

Title

Nature and Causes of Unemployment and its Impact on Society: A study in Juba County, South Sudan

Author/s

Dr Akashraj Devanga Pruthviraj.; Associate Professor, Department of Economics, University of Juba, South Sudan. Email: Akashrajdp@gmail.com

Kom Kom Geng Atem, MSc Student, Department of Economics, University of Juba, South Sudan,

Dr Ananth S Panth, Social Development Consultant

Abstract

South Sudan is facing problems of unemployment, poverty and hunger as result of its political instability. This paper reports on the extent of unemployment at the household level, the reasons causing the unemployment and its impact on the individuals with a focus on Juba County. The analysis was based on information obtained through a primary survey of 100 households across five payam in Juba County. The results show that unemployment is a major problem. The main causes of unemployment as revealed by the respondents included economic recession, illiteracy, war, population explosion, high technology and globalization. However, the present education system is also a contributing factor. The impact of

unemployment is resulting in unemployed people experiencing low social status within and outside the family circles. It is also leading to psychological problems of stress and depression among them. The impact of unemployment is also causing them to take unethical steps such as corruption, dishonesty and crimes. To increase employment, among other recommendations, the government should establish industrial training institutes and polytechnics and incorporate industrial internships for the students. Another recommendation is to promote self-employment.

Key words

unemployment, government, educational system, graduates, social status, employment, mental health, Juba County, South Sudan

Introduction

Unemployment has social as well as economic consequences for young people. Unemployed young people are forced to find alternatives to generate income, including activities in the survival-type informal economy and, in extreme cases, criminal activity. Urban unemployment is further exacerbated by rural-urban migration. Rural migrants believe that more jobs and social opportunities are available in urban areas, but once in the cities they find themselves without a job and with limited social networks. Trapped and discouraged by bleak job prospects, some turn to the sex, criminality and drug industries to survive. In many cases, their aspirations are frustrated. This paper reports on the extent of unemployment at the household level, the reasons causing the unemployment and its impact on the individuals with a focus on Juba County.

Background

UNDP (2008) suggests that each person is endowed with a mix of capacities that allows them to perform, whether at home, at work or in society at large. Some of these are acquired through formal training and education, others through learning by doing and experience. UNDP (2008) identifies levels or processes for capacity building. These include the enabling environment in which people are facilitated to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes. These environments determine the rules of the game for interaction between and among organizations. In the process of developing knowledge, skills and attitude to enhance individual capacity the enabling environment include policies, legislation, power relations and social norms, all of which govern the mandates, priorities, modes of operation and civic engagement across different parts of society.

It is a myth among the people that urban areas are safe haven for livelihood and survival. It is true to a certain extent; however, knowledge, skills and attitude are important for sustained employment and taking advantage of the job opportunities. It is also presumed by people that it is the duty of the government to provide employment to all its citizens. However, the government can at best facilitate people to obtain employment and create opportunities. People with positive attitudes find themselves with employment opportunities and improve their social and economic status in the society. Hence there is a need to explore the ground reality on the nature and extent of unemployment and understand the reasons as well as implication of the unemployed status.

According to Ezie (2012), unemployment in South Sudan is disturbing and even more disheartening that the country's economic condition cannot absorb an optimal proportion of its labor force. This situation has contributed to the increase in crimes and other social vices experienced in our society in recent times in Juba.

Trehan (2001) provides an important explanation of the search theory of unemployment. Firms search

for the productive workers and workers search for high-paying jobs, so both agents continue searching until matches are reached at the point a worker will leave the unemployment pool. But if a worker realizes later on that her productivity is worth higher wages and firms are paying high wages on the average, then the worker's reservation wage will increase. Consequently, the unemployment rate will start rising gradually, indicating that a mismatch has occurred again.

According to Ramón (2011), graduate unemployment is an evidence of serious shortcomings in educational system and labor market in developing economy, which explains the country's relative high rate of youth unemployment and the imbalance between job supply and demand at the different educational levels attained, which also complicates graduates' access to the labor market and has a negative impact on their professional career.

Confirming this, three out of ten graduates of higher education cannot find work, the reason being that high education does not increase the chance of finding job; many graduates of higher education who find work are not usually gainfully employed (Ramón, 2011). They are forced to accept marginal jobs that do not use their qualification, for instance, in sales, agriculture and manual labor.

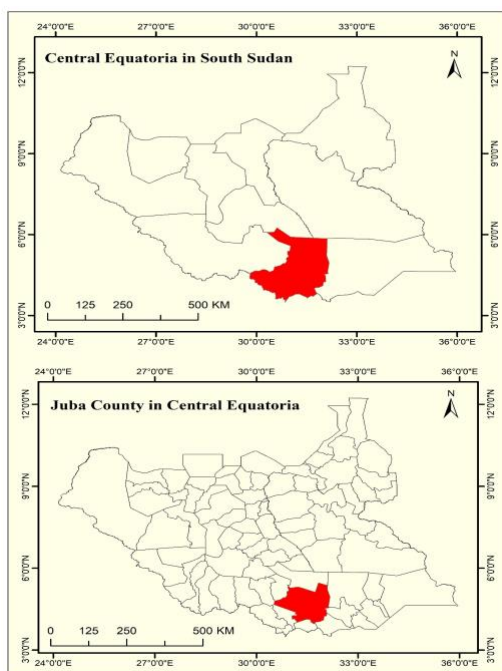
Studies show that unemployment is created due to differences in the existing wages and expectations of the labor force (Ramón, 2011). Similarly, there are discrepancy in the labor market arising from changes in the demand and supply. The unemployment situation can lead to changes in social dynamics within the society as well as political unrest. The changes create social inequality due differences in economic status. These implications can have several negative consequences including crimes, suicides, etc. This calls for having a deeper look into the social consequences of unemployment.

The overall objective of this study was to explore the unemployment situation across the different

sections of the society in South Sudan. The specific objective was to highlight the nature and extent of unemployment, its causes and implications in Juba County and suggest ways to suggest measures to reduce unemployment. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of unemployment in the economy of South Sudan. In addition, this study aimed to show the misrepresentation and misconceptions of causes of unemployment and challenges of unemployment in the economy of South Sudan.

The analysis was based on primary sources of data based on a household survey conducted in five selected payam namely Juba, Kator, Munuke, Rajaf, and Gudele belonging to Juba county in Central Equatoria State of South Sudan. The total sample size is 100 households with 20 sample households in each payam.

Figure 1: Map of research location



Map was prepared by the Researcher

Results

Unemployment situation and its causes

Through primary study sample of 100 households it is observed that there are households with unemployed members varying from one to five members. Across the sample payam, shown in Table 1, at the aggregate, in two payams, namely Juba and Kator, 10 per cent of the households each, had no members that were unemployed. 90 per cent of the households In Gudele payam had number of unemployed members varying from three to five members. In Juba payam, 75 per cent households the

numbers were four to five persons. In Kator payam, 80 per cent households the unemployed members were one to two persons. In Munuki payam it was four to five persons in 75 per cent households. But in Rajaf payam, the number of households were fairly divided across varying from two members to five members. Thus, we observe in Tables 8 and 8A, that higher number of unemployed persons, i.e. three to five persons is observed in Gudele, Juba and Munuki payam. The number of persons unemployed in the family as a proportion of total family members is shown in Graph 4, to vary from less than 25 per cent to 100 per cent. At the aggregate, 66 per cent of the households fall in the category of 76 to 100 per cent as all these persons account for school going children, adolescent boys and girls, and persons of more than 60 years of age. Thus, we infer that two-thirds of the households had three to five unemployed members in the family. At the same time two-thirds of the households accounted for families with more than 76 per cent of unemployed persons.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Sample Households by Number of Persons Unemployed in the Family

Payam	Nil	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Gudele	0	0	0	5	5	0	100
Juba	10	5	5	5	0	5	100
Kator	10	30	5	5	5	0	100
Munuki	0	5	5	5	5	0	100
Rajaf	0	0	0	5	5	0	100
Grand Total	4	10	20	9	8	9	100

The causes of unemployment as revealed by the respondents included economic recession, illiteracy, war, population explosion, high technology and globalization. At the aggregate, 45 per cent mentioned war as the main reason, followed by illiteracy in 32 per cent cases, economic recession by 12 percent households and globalisation in 11 per cent households. During the war, there is lack of priority for the development sector, both by government as well as the private sector (refer Table 2). Hence there is a slump in the employment opportunity during such times. Due to poverty, the people are unable to take up higher education and vocational courses that would improve their employability. Globalisation has also put a barricade on employment opportunities for people of South Sudan, where in local employment is also taken up by people from neighbouring countries.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Sample Households by Causes of Unemployment

Payam	Economic Recession	Illiteracy	War	Globalisation	Population Explosion	High Technology	Total
Gudule	35	15	50	0	0	0	100
Juba	20	20	10	50	0	0	100
Kator	0	75	20	5	0	0	100
Munku	5	50	45	0	0	0	100
Rajaf	0	0	10	0	0	0	100
Grand Total	12	32	45	11	0	0	100

There are also other reasons that affect the employment opportunities but in varying degrees. Hence it was attempted to understand the perception of the people on the factors that influence their employability. Firstly, the educational system is normally the platform for students to take-off into various types of career either for salaried jobs or being self-employed. In the total sample, 73 households felt that the educational system was responsible for the high level of unemployment in South Sudan, of which 29 per cent strongly agreed and 44 households agreed to it (refer Table 3). On probing about the lacuna in the education system, the respondents were of the opinion that lack of effective and quality teachers, mismatch in the curriculum with the needs of the employers were two important factors. In addition, they also felt that the pedagogy was more theoretical rather than practical and application oriented (refer Table 4). 87 households provided their opinion, of which 41 per cent were agreeable and 46 per cent were strongly agreeable.

Table 3: Educational System Responsible for High Unemployment Rate

Payam	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Grand Total
Gudule	35	20	25	20	100
Juba	45	45	10	0	100
Kator	90	5	0	5	100
Munku	45	15	25	15	100
Rajaf	5	5	85	5	100
Grand Total	44	18	29	9	100

Table 4: Graduates Unemployable Due to Lack of Practical Education

Payam	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Grand Total
Gudule	45	10	45	0	100
Juba	50	25	25	0	100
Kator	80	5	10	5	100
Munku	30	0	60	10	100
Rajaf	0	5	90	5	100
Grand Total	41	9	46	4	100

The other factors that are significant in causing unemployment include rapid mechanization, introduction of computer technology, and lack of growth of industries in South Sudan. Normally low-income countries prefer to have labour intensive technologies in order to provide employment to a greater number of people as they would be unskilled and semi-skilled workers. However, due to globalisation using foreign direct investment, certain industries use high technology that replace labour to a very high extent. Similarly, computerization also replaces manual work and thus semi-skilled workers are out of employment. The locals do not have access to training in computer technology, either due to non-availability of such vocational courses or high course fee that they cannot afford. In all, 68 per cent have opined rapid mechanization and use of computer technology as a cause for unemployment, of which 38 per cent were agreeable and 30 per cent were strongly agreeable (refer to Table 5).

Table 5: Unemployment Caused by Rapid Mechanization and Computer Technology

Payam	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Grand Total
%	15	40	30	15	100
%	75	5	20	0	100
%	35	60	5	0	100
%	50	10	15	25	100
%	15	5	80	0	100
Grand Total	38	24	30	8	100

As we are aware that one of the characteristics of less developed and developing countries is the lack of industrial growth that is displayed presently in South Sudan also. 96 per cent of the households were of the opinion that lack of industries led to high unemployment in the country, of which 36 agreed and 60 per cent strongly agreed on it (refer Table 6).

In technological dual economy there is bound to be differential rates of remuneration based on skills, qualification and experience. But in an economy with scanty employment opportunity especially among the younger generation do not prefer to join jobs which offer lower remuneration compared to what is best in the industry for a particular position and rather wait for better opportunity. The wait for such opportunities can cause redundancy of their previous experience and thus lead to unemployment situation, though by choice. 83 per cent of the sample households opined on this, of which 48 per cent agreed and 35 per cent strongly agreed on this view (refer Table 7).

The political instability in South Sudan has led to outbreak of violence, displacement of people, and loss of livelihood as it forced people out of their homes. Their backups including monetary savings and livestock have also been lost by them. So political instability has been a major cause of unemployment as government cannot carry out any developmental activity during such times. This fact is opined by 98 per cent of the sample households, 42 per cent agreed and 56 per cent strongly agreed on this point (refer Table 8).

Table 6 Unemployment Due to Lack of Industrial Growth in the Country

Payam	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Gudele	35	5	60	100
Juba	50	0	50	100
Kator	80	5	15	100
Munuki	15	5	80	100
Rajaf	0	5	95	100
Grand Total	36	4	60	100

Table 7 Youngsters' Preference to Unemployment to Low Wages

Payam	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Gudele	45	15	40	0	100
Juba	80	0	20	0	100
Kator	50	45	5	0	100
Munuki	35	5	45	15	100
Rajaf	30	5	65	0	100
Grand Total	48	14	35	3	100

Table 8 Unemployment Due to Political Instability in the Country

Payam	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Gudele	35	0	65	100
Juba	60	5	35	100
Kator	80	0	20	100
Munuki	30	5	65	100
Rajaf	5	0	95	100
Grand Total	42	2	56	100

Socio-economic impact of unemployment

The problem of Unemployment causes not only economic problems to the individual members as well as at family level, but social problems also at both the levels. The social problems include the socio-economic status, and psychological problems. In several countries it is often said that being employed is a privilege. The unemployed feel that those having employment are fortunate. The status of the employed household member increases within the family. Similarly, the family's status goes up within the society as these are components of social dynamics of the society. Among the sample households 93 per cent have positively responded to this fact. Table 9 gives the details of the opinion of the sample households. Of the total, 37 per cent and 56 per cent strongly agree to the statement.

Table 9 Unemployment Affects the Socio-Economic Status of the Family

Payam	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Grand Total
Gudele	35	15	50	100
Juba	40	5	55	100
Kator	60	0	40	100
Munuki	30	10	60	100
Rajaf	20	5	75	100
Grand Total	37	7	56	100

Recommendations

Based on the analysis made above, recommendations are made to improve the unemployment situation in the country. The government should establish industrial training institutes, polytechnics, incorporate industrial visits and summer internships for graduate students. There is a dire necessity to integrate soft skills in the

graduation curriculum. All these will help to mitigate the problem of rapid mechanization and use of computer technology in the country. The government must promote self-employment through small and micro enterprise development program to increase the employment opportunities. All production technologies must be labour intensive rather than capital intensive, with use of appropriate technology that will displace labour. Civil society organisations shall promote capacity building and personality development courses for the youth especially the fresh graduates. The government also needs to invest on capital expenditure in various centre of higher learning and research in the field of science, arts and technology.

Conclusion

The overall objective was to explore the unemployment situation across the different

sections of the society in South Sudan and to highlight the nature and extent of unemployment, its causes and implications of unemployed population in Juba County. The results of the study show that unemployment was rampant in Juba county with a minimum of three to five persons being unemployed in a family that account for over 75 per cent of total family size. The political instability and the civil war taking place in the country were major reasons for unemployment among the people. The government was unable to provide employment to people, especially the fresh graduates as they are unable to allocate money for capital expenditure as a result of this. Unemployment among the individuals caused problems in social, economic and psychological depression, suicidal tendencies and crimes of various sorts. The government must step in to recharge the economy from the recession by creating opportunities for employment, mainly self-employment.

List of References

- Atan, J. (2012). Labour Market Distortions and University Graduate Unemployment in Nigeria. *Current Research Journal of Economic Theory*, 4(3), 67-76.
- Ata, A. (2012). Graduate Turn-out and Graduate Unemployment in Nigeria, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(14), 38-46.
- Awogbenle, A. (2010). Youth Unemployment; Entrepreneurship Development Programme as an intervention mechanism, *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(6), 831-835.
- Bello, J. (2011). Graduate Unemployment and Criminality in Ado-Ekiti, *International Journal of Business Resources Management*, 5(1), 61-77.
- Brue, K. (2007). Adopting a constructivist approach to employment theory: Implications for research design. *International Journal of employment Practice*, 6(2), 98-105.
- Dabalen, D. (2000). Graduate Unemployment in Ghana Possible Case of Poor Response of University Programme to the Demand of the Job Market. *Report of the Educational Research Network for West Africa and Central Africa*, 1(4), 60-70.
- Dabalen, A., (2000). Labour Market Prospects for University Graduates in Sudan. *Higher Education Management*, 14(1), 1-36.
- Danjos, D & Ali, S. (2014). Implications of Unemployment in Gabon's Sustainable Development, *International Journal of Public Administration and Management Research*, 2(2), 56-65.
- Davidson, D. (2010). Challenges of employment in Africa: a new approach uncovers their value. *Journal of Employment Practice*, 3(2), 66-75.
- Essien, E. & Ekpo, N. (2012). Is Ghana Unemployment Problem Unsolvable? *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(6), 389-395.
- Fajana, A. (2000); Reducing Graduate Unemployment through Entrepreneurship Development. The Nigerian Experience, *African Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(4), 139-152.
- Fisher, A. (2011). People perception of unemployment in Africa and the way to combat Unemployment in Africa youth population. *Practice*, 3(2), 66-75.
- Godwin. A. and Aderonmu, O. (2015). Assessment of Entrepreneurship Education and Employment Generation among University Graduates in Kenya; *European Journal of Business and Management*, 7(23), 136-143.
- International Labor Organization (ILO, 2012). Global Employment Trends for Youth, Switzerland. Retrieved Jan 3 2014 [http://www.wilo.org/or \(msp5/groups/public/---dgreputi/dcomm/document/publication/wcms 180976 PDF](http://www.wilo.org/or (msp5/groups/public/---dgreputi/dcomm/document/publication/wcms 180976 PDF).
- John, K. (2002); Unemployment in Africa Paper Presented at African Transformation Forum organized by African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET), April, 2016, Kigali, Rwanda. *Practice*, 3(2), 66-75.
- Johnson, M. (2013); Graduate Unemployment in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship and Venture capital nexus. *Journal of Economic and Sustainable Development*, 4(9), 75-81.
- Keynes, M., E. (2006). Ameliorating the Problem of Unemployment among Graduates through Relevant Functional and Sustainable University Education in South Africa: *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 7(2), 188-196.
- Komba. J. (2007). Satisfaction, sacrifice, surprise: three small steps create one giant leap into the experience economy and improvement in the employment sector, 3(2), 66-75.

Madoui, M. (2015); Unemployment among Young Graduates in Algeria: A Sociological Reading; *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(1), 35-41.

Olufemi, S. (2011). Socio-Economic Impact of Graduate Unemployment in Tanzania and the Vision 20: 2020, *International Journal of Development and Sustainability*, 2(1), 148-176.

Ramon, I. (2008). Reducing Unemployment through the Informal Sector a case study of Nigeria. *European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Science*, 1(1), 97-106.

Shapiro, O. (2004). Youth Unemployment and its Socio-Economic Implications in Uganda. *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy*, 4(1), 49-57.

Turunen, T. (2008). Human Resources Planning in Tanzania. The National Directorate of Employment and Youth Unemployment. *The Tanzania Journal of Industrial Education and Labour Relations*, 6(2), 167-180.

William, A. (2006); Education, Poverty and Development UNESCO. International Institute for Education and Development Ghana, Possible Case of Poor Response of University programs to the Demand of job Market. *Research Paper Series*, 5(3), 6-7.

Journal of Development Administration (JDA)

ISSN: 2218 4899

Manuscripts can be submitted any time, they are open access and they are published online as soon as they are accepted.

Journal Policy

The journal publishes papers that focus on development in general including family, community, social, national and international development. The journal promotes *people centred development*, that is, people centric approaches to development, development with a human face. By putting people at the centre of development, practitioners in different fields of development are able to take people out of poverty. This from-bottom-going-up-approach to understanding poverty, planning against it and implementing reduction strategies is seen as the most important recipe for communities which still suffer the dangers brought by poverty.

Topic Areas

The Journal considers articles from a wide variety of interest areas and from a wide spectrum of disciplines. The editor works with an editorial team from across the globe derived from development sectors mainly in the social sciences. Specific areas covered include but are not limited to development management; resource mobilisation and fundraising; inclusive development; sustainable development; disability and development; gender and development; poverty; sustainable development; social services and development; human development; HIV/AIDS; child development; counselling; rural development; governance; disaster management; agriculture and livelihoods; and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

Types of Papers

The Journal contains peer reviewed articles in the form of original reports, research summaries (including dissertations), book reviews, literature review articles, think pieces, reports of work and original frameworks. Other forms of papers may be published at the discretion of the Editor.

Review process

The JDA uses a double-blind peer review process.

Submission

Submit a single Word document to asw@africasocialwork.net