



**Strategies for Tackling the Menace of Youth Unemployment and Insecurity in North – Central Nigeria, 2008-2020**

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**Abstract**

The menace of Youth unemployment and insecurity poses a major challenge to the progress of Nigeria particularly the North-Central region. Despite numerous efforts initiated as measures in tackling the menace, unemployment and insecurity is on the increase. This study examines governmental efforts in tackling the menace of youth unemployment and insecurity in North-Central Nigeria between 2008 and 2020. It utilized cross sectional survey design method combined with both primary and secondary methods of data collection. Purpose and simple random sample techniques were used to obtain the sample. Three hundred and fifty respondents were sampled using Krenjice Morgan (1970) sample size technique. Data collected were analyzed and presented using descriptive statistics and percentages. Findings revealed that government has made efforts in creating employment opportunities for the youths in North-Central Nigeria, but the effort is undermined by series of factors such as public sector corruption and negligence of the agricultural sector, Farmers/herders clashes, inconsistency/uncoordinated policies among others. The paper recommends that Governors of the North-Central region should collaborate with the Federal Government to succinctly improve job creation initiatives by jointly reviving the Ajaokuta Steel Mill in Kogi State to enable them to generate sufficient employment for the teaming youths in the region and as well address the factors undermining the efficiency of the employment programmes.

**Key Words:** Insecurity, Security, Unemployment, Youth

**Introduction**

The Nigerian economy since independence in 1960 has witnessed various fundamental structural changes resulting to structural shifts that have not culminated into any reasonable sustainable economic growth to engender sufficient employment opportunities for the youth. Although, available data shows that Nigeria grew substantially in the most part of 1970s because of the oil boom which the gains were wasted by the public office holders through the distortion of oil revenue which could be used to implement employment policy for her youth. The situation among other crises resulted in the introduction of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) in 1986 and the recent economic reforms. The core objective of the economic structural reform is a total restructuring of the Nigerian economy in the face of population explosion (Emeh2012). The North-Central region has become the hub of youth



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unemployment and insecurity because it's the region where the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) is located.

The fact that the Federal Capital is situated in the region, it is believed that there would be a lot of job opportunities. This impression has created hope in the minds of Nigerian youths who troop into the Federal Capital City in search of non-existent jobs, a development which increases the level of youth unemployment not only in the FCT but in adjoining states of the North Central region and which has equally culminated into a heightened level of insecurity in the region. However, Emeh (cited in Awogbenle et'al 2010 and Okar 2011) asserts that youth unemployment is not restrictive to the North-Central region of Nigeria.

In their study, they submitted that youth unemployment across the world has reached the crescendo and may likely increase over time. Okafor (2011) reported that in Sub-Saharan Africa, youth population was estimated at 138 million people in 2002-2003, with 28.9 million. It has also been reported that youth unemployment in Africa has a geographical dimension as it is generally higher in the urban areas than in rural ones such as north-central states and several factors have been established to account for higher youth unemployment rate in Africa, most notably low economic growth, low economic activity and low investment. These related factors contribute to low job creation and because of sustained (increased in some cases) population growth the small labour market is unable to absorb the resulting army of job seekers in Nigeria.

Tope et al (2012) avowed that, unemployment is one of the major causes of the rise in crime in Nigeria. Nigeria has a 21.14% unemployment rate in 2010. In 2011, it rose to 23.9%, and also by 2012, it had significantly risen to 27.4%. However, the unemployment rate decreased to 24.7% in Q4 2013 and increased up to 25.1% in Q4 2014. As of Q4 2015, this was 10.44%, 14.23% by Q4 2016, 20.42% by Q4 2017, 23.13% by Q3 2018, and 33.30% by Q4 2020 according to the report from National Bureau of Statistics, 2015, 2019 and 2020. Thus, Nigeria's unemployment rate was 27.10% as of the second quarter of 2020, and it increased to 33.30% by the fourth quarter that same year. Particularly, as of Q1-2021, the NBS revealed that unemployment was 30.7%.

For most developing countries like Nigeria, governments and policy makers are increasingly finding it difficult to grapple successfully with youth unemployment. This high rate of unemployment can be blamed on the lack of adequate provision for job creation in the development plans, the ever expanding educational growth and the desperate desire on the part of youths to acquire University education irrespective of course and course contents. As a result, a number of skills acquired from the University appear dysfunctional and irrelevant (Okafor, 2011). In 2008 the federal government of Nigeria recognized that about 80 percent of Nigeria's youth are unemployed and 10 percent underemployed (Daily Trust, 2008). In 2011, the Minister of Youth Development, Bolaji Abdullahi reported that 42.2 per cent of Nigeria's youth population is out of job. Depo Oyedokun, the Chair of the House Committee on Youth and Social Development revealed that of the over 40 million unemployed youths in the country, 23 million are unemployable and therefore susceptible to crime, hence the need to articulate what could be done to salvage the situation (Emeh, 2012).

The pace is increasing because most graduates lack relevant marketable skills. More than half of the Nigerian populations are under the age of 30 (National Population Commission, 2001). Therefore, it can be asserted that the Nigeria economy is a youth economy (Oviawe, 2010). Expectedly, today's youth will become in a short decade tomorrow's parents, leaders, labour force and armies. However, the Nigerian youths are visibly confronted with poverty, unemployment, urbanization, lack of capacity and skills needed to move the economy forward.



This is partly because of insecurity, policy inconsistency, corruption lack of proper accountability and transparency in public businesses, the youth faces unemployment and again the youth lack necessary productive skills to keep body and soul together. Many researches have been conducted into the dynamics of security challenges in Nigeria, and reports indicate that no one regime is spared of one form of security challenge or the other. According to Aliyu (2021) Nigeria is faced with an unprecedented wave of different but overlapping security crises, from kidnapping to extremist insurgencies, and almost every corner of the country has been hit by violence and clashes. The trend is worrisome, especially, when there exist many conflict entrepreneurs in the polity (Joseph, 2013).

The recent increase in insecurity in the county is linked to the harsh poverty and economic recession and unemployment across the country. Youth unemployment currently stands at 32.5% and the country is at the peak of the worst economic downturns in last 27 years (Aliyu, 2021). Weak security systems, lack of political will to addressing the security situation are also some of the factors for adverse security challenges in Nigeria.

Paradoxically, despite Nigeria's wealth and abundant natural resource endowment, the rate of unemployment among its citizens is highly worrisome as such a condition described by the World Bank as "unemployment in the middle of plenty" (Anthony, 2013; Garba, Ahmed and Sunday, 2019; Kilishi et al., 2014; Alabi, 2020; Eji-Orusa, 2019).

Concisely, the focus of this research is on strategies for tackling youth unemployment and security challenges in Nigeria from 2008 to 2020, with the goal of advocating policies that, if the unemployment rate in Nigeria is reduced, it would help in drastically reducing the security problems currently confronting North-Central Nigeria particularly and Nigeria in general. It is against this background that this study examines the effort by government in tackling youth unemployment and insecurity in North-Central Nigeria with a view to making recommendations on how the menace of youth unemployment which the findings of World Population Review (2022) report asserts has increased the waves of crime worldwide can be addressed.

### **Statement of Research Problem**

Successive governments in Nigeria have initiated programmes in tackling the menace of youth unemployment, but yet the scourge of youth unemployment is on the rise. There is no doubt that government across the strata has created one employment initiative or the other for the youths, programmes such as National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (LEEDS) NEED, Subsidy Reinvestment Programme, N-Power as well as Small and Medium Enterprise initiatives were instituted to help in guarantying that the youths are gainfully employed but all these programmes became inefficient as a result of one challenge or the other.

According to Bureau of Public Service Reform (2017) the challenges ranging from lack of effective coordination, weak business environment, corruption, lack of awareness of government policy especially in small and medium scale enterprises through the Small and Medium Enterprise Development (SMEDAN) which government has made commendable efforts, lack of technical skills by the unemployed youth, skill mismatch, excessive influx of foreign made goods into Nigeria, lack of accountability and transparency, improper monitoring and evaluation system has become cardinal challenges in realizing the objectives of national employment policy in Nigeria. Government effort to reduce insecurity have been stalled by



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factors such as lack of proper training for the security personnel, widespread youth unemployment, siphoning of funding provided to procure modern security equipment, weak security system, youth unemployment, illiteracy, politics, conspiracy, ethnic & religious intolerance and corruption.

### Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to establish the effort by the government in tackling youth unemployment and insecurity in the north-central Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

- i. To examine the effort of government in tackling menace of youth unemployment and insecurity in the north-central Nigeria.
- ii. To examine the factors militating against government effort in tackling youth unemployment and insecurity in the north-central Nigeria.

### Research questions

- i. What are the effort of government in tackling the menace of youth unemployment and insecurity in the north-central Nigeria?
- ii. What are the factors militating against government effort in tackling the menace of youth unemployment and insecurity in the north-central Nigeria?

### Research Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey research conducted to examine the connection between youth unemployment and insecurity in the north-central region of Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of policy makers, community leaders, security personnel, unemployed youth, students and relevant stakeholders selected from the six states that comprise the North-Central region of Nigeria. The sample size of 370 was drawn from the 10,278 population using the Black and Champion's statistical formula, and showed the significant level of 0.5. Cluster, Purposive and Simple random sampling techniques were used for the study. Data was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Questionnaire and interview were instruments used as sources of primary data collection. The questionnaire was administered to 350 respondents partly face to face and through a well-designed Google form. Data was analyzed using simple descriptive statistical percentage tables. While the secondary sources were derived from articles in journals, textbooks, magazines, newspapers etc.

### Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Structural functionalism as a tool of analysis and to aid proper understanding of the subject under study. Structural Functionalism is a sociological theory which origin could be traced to August Comte (1798-1857), Ibn Khaldun (Ritzer, 2014), Herbert spencer (182-1903), Robert Merton (1920- 2003), Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Talcott Parson (1902-1979) (cited in Dare et al, 2017). The central assumption of the theory is that society is a system which consists of structures that are interconnected and interrelated to function together for the survival of the whole. According to Emile Durkheim, society is similar to an organism whose structures and actions are balanced, bounded and interrelated. Herbert Spencer, in his study, compared society to human body, which function interdependently to help the entire system survive to promote solidarity and stability.

To the functionalists, family, politics, economy, religion, education, industry, security, technology are regarded as structures that perform specific roles towards integrating and maintaining the whole. These roles could be manifest and latent and they have continued to



hold society together (Harambos and Holborn 2003, Ngwama, 2014, Oputeh. 2015). However, it is argued that should any of sub-structures fail to effectively perform its role, the entire system will be negatively affected and may collapse (Niyi, 2020). This has revealed that security challenges in Nigeria as whole is as a result of the failure of the security sub structure to perform its role effectively. Thus armed robbery, kidnapping, assassination, insurgency, terrorism, religious and ethnic crises etc. occur because of the failure of the security system in the country.

According to Merton (1638) and Durkheim (1964) insecurity or rather security challenges is a reflection of dysfunctional social control institutions in the society and has negatively affected investment which is expected to play a crucial role in the process of development of communities, which is largely left to bear without the presence of police and this has provided a fertile ground for criminals to perpetrate their criminality and unleash terror unchallenged. Osita and Ikelegbe (2021) argued that, it is clear that security vacuum exists at the community level in Nigeria due to failure of security management structure/architecture of the country. Although, functionalism attempts to explain social structures by describing their contributions to the well-being of the whole system, it however does not consider that one structural form can fulfill the whole functions (Ritzer et al, 2014).

### **Conceptual Clarification**

Basically, two words demand clarification in this paper and these are youth and youth unemployment.

#### **Youth**

The concept of youth in academic context, have no single stand point definition. Several conceptualizations have been advanced in a bid to define the concept. The UNDP (2009) report revealed that youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. That's why, as a category, youth is more fluid than other fixed age-groups. Yet, age is the easiest way to define this group, particularly in relation to education and employment, because 'youth' is often referred to a person between the ages of leaving compulsory education, and finding their first job. The UNDP (2009) avowed that, the definition of youth perhaps changes with circumstances, especially with the changes in demographic, financial, economic and socio-cultural settings; however, the definition that uses 15- 24 age cohort as youth fairly serves its statistical purposes for assessing the needs of the young people and providing guidelines for youth development.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2017), young people aged between 15 and 24 years account for 33.1 percent of unemployed people while those aged between 24 and 34 years accounted for 34.2 percent in the third quarter of 2017. This study however adopts the definition of youth by the National Youth Development Policy (NYDP) which defines youth as people aged between 18 and 35 and made up of "all young males and females aged 18-35 which are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria" (National Youth Policy of Nigeria, 2001).

#### **Youth Unemployment**

According to BPSR (2017) youth unemployment is a longstanding global problem. In many countries of the world, statistics on youth unemployment is blurred, depicting unemployment conditions generally suggest that youth are facing comparatively worsen labor market



outcomes. Likewise, in terms of scope, Okafor, (2010) observed that unemployment is a global trend, but occurs mostly in developing countries of the world, with attendant social, economic, political, and psychological consequences.

The NBS (2017) data on youth unemployment showed that the largest group of the unemployed is the secondary school graduates. There are also 40% unemployment rate among urban youth aged 20 - 24 and a 31% rate among those aged 15 - 19. Two-third of the urban unemployed ranges from 15 – 24 years old. Moreover, the educated unemployed tended to be young males with few dependents. There are relatively few secondary school graduates and the lowered job expectations of primary school graduates. There is no consistent trend of unemployment rates in Nigeria. An increase in one or two years is sometimes followed by a decline in the subsequent years (Okafor, 2011). Youth unemployment in this study remains the teeming idle and unemployed youths in North Central Nigeria most of whom have completed University education without any hope of getting employed.

### **Government Efforts in Tackling Youth Unemployment**

Successive governments have made certain effort in the past to tackle the menace of youth unemployment which has contributed to the widespread cases of insecurity in Nigeria and particularly in the North-Central region. This part assesses government approaches and strategies vis-à-vis policy development and implementation capacity in tackling youth unemployment in Nigeria. Many employment promotion initiatives have been implemented in the areas of skills development, entrepreneurship promotion, improvement of the business climate and access to finance for small and medium enterprises in Nigeria. Despite these initiatives, the fundamental problem of rising youth unemployment persists.

Most recently, the federal government has launched the Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan (NIYEAP 2021-2024). According to The Cable News (2021) the former Minister of Youth and Sport Development Sunday Dare, avowed that, “youth inclusion is about skilled human capital, social and economic stability, a vibrant and healthy labour force, which will also engender political stability and national growth and development.” The minister further asserts that the plan would emphasize the 4Es, which are: employability, entrepreneurship development, employment creation, and equality and rights, with detailed actions required in support of employment creation for youths in critical economic and social sectors. The plan is aimed at mobilizing the energies and capacities of the youth to minimize the risks to national security posed by rising unemployment.

This initiative was established in response to the report of unemployment released in March, by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The Bureau reported that Nigeria’s unemployment rate climbed to 33.3 percent in the fourth quarter (Q4) 2020 from 27.1 recorded in the second quarter (Q2) 2020.

A former minister said; the NIYEAP was part of the Buhari-led administration’s effort in providing an enabling environment that will create about 3.7 million jobs annually. He emphasized that youth should be regarded as a viable investment to yield positive benefits for all spheres of our socio-economic progress, rather than a group targeted for periodic empowerment interventions. In his words:

It is important to state that the economic and social consequences of youth unemployment transcend the youth group. It has also resulted in missed economic opportunities for the nation. Youth



inclusion is about skilled human capital, social and economic stability, a vibrant and healthy labour force, which will also engender political stability, national growth and development (Blueprint.ng, 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2021).

In furthering discussion on government effort in reducing youth unemployment, Paul, et al (2014) asserts that over the past five decades, Nigeria has never been short of programmes and reforms aimed at alleviating the failing rural economy, livelihood, insecurity and other special polices associated with poverty alleviation and rural community and sustainable development. These programmes include but not limited to the following as identified by Sam (2014):

1972- National Accelerated Food Production Programme of 1972, the Nigeria Agricultural and Co-operative Bank of 1976, Operation Feed the Nation and the Peoples Bank of Nigeria of 1987 and The Green Revolution Programme of 1979. Others are the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Development (DFFRI) 1986, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) of 1986 as well as the Family Support Programme, and Family Advancement Programme of 1993. Similarly, there are other programmes at federal, state and local levels. These include: -

- i. Accelerated poverty eradication programme
- ii. School to land programme
- iii. Agric Bank of Nigeria - Community Bank
- iv. Better life for rural women
- v. Structural adjustment programme
- vi. Ward Development Project
- vii. Fadama Programme for Agricultural and Rural Development
- viii. Small and Medium Scale Enterprises

Nonetheless, most of these poverty alleviation programs suffered the same fate as a recent government assessment showed. It found that they all failed largely due to the fact that they were mostly not designed to alleviate poverty, lacked a clearly defined policy framework with proper guidelines for poverty alleviation, suffered from polity instability, political interference, policy and macroeconomic dislocations and as well lacked continuity. Other reasons are lack of continuity, poor implementation and the fact that they were riddled by corruption.

### Data Presentation, Analysis and Findings

This section of the study focuses on the presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings from the field survey conducted by the authors.

**Figure 1.1: Respondents' views on whether government has made any effort to tackle the scourge of Youth Unemployment in the North-Central region of Nigeria?**

S/N	Options	Respondents Frequency	Percentage
1.	Agreed	92	26%
2.	Strongly agreed	139	40%
3.	Disagreed	41	12%
4.	Strongly disagreed	56	16%
5.	Neutral	22	6%
6.	<b>G/Total</b>	350	100%

**Source:** Field survey Research, March, 2023



The above table shows that 92 respondents constituting (26%) accepted that government have made effort to create jobs for the teeming youths in North-Central Nigeria, also 139 respondents representing (40%) fervidly affirmed that government have in strongest term make series of effort to provide jobs for the youths, 41 respondents which is (11%) disagreed that government has not made any effort to create jobs, 56 respondents representing (16%) were of the opinion that government has not made any good effort at creating jobs while (6%) of the respondent were neutral on the effort of government to create jobs.

From the above presentation, it was glaring that majority of the respondents agreed that governments over the years have initiated various employment creation measures. 62% of the respondents vividly affirmed that government has made effort to create jobs for the teeming youths in North-Central Nigeria. Therefore, 62% is significant and confirmed correlation that government has made effort to create jobs. 28% of the respondents disagreed with the notion that government have made considerable efforts in jobs creation, their perception may not be unconnected with increasing menace of youth unemployment in the region which have culminated into crimes of various types in the region. 6% of the respondents were undecided over the question of whether government has made any viable effort towards jobs creation.

The above information can be corroborated with that in the existing literature where the administration of President Buhari unveiled some job creation initiative and promised to employ 20,000 graduates annually and as well build on other efforts by government to support young Nigerians to establish and own businesses through the instrumentality of the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development (Deji, 2021). Similarly, Onuoha, et al (2019) observed in their study on job creation strategies for Nigerians that government has made considerable effort to create jobs although such efforts have been plagued by numerous challenges most especially corruption which has been the bane of Nigeria's progress.

**Figure 1.2: Respondents' views on whether the current strategies adopted by government as effort geared towards employment creation for youths in the North-Central region of Nigeria, is satisfactory**

S/N	Options	Respondents Frequency	Percentage
1.	Very satisfactory	75	21%
2.	Satisfactory	56	16%
3.	Moderately satisfactory	55	16%
4.	Not satisfactory	141	40%
5.	Poor	23	7%
6.	G/Total	350	100%

**Source:** Field Survey Research, March, 2023

The table above reveals that 75 respondents constituting (21%) asserted that government effort is very satisfactory, 56 respondents representing (16%) were on the view that government strategies and effort are satisfactory, 141 respondents representing (40%) were of the opinion that the strategies and effort deployed by government for employment creation is not satisfactory, 55 respondents representing (16%) responded that government strategies and efforts are moderately satisfactory while 23 of the respondents representing (7%) considered the current strategies for employment generation as poor.





However, the above views were corroborated by the director of planning, research and statistics in the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Mr. Bamidele in a personal communication with the researcher when he stated succinctly thus:

Government alone cannot solve the youth unemployment in Nigeria. There is need for government to create enabling environment for private organizations to thrive and through their operations they could supplement government efforts to provide jobs and required skills for the youths to develop their skills.

Unarguably, the efforts of the government to promote job creation in small and medium scale enterprises through the SMEDAN are quite commendable. However, government investments in this area to boost employment tend to be performing below its potential for a number of reasons (ILO, 2015).

**Figure 1.3: Respondents' opinions on the factors militating against Government effort in tackling Youth Unemployment and invariably insecurity in the North-Central region of Nigeria**

S/N	Options	Respondents Frequency	Percentage
1.	Public sector Corruption and Negligence of Agricultural sector	64	18%
2.	Lack of purposeful leadership and good governance	31	9%
3.	Rapid population growth	16	5%
4.	Lack of career information and vocational training	18	5%
5.	Employment policies inconsistency/ uncoordinated policies	51	15%
6.	Farmers/herders clashes	77	22%
7.	Kidnapping and banditry	19	5%
8.	Lack of proper monitoring and evaluation of youth empowerment programmes	31	9%
9.	Political consideration or lack of political will	43	12%
10.	<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field survey, March, 2022

The table above shows the responses retrieved on the factors responsible for youth unemployment in North-Central Nigeria. To start with, 64 respondents representing (18%) were of the view that Public sector Corruption and Negligence of the Agricultural sector is the leading factor in bringing about youth unemployment in the north-central Nigeria, 77 respondents constitute (22%) blamed farmers/herders conflicts as the factor responsible for the



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pervasive unemployment, 43 respondents which is (12%) claimed that political consideration or lack of political will to create viable economic policies which would translate into massive jobs creation is responsible for the widespread unemployment especially amongst the youths. 31(9%) of the respondents agreed that lack of purposeful leadership and good governance is the cause of youth unemployment.

Also 31 (9%) asserts that lack of proper monitoring and evaluation of youth empowerment programme, while minority respondents 18(5%) and 16(5%) claimed that Rapid population growth and lack of career information and vocational training are the factors why youth unemployment is rampant. The above responses are in league with the views Dr. Joe, a former Director General of the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR), Dr. Joe who observed the multiplication of employment creation policies as a leading factor in youth unemployment. He equally blamed the mismanagement of funds meant for such schemes by public officers and advocated that the employment initiatives should be streamlined to guarantee optimal results.

Similarly, Bechir (2016) asserts that, many researchers have investigated the economic consequences of corruption on unemployment and the labour market in general within the purview of foreign direct investment (FDI). The summation is that in a highly corrupt environment, foreign investors would be more reluctant to invest and to create job opportunities in the local market (corruption increases the cost of doing business (often referred to as the corruption tax). This view has received empirical support from recent researches. The perception among foreign actors that due to corruption, the allocation of domestic human capital toward the most productive economic sector is inefficient and constitutes an obstacle to the inflow of foreign capital in the economy.

### Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study shows that majority 203 respondents constituting (58%) were male, while 108 (31%) of the respondents aged between 30- 39. It further revealed that majority 178 (51%) of the respondents were graduates with bachelor degrees or in their degree programme.

- i. Based on the first objectives of the study, to examine whether government has made any effort in tackling the menace of youth unemployment in north-central Nigeria, 138 (40%) out of 350 respondents strongly agreed that government has made effort in tackling the menace of youth unemployment. Again, 92 respondents, representing (26%) agreed that government effort to tackle youth unemployment is glaring, 56 respondents out of 350 representing (16%) strongly disagreed with the assertion that government has made effort to tackle youth unemployment in the North Central region, 41 respondents constituting (12%) disagreed that government has made effort to drastically reduce youth unemployment while 22 respondents, representing (6%) were neutral over the question on whether there is any visible effort by the government to tackle youth unemployment through employment initiatives. Again, on the issue of whether government has made any effort to tackle the pervasive insecurity in the north-central region, majority of the respondents affirmed that government has made considerable effort in tackling the scourge of insecurity in the region. Though, some people felt government effort is not satisfactory, calling for improvement on the strategies.



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- ii. On the second objective, which is to examine the factors hindering the efficiency of government efforts to drastically reduce the menace of youth unemployment in the north-central Nigeria. Factors such as public sector corruption, policy inconsistency, lack of proper implementation strategy, political consideration, duplication of employment initiatives, lack of long term perspective to initiatives, inadequate monitoring and evaluation system, lack of accountability and transparency and lack of consultation with stakeholders and youths who are the potential beneficiaries of the initiatives. The leading factor on the list is public sector Corruption and Negligence of the Agricultural sector with 77 respondents (22%), followed by Farmers/herders clashes with 64 respondents (18%) and policy inconsistency/uncoordinated policies 51 respondents constitute (15%) respectively. 43 respondents which is (12%) claimed that political consideration or lack of political will to create viable economic policies which would translate into massive jobs creation is responsible for the widespread unemployment especially amongst the youths. 31(9%) respondents agreed that lack of purposeful leadership and good governance is the cause of youth unemployment. Also 31 (9%) asserts that lack of proper monitoring and evaluation of youth empowerment programmes, while minority respondents 18(5%) and 16(5%) claimed that Rapid population growth and lack of career information and vocational training are the factors why youth unemployment is rampant in North-Central Nigeria.

### Conclusion/Recommendations

The paper concludes that while government has made substantial efforts in creating employment for the teeming youth in North Central Nigeria, these efforts are rated as unsatisfactory and ineffective since unemployment especially amongst the youths is on the increase thus culminating to the pervasive nature of insecurity in the region. Arising from this conclusion this paper makes the following recommendations:

- i. There is need for Governors of the North-Central region to collaborate with the federal government to succinctly improve jobs creation initiatives by jointly reviving the Iron and Steel Mill company in Ajaokuta, Kogi State to enable them to generate sufficient employment for the teeming youths in the region.
- ii. The youths should be re-oriented and properly guided on career information and training for entrepreneurial skills against theoretical knowledge which is the dominant method of tertiary training in institutions in the country. This will allow the youths to survive the unemployment trap. As a corollary, there is greater need for the review of the school curriculum to reflect these skills acquisition strategies, a development which will turn most of the youths not only in North Central but in the entire country to job creators and not job seekers.
- iii. For government efforts in tackling the menace of youth unemployment and insecurity in North-Central Nigeria to yield positive results, it must tackle the causes of unemployment in the first instance. One of such causes is public sector corruption which is at the root of youth unemployment in the region and it should be tackled headlong. It is stating the obvious that once corruption is curbed, all other issues will fall in line including insecurity in any form.



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