

The Effects of Unemployment and Anti-social Activities of Youth on Socioeconomic Development of Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *Much scholarly work has been done in this research area, “youth unemployment and anti-social activities and their effects on socioeconomic development in Nigeria.” A review of these works have their central tenets on causes and affects phenomena but failed to address the issues with empirical reality as their recommendations were not immersed in resource-based policy approaches. This paper addresses all the issues using a policy decision analytic graphical approach having four generic policy positions: optimistic or proactive, coping, opportunistic, and pragmatic. The paper also called on policy direction toward the market highlighting that it is in the activity level and output level in the economy that employment, investment, income and corresponding socioeconomic development rents are obvious. Finally, the paper recommended that the policy positions to be taken by policy groups in Nigeria and especially Benue state should be devoid of corruption, financial sharp practices, favouritism and nepotism, through embracing best practices of accountability, transparency, probity, integrity and ethics. These are the necessary conditions for this policy model to be maximized in seeking redress to youth unemployment and anti-social activities for socioeconomic development.*

Keywords: *Unemployment, Anti-social Activities, Policy Decisions, Strategy Positions, Decision Analytic Model.*

I. Introduction

1.1 Historical Background.

Unemployment and anti-social activities relates with attendant socioeconomic effects and abound globally but with more adverse effects on developing economies, especially that of Nigeria and Benue state in particular. Reality and research have both shown that socioeconomic development relates to employment and positive social activities (or behaviours) of youth as they are catholically accepted to be the custodian and right holders of employment. In other words, “there is a link among poverty, loss of livelihood, inequality, and youth anti-social behaviours (a.k.a. youth restiveness) as evidenced by the numerous violent protests against the holders of power, and politicians/bureaucrats in the corridors of power in Nigeria and particularly in Benue state. In the last two decade and thereabout, there have been multiplication and proliferation of anti-social cases all over the country and indeed the world, of youth agitations with attendant social costs ranging from lawless and violent killings, brutality, cannibalism, kidnappings and emergent terrorism, etc., and valuable infrastructure as well as public and private properties lost and destroyed.

Specifically, in Nigeria, the Niger Delta was prominent in youth anti-social behaviours which took the various administrations within that period by the horn with lots of attendant socioeconomic costs evidenced in countless loss of lives and billions of Naira for over a decade until the President Yaradua’s Amnesty Policy of 2008 provided a way forward. Within this period, sporadic youth agitation in Lagos and coastal areas in the western parts of Nigeria, masterminds of area boys, Alaiyes and Agberos (as were termed) were domesticating and preying on the anti-social and illicit behaviours and activities. Almost simultaneously, the Bakasi boys in the eastern Nigeria held sway over that region with anti-social activities leading to colossal losses in lives, property and millions of Naira. When the amnesty program seemed effective in the Niger Delta region, the quasi anti-social behaviours in the south-east metamorphosed into full-fledged and increased rate of armed robbery attacks, kidnappings as well as unbridled thug actions. In Benue state, the small pockets of youth anti-social practices that evidently commenced in 1998 and thereabout gradually enlarged. There are Ogororo (a.k.a. Suswam) high level and uncontrolled consumers, increased level of social sex workers, increased armed robbery, increased kidnapping, increased thug actions, increased militia practices, uncontrolled drug addicts and etc. These groups are already out of the way in terms of any tangible mental reasoning for pro-social behaviours, but quick in adapting to anti-social activities. The Kwande political killing in 2002; Jato-Aka political mayhem of 2003; Asukunyo political killing of 2011; and other sporadic political killings of both individuals and groups, property destruction worth billions of naira, were carried out by unemployed youth in Benue state seemed sponsored by high-flying politicians. The major development mill for the youth are the public schools. But in Benue state, the public schools have been sporadically in and out of school due to continuous strike actions in

the past ten years of democracy in Nigeria. The present state of Benue youth is highly questionable as unemployment rate is on the increase, and the state seems not to have come up with any effective public plan for youth development (engagement and social inclusiveness). Anti-social activities of youth in Benue state have entered a different phase from its inception. It seems as if there is a link between the leaders of youth anti-social groups and top politicians, or even the government agents (bureaucrats and the police). The anti-social youth groups, some of political extractions abound and are present in every local government headquarters and prominent villages/hamlets in Benue state. In the last general elections, almost all leading politicians in Benue state had at least one anti-social youth group. For example, there were the “Bai boys,” and every prominent politician have these type of youth boys group in their respective camps, and etc. Some were engaged in these actions because of poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and frustration. There are still other anti-social youth groups such as the “Ghana group” in Sankera, the “Aondonengenand Saasaagroups” in Gboko, the “Sparko G group” in Makurdi among other groups spread sporadically in the state. They are very ruthless, tactical and dogged, some even educated but unemployed, and painfully, most of them engage into these illicit acts for nothing more than pastry sums, red wine and spirits. The recent Fulani herdsmen onslaught in Benue state employed some of these youth anti-social groups as mercenaries against their motherland. The aged long Jukum-Tiv showdowns have been executed by the anti-social youth groups of those epochs. The Ipav-Ukan, Ukan-Gaav, Shorov-Ukusu, and Mbagen-Eturo clan squabbles of the past in Benue state were all executions of the anti-social tactical youth groups. Over 6 brutal political killings including the killing of a prominent Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) faithful, Chief Atoza Hindan, have already been recorded in Benue state between May 29, 2015 and July 5, 2015. Lastly, at the present, the northern part of Nigeria formerly known as the symbol of peace and tranquillity and a cushion for peace settlement, is literally erupted with unrivalled violence in the class of terrorism (Boko Haram). Culminating into lots of bomb blasts, kidnaps and killings, hostage taking of villages and hamlets, with many citizens becoming refugees in their fatherland in northern Nigeria.

Today, the illicit and anti-social behaviour of youth in Nigeria due to unemployment and poverty is known to metamorphose from traditional or crude physical weapon-free fighting and voice-shouts to a more sophisticated, high-tech and weapon-grade robbery, kidnapping and terrorism with associated sunk costs. The present level of anti-social activities of the youth in Nigeria have taken a global perspective as it has moved almost beyond national issues to international policy concerns. In the last five years, illicit practices from anti-social activities of youth (particularly Boko Haram) in Nigeria due to high youth unemployment and poverty, has made Nigeria to earn an unsought position and naming among the terrorists family of the world. This is a very bad scenario as Nigeria’s international reputation and socioeconomic development further nose dives. The question now remains: can Nigeria evolve an ambidextrous employment and poverty eradication policy that will provide the teaming youth (both schooled – learned, and unschooled – unlearned) employment and poverty eradication projects *assine qua non* for curbing these youth anti-social activities?

Furthermore, the criticality of the dynamic relationship and imperatives of unemployment and youth anti-social activities is known by Nigeria’s leadership, policy and governance groups. The worst unimaginable was when the youth in 2013 were compelled to pay an amount of one thousand naira each as employment application fees. Over 3 million youth applied for less than 20,000 entries and in the process over 10 youth died but over 2.5 billion naira was collected from these youth under the authorization of the minister for information. This could lead to and spark up restiveness scenarios. Concomitantly, the unimaginable situation of youth unemployment provoked concerns of the Ministry of Education of Nigeria and World Bank as they succinctly decried in their respective reports that “unemployment among Nigerian youth is three times higher than general unemployment” (Administrator, 2012). The National Population Commission (NPC) of Nigeria in 2011 claimed an annual population growth rate of 5.6 million people and the Ministry of Youth Development of Nigeria reports about 68 million unemployed youths in Nigeria. Also, about 300,000 fresh graduates enrols in the National Youth Service Scheme (NYSC) annually, and the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) report stated that the population of the youth unemployment in Nigeria is put at 43 per cent of the overall population unemployment (Administrator, 2012). Furthermore, quality education has a direct bearing on national prestige, greatness, and cohesion. The knowledge and skill that young people acquire helps determine their degree of patriotism and contribution to national integration and progress. However, PRB reported in 2006 that “between years 2000 – 2004; about 30 percent of Nigerian youth of between ages 10–24 were not enrolled in secondary school.” Some of the youth that struggled to complete secondary education have no further opportunities for tertiary education. This situation puts several thousands of youths roaming the streets of villages, towns and cities in Nigeria; unemployed, fully frustrated, and ready to be both engaged or relate anyhow. The general unemployment rate in Nigeria is presently high at 23.90 per cent (NBS, 2015), and by the deduction of World Bank and Ministry of Education of Nigeria, the youth unemployment should be as high as about 71.70 per cent in Nigeria.

The youth population is known and appraised for their mutual and collective exhaustive strengths. In this view, Apostle John in great antiquity succinctly commented, “... I have written unto you young men (the

youth) because you are strong ... and you have overcome ...” (1John 2: 14). The youth are the hallmark of both strength, continuity and succession in any economy. The leaders and managers of today were the youth of yesterday and consequently, the leaders and managers of tomorrow are the youth of today. The youth are the only human resource, human capital and human factor that have the capability to overcome the hurdles of yesterday, the squabbles of today for the victory and sustainability of tomorrow. As a result, the youth are regarded as inextricable, intrinsic, invaluable and inevitable strategic resource for competitive advantage and competitive collaboration in any economy (Benue state inclusive). Thus, any economy that will succeed and remain invaluablely sustainable must build strategically their governance, leadership, “doing business,” succession, polity and policies around the youth.

The great Benue state is known to be in custody of about the most educated youth in the northern part of Nigeria going by literacy statistics as it ranked 19th in Nigeria and 2nd in northern Nigeria with a literacy rate of 84.60 per cent implying a positive variance of 8.40 per cent from the overall Nigeria’s literacy rate standing at 76.30 per cent (NBS, 2010). This by extension shows that Benue state has about the highest number of qualitative youth in northern Nigeria. In other words, the present quality of youths in Benue state, through good policy and governance instrumentation of any visionary, transactional and transformational leadership content, Benue state would turn into a land flowing with milk and honey. However, the present situation is far from expectation due to high unemployment in Benue state, thereby putting the Benue youth into: loss of pride and sense of direction, inability to access social development amenities due to their unavailability, loss of quality of life and capacity, frustration, antagonism, and social exclusion. As these continue to increase unabated, a tipping (turning point) is attained where the change directed at frustration against the change directed at employment reaches an infinity level (level of no control). The obvious then becomes the resultant effect no matter being considered below base behaviour: anti-social activities (a.k.a. youth restiveness), the ensuing strategy for the hard sought survival of the youth. It is against the backdrop of the foregoing that this paper seeks to address policy issues that would turn around the youth behaviours into positive social practices by provision of employment to Benue youths in order to exploit the socioeconomic development capital in Benue state.

This paper is written in five sections beginning with section one stating the problems and objective of the inquiry and section two following discussed the theoretical framework with theoretical reviews. Section three discussed the decision theoretic model for policy implications, while section four highlighted discussions of expectations and their applications to the problem of the inquiry. Finally, section five concludes with policy issues and recommends further inquiry into the unemployment and anti-social activities of the youth cum socioeconomic quagmire in Benue state.

1.2 Problem Statement.

Benue state is the centre of unity connecting all sections of Nigeria and described as a state of unity in diversity. Benue state also is an agrarian economy with abundant natural factors with prolific human capital having a youth literacy rate of 84.70 per cent, about 8.40 per cent above average (76.3) according to NBS statistics of 2010. This is backed up with thousands of youths graduating from 2 public state colleges of education, a state college of Agriculture, a state college of Nursing, a state polytechnic, and a state university among other private higher institutions, and a myriad of public and private secondary schools. These strides ensures production of quantum human capital product development that is capable of managing and controlling socioeconomic development challenges in the state any time. From 1999 up till today, Benue state have collected budgetary capital allocation, foreign capital inflows, internal revenue, and other intervention funding that accrue into several trillions of naira. In presence of these, there is high level of unemployment, increasing anti-social activities by the youths, nose diving socioeconomic development and very low to zero quality of life. The problems is definitely hanging on lack of good and effective leadership and governance to craft and implement policies that will engender employment and socioeconomic development, thereby curbing anti-social activities to a zero tolerance. What policies? This paper sets out to explore the various state of affairs and corresponding policies for probable solution.

1.3 The Inquiry Questions.

The two important questions this paper attempted in view of the problem of the inquiry are as follows:

- 1) What are the causes of unemployment and anti-social activities of the youth in Benue state?
- 2) How can the causes of unemployment and anti-social activities in Benue state be averted?

1.4 Objectives of the Paper.

This paper is timely as the hurricane of change has blown all over the country through the new leadership of President Muhammadu Buhari with uncontrollable waves for socioeconomic development demanding the right policy direction. The overarching objective of this paper is to open up possibilities for

designing and implementing policies for socioeconomic development unleashing employment and curbing anti-social activities of the youth in Benue state. Other objectives include:-

- 1) To expose to the youth the imperatives of illicit and anti-social activities to their individual lives and society in Benue state.
- 2) To aid in selection by the policy group youth possible policy strategies for development and contribution to the socioeconomic development of Benue state.
- 3) To make an original contribution to social science research and the informed body of knowledge.

II. Review of Related Literature

2.1 The Theoretical Framework.

This paper attempted the two research questions and these would be discussed by theoretical reviews of literature relevant to the subject. There are research literatures in many numbers from 2000 – 2014 on the subject by seminal theorists. Most of the theorists proved empirically that there is a positive relationship between unemployment and anti-social activities of the youths. Other theorists also showed that socioeconomic development relates inversely with youth unemployment and anti-social activities. In other words, "socioeconomic development of Benue state increases with a decrease in both unemployment and anti-social activities of the youth." Thus, the theoretical framework of this paper is based on the lens of these seminal theorists and it is: "if the present Alliance for Peoples Consensus (APC) administration reduces unemployment and anti-social activities of the youths in Benue state, socioeconomic development would be the obvious results in the state," all things been equal. Or, "the pace of unemployment and anti-social activities reduction in Benue state is directly proportional to the pace of increase in socioeconomic development in the state."

2.2 Concepts Clarifications.

2.21 Anti-social Activities.

"The Advocates for the Advancement of Youth Development Initiatives" (AAYDI), best defined anti-social activities of the youth as, "a sustained protestation embarked upon to enforce a desired outcome from a constituted authority by a structured or unstructured body of youths." This fits the label of "youth restiveness." It is also "a combination of any action or conduct that constitutes unwholesome, socially unacceptable activities engaged in by the youths in any community." "... it is a phenomenon which in practice has led to: a near breakdown of law and order, low productivity due to disruption of production activities, increasing crime rate, intra-ethnic hostilities, and harassment of prospective developers and other criminal tendencies" (Administrator, 2012).

2.22 Unemployment.

Unemployment is "a situation in which persons capable and willing to work are unable to find suitable paid employment". The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defined unemployed workers as those who are currently not working but are willing and able to work for pay, currently available to work and have actively searched for work. These include the facts of a number of people not having a job; the number of people without a job; and the state of not having a job. Same unemployment was operationalized to include the underemployed. Unemployment occurs when people who are able and willing to work are without jobs, or cannot find work that is effective and productive. It also occurs when people undertake jobs that are contrary or lower than their academic qualifications or areas of specialization. For instance, a first or second degree holder that enrolls as a recruit into any of the armed forces or paramilitary or a degree holder working as a clerk in an office is greatly underutilized and as such could be termed as unemployed even when such person is on a job (Asaju, Arome, and Anyio, 2014). However, the Federal Government over the years has been claiming strong real GDP growth rate measuring at 6% or 6.5% since 2005 till date. This is apparently a paradox. A situation whereby, there is a decade of strong real GDP of 6.5% economic growth, and in the same period, unemployment rate continue to rise annually from 11.9% in 2005 to 19.7% in 2009, and over 37% in 2013%. The apparent economic growth has not lead to economic development. The rate of poverty is still very high, the industries are still in shambles, technological development is till at rudimental stage, income inequality is high, mortality rate and child mortality rate is high, and in fact, Nigeria development index is still very low (Asaju, Arome, and Anyio, 2014). Unemployment according to ILO, is among the biggest threats to social stability in many countries (including Nigeria and particularly in Benue state), putting the global rate at 12.6% (ILO, 2012). The recent statistics by the World Bank has put the unemployment rate in Nigeria at 22 percent, while the youth unemployment rate is 38 percent. It has been shown that the bracket age of 15-35 years olds account for close to 60 percent of the Nigeria's population and 30 percent of the work force, and approximately 4 million people entered into the labour market every year. This situation is pathetic considering the fact that Nigeria and Benue state particularly is blessed with abundant human and natural resources capable of providing employment for the teeming youths.

As noted by the World Bank report, the youth holds the key to achieving the Vision 20: 2020 (Asaju, Arome, and Anyio, 2014).

2.3 Youth Unemployment and Anti-social Activities.

Going by these theoretical concept, AAYDI opined that anti-social activities of the youths affects negatively socioeconomic development through the following concerns:-

- 1) Low production due to disruption of production activities.
- 2) Near break down of law and order (e.g. Boko Haram).
- 3) Increased crime rates.
- 4) Increased intra-ethnic hostilities.
- 5) Harassment of prospective developers (investors).
- 6) Other criminal tendencies.

AAYDI listed some the reasons for anti-social practices of the youths, especially in the Niger Delta to be complaints for wealth sharing formula from petroleum resources which they claimed that by virtue of the bulk coming out from their father's land, that, they should be partakers of the gains to alleviate their sufferings associated with extraction activities (Administrator, 2012). Additionally, they elicited other reasons for anti-social activities that applies to Benue state also, as follows:-

- 1) Marginalization - Youth resorts to restiveness because of their perceived marginalization by the 'selfish' elders in the scheme of things in the communities and society at large. In order to get their share of the benefits accruing to the society they resort to taking on their elders and government headlong, culminating in the restiveness rampant in most of our communities today.
- 2) Unemployment - The unemployment rate in Nigeria was last reported at 23.90 percent. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has put the figure of unemployed in Nigerians at 21.10 per cent in 2010 and 19.70 per cent in 2009. The rising tide of unemployment and the fear of a bleak future among the youth in African countries have made them vulnerable to the manipulations of agents called "provocateurs." These include aggrieved politicians, religious demagogues, and greedy multinationals that employ these youths to achieve their selfish ambitions.
- 3) Exuberance - Very often, due to the non-directional strength, dexterity and charisma of the youth leads into full youthful exuberance. This raw energy has of late been channelled into unwholesome and socially unacceptable venture that threaten the very fabrics of the community and society at large. Also the issue of availability and accessibility of hard drugs which predisposes the youth to abnormal behaviours finally leads them youth anti-social activities. It is also believed that some disgruntled leaders, elders and politicians in our society resort to recruiting youth for settling scores or using them against perceived enemies. With this trend, the activities of these youth have degenerated to outright criminality. Once these youth get mobilized for these nefarious activities they become uncontrollable and the society suffers.
- 4) Poverty - Poverty connotes inequality and social injustice and this traumatizes. More than 70 percent of people in Nigeria are in abject poverty, living below the poverty line, and one-third survive on less than US \$1 dollar a day. This figure includes an army of youth in urban centres in Nigeria who struggle to eke out a living by hawking chewing sticks, bottled water, handkerchiefs, belts, etc. The sales turnover per day and the profit margin on such goods are so small that they can hardly live above the poverty line. Disillusioned, frustrated, and dejected, they seek opportunities to express their anger against the state. Scholars have overtime agreed that there is a link among poverty, loss of livelihood, inequality, and youth restiveness as evidenced by the numerous violent protests against the wielders of power in Nigeria.
- 5) Inadequate Educational Opportunities and Resources - Quality education has a direct bearing on national prestige, greatness, and cohesion. The knowledge and skill that young people acquire help determine their degree of patriotism and contribution to national integration and progress. Between years 2000 - 2004, about 30 per cent of Nigerian youth between years 10 - 24 were not enrolled in secondary school. The after effect of this situation is that thousands of young people roam the streets in villages, towns and cities in Nigeria. Those who struggles to complete secondary school have no opportunities for tertiary education.

From the foregoing, AAYDI has linked anti-social activities of the youth to unemployment and were succinct on other causes also. They reiterated scholar's position overtime of tracing the link among these macroeconomic variables of poverty, loss of livelihood, inequality, and youth restiveness as evidenced by the numerous violent protests against the leadership, politicians and bureaucrats in corridors power in Nigeria. In this view, this paper is vehement to generalize that "the duo of unemployment and anti-social activities of the youth inversely affects the socioeconomic development of any society in question.

Furthermore, other studies also showed that unemployment leads to poverty, poverty causes insecurity, and insecurity negatively affects socioeconomic development (Akwara, Akwara, Enwuchola, Adekunle, and

Udaw, 2013). Also, poverty directly affects youth restiveness and youth restiveness negatively affects human capital development and industrial productivity (Chukweize, 2009). Thus, Chukweize concluded that the poverty level and youth restiveness today in Nigeria are very high with attendant human capital extinction and industrial productivity elusiveness (Chukweize, 2009). Ajufo (2012) reiterated that, in recent times, there have been notable adverse social, economic and political developments in Nigeria, a consequence of youth unemployment and underemployment, particularly exemplified by increasing militancy, violent crimes, kidnapping, restiveness and political instability. The Nigerian situation is further compounded by the recent global financial crisis that has crippled businesses and the prospect of securing jobs for young people. Youth unemployment poses a risk to the Nigerian society. The consequence of this problem, if no major corrective initiatives are taken, could be disastrous for the nation. Youth unemployment has national and global impacts, notably among which are increased violence, crime, drug abuse and political instability. Desperation can drive many people into living outside the law in order to survive and as a means of expressing dissatisfaction at the apparent neglect of their very existence. Furthermore, the negative consequences include poverty, psychological problems of frustration, depression, hostility, abduction, murder, armed robbery, and all manner of criminal behaviours causing general insecurity of life and property (Afujo, 2012).

Additionally, another work was succinct that, the youth anti-social activities and unemployment culminated in Nigeria (especially in Benue state) due to a large extent to the ‘negligence’ on the part of the government to act as a force to reduce poverty, promote a strategic vision of economic growth, advance democracy to achieve sustainable development. No doubt, the existence of these organisations and their advancement assisted considerably to open up space for the expression of dissenting opinions and what could be regarded as alternative voices. Unfortunately, this very character and attribute has come to serve as a shield for opportunistic and nuisance activities of some civil society organisations and disgruntled politicians. In some respects, the nation has witnessed situations whereby monies received from international development partners have been channelled to buying luxurious cars and building high-priced houses by founders of these organisations (Yaro, 2010).

Lastly, 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 (Osakwe, 2013). 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 (Osakwe, 2013). 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 behaviour; 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. For such a powerful group in any environment, it is unfortunate that in Nigeria (and particularly in Benue state) 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 (Osakwe, 2013).

III. Methodology

3.1 Introduction.

This paper used library sources (secondary sources) to show the relationship that exists between the duo of youth unemployment and anti-social activities with socioeconomic development of Benue state. All the literature and works of seminal researches showed that the relationship is indeed inverse (i.e. indirect or negative). But the intention of this paper is about policy for managing and controlling youth unemployment and anti-social activities to attain improved and continuous socioeconomic development in Benue state, and consequently Benue social environmental cleansing. A policy decision analytic model is proposed by this writer for perspective analytic about policy strategies (alternatives) as shown in **figure 1** below with main variables for effective policy formulation and implementation.

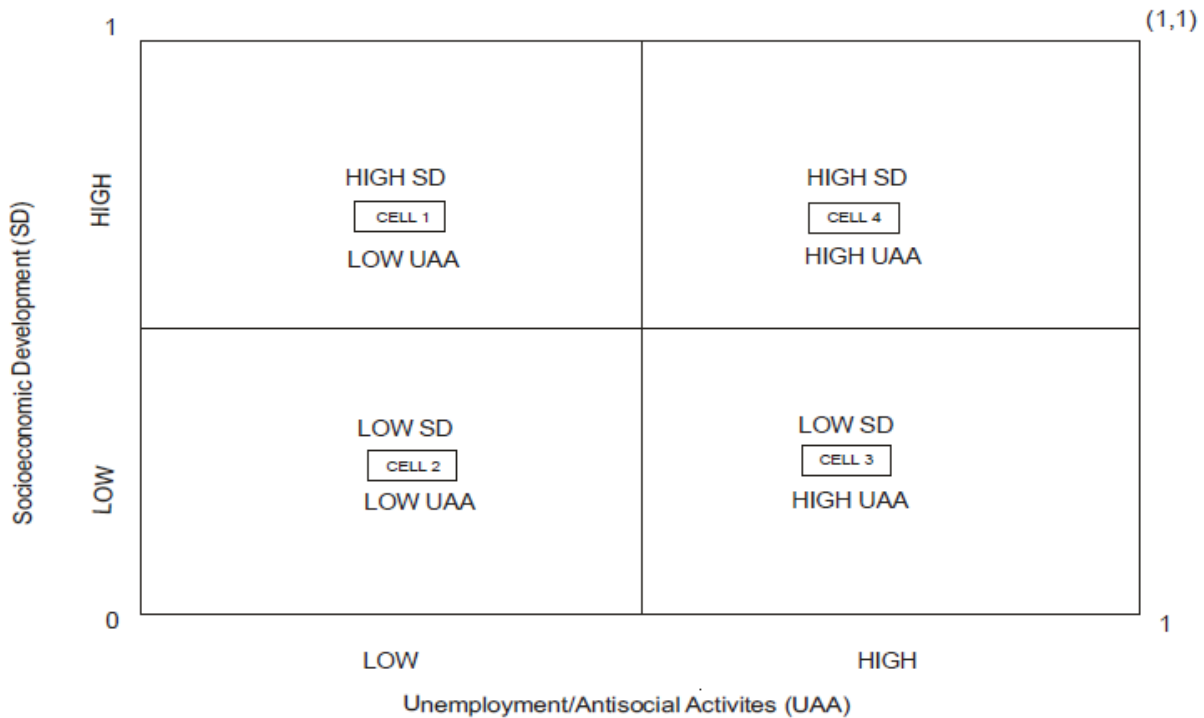


Figure 1: A Decision Analytic for Socioeconomic Development/Unemployment- Antisocial Activities.

3.2 Model Specification and Description.

3.2.1 The Decision Analytic Model.

The model is an idealized graphical decision analytics shown in **figure 1**, and is placed on the first quadrant of the Cartesian two-dimensional plane. The choice of the first quadrant is because, all variables are having fixed position positive values. The vertical dimension depicts socioeconomic development (SD), while the horizontal dimension depicts youth unemployment and anti-social activities (UAA) in Benue state. This approach considers an elemental unit measurement since all additional probabilities (conditions of successful performance and states of affairs) sums up to unity, 1 (expressed in percentage as 100). A movement from the origin (point of zero) to the right on the horizontal axis shows UAA improvement (increase) up to unity (1) where additional increase (positive change) chances are exhausted. Also, movement from the origin to the top of the vertical axis shows SD improvement up to 1 where no additional improvement in SD is possible (i.e. all possible chances of SD positive change are exhausted). Conversely, a movement from 1 toward zero on both dimensions represents decreases in SD and UAA respectively. However, a decrease in SD marks retrogression, negative effects and reversed socioeconomic development, whilst; a decrease in UAA is a chance for positive socioeconomic improvement if the decrease is caused by an increase in SD. The question now is: how can this model be operated effectively for policy?

The key to model-building lies in abstracting only the relevant variables that affect the criteria of the measures-of-performance of the given system and in expressing the relationship in a suitable form. Model enrichment is accomplished through the process of changing constants into variables, adding variables, relaxing linear and other assumptions, and including randomness (Sharma, 2010; Hillier and Leiberman, 2010; Taha, 2007). The top three qualities of any model according to Sharma (2010) are:-

1. Validity – how the model will represent the critical aspects of the system or problem under study,
2. Usability – Whether the model can be used for the specific purposes, and
3. Value – Attain value expectation of the user.

This graphical model is divided into four cells as shown in **figure 1**. Cell 1 represents High SD-Low UAA, cell 2 represents Low SD-Low UAA, cell 3 represents Low SD-High UAA, and cell 4 represents High SD-High UAA. These are the various states of affairs available to the decision-maker (leadership and governance policy group) for effective policy making and implementation for optima value creation measured by socioeconomic improvement and reduction of unemployment and anti-social activities of youth in Benue state. Therefore, the description of the states of affairs are as follows:-

- 1) **Cell 1 (Optimistic):** High SD-Low UAA – This is a state of affair that yields high socioeconomic development (0.5 – 1.0) with a corresponding low unemployment and anti-social activities (0 – 0.5). It imply that the highest point of UAA here is the beginning point of SD, showing that the propensity for SD improvement is higher than that of UAA requiring policy to take a vantage position of SD for further improvement. In this state, the gains in SD and continuous improvement by reason of maintaining favorable enabling environment, equal opportunities, good practices, human rights and dignity, right policies and programs, meritocracy, right political will, and youth policy participation and etc., would be deployed to further surmount the prowl of UAA. When these takes place at the right times, UAA can possibly be reduced to a zero tolerance in Benue state.
- 2) **Cell 2 (Coping):** Low SD-Low UAA –The state of affairs here is a balanced one in which the propensities of SD and UAA are equal and cannot improve higher than 0.5 respectively. However, a critical look at Benue state at present does not require this position. But in view of uncertainties and ambiguities that are the hallmark of real world behavior (Daft, 2010), the policy issue would be to combat UAA and force it toward zero for SD to have an edge over UAA. This would require ambidextrous policy in human capital development, skills acquisition, effective youth programs that inculcates good behavior building and youth social inclusion projects.
- 3) **Cell 3 (Opportunistic):** Low SD-High UAA – in this state of affair, socioeconomic development potentials are overtly surmounted by the prowess of unemployment and anti-social activities of the youth. SD cannot improve beyond 0.5 whilst UAA is minimum at that 0.5, representing a chaos situation. It is also a state of affair which can easily evoke a “state of emergency” as youth restiveness is the order of the day. However, policy concerns here would require exchange training programs, intervention programs, intensive youth development projects, policy participation of the youth, and participative governance and leadership by the youth. This efforts may swing cell 3 towards cell 1 if effectively managed and controlled.
- 4) **Cell 4 (Pragmatic):** High SD-High UAA – This depicts also a balanced situation where the minimum is 0.5 and the maximum is 1 for SD and UAA respectively. The socioeconomic development is in direct proportion (i.e. equal) to anti-social activities of the youth. The state of affairs here is dicer than that of cell 1, though all are balanced, because as socioeconomic development improves from 0.5 to 1, anti-social activities of the youth increases also from 0.5 to 1, and vice versa. This may imply that the gains in SD are used in funding the anti-social activities of the youth. It could be thought of it that, the political group and senior bureaucrats who are disgruntled in one way or the other, sponsors the youth group to settle political and socioeconomic investment scores. Or probably, the youth prepares bridges for bureaucrats and politicians to positions of power and are invariable settled (paid well) with public funds and other motivations to advance in more anti-social activities. In other words, anti-social activities have become a source of sound income and enviable profession amongst the youths. The policy implication here is doggedness of policy makers and transformational leadership that would reduce the prowess (propensity of UAA) to a lower probability for a higher probability of SD. Achieving this would evoke policy on youth training programs, character development programs, and creation of self-dignity among the youth through conscientious massive youth employment projects.

Finally, the center point position in the model where SD and UAA are 0.5 each is the most critical balanced state of affairs because, it is a state of affair that have no probability space for improvement and recession in SD and UAA respectively. Therefore, policy instruments can direct improvement that is socioeconomic development content so as to change policy position to another cell, either cell 2 or cell 4. Lastly, this graphical analytic model is flexible and fitting as it is characterized by validity, usability and valuable as it satisfies the optima value creation to fulfil the objective criterion of the problem under investigation (Sharma, 2010).

IV. Results Discussions

4.1 Results.

This model brought to bear possible results that have implications on policy for youth employment generation and curbing anti-social activities for eventual corresponding socioeconomic development of Benue state. The reviews showed a theoretical proof that socioeconomic development of Benue state is inversely related to the duo of youth unemployment and their anti-social activities. Symbolically, the theory could be expressed as:

$$\text{SocioeconomicDevelopment} = \frac{\text{Constant}}{\text{Unemployment+AntisocialActivities}} \dots\dots\dots \text{Equation 1.}$$

The constant in the model shown in equation 1 above is a measure of the propensity to both develop and regress. The useful results from the model displayed four states of affairs for corresponding policy positions: optimistic or proactive, coping, opportunistic, pragmatic, and stuck-in-the middle position respectively.

4.11 Optimistic Policy Position.

The optimistic policy position has improvement probability of from 0.5 to 1.0 representing 50% minimum chance for socioeconomic development to match the probability of 0 to 0.5 representing 50% maximum chance for unemployment and anti-social activities. Policy strategies for socioeconomic development in this position are very possible, hence the position is optimistic. The situation where unemployment and anti-social activities plays at maximum (50%) probability, socioeconomic development influence of probability greater than 50% steps in to surmount their effects and possibly makes their effects negligible for improvement. Algebraically, keeping SD and UAA at maximum make the constant to gain a value of 0.5. Maximizing SD means keeping UAA value close to 0.5 so that SD will improve close to 1 unit.

4.12 Coping Policy Position.

This policy position have equal chances for improvement and retrogression standing at 50% maximum for both socioeconomic development and unemployment-antisocial activities. The policy strategy requires always keeping below 50% probability chance of unemployment and anti-social activities and possibly reducing the chance to near zero probability value. However, whichever way, socioeconomic development cannot attain more than 50% probability chance for improvement. Algebraically, maximizing all values will cause the constant to take a unit (1) value. Improvement in SD means reducing the effects of UAA to keep always a value of less than maximum (near 0) to improve SD to infinity ∞ value (which is not possible in the real world). Thus, the position is called coping, because it is the least policy position any economy can take in the real world.

4.13 Opportunistic Policy Position.

The opportunistic policy position is complicated for any economy, especially Benue state, because it constitutes many fall-outs from the youth due to high unemployment and anti-social activities probability chance of 0.5 to 1 representing 50% minimum. This probability value is above that of socioeconomic development with 50% maximum probability chance. Algebraically, keeping SD and UAA at maximum values, the constant takes a value of 0.5. This implies that keeping UAA at 0.5 minimum to maximize SD causes an improvement in SD by 1 unit, whilst keeping SD lower than maximum (say 0), increases UAA to a value up to infinity, ∞ (state of emergency). The policy situation is very dicey and called opportunistic because it depends on the effectiveness of policy, programs and attractive enabling environment providence for a balancing. It gives the youth the opportunity to be attracted into leadership and governance positions. It also allows the youth the opportunity to wield maximum policy patronage and programs. If these succeeds, it gives the economy the opportunity to develop its youths and exploit socioeconomic development of the present and distant future. Failure of all these also avails the state the opportunity to be in chaos and have threat of “state of emergency” declaration.

4.14 Pragmatic Policy Position.

In this policy position, at maximum values of SD and UAA (i.e. 1 unit), the constant takes a 1 unit value also, hence it is a pragmatic position. The philosophy of pragmatism says that policy maker (or researcher) should use the approach or mixture of approaches that works the best in a real world situation. In short, what works is what is useful and should be used, regardless of any philosophical assumptions, paradigmatic assumptions, or any other type of assumptions (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Keeping UAA at 0.5 will make improvement in SD of 2 units and vice versa. Thus, pragmatism is needed by leadership and policy group to reduce UAA and keep it below 1 unit for any improvement in SD.

4.15 Stuck-in-the-middle Policy Position.

The policy position here is balanced by no possible improvement in both SD and UAA because the position is fixed by growing status quo. The policy makers and economy seem very satisfied and comfortable with the situation. To move away from this position will require policies to bend toward cell 1, 2, 3 or 4, whichever one that satisfies the socioeconomic development objective of the time.

4.2 Possible Cells Policy Strategy Options.

Strategy position is not a fixed position but a dynamic position always taken by the policy maker in order to find optima criterion (the option for maximum utility value) for decision making (Hillier and Lieberman, 2010; Sharma, 2010, Taha, 2007). In view of this, the policy strategy for each cell is a suggestion of

the author for possible improvement in socioeconomic development of Benue state, as discussed in the following sections.

4.2.1 Optimistic Position Policy Strategies.

This would require keeping UAA at 0.5 maximum and SD at 1: The youth basic literacy level in Benue state is 84.6 % indicating a moderate literacy level for policy understanding and consummation. Post primary and post-secondary literacy advancement is also moderate considering the presence of many post-secondary institutions in the immediate and task environments, but with very high unemployment and poverty levels (23.6%-general and 70 %-youth respectively for Nigeria). Unemployment and poverty are reviewed afore to be among the causes of anti-social activities that inversely affects socioeconomic development (an answer to question 1). Thus, the present government is required to do the following (i.e. the probable answer to question 2):-

- 1) Reduce corruption and financial sharp practices to near zero.
- 2) Promote best practices of accountability, probity and transparency.
- 3) Eradicate partiality and nepotism by promoting meritocracy in business and administration.
- 4) Create an enabling business environment that will raise the level of economic activity in the state. A healthy business economy is both known and seen by the level of production and market activity. When activity level is high, employment is at sight and socioeconomic development gives rents to improved income, improved savings, improved capital generation and multiple creative destruction (i.e. entrepreneurship) as spinoffs.
- 5) Increase spending in the Benue economy as liquidity squeeze is counter-developmental. The capital allocation to Benue state should be at par with socioeconomic development needs and when these monies are disbursed to the state for investment projects, it should be properly handled transparently and accountable to ensure that these investments are realized. Investments generate income and employment, conversely, income and employment leads to investments.
- 6) Make policies that are youth-friendly in order to allow youth participation and curb youth social exclusion. Educational and training projects, youth exchange programs, additional skills development for youth and all, and strengthening of dying vocational centers and etc., are examples of policies that are youth-friendly.
- 7) Wield off nepotism and partiality for equal participation based on meritocracy.

4.2.2 Coping Position Policy Strategies.

In this balance position, the policy strategy would be to keep UAA at near zero and maximize SD at 1 unit: with all prevailing conditional probabilities of high unemployment and poverty levels, abundant human resource and human capital within the youth economy, a sway from UAA is required for optima socioeconomic value in Benue state. Thus policy makers requires the following:-

- 1) More training and development for the youth to reduce the UAA through skills acquisition and educational learning eliciting higherattitudinal behaviors and become responsible enough to shear away from anti-social behaviors and practices.
- 2) Total eradication of hide-outs points and Ogogoro consumption that erode brains amongst the youth in Benue state.
- 3) Engage in investment promotion programs and projects such as revitalizing ailed and ailing industries such as the Benue Burnt Bricks, Tarku Soya Mills, Ikyogen Cattle Ranch and Farms, the Radio Benue and etc. These would improve the lots of youth by employment provision and income generation.
- 4) MSME entrepreneurship training and development of the youth and creating linkages for capital access and markets for full entrepreneurial practices in Benue state.
- 5) Reduce corruption and financial sharp practices to near zero.
- 6) Promote best practices of accountability, probity and transparency.
- 7) Eradicate partiality and nepotism by promoting meritocracy in business and administration

4.2.3 Opportunistic Position Policy Strategies.

This position would require keeping UAA constant at 0.5 and allowing SD to reach maximum (0.5) so that SD improvement will increase to unity (1). Maximizing UAA would make SD to remain unchanged at 0.5 but reducing SD by increasing UAA would make UAA take a value that is high (for example, a 0.1 SD value at UAA maximum renders 5 units for UAA). The following policy strategies are obvious:-

- 1) Increase spending on youth development and empowerment.
- 2) Create enabling environment for youth participation in leadership and governance.

- 3) Promote the youth spirit through youth sensitization and voice creation for them to advance and sort out their needs toward development.
- 4) Allow the youth ownership to landed properties for agriculture and other economic investments.
- 5) Prioritize on youth educational and skills development that are of economic and market values and business participation.
- 6) Reduce corruption and financial sharp practices to near zero.
- 7) Promote best practices of accountability, probity and transparency.
- 8) Eradicate partiality and nepotism by promoting meritocracy in business and administration.
- 9) Train the youth toward character development and allow them to lead in controlling dark hide-outs.
- 10) Increase business and economic output in the state so that the activity level would rise to give youth opportunities to participate in business.
- 11) Create youth cooperatives and increase their access to funding.
- 13) Allow the youth to have inputs in their development programs and increase competitive participation among them.
- 14) Meritocracy in all youth governance choices to be the watch word.

4.2.4 Pragmatic Policy Position.

Pragmatism here involves doing and re-doing everything to develop. It is a position to reengineer all processes for continuous performance. It is also a position of discipline from leadership and governance in all earnestly. The public and private bureaucracy must have their hands on desk and the bulk must not stop for smoothing of the ‘doing business’ in Benue state. Leadership and governance here should be kept at bay from political and electioneering campaigns as they are diametrically opposed to each other. The Benue development project must be the dream (objective) of all policy-makers and implementers at all levels in the state beginning from the home to the office, and to the church and market square.

The pragmatic position has the highest socioeconomic development of 2 units when SD is maximized at 1 unit and UAA kept constant at 0.5. But when SD and UAA are both maximized, SD and UAA takes unity (1) values. Thus it is a duty call on policy-makers to keep UAA minimized for SD to improve and surmount it in Benue state. To achieve this, the following are suggested:-

- 1) Reengineer and reorganize for improvement, the business sector in Benue state.
- 2) Training and development of both private and public bureaucracy human resource.
- 3) Create investment opportunities for the youth.
- 4) Reduce corruption and financial sharp practices to near zero.
- 5) Promote best practices of accountability, probity and transparency.
- 6) Eradicate partiality and nepotism by promoting meritocracy in business and administration.
- 7) Training and development for the youth so as to have market skills and recover their lost image.
- 8) Reposition the youth and prioritize youth projects.
- 9) Public accountability and transparency spirit be embowered by all indigenes of Benue beginning with office and responsibility holders, govern and the governed, and the man on the street.
- 10) Meritocracy in selection for all requisite operations in the state.
- 11) Train and develop the youth to become positive social change agents in Benue state and give to the equal participation opportunities.
- 12) There should be effective monitoring and evaluation of all youth policy implementation in the state.

4.2.5 Stuck in-the-middle Policy Position.

This position is not realistic in the real world, because the variables in this paper are dynamic and paradigmatic due to the law of change. The business environment of Benue state is heterogeneous and changes ambiguous and tsunami. Thus the policy-makers cannot afford a stuck-in-the-middle position.

V. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary.

The various policy positions and their strategies for curbing off youth unemployment and anti-social activities as discussed in the foregoing represents answers to questions 1 and 2, and also fulfils objectives 1 and 2 respectively as posted by this paper. The decision analytic graphical model and its implications on policy eliciting policy positions in accordance with the prevailing states of nature in Benue state fulfils objectives 1, 2, and 3 also. Proved by this paper also is that, the youth unemployment and anti-social activities affects negatively socioeconomic development of Benue state. From theoretical reviews it was found that the two predictor variables (youth unemployment and anti-social activities) are both mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive in relationship with socioeconomic development. Their causes have been enumerated accordingly

and many way forward suggestions given by the seminal researchers as in the review. Some of the ways forward proffered are: entrepreneurship training, vocational skills development, educational development, youth development projects, and etc. However, the review of proffered probable solutions can go on and on but the problems of youth (predictor variables) correspondingly goes on and on unabated creating a knowledge gap. Where is the market for entrepreneurship, education and vocational skills among other skills for the youth to be effectively employed to curb off anti-social activities? This paper is centered on creation of an effective and efficient market where the activity level with economic output level will rise with increase in employment, income, new markets, strengthening old markets, creating niche markets, distribution channels and network-based strategies, and in the final analysis, socioeconomic development rents. Thus, attempted in this paper is a policy framework for “the effects of unemployment and anti-social activities of the youth on socioeconomic development of Benue state.” The framework, agraphical decision model analytic found four necessary and robust policy positions that are invaluable and inextricable for socioeconomic development of the state and managing effectively youth unemployment and anti-social activities. These policy positions for each corresponding states of affairs (or states of nature) are:-

- 1) Optimistic policy position.
- 2) Coping policy position.
- 3) Opportunistic policy position.
- 4) Pragmatic policy position.

All these positions have strategy variables to be harnessed in order to drive home socioeconomic development with redress to unemployment and anti-social activities of the youth in Benue state. The policy decision-makers in this enviable and competent administration (APC led government) of Benue state would need to analyze the positions based on the state of affairs dominant, since the decision-maker have no control over any state of affair. Thereafter, the decision-maker would choose the strategic alternatives (policy positions) that would give the optimum value (Maximum to minimum) based on the objective criterion (reduction to possible zero value, unemployment and anti-social activities of the youth that will usher outstanding or a thunderous socioeconomic development in Benue state.

5.2 Conclusion.

Several literature on this topic abound from year 2000 to date with many suggestions but without noticeable improvement in youth unemployment and anti-social activities problems. The reviews positioned causations (causes of youth unemployment and anti-social activities) and effects without policy positions for the policy group in Nigeria, especially Benue state. The overarching policy issue is about an effective market for Benue state. There is unemployment because there is no effective and efficient market, and this is due to very low activity level and low output level in Benue state. If the state socioeconomic development programs from the household to industry are centered on the market, socioeconomic development would become obvious as the best out of four policy positions devised from the decision analytic graphical model of this paper is the chosen policy alternative. Also, the decision analytic graphical model is flexible and applicable to all economies and states of affairs. It is therefore, the interest of any economy policy decision-makers to craft policies in accordance with its socioeconomic development objective criterion and select the best policy alternatives that would optimize utility value. Thus, designing and implementing these positions with respect to their corresponding realistic states of nature in Benue state will bring about the desired socioeconomic development, answer the 2 important questions, and fulfil the three objectives posted by this paper.

5.3 Recommendations.

The decision analytic graphical model with the four policy positions is an open and accountable model that apply effectively to situations of transparency, accountability and probity, and full integrity and ethical environments with effective monitoring and evaluation. The objectives for socioeconomic development in Benue state must take an ambidextrous change – incorporating structures and processes that are appropriate for both the creative impulse and for the systematic implementation of innovations (in this case, policy position alternative yielding socioeconomic development) (Daft, 2010). The paper therefore recommends transparency, accountability, ethics, meritocracy and political will, monitoring and evaluation of the model policy position alternative chosen by Benue state in their search for zero tolerance in youth unemployment and anti-social activities. It also recommends another research in decision policy model approach so as to contest, prove and/or extend this work.

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