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UNEMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIA

Abstract: the article describes one of the major economic problems in the country, its progression over the last five years, the causes of this economical problem, its effect on the economy and productivity of the country in general, the efforts of the government in resolving this issue and measures that can be taken to alleviate the condition to its barest minimum. Unemployment is an issue affecting several countries of the world; however, it is needful to pay attention to the rapid rate at which it increases and shows no sign of getting better.

Key words: unemployment, Nigeria, economy

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БЕЗРАБОТИЦА В НИГЕРИИ

Аннотация: статья описывает одну из основных экономических проблем в стране, его развитие за последние пять лет, причины этой экономической проблемы, его влияние на экономику и производительность страны в целом, усилия правительства в решении этого вопроса и меры, которые могут быть приняты, чтобы облегчить его состояние до самого минимального. Безработица является проблемой, затрагивающей несколько стран мира; тем не менее, необходимо обратить внимание на быструю скорость, с которой она увеличивается и не показывает признаков улучшения.

Ключевые слова: безработица, Нигерия, экономика.

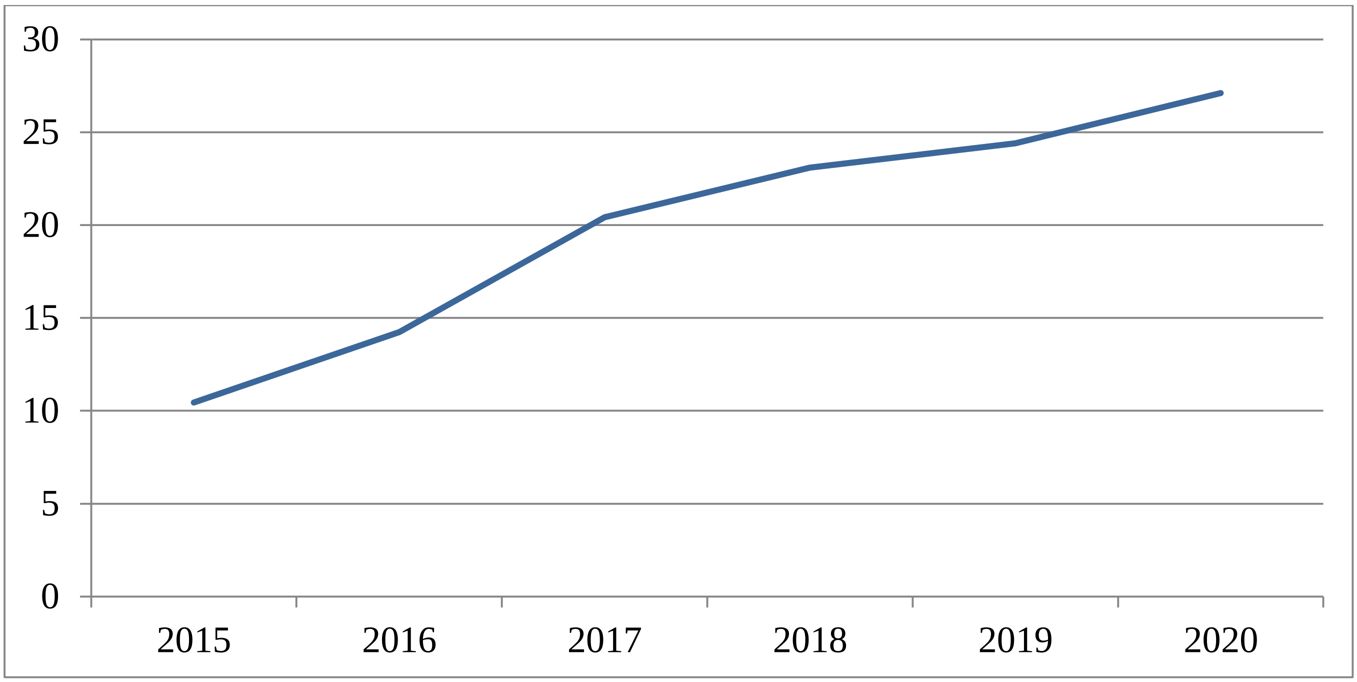
Nigeria is known to be one of the largest countries in Africa in terms of land mass and the largest in terms of population of over 206 million people. The country is rich with a lot of mineral resources ranging from; gold, iron, lead, tin, copper and of course oil. In fact, several years ago, the country was among the largest producers of oil in the country however, it is not so at the moment. Besides the numeral abundant resources in the country, the soil is rich and extremely good for agriculture. The agricultural sector accounts for 21.96% of the country’s economy with higher values in previous years. It also employs 34.66% of the entire working population in the country. We can also address the fact that Nigeria has an active labour force of 52.7%, a very high working population, good climate, low risks of natural disasters and a youth literacy of 72.8%. This goes a long way in highlighting that Nigeria has the potential of having a good and stable economy and issues such as unemployment should be minimal [2].

The current statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics shows that the rate of unemployment has greatly increased over the past five years and from the figures, if drastic steps are not taken and put in place; there is a chance it will continue to rise as the population rises on a daily basis and with the huge decline in the economy. Let us take a look at the data showcasing the rates of unemployment in comparison with the GDP in the past five years (table 1).

Table 1-Unemployment rate in Nigeria in 2016-2020

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
10.44%	14.23%	20.42%	23.1%	24.4%	27.1%

Table 1 shows the percentage rate of unemployment in Nigeria over the past five years.



Graph 1-Unemployment rate in Nigeria n 2015-2020

The graph above shows the rapid increase in the rate of employment over the last five years. In the year 2015, the rate of employment was about 10.44% and it increased greatly the following year to the rate of 14.23%, this rate continued to increase as the following year, it increased to 20.42%. In the year 2018 the rate of unemployment further increased to the rate of 23.1% and in the year 2019 it moved on to 24.4% and presently, it is at the rate of 27.1% and there are chances of it increasing before the next year [3].

The worst part about the situation is that the population is also increasing daily while the economy is declining in contrast. Studies even showed that most of those who managed to get jobs are not happy with it and are only doing it because they have no choice. Majority are underpaid and are not getting equal compensation for their efforts. This tells us how important it is for the problem to be solved as it has the potential of causing major economic problems for the country in the foreseeable future.

Unemployment has taken a large toll on the country. It can be said to be one of the major causes of poverty and the sky-rocketing rate of social vices in the country. Graduates who have spent several years in the university and have graduated with excellent grades find it difficult to get jobs some end up with menial jobs in order to earn a living and those who aren't patient enough engage in criminal activities such as fraud and robbery and this constitutes a huge nuisance to the society and also exposes citizens to insecurity [1].

Due to the rate of unemployment, citizens live their countries and take their labour and skill resources to urban cities and other countries leading to underdevelopment. This economic issue is not to be handled with levity as it constitutes to a great deal of problems to the economy and security of the country as a whole.

Having realised the severity of the situation at hand, it is important to know reasons for the problem. When the source is known, it is easy to find ways of providing solutions. The causes of unemployment in the country are a handful. However, there are certain ones that cannot be ignored.

In comparison with the current economic situation at the moment and the rate of unemployment with far back in the 1900's, the economy has greatly declined this majorly because of the diversification of the economy at that time. Nigeria has a lot of mineral resources it can use to improve the economy but they have been neglected and exploited, the major focus of the government is on crude oil which should not be so. Crude oil only provides employment opportunities for minority of the population while Agriculture on the other hand has the ability to employ majority of the population and in actual fact, it is responsible for 70% of the labour force while oil only provides employment for only 0.01% of the entire population despite being responsible for 70% of the entire revenue of the government. This goes a long way in showing us that, if more attention is placed into the agricultural sector, which holds greater opportunities for the citizen, it would go a long way in reducing the rate of employment. Most of the employment opportunities in the oil sector requires an average or a great deal of education but the opportunities in agriculture are endless, from farming, poultry, fishery, export of agricultural products, sale and marketing of these products, conversion of these products into packaged goods and many more. It requires little or no formal training to be employed in this sector and this gives all the citizens equal rights to get employed.

Another factor responsible for unemployment in the country is the margin of the rapid growing population in contrast with the declining economy. Nigeria has the highest population in Africa but unfortunately the economy is not good enough to take care of this population. The only advantage the population has is that majority are youths. If country has enough monetary resources to fend for the country then this would have been advantageous instead of the other way around [2].

One cannot help but wonder why a country with so much natural resources, good land and an active labour force is facing a great deal of economic problems. These resources in the country should be a major source of attraction to foreign investors but unfortunately it is not the case. This is because of the lack of basic infrastructure such as bad roads, poor electricity which in turn leads to high cost of production. Compared to the 1800’s and 1900’s, Nigeria had a lot of foreign investors such as Michelin and Dunlop but they have all left the country as the production costs did not favour them. Some of the ones still around have reportedly sacked half of its employee’s whilst complaining about the poor infrastructure, recession and economic meltdown in the country while others are also preparing to relocate. A great number of foreign investors in the country would have greatly minimised the rate of unemployment.

One of the general and popular opinions from various points of view about the causes of unemployment is always traced back to the government and their poor management of resources. Some government officials have been caught on several occasions in possession of huge amounts of money which should have been for the development of the country. In better terms, corruption is evident in their affairs. If economic issues like these are made priorities instead of other unimportant ventures then the problem would have been solved a long time ago. Besides the fact that some officials are corrupt, the government are responsible for the country and are in the best position to put an end to whatever situation the citizens are facing in the country. They are in the best position to create more employment opportunities for citizens; therefore, majority of the blame and workload rests on them [3].

Now that the causes of this economic problem have been highlighted, we should move on to the solutions that can help to reduce it to the barest minimum. The first is to diversify the economy; the government should strive to develop other sectors such as the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. This will not just go a long way in contributing massively to the government's revenue but it will also create employment opportunities for the citizens.

Improving the educational sector by providing good and quality education for students and equipping them with world standard skills will also go a long way in reducing the unemployment rate of the country as the graduates will be experts in their various skills of study and be open to various employment opportunities.

Another way to reduce the rate of unemployment is to improve the infrastructure and security of the country in order to make the country conducive and attractive enough for foreign investors. This will open doors of employment to unemployed job seekers.

The government also has a huge role to play; officials in charge of finances must be checked and monitored in order to prevent embezzlement. Funds should be properly managed and not spent on unnecessary expenses. The government should also provide grants and funds for people to start and develop their businesses. Financial loans should be provided for individuals as this will create more job opportunities for individuals [1].

One important thing to note is that the government will try its best most of the time but their best may not be good for everyone; therefore, the citizens need to learn to be independent and not to depend on the government for employment opportunities all the time. Citizens should learn skills and make use of their natural abilities to fend for themselves when the need arises.

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