

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFORMALIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, there is a theoretical elucidation of how development and youth unemployment in Nigeria informally takes place by acting upon a sociological basis. This means that the constant high unemployment of the youth is not merely a labor market phenomenon but a structural feature of the Nigerian postcolonial development course, which is characterized by ineffective industrialization, rentier accretion and peripheral incorporation into the world system. As part of the conceptualization of the study, the informality is theorized as a central form of economic participation rather than a marginal or a transitional form of economic participation that relies on political economy, dependency theory and development sociology. This paper puts youth unemployment into a context of bigger processes of state retreat, neoliberal restructuring and uneven development and demonstrates how these processes make precarious work the rule of thumb, reproduce social inequalities, and constrain youth agency. The research contributes to the theoretical discourses on underdevelopment, labor precarity, and postcolonial state formation, by describing informality as a mode of development, rather than an exception, and by highlighting the importance of pursuing employment-based policies, structural change, and interventions by the state in dealing with the livelihoods of the youths in Nigeria.

Keywords: Informalization, Political economy, Youth unemployment, Development, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment among young people has become one of the most common dimensions of the modern development of Nigeria. Nigeria, the most populous African country, has the greatest and fast increasing youth population that is frequently cited as the potential demographic dividend in the policy discussion. This has however not been well realized and a significant percentage of the young people are being institutionalized in steadfast, tough jobs. Nevertheless, throughout the continuous endeavors of the development strategies within the country regarding economic growth, entrepreneurship, acquisition of skills and self-reliance, the issue of youth unemployment has been a structural one and not a transitional or a short-term one (World Bank, 2013; ILO, 2015). This scenario reveals the unreality of relationship between the dreams of development and material life such that the issue of young labour is being socialized and put in context under the influence of structural, political and even historical factors rather than explain it under the influence of personal inadequacies or failure of the labour market (Ake, 2001; Mkandawire, 2010; Sen, 1999).

The problem of unemployment among youth is generally associated in the popular discourses with the lack of skills, lack of work ethics, or population pressures. These are typical explanations in the policy making process, but they are too simplistic as they do not reflect real structural and historical processes shaping the results of employment (Fine, 2007; Ferguson, 2006). A long history of poor industrialization, rent-seeking accumulation and failure of developing economies to experience productive change leading to unemployment marked the sociology of development perspective. Such structural conditions limit the ability of the official economy to absorb labour, especially youth labour force, which creates an endless underemployment and marginalization (Rodney, 1972; Amin, 1976; Arrighi, 2002).

Youth unemployment and informalization of development are the two overlapping phenomena that support one another as the thesis in this paper holds. Informality is not a unique and temporary reaction to unemployment; it is a structural feature of the development process in Nigeria (Hart, 1973; Chen, 2012). In the Nigerian context, the informal sector has become the centre stage, as youths are able to earn their livelihoods, have access to resources and play their social reproduction. This has been added with the neoliberal reforms and the state stopping being a direct employer, naturalizing precarious work and absolving the survival responsibility to the individual (Peck, 2010; Harvey, 2005). This theoretical contribution confirms the conceptualization of youth unemployment and informality not only as a structural but also as an interrelated phenomenon and, thus, shows the need to reconsider the development beyond the market-based models by paying more attention to employment production, structural change, and the renewed state responsibility.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The paper employed a conceptual and theoretical approach in the analysis of the situation of unemployment among the youth and informalization of development in Nigeria. The study is not premised on primary empirical data since these phenomena are internal to structural, historical as well as in political processes. Instead, it is a compilation of academic resources, policy reports and historical analysis that tries to penetrate the systemic forces to informal labour, precarious youth livelihoods as well as social inequality (Ake, 2001; Meagher, 2010; Mkandawire, 2010).

The analytical framework is based on the information of the political economy, the dependency theory and the postcolonial studies, and includes the sociology of development perspective. The political economy paradigms contribute to understanding the role played by the structure of the state, industrial capacity and reliance on the resources in the determination of opportunities of employment (Watts, 2004; Obi, 2010). The dependency and world-systems theories state that Nigeria is within the world economic hierarchies and peripheral integration is a constraint to uptake local labor and structural inequalities are imposed (Amin, 1976; Wallerstein, 2004). The visions of the postcolonial sociology and development sociology also frame the aspect of the same on how past-based legacies, neoliberal reformations, and institutional-based settings affect the patterns of informality as well as youth precarity (Harvey, 2005; Ferguson, 2015; Castells and Portes, 1989).

It is a conceptual synthesis, a critical synthesis, the combination of these theoretical prisms with life examples of the Nigerian reality, including employment patterns in the industry, geography, and informal economic practices (Bremar, 2016; Meagher, 2018). It enables viewing the ways in which unemployment and informality of the youth are becoming increasingly conceptualizations of the other, as formations of structure, and underscores the existence of interactions amongst precarity in the labor markets, inequality and development outcomes more broadly. The methodology can also be applied to find the theoretical and policy implications that lay emphasis on the employment based development, state role and structural change.

ISSUE OF UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG THE YOUTH AS A STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Sociological view of unemployment amongst the youths in Nigeria can not be adequately explained as a result of incompetence skills, population growth or personal orientations. Such explanations, which are widespread in human capital and policy discourses, make a problem individual, but it is structural in nature. One of the signs of the systemic failures of the model of development in Nigeria is youth unemployment, which is explained by a weak industrial base, accumulation by rent, and unsatisfactory opportunities to absorb the labor force in productive sectors.

Nigeria is used as an example, though the population of the young population in the country continues to rise at a very rapid pace, regions that can offer enormous employment opportunities such as manufacturing and agro-processing do not develop. Conversely, the oil industry monopolizes the economic production but the number of jobs created is relatively low. The situation is aggravated by the regional inequality, which implies that, due to less investments in education and infrastructure, the northern states have more cases of youth unemployment, and urban south, although its economy is dynamic, create more graduates without formal job opportunities. The Nigerian reliance on oil payments has resulted in rent-seeking behavior that has discouraged the investment in the labor intensive sectors but the sector of the public employment has stood at zero. The development of the economy in terms of GDP does not therefore directly relate with the creation of jobs particularly in the formal and safe sectors (Watts, 2004; Obi, 2010).

The international aspects of the issue are emphasized by dependency and world-systems approaches. Nigeria being incorporated into world capitalism favors exports and transnational capital at the national level of industrialization and at the cost of concentrating on accumulating capital instead of job creation (Amin, 1976; Wallerstein, 2004). The young labor is therefore being driven further towards the marginal informal labor or even jobless.

The mainstream policy interventions (vocational training and entrepreneurship training) have a tendency of considering the unemployment of the youth as a policy issue rather than a structural issue. These actions are premised on the short-term mitigation of the issue but do not concentrate on the origins of the problem, which can even support precarious labor relations (Ferguson, 2015).

This way, the fact that the unemployment of the youths is a systemic part of underdevelopment must be understood. There must be structural solutions in which particular investment in the industrial and service sector, equal development of the region and strategic development of formal jobs to absorb the growing youth labour force. Without such interventions, the problem of unemployment amid the youths will still define the development environment in Nigeria.

INFORMALIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT

The informalization of development has been generally accepted to be the structural effects of informal economic activities as the major source of social reproduction and livelihood. This idea is the summation of the revolution where informal labour is not a secondary phenomenon or a middle ground phenomenon but the most prevalent form of economic activity in the third world (Hart, 1973; Chen, 2012; ILO, 2018). This has transformed work, economic survival and reproduction within the Nigerian society, especially among the young people who are increasingly being pushed out of the formal job in the manufacturing, construction, services and other controlled sectors (World Bank, 2013). The informal labour has proven to be the primary livelihood of the millions of Nigerians and their families and even the very notion of development has been redefined as informal labour has ceased to be an exception, but an organizing principle around which the economic life of the majority depends (Castells and Portes, 1989; Meagher, 2010; Chen, 2012).

Empirical evidence indicates that the extent and expression of informal work in Nigeria is different. Street trading, informal retailing and small scale provision of services dominate the lives of the youth in the urban centres like Lagos (Davis, 2006; Simone, 2004). The capital and other large cities are dominated by motorbike taxis, messengers delivery services, ride-hailing services, and casual labour, which brings quick yet relatively unsafe and insecure revenue (Graham et al., 2020). In rural Northern Nigeria, producing in small quantities, artisanal trades and seasonal agricultural labour are some of the main survival tactics of the youth (Okojie, 2013). Through these instances, informal labour is seen to be a broad subject of activities and has become institutionalized in the urban and the rural economies. This institutionalization upholds the thesis according to which informalization is not only an adaptive measure to unemployment, but a characteristic of the current process of development in Nigeria, balancing the integration of economies, social reproduction and survival tactics (Meagher, 2018; Breman, 2016; Sanyal, 2007).

Informal labour is usually promoted in mainstream development discourse as an indicator of dynamism, flexibility, and entrepreneurial possibilities. The policies in response to the unemployment among young people often focus on self-employment, the development of microenterprises, innovation, and small-scale entrepreneurship (Banerjee and Duflo, 2011; World Bank, 2019). Within this framing, the informal sector is placed between unemployment and formalization in between and outside of it is cheered by international development agencies, national policy reports, and local governance initiatives as a way of absorbing unemployed youth and encouraging individual initiative (Davis, 2006; Ferguson, 2015; OECD, 2017).

Nevertheless, within a critical political economy/ sociological approach, informal sector is a precarious and unequal fact. The informal work is generally vulnerable to exploitation and economic shocks, has to work very long hours, and is subject to unstable incomes, lack of access to the help of institutions (Breman, 2016; Standing, 2011; ILO, 2018). The informal opportunities are stratified on a profoundly stratified level that is based on classes, gender, ethnicity and geographical regions. To illustrate it, young women who trade petty goods in northern Nigeria or work in an urban empire are at a greater risk of being harassed, robbed of their wages, and not being included in social security programs, which strengthens gendered inequalities and the social mobility barrier (Meagher, 2010; Ferguson, 2015; Kabeer, 2012). Likewise, young people in the rural areas are prone to seasonal jobs in agriculture or seasonal construction (poor pay) that continue the poverty generation between generations (Bryceson, 2002).

This distorted distribution of informal opportunities brings out the reproduction of structural inequalities. Instead of being an empowering force, informal labour tends to strengthen the existing social hierarchies by limiting the mobility and further stratifying society. Informality is not a simple economic formation but rather a political and social process which has more general dimensions of marginalization. It puts the youth systematically out of reach of resources, networks, and institutional platforms to exercise influence in policy, negotiate labour terms and conditions, or ameliorate their socio-economic status (Castells and Portes, 1989; Meagher, 2018; Bayat, 2010). Decentralization and informalization of development in Nigeria should also be seen within the wider political and structural changes as opposed to behavioural changes. One of the most significant factors behind this change has been the withdrawal of the state in the management of the economy that has been brought about by neoliberal reforms which have been executed in the 1980s. Privatization, structural adjustment programmes, fiscal austerity and liberalization in labour markets undermined the ability of the state to create formal jobs and offer social provisions and to control labour market (Harvey, 2005; Mkandawire, 2010; Peck, 2010). Demanding more and more economic survival to individuals, families, and communities as public-sector labor became decreased and state-developed industrialization collapsed, the pressure was put on young people to a disproportionate extent. In this regard, informal labour is not just a survival measure, but a structural effect of political choices and the world economy (Arrighi, 2002).

The effects of this change are immense. It is common that informal workers do not get the benefits of labour laws and are not exempt to exploitation, unsafe work environments, and lack of income security. Their right to collective bargaining is also not accepted since they lack formal organizational structures like unions or cooperatives, which undermines their bargaining leverage on labour policies or better terms and conditions (Standing, 2011; Ferguson, 2015; Webster, Lambert, and Bezuidenhout, 2008). Moreover, informality restricts the representation and political involvement, pushing youth workers to the outskirts of institutional decision-making and strengthening general social and economic marginality.

The informal labour therefore acts as a tool of reproducing structural inequality. The existing development paradigm contributes to the social hierarchy by concentrating the marginalized groups in underpaid, unstable, and unregulated labor. Gender, class and regional disparities collide to bring differentiated experiences in the informal economy such that the young women and youth in rural regions continue to be disproportionately disadvantaged (Bremman, 2016; Meagher, 2010; Kabeer, 2012). Unemployment thus is not the factor contributing to informality but one of the means to sustain the status quo of the prevailing social and economic orders.

The long-term consequences of informal labour are important, as far as development is concerned. Although informal activities can offer temporary survival to the economy, they add little to long-lasting economic development, skill development, or industrial revolution. The informal labor is generally low-productive, disorganized and has few prospects to learn and innovate in terms of technology restricting the inclusive progress (Rodrik, 2013). In consequence, the high level of informality affects the ability of the state to attain widespread development and absorb the youth in meaningful economic and social activity.

However, these structural forces of informalization tend to be lost in the policy debates that focus on entrepreneurship and self-reliance. These stories distract attention away when there is a failure by the state to create jobs, develop industries and become economically independent and rebrand informality as a manifestation of youthful enterprise. By so doing, precarious livelihoods and structural inequality are made normal and depoliticized (Harvey, 2005; Ferguson, 2015; Li, 2007).

The development policy should change course in order to reverse the deeply ingrained process of informalization. Market-based interventions are not sufficient over the short-term. There is also the need to have employment-based approaches that revolve around the development of stable formal jobs in both rural and urban zones as well as the continued investment in industrialization, infrastructure and social protection mechanisms. The gendered and the regional aspects of informality should also be taken care of through policies to provide equal opportunities in gaining livelihoods. Addressing informalization thus needs structural adjustments and a conscious intervention of the state as an element of a more comprehensive strategy to lessen poverty, inequality, and precarity among young people (Standing, 2011; Meagher, 2018; Mkandawire, 2010).

Lastly, development in Nigeria through informalization is an intensive change in the economic structure, labor relations and social existence. Informal labour does not remain a marginal or residual means anymore but the dominating means of livelihood and social reproduction of most of the Nigerian youths. Although it is frequently presented as a hardy and entrepreneurial, informality is nonetheless highly fractured and unequal, and is entrenched in neoliberal reform, state withdrawal, and structural inequality. To cope with this dilemma, a subtle awareness of the political, social, and economic relations of informalization and the incorporation of the development strategies, which combine job creation and social security with structural change on the way to inclusive and sustainable development, is needed.

YOUTH PRECARIETY, NEOLIBERALISM AND STATE RETREAT

The aspect of precarity and informalization of the youth in Nigeria has increased in the face of the neoliberal development policies. Structural adjustment programs, as well as those policies, which encourage privatization, deregulation, liberalization and fiscal austerity have changed the role of the state in the governance of the economies since the 1980s (Mkandawire, 2010; Harvey, 2005). These reforms weakened the state capacity to take on young workforce into formal and secure employment in that the workforce in the state sector was reduced to a minimum and the state role in job creation was curtailed. This has witnessed some of the youths being involved in more casual, informal, and personalized forms of work where they have been involved in trading on streets, freelance gig workers, small entrepreneurship, and casual workers (Meagher, 2010; Standing, 2011).

Neoliberal reforms have also changed the vision of citizenship that social and economic rights are no longer associated with employment. Young people are being postured as entrepreneurial and self-reliant to get into the uncertain labor markets. According to this ideology, structural unemployment causes are diffused and informal labour should be seen as a natural and even a desirable outcome of development, rather than a symptom of

structural failure (Ferguson, 2015; Breman, 2016). The effects of neoliberalism are not evenly distributed, as is the case, which leads to the social inequalities. The availability of informal labour is based on the class, gender, and location area. The young women and rural youths get in the most unsafe sectors, whereas the urban elites get to venture in quite stable entrepreneurship. In informalization, the basis of legitimizing informal work is the rejection of labor solidarity and capacity to collectively hold the state accountable, however, again placing youth precarity in a grip and reinstating socio-economic hierarchy.

INFORMALITY, INEQUALITY AND REPRODUCTION OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Politics of Informality, Inequality and Reproduction of underdevelopment: The informal or unofficial labor in Nigeria has very far reaching implications on the aspect of social stratification. The informal labor is linked to inconsistent and in the vast majority of cases non-sufficient income, insignificant or absent social security, weak regulation and low vertical social and economic movements (Meagher, 2010; Breman, 2016). These structural features are metamorphosed into precarious lives of the youths, restricting their economic, and provision of most of the growing social, political and civic benefits. In a sense, informality is a recreation of fragility, which sows the disparities across generations and presents the processes of marginalization and inequality (Davis, 2006; Standing, 2011). This informal work is self-perpetuating in nature and it means that the young people are not struggling to survive through the short-term economic issues but rather they are locked into a structural arrangement that does not allow them to social and economic improve in the long run.

The overlapping class, gender and geographical axes have an impact on the axis of inequality in distribution of informal opportunities. The poor families or children in marginal areas or in economically marginal states have been overburdened with unsafe and low-paying informal jobs which may be petty trading, street selling, household labour, or casual labour in agriculture. Quite the contrary, people in urban areas or more affluent families stand a higher opportunity of acquiring formal employment or more stable enterprises, which implies the social hierarchy of the job market (Meagher, 2018; Ferguson, 2015). Particularly acute are gendered features as young women (usually under 18) are the primary users of the domains of domestic labor, informal care, small-scale trading, and unpaid labor. The jobs offer poor income protection, substandard social benefits, and inability to ascend the career ladder, which guarantees the reaffirmation of gendered inequalities and frustrates the empowerment that is typically associated with participation in labor (Breman, 2016; Ikenyei 2017).

The persistence of informal labor is also a pointer that there is more structural logic of politics of economy of Nigeria. Not only the result of individual choice or entrepreneurial activity, but as a means to spread the social costs of development failure into the hands of individuals and households, informality is a means of distributing state activity. The youth is literally pushed out to the informal sectors where economic survival is the issue of concern as the formal employment openings level out and the government-funded social safety nets disappear. This movement ensures that as much as there is the concentration of capital in the formal and semi-formal sectors social unrests and structural inequalities are evaded or delayed rather than addressed (Harvey, 2005; Mkandawire, 2010). The informal economy, in this regard, is both a symptom and an engine of underdevelopment, simultaneously being both a source and a reproducer of the vulnerability and inequality, which preconditions the existence of the latter.

There is a machine of the cause and effect between unemployment, informalization and inequality among the youth. Structural unemployment makes the youth to be pushed to the informal sector work which in the process recreates the same social and economic inequalities, places them in a cage that limits their opportunities to join the formal sector in future. This process of institutionalization of vulnerability is implemented in the following way: informal labor limits mobility, acquisition and reproduction of skills, uneven development outcomes among generations. Take into account that young men employed in motorcycle taxi-actions or informative construction in Abuja usually spend numerous hours of uncontrollable employment with unstable turnover and have no time or money to study and work out the entrepreneur activities. Similarly, the youth in the rural regions that make seasonal employment in agricultural activities within the northern states are normally assigned to low productivity, low paying jobs that lack access to infrastructure, training and markets which would assist in enhancing their social mobility. These examples suggest that informalization is an organizational process and imitates inequality rather than a temporary coping strategy (Meagher, 2010; Breman, 2016).

Another cause of inequality is informal labor because of the gendered vulnerability. Women end up in dangerous industries, which are the domestic work, low end trade and informal care work where labor is not considered properly and it is largely the unrecognized. They are either underpaid or unpaid and they scarcely get a chance to amass assets or even socially form. With that, there are augmented hazards of exploitation, harassment alongside social marginalization to women on informal work particularly in the scenario where there is a feeble or nonexistent labor regulation. This marginalization along with personal livelihoods affects the well-being of

households and generational inequity in the long run since young women have no resources and networks on which they can rely to not only transform their own lives but also those of their families (Ferguson, 2015; Breman, 2016).

Regional inequalities also encourage these dynamics. The reliance of young people on informal jobs that are unsustainable is more widespread in the Northern Nigeria which is less-industrialized, less-infrastructure and less-education invested than in the more economically active southern states. The overgraduateness and low growth in formal work, even in the southern parts of cities, require mushrooming of precarious informal work, such as ride-hailing, informal retail, and microservices. These geographic inequalities also prove that the structuring factors of the development process, encompassing state investment priorities, industrial policy, come to interplay with the localities of the labor market in order to fix the processes of marginalization and informalization (Meagher, 2018; Davis, 2006).

In a political economy perspective, informal labor is a sign of an endemic inequality, and a production tool. It is the assigning social costs of failed or poor development interventions to individuals and households. The model of development still holds the youth labor in the unregulated sectors to make sure that they remain peripherally integrated in the global economy to amass capital in unhindering cycles of social disturbances. Informality therefore becomes one of the means to sustain economic and social hierarchy to ensure that the structural inequalities remain in place as long as it creates an illusion of dynamism of labor and economic activity (Harvey, 2005; Mkandawire, 2010).

Informalization, inequality and youth unemployment are dependent on each other and that depicts policy constraints in a short-term outlook. Entrepreneurship-based, microenterprise-only, or vocational programs, however well aimed, ignore the structural bases of informal work. They also alleviate the situation in the short term but they do not shift the systemic factors that persist in causing precarious livelihoods, including low measures of industrial capacity, low levels of state intervention, poor social protection, and inequitable regional development. Without any structural interventions, informalization is a driver of social reproduction that causes vulnerability on a generation level and strengthens inequality (Standing, 2011; Breman, 2016).

It must have multi-dimensional and systemic solutions to the structural implications of informalization. The generation of jobs must not be limited to the short term skills training but a component of industrialization and expansion of formal services as well as equitable distribution of infrastructure in the regions. The social safety nets like health provisions, unemployment provisions and the enforcement of labor law have a role to play in reducing the vulnerability of the youth of the informal work force. Gender policies should also receive priority in order that young women can have the same access to good job opportunities, education, and social resources. The informal economy in Nigeria can be initiated to begin breaking the cycle of vulnerability reproduction and inequality reproduction that is characterized by the creation of formal employment and social protection alongside regionalized investment of resources by the policymakers (Meagher, 2018; Ferguson, 2015).

In addition, informalization does not just apply to the economic context on the sociological context alone. This means that informal labor predetermines how youth may be engaged in political and civic actions and their opportunities to influence the policies of development or hold institutions accountable. Informal workers operate outside the frameworks of a legal system and therefore their way to advocate, unionize or join a social movement is restricted, and this only contributes to their marginalization. This is a political dimension that assists in supporting the fact that the informality needs extensive policy reactions that incorporate economic, social, and political inclusion rather than viewing informality as a labor market concern (Standing, 2011; Castells and Portes, 1989).

Informal work is taken as a point of inequality and underdevelopment in Nigeria, rather than a peripheral and intermediate form of work. It institutionalizes vulnerability, constrains social and economic mobility, and recreates across-generational regional, gendered, and class-based inequalities. The informalization is an effect of more wide-ranging structural and political developments, including state retrenchment, neoliberal restructuring, and peripheralization in the world economy, which are also determinations of youth work experience and the boundaries of social incorporation. Such short-term intervention as entrepreneurship training in the respond to immediate needs though effective are not sufficient to turn around such deep-rooted dynamics. The solutions are sustainable systemic investment in industrialization, institutional creation of jobs, social protection and equal regional development with policies that pinpoint directly on the weaknesses of the women and the minority youth. Only with this kind of structural reforms informalization can be transformed into an inclusion tool instead of an exclusion tool into informalization and the generation of an inclusive and sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

The paper has revealed that both informalization of development and youth unemployment in Nigeria are essentially structural phenomena, which are based on the postcolonial political economy of the country. Youth unemployment is not an issue of a short-term and policy-induced problem, but rather a systemic consequence of the development path taken by Nigeria, which is characterized by poor industrialization, accumulation through rent, and marginalization into the world of global capitalism. Both these historical and structural circumstances have limited the ability of the formal economy to absorb labour (especially the youth labour force) thus creating a cycle of unemployment and underemployment.

The discussion also confirms the fact that informal labour is no longer peripheral or transitional in the economy of Nigeria. Rather it has emerged to be a characteristic of the modern model of development as the main tool by which the youths will be able to earn a living, negotiate social reproduction and interact with the state. Informality is not therefore a development failure, but a reconstitution of development, but this time around, precarious work, inequality, and restricted social security are normalized.

The paper questions neoliberal and market-based explanations of youth unemployment and informality which make individual decisions and choose to live in the city centre. It highlights the drawbacks of policies that promote entrepreneurship and self-reliance without paying attention to the structural parameters that determine labour markets. The continuing manifestation of youth unemployment and informalization suggests that it is time to radically reconsider the development strategies and make employment creation, structural transformation, and the rejuvenation of state accountability the focal point of the development agenda in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding the results of this research, the following recommendations can be suggested:

1. The development policies of Nigeria must change to employment-oriented policies instead of market-driven and neoliberal policies that the country has been using. The development plan should also focus on creating sustainable and productive employment opportunities instead of employing informal self-employment and entrepreneurship that remain the primary solution to youthful unemployment.
2. To counter the structural cause of unemployment among the youth, there is need to deliberately invest in industrial and service sectors that have high potential to create employment. Diversifying into domestic production, agro-processing and expanding government service sectors would increase the amount of formal jobs and lessen reliance on informal labour.
3. The state should be more active in the regulation of labour markets, they should assist productive areas and give social protection. State responsibility needs to be revived to oppose the precarious livelihoods normalization to make development deliverables inclusive and equitable to the youth.
4. Instead of viewing informality as an irregular or unwanted interim situation, the policy should look at using it as a form of youth development by creating a way of inclusion and sustainability. These involve better working conditions, expansion of social security and gradual inclusion of the informal workers in formal economic set-ups.
5. Special interventions are needed to interfere with the procreation of inequality and structural underdevelopment in youths. The vulnerability would be decreased due to the expansion of access to formal employment, social security systems and collective labour protection, which would increase the social reproduction.
6. The issue of youth unemployment, informality, and inequality needs to be incorporated into more wide analysis of postcolonial state formation and economic reliance in the world market. The regional, sector, and social differences in informal labour should also be considered in the policymaking and the future studies and the role of state-based policies by transforming informal economies also needs to be taken note of.

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