

An Overview of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and its Mandate in Nigeria

Adam Adem Anyebe

Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Administration, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria- Nigeria

***Corresponding Author:**

Adam Adem Anyebe

Email: adamanyebe@gmail.com

Abstract: In spite of the conscious effort by the Babangida administration to combat unemployment by establishing NDE in 1986, unemployment has been on the increase. This study, therefore, attempted to examine NDE and its mandate in the country. Official documents were employed in data collection. The study revealed, among others, that NDE as a programme aimed at combating unemployment has recorded a mixed bag of some successes and continuing challenges. It was, therefore, recommended that the Directorate should be re-examined and possibly overhauled to enhance its performance. It should also be properly funded.

Keywords: Employment, unemployment, empowerment, programme, directorate

INTRODUCTION

When the National Manpower Board was directed in 1986 to conduct a sample survey of the unemployed youth, the result was frightening (some 2, 000, 000 unemployed youths or 10%) and this led to the inauguration of Chukwuma Committee in the same year to devise some strategies to combat mass unemployment [1]. To curb the unemployment, the Babangida administration in 1986 established the National Directorate of Employment, and its programmes were launched nationwide the following year.

The Directorate was statutorily mandated to:

- Design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment;
- Articulate policies aimed at developing work programmes with labour intensive potentials;
- Obtain and maintain a Data Bank on employment and vacancies in the country with a view to acting as a clearing house to link job seekers with vacancies in collaboration with other government agencies; and
- Implement any other policies as may be laid down from time to time by the Board established under sections of the enabling ACT

In order to actualize its mandate, the Directorate launched four well-articulated programmes in 1987. These are:

- a. National Youth Employment Programmes;
- b. Small scale Industrialist and Graduate Employment Programmes;
- c. Special Works Programme; and
- d. Agricultural Programme [2].

The programmes were backed by necessary administrative, monitoring and support personnel, thus enabling optimum use of resources and prompt response to the requirements of the public [3].

In 1996, the core employment generation programmes of the NDE were re-organised into:

- i. Vocational skills Development (VSD) Programme;
- ii. Small Scale Enterprise (SSE) Programme;
- iii. Special Public Works (SPW) Programme; and
- iv. Rural Employment Promotion (REP) Programme [4].

However, from 8.5% in 1985, the unemployment rate in the country rose to 11.9 % in 2005, 12.7 % in 2007, 14.9 % in 2008, 19.7 % in 2009, 21.4 % in 2010, and 23.9 % in 2011 [8]. Undoubtedly, those who feel the brunt of the unemployment crisis in Nigeria the most are the youths. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 54 % of Nigerian youths were unemployed in 2012. In the “2012 National Baseline Youth Survey Report” issued by NBS in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Youth Development in December 2013, it was reported that more than half, about 54 % of the youth population were unemployed. Of this, females stood at 15.9 % compared to their male counterpart with 48.1%.” The survey classified youth to be those between ages of 15 and 35. According to the survey, the population of youths aged 15 to 35 years in Nigeria is estimated to be 64million. The youth unemployment crisis in Nigeria is so severe that over 100,000 youths sometimes jostle for 25 vacancies [5].

The newly launched jobs portal of the Federal Government “N – Power.gov.ng” recorded over 400, 000 successful registrations within 36 hours after opening for 500, 000 teaching job positions [6].

NBS [8] states that the rate of unemployment among economically active Nigerians between the youthful ages of 15-24 was as high as 37.7 % in 2011 while among those within the age bracket of 25-44 years, the unemployment rate was 22.4 %. For Nigerians within the age of 45 and 59, the rate of unemployment stood at 18.0 % while it was 21.4 % among those within the age bracket of 60 and 64. The translation of this is that Nigerians between the youthful ages of 15 and 24 are those mostly affected by unemployment and are, as such, more vulnerable to its attendant consequences. This evidence is collaborated by the World Bank [7] which reports that the unemployment rate among Nigerians between the ages of 15-24 was 13.8 % in 2011; 13.7 % in 2012; 13.6 % in 2013; and 13.6 % in 2014.

The importance attached to NDE in Nigeria can be seen from the fact that with the end of the military rule in 1999, the Directorate was given legal backing, with its continued existence guaranteed by its enabling ACT, CAP250 of the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria [18]. However, in spite of its continued operation and financing (for example, the NDE was allocated N5,905,302,638 in the 2016 budget) [16], the unemployment rate in Nigeria keeps rising. What is responsible for this state of affairs? It is against this backdrop that the researcher poses this research question: what have been the achievements and the challenges of the NDE since its establishment in 1986?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent times, many researchers have carried out empirical studies on the operations and programmes of the NDE. For example, Toluwalase and Omonijo [4] evaluated the fundamental efforts of the NDE in using agricultural programmes to combat poverty among small-scale food crop farmers in Ekiti State, where agriculture is largely practiced as a means of livelihood. The study obtained its data through the administration of structured questionnaires on 200 arable crop farmers who benefited from NDE agricultural programmes and 100 farmers who did not benefit from the scheme. The findings of the study revealed that socio-economic characteristic like age, education, level of income, household size and income had correlation with severity of poverty; that those who did not benefit from NDE programmes (non-benefiting farmers) had the highest vulnerability to poverty as their poverty index was estimated to be 0.94, compared with 0.11 of the beneficiaries.

Adebisi and Oni [9] assessed the operational schemes of the National Directorate of Employment

NDE and the relevance of its training programmes to the needs of trainees in Southwestern Nigeria. The study adopted the survey design. Precisely, the six states of Ekiti State, Lagos, Ogun, Osun and Oyo in the South of Nigeria were used for the study. 1200 trainees, 420 trainers, and 120 ex-trainees were sampled from a population of 382, 792. The results showed that the NDE had 11 operational schemes and 30 job categories. It also revealed that the NDE training programmes met the needs of the trainees as 99.2% of trainees and 98.3% of ex-trainees said that they learnt the jobs they had wanted to learn at the NDE. Furthermore, all the 120 ex-trainees sampled (100%) said the jobs they are now doing were the ones they learned at the NDE. In conclusion, results of the study indicated that the NDE has impacted positively on the previously unemployed Nigerians by providing them with gainful employment.

In a different study, Obike, Ukoha, and Nwajiuba [10] investigated the role of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in poverty reduction among farmers in Nigeria, using Abia State as a case study. The simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study, and structured questionnaires were used to obtain information from 120 respondents – 60 beneficiaries and 60 non-beneficiaries of the NDE in the study area. Results of the study revealed that beneficiaries of the NDE used more fertilizers than non-beneficiaries, with an average input level of 132.5kg ha⁻¹ per farmer compared to 100kg ha⁻¹ for non-beneficiaries. Furthermore, average farm land of NDE beneficiaries was 1.68 ha compared to 1.45 ha for non-beneficiaries. In addition, the value of improved seedlings used by NDE beneficiaries was on the average ₦6, 733.3 ha⁻¹ whereas the non-beneficiaries used improved seeds valued at ₦4, 250 ha⁻¹. NDE beneficiaries also enjoyed better credit of ₦7, 516 per farmer compared to non-beneficiaries who received ₦2, 550 credit on the average. Similarly, NDE beneficiaries, on the average, used pesticides worth ₦13, 000 ha⁻¹ while non-beneficiaries used pesticides worth ₦7, 250 on the average. The findings of the study, Obike *et al* [10] concluded, show that NDE beneficiaries enjoyed better agricultural packages than non-beneficiaries; that the NDE plays a vital role in poverty reduction among farmers in Abia State, Nigeria. The study also showed that farmer income is significant for poverty reduction.

Ukoha, Osuji, Osuji and Ibeagwa [11] in another study examined the influence of the skill acquisition programmes of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) on job creation in Abia State. Both primary and secondary sources of information were used in gathering data for the study. 120 questionnaires were administered to NDE by means of simple random sampling technique. Out of these, 108 questionnaires were returned with valid responses. The findings revealed that 18 of the beneficiaries (representing 16.67% of beneficiaries sampled) acquired Vocational Skills Development (VSD) Programme training and

subsequently created 30 jobs (14.92% of total jobs created) while 40 respondents (representing 37.04% of beneficiaries sampled) acquired Special Public Works Programme (SPW) training and created 54 jobs (26.89% of jobs created). 20 of the respondents (18.51%) had Agricultural Employment Programme (AEP) training and created 82 jobs (40.79%) whereas 30 of the respondents (27.73%) had Small Scale Enterprise programme (SSE) training and created 35 jobs (17%). The results showed that the AEP is better acquired with the necessary logistics and manpower to create jobs; that SSE beneficiaries generated the highest average annual income of ₦531,961.00 per beneficiary (₦44,330.08 monthly), which suggests that it is the most profitable skills acquisition programmes. The study concluded that the NDE, through its skills acquisition programmes, is helping its beneficiaries generated employment.

In a separate study entitled: “An Assessment of the Role of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Reducing Graduate Unemployment in Kaduna State,” Amupitan [3] sought to examine: (i) if inadequate awareness of the programmes of the NDE had led to poor enrolment in its skills acquisition schemes, (ii) if the NDE was reducing graduate unemployment in Kaduna State though its skill acquisition programmes, (iii) if poor funding was affecting the effectiveness of the NDE. Data were gathered from primary and secondary sources while the systematic sampling method was used in determining the sample size and the opportunistic sampling method was used in its administration. The results of the study revealed that inadequate awareness of the activities of the NDE had led to poor enrolment in its programmes in Kaduna State; that the NDE was creating employment through specific skills acquisition schemes, thereby reducing the graduate unemployment rate in Kaduna State, but that there was still room for improvement as the number of those who had benefited from the scheme was not commensurate with the number of graduates turned out yearly by tertiary institutions; and that poor funding had undermined the effectiveness of the NDE in Kaduna State.

Ogunlela [12] assessed the impact of the programmes of the NDE on graduate employment and unemployment in Kaduna State of Nigeria. The study relied on oral interview of NDE personnel and NDE brochures, annual reports, handbooks and other documentary sources for its data. The study revealed that while graduates who benefited from the training programmes under the different NDE schemes were normally supposed to be placed on attachment, what obtained was that in some cases, graduates trained were not placed on attachment. The study also revealed that the impact of the NDE in generating graduate employment in Kaduna State was, at best, modest.

Amire and Ngwama [13] examined the contributions of the NDE in facilitating youth employment through skill development and job creation in Lagos State, Nigeria between 2005 and 2011. To collect data for the study, unstructured interview was carried out with officials and heads of department at the NDE zonal offices in Lagos State. Secondary data were collected from NDE annual reports, periodicals, journals, etc. The findings of the study revealed that between 2005 and 2012, 4188 graduates registered with the job centre units of the NDE in Lagos and out of this number, 341 were employed; that the NDE as an institution had contributed in no small measure in developing vocational skills, training and creating jobs for the unemployed within their capacity. The study however submitted that the pace of the NDE was slow in meeting the demands for skills development among graduates in Nigeria. Consequently, the study recommends that the government develop more institutional capacity to tackle the issue of unemployment in the country and that the NDE update its data bank as the lack of current data is a serious defect on its operations – the availability of current data will make for proper planning.

RESEARCH METHOD

Some official publications of government agencies were relied upon for purposes of data collection for this study-official publications and bulletins of NDE, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and NBS as well as internet materials.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, results are analysed and discussed.

Achievements

Since its establishment in 1986, the NDE has been able to record some achievements in the pursuance of its mandate – from designing employment – generating programmes and training schemes to actually empowering thousands of unemployed persons. According to CBN [17], 1, 248,109 new jobs were directly created by the NDE in 1987, through its various activities. Out of this number 137,200 were non-graduates, while the rest made up of both graduates and non-graduates were staff recruited by the NDE for its own presence and its related activities. As Gbosi [2] puts it, about 142,072 jobs were created by the NDE under its various programmes in 1987 compared with 94,365 and 242,160 jobs in 1988 and 1989 respectively. And by December 1990, the cumulative number of jobs created by the Directorate stood at 776,813. Available data from the NDE indicate that about 36,400 unemployed youth were recruited for vocational training in 80 different trades nationwide under the National Open Apprenticeship (NOA) in 1998 compared with 32,000 in 1997. Also, 2000 youths were trained on the conversion of waste to decorate objects under the Waste-To-Wealth Scheme [2].

Oyemomi [14] summarized the achievement of the NDE thus:

The NDE has trained more than 2 million unemployed Nigerians, provided business training for not less than 400,000 people, vocational training in up to 90 different trades, (and) assistance to more than 40,000 unemployed to set up their own businesses. The Directorate has organized labour-based groups through which 160,000 people benefited.

According to NDE official reports, between 2005 and 2009, 599,405 person were empowered nationwide under the various programmes and schemes of the NDE. In addition, there were 171,253 beneficiaries of NDE programmes and schemes nationwide in 2010. In 2011, 159,076 persons benefited from NDE programmes [8]. According to Umoh, as cited in Odeh and Okoye [15] an average of about 108,000 people joined the programmes of the NDE annually (meaning that by 2016, the NDE would have directly created more than 3.2 million jobs over the 30 years of its existence). This large number would have joined the swelling ranks of the unemployed without the presence of the NDE.

Challenges

The NDE is faced with some challenges. These challenges affect its operation and, consequently, its service delivery. Umoh [15], as cited in Odeh and Okoye [15], lists these challenges to include: inadequate funding and late release of funds from the Federation Account, managerial deficiency, policy distortions and corruption.

In the words of Oyemomi [14]:

The NDE suffers from inadequate funding from the federal government. Its predicament is worsened by the fact that it has over stretched itself by engaging in skills acquisition, granting of loans, procuring and selling agricultural inputs such as fertilizers. It has succeeded in recovering less than 60% of its loans. There is also the problem of duplication of efforts with the statutory roles of the federal ministry of labour and productivity in the area of compilation of statistics on the unemployed in the country and claims to maintain a data bank of these as well as matching applicants with vacancies.

Amupitan [3] also lists the challenges faced by the NDE as follows:

- i. Resource constraint (human and material), thereby leading to inadequate monitoring. There are cases of poor funding and untimely remittance of money.
- ii. There are instances of loan diversion, that is, loans given to beneficiaries are not used for the specific purpose they were given.

- iii. Poor repayment status of disbursed loans, beneficiaries delay or are reluctant in loan repayment.
- iv. In some cases, the Environmental Beautification Board (EBS) and the Graduate Attachment Programme (GAP) run for only three months, which has become a source of worry to the participants because they are practically thrown back into the world of the unemployed after three months. The period of 3-6 months is too short to acquire necessary practical skills.
- v. There is also the case of late payment of trainers/trainees stipends which eventually affects commitments.
- vi. Non-availability of state-of-the-art facilities like computer sets, functional radio message equipment, cameras, training workshops, public address system. This puts a strain on NDE activities.
- vii. Inadequate infrastructure: some of the training sites mainly the agricultural skills training centres lack regular supply of water.
- viii. Reluctance of some organizations in retaining graduate attachment programme (GAP) participants after the attachment.
- ix. Refusal of some participating organizations to supplement the monthly stipends.
- x. Some participating organizations are in the habit of posting participants outside their Head Offices without accommodation and financial support.

CONCLUSION

One conclusion from the findings of this study is that the NDE as a directorate set up to curb unemployment in Nigeria has recorded a mixed bag of some successes and continuing challenges. Thus, any attempt to reposition the NDE for effective operation and by extension, effective service delivery, should include an overhaul of the modus operandi of the Directorate to enhance the achievement of its objectives. The Directorate should also be properly funded.

REFERENCES

1. Anyebe, A. A. (1998). Education and Manpower development in Nigeria. *Journal of Problem – Solving*, 1(1).
2. Gbosi, A. N. (2005). The Dynamics of Managing Chronic Unemployment and Underemployment Current International Standards and Issues in their Application. ILO Bureau of Statistics.
3. Amupitan, O. (2011). An Assessment of the Role of then National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Reducing Graduate Unemployment in Kaduna State (2005-2009). Unpublished MSc Dissertation, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
4. Toluwalase, S. O. W., & Omoniji, D. O. (2013). Evaluation of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Alleviating Poverty

- among Arable Farmers in Ekiti-State, South West Nigeria. *Journal of Agriculture Economics and Rural Development*, 1(1), 8-25
5. Durotoye, A. (2014). The Crisis of Youth Unemployment in the MINT Countries: Causes, Consequences and Corrections. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 6(24).
 6. The Nation, June 14, 2016, available online at www.thenationonline.ng
 7. The World Bank. (2016). Data World Bank, available online at org; siteresources.Worldbank.org, 2016.
 8. Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2012). National Bureau of Statistics, Annual Abstract of Statistics, 2012.
 9. Adebisi, T. A., Oni. (2012). Assessment of Relevance of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) training programmes to the Needs of Trainees in Southwestern Nigeria. *International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*, 4(3), 29-37
 10. Obike, K. C., Ukoha, O. O., & Nwajiuba, C. U. (2007). Poverty Reduction among Farmers in Nigeria: The Role of the National Directorate of Employment. *Agricultural Journal*, 2(4).
 11. Ukoha, I. I., Osuji, M. N., Osuji, E. E., & Ibeagwa, O. P. (2014). Analysis of the Influence of the Skills Acquisition Programmes of the National Directorate of Employment on Job Creation in Abia State. *Report and Opinion*, 6(3).
 12. Ogunlela, Y. I. (2012). Impact of the Programmes of the National Directorate of Employment on Graduate Employment and Unemployment in Kaduna State of Nigeria. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(1), 40-45
 13. Amire, C. M., & Ngwama, J.C. (2015). Emergence of Unemployment: An Assessment of Nigeria Directorate of Employment (NDE) Skill Intervention Programmes between (2005-2011) in Lagos State. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 6(5).
 14. Oyemomi, E. O. (2003). An Assessment of Poverty Reduction and Strategies in Nigeria (1983-2002). Unpublished PhD Dissertation, St. Clements University, 2003.
 15. Odey, M. A., Okoye, C. O. (2004). Poverty Reduction and Youth Unemployment in Nigeria Public Policy and *Administration Research*, 3(4).
 16. Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2016). Appropriation Bill
 17. Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1987). Report of the CBN
 18. Federal Republic of Nigeria. National Directorate of Employment (www.nde.org.ng)
 19. Federal Republic of Nigeria: 2005-2009 Reports of the NDE