

UNEMPLOYMENT AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE CRIME RATE OF BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper examines the effects of unemployment on the Crime rate of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The major focus of the study is to examine the major causes of unemployment in Nigeria; identify the level of crime in Nigeria and to bring it down to its effects on Bayelsa State. A cross sectional survey design was adopted on the study. Data for the study depends on both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected with the aid of a self- design structured questionnaire while secondary sources of data depend on the reviews of empirical literature of scholars. The Durkhemain “Anomie Theory” was implored as a sketch for theoretical framework of the study. Furthermore, a sample of 200 respondents were drawn using both purposive and simple random techniques, Yenagoa metropolis were selected randomization method of balloting was employed to select the respondents. Data selected were analyzed with frequency distribution table and simple percentage. The findings of the paper revealed that the major causes of crime in Bayelsa Stat are unemployment, poverty, government neglect and rising population and corruption. The paper concluded that unemployment is the major cause of high crime rate in Nigeria. The paper recommends among other that, government should create an enabling environment for industry to serve, youth should be creative and learn different vocational skills. The war against corruption should be intensified to ensure the fair distribution of resources. Unemployment is the root cause of crime rate and if it is properly tackled the level of crime will reduce drastically.

Keyword: Effects, unemployment, Bayelsa, crime, Nigeria

Introduction

Every human being naturally has the desire to achieve these three basic needs of life, eg food, clothing and shelter. Although due to the nature of scarce resources and opportunities available to human nature, these basic needs are not always met by many. Also, every society across the globe has its particular problems and challenges. Nigeria is not an exception. As a developing country, it has its share of political, economic and cultural problems which has in no measure affected the people of the nature. Such problems bedeviling the society include unemployment and the increasing rate of crime.

Unemployment is a very sensitive problem facing and affecting many economies of the world. The issue of unemployment became more risky to global economic growth after the great

depression. Unemployment rate has continued to be on the increase despite the enormous human and natural resources available in the nation. Unemployment is visible in Nigeria and Bayelsa State in particular. Every year, thousands of graduates are produced from various higher institution of learning but there are no jobs for majority of them. Nigerian streets are littered with youth hawkers who ordinarily would have found gainful employment in some enterprise. Okafor (2011). The large number of youths who are unemployed is capable of undermining democratic practice as they constitute a serious threat if engaged by the political class for destruction and other criminal activities. Adepegha, 2011, Ibrahim, 2011, Lartey, 2011, Olatunji and Aboye, 2011, Okafor 2011.

On the other hand, crime is often perceived to be threatening the fabric of society or as a symptom of a breakdown of social order. Crime is dysfunctional as it threatens the stability and it is therefore, a social problem that requires a concerted effort towards finding a lasting solution to it. Crime is a resultant effect arising from the failure of the social contact. Crime is also seen as a violation of the rules agreed to be respected by all members of society mete sanction upon those guilty of the violation it is for the same reason that the legal system views crime as a public and moral wrong crime is a menace bedeviling developed and developing countries alike. It is harmful and damaging, debilitating and distasteful consequences on man and society cannot be overemphasized.

Objectives of the paper

Generally, the study is designed to investigate the effects of unemployment and crime rate in Bayelsa State.

However, the study is specifically set to achieve the following;

1. To determine the major causes of unemployment in Bayelsa State.
2. To investigate the rate of crime in Bayelsa State.
3. To examine the impact of unemployment on crime in Bayelsa State.

Conceptual underpinning of Unemployment

There is no precise definition of unemployment in the economic literature. To the layman, unemployment means a state of joblessness. Unemployment could be defined as the percentages of labour force that is without job but is able and willing to work. Gbosi AN. (2007). According to Briggs (1973), unemployment is defined as the difference between the amount of labour employed at current wage levels and working conditions and the amount of labour not hired at these levels. The international labour organization (ILO), defines unemployment as the numbers of the economically strong population who is without work but ready and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. (World Bank. 1993). Gbosi 1997, defined unemployment as situation in which people who are willing to work at the prevailing wage rate are unable to find jobs. Today unemployment has been identified as one of Nigeria's major socio-economic problems. In Nigeria, unemployment has toppled, the chart in the catalogue of economic problem and the effects so devastating that various government have made efforts making massive employment generating policies and scheme.

Crime

Crime like other concepts in social, science has no universally accepted definition. According to Oxford Dictionary of sociology (2009) a crime is held to be an offence, which goes beyond the personal and into the public sphere, breaking prohibitory rules or laws, to which legitimate punishments or sanction are attached, and which requires the intervention of a public authority. Dambazau (1994), defined crime as an act or omission against public interest and which is prescribed by law enacted by the legislature in the overall interest of the society, and t which prescribed punishment is attached in the event of violation and it involves four major principles which are public wrong, moral wrong, law and punishment for the criminal.

Crime is an unlawful act punishable by a state or other authority. The most popular view is that crime is a category created by law; in other words, something is a crime if declared as such by relevant and applicable law Farneo (2008).

One proposed definition is that a crime or offence is an act harmful not only to some individuals but also to a community, society or the state. Such acts are forbidden and punishable by law Martin (2003). The act such as murder, rape, stealing, burglary, arson, kidnapping, rubbery and theft are to be prohibited but exists worldwide. What exactly is a criminal offence is defined by criminal law of each society or nation.

Theoretical frame work.

The paper adopts anomie theory because of its suitability.

Anornie Theory

This theory was propounded by Emile Durkheim introduced the term in his book. The Division of labour in society in 1893. He believed that the specialized division of labour and the rapid expansion of industrialized society contained threats to social solidarity. He used the term Anomie to describe the condition of deregulation occurring in the society. He posits that the general procedural rules of a society, the rules of how people ought to behave have broken down. This state of normlessness easily leads to deviant behaviour Habrambos and Holborn (2008). Thus anomie refers to the breakdown of social norms and a condition where those norms no longer control the activities of the members of the society without clear rules to guide them, individuals cannot find their plans in the society and have difficulty adjusting to the changing conditions of life. This in turn leads to dissatisfaction, frustration, conflict and deviant behaviour Tard was one of the earliest writer to establish a relationship between crime and environment. He believes that people learn crime through imitation or contact with criminals in their environment. He holds that unhealthy exposure to certain environments would induce criminality. While agreeing with Tard. Dahrend of (1974) argues that poverty as a social condition plays a vital role in crime. The poor are led to crime because of their relative deprivation and acute sense of want. As a result, the social environment of the poor are jobless in Bayelsa State often leads them to crime. The unemployed in Nigeria cum, Bayelsa State experience low self esteem. Deprivation, muststration and acute want. This conditions may lead the unemployed people to deviant behaviour like crime in the society in particular Bayelsa State.

Causes of unemployment in Nigeria

1. Rising population.

The population of Nigeria is rising faster than job opportunities. This has led to large scale unemployment. The population increases without a proportional increase in job opportunities. This has left a large proportion of the population unemployed.

2. Rural – urban Migration and neglect of Agriculture

Since the oil boom in Nigeria, there has been dismal neglect of the agricultural sector with the resultant effect of rising unemployment. This is because job opportunities created by the oil boom can no longer take care of available work force. The era of oil boom has led to great movement of people from the rural to the urban areas in search of elusive and often non existing jobs.

3. Worldwide Economic Depression

The worldwide economic depression of the 1980s brought with it a very high rate of unemployment and high balance of payment deficit. The stabilization act Of 1982, placed embargo on employment. The embargo although lifts on the early 90s, the spill over effect continued to have serious negative effects on employment in Nigeria.

4. Corruption

High level of corruption in Nigeria has robbed the country of developing a vibrant economic base has in spite of her abundant national resources. Massive corruption is perpetuated in every sector and has permeated the entire social structure of Nigeria. Funds meant for development projects which could have generated employment have been misappropriated, diverted, or embezzled and stashed away in foreign banks. Epidemic corruption has robbed the country of the chance of using more than US 500 billion dollars estimated revenue from the sale of oil in the last 50 years to develop a vibrant economy that would created jobs, for the people in various sectors of economy Okafor (2005).

Crime rate in Bayelsa State

The rate of crime in Bayelsa State is relatively high as compared to some states in Nigeria. For instance, in 2016 alone there were 612 offences against person, 1897 offences against property, 91 offences against lawful authority and one offence against local act making a total of 1541 represent 13% of total crimes in Nigeria. Offence against persons are those offences against human beings. Example, murder, manslaughter, intensified, concealment of birth, rape and other physical abuse etc. (National Bureau of statistics, (2017). Unemployment has been put forward as a decisive motive for crime. Individuals lacking the basic means of subsistence are more likely to become involved in criminal activity when they experiment a negative income shock. As income levels decline, engaging in property crime becomes more opportune relative to participating in more “peaceful” economic activities and the stolen property might be regarded as a buffer in alleviating distress Papaianou (2017).

A primary data was carried out using 200 questionnaire and such was elicited from the respondents in the table below.

Table 1: Crime pattern in Bayelsa State.

Types of crime	Frequencies	Percentage
Militancy	35	17.5%
Stealing	25	12.5%
Robbery	9	4.5%
Kidnapping	10	5%
Gambling	21	10.5%
Rape	6	3%
Cultism	24	12%
Prostitution	10	5%
Burglary	14	7%
Drug abuse	19	9.5%
Fraud	5	2.5%
419	7	3.5%
Kpo fire pilligeburkery	5	7.5%
Total	200	

Source: Researchers field work 2023

Gleaning from the table, the common criminal pattern in Bayelsa State adjudged by the respondents were militancy (17.5%), stealing (12.5%), robbery (4.5%), kidnapping (5%), gambling (10.5%), Rape (3%), cultism (12%) prostitution (5%), Burglary (7%), Drug abuse (9.5), fraud (2.5), 419 (3.5), Kpo fire illegal bunker (7.5%). These crimes were adjudged to be seldom committed in Bayelsa State.

Table 2. Factors influencing crime in Bayelsa State.

Factors influencing crime	Frequency%			Total
	Yes	No	Neutral	
Unemployment	140	30	30	200
Poverty	120	30	20	200
Government neglect	95	25	80	200
Rising population	130	60	10	

Source: Researchers field work 2023

Extrapolating from the study, 130 respondents 65% constituting the majority affirmed that crime rate is alarming in Bayelsa State and it is caused by unemployment. While poverty, government neglect and rising population are 120 (60%), 75 (47.5) and 130 (70%) respectively.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

The study concluded that unemployment has a major effect on crime in Bayelsa State. It is also important to emphasize that, if the roots cause of unemployment, are not tackled, the level of crime will continue to manifest in Nigeria in different terms.

The study therefore recommends that;

1. Efforts should be made to diversify the economy to reduce over dependent on oil so as to create employment and improve standard of living in other sectors.
2. The war against corruption should be intensified to ensure the fair distribution of resource to where they are needed.
3. Education should be prioritized to reduce the level of illiteracy as a weapon to fight crime.
4. Youths should be creational and learn different vocational skills. By so doing they will be job-provider and job-seekers.
5. An uncontrolled population growth is a receipt for disaster, as it would readily creates an array of unemployed people.
6. Government should create an enabling environment for industry to serve.

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