

## **Job Insecurity as a Threat to National Growth and Sustainable Development in the Developing Countries**

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### **Abstract**

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**J**ob insecurity is a phenomenon threatening the workplace in Nigeria and other Developing countries of the world. Incessant retrenchments, job cuts, salary cuts, have become the order of the day with attendant workers' strike actions resulting in low productivity and insecurity in the work environment. This study takes a theoretical and descriptive approach in evaluating job insecurity as a threat to National Growth and Sustainable Development in the third world countries with the aim of identifying the reasons and undercurrents of job insecurity and its back lash in National Growth and sustainable Development. Job insecurity has been found to be a worrisome phenomenon in third world countries resulting in the engagement of workers in more than one job. This paper considers the situation as dangerous and makes recommendation for the institution of strong policies aimed at providing basic infrastructure that encourages investment, enactment and implementation of laws that streamline rules of engagement in the workplaces among others. This paper has implication for future government policies on employment and sustainable development in the third world countries.

**Keywords:** *Job insecurity, National growth, Sustainable development*

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### **Background to the Study**

A secured job or employment is the dream of any employee who desires to serve in an organization, be it a private or public. In Nigeria and most developing countries, job spaces are few and rarely meet the demands of applicants. It is common knowledge that more applicants jostle for few vacant positions, which ultimately end in the hands of a few privileged ones (most times people who know the owners of the organization or the organizers of the interviews/ recruitment exercises or those who give kick-backs and so on). Job interviews or recruitment exercises, when conducted are rarely judged transparent. The man-know-man syndrome is always alleged. However, in rare cases, as in the multi-national companies and specialized areas such as the medical profession, engineering, aviation, and a few others, applicants are meant to pass through rigorous selection exercises to ensure that the best are chosen; though with little biases.

In the midst of all these, employees of private and public organizations feel that their jobs are not secured. Often times, workers or employees of private and public establishments are sacked without recourse to the employees' rights as enshrined in the employment statutes and laws. These actions no doubt have implications to the national growth and sustainable development of the nation and other developing countries of the third world. A secured employment is the type that offers the employee satisfaction, financial independence, social security and ease of mind. An employee in a secured employment does not think of strike action. If there should be disagreements, resolutions of such, should be in a mutual and convivial atmosphere. A secured employment ensures efficiency, increased productivity, sustained life span of an organization, transparency and corruption-free working environment.

### **Objective of the Study**

This paper therefore, looks at Job Insecurity as a threat to National Growth and Sustainable Development in the third World Countries.

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Job Insecurity**

Since man's existence, the search for what to do to put food on his table for the purpose of existence and living has remained unending. A job could mean anything an individual does to earn a living. Be it on a private, public or self-made approach, a job is meant to offer the person who engages in it some level of income to take care of his day-to-day needs.

Human wants are said to be numerous and insatiable. Therefore, in applying the hierarchy of needs a job is meant to satisfy an employee. These basic human needs include, feeding, shelter, transportation, health-care, leisure, some savings to take care of eventualities, among others. When these basic needs are lacking, one can say that an individual is in the wrong job/employment or in fact, an insured job. Job insecurity revolves around the nature, structure and states of organizations; the organizational/corporate policies, vision, mission, values, goals, objectives, of the organizations, among others. Any organization that has a weak structure, low vision, weak mission, values, goals and objectives cannot offer an individual job

security. Any organization, private or public that has less regard for its work force (employees) cannot offer employees secured jobs. Organizations that operate hire and fire without regards to employment statutes/rules and regulations guiding employment of staff and other labour laws court disaster and offer window for job insecurity. Hence any employed person working in an organization that does not pay 'good' salaries and wages; offer opportunities for regular training, and development, opportunities for existence/sustenance for a long term; regard employees as members and owners of the organization, among others, is in an insecure job.

Job security, from the foregoing, implies a job or employment that offers an individual opportunity to be able to satisfy basic needs of life. A secured job is one that is seated on a strong foundation; a well structured organization with laid down employment/labour laws that offer employees opportunity for development and sense of belonging. Job security, apart from offering steady payment, of agreed salaries and wages, training and development, to employees, ensures steadiness, comfort, satisfaction and ease of mind.

### **Job Insecurity, National Growth/Sustainable Development**

The term 'Development' is a pervasive concept and phenomenon in countries of the world before globalization, liberalization and integration; and its application raised markedly. While the more advanced countries, especially democracies saw development from the prism and collectivity in all frontiers of development within their respective states, the developing countries applied and still do so to restrict and limit the human rights and freedom of the peoples in the march towards development. So, development was not just a polted plant that can easily be transplanted from country to country without adjustment and adaptation to the peculiarities of the countries requiring it. It is, therefore, noteworthy that since countries are at different stages of development, they differ too, in their capabilities and capacities to absorb the challenges associated with development. The previous notion of development has been changed with the emergence of globalization, triumph of capitalism and collapse of Soviet system in the early 1990s. Today's world is guided by collaborative endeavours under the millennium development goals regime of the United Nations (Eke, 2010).

The concept 'development' is no longer new, as many writers within varying categories of orthodox and western purists, structural-functionalists, and Marxists (Eke, 2005) including Rodney (1990), Mabogunje (1980), Anibueze (2005), Kim (2005), Howkins and Valantin in Tiam,yu (2003), among others, have within their differing economic environments and experiences, tried to present various perspectives on the subject-matter. However, Soola (2003), made a more encompassing espousal on a people-oriented approach to development when he stated that Growth and Development must not only be both quantitative and qualitative in a mutually beneficial and reinforcing manner, but must also appreciate the endogenous and exogenous dimensions of development. This calls for far-reaching socio-cultural, political and economic reforms, a more equitable power relations and distribution of resources, as well as more equitable terms of trade relations and reforms of international monetary systems and institutions” (Eke, 2010). Growth from the above perspective, National development in line with the Millennium Development Goals, is progressive attempt to attain prosperity for the citizens of a nation through increase in human capacity to produce and reproduce for sustainable development.

Job Insecurity cannot guarantee national growth and sustainable development. Appadorai, Ofoeze, etal (2009) in (Eke, 2010) enjoins the state to act to remove disabilities, and in so doing, the rulers (management) would be forwarding the welfare of their subjects. In Nigeria, as most developing countries, the issue of development is pervasive transcending administrations. Successive administrations have had development issues constantly in their lips but at the most critical moment of delivery, it is at best, cases of lip-service to the nation despite all the thrusts of Development plans. Ejiofor (2001) in Eke (2010) reasoned that despite the lofty postulations in Nigeria's development plans "in their public capacity, politicians in our country have not been the most trusted custodians of probity and equity in public affair". Job insecurity has been accentuated in Nigeria since the emergence of nouveau riches in the expanding Nigerian economy, the rich individuals and groups who gravitated into the controllers of the commanding heights of the national economy so much that with the increased revenue from petroleum, they exhibited all manner of luxury and profligate spending. These actions thwarted interests away from agriculture, spurred and promoted corruption in a large-scale; thus, exacerbating the job insecurity position bringing about the diversionary element in Nigeria's development process as further accentuated by ethnic, linguistic and religious divisions and fabrics, which have all the years directed Nigeria's political and economic life.

In analysing the Nigeria's development Plans, the First National Development Plan (1962) instead of reflecting the enthusiasm of Nigerians towards a more diversified economy, that would raise the rate of the economic growth and standard of living of the citizens, left Nigerians groping with numerous challenges that were associated very much early in the planning stage such as inadequate executive capacity and financial constraints sharply orchestrated by colonial legacy of leaving their colonial states with serious problems that besiege their development. Such problems include catch-up syndrome, vulnerabilities to help of resources, e.g., foreign aid and scanty educated and qualified manpower to draw stable and independent development plans, e.t.c, all culminating to perpetual dependence on and slavery by external powers.

To ensure steady national growth and sustainable development, Appadorai made no reservation in asking government, its representatives in the policy making field and all employers of labour to think of the welfare of the people as a moral issue beyond legalistic consideration because only the happiness of the people far from legal can guarantee obedience and compliance to rules and procedures in the production chain. Affirming the news expressed by Appadorai, one can strongly attest from the Nigerian perspective that industrial unrests which is as a result of disagreement arising from job insecurity, leads to loss in productive man-hours which cumulatively is injurious to the health of any economy (developed or developing). Citing the president of Nigeria Employers Consultative Association (NECA), Rufus Guwa, (2013), Eke and Ezeibe (2009) reveal that man-days lost to strike activities in 1991 and 1992 cumulatively amounts to three million and one million, respectively; in 2003, apparently as a result of the annulment of the controversial and inconclusive presidential election, it came to 10 million and in 2004, jumped to all-time high of 234 million! In terms of days-statistics, the NECA President said, in 1993, due to political

strikes, 111 days or work stoppages were observed, but in 1994, the figure rose by 42.3 to 158. During the period, man-days lost to strikes jumped by 246 percent from 10.6 million in 1993 to 36.9 million in the second half of 2004.

In recent times also, between 2005 -2016, several man-hours had been lost due to schisms between several labour unions and their employers. The Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), Academic Union of Universities (ASUU), National Union of Petroleum and Gas Workers Union (NUPENG) and Petroleum and National Gas Workers Union of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), Organised Labour, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) are among several labour organizations in Nigeria that have constantly engaged their employers in negotiations, warning strikes and full-blown strike actions due to Job insecurity. These actions have constantly impinged on productivity of the workforce, thereby affecting the National Development and sustainable Development of Nigeria and Third World Countries.

Job Insecurity has led to the engagement of workers in two or more jobs at a time. For instance university lecturers-academics who have attained senior lecturer positions and those with Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) and Professors now engage in lecturing in several institutions; sometimes, in the name of sabbatical, Adjunct, Part-time, contract, etc. The reasons for these actions are partly-due to government's discriminatory salary and wage policies of the states and federal public service.

### **Conclusion**

Job insecurity has been discussed in this paper as a state where an individual in a paid employment is unsure of his future state in the organization where he finds himself/herself. Job insecurity brings about schisms between employees and employers leading to loss of man-hours. Productivity and efficiency suffer set-back when employees engage in other private jobs while working in an insecure environment.

Job security is a state where an employee is sure of receiving 'good' salary, training and development, and is considered a part of the organization on a sustained level. Job security offers an individual an opportunity to live a good life, and peace of mind. Job insecurity, therefore affects the overall national growth and sustainable development of Nigeria and the third world countries.

### **Recommendations**

Having discussed job insecurity as a threat to National Growth and Sustainable Development in the third world countries, the following recommendations are made towards improving the situations.

1. Institution of strong policies aimed at providing basic infrastructure that encourages investment.
2. Governments should enact laws that streamline rules of engagement in the employment and labour matters.

3. The various agencies of labour and productivity should be strengthened with strong legal powers to monitor and sanction any employment agency flouting the laws on labour matters.
4. Government of Nigeria and other developing countries of the world should continuously strive to maintain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) imperatives.
5. Nigerian government as well as developing countries in the third world should continuously strive to emulate developed countries in the area of transparency in government policies and shun corruption at all levels.
6. All employers of labour must be seen to institute a culture of dignity that is in line with the economic realities of the times and global best practices.

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