

Distributive Education: A Viable Tool for Reducing Youth Unemployment in Nigeria

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Abstract

Unemployment is a global phenomenon. This means it is found all over the world. Youth unemployment is however on the increase in Nigeria. Distributive education equips its recipients with skills for becoming professional marketers and teachers. This paper thus, identified educational services; consultancy services and commercial services as the areas through which Distributive education can help in generating employment opportunities in order to reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria. The paper concludes that the problem of unemployment requires multi-facet approaches and as such, Distributive education should be encouraged, otherwise, the efforts of the government and other stakeholders toward reducing youth unemployment will not be significantly seen and appreciated. Finally, as a way forward, the paper suggests that; Nigerian youths should be encouraged to study Distributive education, Nigerian youths should be ready to take risk, education should be properly funded, there should be industrial harmony in the Nigerian educational sector and the security situation in Nigeria should be improved.

Key words: Distributive education, viable, tool, reducing, youth unemployment.

Introduction

Unemployment is a social problem. It is said to occur when the active segment of a society's population who are willing to work could not get any work to do. Unemployment is on the increase in Nigeria and it seems to defy solutions. In 2013, the Premium Times reported that the National Planning Commission stated that the rate of unemployment in Nigeria was 21.1% in 2010. This increased to 23.9% in 2011, while Trading Economics (2015) states that the rate of unemployment increased to 24.20% in the first quarter of 2015. Similarly, in 2013, Osun Defender reported that the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) puts Nigerian youths' unemployment at 54% in 2012. Cassavermillers (n.d) also reports that 80% of Nigerian youths

are either under- employed (working below capacity) or totally unemployed (without any work to do). These reports were confirmed by the large army of Nigerian youths who trooped out in thousands on 15th March, 2014 to take the recruitment selection examination organized by Nigerian Immigration Services. This exercise however turned out to be horrible as some of the youths who went out in search of job lost their lives, while many met themselves on hospital beds. This social problem (unemployment) therefore requires an urgent and serious attention which could be addresses through functional education.

Education is a springboard for social and economic change. It equips people with lifelong skills for solving problems and also leads to innovation and creativity. Distributive education is also out to achieve these aims of education, and the discipline could be seen as an aspect of education which equips learners with skills for proper identification of the needs and wants of the target market, developing products that would satisfy the needs and wants, adopting the right pricing technique, creating awareness on the existence of the product and making it available at the right time and place to the customers.

From the foregoing, it could be seen that, beside the skills which Distributive education instills in its recipients; it also has the potentials of addressing problem of youth unemployment in Nigeria. This is because most Nigerian youths are unemployed because they lack skills that could make them to stand on their own and Distributive education could equip them with self-reliance skills. Similarly, the last three goals of Nigerian education as stated in National Policy on Education (2004) are geared toward entrepreneurship and employment generation. The three goals which are aimed at building; a united, strong and self reliant nation, great and dynamic economy and land full of bright opportunities for all, are achievable through Distributive education. It is thus, against this background and bearing in mind the possible negative outcomes such as militancy, armed robbery, cultism and terrorism which youth unemployment pose for Nigeria, that this paper examines how Distributive education could help in reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria.

This study is therefore necessary in the sense that unemployment, particularly the one that affects the youths, with their youthful exuberance is a serious problem that needs to be drastically reduced to a minimum level. The fact that different approaches have been adopted in Nigeria and the problem still persists, this study contributes by showing that practical application of Distributive education is an apparatus for reducing the level of youth unemployment. This is because it could lead to self-reliance and as such reduces the preference of Nigerian youths for white collars jobs in the public, oil and gas, telecommunication, financial and other juicy sectors of the economy as well as the desire to search for greener pasture in other countries of the world. It is hoped that this (self-reliance) would make them to employ themselves and consequently because of the multiplier effect, generate jobs for other people.

Concept of Distributive Education

Distributive education is also called Marketing education. It has the objectives of maximizing customer's choice, quality of life and satisfaction. It also aims at ensuring that the recipient is able to analyse market situations, acquire effective sales habits and develop competencies that would reduce distribution cost. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008),

marketing is the process through which companies create values for customers and build strong relationship with them for the purpose of also capturing values from the customer. On the other hand, Egele (2011) states that Marketing education is an aspect of business education which equips a person with skills on how to get the right goods and services to the right people, at the right place, time and price using the right communication. It could therefore be deduced that Distributive education is an educational programme which focuses on the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies which will enable the recipient to perform well as a marketer. Finally, Gidado (2011), reports that marketing education could be Professional-marketing education or Teacher-marketing education. The former equips a person with skills for becoming a professional marketer, while the latter, in addition to the professional marketing skills; makes a person to become a professional teacher. These show that contrary to the notion of some people that anybody who studied any discipline in education will end up teaching, the Distributive education gives its recipients dual career advantage (teaching and marketing) and they may choose to pursue any or both careers.

Concept of Unemployment

Unemployment is a global phenomenon. It is not a problem that is associated with a particular country or an economic system. The magnitude of unemployment is however high in some countries, while some countries have low level of unemployment. According to Mankiw (1994), unemployment represents wasted resources. This is because, the potentials of a person not working at a given period is being wasted. Aderinto and Abdullahi (2007) are of the view that an unemployed person is 'one who is available for work and actively looking for work but currently without any work'. In the same vein, Abubakar (2012) states that unemployment is a situation where able bodied men and women who are willing to work cannot find any employment. These imply that only those who belong to the labour force of a country and actively search for job but could not find any job would be said to be unemployed. Therefore, anybody who deliberately/voluntarily refused to work is not considered to be unemployed. A deliberate refusal to work is known as voluntary unemployment. Aderinto and Abdullahi (2007) also point out that unemployment may be caused by disequilibrium in demand and supply, structural factors such as changes in technology or method of production, inadequate information and seasonal nature of production. These lead to the different types of unemployment which are; structural unemployment (caused by changes in methods of production or technology), frictional unemployment (caused by inadequate information and the time within which a person is searching job), seasonal unemployment (caused by seasonal nature of production such as agricultural practices and road construction) and cyclical unemployment (caused by recession which leads to sharp reduction in demand for goods and services and consequently, demand for labour). Finally, unemployment has very serious negative consequences such as wastage of resources/potentials; poverty, youth restiveness, thuggery, armed banditry, militancy, terrorism, late marriage, family dispute and consequent break down of marriage, infidelity and depression. All these do not augur well for a country because they lead to retrogression as opposed to progress.

Ways through which Distributive education can reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria

To reduce the level of unemployment in Nigeria, Akinwale (n.d) suggests that there should be resuscitation of the manufacturing sector, encouragement of self-reliance, improvement of power supply, entrenchment of enterprise culture in the minds of our graduates and artisans and the utilization of untapped potentials in the agricultural sector. However, based on the nature, content and objectives of Distributive education, this paper is of the conviction that it could help in reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria. This is because, it could make our youths to become self-employed and also generate employment for other people. The following are some of the ways by which employment can be generated through Distributive education:

Educational services

Distributive education can help in reducing youth unemployment in the sense that it has the potential of equipping the youths with skills that would enable them to provide educational services. This could make them to be self-employed and become employers of labour. For example, the Teacher- Distributive education leads to production of professional teachers. These educators can set up Extra-mural centres and private schools. They can also use their knowledge of marketing and experience to write and publish books in the field of marketing. Finally, they may be organising seminars, workshops and symposium for entrepreneurs in order to equip them with better and proper marketing skills that would aid their performances as entrepreneurs.

Consultancy services

Graduates of Distributive education can use their professional marketing skills to go into marketing consultancy. Based on this, firms and entrepreneurs who lack marketing skills will be coming to them for professional advice on how to design and execute their marketing strategies. They can also help their clients in preparing marketing plans, feasibility studies and participate in product promotions. In the same vein, the marketing educators could be useful to their clients in designing advertising programmes that would be appealing to the target market. Finally, it is expected that employment opportunities will be generated through these activities and thus help in reducing the level of youth unemployment in Nigeria.

Commercial services

Distributive education equips its recipients with skills for rendering commercial services. This would therefore help in reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria. This is due to the fact that the discipline (Distributive education) equips its recipients with skills for identifying people's needs and wants. Based on this, the desire to generate income and become successful would stimulate them to take risk and strive to satisfy the identified needs and wants of the target market. In line with this, they may choose to go into production, merchandising or buying and selling. This is expected to increase production and consequently employment opportunities. This is because, all things being equal, the higher the production, the higher the employment opportunities that will be generated.

Conclusion

Unemployment is a serious problem in Nigeria which seems to defy solutions. It is also said to be responsible for problems such as militancy, thuggery, armed banditry, insurgency and oil bunkering that are currently bedeviling the country. Distributive education on the other hand, equips people with professional marketing and teaching skills. This paper thus, examines how Distributive education could help in reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria because all forms of education are geared toward proffering solutions to problems faced by human societies. The implication of the presentation in this paper is that, owing to the importance of Distributive education in reducing youth unemployment, it should be highly encouraged in Nigeria. This is because the problem of unemployment requires multi-facet approaches. Failure to do this could make the problem to persist and the efforts of the government and other stakeholders toward reducing unemployment and particularly, youth unemployment in Nigeria may not be significantly seen and appreciated.

Recommendations

Based on the problems associated with youth unemployment and the relevance of Distributive education towards generating employment opportunities which are expected to help in reducing youth unemployment in Nigeria as well as the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are suggested as the way forward:

Nigerian youths should be encouraged to study Distributive education

As put forward by Damachi in Abubakar (2012) youth unemployment in Nigeria is aggravated and lingers on because of the neglect of vocational education and the market preference for academic certificates. Since Distributive education is an aspect of vocational education, our youths should be encouraged to study it in order to reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria. Furthermore, Distributive education should be made a core subject at the secondary school level. This is to enable the secondary school leavers to acquire skills that will enable them to stand on their own, even if they could not study beyond secondary school.

Nigerian youths should be ready to take risk

To get out of unemployment, Nigerian youths should be bold to take risks in line with the identified opportunities. This is because their inability to do this could make them to perpetually be without employment. It should be noted that anybody who wants to be successful should be ready to make some sacrifices, among which is the desire to bear risk. In doing this, they should be highly innovative in coming up with new ideas that would make their enterprises to survive competition in the market. Furthermore, the government at all level (federal, state and local) should use political will to encourage the young entrepreneurs who are ready to take risks. Finally, financial institutions should be ready to give them soft loans in order to aid towards financing the businesses.

Education should be properly funded

The Nigerian educational sector should be provided with the adequate funds that would guarantee qualitative education. If this is done, Distributive education that is an element of Business education which is a skill-based course and requires a lot of funds will be able to live up to the public expectation. Similarly, if requisite funds are made available, the Entrepreneurship Development Centres established in some higher institutions of learning would be functional and equip our youths with entrepreneurial skills and zeal that will reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria.

There should be industrial harmony in the Nigerian educational sector

Industrial harmony in the educational sector will lead to uninterrupted academic activities. This implies that all stakeholders (government, academic and non-academic staff) should try as much as possible to avoid incessant strikes that seem to be the order of the day in our higher institutions of learning. For instance, in 2013, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) embarked on a strike which lasted for six months. Similarly, after calling-off the industrial action, their counterparts in the polytechnics and colleges of education also declared indefinite strike actions which lasted for many months. These incessant strikes make it impossible for students to complete their programmes within the stipulated time and as such contributing to youth unemployment. Therefore, to reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria, industrial harmony should be encouraged in the educational sector. This implies that the government should honour all agreements it enters with the trade unions in the educational sector and if possible, the unions should shift grounds by accepting what the government is ready to give since resources are scarce relative to the numerous commitments of the government.

There should be improvement in security situation in Nigeria

Insecurity is a serious problem which negatively affects entrepreneurship and as such leads to unemployment. The spate of wanton killings and destruction of lives currently bedeviling Nigeria is aggravating the problem of unemployment. Therefore, to reduce youth unemployment in Nigeria, adequate security should be provided. This is because; it is only a secured and safe environment that allows economic activities to flourish and consequently, increase production which would aid generation of employment opportunities.

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