

The Policy Thrust of the National Directorate of Employment in Combating Mass Unemployment in Southwestern Nigeria: Rural Employment Creation

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Abstract

The study examined the policy thrust of the National Directorate of Employment in combating mass unemployment in Southwestern Nigeria with a view to providing information on the extent to which National Directorate of Employment has contributed to rural employment in Southwestern Nigeria. Nigeria's labour market is characterized by a high percentage of underemployment, a large public sector, and unfavorable working conditions. Both underemployment and unemployment persist in the informal market, leading to underutilization of the Country resources. (Mitchell, 2023). 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 so also the settlement of the beneficiaries who are already trained to start small-scale agro-allied and agro-based ventures yet the challenge of unemployment seem not to be abated.

Key words: Unemployment; Agriculture; National directorate of employment

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1. INTRODUCTION

Youth unemployment is a global challenge with rising long-term unemployment rates and worsening skill mismatches affecting young people worldwide. Each country faces different reasons for youth employment and seeks unique solutions, highlighting the need for tailored approaches. Addressing youth unemployment is crucial due to its long-term consequences and its impact on the future of nations. (Fischer & Schmid, 2021)

In South Africa, high level of poverty are closely linked to the unemployment problem. Poor employment growth and a lack of direct links to the formal economy have been longstanding concerns for policymakers. Various policy initiatives such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) 1994, and the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Programme (GEAR) (1996). aimed to lower unemployment rates but did not fully achieve their goals (Zizammia, 2020).

Arguably, one of the menaces plaguing Nigeria's economy and society is unemployment, in fact, one of the top on the list. Due to the consequences of the economic downturn, the unemployment rate has risen in recent years. Unemployment has become a big issue in Nigerian adolescents' lives, leading to an increase in militancy, violent crimes, kidnapping, restlessness, prostitution, and socially deviant behavior (Oluwaleye, 2021).

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).

2. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Unemployment

Unemployment refers to those who have been jobless for at least five weeks and have actively looked for work. International Labour Organization (ILO, 2012) defined unemployment as the total number of people between 15 and 64 years, who were willing and also available for work, intentionally hunting for a job, but could not get the job during the reference period.

The lack of work options is a major contributor to poverty. Unemployment is one of Nigeria's most important economic and social issues right now; a high unemployment rate indicates a labor market shortage that exacerbates poverty and feeds the cycle of low living standards (World Bank, 1994). The Nigerian economy was predominantly agricultural before the 1970s oil boom, and more than 70% of the employed was involved in agricultural practices regions that are rural. When the oil riches faded, the reality of an overburdened and unsustainable public sector and a private sector unable to absorb all of the new entrants into the labor market became evident (Onwioduokit 2013). There is a serious job crisis and delayed global advancement which is brought about by the worldwide financial and economic downturn as well as a hike in the prices of fuel and food.

Unemployment is a major challenge for the Nigerian youths. They are qualified and ready to work but no job in view. This is disheartening. As a result of the lack of gainful employment, they, coupled with responsibilities and bills staring them in the face, take up any type of undignifying jobs just to make ends meet as posited by Echebiri, (2005) and Onah, (2001). The working force of a nation is measured by a group of persons who are eligible and willing to take up decent jobs at any given time (Lauder and Mayhew, 2020). If an individual is employed yet seeking for job, such is still unemployed.

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).

2.1.1 Structural Unemployment

Structural unemployment is a long-term type of unemployment that occurs in situations where workers lose their jobs because of a mismatch between labour demand and the characteristics of the labour force offered in the labour market. Structural unemployment is characteristic of periods when workers' qualifications do not match their skills and abilities. Global processes, industrialization, computerization, digitalization, and new technology can contribute to the suppression of some professions or occupations. Changes in technology are likely to be at the root of many cases where workers are no longer needed in an older, declining industry, while in new industries there are vacancies that require different skills or are located in different places. In such situations, unemployment occurs which cannot be overcome without retraining. The view of economists on this issue is that globalization has changed the professional structures of older industrial societies while the recession has accelerated existing trends in terms of transformations of employment opportunities and labor markets in industrial societies (Ashton, 2017). In the case of structural unemployment, there is no significant difference between the volume of supply and the volume of labor demand. The difference relates to the structure of supply and the structure of labor needed for the labor market.

The basic problem of this type of unemployment is the deficit of the labor force among the unemployed

persons, which refers to meeting the criteria of education, knowledge, skills, etc. Structural unemployment is characterized by two features. The first characteristic refers to the characteristics of the occurrence of this type of unemployment, which is related to technological changes. Another feature refers to the longevity of this type of unemployment because it affects people who are unable to learn to cope with the current changes. These are usually older people who did not expect this type of change or some barriers cannot overcome, and they relate to technological processes, digitalization, and modernization of means of work. The challenges that arise relate to the need and readiness for additional training or retraining in the time that accompanies the economic cycle. This means that this type of unemployment is always present and constant. It can also be massive for some economies, given the level of (under) development of a country. But what is important is that developed economies fight this type of unemployment more effectively through developmental educational programs of formal and non-formal education. Apart from this, the problem of structural unemployment in advanced nations is associated with significant difficulties in displacing the working-age population from depressed regions with a lack of work in place of business activity and the inability to learn quickly. Rising structural unemployment may cause a drop in economic growth. Therefore, states should continuously monitor changes in economic and production flows to react to changes promptly and contribute to the harmonization of labor supply and demand with their activities.

2.1.2 Frictional Unemployment

Frictional or normal unemployment occurs due to changes in jobs or interruptions due to relocation of companies, short-term shortages of raw materials, mobility of people caused by different stages of the life cycle, etc. Frictional unemployment stems from the dynamism of the labour market. The reason may be a decision for a voluntary change of job due to salary or better working conditions. The characteristic of this type of unemployment is that, unlike structural unemployment, it resolves faster and is of a short-term character. Short-term arises from the very nature of this type of unemployment which is the matching of labor supply and demand. The cause of frictional unemployment is the time mismatch between labor supply and demand. Therefore, the main reason for this type of unemployment is the imperfection of information (data on the availability of vacancies). Frictional unemployment causes not only economic damage but also some tangible economic benefit (Veselonović, 2017), which is why it is the most desirable type of unemployment because it contributes to a more rational division of labor and higher productivity (the job you love is always more productive and creative than which the person is forced to).

2.1.3 Cyclical Unemployment

Cyclical unemployment in the literature is also called conjunctural, or so-called “economic unemployment” (since it is a product of changes and flows in the economy). It arises because of the general lack of demand in the commodity market and the labor market. Cyclical unemployment occurs when there is not enough aggregate demand in the economy to provide jobs for all who want to work. Demand for most goods and services is falling, less production is needed, and therefore fewer workers are needed, wages are sticky and not falling to reach an equilibrium level, and unemployment is the result. According to Samuelson and Nordhaus (2007): “It occurs when the overall demand for labour is low. When consumption and production decline, unemployment rises virtually everywhere.” This type of unemployment occurs during a period of economic crisis in countries. Cyclical unemployment is unemployment instigated by a downturn (recession) in the economy. This means that there is an underemployment of resources in the economy and that the actual level of unemployment is higher than natural. A cyclical unemployment rate can be the next positive value - during a recession when the actual unemployment rate is higher than natural and there is insufficient resource employment, and a negative value - during a boom, when the actual unemployment rate is below its natural level and resource overuse takes place. In any case, the presence of cyclical unemployment is a serious macroeconomic problem, a manifestation of macroeconomic instability, and proof of insufficient employment of resources.

Cyclical unemployment disrupts the balance of labour supply and demand. Namely, the demand for labour is great, it can even happen that it reaches its maximum while the supply reaches zero value. Establishing a balance requires a long period at the level of the entire economy. These are phases of an economic depression that can last for a very long time. The shift phase or the recovery phase is also reflected in the balance of labour supply and demand. This turning point results in structural unemployment. The period of recovery creates a mismatch of supply and demand for random power, for the reason that time spent in stagnation for global economic flows means a step forward toward new technology. The duration of the cycle in which this type of unemployment occurs is related to the duration of the period of recession in the economy given society. The stagnation of economic flows not only affects employment but also affects the status of employees themselves: a decline in job supply, a tendency to reduce wages or maintain a certain level with increasing the executive burden of work, reducing social and incentive payments, and rising prices of products and services.

3. AGRICULTURE

Agriculture continues to be a significant sector of the economies of Nigeria. It is suffice to say that agriculture has made considerable contributions to the economy of the nation with a great potential for job creation. Agriculture's importance is shown in the 2004 Agricultural Policy which main thrust is growth. Agriculture was also identified as a critical industry that may help the government reach its poverty reduction goals, food security and farm goods enough for household consumption, as well as meeting the needs of local industry and worldwide markets in terms of raw materials.

Nigeria launched its own Green Revolution in the late 1970s. The initiative soon crumbled and the nation reverted to her dismal status as a grain and processed food importer. It is a pity and it does not just add up that the Green Revolution of Nigeria has not hit its target. This was caused by some issues misapplication of funds, insincerity, and total negligence, in a country that historically relied mostly on agricultural exports and taught Malaysia how to grow palm oil. Development analysts have blamed the country's current economic position on the agriculture sector's poor performance.

Agriculture plays a significant role in the economies of Sub-Saharan African countries. It is a driving force for job creation, wealth creation, growth, and ultimately poverty reduction. It is also the continent's most important economic activity, accounting for about twenty percent and thirty percent of the continent's GDP. Agricultural production continues to be the backbone of Nigeria's economy. With a predominantly agrarian population, agriculture has long been the primary source of income for our people. It is a key source of raw materials and a source of livelihood for approximately 70% of the population for the agro-allied sectors and a reliable source of foreign currency (Ogbalubi&Wokocha,2013).

The agricultural policy targets the following broad objectives:

- Food security and basic food commodities.
- Meeting the development of an industrial sector that is continually growing, increase in production of agricultural raw materials increase in production and processing of exportable goods to boost their foreign exchange capacity, increase in production of agricultural raw materials, and continually diversify the nation's source of foreign exchange and export base.
- An improvement in technology and administration of agricultural production, processing, storage, and distribution in Nigeria so that agriculture can better meet the needs of other sectors of the economy.
- Increasing agricultural and rural job options so that farmers and rural residents may earn more money and the nation's labour force can be used more profitably.
- Agricultural land resources and the environment need to be safeguarded and improved to ensure a long-term supply of agricultural products.

4. NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF EMPLOYMENT

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) enunciated by Babangida's regime has been in place. NDE's mandate required it to create and carry out programs to fight unemployment and to formulate laws intended to create laborious work programs. (FRN, 2004).

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).

The NDE's organisational structure includes the board of Directors, which is led by the Honourable Minister of Labour and Productivity and is responsible for policy formulation for the Directorate's activities. The Minister sits at the top of NDE's organizational structure. The National Directorate of Employment's job creation initiatives are well overseen by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity. At the Directorate's headquarters as well as the 36 state offices and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, there are four (4) programme departments and support service departments. The Directors, who report to the Director-General, are in charge of all nine (9) departments. State Coordinators are in charge of the various state offices. Aside from the programme and support service departments, some branches and units conduct functions that help with the delivery of employment programmes.

In line with the NDE's mandate to impart skills to the unskilled, the target audience in all the schemes is mainly the unskilled with various levels of educational background including:

- School leavers;
- Graduates of tertiary institutions;
- Retired or retiring Persons;
- People with special needs including the vulnerable, physically challenged, etc.

Their programme execution involves the state offices led by state coordinators. Apart from that, the NDE's programmes are primarily carried out within budgetary constraints. This is supplemented by collaborative activities such as those outlined in the NDE Act. National and international donor agencies, faith-based and non-governmental organizations, and community-based petitions are among the targets of such attempts.

Collaboration with National Assembly members in the execution of constituency initiatives is a relatively recent concept. Because these joint initiatives, particularly those with NASS members, are driven by need, they are effective ways of transmitting skills at the local level.

4.1 Departments and Branches of the NDE

The departments, branches, and units of the NDE are as follows:

(i) Programme Department

- Vocational Skills Development (VSD)
- Rural Employment Promotion (REP)
- Small Scale Enterprises (SSE)
- Special Public Works (SPW)

(ii) Service Departments

- Planning, Research and Statistics
- Personnel Management
- Finance and Supplies
- Inspectorate
- Special Projects

(iii) Branches/Units

- International Collaboration
- Job Centre
- Information and Public Relations
- Internal Audit
- Loans and Properties.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is structural-functionalism theory in preference to other theories mentioned. According to structural-functionalism, society is seen as an interconnected system of components that work together to either foster stability or change. According to this theoretical framework, in order to comprehend social systems, we should examine the components of the system that support specific behaviors as well as how they relate to one another (Chilcott, 1998). Therefore, the following are some of the general central (and most helpful) presumptions of structural-functionalism. According to Radcliffe-Brown (1935) and Dale et al (2013), society is made up of interrelated structures and functions that are ultimately geared toward preserving or mediating societal stability. Systemic functionality, or how various system components function both within and across structures, serves to reinforce and maintain the stability of the system's structures in the context of an ever-changing, complex, and unpredictable system. Social systems are composed of both structures and functions that are essential to their continued existence or well-being (Chilcott, 1998; Merton, 1949).

A system's structures are its "steady" parts (Sewell, 1992), this does not mean that some functions have become less reliable and more dynamic than structures,

rather, it is to say that structures change more slowly than functions. Structures can be recognized by their distinctive organization or institutionalization, which typically consists of numerous autonomous, interconnected, and related components, such as coalitions of various players (Sewell, 1992).

6. METHODOLOGY

15 members of the Directorate's employees were interviewed on the Directorate's programme performance and obstacles in generating employment in Nigeria's South-Western states. These include the State Coordinators for Lagos, Ondo, and Osun States' NDE, Heads of the 4 employment creation departments, Assistant Heads of the 4 departments, and Head of Planning, Research & Statistics (PR&S), all of the National Directorate of Employment in Lagos, Ondo and Osun States, while 30 beneficiaries were interviewed for programme performance and benefits derived from the Directorate.

The data generated were analyzed using content analysis to examine the policy thrust of the National Directorate of Employment in combating mass unemployment in Southwestern Nigeria.

7. RESULTS

7.1 Qualitative Analysis

To understand the policy thrust of the National Directorate of Employment in combating mass unemployment in Southwestern Nigeria, this study conducted qualitative research with key stakeholders, 15 Key informant interviews were conducted among key officials of the National directorate of employee and 30 in-depth interviews were carried out among beneficiaries of the programme. This took place in Osun, Ondo, and Lagos states. In addition, this study conducted in-depth interviews with 30 of the beneficiaries. According to socio-demographics of the beneficiaries, more than half are males, while others are females. Concerning their age, only a few of the beneficiaries are young adults below 40 years while a majority were between 40 to 60 years. Furthermore, virtually all the beneficiaries were literate with a minimum of School Leaving Certificates (SSCE) and MSc as the highest degree earned.

7.2 Overview of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE)

To fully comprehend the impact of the National Directorate of Employment, this study was first interested in understanding what brought about the idea of the NDE. From the response of the key officials, it was made known by the interviewees that the idea of NDE came into existence in 1987, with the sole aim of employment creation, and wealth creation for people across different

levels, which has made them put in place training such as Basic Business Training.

the programme was established in 1987 basically for employment generation, poverty eradication, wealth creation, and reorientation of citizens towards self-employment. Also, we train people on entrepreneurship, ranging from women to youth, graduates, disabled, etc.

There is this one called BBT (Basic Business Training), they organise for beneficiaries from all departments pass through SSE for 5–day training for BBT” (Deputy director, Female, Lagos)

Another interviewee buttressed that the programme encompasses different training schemes, accommodating graduates, drop-out, and the less privileged.

Yes, the programme was established in 1987, it is about skill acquisition for drop-outs, graduates, loans, and provision of equipment for resettlement, EBTS trains people in hard landscaping e.g., on how to tile, fix POP, paving stone, and soft landscaping e.g. flower rearing. Another EBTS programme is GAP (graduate attachment programme) where graduates are recruited and posted to companies for them to acquire more knowledge in the form of attachment and paid a stipend of 20,000 by NDE, in the process, some of the were retained in the company as staff. There is the EBTS is called a solar energy training scheme where graduates only are trained but it is more flexible now for anyone at any level of education can partake, beneficiaries are trained on solar energy and are resettled to start up their own business. One other program of EBTS is the Graduate Coaching Scheme: graduates of education degrees are recruited for 3 months by NDE to assist and teach the less privileged students so they can make their O’levels. These teachers are paid by NDE a token of 20,000 naira only (Assistant director, Female Lagos)

It started in 1987 it cut across agricultural practices like poultry, crop production, etc. RADTS (RURAL Agriculture Development Training), PRADTS (Post Rural Agriculture Development Training) (Chief Rural Employment Promotion Officer, Female, Lagos)

In addition, it was captured that the programme also had the aim of youth empowerment in mind through training schemes like A-NOAS, YTTS, and Bi-NOAS among others.

NDE started in 1987. to combat mass unemployment, and to create jobs through vocational skill development. There are also domestic traits like barbing, and industrial traits e.g., mechanical, and plumbing. Some of the skills were Bi-NOAS (Basic Open Apprenticeship Scheme). These were general skills like hairdressing, tailoring, carpentry, make-up, etc. There is also A-NOAS (Advanced Open Apprenticeship Scheme). This was a scheme that trained on advancing the knowledge acquired from BI-NOAS. There is the YTTS (Youth Transformation Training Scheme), which is a strategy that trains the youth on new technology to improve their skills and channel the knowledge for productive use.

Also, School on wheels is a strategy to reach people at the grassroots. This was all about transporting all materials, and equipment for training to the people at the grassroots inside a Van to train them so that they adequately benefit from the employment creation programmes. And there is biofilm toilet

digestion – an organic, septic tank where organic ingredients are put inside septic tanks that will disintegrate the waste. Advanced training- biofilm melting gas- generate cooking gas from cow dung (Assistant Chief executive Officer, Male, Lagos)

7.2.1 Collaboration between NDE and other organisations both local and international

As part of the policy thrust adopted by the NDE programme is the collaboration mechanism that provides support for the scheme both locally, nationally, and internationally. According to some of the key interviewees, it was reported that the programme has engaged in collaborative engagements with faith-based organisations, community-based organisations, and local government authorities among others. Another interviewee added that the body has collaborated with philanthropists, state and national assemblies, and some financial institutions both nationally and internationally.

Yes, we have collaboration with individuals, faith-based organisations, community-based organisations, local government, GAP, Dangote, railway, port authority, NDLEA, DSS, and even international bodies like UNDP and world bank (State Coordinator, Male Ondo)

We have collaboration with the state, philanthropists, and the National Assembly (Assistant director, Male, Osun state)

NDE partners with financial institutions like CBN, Bank of Agriculture BOA, and even companies like, Dangote (Deputy director, Female, Lagos)

Aside from the above-mentioned collaborations, there were individuals from informal and cooperate firms who had partnership agreements with NDE for capacity building and skill acquisition.

Informal master trainers- gets shop owners like tailors, and hairdressers to train people on behalf of NDE. Cooperate master trainers- companies are hired to train on behalf of NDE and loans are given to them to improve their outputs. (Assistant Chief executive Officer, Male, Lagos)

7.2.2 Availability of adequate resources (human, financial, material)

It is believed that for effectiveness, adequacy of resources plays a vital role, which this study was interested in capturing. From the response of the interviewees, it was revealed that there are perspectives on the level of adequacy of resources for the smooth running of the programme. To some of the interviewees, the financial, material, and human resources are considered sufficient. According to one of the interviewees who said,

we can say the resources are adequate (Deputy director, Female, Lagos)

ehn the resources available are adequate (Audit officer, Female, Ondo)

However, there were responses which indicated that the resources are only to be considered manageable.

erm, we can say it is manageable (Assistant director, Female, Lagos)

Furthermore, other interviewees revealed that the resources are not sufficient for the smooth running of the

programmes. Reasons for inadequacies highlighted by the interviewees include the unemployment rate as well as the duplication of agencies which led to the sharing of available resources.

not enough at all, because there are many unemployed people (Assistant Chief executive officer, Male, Lagos)
the resources are not adequate, because so many other agents are duplicating the NDE programme, so the resources need to be shared (State Coordinator, Male, Ondo)

7.2.3 Support from individuals, local government, state, and international donors toward employment creation and empowerment efforts of NDE

Likewise, the availability of support from different means also plays a key role in enhancing the effectiveness of the NDE programme, thereby promoting employment creation and empowerment. In the words of the interviewees, it can be deduced that there are different perspectives on the availability of support. While some of the interviewees explained there is support from organisations and local government bodies and even the state, supplying resources like land for the programme.

Support from Local Government, Dangote employs people trained by NDE in the locality (National Content Board), politicians help to resettle beneficiaries (Deputy director, Female, Lagos)
Yes there are some that are supportive (State Coordinator, Male, Ondo)
errmm, the support is not that much except for the land that we got from the local government and the state (Assistant Director, Female, Osun)

Based on the response of the interviewee, it was further revealed that there has been no support for employment creation. Another interviewee added that there used to be a collaboration with some organisations before, but it no longer exists.

there is no support from anybody for the NDE programme (Assistant director, Female, Lagos)
there is no collaboration, we used to have with ILO and German Tech before but they no longer collaborate (Assistant Chief executive officer, Male, Lagos)

Since the Middle Ages, entrepreneurship has been defined in a variety of ways by different authors (Igbo, 2006). The term “entrepreneur” has been used to describe actors, innovators, and technological developers. Nevertheless, the definition of entrepreneurship will vary depending on who defines it. Ratten and Usmanji (2021) defined entrepreneurship as the willingness and capacity of an individual to look for investment opportunities, and establish, and successfully run an enterprise. Tkachenko, Kuzior, and Kwilinski (2019) defined entrepreneurship as the skillful manipulation of human intelligence, as demonstrated in a creative and innovative performance.. Agriculture is identified as a critical industry that may help the government reach its poverty reduction goals, food security, and farm goods enough for household consumption, as well as the needs of local industry and

worldwide markets in terms of raw materials, are all provided by agriculture. Agriculture is a significant sector of the economy with great potential for job creation.

According to Winarsih, Indriastuti, and Fuad (2021), entrepreneurship is the process of expanding a nation’s pool of small, medium, and large businesses by fostering the growth of numerous competent entrepreneurs who can successfully manage creative businesses, support them as they expand, and ensure their long-term viability to meet various socioeconomic development objectives.

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 programs. 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).

According to the NDE Annual Report (2013), the goal of the Rural Employment Promotion Programme was to increase rural income through agricultural production and provide jobs for the rural population. These admirable goals are accomplished through the teaching of contemporary farming techniques and the provision of microcredit for postharvest management, production, processing, storage, etc. Additionally, training in non-farm rural employment pursuits is promoted by the initiative. It not only boosts the rural economy but also lessens the drift between rural and urban areas.

The following are some of these programmes and initiatives:

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 practicals 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. The following are some of the policy thrusts that had an impact on mass unemployment creation in southwestern Nigeria:

i.) Regular training: NDE made regular training available for the beneficiaries in their area of vocation to be well-rounded in their chosen field.

ii.) Supply of materials needed: NDE-made machines, tools, and other materials needed available for the take-off of training of the beneficiaries to have access to adequate training in their chosen vocation.

iii.) Entrepreneurship knowledge: coupled with the skills acquired by the beneficiaries, NDE made entrepreneurship skills a compulsory part of the training for all the beneficiaries to be well grounded on the business aspect of their vocation and thrive.

iv.) Youth empowerment scheme: this is a scheme targeted mainly towards the youth.

v.) Loans: the government makes access to loans by the beneficiaries possible, NDE liaises with some financial institutions that make it possible for the beneficiaries to take off in their chosen vocation.

vi.) Resettlement: there is resettlement of the beneficiaries after their training, NDE resettles the trainees by providing funds, land, equipment, and materials to the beneficiaries to start their small scaler agro-allied and agro-based ventures.

vii.) NDE provided graduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions as well as retirees with the requisite skills needed for competences in managing mixed farming enterprises as Agro-entrepreneurs.

viii.) Partnership: NDE partners with politicians to train people of their senatorial districts in different areas

of vocation, they also attach the beneficiaries to different organisations to acquire and practice their vocation. Some are employed by the organisation while doing this.

The main objective of the rural employment creation of the NDE is 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.

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