployment situation in Nigeria's democratic environment. In this regard scholarly analysis of unemployment situation suggest that, unemployment rate in Nigeria has continued to be on the increase despite the abundant human and natural resources available in the country. And ironically chronic youth unemployment is evident as every year thousands of graduates are produced but there are no jobs for majority of them. Nigerian streets from Okafor (2011) argument as cited in Anthony (2013:350) are littered with youth hawkers who ordinarily would have found gainful employment in some enterprise. Other scholarly views that substantiate this observation and specifically tracks on youth unemployment situation that provide us with more insight are the argument of Soludo (2006:10) cited in Onuoha (2010:124) stating that Nigeria has over 100 tertiary institutions producing more than 200000 graduates per annum. While Attah, Audu and Haruna (2013) drawing from data released by the Federal Office of Statistics for 2012 argued that Nigeria generates about 4.5 million new entrants

into the labour market annually, with 300000 graduates finding no placement anywhere for productivity. In addition, Anthony (2013:352) observed that there are 2.2 million primary school leavers as well as one million secondary school leavers not proceeding to either secondary school or tertiary level respectively. Further analysis indicates that as of march 2009, 41.6 per cent and 17 per cent of persons between the ages of 15-24 years, and 25 and 44 were unemployed. In other words 58.6 per cent of persons between the ages of 15 and 44 were unemployed in 2009.

From the foregoing analysis, it is obvious that persons between the ages of 15 and 44 constitute the active labour force in Nigeria's economy. However, the most affected from all indications by unemployment are those between 15 and 34 years base on the age conceptualization of the national youth forum or report. And since these social groups are seen as the backbone for enhancing or engendering development in a polity and are at the same time unemployed what then is the national security and development implications in Nigeria's democratic environment. This is what the paper attempt to highlight and to proffer possible strategy for reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria for positive impact on national security and development at large.

II. Analytical Framework and Conceptual Explications

2.1. Analytical Framework

The primary concern of all governments either democratic, authoritarian, oligarchy and so on is on how to organise effectively the human and material resources available for human progress and national development. As such policies and programmes are often designed and implemented toward specific needs in an economy. However, the role of policy makers and also the implementers in a social system determine the direction on how the human and material resources are harnessed for development. In other word those who govern or stir the affairs of government affect significantly the policy direction and its execution. In Nigeria's 54 years of independence as a political entity, governance has been under two forms or system of government that is democratic system and authoritarian military rule. The military rule according to David, Yusuf and Auwalu (2014:93) swept away democratic principles. But with the return to democratic rule in 1999 base on constitutional provisions, it is expected that the political leaders would adhere to, and conduct the affairs of governance base on constitutional provision to guarantee stipulated rights and government responsibility to citizens. This however has not been the case for the provisions in Chapter 11 Section 13 to 24 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with amendments 2011 have been neglected. For instance Section 17-(3) stipulated that the state shall direct its policy towards ensuring that-(a) all citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment; (f) Children, young persons and the aged are protected against exploitation whatsoever, and against moral and material neglect.

From the above constitutional provision it means that those who represent the citizens in public offices from federal to state and local government levels are mandated to pursue policies along these provisions. However, available literatures indicate that from 2000 to 2011 unemployment has been on the increase recording a national rate of 11.9 in 2005, 21.1 in 2010 and 23.9 in 2011 (NBS 2010; and CBN annual report in John and Bright, 2012: 273 and Benjamin, 2013). It is as a result of this development in Nigeria's democratic environment that we adopt the elite theory which describes the power relationship in contemporary society as the analytical framework.

Generally, all governmental system has two dominant classes those who rule and the ruled (minority and majority) and the power relationship between the two groups in a state particularly a democratic state is what the proponents of elite theory and their intellectual followers devote their arguments in explaining. The theory asserts that there is an inescapable division between dominant minorities variously called elites, oligarchies, ruling classes, political classes, aristocracies and others; and the dominated majority or masses. It means that in a democratic social system a small clique-the minority group made up of the political class and the policy making network hold the most power in a state and they exert substantial power over policy decisions. Pareto in John (2014) express the view that in society elites would consist of the most talented as well as those who are skilful at using the two modes of political rule, force and persuasion. Furthermore, they usually enjoy important advantages in form of inherited wealth and family connection in society. While Michels in David, Yusuf and Auwalu (2014) and Linz (2006) emphasised that, elites (oligarchies) operate efficiently as they gain control of funds, information flow, promotion, and other aspects of organisational functioning, and then power becomes concentrated in their hands and retaining this power increasingly govern their actions. The observed irregularities and fraud, the pre-election and post-election violence as well as cases of assassination recorded during elections and the electoral processes in the fourth republic (Awowole-Brown, 2011; Dunmoye, 2011; Yagboyaju, 2011) are the result of political elites attempt to retain power, to win over power or gain control of the instrument of power from incumbent. Mosca and Michels describe these actions as competition between elites.

The views expressed above gives credence to the argument that representative democracy is just rule of the elites and the inevitability of elite rule makes democracy an imaginary dream and more so those elites can never be accountable to the people. It is stressed that the most that is possible is an elite-manipulated democracy (David and Yusuf, 2015; and Femia, 2001). Evidence of political or ruling elite not being accountable to the people are seen in their inability to provide as stipulated in the constitution adequate employment opportunities for all people and more so for the most active labour force in Nigeria's polity that is the youth. Even though various policies and programmes have been initiated to reduce the phenomenon of unemployment (National Directorate of Employment; the 6-3-3-4 education policy; National Poverty Eradication Programme; National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy; Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme etc.) these lack the political will and commitment in implementation. For instance literature shows that Nigeria has over 100 tertiary institutions producing more than 200000 graduates per annum (Soludo, 2006: 10 in Onuoha 2010) that is, about 1800000 graduated from 2006 to 2014. An analysis by David (2010) base on the 2005 Education Sector Analysis (ESA) for 2004 report puts the number of youths that join the labour market from tertiary institutions at 130000 annually and only 10 per cent of this figure gain employment. The remaining 90 per cent roam our streets in search of jobs that are not available. Based on this observation, it means that from 2004 to 2014 about 1430000 youth entered the labour market and only 14300 were able to secure gain employment. While the active labour force the youth that constitute about 70 per cent of Nigeria's population are faced with this challenge, the political elites who control the reign of government are busy the former Governor of Central Bank (Sanusi Lamido now Emir in Kano) lamented in 2010 enriching themselves and consuming large amount of the country's wealth as salaries. That is the National Assembly members that are less than 1 per cent of Nigeria's population consumed 25 per cent of the nation's budget (Oladayo, 2014)

The foregoing arguments suggest that representative democracy in practical terms is just rule by elites and more so in developing country like Nigeria where the principles of democracy are negated and constitutional provisions disregarded. The political elites or the cabinet of people that control the reign of government are found in government institutions such as the Presidency, National Assembly and Federal Executive Council and their counter parts at the various levels of governance (state and local government) control government machinery and apparatus (Vegara, 2013 and Oladayo, 2014) and are never accountable to the majority nor their constitutionally stipulated rights- secure source of livelihood/suitable employment, protection against exploitation, security of life and property and so on.

2.2. Youth

Youth is a social construct used to identify a person or social groups in a society and as such the term has been subjected to several interpretations and meanings in academic writing, by international and regional bodies and national governments. In academic writing, several definitional interpretations have been identified in extant literature such as: age category; transitional stage between childhood and adulthood; as gender (boys and girls, young men and women) and so on. But in this paper the focus is on youth as an age group. As such, in conceptualising youth as an age category or group we draw from the definition provided by global inter-governmental organisation, and its link to national definition or categorisation. The United Nations (UN) defined youth as an age group that is between 15 and 24 (Lyndsay and Erika 2009). The UN definition differ with the meaning of youth in Jordan based on age range and the lowest age range for youth is 12. While the upper range for youth in a number of African countries – Rwanda, Sierra Leone and even Nigeria is above 24. Similarly, UN special agencies- the World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) used the term adolescent for those aged 10-19, and youth for those from 15-24 and young people 10-24. What the foregoing implies is that an overlap exists between the definitions of youth and children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child, defined child as every human being under the age of 18 years, which means that youth and child falls within the same age group, and the dictionary on education referred to this age group 15-24 as young adults (Lyndsay and Erika, 2009; Legal Aid and Judicial Protection for Women and Children).

In Nigeria, adulthood is attained as stipulated in the constitution when an individual clocks 18 and obtains the right to vote and thus cease to be a child [Chapter 111 Section 29 subsection (4)-(a)]. In a related categorisation, the provision of the National Policy on Education for basic and post-basic education indicate that persons between the ages of 15-30 are expected to be enrolled for educational development at the senior secondary and tertiary levels of the education sector, to prepare them for useful living. While the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) Scheme, is meant for person's not older than 30 years of age. Furthermore, the first age group used by the National Bureau of Statistics to generate data on rate of unemployment and employment is age group 15-24, indicating that the official or legal lower working age range is 15 years. It is based on the foregoing provisions that this paper situates its concept of youth as Persons age 15-34 which reflects the NBS first and second age group category used to generate data on rate of unemployment and employment in Nigeria.

2.3. Unemployment

Unemployment is a social problem that modern society are confronted with in their quest for development and is seen as a phenomenon which arises when the members of a country's labour force are faced with obstacles to the attainment of their goal of participation in gainful occupation either self-account or wage paid (National Bureau of Statistics, 2001: 20). Okafor (2011) opinion that it describes the condition of people who are without jobs and Jhingan (2011) sees it as an unacceptable idleness of a person willing to work at prevailing labour payment system but still unable to find one. This means that persons who reject certain work on the basis of low wage or payment cannot be classified as unemployed and those who accept due to unavailability of work commensurable to skill and qualifications are termed as under-employed. In addition, the ILO in 2010 stressed that issue of unemployment borders on a country's population consists of the economically active and inactive component, with the economically active as those of working age; and in this regard the organisation in 2007 saw the unemployed as those individuals of 15 years and above that are: without a job of any type; available to start work in the next two weeks if offered employment, but yet seeking for one; and actively seeking for work or have found one and is waiting to start it. In this paper unemployment refers to the number of the economically active population who is without work but is available and seeking work and it also include those who have lost their jobs and so on.

In Nigeria the economically active population is persons between ages 15 (the legal lower work age) and 44 years. The youth fall within this age range 15-34 and are seen as the most affected by unemployment in our polity, despite constitutional provision that: all citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment; and Children, young persons and the aged are protected against exploitation whatsoever, and against moral and material neglect. It been argued that the return to democracy in Nigeria in 1999 ushered in the politicisation of ethnic, regional and religious identities by political elites in their competition for political power. Those seeing no prospects of political power become aggrieved and often take the violent route and given the current economic hardship and high level of unemployment, "armed youths for hire" are available at cheap cost. Thus the armies of unemployed youth are always willing to find new jobs as body guards, assassins, and cannon-fodders in communal violence (Elaiwu, 2005:42-43) and we emphasise that this has national security and development implications.

2.4. Development conceptualised

Development has remained one of the major pre-occupation of governments and yet the concept has defiled a universal definition, and as such the term has numerous conceptualisations offered by scholars and writers. However our aim in this paper is not add to the existing definitions rather we limit focus on the definition provided by Rodney (1972:1) who argued that development in human society is a many sided process. Three different levels are identified in the process these are: the individual level; social group level and the society level. Focusing on the individual level, development from this scholar's view means increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Even though these are seen as virtually moral categories and difficult to evaluate depending on issues such as age in which we live, class origin and so on, what is indisputable is that the achievement of any of those aspects of personal development is very much tied in with the state of the society as a whole. For instance youths, ages 15-34 form part of the social group level, and in Nigeria they constitute about 70 per cent of the population. Individually, youth as part of a social group level increases skill and capacity and other variables that holistically translate into development through process of development like education at the various levels of the education sector and also training outside the formal school system. Collectively, youths with increase skills, and productively engaged become assets for transforming the society because their material well-being is enhanced when they are productively engaged and this impact positively on the society and this implies development. However, if the skills acquired are not productively utilised to bring about positive impact on the individual's well-being and then society, such cannot be referred to as development. Hence Rodney's position of the society level as cited in Onuoha (2010:119) that a society develops economically as its members increase jointly their capacity for dealing with the environment but with the understanding of the laws of nature and the extent to which such understanding is put into practice and the manner in which work is organised. Education is central to the understanding of these laws of nature and the practical application of skills and capacity acquire through education translate into material well-being for members of the society and then development in general. Youths as a social group in Nigeria form part of the most active labour force and they constitute the bulk of the unemployed. It means that skills and potentials of the active labour force is not harnessed for societal development because unemployed person does not enjoy any form of freedom (material well-being) and neither do they have the increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationships which Rodney sees as development. An individual or groups level of freedom is tied to their material well-being in society as it comprises access to the basic necessities of life- freedom from fear of losing life and property, education,

employment opportunity, health care, safe environment to conduct economic and social activities and so on. Unemployment among youth is a major security challenge confronting Nigeria as over 90 per cent of violent conflicts have been linked to youth as the perpetrators and persecutors on behalf of politicians who use them as tools and this constitute threat to national security and development as their energies are negatively channelled.

2.5. National Security

In conceptualising national security it's imperative to note that security is of great concern to all human societies as it impinges on the survival of every human person or society. The absence of security implies that individual's (including youths) within a state will find it difficult to engage in productive activities. And without security, a nation is bound to experience difficulty in harnessing its human and material resources that could guarantee meaningful development and the promotion of its citizens' well-being. In this regard, national security is seen as the sum total of actions and measures, including legislative and operational procedures, adopted to ensure peace, stability and the general wellbeing of a nation and its citizens (Shinkaiye 2004 cited in Mbachu 2009). While Mbachu emphasised that national security has both objective and subjective meaning, and objectively it measures the absence of threat to life, liberty, property and core values; and the absence of fear, anxiety, tension or apprehension of being in danger of losing life, liberty, property and core values constitute the subjective components of national security.

It could be stress base on these subjective and objective meaning of security that national security means the protection of a nation from all types of external aggression and espionage. Imobighe (1990) sum the concept of security as having to do with freedom from danger or with threats to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the well-being of its people which means that security manifests at the levels of nation, state, individual and so on, and it also has both external and internal dimensions. Internal security has to do with freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could weaken internal unity and the corporate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic objectives as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people. For internal security to be ensured, it implies that the citizens enjoy freedom from danger to life and property, have access to gainful source of livelihood, and an enabling environment to pursue legitimate economic and political endeavour. A nation, therefore, is threaten or is in great danger when she is incapable of providing for its security through conventional and non-conventional means. It is then seen as porous and prone to any form of attack, from within and externally. As such the view that security is solely a military matter with efforts geared towards providing the latest weapon to secure the nation is not enough to guarantee national security. Rather national security constitutes both external and internal issues, as well as measures adopted to ensure the safety of people and the territorial integrity.

The measures that enhance national security internally include, among others, those basic rights which the Nigerian Constitution clearly stipulated – right to life, right to gainful employment, right to education, protection from exploitation and against moral and material neglect etc. And internationally, security is conceived and includes issues such as, food security, environmental security, economic security, domestic order, educational security, national disaster security, old age, youth employment and job creation, as well as gender, equal access to social and economic empowerment, good governance and so on. Where all these are effectively taken care of, a nation is said to be secured and free from threat and can then boast of national security. In other words, national security is encompassing of all necessary factors which brings security to a nation and not limited to measures taken to deter external attack as the attack from other dimensions could be more threatening to a nation's security. And going by the high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria and increasing criminal activities, militancy, terrorists related acts of violence and so on; it means that Nigeria's national security is being threatened by these developments. But what is more threatening to its national security is the fact that youths who constitute about 70 per cent of the population are associated with the execution of criminal activities and violent acts. It has been documented that 90-95 per cent of violent conflicts in Nigeria since May 1999 to date are persecuted by army of unemployed youth (see Emeka, 2013; Kennet, 2011 and Elaigwu, 2005).

This situation is unhealthy for security and development. For instance, youths ideally form the backbone of any economic, political and social development, and Nigeria's national security and development rests on the functional role of this group in the economy. They are energetic and combatant as well as manpower whose potential both skilled and unskilled the country needs to harness for national development. However, where the institutional framework for harnessing these potentials are not functioning efficiently, and youth are left unemployed the resultant consequence could be aggressive outburst, and more so when governmental institutions tend to operate unfavourably to the yearnings and aspiration of the youth population. Then youth are compelled to seek employment from alternative sources even if such alternative pose as threat to their social existence and well-being. In this regard youth become vulnerable to opportunistic groups, political and economic, who in one way or the other feel that the democratic environment is not meeting their political and economic expectations. Becoming vulnerable to manipulation therefore makes unemployed youth a threat

to national security and development. For instance, an observation relating unemployed youth to the Boko Haram terrorist sect which have been a threat to national security in Nigeria's democratic environment since 2009 which Oyoyo (2011) cited in Christian and Ambily (2013:366) drew our attention to is made by Sam Omatseye a criminologist that "while we contemplate criminalising the Boko Haram group, we must understand that we created them. The elite had food but did not give them. They had school but did not educate them...had shelter but left them loiter in the heat and sand. So they followed Yusuf who gave them a living, no matter how little". Furthermore, literatures shows that militant youth groups emerged in the southern part of the country in response to neglect, and kidnapping which has been established as an act of terrorism became lucrative business for unemployed youth.

Nigeria's democratic environment since the re-commencement of the fourth republic have been confronted with different forms of violent conflicts ranging from intra party clashes, political assassination, post-election violence and community unrest, militancy and terrorist acts and so on. Thus creating a polity marked with unchecked proliferation, hiring, and arming of militias in different forms to serve narrow political ends. The militias in Nigerian polity are made up of youths and according to Onwudiwe and Berwind-Dart (2010) politicians and party bosses found a ready supply of unemployed men, frequently youths, willing to perpetrate violence in exchange for pay and fire power. They further argued these young men comprised a significant percentage of lost. Scholarly focus on the Niger-Delta area points to the fact that the corruption of the Nigerian political process had not only left the oil mineral-producing communities of the region poor and underdeveloped but had un-intentionally created a large class of young men who have no hope of legitimate work that would fulfil their ambitions that are easily recruited into violence (Human Right Watch, 2003 cited in Emeka, 2013:228). It means that the unemployment among youth constitutes a major national security and development challenge because they serve as drivers of violent conflicts and increasing insecurity.

In order to enhance national security, financial resources needed for developmental programmes are often channelled towards this objective in form of defence spending. However scholars have criticised that defence spending in Nigeria grew about 9 per cent annually on average from fiscal year 1999-2009 against education and health spending that grew about 0.3 and 0.6 per cent annually within the same period, and that despite this abrupt increase in defence spending annually, the level of insecurity in Nigeria worsened because the military personnel are reluctant in spending these funds and they rather see these funds as compensation for their staying out of politics and protecting the democratic government that lacks legitimacy (Ezeani and Ezeibe 2011:247-8). This argument is predicated on the fact that fraud and irregularities in elections and the electoral process have been an enduring feature of the democratic process and this brings into power illegitimate government and leadership (see David, Yusuf and Auwalu 2014:92; and Inokoba and Kumokor, 2011). Ezeani and Ezeibe (2011) further stressed that political leadership has failed to prioritise national needs and respect the virtues that bond society, promote stability and harmony such as social justice, equity, rule of law and respect for individual/group rights and other democratic principles. As such, political leadership as emphasized trigger conflict drivers in the society like social division, militarisation, elites' fragmentation and competition and the emergence of ethnic and sectarian militias in order to increase and rationalise military spending and repressive apparatus to forcefully hold the people within bounds of order. Unemployed Youth in our polity are then recruited by the same political elites as ethnic militias, religious, political thugs and so on to carry out violent acts that threaten national security and development. For instance between 2006 and 2009, 21 militant camps emerged in Niger Delta area and a former ruling elite, the governor of Rivers State Peter Odili is noted to have recruited in 2003 armed militias to carry out electoral fraud and one of the leaders of the 21 militant camps Asari Dokubo of the Niger-Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) also linked this former governor, as well as a former Federal Transport Minister (Abiye Sekibo) and the aides of the governor as sponsors and financiers of armed groups and particularly NDVF and Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) made up of Ijaws (See Emika, 2013: 228; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/conflict-in-Niger-Delta>, accessed 04/01/2015 9:31am). Similar observations have been made about ruling elites and links to ethnic and religious militant youth groups and specifically a senator from Borno-South Senatorial District Mohammed Ali Ndume was arraigned before an Abuja High Court for ties with Boko Haram; other linked to the sect are former Kano State governor Ibrahim Shekarau, Bauchi State governor Isa Yuguda, former Borno State governor Ali Modu Sheriff is reported as a political founder of Boko Haram (see Freedom, 2013:411-412; Nigerian Tribune, 21 may 2012; Ali, 2014:3 and Desert Herald Report December 1 2014:6-7); and in South-West, the former governor of Lagos State Bola Tinubu announced in 2001 plans to turn the militant youth wing of the O'Odun People's Congress which between 2000 and 2003 intimidated and killed many people into state security service and then ordered the release and discharge unconditionally about 100 OPC members arrested by the Nigerian Police in connection with criminal activities- arson, assassination, armed robbery and so on (Christian and Ambily, 2013:365).

The forgoing argument shows that unemployment among the youth population in Nigeria is a threat to national security and development since they are often recruited by political elites and their associates to perpetrate violent acts to advance political and economic benefits. As such national security entails the provision

of adequate employment for youth, social justice, adherence to constitutionally stipulated responsibilities and obligations and so on.

III. Youth And Unemployment In Nigeria's Democratic Environment: An Overview

Unemployment is not a problem that is unique to Nigeria; it exists in all countries of the world. However, the difference lies in the levels of degree, as the problem is more chronic in some countries than others. In developing countries, Nigeria inclusive, unemployment is a particular chronic economic disease, and youths tend to be more affected by this development. In urban and semi-urban areas about 60 per cent of the 70 per cent of youth population in Nigeria reside in these areas and are unemployed (Mijah, 2008). In matured democracies, a high rate of unemployment can make a government unpopular and may even bring such government down. As such, democratic governments in developed economies always keep watch on the unemployment rate, and to take necessary action or precaution when the unemployment level is going out of the tolerable limits. For instance, in 2011 United State President Obama in response to the estimated 9 per cent unemployment situation between April and July called on the private sector to make sacrifices to reduce the unemployment rate. This call was imperative because in justifying why unemployment rate is significant for the economy, Investing Answers in 2014 assert that employment is the primary source of personal income in U.S. and has a major influence on consumer spending and overall growth and in addition the unemployment rate can provide considerable information about the state of the economy or the health of particular business sectors (see Eme, 2014:105). Essentially it is argued that high unemployment generally is an indication that an economy is underperforming. Ironically the situation differs in developing countries of West Africa and in Nigeria because the public and private sectors of the economy are not adequately equipped to deal with unemployment, more so with youth unemployment problems. Young school leavers, both skilled and unskilled are left wondering the urban and semi-urban streets in search of employment opportunities that is not available.

Generally unemployment has become a major security and development challenge in Nigeria. And according to Eme (2014:103) millions of graduates and school leavers are busy roaming the streets in search of elusive jobs and government at all levels is paying lip service to creating employment opportunities for the people. What then is the general situation of unemployment in Nigeria's geopolitical zones? And more so as all the zones have recorded different forms of violent conflicts since the recommencement of the fourth republic in May 1999. The table below provides some insight on the average rate of unemployment in the six geopolitical zones.

Table 1: Average Rate of Unemployment for Geopolitical Zones in Nigeria 2007-2011

S/No	Geopolitical Zone	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
1.	North Central	15.8	9.8	15.0	7.9	22.5
2.	North East	18.5	12.0	27.9	26.2	31.9
3.	North West	12.7	10.7	21.5	13.3	28.7
4.	South East	18.1	10.4	15.8	23.0	16.5
5.	South-South	29.4	22.7	22.3	27.7	24.7
6.	South West	8.5	7.7	15.2	23.2	11.3
7.	National Rate	12.7	14.9	19.7	21.4	23.9

Source: Author's compilation from NBS Annual Abstract 2012:396 table 338

From author's calculated average rate of unemployment covering the six geopolitical zones in table 1 above, South-West and North-Central had the lowest average rate of 8.5 and 12.8; and South-South and North-East had the highest rates of 29.4 and 18.5 respectively in 2007. In 2008 and 2009, South-South recorded an average unemployment rate of 22.7 and 22.4 respectively that is a decline compared to 2007 rate of 29.4. The North-East on the other hand recorded an average rate of 27.9 and 31.9 for 2009 and 2011 respectively and it reflects an increase except for the slight decline rate of 26.2 in 2010 when compared with 18.5 for 2007. The reason for this development in the North East could be linked to the security challenges in form of Boko Haram terrorist's acts of violence that erupted in this area in 2009, and to date has displaced millions of people and business. As such, we cannot not help but tend to agree with Komolafe (2011) in Christian and Ambily (2013:372) that Boko Haram Sects enjoy massive support from a large section of northern youths as majority of them have, due to the high level of poverty, given up on life; and paradoxically, even those that have some level of education, unemployment has rendered them hopeless and as such sees Boko Haram as an opportunity to ventilate their anger. In other word, the sect draws membership mainly from dissatisfied youths, unemployed graduates and even former almajiri's mostly but not limited to northern Nigeria. In addition, is the emergence of 21 militant youth groups in the South-East and South –South that have been active in terrorist acts of kidnapping. Even though the National Bureau of Statistics Annual Abstract for 2012 did not provide data on youth unemployment rates by states as it did for the national unemployment rate, the observation made by these scholars is an indication that youth generally are the most affected by unemployment in all the geopolitical

zones. Furthermore, there are literatures that establish link between youth unemployment and social exclusion arguing that inability to find a job creates a sense of vulnerability, uselessness and idleness among young people and can heighten the attraction of engaging in illegal activities (see Anthony, 2014 and 2013; Kathleen, 2006; McIntyre, 2004).

From the forgoing arguments it means that high rate of unemployment and particularly among youth constitute threat to national security and development. The information in the table below shows the rate of unemployment for youth based on data from NBS National Manpower Stock and Employment Generation Survey for 2010 and Annual Abstract for 2012.

Table 2: Youth Unemployment Rate (age 15-34) 2008 and 2010

Age	2008		2010	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
15-24	29.0	30.8	31.5	37.3
25-34	14.1	16.6	17.8	26.5

Source: NBS Annual Abstract of Statistics 2012 Table 333; National Manpower Stock 2010 Table 5.3

From table 2 above, the information indicates that in 2008 and 2010 the rate of unemployment for age 15-24 for Urban was 29.0 and 31.5 and for Rural 30.8 and 37.3 for 2008 and 2010 respectively. It means that those ages 15-24 have the highest rate of unemployment in both urban and rural areas of Nigeria's polity compared to their counterpart in the age category of 25-34. However the unemployment rates for youth as shown in the table above constitute threats to national security and development as the rates indicate an increase from 29.0 and 14.1 in 2008 to 31.5 and 17.8 in 2010 for urban areas and similar increase is reflected for the rural rates.

The unemployment situation in Nigeria according to Ogunyomi and Oginni (2013) is unsettling, statistics shows that almost 75 per cent of those who are able and willing to work cannot find gainful employment, especially among young graduates/school leavers. It is further stressed that 40 per cent of the unemployed rate are among urban youth age 20-24 and 31 per cent of the rate among those aged 15-19. In relation to this argument Danjibo (2009) pointed out that 60 per cent of youth lack jobs and a growing number of young people from university graduates to illiterate youths seem to be excluded from being able to gain access to paid employment.

This development is further compounded by the fact that the Federal Civil Service is one of the major employers of labour and since the 1980s employment in this sector has been on a steady decline as well as more retrenchment which is attributed to the shades of neo-liberal reform measures adopted for correcting the economic crisis. Furthermore, employment by the organised private sector, that is, industrial and manufacturing sub-sectors has also declined. As such, young job seekers face increasing difficulties finding work in the current economic scenario. Adewoye (2010) points out that unemployment is a problem impacting on the labour market, with a growing proportion of the unemployed located within the various urban areas due to rural-urban migration caused by neglect of rural areas. It is further stressed that an estimated 50 per cent in Africa in 2010 reside in urban areas and according to Mijah (2008) about 60 per cent in Nigeria, where job opportunities are limited to a few modern sectors and establishment. In other words, the rapid increase in labour force relative to the absorptive capacity of the economy affects the system. For instance, inappropriate school curricula and lack of employable skills has been argued, makes youth to be unemployed. The emphasis often made is that, so far as the formal sector is concerned, the skills that job seekers possess do not match the needs and demands of employers in Nigeria (Adewoye, 2010).

The inability of governments to provide youth with jobs pose threats to national security and development. In outlining the broad framework for collective security and the United Nations' role in the 21st century, the report by the High-level Panel on Threat, Challenges and Change points to youth as a threat to security. It identified youth unemployment as both a cause of violence and a consequence of failed post-conflict peace building, potentially leading to further violence (UN Security Council Resolution/Report S/2004/252). In other words, Security Council Resolutions and statements on West Africa links youth conflict with youth unemployment as a prime condition for and cause of youth involvement in violent conflict. It therefore means that that, the major aspect of development which education fosters is made possible in the provision of employment opportunities for the teeming population of youths and other citizens. Where this is not possible, the youth become vulnerable to manipulation and engage in all forms of vices that are unhealthy for social coherence and corporate existence.

It is in recognition of the unhealthy and negative effect of unemployment among youth on national security and development in Nigeria's polity that various programmes have been initiated by the Federal Government and with some replicated at states and local government level for combating unemployment. Prominent of such initiative is the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) established in 1986 by the military government to combat massive unemployment and to act as clearing house to link job seekers with

employers of labour. As part of this initiative, the National Youth Employment and Vocational Skill Development Programme was designed for youths in recognition that more than half of the population were youths who were unemployed or lacked productive and marketable skill and so on (Adewoye 2010). Some aspects of this programme and number of beneficiaries is as compiled in the table below.

Table 3: Number of Unemployed Youths Trained 2008-2011

S/NO.	Type of Training	Number of Unemployed Youth Trained 2008-2011				
		2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
1.	National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) and School on Wheels (SOW)	35221	48158	57646	32712	173737
2.	Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP)	95022	111333	104130	137014	447499
3.	Agricultural Skills	7374	10571	4410	3973	26328
4.	Technical Skills: Environmental Beautifying and Solar Energy	1403	2843	1225	1132	6603
5.	Transient Jobs	4709	4447	2973	2646	14775
Total		143729	177352	170384	177477	668942

Source: author's compilation from Annual Abstract Statistics 2012(NBS) Tables 342.1-6 PP. 400-405

Information in the table above shows that 143729 unemployed youths were trained in five different programmes in 2008, and in 2010, 170384 also received training. Generally, a total of 668942 unemployed youths were trained from 2008 to 2011. The irony is that the profile on unemployed youth beneficiaries of these programmes did not specify the number of trained youths that were provided with required tools, materials and others to put into practice acquired skills for the different programmes. And where such information is available, the number of unemployed youths that have been provided with tools and equipment to establish their own business as capture in table 342. 3 of the NBS 2012 Annual Abstract, it only shows the number by state and gender and not for each of the programmes. The calculated number of unemployed youths that have been provided with tools and equipment to start their own business shows that from 2008 to 2011 a total of 17878 unemployed youths were beneficiaries. In other words in 2008; 2009; 2010 and 2011, 791; 2972; 9656 and 4459 unemployed youth benefited respectively. It also means that only 2.67 per cent of those trained were provided with tools and equipment to start their own business while 97.33 per cent were unable to access such opportunity to start their own business despite the training. In this regard Tunji (2014:7) is of the view that NDE had no opening of its own to engage unemployed youth, providing only vocational training to young school leavers, and with emphasis on insufficient funds to provide start-off capital for youth who complete their training. It means that NDE programme did not really meet up the objective nor lived up to expectations. The implication of this development is that 97.33 per cent are left with a sense of hopelessness and emotionally, frustration may eventually set in and the need for alternative no matter the security risks becomes attractive option. Hence the increase in crime rate and youth being associated with violent acts and are often seen as persecutors of over 95 per cent of violent conflicts in Nigeria's fourth republic.

In addition to the NDE programme is the Subsidy-Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) introduced in 2012 that focuses on management and investment of federal government savings derived from the proceeds accruing from partial removal of the subsidy on petroleum products. The programme main aim is to provide job opportunities to graduates of tertiary institutions, and has several ranges of activities and programmatic schemes such as the General Internship Scheme (GIS); Community Services Scheme (CSS); Vocational Training Scheme (VTS); Community Service, Women and Youth Empowerment (CSWYE) and so on. Specifically, the GIS offer unemployed graduates the opportunity to undergo a one- year internship in banks, ministries, government departments and agencies, firms, as also in small and medium enterprises but with relevance to beneficiary's disciplines. According to Tunji (2014) about 50000 graduates were selected for the first phase of the scheme out of 85000 applicants, and out of the 2000 firms that indicated interest in hosting the graduates only 293 firms were eventually approved, and constituting only 14.65 per cent. From this observation we argue that from the beginning of the SURE-P there appears to be a serious problem when we consider the number of applicant 85000 and with only 50000 selected and to be spread across 293 firms, it means that each firm had to accommodate 170 graduates with different discipline for training and thus putting strains on training equipment, tools and trainers or resource persons. In addition, the success of the first phase of the SURE-P programme is yet to be known and specifically how many of the 50000 graduates (youth) are functionally or productively engaged after the training. The lack of information on the success or not of the first phase of the

programme may be considered as a manifestation of poor implementation and training process that has been a characteristic feature of most youth unemployment programmes. For instance data on the success of earlier programmes shows that thousands of youths receive training but only a few are provided with tools and necessary equipment to establish and run their own business as capture in the body of literature above.

The inability of government to provide majority of the trained unemployed youths with tools and equipment to establish and run their own business, we argue is an indication that the programmes are yet to record meaningful success. Unemployed youths have been trained and yet are not able to productively contribute to development and are rather left disillusioned and at the same time frustrated and the situation constitute threat to national security. In this regard, Ademola (2013) argued that massive unemployment has made youth in the country to become elements of destabilisation and threat to socio-economic development and peace as more youths are now used by unscrupulous politicians to cause havoc in the country.

Generally most of the public policies and programmes directed at youth unemployment in Nigeria have been marred with challenges such as inadequate funding, poor administration and implementation (monitoring and coordination), inconsistent policies and duplications (split among range of ministries and agencies) unqualified resource personnel handling training programme, training not supplemented or accompanied by soft-loans to start –up capital and the lumping together of all categories of unemployed and without distinctions on the basis of education, experience and willingness to learn (see Tunji 2014:5).

IV. Youth And Unemployment In Nigeria's Democratic Environment: Implication For National Security and Development

The growing concern and attention which youth unemployment, national security and development enjoys in Nigeria's democratic environment is predicated on the fact that internal security crises have become an alarming situation in the fourth republic and threatens national unity and cohesion, and also undermines development in general. And despite persistent efforts to reduce the rate of unemployment and particularly youth unemployment, government effort seems ineffective as have been exemplified in compilations made in tables 1-4 above showing unemployment situation in Nigeria from 2008 to 2011 and the most affected age category 15-34, who are termed youths and the most active labour force for facilitating any form of development. Unemployment among youth serves as trigger to violent conflicts and a threat to national security and development. For instance, David and Yusuf (2015) argued that over 300 violent conflicts occurred between May 1999 and December 2014 and unemployed youths have been linked to the execution of over 90 per cent of these conflicts. This constitutes threats to national security and development because youths are not positively engaged in the productive process through suitable and adequate employment so as to become assets for national security and development, their energies and potentials are not harnessed to enhance national security and to positively contribute to socioeconomic development.

The implication of youth unemployment on national security and development are enormous, and more so as national security has to do with freedom from danger or threats to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest, and advance the well-being of its people. The promotion of this cherished values and legitimate interest for the enhancement of the well-being of the people have as central to it, access to employment opportunities, because youths constitute the larger, viable and productive force of a nation and particularly Nigeria with about 70 per cent of its population as youths. And where Nigeria's 100 Universities as observed by David (2010); Soludo(2006) in Freedom (2010); and Attah, Audu and Haruna (2013) graduates annually either 130000; 200000 or 300000 youths into the labour market, and with only about 10 per cent of each of the category of educated youths, are able to secure paid employment. The implication is that 90 per cent of the unemployed are left wondering the streets frustrated and disillusioned and the nation is unable to harness the knowledge and skills acquired through educational training for productive development. In other words if we calculate the average of the figures provided by these scholars it means that 210000 youth from our universities join the labour market annually; and still if we limit this calculation to just 13 years under the fourth republic we will have a total of 2730000 graduates and only 10 per cent of these have access to paid employment while 90 per cent don't have the opportunity to secure suitable employment. In addition, the exclusion of large population of youth either university graduates or secondary school leavers, skilled and unskilled from attaining the expected level of development increase the risks of violence. For instance in 2012 FOS reported that 3.2 million youth Nigeria did not proceed to secondary and tertiary education and this does not include those that were not enrolled in formal education that is the almajiri. These youths as have been shown in the body of literature in the work become viable tools for exploitation, hired as political thugs or militia as well as ethno-religious crusaders against perceived injustice. And according to Yomi and Opurene (2006) the alternative for some of the unfortunate ones (unemployed youths) is to develop relationship with rich, irresponsible and corrupt politicians and money bags that portray themselves as their patron and use them as their accomplices. It is further stressed by Fanimo and Kehinde (2011) that crime which used to be the exclusive preserve of renegades and largely illiterate crooks are now being perpetrated by tertiary

institution graduates. This means national security and development are threatened by the spate of political, ethno-religious, inter and intra-communal and other forms of violent outburst in Nigeria of which unemployed youth are used as executors and perpetrators. Economic growth, development of human capital and physical quality of life cannot be enhanced in conflict and violent-prone zones and no geopolitical zone in Nigeria has been immune to violent conflicts in this fourth republic. Lack of safety and security directly affects the welfare of the whole population; it can cause injury and death (as over 30000 lives are reported to have been lost to the over 300 violent conflicts under 14 years of democracy), reduce income and generate a climate of fear. In addition the climate of insecurity usually created by violent conflicts deters investments. It is an established fact that an insecure, crises-and-violence ridden polity can never attract foreign investment. Where the polity is scaring away foreign investments, the economy becomes stagnant and a typical example is the militant youth violent acts of kidnapping and Boko Haram terrorist activities that have affected the business environment and investment generally. Beside persistent violence retards growth and development, because development can only take place under a peaceful atmosphere. Furthermore, national unity and social integration cannot be achieved in unstable environment. Generally, insecurity displaces persons, discourages investment, limits economic growth and alters the composition of government spending and, therefore, hinders future growth and development. For instance, as a result of insecurity, the 2012 budget allocated over ₦900 billion to security and despite this the security situation in the North-East (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe) worsen since 2012 (over 15 local government areas being terrorized and resident displaced by Boko Haram militant sect activities made up of mostly unemployed youth and ex-almajiri's). The situation according to Obasanjo (2004) retards development, scares away investors, stultifies creativity and contaminates social relations.

V. Conclusion

Unemployment is a development and national security concern that all governments of the globe are confronted with, and more so when the larger population of the unemployed in a polity are youths. The body of literatures above has demonstrated that unemployment rate in Nigeria is high and the most affected are youths who constitute about 70 per cent of Nigeria's population and with about 60 per cent as unemployed. The programmes that have been initiated to reduce unemployment among youths have not really succeeded as most of the youth's trained under such programmes are not provided with the necessary tools and equipment to establish and run their own business so as to generate more jobs for other youths. The inability of government to productively engage unemployed youths that have been trained to contribute to development and to enhance national security leaves these youths in state of disillusionment and also frustrated and as such the situation constitute threat to national security. Our analysis shows that government trained 688942 unemployed youths in four different skill development programmes and only 17878 (2.67 per cent) were provided with tools and equipment to establish and run their own business. This development is not encouraging as majority of the unemployed youth trained are left unemployed even after training, and the skills acquired from the training is not harness to engender development and to foster national security. As such this constitutes waste in financial and material resources as well as human manpower development. Furthermore over 210000 graduates from our universities join the labour market annually and only about 10 per cent of this figure are able to secure paid employment, while 2.2 million primary and 1million secondary school leavers not proceeding to either secondary school and tertiary level of education respectively and as such Nigeria's democratic environment becomes saturated high number of unemployed youth. We then conclude by stating that massive unemployment among youths has made the youths in Nigeria to become elements of destabilisation and threat to socio-economic development and peace as more unemployed youths are now used by unscrupulous politicians to cause havoc in the country and this threatens Nigeria's national security and development.

VI. Recommendation

The paper examined youth and unemployment in Nigeria's democratic environment and has established that unemployment among youth constitute threats to national security and development as this group are often recruited and used by unscrupulous political elites and their associates in the polity to perpetrate violent acts for their benefit. An environment that is characterised by insecurity scare away investors and this reduces the chances to create more jobs that could productively engender development. We therefore recommend that: political elites in Nigeria should adhere to constitutional provisions and to urgently provide suitable employment for the millions of unemployed youths roaming the streets for unavailable jobs; government should do more by providing the unemployed youths trained annually with the requisite tools and equipment to establish and run their own business; students (youths) should see themselves as entrepreneurs rather than job seekers and should not see university education as a precondition to economic pursuit but both should be complimentary; the Central Bank of Nigeria should ease lending rate so that more businesses can be set up to create more employment; government should endeavour to improve on energy (power generation)

supply to boost small and medium scale business and also employment in the agricultural sector; and finally government should create an enabling environment to attract more foreign investors and for the private sector to thrive better to create employment.

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