

Youth, Unemployment and National Security in Nigeria

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Abstract

Youth unemployment as it concerns national security has been garnering a significant body of literature. In the burgeoning literature, the component parts of youth, unemployment and national security is not adequately assessed and analyzed. This paper is an attempt to describe and analyze the component parts for a better appreciation of youth unemployment on national security issues and challenges. The paper goes on to confirm and put in historical perspective that the youth bulge and unemployment are catalysts to national security issues and challenges. While not diminishing their importance, the paper posits that some of the data used in analyzing unemployment need to be re-evaluated, placed in context and a new perspective proffered on the role and importance of youth unemployment in the broad area of national security.

Key Words: National, Nigeria, Security, Unemployment, Youth

Introduction

In the vortex of a globalized world with its complex characteristics, three words remain constant in its discourse: youth, unemployment and security. These words connote, conjure as they are imprecise and functional in the discourse on youth, unemployment and national security. As a result, the existing and growing body of literature tend to reflect the ocular perspective of the writer and reel under the influence of the environment. But for the most part, the three words would continue to be relevant as governance, development and security in all their ramifications continue to be the bellwether of post colonial Nigeria.

If the words youth, unemployment and security have a worldwide currency, they have gone viral in Nigeria and serve as a lightning rod for all manner of issues, events and challenges. Notwithstanding that the ethnic groups that make up Nigeria have their histories dating back to antiquity, Nigeria is a relatively young one, having been created by the British in 1914 and gaining her independence in 1960. Thus, 1960 would be the starting point of our discourse up to the present. Since Nigeria does not operate in a vacuum, references, examples and comparisons will oftentimes be made with other countries. Finally, this article uses the history method of analysis. The science of historical research and writing is an ever present pursuit of the truth without bias.

Youth

As a result of its varying descriptions and definitions by organizations, countries and cultural groups, the term youth cannot be easily defined. Officially, the Nigerian Population Commission defines a youth or young adult as persons between the ages of 18 and 24.¹ The conundrum here is that the same country legally considers the age of 18 as an adult with voting rights. But in order not to engage in a prolonged and perhaps unproductive debate the National Population Commission has gone on to describe the characteristics of the persons identified as youth: These are persons who normally would have completed secondary education, and would either be in tertiary institutions such as the university, striving to secure employment, or be already employed. This group of persons would need post secondary education, employment and reproductive health information and services.²

Persons between the ages of 18-35 years, male and female who are citizens of Nigeria have been defined as youth in the 2009 Second National Youth Policy Document of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.³ Elsewhere, youth has been defined as a phase, a transition from dependence to independence and possessing certain distinct features such as:

- a. Leaving the parental home and establishing a new living arrangement;
- b. Completing Full-time education;
- c. Forming close, stable personal relationships outside of the family, often resulting in marriage and children and;
- d. Testing the labour market, finding work and possibly settling into a career, and achieving a more or less sustainable livelihood.⁴

From 1995, the International Year of Youth and beyond, the United Nations has defined youth as persons in the age range of 15 to 24 years. While the World Health Organization reporting on violence and health categorize youth as persons between the ages of 10 and 29. In Sierra Leone, the United Nations Peace-Building Commission define youth as belonging to the ages of 15 and 35. Collating statistics on crime, the Northwest Territories of Canada define youth as individuals aged 12 to 17 years, while the United States consider youth as persons under the age of 21.⁵ What is evident in the various definitions is that there is no clear particularly exclusive definition of youth. It is situated in its immediate socio-political and economic environment. It is a form and it is functional. Indeed, it is not unlikely that the varying age definition is a reflection of the value, importance and dynamics of this human group.

In this youth demographic group, the one pertinent question is the population. The exact number may never be known ostensibly because various countries and various organizations have different age brackets defining them. More so, and because they are a transitory age group it is difficult to capture and properly explicate on them. Using the United Nations parameters, Table 1 shows that in 1985 the youth population was 941 million and in 1995 1.019 billion. Projected to the year 2025 it is expected to be in the range of 1.222 billion.

Table 1. How Many Youth Are There in the World

Year	Youth Population	Percentage of Total Global Population
1985	941 million	19.4%
1995	1.019 billion	18.0%
2025	1.222 billion	15.4%

Source: Culled from David Nosworthy, ed, *Seen But not Heard: Placing Children and Youth on the Security Governance Agenda*, p.15

But what is disconcerting about this Table 1 is the fact that in proportionate terms to the World population the percentage of youth seem to be declining.

It is not clear why as the years progress the proportion of youth to world population would be declining. Perhaps it might be because of certain happenings at various spots in the world. For instance, the attitude of people in the 'developed' world is to raise relatively smaller family households. While conversely in the 'developing' world the meteoric rise of wars and all manner of conflict, the pandemic of Acquired Immune-deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), and the ubiquity of poverty have led to the decline of this human group. However, the disproportionate decline to the global population does not discountenance the expression associated to this group, "youth bulge". Youth bulge is an expression that suggests an incendiary component of the youth demographic group but not necessarily that the usual large population of the youth group automatically leads to conflict.

In Nigeria, the population of youth is difficult to fathom. This is because of the reasons mentioned earlier and much more. The various ethnic groups and some socio-cultural organizations have a broader age group definition of youth as opposed to the official National Population Commission definition. But even when that is disregarded, the official population numbers of Nigeria has constantly been under question and as described in the 1973 census, a monumental fraud.⁶ Regardless, the problems of census collation in Nigeria, and as Table 2 shows the probable population of Nigeria is somewhere around 140 million as at 2006.

An appreciation of the aggregate age definitions mentioned earlier and gleaned from the espoused characteristics of youth, it is evident that they are a veritable force in Nigeria and perhaps in all countries.

In deed, it is important to study and understand the dynamics of the youth population not just for the youth group but also the country and humanity as a whole.

Table 2. Distribution of Population by Age Groups and Sex-National

Age Groups	Both Sexes	Sex	
		Males	Females
Nigeria			
0 - 4	22,594,967	11,569,218	11,025,749
5 - 9	20,005,380	10,388,611	9,616,769
10 - 14	16,135,950	8,504,319	7,631,631
15 - 19	14,899,419	7,536,532	7,362,887
20 - 24	13,435,079	6,237,549	7,197,530
25 - 29	12,211,426	5,534,458	6,676,968
30 - 34	9,467,538	4,505,186	4,962,352
35 - 39	7,331,755	3,661,133	3,670,622
40 - 44	6,456,470	3,395,489	3,060,981
45 - 49	4,591,293	2,561,526	2,029,767
50 - 54	4,249,219	2,363,937	1,885,282
55 - 59	2,066,247	1,189,770	876,477
60 - 64	2,450,286	1,363,219	1,087,067
65 - 69	1,151,048	628,436	522,612
70 - 74	1,330,597	765,988	564,609
75 - 79	579,838	327,416	252,422
80 - 84	760,053	408,680	351,373
85+	715,225	404,021	311,204
Total	140,431,790	71,345,488	69,086,302

Source: National Population Commission, Priority Tables Volume I, 2006 Population and Housing Census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, p.5.

A broad classification of the age groups from the 15-19 group to the 45-49 group shows that over 50% of the Nigerian population have the major characteristics of the youth population. Thus, it can be confidently inferred that from 1960s to the present, youths have been led and have led in the governance of Nigeria. They are part and parcel of Nigeria's history as well as significant actors in the kaleidoscope of violence dotting the landscape of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. They have been seen and heard from in Nigeria. They are a significant "bulge" in the population and demographic structure of the country. Their potential is that at relatively young age they can serve as a catalyst in spurring economic development that would lift the country out of poverty. The reality, however, is that they can perpetrate violence or be used to promote violence and terrorism. Thus it is not surprising, as one scholar remarked, that:

Social change is not engineered by youth, but it is most manifest in youth ... The presence of a large contingent of young people in a population may make for a cumulative process of innovation and social and cultural growth; it may lead to elemental, directionless acting-out behavior; it may destroy old institutions and elevate new elites to power; and the unemployed energies of the young may be organized and directed by totalitarianism.⁷

For such a powerful group in any environment, it is unfortunate that in Nigeria government has not been able to maximize gainfully the potentials of this group. Policy promulgations from various administrations have not been able to quell or minimize youth restiveness in Nigeria. For instance, during the administration of General Yakubu Gowon and immediately after the civil War, Decree No. 24 of May 1973 introduced the National Youth Service Corp Scheme. Laudable as the scheme may be, in recent years it is under threat because of violence against the participants.

At other times since independence, and perhaps only for the sake of its symbolism, the Federal Government established the Ministry of Youth and Sports. But with the lot of the youth being what it is in Nigeria, the Ministry appears to be just a symbol without any significant effect on youths and unemployment.

With the youth in mind, the administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, in the early 1980's, introduced the National Youth Policy. It remained a policy without much action until a second policy was cobbled up in 1989. In 1987 a Decree of General Ibrahim Babangida administration established the National Directorate of Employment (NDE). Interestingly, it is still in existence but it would be comical to gauge its performance in the light of unemployment data. For whatever it is worth, the Olusegun Obasanjo administration in the year 2000 organized a National Youth Summit. The outcome was yet another Youth Development Policy. The ripple effect might have been the setting up of a Youth Directorate at the Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and reviving the near moribund National Poverty Eradication Programme in 2006. What is clear, however, is that the Niger-Delta is still an unsettled region in Nigeria and poverty, from all the available data, seems to have been aggravated and not eradicated. Still in the realm of policy and plans without much action, Nigeria, in 2007 signed on to a "Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment, 2007-2015" developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat. That policy and plan still has a shelf life and the Nigerian youth is yearning for its effect. Multinationals as part of their corporate social responsibility have also contrived various youth schemes of doubtful effect on the greater mass of the Nigerian youth.⁸

Unemployment

Universally in most national discourse as well as in development studies and governance, the employment rate, or the lack of it, unemployment is seen as the litmus test for the effectiveness and efficiency of any administration. For our purpose, it appears to be the 'fault line' between the youth of Nigeria and national security.

The definition of unemployment is problematic. The tendency has been to define employment and consider the opposite as the definition of unemployment. The difficulty in defining unemployment is further accentuated when we place unemployment against its many variables such as 'under-employment', 'low-wage employment', 'informal employment'. Thus, a definition would not be attempted in this paper. Unemployment exists when a fit and eligible individual does not have a job or work to do for some compensation.

Although the youths are not the only employable group in the demographic structure, the importance of youth unemployment cannot be over-emphasized. The issue of unemployment with respect to the youths is responsible for all manner of social pathologies not least of which are violence, crime and criminality. As an economic malaise, although exploring education and skills for employability, the Vision 20: 20/20 Economic Blueprint had the following lamentations:

The deficit in educational quality has grossly undermined the competitiveness of the Nigerian labour force in national and global markets ... Nigeria finds itself faced with the paradox of the simultaneous existence of surplus labour and scarcity of skills, due to a persistent skills mismatch, which further compounds unemployment.⁹

Yet again, and with the controversy prone statistical data in Nigeria, the number of unemployed youths is not clear. The problem is made worse by the problem associated with the many age definitions of a youth. But with the high levels of societal ills, it is likely that the numbers must be significantly high to the overall population of Nigeria. The Vision 20: 20/20 Economic Blueprint Report made the following observation:

Of the 6 million Nigerians graduating annually from the educational system, only about 10% are often employed, thereby leaving about 4.5 million to enter into the labour market annually (a combination of unemployment, low-wage employment and social exclusion).¹⁰

From the teeming population of about 140 million people, the Minister for Youth Development, Mallam Bolaji Abdullahi, declared that 67 million youth are unemployed. Even more damning is the assertion that 80% of that number do not possess a university degree.¹¹ If nothing is threatening to the national security of Nigeria, these data must be.

As scary as these numbers may be, however, some economists and other scholars seem to assuage the situation by taking into account the informal employment.

In fact, some of the scholars have extended the argument so much that they even question if unemployment exists in the percentages alleged among the able bodied youth. But if it does, as they contend, the numbers might not be that high.

This argument is predicated on the following understanding: that the unemployment data is based on some formal parameters set by government and could be skewed; that most self-employed Nigerians do not register their businesses or pay taxes and as such the employment numbers are under represented and unemployment overstated;

that a distinction must be made between 'gainful' employment and 'non gainful' employment in the collation of employment and unemployment data;

that if informal employment is not gainful, it also means that formal employment likewise is not gainful because government employees cannot and do not subsist on the income except if they supplement it with income from informal employment or corruption;

that because of the socio-cultural stigma and the law, prostitution and armed robbery, albeit illegal activities, have become means of livelihood and the perpetrators cannot and should not easily pass as unemployed;

that in the overall, and considering that Nigeria does not have a welfare scheme where people line up at the end of the week or month to collect money or food, able bodied Nigerians who live and eat everyday must have something they do at least on a daily basis.¹²

These assertions also point to the possibility that some youths may not be interested in government employment because they cannot subsist on it. Or, the distinct possibility, that they might not be qualified for some of the jobs. Obviously, qualification can mean two things: the relevant skill for the job or outright illiteracy. The inference from this argument, it would appear, is that the various administrations have not done enough to create jobs and provide the enabling environment for its citizens to move from the unemployment status to the employed. As a result, Nigerians have resorted to doing all manner of activities in order to be gainfully employed.

The visionaries of Vision 20: 20/20, for instance, have suggested to government to focus on certain areas to address some of these youth challenges. They called for a youth empowerment programme that would reduce the unemployment rate among Nigerians through job creation; in addition, implementing micro-finance schemes that would support young entrepreneurs. Finally, government should establish functional leadership and development centres in all local government areas. The government was also urged to improve literacy and numeracy amongst Nigerian youth with focus on the female education in the northern part of Nigeria and the male education in the eastern and western regions. Youth's health was also explored by the committee who recommended that government should initiate programmes that would target key health challenges among young people such as reproductive health, emotional and mental health. Such programs should include educating and sensitizing the youth on communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, etc. With respect to youth and the environment, increase awareness on sanitation and pollution; educate and sensitize the youth on the global climate change and on how to harness alternative sources of energy. Similarly, on youth leisure, recreation and community service, create avenues for recreation through leisure, encourage participation in sports as well as establish recreational centres in all communities/Local Government Areas. Likewise, develop and inculcate national pride, patriotism, self-esteem, self-confidence in the Nigerian youths. Finally, establish youth mentoring programmes and role modeling.¹³

Unemployment may have a part to play with respect to national security, but so far from this discourse it is not a *sine quanon*. Unemployment is a constant in all countries and it is a challenge that can be managed. High levels of it can threaten national security of any nation but there is much more to the issue of national security that would warrant putting the issue of unemployment in perspective. But when all is said, it is interesting to note that based on the broad age categorization, the Nigerian Youth since the 1960's have been part and parcel of governance. Thus, if government is not creating employment, it is a scourge meted by the youths in government upon the youths not in government. It amounts to self-destruction for youths outside government to fan unemployment by not creating jobs and the enabling environment for gainful employment.

Unemployment having many variants such as gainful employment, under employment, informal employment and the likes is such an elusive term to find examples. A cursory look at the many crises and violent acts in the first few decades since independence, except, perhaps for a few isolated cases of armed robbery, and the causes of such incidents do not have unemployment as the main reason. See Table 3 below.

INCIDENT	DATE OF OCCURRENCE	NATURE OF CRISIS	NATURE OF REGIME IN POWER	FORCE USED TO QUELL CRISIS
Tiv Uprisings	1960 – 1964	Political	Civilian	Police/Military
Western region crisis	May 1962 & Oct 1965	Political	Civilian	Police/Military
Labour Strike		Economic	Civilian	Military threat
Constitutional Crisis		Political	Civilian	Military threat
May riots (Northern Nigeria)	May 1966	Communal	Civilian	Police/Military
Agbekoya	July – October 1969	Economic	Military	Police/Military
Students demonstrations	April 1978	Socio- Economic	Military	Military
—	April 1980	—	Civilian	Police
—	May 1986	—	Military	Police
—	June 1988	—	Military	Police
Bakolori	April 1980	—	Civilian	Police
Maitatsine (Yan Awaki Kano)	December 1980	Religious	Civilian	Police/Military
Ife – Modakeke	April 1981	Communal	Civilian	Police
Maitatsine (Bullumkuttu Maiduguri)	October 1982	Religious	Civilian	Police
Maitatsine (Rigasa Kaduna)	October 1982	Religious	Civilian	Police
Kano	October 1982	Religious	Civilian	Police
Maitatsine (Jimeta – Yola)	Feb- March 1984	Religious	Military	Police/Military
Maitatsine (Pantami Gombe)	April 1985	Religious	Military	Police/Military
Ilorin	March 1986	Religious	Military	Police
Kaduna State Police/Military (Kafanchan, Kaduna, Zaria, Funtua, Kankia)	March 1987	Religious		Military

Tiv Uprisings	1960 – 1964	Political	Civilian	Police/Military
Kaduna (Kaduna Polytechnic)	February 1988	Religious	Military	Police
Bauchi State (Bauchi, Gombe, Darazo, Azare Secondary Schools)	June 1988	Religious	Military	Police
Katsina	April 1991	Religious	Military	Police
Bauchi state (Tafawa Balewa)	April 1991	Religious & Communal	Military	Police/Military
Kano(Reinhard Bonke Crusade)	October 1991	Religious	Military	Police/Military
Kaduna State (Zangon Kataf)	May 1992	Religious & Communal	Military	Police/Military
Jukun – Tiv	Oct1991 Oct1992	Communal	Military	Police/Military
Funtua	January 1993	Religious	Military	Police
Jukun – Kuteb	April 1993	Communal	Military	Police/Military
Ogoni	June 1993	Socio-Economic	Military	Police/Military
June 12, 1993	July 1993 -	Political	ING/Military	Police/Military

So, youth unemployment as it relates to national security is the possibility of violence to take a monumental dimension, become protracted and persistent because various types of the unemployed youth provide the human resource for its conduct. In this regard, and arguably, the military personnel of the 1960s who then belonged to the youth group could have been under-employed giving them impetus and the time to engage in overthrow of governments plunging the nation into thirty months of civil war. Mindful of the peace support operation in the Congo, it is very likely that if the military was effectively engaged in defending the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, internal security operations, military operations other than war, the time may not have been available for the overthrow of government.

Majority of violent acts threatening national security have been ascribed to youth unemployment. Some of them are the Aguleri-Umuleri war in Anambra State¹⁴; the low intensity war in the Niger-Delta¹⁵; Ife-Modakeke dispute¹⁶; the post election crisis and the asymmetric war with Boko Haram going on in large part of the Northern region of Nigeria¹⁷.

The more recent conflicts since 1999 have met a bifurcated response from the government. Physical force has been used to suppress them and amnesty utilized thereafter to minimize conflicts. In some of the festering conflicts or war, amnesty is being placed as a viable option. Inadvertently, it goes on to confirm Clausewitz's contention that war is an extension of policy. Furthermore, it goes on to exonerate him from a position which has been imputed in his contention, that is, that war is not an end policy. Since the war policy option and politics are in constant dialogue, all conflicts or wars generally end on the negotiating table and not permanently solved by conquest or annihilation. This lesson is very important for policy makers and implementers. However, Clausewitz, who was a youth when he began his writings at the age of 24 years, understood the fact that there are imponderables in war which could be far reaching. He made clear that war could be a jumble of misunderstandings but, transcends the purely military.¹⁸

National Security

Issues of National security are turbulent and disorienting to both the scholar and citizen in Nigeria. It means all things to all people.

In deed, it is also acquiring a significant body of literature and the approaches to its study are as diverse as the number of scholars interested on the subject. However, two schools of thought seem to be emerging in this rather strange career of national security issue in Nigeria.

One school of thought, made up of mainly practitioners of the security art, military art practitioners and law enforcement agents approach it from the angle of sovereignty, territorial integrity and internal security issues. They emphasize on the physical aspect of national security. As one practitioner recently made clear:

Globalization and advances in information technology and social media have weakened the concept of sovereignty by denying government total control of what happens within national borders. However, despite transnational challenges, the seamless reality of the internet, and increasing regional integration across the globe, borders and national identity remain important elements of security control.¹⁹

Some in this school of thought have gone on to establish a kaleidoscope of conflicts using the six geo-political zones of Nigeria.²⁰ In the checkered history of Nigeria, however, no physical security challenge is unique to a particular geo-political zone. All told, those in this school of thought appear to dominate and attract the attention of government in the fourth republic because of the budgetary allocation to physical security. In the 2012 budget a little less than one trillion Naira was budgeted for security. Indeed, law enforcement agents and all manner of security personnel are noticeable in the country. But the jury is out and would be out for a long time before they return a verdict on whether this approach to national security is working.

Another school of thought co-exists with the first school, but does not imbibe all the ideals of the first school mentioned. However, cresting on the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDPs) Human Development Report of 1994 this school broadens the spectrum of national security to include: economic security; food security, health security; environmental security; personal security; community security and political security. Indeed, chapters two, three and four of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria capture this broad spectrum of security. It is no surprise to some scholars that the fanfare of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) is not of exotic origin but might just be excessively branded. Nonetheless, the MDGs call for the eradication of extreme poverty; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development.²¹ An important aspect of this school's argument is that if funds from the first school's budget is rationally allocated to the areas highlighted by this school, the threat to national security as a whole would be minimized and law enforcement agents and other security personnel would do less. More so, a substantial amount of money allocated to physical security is used in purchasing equipments that are not manufactured in the country and thus prone to corruption. Obviously, the flight of capital outside the country in no way would help the local economy to grow. This glaring inequality between physical security and other areas in the broad national security discourse could be further compounded if the allegation that between 2002 and 2012 approximately five trillion naira was corruptly expropriated from Nigeria's oil revenue sales.²²

Closely tied to this school of thought and developing quite a body of literature are scholars who emphasize on human security as opposed to national security. Or, put differently, they emphasize on human security in the context of national security. As one scholar contends:

... it is the concept of human security that encompasses the protection of lives and property; a pre-condition for the improvement of peoples wellbeing; protection of human rights; and the provision of basic human needs. ... Implicit in these definitions of security is that when adequate security is provided for the citizens of any nation, a congenial environment for development and self-actualization is achieved.²³

Historicizing this emphasis on human security, the scholar lays claim to the long era of military rule as the foundation and structure of the current threat to national security.

The prolonged orgy of misrule that fawned and fanned corruption, debased human rights, mismanaged various infrastructures and led to their decay and proselytized violence in Nigeria. As a result, citizens began to lean on ethnic, religious, political, environmental issues, among others, to wreak violence and propagate conflict. The scholar concludes by asserting that:

... the current security situation in the country is one result of the structural, systemic and value decay thrown up by long years of mass neglect and political impunity inimical to the wellbeing of the masses of the people of Nigeria.

There is the need for a total political, social and economic transformation in the country as being currently advanced. To achieve this, there is the need for the development of a strong political will that would back up strong political and democratic institutions, all of which would help to bring all the sources of frustration in the country into instruments of nation building. Obviously, the challenges facing Nigeria today are how to ensure faster economic growth, reduce poverty and build confidence into the citizenry and foreign investors in the context of the globalised world. These challenges would be surmounted if the leadership is responsible.²⁴

Youth unemployment is only a symptom of a long and enduring problem in respect to national security. Unemployment, perceived in some discourse as the major, if not the main, threat to national security need to be re-evaluated or put in historical perspective. There is the need to look elsewhere, to explore other possibilities in the relationship between youth unemployment and national security. If anything, youths that have engaging jobs or not can perpetrate or be used to perpetrate violence and thus threaten national security. It is not solely unemployment that project youth violence as having a direct connection to national security threats. It is in education, wealth disparity and display, urbanization, bad governance, corruption: identity factors such as religion, ethnicity, geographical groups, political groups that the threats to national security domicile.

Most of the scholars and practitioners in the national security sphere, and the various schools of thought are not averse to education being the panacea to any and all manners of national security challenge. In their words:

Peace can only thrive in a culture of tolerance and mutual respect. Many Nigerians do not understand the course of the country's historical development. If citizens understand the upheavals the country has gone through and the outcome, they will not want a repeat of the jeopardy. This is why most countries educate citizens on citizenry and promote tutorial exposure to all aspects of the nation's history including nevents which others may find abhorrent.²⁵

Elsewhere, another scholar re-echoes the same thoughts while linking education and national security. He argues that national insecurity is fostered when there is lack of education, poor educational curriculum or a twisted educational system. Thus during times of national insecurity, he observes, the young ones are less likely to be in school; child mortality rates are high, youths are less likely to be literate; and girls are left furthest behind.²⁶ It is no surprise, therefore, that the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) considers the right type of education as the best conflict prevention strategy available to any society. The wrong type or the lack thereof would make conflict likely if not inevitable.²⁷

Conclusion

This article has shown that youth unemployment is a pervasive issue in Nigeria. It is unsurprising that the ever-exploding youth bulge and unemployment threaten Nigeria's national security especially when young men and women have little prospects of a comfortable livelihood, when questionably acquired wealth is constantly displayed, and when the complex realities of globalization present economic challenges. It is clear that youths are hapless victims as well as perpetrators of national security issues and challenges. As for unemployment, it adds fuel to the burning issues and challenges of national security. It is a major ingredient in the vortex of modern Nigeria into which the youths have been thrust. But in all, they must be placed in their proper perspectives.

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