

Public Sector Management and the Challenge of Unemployment: Nigeria's Experience in the Last Three Decades (1985-2015)

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Abstract

Public sector management represents the set of processes and management relations which exist between the components of an administrative system by which the laws are put into force and/or the activities in the delivery of services satisfying public interest are planned, organized, coordinated, managed and supervised. This process is saddled with the responsibility of satisfying the yearnings and needs of the citizenry. One such need is in the area of unemployment – a phenomenon that has posed serious challenges globally and here in Nigeria. Unemployment is widely believed to pose potential danger as it sends disturbing signal to all segments of the Nigerian society. This is because the rate of unemployment in Nigeria has been high even at the period of economic boom of the seventies (6.2%); 1980s (9.8%) and the 1990s (11.5%). This study investigates the extent to which public sector management has risen to the challenge of unemployment in the last three (3) decades. Specifically, it seeks to assess the effectiveness of the measures of the up-and-downstream public management sub-sectors at ameliorating the unemployment situation in Nigeria. While the Okun's law (1962) constitutes its theoretical framework, the data is obtained from secondary sources namely – the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) statistical bulletin, Journals, periodicals and the internet. Its mode of analysis is largely qualitative and comparative approach. The findings reveal that measures/efforts emanating from public management policies are yet to achieve significant positive impacts on the unemployment situation in Nigeria. Hence, the advocate of far-reaching reforms.

Keywords: *Public Sector Management, Challenge of unemployment, Okun's law, Reforms*

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<http://internationalpolicybrief.org/journals/international-scientific-research-consortium-journals/intl-journal-of-economics-vol5-no2-april-2017>

Background to the Study

Globally, economies vary in their systems/modes of production, distribution, and even consumption. This has given rise to communism, socialism and capitalism as major economic systems. However, whichever economic system a nation adopts, government stands out as the principal actor. This underscores the role of the public sector in any country/economy. Little wonder why there is a growing concern and attention on the issue of public sector management particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. The public sector comprises the upstream core ministries and central agencies, downstream bodies including sector ministries, and non-executive state institutions. Upstream bodies include core ministries and agencies at the center of government, such as the ministry of finance and the offices that support the head of government, which have functions that cut across sectors. Downstream bodies include “both sector ministries and agencies, including education and health providers which deliver and fund services under the policy direction of government” (Independent Evaluation Group, 2010). They also include a diverse group of more autonomous bodies such as regulations and state-owned enterprises and corporate bodies which, in many countries, still provide the majority of infrastructure services despite extensive privatization. Non-executive state institutions include “judiciaries, legislatures and institutions such as Supreme Audit institutions (Independent Evaluation Group, 2011).

It may be necessary to underscore the fact that the size and economic significance of the public sector, make it a major contributor to growth and social welfare. Its achievements evolve from the quality and nature of the services it provides, the infrastructure it finances or underwrites and the quality of its social and economic regulation and its sectorial policy objectives. How well those public sector activities are managed is a key development variable. Suffices at this point to observe that the quest for development in developing countries, suffers serious setbacks with an over-increasing rate of unemployment. This makes the nexus between public sector management on the one hand, and the unemployment issue, an interesting case study. Like many other developing nations, Nigeria is a good example of a country with serious unemployment challenges. Alanana (2003), posits that “unemployment is potentially dangerous as it sends disturbing signals to all segments of the Nigerian society”.

Public sector management has certain characteristics which equip it with what it takes to function effectively as it sets to satisfy the yearnings of its citizenry (eg. unemployment). Five such features include -integrating character, political character, diversity character, complexity character and synthetic character.

Problem Statement

Africa Check (2016), reveals that Nigeria's economically active population stood at 102.8million (Age 15-64) just as the labor force (i.e those available for work) was 73.3million. While 29.4 Million chose to stay at home (full-time students/ill persons), 16.6 percent of this population was underemployed and 7.5 percent unemployed. Given the nature and character of public sector management, the Nigerian Federal administration is known to have enunciated policies and other measures to check/reduce the rate of

unemployment in the past thirty years. Such measures include – the federal character policy/commission, the Directorate of employment, the Operation- Feed- the-Nation/school-to-farm project, the skill –acquisition scheme, etc. It needs be underscored that these policies/ measures have involved the upstream and downstream sub-sectors of public management in the execution. The onus therefore, revolves around this study, to assess the effectiveness of these subsectors in reducing the rate of unemployment in this country.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to assess the extent to which public policies/ measures have impacted on the rising rate of unemployment in Nigeria over the past thirty years.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the impact of the upstream public sector in addressing the problem of unemployment in Nigeria in the last three decades.
2. Ascertain the success of the downstream public sector in reducing the rate of unemployment in the past thirty years in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study will be guided by some questions. These include:

1. What contribution did the upstream public sector make towards the reduction of the unemployment rate in Nigeria in the past thirty years?
2. Did the down-stream public sector achieve a reduction in the rate of unemployment in Nigeria within the period under review?

Literature Review

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2012), Nigeria's population is said to have reached 167million by year 2012. The National Population Commission (NPoC, 2013) states that “about half of the population is made up of youth, defined as individuals between 15 and 34 years of age”. Unfortunately, as youth population grows, so does unemployment rate. Infact, unemployed youth numbered about 11.1million in 2012. The report further reveals that from 2010 to 2011, the share of unemployed youth in rural areas increased from 47.59 percent to 59.95 percent. Actual figures indicate an increase from 2.9million in 2008 to about 5.9million in 2012.

Weak links between higher education and the labor market lead to a high level of unemployment, which represents a waste of human resources and increases the social exclusion that makes societies more vulnerable to civil disorder and political upheaval. Sawahel (2015), reports that “unemployment among young people is particularly worrisome in North African countries including Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia along with three other Arab countries - Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine”. According to the report, “Unemployment among young people in North Africa has reached 48.7% in Libya and 42.3% in Tunisia”.

Also, most unemployed people – up to 8% in Egypt – are looking for their first job and have no previous work experience. The number of long-term unemployed is increasing. The phenomenon remains a major development issue in many countries, and in Ghana,

the rates are quite high especially among the youth. Recent improvements in Ghana's economic growth since 2001 have not translated adequately into employment. Evidence indicates that there has been an increasing trend towards the expansion of urban informal sector and a decline in opportunities for productive unemployment in the formal sector. Although poverty has declined over the last few years, it is still high at about 40 percent. This means that the absolute number of people in poverty remains high. Of the current national population of about 21 million, about 8 million live in poverty and well over 5 million are in extreme poverty. Abubakar (ND), believes "there is a strong correlation between the unemployment situation and poverty". Income poverty is the result of unemployment, under-employment and very low income of the working poor in low productivity jobs. Youths aged 15-24 were twice likely to be unemployed compared to any other age cohort. Quoting the Ugandan Bureau of statistics, the duo revealed that "the share of unemployed.

Conceptual Literature

Public Sector Management: Developments in public sector management has led to the evolution of what is now generally referred to as the new public sector management (NPM). To quote Pollitt (1994:1), 'NPM has variously been defined as a vision, an ideology or (more prosaically), a bundle of particular management approaches and techniques (many of them borrowed from the private, for profit sake)'. Hood (1991), believes such thought\should be "based on ideas in the private sector and brought into the public sector". For Grindle, (2004). Many of these reforms have similarities with the modernization component of good governance"

Public management: Management of public organizations is referred to as public management. According to OECD (2015), "Technological changes, increase in costs, financial crisis, etc. gave rise to reforms". This is the evolution of the new public management. "Earlier reforms were treated as technical or legal" (Pollitt & Bouckaert: 2011). Every country has its own peculiar reasons for public reforms. Thus, "the spread of NPM is a complex process, going through different stages in different countries and is not an integrated and coherent set of reforms" (Wright, 1994).

Public sector: Whatls.com (ND) views the public sector as "that portion of an economic system that is contributed by national, state or provincial and local governments". Study.com defines public policy as "the means by which a government maintains order or addresses the needs of its citizens through actions defined by its constitution".

This definition may sound vague because public policy is generally not a tangible thing but rather a term used to describe a collection of laws, mandates, or regulations established through a political process.

Down/upstream public sector: Perhaps the most comprehensive view and explanation of the concept is that presented by the Independent Evaluation Group (2010). It holds that "upstream bodies include core ministries and agencies at the center of government such as the ministries of finance and office that support the head of government, which cut across

sectors". Downstream bodies include "both sector ministries and agencies like education and health providers which deliver and fund services under the policy direction of government".

Unemployment:- Aighyisi (2015 b), posits that "unemployment refers to a situation where able bodied men and women particularly those between the ages of 15 and 60 are actively seeking jobs but are unable to find meaningful ones". It is the difference between the amount of labor offered at present wage levels and working conditions and the amount of labor hired at those levels. Jhighan (2004), defines unemployment as "an involuntary idleness of a person willing to work at the prevailing. Rate of pay but unable to find it" According to Onwioduokit (2006), unemployment in Nigeria "can be broadly divided into two: open unemployment and disguised unemployment" Todaro (1992), describes open unemployment as when people who are able bodied and desire to work cannot find jobs to do". "Disguised unemployment involves people who are working full time but whose productivity is so low that a reduction in hours would have an insignificant impact on total output" (Todaro: 1992). There is a consensus that unemployment is the underutilization and waste of human resources which inhibits economic growth.

Theories of Unemployment and Public Policies

Economic literature provides many explanations for the unemployment problem. Some causes blame the economic systems and others blame the unemployed workers. Some other theories shift the problem to external sources and shocks, or unpredictable events, while others argue that technology and labor market institutions are the root causes of the problem of unemployment. Still, other theories think the deficiency in aggregate spending and innovations are the essential factors for explaining the problem. A few of such theories may be cited.

The Classical Economic Theory and the Issue of Unemployment

In the analysis of the classical theory, Pigou (1933) and Solow (1981), argue that "the labor market consists of demand and supply of labor. Being a derived demand, demand for labor is obtained from the declining portion of the marginal product of labor". The demand curve is a negative function of real wage in the sense that, if wages increase, the quantity demand for labor will decline and the opposite is correct. The supply of labor is derived from worker's choice to spend part of their time working or not working (leisure). Supply of hours worked is a positive function of the real wage because if the real wage rises, workers supply more hours of work. In equilibrium, demand and supply of labor are intersected at a clearing point which determines the equilibrium real wage rate and full employment. The classical economic theory sums up in the statement that wage reduction is not a competent policy to increase employment. The increase in wages is most likely due to increased labor productivity and wage reduction will reduce work intensity and productivity. Wage reduction will not force some capital intensive firms to switch to labor-intensive techniques in the short run. Higher wages should stimulate the substitution effect by employing more machines for labor. This substitution will increase labor productivity and employment in the long-run.

Unemployment in the Theory of Innovations

Developed by the German economist Von Mangoldt originally, this theory provided several ways by which the entrepreneur can make profits. They include:

1. Finding particular markets
2. Acquisition of productive agents
3. Skillful combination of factors of production
4. Successful sales policy and
5. Innovations.

“It is a well understood proposition that entrepreneurial profits will increase employment” (Mouhammed, 2010).

Unemployment and the Theory of Effective Demand

The level of aggregate demand will provide the necessary increases in total revenues. On the other side, the cost of production has to decline. When revenue rises and cost declines then the reasonable level of profits can be attained. In Veblen's work (1904), there are various forces that reduce the cost of production. Technology increases production and reduces the cost of inputs used in the production process, and enterprises cut wages and increase productivity in order to cut cost per unit of output. Better technology can reduce the prices of capital goods and government can cut taxes. Banks can reduce the rates as well. Administrative and insurance costs can be declared in order to stimulate business enterprises. For Veblen, the decline in costs given rising revenues will increase the profit level. Consequently, higher profit will force the business enterprises to expand and employ more workers. Thus, employment will increase and the rate of unemployment will decline. Keynes [1936], considers unemployment as an involuntary phenomenon . For him according to Mouhammed [2010], “employment is cyclical, generated by the deficiency of aggregate demand” . If expectations about the future are supported by reality, investments and employment continue rising until equilibrium is reached. This equilibrium is attained by the intersection of the aggregate demand and supply----- the point of effective demand----- which may be less than the full employment equilibrium. Consistent with Keynes' teaching, Davidson [1998], a representative of post Keynesian economics, argues that involuntary unemployment is explained by insufficiency of effective demand, instability of exchange rates and antirational mobility of finance which create uncertainty that weakens entrepreneurial confidence to make investment to reduce unemployment.

Unemployment in the Real Business Cycle Theory

Chatterjee [1995 to 1999] in his theory ,argue that the growth of productivity of input which revolutionizes technology is the main source of employment and unemployment". If the growth of output increases more than the growth of input, then total factor productivity or the residual has increased. If total factor productivity is not growing, than firms and economy become inefficient. It follows that the reallocation of labor and capital cannot be achieved and labor and capital will be used in less profitable opportunities.

Implications of Theories for Public Policist

The analyses of the determinants of unemployment in the theories above provide an excellent picture of the trend of public policies. Governments at all levels should provide

accurate information about the job market in order for workers to be able to seize the opportunity for finding employment. Governments should spend on education in order to develop very productive workers and innovative entrepreneurs.

Theoretical Framework

Due to its popularity and simplicity in studies on unemployment, Okun's law is adopted as the theoretical framework of this paper. Arthur Okun, a Yale professor of economics, published his research on the market relationship between unemployment and production. The law provides a general notion construing that when unemployment falls, the production of a country will increase. This measure can be used for estimating both GNP and GDP. The percentage increase by 1% is the Okun coefficient.

The relationship between unemployment and GNP or GDP varies from one country to another. In the United States, the Okun coefficient estimates that when unemployment falls by 1%, GNP will rise by 3% and GDP by 2%. When unemployment rises by 1%, then GNP is expected to fall by 3% and GDP is expected to fall by 2%. Economists broadly support Okun's law, but it is not considered to be highly accurate.

Empirical Review

Kathleen and Stanley (2001), conducted an empirical investigation on interregional migration and public policy in Canada. Some researchers had earlier measured empirically, the impact of variation in public policies on interregional migration but with inconclusive results. This study examines the effects on interprovincial migration over the 1974 to 1996 period of public programmes such as unemployment insurance, federal and provincial government spending, income tax and social assistance. The results of this study tend to confirm that the major determinants of interprovincial migration are earnings differentials, employment prospects and moving costs. Moving costs are by far the most important of the three. The study finds no evidence that the regional features in the unemployment insurance system between 1971 and 1996 led to substantial net in migration to poorer parts of the country.

Belenking and Riker (2015), conducted a review of recent empirical studies that link international trade flows and trade policies to aggregate (economy wide) unemployment rates. The theoretical models demonstrate that there is a complex and often ambiguous relationship between trade and unemployment: whether trade increases composition of a country's output and on differences in labor market frictions across industries and countries. The empirical studies, on the other hand, offer a story that is simpler and fairly consistent: they generally find that an expansion in international trade reduces a country's aggregate unemployment rate in the long run.

Felbermayr, Prat and Schmerer (2011), report an econometric analysis of a panel of 20 OECD countries and a broader cross-section of 62 countries for the period 1990-2007. Their empirical analysis does not test a specific theoretical model. Instead, their aim is to document robust facts about the relationship between the aggregate unemployment rates and trade and they do this by adding measures of trade openness into a regression

framework previously established in the macro econometric literature on differences in national unemployment rates. They find that a ten percent point increase in trade openness reduces unemployment by about three quarters of one percentage point.

Gap in Literature

Quite a handful of studies have been conducted on issues related to unemployment. However, it is interesting to observe that none of such studies have considered and isolated the up-and-downstream sectors of public management and the relationship and effect of such management on the rate of unemployment in any country especially Nigeria. This study intends to do this.

Conceptual/Theoretical Perspectives

A policy is a response to the problems of people and society. Simmons (1974), views a policy as “an intention, a guide to action, encompassing values which set priority and relations” – while Friedrich (1975) defines it as “a proposed course of action of a person, group, or government within a given environment providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilize and overcome an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective or a purpose”. Ikelegbe (2006), opined that a policy is “ a course of action or a programme of actions, which is chosen from among several alternatives by certain actors in response to certain problems”. To Jiboye (2011), policies can be likened to or understood as “political, managerial, financial, and administrative mechanisms arranged to reach explicit goals and targets”. A policy is a response to problems of people and the general society or a country. A policy problem “is a human need, deprivation, or dissatisfaction, self-identified or identified by others for which a relief is sought” (Egonmwan, 2000). Policies made or enunciated by government are public policies. “Public policies are those developed by governmental bodies and officials”. Public policies are meant to solve people's problems. This may be referred to as a policy problem. David (1964), views a policy problem as “a human need, deprivation, or dissatisfaction, self-identified or identified by others for which relief is sought”.

Methodology

This study is not a direct assessment of the effect of Public Sector Management on the growth of Nigerian economy. It does not require complex mathematical/econometric models to actualize. It is a descriptive analysis of the success recorded by the Up and Downstream Public Sector measures/policies in ameliorating the unemployment situation in Nigeria. It employs the qualitative content analytic approach which seeks to ascertain the impact of the Up and Downstream public policies in stemming the tide of rising unemployment in Nigeria. The approach presents a clear and simple comparison of the rates/trends in unemployment before and after the adoption of the measures. Data is obtained from books, journals, periodicals, internet, etc.

Unemployment Data in Nigeria

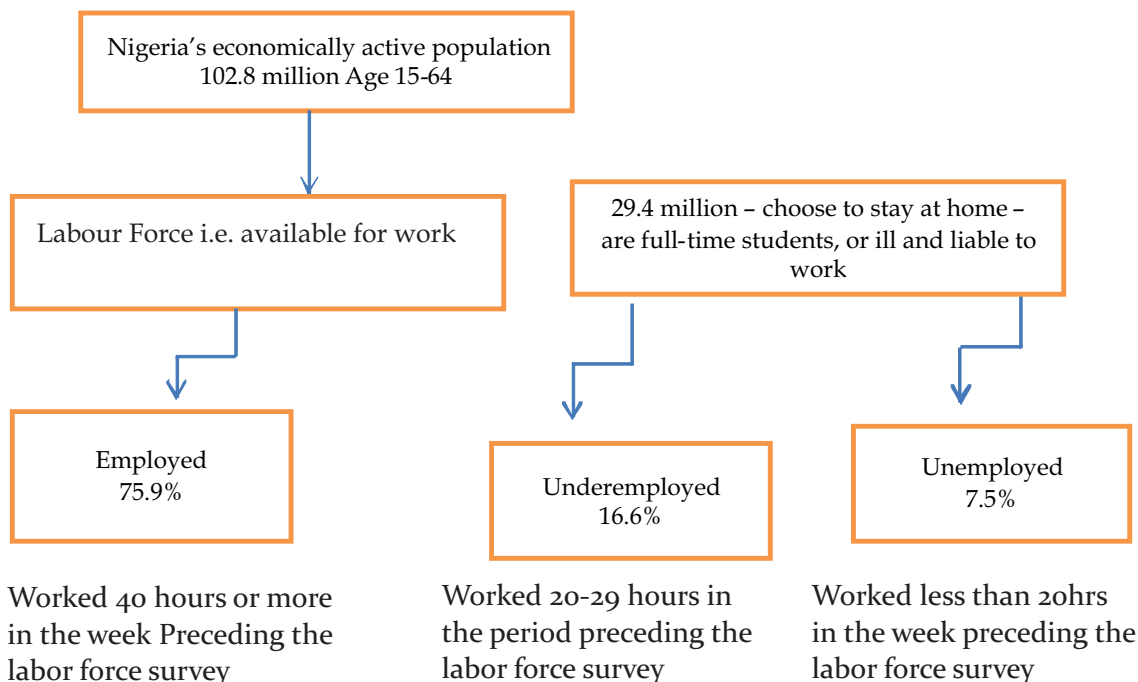
People are considered unemployed when they are:

1. Aged between 15 and 64 and therefore fall in the “economically active” segment of the population

2. Available for work, and
3. Actively seeking job.

People who choose to stay at home, are full-time students, or are ill and unable to work, are not counted as unemployed.

Africa Check (2016) reveals the following:



Source: Unemployment/Underemployment WATCH QI 2015

In Nigeria, a benchmark of 40 hours per week was adopted in 2001 by the National Consultative Committee on statistics. This means that people were only counted as 'employed' if they have worked 40 hours or more in the week preceding the labor force survey. The NBS reviewed the 40 hour benchmark in September 2014 believing it has been described as out dated, both by local and international partners, and inconsistent with present realities in the country. The statistics agency consulted government agencies, universities, researchers and others agreed on 20 hours per week - half-way between the ILO approach and the former Nigerian measure - as the new benchmark.

Up and Downstream Policies/measures to check Unemployment in Nigeria

S/N	Policy	Year of formulation	Objective/Function	Failure/Success	Reason for Failure/Success
1	National Agricultural Land Development Agency (NALDA)	1989	To encourage the evolution of economic size villages and provide gainful income and employment opportunities for rural people, etc.	There is nothing to demonstrate that the policy did not fail	It was phased out early and its function performed by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD)
2	National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS)	2004	This policy evolved from the standpoint of MDGs of the UN to address human development problems. It was also on the basis of Nigeria's long-term goals of poverty reduction, wealth creation, employment generation, elimination of corruption, good governance and value-orientation.	All the efforts and purported machineries put into this policy were wasted as was a mere symbolic polity	It never functioned at any of the three levels of government meant to implement it.
3	National Directorate of Employment	1986	(a) Agricultural Employment Programme (b) Provide vocational skills development programme to secondary school leavers and graduates from tertiary institutions. (c) Special public works programme (d) Small-scale Enterprises Programme	The policy was targeted at the youths in particular so as to provide skills for the unskilled to enable youths acquire vocation.	The policy is still on-going. However, it is a general consensus that it is not doing enough to stem unemployment and enhance skill acquisition among youths. Many youths are not aware of the scheme so as to key into it.

4	Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)	1992	To provide access to credit for micro entrepreneurs at the grassroots levels; encouragement of job-creation, local raw materials utilization, and development of indigenous technology.
5	Privatization & Commercialization	Nigeria's privatization journey really started in the 1980s when the country's economic situation began to deteriorate	Essentially, the policy aimed at making the Nigerian economy a private sector- driven economy
6	Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) - The Green Revolution	OFN - 1976 GR - 1979	(a) Formulated in 1976, the OFN was designed to function amongst others, to provide sufficient food for all Nigerians, facilitate agricultural credit from commercial banks to farmers. (b) The Green Revolution was formulated in 1979 to replace the OFN

Other Policy Measures

So far, this paper has outlined a number of policies which were either abandoned midway or did not record any significant success. There are also instances of policies that worked. However, "ascertaining policies that have worked in addressing unemployment in Nigeria is rather difficult in the light of the incredibly high and rising unemployment rate – and at least around 1.8 million youths are entering the labor market every year" (Falusi, 2014). Since it is unclear to what extent any given intervention may have reduced the rate of youth unemployment on the aggregate, it may be more helpful to think of effective policies as those that have delivered on their stated objectives. The sustainability of a program could also be considered an indicator of success. Three programs stand out clear in recent administrations – the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YOU-WIN), and the OSUN STATE Youth Empowerment Scheme (O'YES), among others.

7	The SURE – P	February 2012 with a focus on management and investment of federal government savings derived from proceeds accruing from the partial removal of the subsidy on petroleum products	The SURE - P is the flagship of recent efforts to provide job opportunities to graduates of tertiary institutions. It is more or less a whole range of activities and programmatic schemes, including the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS)Community Services Scheme (CSS) Vocational Training Scheme (VTS), and Community Services, Women and Youth Empowerment (CSWYE), among others	One of the more successful schemes of the SURE – P is the GIS, which offers unemployed graduates the opportunity to undergo a one year internship in firms, banks, ministries, government departments and agencies, as well as in small and medium enterprises (SMEs), relevant to beneficiaries' disciplines. The purpose of GIS is to help beneficiaries acquire the appropriate skills and practical knowledge that will make them more suitable for the job market	50,000 graduates were selected in the first scheme out of some 85,000 applicants. 2000 firms expressed interest to host graduates while only 293 firms were approved. A firm must show evidence of registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission. Government paid N18,000 stipends to interns. There were plans to increase by 2014/15 to 100,000 participants.
8	YOU-WIN Program	2012	Another program designed to create job opportunities specifically, again, for graduates of tertiary institutions who elect to go into business as entrepreneurs. Participants are required to develop and execute their own business ideas that will provide jobs for themselves and other unemployed youths who may or may not be graduates. As projected, the programme is providing jobs for between 40,000 and 50,000 job seekers.	According to NPC (2013), by creating 40,000 to 50,000 new jobs, “the program is expected to encourage expansion, specialization and job spin-offs of existing businesses, and enables young entrepreneurs to have a broad professional and business network”.	The program has endured. This is an evidence of success.

9	The Osun Youth Empowerment Scheme (O'YES)	A few years ago by the Government of Osun State	Government established various forms of employment creating programs at the state level. The schemes provided a series of employment opportunities for participants as traffic controllers, sanitation and environmental officials, security personnel, and other works and services.	The world bank has singled out the OYES scheme for its success in promoting youth employment in Nigeria and has recommended the scheme for replication by the Federal and other state governments.	Good planning and implementation.
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Several empirical studies may be cited to lend credence to the findings of the current investigations. For instance, Obanwoniye and Aibieyi (2014), in a study titled "a policy failure in Nigeria, enumerated some Public Policies that have failed since 1976. They listed the policies to include- the Green Revolution, Operation-Feed-The-Nation, Nigerian Agricultural Land Development Agency (NALD), Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Corporation, Forestry Development Programme (2000), NEEDS, Directorate of Foods, Roads and Rural Infrastructure, National Directorate of Employment, Family Economic Advance Programme (FEAP) 1992, National Commission for Nomadic Education, Family Support Programme, etc. The study gave reasons for such failure to include- regional change and poor funding as well as clarity of purpose. Another study by Uche (2001) on the impact of Agricultural Policies on Nigerian economy contends that government agricultural policies only recorded partial success as regards the attainment of their objectives. It gave reasons such as insufficient credit to farmers especially those in rural areas and implementation leakages which divert benefits to unintended beneficiaries especially those outside agricultural dominated activities. In a related development, Onwuka (2006), in a study "why OFN failed" cited the lack of sustenance of agricultural.

Polices has the reason for failure. Onwuka (2011), revealed in his study on the National Directorate of Employment as an instrument of unemployment" that the "Directorate has not substantially reduced the growing rate of unemployment in Enugu State, while Ugwu (2012) explained that NEEDS as a policy worsened the poverty problem in Nigeria. It argued that the National Economic Employment and Development Strategy was an offshoot of SAP.

The above table provides the needed insight into the most prominent public policy measures in Nigeria for over three decades, Answers to research questions one (1) and two (2) begin to manifest as we present the unemployment situation during and after the introduction of the various measures to contain rising unemployment rate.

Nigeria's population is said to have hit 167 million in 2012 (NBS). The National Population Commission (NPoC, 2013), states that “about half of the population is made up of youth, defined as individuals between 15 and 34 years of age”. Unfortunately, unemployed youths numbered about 11.1 million in 2012. Analysis of youth unemployment by geographical/settlement location (rural and urban areas), indicates that youth unemployment is mostly in rural areas and rapidly growing. From 2010 to 2011, the share of unemployed youth in rural areas increased from 47.59% to 59.95%. The population of the unemployed youth in rural areas rose from 2.9 million in 2008 to about 5.9 million in 2012. NISER (2013), holds that “graduates of tertiary institutions seem to be badly hit by unemployment and often remaining unemployed for upwards of five years after graduation”. Our content analysis begins with validated facts on the issue.

11The NBS (2016) laments that “another 1.5 million Nigerians became unemployed in the first quarter of 2016”. In its recent report, the NBS revealed that the country's unemployment rate grew from 10.4 percent in the last quarter of 2015 to 12.1 percent. In the third and fourth quarters of 2015, Nigeria saw about the same number of people become unemployed.

The economically active population or working age population (persons within ages 15-64) increased from 105.02 million in Q4 2015 to 106.0 million in Q1 2016, the report adds. “In Q1 2016, the labor force population (i.e. those within the working age population willing, able and actively looking for work) increased to 78.4 million from 76.9 million in Q4 2015”, NBS stated. “This means an additional 1,528,647 economically active persons within 15-64 joined the labor force i.e. were able and willing and actively looking for work between January 1 and March 31, 2016” NBS (2016). Within the same period, the total number in full employment (did any form of work for at least 40 hours) decreased by 528,148 persons or 0.97%. This consists of people who lost their jobs and were either forced or for various reasons chose to move from full time employment to under-employment. Youth unemployment also rose to 42.24 percent, as 15.2 million youths remain unemployed in the economy. Accordingly, out of a total youth labor force of 38.2 million (representing 48.7% of total labor force in Nigeria of 78.48mn), a total of 15.2mn of them were either unemployed or underemployed in Q1 2016 representing a youth unemployment rate of 42.24% (NBS, 2016).

Writing in the Punch Newspapers (August 31, 2016), Ifeanyi Onuba quoting the NBS, reveals that 'Nigeria's unemployment rate rose to 13.3% within the period'. Onuba (2016) explains further that 'The Statistician General of the Federation in Abuja, released the report recently'. The report submitted that the country's unemployment rate has risen from 12.1 percent in the first quarter to 13.3 percent in the second quarter of 2016. The bureau further explained that the number of people who were either unemployed or under-employed increased from 24.4 million as at the end of the first quarter to 26.06 million persons.

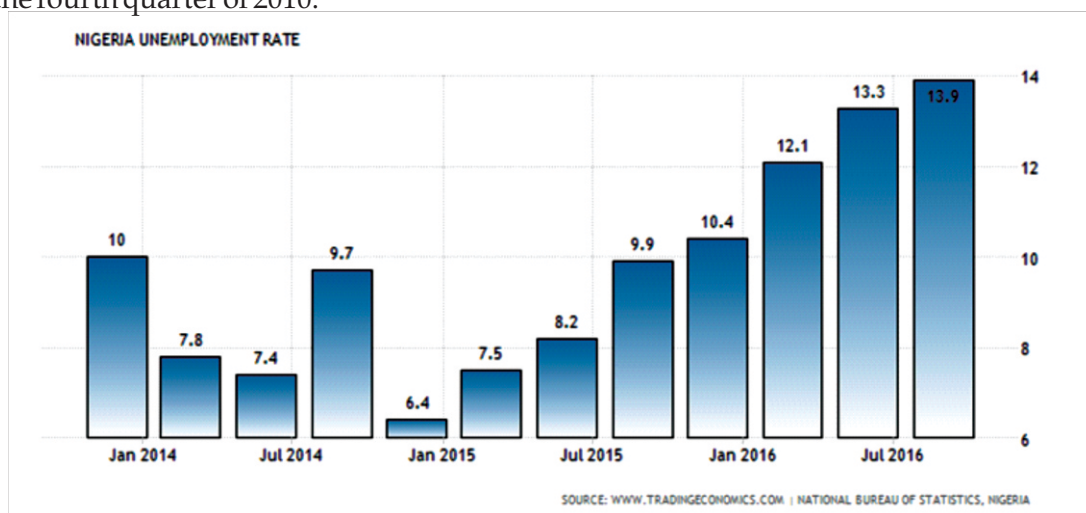
In a related separate report, PREMIUM TIMES (December, 29, 2016) displaying the picture of a surging crowd at an immigration recruitment test in 2014, quotes Bassey (May, 2016) as lamenting Nigeria's unemployment worsening crisis. Bassey in NBS (2016), reveals, 'Nigeria's unemployment crisis worsens; rate jumps by 518, 000 in 3 months'. The bureau said in its latest unemployment watch report that between December 2015 and March 2016, the population of unemployed Nigerians increased by 518,000 to over 1.45 million. The report explained that failure of government to meet its target of creating a minimum of 1.5 million jobs required for the period to keep the unemployment rate constant at 10.4 percent before the end of December 2015, worsened the unemployment situation. The rate as at of June 2015 was 8.2 percent and 9.9 percent by September end 2015

Nigeria's Unemployment Rate 2010-2016

Date	Value	Change, %
2010	5.1	-
2011	6.0	16.99
2012	10.6	77.37
2013	10.0	-5.78
2014	7.8	-21.24
2015	9.0	14.78
2016	12.1	34.44

Source: World Data Atlas: Knoema.com.

A report on Nigeria's Unemployment Rate for the period 2006-2016 presents a good summary/background that would provide answers to research questions one (1) and two (2) of this study. In this report, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS,2016) reveals that Nigeria's unemployment rate rose for the seventh straight month to 13.9 percent in the third quarter of 2016 from 13.3 percent in the previous period. It was the highest level since 2009, as the number of unemployed rose by 5.2 percent to 11.2 million, employment rose at a much slower 0.6 percent to 69.5 million and the labor force increased 1 percent to 80.7 million. Meanwhile, youth unemployment rate increased to 25 percent from 24 percent in the previous period. A year earlier, the unemployment rate was recorded at 9.9 percent. Unemployment rate in Nigeria averaged 9.52 percent from 2006 until 2016, reaching an all-time high of 19.70 percent in the fourth quarter of 2009 and a record low of 5.10 percent in the fourth quarter of 2010.



Nigeria labor	Last	Previous	Highest	Lowest	Unit
Unemployment rate	13.90	13.30	19.70	5.10	Percent +
Population	182.20	178.52	182.20	45.15	Million +
Unemployed persons	11198.00	10644.00	11198.00	4672.00	Thousand +
Youth Unemployment Rate	25.00	24.00	25.00	11.70	Percent +
Employed Persons	69470.90	69042.30	69470.90	66951.00	Thousand +
Employment change	79465.00	499521.00	499521.00	79465.00	Jobs +
Employment Rate	86.10	86.40	93.60	86.10	Percent +

Source: NBS (2016).

Summary/Conclusion

Rising unemployment rate constitutes an issue of global concern due to its socio-economic implications. This informs the enunciation of policies by various governments to address the challenge. Nigeria cannot be an exception. For over thirty years, the nation has adopted some measures/policies to stem the rising unemployment rate. Apparently, these measures may have offered some glimmer of hope at one point or the other, the aggregate result reveals a colossal failure as evident in the ever-increasing and worsening scenario. Thus, from the introduction of OFN –Green Revolution, through the adoption of the SURE-P/O'YES programmes at the Federal and state levels, the rising unemployment saga has persisted and turned more resilient. Some reasons have been adduced. These include:

- a) Inadequate funding
- b) Lack of mechanisms in the various policies and programmes and projects to ensure sustainability
- c) Poor governance leading to abandonment of projects
- d) All the policies suffered from political instability, political interference, policy and macro-economic dislocations
- e) The policies lacked continuity as different regimes (military and civilian), came up with different policies.

Policies need to be properly formulated and monitored to attain their objectives. This is because the failure of public policies, to a large extent, is a failure of government and governance. The failure of public policies speaks volumes of government, especially on the negative aspect.

Recommendations

In order to stem the failure of public policies on unemployment in Nigeria, a number of recommendations may suffice:

- a) Government is a continuum. Regime change must not be allowed to affect public policies on employment/unemployment. All government/administrations in Nigeria should ensure that there is continuity in polices.
- b) Adequate and proper structures and machineries should always be put in place for policy implementation in the country.
- c) Policies must always be properly funded for successful implementation
- d) Parochial and primordial interests must be set aside when making and implementing policies in the country. This is a serious source of failure in Nigerian policy implementation.
- e) Appropriate institutions and agencies should be put in place to implement policies.

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