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**ALIENATING UNEMPLOYMENT THROUGH SKILL DEVELOPMENT
IN BUSINESS EDUCATION**

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INTRODUCTION:

A nation becomes concerned with the issue of economic survival when it is operating at a level of economic activity and in circumstances which are perceived by that country as threatening the retention by it of that degree of freedom to take or exercise economic, social and political initiatives consistent with sovereign and independent status. If in a bid to keep the economy on an even keel, or strong foundation, without courting social disruption, a nation recognises that the instruments available for achieving that objective would compromise control over its internal affairs and its external relations, that nation has cause to be genuinely concerned with the subject of survival (Onosode 1984).

In order to revisit some features of our ailing economy, Kolade (1985) enumerated the symptoms as:

-Low productivity and poor productivity: i.e. we do not produce anything near enough to meet our needs and moreover, because of poor efficiencies, the amount of production, which we generate, is far below the levels, which we should be achieving.

-An over-dependence on other people's resources: i.e. these may be raw materials, machinery, expertise or technology. The cost and availability of such resources are dictated by those to whom they belong, and over dependence on them places us often at the mercy of foreign interests.

Under-utilization of our capacity and resources: This means that, dependence on other people is bound to be compounded and prolonged by our failure to make full use of our own capacity.

The high costs of inputs to production: This relates not only to the raw materials, but also to labour, and infrastructural services, put into the production process at cost which make the prices of our end-products near prohibitive. One result is that Nigeria-made goods find it difficult to compete in terms of price on the export market.

The inefficiency of public utilities and infrastructural provisions of Electricity power (NEPA) and water, which is supposed to be supplied by our public utilities are available in unreliable quantity and quality; and cannot yet provide a sure base for meaningful and uninterrupted economic activity.

The scarcity and high costs of Essential items: commonly referred to as "Essential Commodity". We have witnessed and still experiencing the situation when many Nigerians cannot often obtain

what they perceive as essential as essential to their living, and when they can obtain it, they sometimes cannot afford it .

Some social scientists have attributed Nigeria's economic backwardness and slum to lack of manpower and technology. They believe that for Nigeria to join the club of developed nations, she must have adequate skilled manpower and be technologically developed. i.e. (the ability to produce capital and consumer goods and their components.)

However, these dangers of Nigeria's economic problems may not be exhaustive, therefore, this paper will deal only on the aspects which business education has a major role to play. The paper looks at the danger of unemployment in a nation's economy; identifies some strategies in promoting employment within the context of economic revival and sees Business Education as able to meets the needs towards greater promotion of employment. Although, this paper directs its attention on the unemployment problem of the country's economy, that does not mean that other problems are less important.

TYPES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

The word "unemployment" has become a common phenomenon in every nation's economy as one of those aspects a nation struggles to reduce in order to improve the life of the citizens.

Egwu (1984) quoting Orwell, in his works summarized unemployment as:

"the frightful doom of a decent working man sudden thrown on the streets after a lifetime of steady work, his agonized struggles against economic laws, which he does not understand, the disintegration of families and the corroding sense of shame" .

He said that unemployment as we may perceive, has two major dimensions,

- (a) The hidden dimension and
- (b) The open dimension.

The hidden dimension, according to his, takes care of unskilled/skilled, able-bodied men and women in our society who do not seek for, and are not under any form of regular salary/wages employment. In Nigeria, this category comprises millions of the citizens who are engaged in farming, petty trading, cattle rearing, fishing, truck pushing, brick-laying and various moon-light activities such as prostitute, park-touting, burglary and armed-robbery. As far as modern (Industrial & Organization) meaning of work is concerned, this category of individuals are unemployed.

The second dimension is of more immediate interest. This is the open dimension as put by Egwu (1984). Under this category are the unskilled, sometimes well-educated and able-bodied men and women in our society, who openly and actively seek for employment but cannot get one, as well as those who have been deprived of their employed work-life patterns through retrenchment, dismissals and terminations probably for want of particular skills required for production or non-matching skill to job.

In Nigeria, category comprises millions of graduates from our primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions, who are seeking for salary/wage-related job opportunities in Nigerian organizations, but cannot get them. It also comprises thousands who have been laid off their jobs in recent years and have themselves been unemployed. This is the area of great concern and which requires immediate attention.

INFLUENCE OF WORK ON INDIVIDUAL:

Work is a central part of life and of society. In fact it is an acknowledged fact that the personality and individual well being of human beings are influence by work and institutions of employment. Work is very important in providing answer to the questions such as "Who am I?" The answer of which can be found in institutionalized status and roles such as "I am a Doctor, Secretary, Accountant, Engineer, Architect, a student and/or other job/work-related status or roles. One without work or a job, would therefore seem to be a nobody. He is a dispossessed adult – one for whom the social anchored indicators of self and personality have no meaning. The life of the sure basis for the destruction of an individual's psychological well being.

Work is an identity symbol in our society. It creates conditions and feedbacks necessary for personal and social identification. Employment and unemployment, therefore, have different effects on human personality and identity, self-concept and dignify. When somebody is unemployed particularly for a long time, he experiences a disturbance of symbolic balance. For the undergraduate, trained manger, teacher, pilot, engineer, secretary etc. Loss of employment may mean loss of status symbols. Without work, these people and others cannot locate themselves sentimentally nor can they declare to self and others who they are. If they remain or are? Long – term unemployed, they say enter into various undesirable activities such as heavy drinking and smoking, drug usage and abuse, loitering and wandering, prostitution, stealing and robbery, murder etc. The society should make every effort through provision of employment. (Egwu 1984).

In Nigeria today, we hear and read everyday of discharged unemployed soldiers engaging in armed robbery; or unemployed school leavers and graduates engaging in robbery, drug abuse, and all sorts of rebellious activities against society; of police picking up hundreds of unemployed; idle people every night in the big cities, because they are unemployed. For the police, such people are up to mischief very quickly.

The greatest danger posed to society by a great number of the unemployed is that such people are capable of destroying the society. Economically, the society loses a great deal when it cannot put to work so many millions of hands.

According to Harbinson (1973) resources are the wealth of nations. He said:

"Human resources – not capital nor income nor material resources – constitute the ultimate basis of the wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production; human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social economic and political organizations and carry forward national developments. A country which is unable to develop the skill and the knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else".

That statement underscores the danger of unemployment and under-employment for any nation. A report of labour Force Survey published in 1987 revealed that the survey carried out by the Federal office of statistics, shows results of unemployment rate in urban areas was 9.1% as against 9.8% in December 1985.

The report also revealed that the bulk of the unemployed continue to be secondary school leavers which accounted for 67.4% of the total unemployment in the urban and 54.5% in the rural areas.

Also as high as 73.4% in the rural areas. Those aged 45 to 59 years accounted for only 4% in both rural and urban areas.

Although the unemployment rate fell in 1986 compared with 1985, yet it can be observed that the vast majority of the unemployed are school leavers and/or graduates as well as some unskilled.

The unemployment among school leavers especially graduates has always been attributed to the fact that most graduates were ill-equipped with sufficient skill content for a particular job. Take for instance; our society is guilty of the offence of employing holders of degree in Geography, History, Government, Agriculture and other liberal arts into the administrative position. Such people when given employment end up in poor performance of their function thereby leading to retrenchment or other.

THE ROLE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION

The technical and vocational education, of which Business Education is a part, plays a vital role in greater promotion of employment in Nigeria. Prior to the present policy on education, there had been criticism in Nigeria's education and training system, which were placed under two major categories. Firstly, the system was not geared effectively enough to the realities and needs of the labour market. That is, the educational system was not adequately employment oriented. Secondly, there was insufficient application of the system's facilities and manpower towards solution of the Country's most pressing development problem. That is, it was not adequately service-oriented.

This indicates that the educational and training policies followed had not been properly geared to the needs of the economy. On one hand, they have not been able to produce sufficient skilled persons to meet the needs of the economy. (Oladebo 1978).

Business enterprises both private and public is the engine that supplies power to Nigeria's economy and education is one of the primary fuels of that engine. There is general contention that our society and our free enterprise system can survive only with an educated, economically, skilled literate population. Recognizing the need for this type of literacy, the present National Policy on Education focuses greater attention on vocational skill of the graduates both at secondary and tertiary level. The vocational skills acquired by graduates are saleable on the labour market either by employing themselves or be employed.

Business Education, parts of vocational/Technical Education plays an important role as the major of vocational and consumer education. Literally, business educators teach students how to "make a living" as well as to develop and successfully operate their personal and family financial plans.

Abdulkadir (1985) stressed that manpower requirement in our economy is vast. This resource is important in terms of entrepreneurial skill, skilled and semi-skilled people required to man various projects. He contents that these skills are greatly in demand despite increasing output of the country's educational system from year to year. The required skills such as engineers, technicians, as well as business skills are in short supply. There is the need for supplementing formal education with relevant vocational and industrial training programme.

Levitan (1976) asserted that vocational training and academic education are often viewed as alternative ways of preparing for employment, as skill training and educational attainment are positively correlated largely because vocational training ordinarily become available during the

last two years of high school". This is applicable to our present system that the junior and senior secondary school graduates are required to acquire some saleable skills.

Since manpower is defined as the productive employment capacity of human being, nearly institution that affects our lives has an impact on manpower development. The basic assumption is that preparation for a working career is among the most important education's many objectives. Thus no one without the requisites for employability, including a saleable skill, can be considered educated. At the same time, skill preparation should neither supplant other general education objectives nor be so structured that the individual will not be able to realize his true potential. (Levitan 1976).

It is from this premise that the concepts of career education have emerged. Some of the techniques for accomplishing this goal are preliminary school orientation to the world of work, information and training in occupational choice integration of academic and vocational content so that each serves as a vehicle for the other. Fortunately, the nature of our present policy on education is geared towards the attainment of that concept. Business educators therefore, owe this nation the role for proper, diligent and dedicated teaching proficiency and also willingness to produce well-trained and competent personnel for various (specific) jobs. Whatever training and skill acquired must be tied with competency, which is needed of every graduate for specific job on the market.

Functional competency according to Banjo (1984) has the following elements:

- (a) Possession of the knowledge/know-how required for a particular occupational role,
- (b) Skill in the application of such knowledge/know-how,
- (c) Ability to select and apply successfully the requisite knowledge/know-how to the solution of problems in one's sphere of work.
- (d) The drive and the industry to discharge successfully the functions of the occupational role being occupied.

It can be seen from this breakdown that competence is not a casual attribute neither is it a quality to be conferred by an appointment. It is an individual property, dependent on the character and natural endowments of that individual property, dependent on the character and natural endowments of that individual. It is developed by education and training and a drive from within (inside the) an individual to be good at what he does.

Vocational/Business education, a significant area in current public education, stands ready as a whole. Business Education does not cost, it pays – literally. It can meet the needs of the nation in her economic revival for greater promotion of employment if it remains a strong part of secondary school curriculum.

SUMMARY

Unemployment in Nigeria is one of the features of our ailing economy. It has become a common phenomenon in every nation's economy as one of those aspects a nation struggles in a society, for it creates identify crises, which thus results after long-term, into various undesirable activities. This has been witnessed and the society loses a great deal when it cannot put to work so many millions of hands.

Unemployment especially among school leavers, has always been attributed to the fact that most graduates were ill-equipped with sufficient skill contents for a particular job.

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