

## Challenges confronting National Directorate of Employment in Job Creation in Southwestern, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Unemployment has become a major problem bedeviling the lives of Nigerian youths causing frustration, dejection, and dependency on family members and friends, who also have their lots of problems to grapple with. The piercing rate of unemployment among the youths in Nigeria has contributed to the high rate of heinous practices such as militancy, Boko Haram insurgency, drug trafficking, kidnapping, armed robbery, prostitution, smuggling, and insecurity of all kinds. Thus, productive and decent job creation is a vital means of income and security. However, curbing unemployment becomes crucial to achieving inclusive growth in Nigeria by creating a largely mutual chance for to everyone be employable in the agricultural, manufacturing, and industrial sectors of the economy. To create self-dependency and gainful employment that can lead to inclusive growth in Nigeria, certain governmental programmes and policies were inaugurated such as the introduction of vocational courses in the educational curriculum in 1997, the creation of the National Directorate of Employment in 1986 solely for skills acquisition; industrialization programmes and policies; the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy designed in 2004 with one of its goals tuned towards fighting unemployment and the Agricultural programmes and policies geared at generating employment for graduates, non-graduates and school leavers in the Agricultural sector coupled with election promises (Abada *et al*, 2021). Despite these measures, the unemployment rate has not declined rather it continues to rise.

**Key words:** Youth unemployment; National directorate of employment; Rural employment

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was established to address unemployment through job creation and training programmes. Despite its efforts, challenges such as insufficient job creation persist, highlighting the ongoing issue of unemployment in Nigeria.

The National Directorate of Employment was mandated to plan and execute initiatives aimed at reducing mass unemployment, as well as clarify policies aimed at promoting labor-intensive work plans. Its mission is to address employment issues short-term as well as long-term by establishing and executing job-creation and job-related training programs. In 1987, the Directorate began four well-articulated employment-generating programs to carry out these legislative tasks. Since then, the program's skill acquisition component has provided unskilled adolescents with occupational skills, allowing them to

find while the labor-intensive and loan-granting enterprises have hired several gifted but jobless youths (NDE Annual Report, 2013).

The Directorate uses training as a vehicle for stimulating youth interest in taking agriculture as a vocation and discovering agricultural value-chain business possibilities that may lead to the development of jobs and wealth as well as the resettlement of trained beneficiaries to start their small-scale agro-allied and agro-based

ventures yet the challenge of unemployment seem not to be abated.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

### 2.1 Youth Unemployment

Numerous factors contribute to youth unemployment. The primary cause is weak macroeconomic performance which impacts the economy as a whole and youth in particular (Ryan, 2001). Another significant factor is the lack of job creation which impacts youth the most when the economy is unable to generate new jobs. Other factors that affect youth unemployment include the length of the educational process, increased participation in education, higher education levels, higher wages, unfavorable working conditions, lack of experience, mismatch between skills and labor market needs, etc. Since they are the most vulnerable demographic in the labor market, young people are typically severely impacted by the crisis. Youth must therefore get special consideration when policy and regulations are reviewed. Due to their lack of work experience, low social capital, lack of unique information about the organization, shorter years of service, and thus low redundancy payments, young people are particularly vulnerable. Thus, during a recession, employers would rather fire youthful employees first (Churchill & Khan, 2021). Inadequate growth performance in economies is the most important determinant of young unemployment level, especially during the crisis period. Young people may also be more likely than adult workers to quit on their own volition since they would rather look into other career options. (Jiang, 2023). Higher rates of youth unemployment are also a result of the growing youth population. The labor market's supply and demand balance is distorted by this issue. Due to their lack of work experience, youth also face more obstacles when they want to enter the workforce. Young people are prevented from becoming successful business owners by having shorter credit histories and limited access to business networks (Igwe *et al*, 2020).

### 2.2 National Directorate of Employment

The capacity of a nation or nations to enhance the social welfare of its citizens, for example, by providing jobs and social amenities like clean water, transportation, healthcare, and high-quality education, is known as national development. It could also be used to describe a country's capacity to raise the standard of living for its people. Improvements can be measured in material terms, like a rise in the GDP, or in social terms, such as healthcare accessibility and literacy rates. National development plans and strategies are created by federal governments using the views of their constituents as a basis. Among these are those that prioritize community development, accessible and inexpensive housing, and the

reduction of poverty. Improving the lives of the concerned citizens is the aim of every national development, and it must be done so in the framework of a developing economy and a focus on the welfare of the community at large.

Decree No. 34 of 1989 mandated the National Directorate of Employment to plan and execute initiatives aimed at reducing mass unemployment, as well as clarify policies aimed at promoting labor-intensive work plans. Its mission is to address employment issues short-term as well as long-term by establishing and executing job-creation and job-related training programmes. In 1987, the Directorate began four well-articulated employment-generating programmes to carry out these legislative tasks. Since then, the programme's skill acquisition component has provided unskilled adolescents with occupational skills, allowing them to find while the labor-intensive and loan-granting enterprises have hired several gifted but jobless youths (NDE Annual Report, 2013).

#### 2.2.1 Rural Employment Promotion (REP)

The Rural Employment Promotion Programme according to the NDE Annual Report (2013) was designed to create employment for the rural populace and enhance rural income via Agricultural Production. These laudable aims are achieved through skills impartation in modern farming and micro-credit support in postharvest handling, production, processing, storage, etc. The programme also promotes training on non-farm rural employment activities. In addition to stimulating the rural economy, it also reduces rural-urban drift.

The strategies adopted by the department in implementing the Directorate's agricultural job creation programmes are as follows:

- Training as a vehicle for stimulating youth interest in taking agriculture as a vocation and to discover agricultural value-chain business possibilities that may lead to the development of jobs and wealth.
- Resettlement of trained beneficiaries to start their small-scale agro-allied and agro-based ventures.

The objectives of the Rural Employment Promotion Programme are actualized through the under-listed schemes viz:

- i. Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme (RADTS).
- ii. Integrated Farming Training Scheme (IFTS).
- iii. Post Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme (PRADTS).

#### i. Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme (RADTS)

The Rural Agricultural Development Teaching Scheme uses an integrated farming demonstration and training method, which includes on-site practical as well as lectures and tutorials on current agricultural challenges (crop cultivation and animal raising). Life skills training, interpersonal communication, problem identification and

solving methods, decision-making, and customer service abilities are among the other ways used. The lectures are given by seasoned academics drawn from within tertiary institutions.

#### **ii. Integrated Farming Training Scheme (IFTS)**

The Integrated Farming Training Scheme is designed to provide graduates from Nigeria's postsecondary institutions with the necessary skills for operating mixed farming operations as Agro-Entrepreneurs. The scheme's concept is based on the Mixed Farming Project, which raises livestock and crops side by side. It is mostly focused on rural areas, with the main goal of empowering unemployed graduates through capacity building and the distribution of startup kits for poultry and crop farming operations.

Coaching on life skills, interpersonal communication, customer service skills, and the advancement of success attitudes, as well as livestock management, crop production, and agribusiness, is included in the training component. Beneficiaries will be empowered with a financial package to start mixed farms at the IFTS centers as an incubation site for three years before migrating to their permanent sites. Each benefactor has entry to one hectare of land for crop production, as well as pens/kraals for livestock or fish, working capital for operations, advisory layer support, and mentoring on technical and financial planning to guarantee the effectiveness of the farming enterprises at the implantation centers.

#### **iii. Post-Rural Agricultural Development Training Scheme (PRADTS)**

The Post-RADTS training is aimed at improving the knowledge of graduates of the prior Rural Agricultural Training and Development Scheme on specific agricultural business skills (NDE Annual Report, 2013).

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

This work adopts Herbert Spencer's (1898) Structural Functionalism Theory in order to contextualise its line of analysis. The theory addressed the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) is the structure created and charged with the responsibility of creating employment in the Nigeria political system. Although all political systems are multi-functional yet some structures are specially suited for specific functions. For instance, the NDE as a structure in the Nigeria political system is specially designed to perform the function of job creation.

As a technique of addressing a country's unemployment problem, it looks to be more relevant to the Nigerian condition and will be used in this study thesis. This is because, when it was founded, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) was tasked with creating and executing employment-related training and job development programmes to address both short-term and long-term employment challenges.

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) is the structure created and charged with the responsibility of creating employment in the Nigeria political system. Although, all political systems are multi-functional yet some structures are specially suited for specific functions.

Vocational Skills Development (VSD), Small Scale Enterprises (SSE), Rural Employment Promotion (REP), and Special Public Works (SPW) are only four of the Directorate's four programme sections (SPW), all of which are attempting to employ more low-skilled labour with the same amount of capital investment as large-scale industry.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The research was conducted in Southwestern, Nigeria, one of the geopolitical zones, comprising the states of Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo. This region is predominantly Yoruba-speaking, although various dialects exist even within the same state. Nigeria experiences two distinct seasons: the rainy season (March-November) and the dry season (December-February). For this study, one state was selected from each axis (Lagos-Ogun, Osun-Oyo, Ondo-Ekiti) with Lagos, Ondo, and Osun States chosen. Lagos State is a key economic hub in Nigeria and the most densely populated State in the Country. It boasts the nation's largest urban area and is considered Africa's fifth-largest economy. Ogun State shares borders with Lagos State to the north and east, and with the Republic of Benin to the west, with the Atlantic Ocean forming its southern border.

Ondo State is situated in southwest Nigeria and derives its name from the Ondo River. It shares boundaries with Ekiti state to the north, Kogi State to the northeast, Edo State to the east, and Delta State to the south is named after the Ondo River. North of Ondo State is Ekiti State; northeast is Kogi State; east is Edo State, Delta State to the South, and Osun State to the West. Ondo State is known as the "sunshine State" and is dominated by the petroleum sector, with significant coastline, and production and asphalt mining.

The study population comprises beneficiaries and staff of the National Directorate of Employment in Southwestern Nigeria. A total of 3,251 individuals have benefited from the Rural Employment Promotion from 2010-2019 with 1,012 in Lagos State, 1,117 in Osun State, and 1,122 in Ondo State. Questionnaires were administered to 325 respondents, and 30 beneficiaries were interviewed (10 in Lagos, Ondo, and Osun States).

Questionnaires were administered to 325 respondents, and 30 beneficiaries were interviewed (10 in Lagos, Ondo, and Osun States). Additionally, five staff members from each of the three States, responsible for training and coordination of the programmes were interviewed. Extant data from the National Directorate of Employment about

Ondo, Osun, and Lagos States were collected to validate the triangulation of both primary and secondary data.

Data generated were evaluated using frequency, percentage, mean as well as a standard deviation to

examine the strategies of the rural employment promotion programmes on employment generation in Southwestern Nigeria.

#### 4. RESULTS

**Table 1**  
**Insufficient funding**

Variables	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed	No response	Descriptive statistics	
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	Mean	Standard deviation
Insufficient funding is a major constraint facing the NDE in achieving her mandate objectives	49(16.1)	254(83)	1(0.3)	-	-	1.9046	1.21356

The first variable on the challenges facing the NDE is that insufficient funding was a major constraint facing the NDE in achieving her mandate objectives. The number of intending trainees were far above the funds available, the funds for purchasing the required equipment for training were not adequate as well as low funds for realistic adequate resettlement for beneficiaries. Data shows that this was a major constraint as 49(16.1%) strongly agreed with this assertion and 254(83.3%) corroborated it by

agreeing to the assertion. Only 1(0.3%) disagreed. This data representation shows that beneficiaries lack adequate access to adequate finance and this limited them their capacity to purchase and take-off in their vocation. Lack of adequate finance was a major challenge against the Directorate. The mean value ( $\bar{x}=1.9046$ ;  $SD = 1.21356$ ) further support the assertion that insufficient funding was a major constraint facing the NDE in achieving her mandate objectives.

**Table 2**  
**Most appointed trainers are not committed to the time limit for the participants**

Variables	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed	No response	Descriptive statistics	
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	Mean	Standard deviation
Most appointed trainers are not committed to the time limit for the participants	-	-	-	276(90.5)	-	4.0000	.00000

Another constraint on NDE in discharging her duties was that most appointed trainers were not committed to the time limit for the participants. According to the results in table 4.6, 276(90.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with this assertion. We can infer from this study

that this was not a major challenge for NDE, there were available and committed trainers. The mean value ( $\bar{x} = 4.0000$ ;  $SD = .00000$ ) further supported the assertion that most appointed trainers were not committed to the time limit for the participants.

**Table 3**  
**The Directorate's follow-up programmes to re-settle the participants are not adequate**

Variables	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed	No response	Descriptive statistics	
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	Mean	Standard deviation
The Directorate's follow-up programmes to re-settle the participants are not adequate	48(15.7)	183(60)	18(5.9)	54(17.7)	-	2.2574	.93128

The 3<sup>rd</sup> variable in Table 4.6 is that the Directorate's follow-up programmes to re-settle the participants are not adequate. 48(15.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 183(60%) also agreed with the assertion, 18(5.9%) disagreed while 54(17.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the same assertion. This seemed

as another major challenge against the NDE as many of the respondents agreed with the assertion that it was an obvious constraint in proper follow-up of the beneficiaries. The mean value ( $\bar{x} = 2.2574$ ;  $SD = .93128$ ) further supported the assertion that Directorate's follow-up programmes to re-settle the participants are not adequate.

**Table 4**  
**Few members of the public are aware of NDE programmes**

Variables	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed	No response	Descriptive statistics	
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	Mean	Standard deviation
Few members of the public are aware of NDE programmes	-	254(83.3)	19(6.2)	-	32(10.5)	2.0696	.25493

On the issue of lack of awareness among members of the public of NDE programmes, 254(83.3%) of the

respondents agreed with the assertion while 19(6.2%) disagreed. This further corroborated the fact that

challenges were being faced by the Directorate that stands as a major challenge, one of which many people were not even aware of NDE and what they stand for not to talk of benefitting from their programmes. The mean value ( $\bar{x}$

= 2.0696; SD = .25493) further supported the assertion that lack of awareness of members of the public of NDE programmes is also a challenge faced by the Directorate in fulfilling her mandate.

**Table 5**  
**The youth empowerment scheme does not always make prompt disbursement of loans to the beneficiaries**

Variables	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed	No response	Descriptive statistics	
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	Mean	Standard deviation
The youth empowerment scheme does not always make prompt disbursement of loans to the beneficiaries	-	126(41.3)	17(5.6)	160(52.5)	2(0.7)	3.1122	.96664

Respondents were also asked if the youth empowerment scheme does not always make prompt disbursement of loans to the beneficiaries. 126(41.3%) respondents agreed, 17(5.6%) disagreed with the assertion, while 160(52.5%) strongly disagreed with the assertion.

This implies that loans were relatively disbursed promptly to those who benefitted from the scheme. The mean value ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.1122; SD = .96664) further supported the assertion that the youth empowerment scheme does not always prompt the disbursement of loans to the beneficiaries.

**Table 6**  
**Insufficient manpower, office equipment, and vehicles are other constraints facing the Directorate**

Variables	Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed	No response	Descriptive statistics	
	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	F(%)	Mean	Standard deviation
Insufficient manpower, office equipment, and vehicles are other constraints facing the Directorate	97(31.8)	179(58.7)	2(0.7)	17(5.6)	10(3.3)	1.9864	2.66365

Lastly, the variable in Table 4.6 is to know whether insufficient manpower, office equipment, and vehicles are other constraints facing the Directorate. 97(31.8%) respondents strongly agreed, 179(58.7%) of the respondents corroborated it by agreeing to it, while 2(0.7%) disagreed and 17(5.6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. This result implies that NDE would have been able to do much more than they are doing in carrying out the mandate of job creation but insufficient manpower, office equipment, and vehicles amongst other challenges are hindering them from doing so. The mean value ( $\bar{x}$  = 1.9864; SD = 2.66365) further supported the assertion that insufficient man power, office equipment and vehicles are other constraints facing the Directorate.

collected through the administration of a questionnaire and the conduct of interviews. The study population (3,251) comprised the Staff and beneficiaries of Rural Employment programmes of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Southwestern Nigeria. A Multistage sampling procedure was used for this study.

Several obstacles hindered the implementation of the National Directorate of Employment rural employment creation in southwestern Nigeria. Among the obstacles of the effective implementation in southwestern Nigeria are:

**Inadequate Funding:** a major constraint to NDE's implementation of rural employment creation is inadequate funds made available by the government in running their programmes. For example, funds to buy enough training materials to train many unemployed groups as we all know the issue of unemployment in Nigeria is alarming but what NDE can do with the limited funds made available can only accommodate very few of the unemployed group.

**Lack of appropriate and conducive infrastructure:** this is also a challenge to the effectiveness of the staff at the helm of affairs of the NDE are not well motivated because of the kind of infrastructure and environment they work in, outdated office equipment, office equipment, and vehicles are other constraints facing the Directorate.

**Inadequate follow-up:** The Directorate's follow-up programmes to re-settle the participants were not adequate. The resettlement package was key for take-off for the beneficiary/entrepreneur, but the package given to them was not adequate at all. A lot of the unemployed had been trained as it was gathered during the interview

## 5. MAJOR FINDINGS

According to the study, the National Directorate of Employment was established in 1986 to combat mass unemployment, The Rural Employment Promotion creation was designed to create employment for the rural populace and enhance rural income via Agricultural Production.

The literature x-rayed conceptual issues that identify poverty, agricultural effects, and empowerment/employment generation. The analysis of the literature found that there are numerous opportunities for job creation in Nigeria. Nevertheless, policy alignment and political will among policymakers in Nigeria are critical.

The study adopted a survey research design. Primary and secondary data were utilised. Primary data were

but had not been able to achieve much nor start anything because they were not given a resettlement package or what they were given was too small to start anything tangible. For example, someone who is supposed to start poultry farming and is given 20,000 naira, it may not be realistic, especially with the economic situation where the Naira has depreciated. The person may just end up using the money for other pressing needs like foodstuff or to pay bills. Such a person still comes back to the start where there is no job.

**Inadequate publicity:** Few members of the public were aware of NDE programmes. Many unemployed people were not benefitting from NDE majorly because a lot of them were not privy to the fact that there was a scheme by the government that trains and empowers people, and many who knew about NDE did not know that NDE was doing so much because anything done by the Nigerian government cannot be worthwhile. So many were not taking advantage of this scheme.

**Late disbursement of loans:** this is another constraint to the effectiveness of NDE. There was no prompt disbursement of loans to the beneficiaries because of bureaucracy. So many beneficiaries ended up giving up pursuing the loan when they had waited and pursued it with nothing to show for it.

Knowing there are so many other agencies involved in the job creation mandate, has also affected the effectiveness of NDE in fulfilling her mandate because the allocation meant for job employment creation has to be divided among them.

It was also gathered that some of the politicians who partner with NDE may sometimes supply equipment for political purposes just for people to see that they were performing after which they would cart the materials away from the premises of the NDE.

**Inadequate resettlement package:**

The NDE suffered from inadequate funding from the federal government. Its predicament was worsened by the fact that it had overstretched itself by engaging in skills acquisition, granting of loans, and procuring and selling agricultural inputs such as fertilizers. It had succeeded in recovering less than 60% of its loans. There was also the problem of duplication of efforts with the statutory roles of the federal Ministry of labour and Productivity in the area of compilation of statistics on the unemployed in the country and claims to maintain a data bank of these as well as matching applicants with vacancies. (Monday & Nklekerem, 2020).

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study's conclusions indicate that while the NDE was established as a directorate to reduce unemployment in Nigeria, it has had a mixed record of accomplishments and ongoing difficulties. Therefore, a review of the Directorate's procedures to improve the attainment of its goals should be part of any effort to realign the NDE for efficient operation and, consequently, efficient service delivery. National Directorate of Employment is moderately effective in reducing unemployment and creation of rural employment in Southwestern Nigeria.

### 6.1 Recommendation

To enhance the implementation of the National Directorate of Employment for rural employment creation in southwestern Nigeria, the following recommendations can be considered:

- To publicise more about the NDE as well as enlightening the general public of what it does and how much it is doing so that many unemployed people can take advantage of the programmes.
- Review of the policy backing up the Directorate because it has been a while since the policy was reviewed.
- The government should do upward review of the allocation being given for the implementation of the programmes of NDE so as to be able to perform effectively.

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