

## **National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and Rural Empowerment in Oyo State, Nigeria**

**Olufemi O. POPOOLA, Ph.D.**

**Olubusayo AJAYI**

Department of Public Administration  
Obafemi Awolowo University  
Ile-Ife, Nigeria

### **Abstract**

*Across the globe, in developed and developing nations, the subject matter of unemployment has been a topical and recurring issue. Indeed, virtually all nations grapple with the attendant challenges of unemployment and constantly devise series of mitigative strategies to combat the menace of unemployment. In Nigeria, unemployment remains a daunting challenge at all levels of government. The Federal Government, in one of its spirited efforts to combat unemployment established an institution tagged National Directorate of Employment (NDE) to embark on rural empowerment across the thirty-six states of the federation. This empirical study therefore, examined the roles of NDE in Oyo State. It appraised the performance of the Directorate and determined the influence of the Directorate on rural empowerment. Furthermore, the study analyzed the challenges facing the implementation of NDE programmes in the State. 20 copies of questionnaire were administered to members of staff of the Directorate while 10 of them were interviewed; 625 copies of questionnaire were administered to beneficiaries of the Directorate while 40 of them were also interviewed. Findings revealed that NDE played significant roles in employment generation, entrepreneurship and skills creation, with a significant positive effect on the monthly income of beneficiaries, though major challenges such as financial constraints, poor-awareness of NDE programmes by the public, still faced the NDE in implementing her statutory responsibilities. The study concluded that the NDE programmes has enhanced rural empowerment in Oyo State, despite the challenges facing agency, thereby engendering an improved means of livelihood for the beneficiaries.*

**Key Words: Unemployment, Poverty, Empowerment, Policy Implementation.**

### **1. Introduction**

From the time immemorial, as asserted by Bello (2003), the subject of unemployment has always been an issue of great concern to policy makers, administrators and economic managers alike, giving the devastating effect of this phenomenon on individuals, the society, and the economy at large. In the 1960's and 1970's, the Nigerian economy provided jobs for the teeming population. The economy also absorbed considerable imported labour in the scientific sectors. The wage rate compared favorably with international standards. There was also relative industrial peace in most industries and some groups. Specifically, following the oil boom of the 1970's, there was rapid migration, especially by the youths to the urban areas in search of wage employment. But following the downturn in the economy in the 1980's, the problem of unemployment started to manifest (Mbah and Agu, 2007).

Successive governments in Nigeria had adopted various policies to create jobs and reduce unemployment in the country. In an effort to achieve this, the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida constituted a committee known as the Chukwuma Committee on March 26, 1986, to consider appropriate strategies for dealing with the mass unemployment problem in the country under the aegis of the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity (Adebisi and Oni, 2012). The report of the committee led to the institution of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in November 1986, and charged with the following mandates:

- i. Design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment;
- ii. Articulate policies aimed at developing work programmes with labour intensive potentials;
- iii. Obtain and maintain a data bank on vacancies and employment opportunities in the country with other government agencies and;
- iv. Implement any other policy as may be laid down, from time to time, by the Directorate.

The Agency has put in place various programmes to help empower the youths and generate employment for them across the federation which includes Oyo State. Parts of the programmes are Vocational Skills Development (VSD), Start your own business (SYOB) and Rural Employment Promotion (REP). Other employment programmes put in place by the Federal Government include Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies (SMEDAN), Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YOUWIN), Better Life Programme (BLP), National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOA) and Agricultural Sector Employment (ASE). In spite of various employment programmes of successive governments in Nigeria, unemployment rate has continued to rise unabated. This has informed the need to embark on the present study with a view to assessing and determining the extent to which the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) of the government has proved effective for achieving full employment in Oyo State of Nigeria.

## **2. Literature Review**

Unemployment refers to a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. It is one of the macro-economic problems which every responsible government is expected to monitor and regulate (Fajana, 2000). The higher the unemployment rate in an economy the higher would be the poverty level and associated welfare challenges. The International Labour Organization - ILO (2007) defines the unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work, but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work.

It is important to state that the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which was introduced in 1986, had serious implications on employment in Nigeria, as unemployment rate declined from 7.0% in 1987, to as low as 1.9% in 1995, after which it rose to 2.8% in 1996, and hovered between 2.8 and 17.5% between 1996 and 1999 (Asoluka and Okezie, 2011). According to National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2009; 2010) the national unemployment rates for Nigeria between 2000 and 2008 showed that the number of unemployed persons constituted 31.1% in 2000, 13.6% in 2001, 12.6% in 2002, 14.8% in 2003, 13.4% in 2004, 11.9% in 2005, 14.7% in 2006, 14.6% in 2007, and 14.9% in 2008. In 2005, Nigerian's unemployment rate reduced to 11.9% from 14.8% in 2003. This reduction was attributed to the various government efforts aimed at addressing the problem through poverty alleviation programmes. This reduction also pointed to an increased number of people who embraced the informal sector activities. Unemployment increased sharply from 14.9% in March 2008 to 19.7% in March 2009, and it has been on the increase since then with 21.1% in 2010, 23.9% in 2011, 27.4% in 2012, 24.7% in 2013 and 25.3% in 2014 (NBS, 2015).

A number of studies have identified unemployment as one of the reasons why government should engage in the business of empowerment. Empowerment, according to Nanette and Cheryl (1999), is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, communities, and societies, by acting on issues they define as important. According to them, three components of this definition are basic to any understanding of empowerment. Empowerment is multi-dimensional, social and a process. It is multi-dimensional in that it occurs within sociological, psychological, economic, and other dimensions. Empowerment also occurs at various levels such as individual, group and community. Empowerment, by definition, is a social process since it occurs in relation to others.

Rural Empowerment means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which people can act on their own behalf and on their own terms, rather than at the direction of others. It is an intentional effort of other youth, adults, communities, government agencies, and schools to provide opportunities for men and women, to enhance their interests, skills and abilities into their adulthoods (Toluwalase and Omonijo, 2013). The National Directorate of Employment was established in 1986 and statutorily mandated by Decree No. 34 of 1989 to among others, design and implement programs to combat mass unemployment and articulate policies aimed at developing work programs with labor intensive potentials.

It is to tackle employment problems in both the short and long term perspectives by formulating and administering job creation as well as employment related training programs. To perform these statutory functions, the Directorate launched four well-articulated employment generation program in 1987. Since then, the skill acquisition aspect of the program have imparted vocational skills to unskilled youths thereby putting them into gainful employment, while the labour intensive and loan granting activities of the programs have engaged many skilled unemployed youth (Amire and Ngwama, 2015). Successive governments in Nigeria, Oyo State government inclusive, have been working to ensure that the people are empowered. Various programmes such as the skill acquisition programme, youth in agriculture programme, entrepreneurship development programme among others have been introduced in Oyo State to alleviate the problems facing the citizens.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

This paper adopted Ndebbio's Theory of 1987 which opines that the hope for employment creation lies in industrialization and it is possible to industrialize a nation through the creation and promotion of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) and Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). He asserted that it is the need for employment generation and economic growth that explains the essence of promoting SMEs in Nigeria to help in absorbing the rapid growing labour force. This is specifically important in developing countries like Nigeria where labour is abundant and capital relatively scarce.

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE), which is the case study of this paper, agrees to the theory as the Directorate, on inception, was saddled with the responsibility to tackle employment problems in both the short and long term perspectives by formulating and administering job creation as well as employment related training programs. This is seen in the Directorate's four programme departments, constituting the Vocational Skill Development (VSD), Small Scale Enterprises (SSE), Rural Employment Promotion (REP) and Special Public Works (SPW) departments whose resultant effort is to employ more labour perhaps of low skill category given the same size of capital investment used in creating large scale industry. This incidentally agrees with the observation of little (1987) that right from the 1960's, SMEs were believed to offer much more employment than larger firms for any given investment. Also, in the 1988 census of business conducted in Nigeria by the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS), SMEs were estimated to have constituted about 70 per cent of the 220,000 industrial establishments surveyed and accounted for 70 per cent of industrial employment as well as 10-15 per cent of manufacturing output (Damachi, 2001).

### **4. Methodology**

The population under study comprised both the staff and beneficiaries of the four employment creation departments of the National Directorate of Employment in Oyo State. The Directorate has staff strength of 80.

However, a total number of 20 staff working under the employment creation programme and service departments, comprising 2 staff each under Vocational Skill Development (VSD) department, Small Scale Enterprise (SSE) department, Rural Employment Promotion (REP) department, Special Public Works (SPW) department, Finance and Accounts department, Information & Public Relations department and 1 each under Inspectorate, International Collaboration, Job Centre, Loans and Properties, Personnel Management, Special Projects, Supplies, Planning, Research and Statistics departments respectively, was the target population.

A total of 72,500 unemployed have benefited from the employment creation departments of the Oyo State National Directorate of Employment right from inception, comprising 55,000 under VSD, 2,500 under SSE, 7,000 under REP and 8,000 under SPW. However, a total of 652 beneficiaries were sampled. 20 copies of questionnaire were administered to members of staff while 652 copies of questionnaire were administered to beneficiaries of the Directorate. Ten members of staff saddled with the responsibility of implementing the employment programmes were interviewed while 40 beneficiaries were also interviewed on performance and challenges facing the Directorate at combating unemployment in Oyo State. The data collected through primary and secondary sources were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

### **5. Results: Hypothesis1**

There is no association between NDE performance and beneficiaries' average monthly income. Table 1 shows the association between beneficiaries' average monthly income and performance of NDE. Result shows that there is an association between performance of NDE and beneficiaries average monthly income.

The result displays a degree of freedom (DF=7) which is a multiplication of the levels of categories difference one and multiplied by each level, and this value depicts the number of categories in the dependent and independent variables. It also shows a chi-square value of 45.901 which depicts the expected frequency counts at each level of the categorical variable and equals to the sample size times the hypothesized proportion from the null hypothesis and displays a satisfactory goodness of fit.

**Table 1: Performance Level of NDE in Oyo State as a Function of the Average Monthly Income Beneficiaries Receive**

Performance	Average Monthly Income							
	#5,000- #15,000	#16,000- #25,000	#26,000- #35,000	#36,000- #45,000	#46,000- #55,000	#56,000- #65,000	#66,000- #75,000	#96,000 +
<b>Effective</b>	76(43.4)	54(30.9)	24(13.7)	8(4.6)	5(2.9)	2(1.1)	5(2.9)	1(0.6)
<b>Not effective</b>	316(69.3)	83(18.2)	30(6.6)	13(2.9)	10(2.2)	2(0.4)	0(0.0)	2(0.4)
<b>statistics</b>	$\chi^2 = 45.901$		DF=7		p=0.00			

Source: Field Survey (2015)

### Hypothesis 2

There is no association between influence of NDE and beneficiaries' place of residence.

Table 2 shows the association between influence of NDE and place of residence. Result shows that there is no association between influence of NDE and beneficiaries place of residence. The small chi-square value (0.82) and degree of freedom value (DF=1) are as a result of the fact that both the dependent and independent variables each contain two categories which shows a goodness of fit because of this condition.

**Table 2: Influence of NDE on Rural Empowerment in Oyo State**

Influence on Rural Empowerment	Place of residence	
	Urban	Rural
<b>Not-Influential</b>	414(92.8)	32(8.2)
<b>Influential</b>	155(90.6)	16(9.4)
<b>Statistics (<math>\chi^2</math>)=0.82</b>	DF=1 p=0.365	

Source: Field Survey (2015)

## 6. Discussion

This study on the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in Oyo State examined the roles of NDE in the study area, appraised the performance of NDE in the study area, determined the influence of NDE on rural empowerment, and also analyzed the challenges facing the implementation of NDE programmes in Oyo State. Results show that overwhelming proportion of the sampled population of beneficiaries agreed that the NDE have adequately helped in empowering and elevating their financial status.

Most of the functions expected to be performed by NDE; provision of vehicles for official duties, increased farming activities in the rural area, supply of take-off materials, organization of free workshops, provision of technical assistance to the beneficiaries and provision of incentives to the NDE staff were reported as adequately performed by the directorate. These roles were agreed upon by beneficiaries that NDE played in order to empower more people in the rural areas of Oyo State. With respect to the appraisal of NDE performance, it could be inferred from the respondents' perception towards the NDE performance that NDE has brought positive changes to the people of Oyo State by discharging their duties properly so as to empower those beneficiaries. Majority of the staff agreed that NDE has increased the farming rate and provided technical assistance to beneficiaries, with majority disagreeing on the provision of vehicles and incentives to NDE staff by the Directorate, while opinion was somewhat equally divided among staff on the Directorates' supply of take-off materials and organization of free workshops/seminars for beneficiaries. Insufficient funds, non-commitment to time limit by trainers, inadequate resettlement of participants on completion of programmes and lack of publicity of NDE programmes to the generality of the public were some of the factors identified as challenges hindering NDE performance in Oyo State.

**Table 3: Bivariate Analysis of Skills Benefitted from NDE against Income Level**

VARIABLES	#5,000- #15,000	#16,000- #25,000	#26,000- #35,000	#36,000- #45,000	#46,000- #55,000	#56,000- #65,000	#66,000- #75,000	#96,000 +
P O P	6(54.6)	2(18.2)	0(0.0)	2(18.2)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(9.1)	0(0.0)
Aluminum Works	17(65.4)	5(19.2)	0(0.0)	4(15.4)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Architectural Design	6(37.5)	9(56.3)	1((6.30	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Automobile Engineering	38(77.6)	4(8.2)	1(2.0)	0(0.0)	3(6.1)	1(2.0)	1(2.0)	1(2.0)
Barbing	21(65.6)	7(21.9)	3(9.4)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.1)	0(0.0)
Bricklaying	6(46.2)	1(7.7)	3(23.1)	2(15.4)	1(7.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Catering	41(89.1)	4(8.2)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(2.2)
Computer Literacy	30(69.8)	7(16.3)	1(2.3)	2(4.7)	2(4.7)	1(2.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Decoration	2(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Electrical Engineering	34(56.7)	19(31.7)	6(10.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(1.7)	0(0.0)
Event planning	5(41.7)	0(0.0)	2(16.7)	2(16.7)	3(25.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Furniture Making	28(59.6)	11(23.4)	8(17.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Hair Dressing	25(51.1)	15(30.6)	6(12.2)	1(2.0)	2(4.1)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Inter-locking	4(50.0)	3(37.5)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
It serves as opportunity	2(66.7)	1(33.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Painting	20(74.1)	4(14.8)	1(3.7)	1(3.7)	1(3.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Phone repair	3(20.0)	9(60.0)	2(13.3)	1(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Photography	22(95.7)	1(4.4)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Plumbing	5(83.3)	1(16.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Shoe Making	18(64.3)	9(32.1)	1(3.6)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Surveying	8(72.7)	1(9.1)	1(9.1)	1(9.1)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Tailoring	47(55.3)	17(20.0)	13(15.3)	2(2.4)	3(3.5)	1(1.8)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Tiling	4(80.0)	1(20.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(1.2)	1(1.2)
Vulcanizing	1(7.7)	8(615)	2(15.4)	2(15.4)	2(15.4)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Weldering	17(77.3)	1(4.6)	3(13.6)	1(4.6)	1(4.6)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
<b>Statistics</b>	$\chi^2 = 265.4463$		<b>DF=168</b>	<b>p=0.00</b>				

**Source: Field Survey (2015)**

Table 3 shows the association between skills benefitted from the NDE against average monthly income level. A larger proportion of the beneficiaries earned between #5,000 to #15,000 as their average monthly income while only a small proportion earned #36,000 and above. Results show that there is a significant association between skills benefitted and average monthly income. The analysis of the table implies that irrespective of the sex of beneficiaries, there was a significant increase in their income level due to acquired skills derived from the NDE programme. The table also reveals that there tended to be increasing income as age increases while it also shows that beneficiaries' educational level had no significant effect on their income level.

This result is supported by a degree of freedom (DF=168) which is a multiplication of the levels of categories difference one and multiplied by each level, and a chi value of 265.4463 which depicts the expected frequency counts at each level of the categorical variable and equals to the sample size times the hypothesized proportion from the null hypothesis. The chi-square value of 265.4463 is the expected frequency counts at each level of the categorical variable and equals to the sample size times the hypothesized proportion from the null hypothesis. The degrees of freedom (DF=168) was obtained as a result of the number of levels obtainable from the categories of the dependent and independent variables by way of multiplication of the levels of categories difference one and multiplied by each level, while the p-values was used as the measure of the hypothesis. The table implies that the skills benefitted from the NDE programmes increased the financial level of the beneficiaries. It means that there is an increase in the income level of beneficiaries higher than it was before the intervention of the NDE. This is evidenced by the p-value of 0.00 which depicts a significant relationship between the variables.

The two hypotheses tested for this study were with a view to understanding the relationship between performance of NDE and the beneficiaries' average income, and the association between influence of rural empowerment and place of residence. Findings showed that there is significant relationship between performance of NDE and average income of beneficiaries. Increase in income was seen as an outcome of empowerment. Therefore, beneficiaries reported increase in their income as a result of the intervention of the NDE programmes.

Results further showed that there is no significant relationship between influence of rural empowerment and place of residence. This implies that the beneficiaries all reported to have benefitted equally irrespective of whether they reside in the rural or urban areas, therefore making the NDE empowerment programme beneficial to respondents irrespective of where they reside.

## **7. Conclusion**

A large proportion of the beneficiaries agreed that NDE has played significant roles in mitigating the unemployment situation in the study area. The influence of NDE on rural development showed that there is a significant relationship between the activities of NDE and rural empowerment (place of residence) in Oyo State and that the intervention of the NDE has also affected employment positively, even in urban areas. The roles of NDE on rural empowerment was significant in mitigating rural unemployment in Oyo State, though a lot still needs to be done if the full objectives of the programme are to be met. The identified challenges facing the NDE were insufficient funds, non-commitment to time limit by trainers, inadequate resettlement of participants on completion of programmes and lack of awareness mechanisms by NDE. In order for the populace to understand its programmes and implementation strategies, the recommendations are:

1. Vocational classes should be taught at the primary level so that by the time the individual gets to the University level, he or she is already producing something. The introduction of job creation skills into the curriculum of higher education will enhance the training and production of employers of labour. Our tertiary institutions will henceforth be able to produce job creators who will in turn train others to be self-reliant and thereby reduce dependence on the government for employment.
2. The inadequacy or absence of start-up capital for graduates of the scheme has been a major challenge militating against the success of the programme. Government should solicit the support of the private sector, especially Micro Finance Institutions that would enable beneficiaries of the scheme have access to interest-free loans or low interest facilities, thereby helping them to start their own business and become employers of labour.
3. The NDE should promote increased productivity by increasing the period of training and number of University graduates especially scientists and engineers to attain the desired technological capabilities to transform the nation.
4. To bring the services of the Directorate closer to the grassroots, it should have its liaison offices in local governments' headquarters across the Federation. Government should also provide an enabling environment for growth of both the private and the informal sector through improved infrastructural facilities like good roads, electricity, pipe borne water, etc.
5. The NDE training should be aimed at bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge in Nigeria by offering more technological learning and capacity building skills.
6. For the activities of the NDE to be sustained, there is the need for concerted efforts by the federal, state and local governments as well as the organized private sector to boost the financial resources of the Directorate as well as assist in the resettlement of the beneficiaries. One source of the underfunding of the NDE is the dissipation of energy and resources of the federal government in similar programmes and schemes.
7. Policies for employment generation should be all embracing and should include all stakeholders, governments, employers and employee associations, the private sector, Civil Society Organizations and the international community. The continuous emphasis on crude oil as major source of revenue should be de-emphasized. Government should diversify the economy with a view to developing alternative sources of revenue.

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