

The Crisis of Youth Unemployment in the MINT Countries: Causes, Consequences and Corrections

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Abstract

One of the main determinants of classifying the MINT countries (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey), as potential economic power bloc is the young population of these countries which is considered an asset. Youth are expected to be at the forefront of social, economic and political developments. They are the engine room that propels any society to greater heights. The progress of any society is based therefore, among other elements, on each society's capacity to involve young women and men in building and designing the future. The developments experienced in the Western world from the 1960s could be attributed largely to the contribution of the baby boomers' generation born after the 2nd World War between 1946 and 1964, who right from their teenage years contributed immensely to the development in the West. Same feat is being expected from the youth of the MINT countries by the MINT proponents but there is a crisis of youth unemployment.

This paper looks at the crisis, causes, consequences and corrections of youth unemployment in the MINT countries. These youth have become a "generation at risk" because of the lack of sufficient or sustainable decent work making them extremely vulnerable. The paper will conclude that solving the problem of unemployment in the MINT countries through effective policy measures such as reprioritization of the agricultural sector, reformation of educational system and provision of enabling environment will be very critical to their emergence as economic power-bloc in the next 20 years.

Keywords: Youth, Unemployment, MINT, Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, Turkey

1. Introduction

Young people are expected to build the foundations for the economies and societies of tomorrow. They are the next generation of potentially productive economic and social actors. This growing youth demographic, in the context of the MINT countries, represents a once in a lifetime opportunity for locally led economic growth which can secure a prosperous future.

But the youth of the MINT countries face a lot of challenges which the governments, the private sector and civil society organizations should deal with if the youth would become an asset and engine of economic growth. Among many others, one of the major challenges is high unemployment. The rate of employment is strongly associated to any country's economic performance.

The problem of youth unemployment is not peculiar to the MINT countries though. It is indeed a global crisis. The International Labour Organization warned of a "generation at risk" in its 2013 edition of "Global Employment Trends for Youth" (ILO, 2013). According to the ILO report, "The fewer young people in decent and productive work, the less economic growth there is; the less economic growth there is, the fewer the opportunities to get youth into productive work".

It is a common international trend that youth unemployment is higher than unemployment for older generations, with possible reasons including low overall job creation and labour market inefficiencies.

According to the ILO report, two thirds of working age youth in some developing countries is either unemployed or trapped in low-quality jobs (ILO 2013). The ILO surveys also show that when unemployment survey counts those who are not actively looking for work, the unemployment rate is much higher than published figures suggest.

Of the world's estimated 211 million unemployed people in 2009, nearly 40% (83 million) were youth between 15 and 24 years of age. More youth are poor or underemployed than ever before. Some 309 million young people work but live in households that earn less than the equivalent of US\$2 per day. Millions of young people are trapped in temporary and involuntary part-time or casual work that offers few benefits and limited prospects for advancement at work and in life. Young women often face additional barriers. (ILO: 2010). Unemployment is therefore one of the macro-economic problems which every responsible government should monitor and regulate. Specifically, the unemployment rate is a measure of the inability of an economy to generate employment for those persons who are not employed but are available and actively seeking work.

What is the youth unemployment situation in the MINT countries and what should be done to reduce the rate of unemployment in these countries? These are the two focal assignments of this paper. The paper focuses on the MINT countries especially because of the potential of the MINT countries to become the economic power house of the World in the next 20 years based on the favourable demographics of their young

population. It is obvious that youth unemployment constitutes a great setback for the economic growth and development of the MINT countries.

As will be demonstrated in the body of this paper, unemployment among Indonesia's youth aged 15 to 24 is at an unusually high level of 21.6%. Turkey's youth unemployment rate stands at 17%. Nigeria's youth unemployment rate is well over 50% as will be shown later in this paper. Interestingly, Mexico's figure of youth unemployment rate stands at less than 10%.

The outline of the paper is as follows: Starting with a clear definition of the concept of youth unemployment and a review of some existing literatures on the subject, we proceed thereafter to the overview of the youth unemployment crisis in the MINT countries of Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Turkey, by presenting figures and tables as well as analysis on the level of youth unemployment and youth inactivity. Next comes an analysis of the causes of youth unemployment in these countries, then, the grave consequences of youth unemployment, and the policies put in place by these countries to deal with the menace. Building on this analysis, the paper concludes with recommendations on what should be done to tackle youth unemployment headlong so that the expectation of the MINT countries becoming an economic powerhouse will not become a mere ruse. This paper employed the use of descriptive analytical method in carrying out the analysis of the work. This involves theoretically examining and interpreting both primary and secondary sources on the subject.

2. Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

2.1. Youth Unemployment

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work (ILO:1982). Youth unemployment therefore refers to those between the ages of 15 and 24 who are seeking employment but cannot find work to do. The unemployed youth comprise all persons between the age of 15 and 24 who, during the reference period, were: (a) without work; i.e. had not worked for even one hour in any economic activity (paid employment, self-employment, or unpaid work for a family business or farm); (b) currently available for work; and (c) actively seeking work; i.e. had taken active steps to see work during a specified recent period (usually the past four weeks).

Youth labour force comprises all persons between the age of 15 and 24 who were either employed or unemployed over a specified reference period. Some countries extend their youth population to age 29. The youth unemployment rate is defined as the number of unemployed youth (typically 15-24 years) divided by the youth labour force (employment + unemployment). (ILO:2011).

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), in 2011, there were 540 million young people employed, while 74.6 million were unemployed around the world which represents youth unemployment rate of 12.6%. (IMJUVE: 2013).

By definition, all youths between the ages of 15 and 24 are part of the Population in Working Age (PWA). According to another study of youth unemployment in Latin America, prepared by the ILO, in 2010, PWA in Latin American was 104.2 million people, of whom about 50 million were working or actively seeking employment, that group represents the Economically Active Population (EAP). Youth participation in the labour market is therefore calculated by the ratio of Economically Active Population (EAP) divided by the PWA (Population in Working Age). (IMJUVE:2013).

But some have argued that underemployment is also partial unemployment. Underemployment among the youth occurs when employable youth could only be engaged in short-term, temporary and informal employment arrangements. One of the consequences of unemployment is poverty.

"Unemployment and poverty are so intertwined that one can easily confuse one for the other. Although, it is possible for one to be employed and still poor, this is likely to be a case of underemployment. Thus, by unemployment, it includes those underemployed. Unemployment and underemployment reflect the failure to make use of an important factor of production, labour, for fostering economic growth." (Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa (2012): 269). They employed the incidence of poverty as a function of unemployment, agricultural, manufacturing and services contributions to real GDP, population and inflation rate in which the growth rate of the variables were modeled. The results of the study revealed that unemployment, agricultural and services contributions to real GDP as well as population have positive determining influence on poverty level in Nigeria.

Several studies have also identified different types of unemployment. Frictional Unemployment is caused by industrial friction in which jobs may exist, yet the workers may be unable to fill them either because they do not possess the necessary skill, or because they are not aware of the existence of such jobs. Residual Unemployment is caused by personal factors such as old age, physical or mental disability, poor work attitude and inadequately training. Technological Unemployment is caused by changes in the techniques of production. Technological changes are taking place constantly, leading to the increased mechanization of the production process and displacement of labour (Oladele, et al 2011).

Ezie Obumneke (2012) examines the socio-economic implications of youth unemployment in Nigeria

as well as its causes and implications. The paper considers the relevant issues of frictional, structural and cyclical issues of unemployment, disguised and under-employment cases. Reflection is also made on the crucial cases of long-term unemployment, duration dependence and unemployment persistence with attention equally given to the micro foundations of unemployment incidence which sheds light on Classical and Keynesian analysis of unemployment phenomenon. Frictional unemployment is regarded as subset of structural unemployment, mainly reflecting temporary unemployment situation as a result of job search and matching difficulties in connection with quits, new entries to the labour market, and job separation because of employers' dissatisfaction with the individual workers. Structural unemployment refers to a mismatch of job vacancies with the supply of labour available, caused by shifts in the structure of the economy. Cyclical unemployment surfaces during the periods of economic depressions and disappears at the times of booms. Cyclical unemployment differs from structural and frictional unemployment because it is basically tied to short-term economic fluctuations.

Examining youth unemployment in Turkey, Attar (2013) stated that Turkey exhibits a level of youth unemployment that is relatively less serious compared to those of some countries in Europe and many in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. Turkey is however not in the position of Greece and Spain where the adverse effects of the global financial crisis on youth unemployment rates seem to be very strong. Despite that, "the youth unemployment rate (in Turkey) remains significantly higher than that of, for example, Germany and Japan. In addition, skill mismatch figures, point to a possibly darker future for youth employment in Turkey. Perhaps the most problematic issue regarding the youth in Turkey is the very high fraction of young people who are neither in employment nor in education and training. This 'NEET' ratio in Turkey for the 15-24 age group has an average of 34.3% for the 2006-2012 period" (p.3).

A World Bank 2010 report titled "Education, Training and Labour Market Outcomes for Youth in Indonesia" endeavoured to evaluate whether the education system in Indonesia is providing graduates with the skills demanded in the labour market, and the reasons for slow job creation in the non-agriculture sectors. The 48-page report stated that each year over 3.3 million youths leave the formal education system to enter the labour market in Indonesia. However, the occupational share of skilled jobs has not kept pace with the increase in education resulting in over-qualified entrants and a difficult transition into the labour market for Indonesian youth.

Similarly, an article titled "Unemployment in Indonesia" on Indonesia-investments.com (2014) stated that even though more than a decade of macroeconomic growth has succeeded in pushing Indonesia's unemployment rate into a steady downward trend, it is still a challenge for the Indonesian government to absorb millions of youth who enter the labour market each year making youth unemployment a cause for concern and action.

A paper prepared by Tatiana Petrone and Mathew Aho (2012) compared Mexico's youth unemployment situation with those of other countries in Latin America. The authors stated that while the youth unemployment rate dropped more than the adult rate in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Panama, and Uruguay in 2011, Mexico's youth unemployment actually increased while adult unemployment decreased. At the same time, in urban areas 1 in 10 Mexicans between the ages of 15 and 24 was unable to find work, compared to 1 in 25 adults. While focusing on private-sector-led initiatives that address three of the key challenges for reducing youth unemployment and underemployment in Mexico namely "narrowing the mismatch between the skills young workers possess and those labour markets demand; fostering opportunities for entrepreneurship; and designing efforts to specifically support at-risk/ disenfranchised youth, they concluded that successful efforts to reduce youth joblessness require a multifaceted approach. "Governments, for example, can promote youth employment by codifying tax incentives that reward companies for hiring young adults, by funding public works projects that employ young workers, and by reforming school curricula to more accurately reflect the skills demanded by the labour market". (P.2)

3. Incidences of Youth Unemployment in the MINT countries

3.1. Nigeria

Unemployment rate in Nigeria for the year 2011 stood at 23.9% with youth unemployment rate at over 50%. (Risenetwork:2013). For instance, most Nigerian youths who graduate from the university with multiple degrees cannot find work that pays enough to sustain a decent lifestyle. On 15 March 2014, 65,000 jobseekers turned up at the National Stadium in Abuja to take a recruitment examination organised by Nigeria's Immigration Service (NIS). The stadium only had one entry point open and there was insufficient personnel and organisation to manage the crowds. The ensuing confusion and scramble led to a deadly stampede where about 16 youths lost their lives. (Lagun Akinloye: 2014). The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said that 54% of Nigerian youths were unemployed in 2012. In the "2012 National Baseline Youth Survey Report" issued in Abuja by the NBS in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Youths Development in December 2013, "More than half, about 54 per cent of youth population were unemployed. Of this, females stood at 51.9 per cent compared to their male counterpart with 48.1 per cent were unemployed" the report said. The survey classified youth to be those

between the ages of 15 and 35. According to the survey, the population of youths aged between 15 and 35 years in Nigeria is estimated to be 64 million, while females are more than males in all age groups. (Vanguard:2013). The youth unemployment crisis is so severe in Nigeria that over 100,000 youths sometimes jostle for 25 vacancies. (Bakare: 2013).

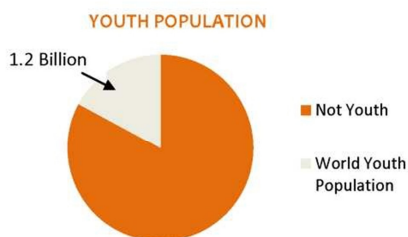
Figure 1: Global and Nigeria's Youth Unemployment Rate

Source: Risenetworks

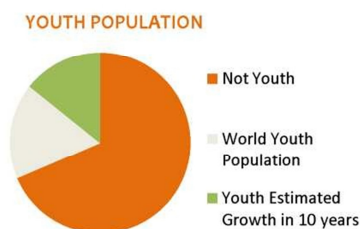
UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment occurs when a person who is actively searching for employment is unable to find work. Unemployment is often used as a measure of the health of the economy.

The number of young people in the world is at an all-time high, at around 1.2 billion.



And within the next decade a further one billion people will come of working age.



Young people are the next generation of potentially productive economic and social actors. This growing youth demographic, in the context of developing nations, represents a once in a lifetime opportunity for locally led economic growth which can secure a prosperous future for some of the world poorest people.

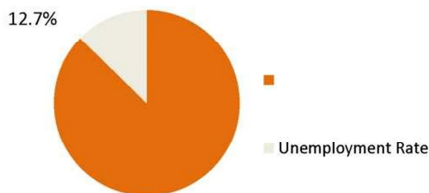
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The most frequently cited measure of unemployment is the unemployment rate. This is the number of unemployed persons

This Infographic is brought to you by Rise Networks, RISE Networks is Nigeria's Leading Social Enterprise with a deliberate strategic focus on Youth and Education Development

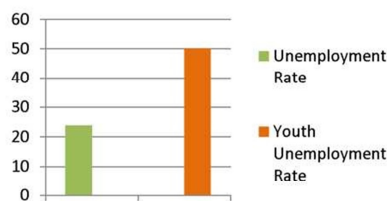
divided by the number of people in the labor force.

GLOBAL YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



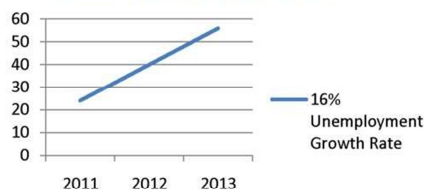
Global youth unemployment rate is projected at 12.7 per cent in 2012.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN NIGERIA



Nigeria's unemployment rate for the year 2011 was at 23.9 percent with youth unemployment rate at over 50 percent

16% UNEMPLOYMENT GROWTH RATE



With 16 percent unemployment growth rate, what is the way forward for Nigerian youth?



From the above chart, Nigeria's unemployment rate in 2011 was 23.9%, while youth unemployment was put at over 50%. This explains the alarming increase in poverty rate which stood at 69% in 2010 as shown in the figure below.

Figure 2: Poverty Rate in Nigeria

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, HNLSS (2010).
 Adapted from Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa (2012).

Relative Poverty Headcount, 1980-2010	Poverty Incidence (%)	Estimated Population (million)	Population in Poverty (million)
Year			
1980	27.2	65	17.1
1985	46.3	75	34.7
1992	42.7	91.5	39.2
1996	65.6	102.3	67.1
2004	54.4	126.3	68.7
2010	69.0	163	112.5

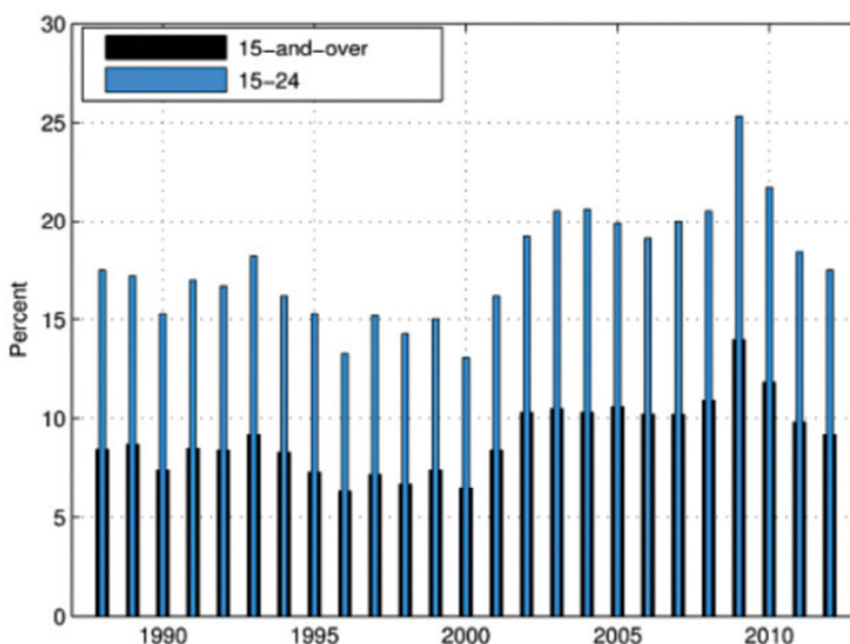
3.2. Turkey

Turkish youth unemployment rate as of April 2014 is 16.20%. This is lower than the long term average of 17.90%. (Ycharts: 2014).

Youth unemployment rate in Turkey decreased to 16% in December of 2013 from 17.40% in November of 2013. Between 2005 and 2013, youth Unemployment rate in Turkey averaged 17.90% reaching an all-time high of 24.30% in April 2009 and a record low of 14.80% in November of 2011.

Figure 3: Youth Overall Unemployment Rates In Turkey, 1988-2012

Source: Turkstat



The above figure compares the unemployment rates for 15-24 and 15-and-over populations for the period of 1988-2012. It is clear that the rate of youth unemployment is much higher than that of the entire labour force. Turkey, just like the other three MINT countries, has a problem with youth unemployment. After the peak of 2009 however, youth unemployment rates exhibit continuous decline from 2010 to the present.

On the average 914,500 young individuals looking for a job were unemployed each year between 1988 and 2012. The average number of the unemployed for more than 6 months from 1988 to 2012 was around 500,000 individuals. “Considering the consequences of youth unemployment—especially the psychosocial ones such as discouragement, social exclusion, and drug use, the substantial numbers of unemployed youth indicates a serious threat to the functioning of the Turkish economy and wider society”. (Attar: 2013, p.2).

A major characteristic of youth unemployment in Turkey is skills mismatch as a result of over-education and under-education. “Finally, another intriguing picture of the skills mismatch in Turkey is from the 2012 statistics of the Turkish Public Employment Agency (ISKUR). Of those registered to ISKUR who found a job that requires no qualification at all in 2012, 9,035 held a bachelor’s degree, 192 held a master’s degree, and 14 held a doctoral degree. In occupations that require some skills but should still be classified as low-skilled or

unskilled jobs, the situation only gets worse: 29 with doctoral degrees are employed as general office staff, 10 of those with a master’s degree are waiters, and 2 who hold doctoral degrees work as fork-lift operators. Note that these 2012 figures are from a country where the employment in the entire R&D sector, including academia, steadily grew with a growth factor of 4.51 between 1990 and 2011”. (Attar: 2013, p.2)

Even though Turkey’s youth unemployment rate is on the decline, there is also a problem of those who are “neither in employment nor in education and training” (NEET). The ‘NEET’ ratio in Turkey for the 15-24 age group has an average of 34.3% for the 2006-2012 period. (Attar: 2013).

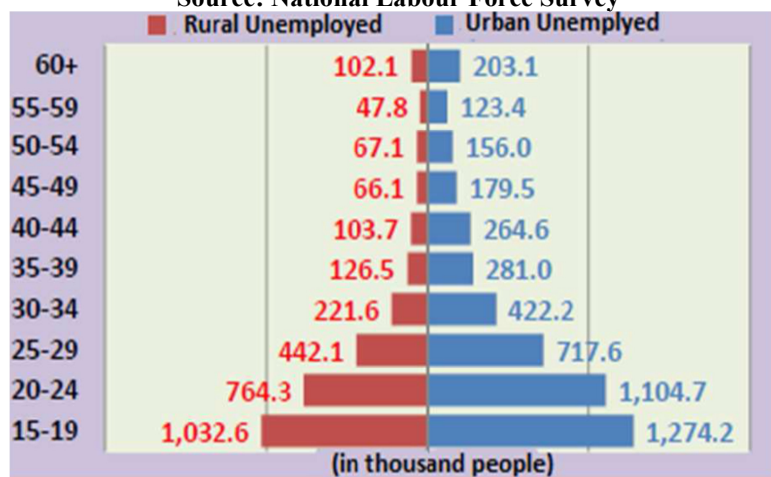
3.3. Indonesia

The unemployment rate of youth in the 20 to 24 age group is about two and a half times that of the overall population. (World Bank: 2010).

Youth unemployment in Indonesia is an urban phenomenon which mainly affects educated workers. Rural areas, with fewer educated workers and greater availability of unskilled jobs have lower unemployment rates; reflecting the dichotomy in the types of jobs in urban and rural areas in the country. The World Bank report cited above further stated that there is high and relatively persistent unemployment rate for more educated youth, especially senior secondary school graduates. Over 40% of 15-24 year olds who have completed senior secondary school in the labour market are unemployed, and although the rate decreases for older age groups, it does not converge to the country average until the 35-39 year age group. While unskilled jobs like manual labour, agricultural labourers, transportation and unskilled production workers, are easier to come by, skilled jobs defined as those usually requiring a senior secondary education or higher qualification, like managerial, professional, skilled production, office/admin and sales positions are harder to get.

Official government report confirmed that in spite of progress already made, youth unemployment (15-24 years) remains above the regional average. (Hasoloan: 2013).

Figure 4: Rural and Urban Unemployment
 Source: National Labour Force Survey



In urban settings, the number of unemployment is higher in all ages, while overall, young people form 71.3% of unemployed people.

Other characteristics of youth unemployment in Indonesia includes; youth male labour force is slightly higher than youth female labour force, there is limited access to employment opportunities due to lack of skills, training, and experience, and most youths work as unpaid family workers and self-employed workers. Besides, most youth have occupation as industrial and agriculture workers. While 60% of the youth attained junior and senior high school levels, only 9.14% graduated from diploma awarding institutions and universities. (Hasoloan: 2013). The proportion of youths working in informal sector is higher than those that work in formal sector, according to the National Labour Force Survey.

Figure 5: Youth Unemployment Rate in Indonesia 2006-2011
Source: World Bank

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Male youth unemployment (percentage of male labour force 15-24 years of age)	27.7	23.8	21.8	21.6	21.1	19.3
Female youth unemployment (percentage of female labor force 15-24 years of age)	34.3	27.3	25.5	23.0	22.0	21.0

Even though, more than a decade of macroeconomic growth has succeeded in pushing Indonesia's unemployment rate into a steady downward trend as shown above, youth unemployment rate is still close to 20%, with the female youth unemployment percentage higher than that of the male youth. It is a big challenge for the Indonesian government to stimulate enough job creation to absorb the group of annual newcomers to the labour force put at around three million Indonesians. Hence, youth unemployment has become a major cause for concern. Indonesia's case is more pronounced because about half of Indonesia's 240 million population is below the age of 30 years.

Fresh graduates from universities, vocational schools and secondary schools have difficulties finding a job. Almost half of Indonesia's total numbers of workers possess a primary school certificate only. The higher the education degree, the lower its share towards Indonesia's workforce. In recent years, however, there is a changing trend with the rise in the share of higher education degree holders while the share of those with only primary school certificate is decreasing. (Hasoloan:2013)

3.4. Mexico

Unlike the other MINT countries, youth unemployment in Mexico is below 10%. World Bank's 2010 figure for youth unemployment in Mexico stood at at 9.5%. (Trading Economic: 2012). The contradiction however is that Poverty headcount ratio (% of population) stood at 52.3% according to 2012 World Bank figure. It is possible therefore that the unemployment rate may have excluded the vast number of youth neither in employment nor seeking employment.

Mexico was affected by the 2008 crisis, especially on unemployment rates. Mexican youth unemployment rates according National Survey of Occupation and Employment (ENOE) during the years preceding the 2008 crisis were stable around 7% on average. However, from 2008 to 2009 the rate increased by 3.3% on average with the youth being the greatest victim. (IMJUVE: 2013).

According to the ENOE, there were 1.4 million young people actively searching for a job in 2012 which represents an unemployment rate of 8.5%.

The ENOE report showed that youth unemployment rate has decreased in Mexico but people between ages 14 to 29 still represent the majority of the unemployed population in the country.

4. Causes of Youth Unemployment

4.1. Rural urban migration: Rural urban migration in search of greener pasture in the cities, due to lack of infrastructural and social amenities in the rural areas end up creating high youth unemployment in the cities.

4.2. Rapid population growth rate: Rapid population growth rate leads to rapid increase in the labour force greater than the absorptive capacity of the economy.

4.3. Inadequate educational curricula: Inadequate educational curricula arising from the course contents of most tertiary institutions in the MINT countries lacking entrepreneurial contents that would have enabled graduates to become job creators rather than job seekers. In July 29, 2014 for instance, it was reported that about 150,000 Nigerian students applied to be admitted to the University of Ilorin which only has the capacity to admit 9,000 students. The Nigerian economy is too weak to absorb this large number of graduates. The problem is further exacerbated especially in Nigeria by negative attitude towards technical and vocational education with almost every youth wanting to pursue university education as a status symbol. This has created the problem of skills mismatch in many of these countries as a result of overqualification for available jobs.

4.4. Lack of stable power supply: In all the MINT countries except Turkey, there is a worrisome situation of very low capacity utilisation in industries and factories that would have absorbed the army of school graduates in these countries due to lack of stable power supply. For instance, Mexico is ranked 133rd, Indonesia 121st, Nigeria 185th and Turkey 49th in the world ranking on availability of electricity for business. (IFC/World Bank 2014).

4.5. The Neglect of the Agricultural Sector: In the wake of oil discovery in Nigeria, Indonesia and Mexico, the attention of the economy was gradually drawn away form the Agricultural sector which could have been a major employer of labour in these countries.

4.6. Unstable Political/Security Environment: All the MINT countries have suffered at varying degrees from unstable political and security situations characterized by military coups, inter-tribal and religious warfare, drug trafficking, border disputes and complete breakdown of law and order. These insecurities have affected economic activities one way or the other. (Durotoye: 2014).

4.7. Institutional Factors: Institutional factors affect the demand for new employees, like the minimum wage, cost of hiring/firing and other factors leading to insider/outsider segmentation. Other issues related to the supply of workers may also limit their employability. For example, insufficient or inappropriate skills may also result in a low level of productivity until work experience has been acquired or workers have been retrained, both of which add to the costs of hiring young inexperienced workers.

4.8. Lack of Information: A lack of mechanisms to access information about the labour market, returns and types of work available may be another reason for difficulties in transition to work for young graduates. In the absence of efficient mechanisms to gain access to this information, this may lead to inequality in labour market outcomes even if all graduates meet the skill requirements of existing jobs.

4.9. Lack of job Interview skills: Many young people don't know how to make curriculum vitae, how to behave in a job interview, how to answer interview questions, and sometimes even how to dress. They have no idea how to play up their strengths than their weaknesses to potential employers.

5. Consequences of Youth Unemployment

5.1. Criminal Activity: The consequences of a high rate of youth unemployment cannot be overemphasized. Youth unemployment has direct correlation with incidences of criminal activity and drug use. In Nigeria, insurgency of Boko Haram, Niger Delta militants, and kidnapping have been directly attributed to youth unemployment. Prostitution, armed robbery, and rape are social vices traceable to youth unemployment. Unemployed young adults in Mexico are tools for recruitment by drug trafficking organizations and gangs.

5.2. Gross Inequality of income: Unemployment has created a situation whereby wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, a situation where the total income earned by the richest 20 percent of the population is over 50% while the total income earned by the poorest 20% is about 4.5%. (Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa: 2012).

5.3. Low Level of Psychological Wellbeing: Unemployment is associated with lower levels of psychological well-being (Machin & Manning, 1998). Unemployment dehumanizes the unemployed and causes partial or total loss of esteem among peers. The unemployed feels inferior before his peer group and sees life as totally demeaning. Those unemployed youth perceive themselves as second-class citizens for being unable to contribute to the society leading to depression, low self-esteem, frustration and a number of other negative consequences. (Ipaye: 1998).

5.4. Poverty: Unemployment and Poverty are intertwined. One of the core causes of poverty is high level of unemployment.

5.5. Economic Decline: The adverse effect of high unemployment on the domestic economy cannot be underestimated. Unemployment is the cause and result of capacity underutilisation which impacts negatively on economic growth. Besides, unemployed people lack the purchasing power that would have helped to bring about economic growth.

5.6. Marital Instability: 2012 National Baseline Youth Survey Report'' issued in Abuja, Nigeria by the NBS stated that "the rate of divorce and widowhood was high among the female youths with 70.9 and 71.8 per cent. (Vanguard: 2013).

5.7. Adult children: Youth unemployment brings about the phenomenon of adult children who despite their relatively advanced age still live with and depend on their parents due to lack of job and financial capacity. They have remained the children they were when they were adolescents in the High School. They have reached marriageable age but could not afford to marry or be married. The implication for this scenario in the future is that we are going to have men and women in their 60s who will still be raising babies.

5.8. Threat to Democracy: The large number of youths who are unemployed is capable of undermining democratic practice as they constitute a serious threat if engaged by the political class for clandestine activities such as political assassination, thugry and the like.

5.9. Emigration and Brain Drain: Ambitious young people facing bleak prospects at home often seek opportunities elsewhere sometimes risking their lives. Many have died in the process of escaping to the developed countries.

6. Corrective Measures by the MINT Countries to Stem Youth Unemployment

6.1. Nigeria:

- **Investment in Technical and Vocational Education:** The Nigerian government has introduced policies focusing on multiple strategies including substantial investment in technical and vocational education as well as improving the business environment. The Federal Government is closely working with State Governments in addressing the security challenges, building and strengthening Institutions,

as well as blocking leakages and loopholes for greater transparency in the conduct of Government businesses as part of efforts to create an enabling environment.

- **Agricultural Transformation Agenda:** A Growth Enhancement Scheme (GES) of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda has been created and has facilitated the provision of subsidised inputs to farmers via the e-Wallet programme to boost agriculture. (National Planning Commission: 2014a).
- **Creation of Youth Development Centres:** Youth Development Centers are being constructed by the Nigerian Government across the country. A pet project that will massively equip the youth with useful trade and entrepreneurial skills in Automobile, Agricultural production and processing, integrated science clinic, computer and information technology among others.
- **Informal Sector:** The federal government is working to improve the operation of the informal sector by releasing incentives and strategies for credit delivery by financial institutions to the sector. The government is conducting a three-phase study of the informal sector to be able to fashion out policies that will assist the sector's contribution to the economy. The study on Informal Sector and Economic Development in Nigeria is important because empirical understanding of the Nigerian informal sector including its size, structures, processes and practices is critical for economic planning, including employment creation and poverty alleviation.
- **Seefor Project to Create 25000 Jobs In Niger Delta:** It is a project conceived by the National Planning Commission, in collaboration with the World Bank and the European Union (EU), as part of the international Donor Agencies' contribution to the Amnesty Programme of the Federal Government. The objective of the project is to ensure improvement in standard of living of citizens and also enhance financial management process in the Niger Delta region. It is also expected to pave way for a significant reduction in unemployment rates in the SEEFOR participating States of the Niger Delta region and sustained improvement in financial prudence. The project has three main components namely; Youth Employment and Access to Socio-economic Services, Public Financial Management (PFM) Reforms, and Project Coordination and Implementation Support at the Federal and sub-national levels.

The Project became effective in July 2013 and several activities and programmes have been implemented both at the National and sub national levels in addressing the twin issues of governance and employment generation in the respective States.

The Project was designed to be executed for a period of 5 years, and will be financed by credit of USD200 million from the World Bank and additional financial support of about Euro 80 million from European Union (EU).

The program is expected to translate to more jobs for the youths, more financial prudence, greater courses in our Technical and Vocational Colleges, as well as more education to our citizenry. (National Planning Commission:2014b).

6.2. Turkey

- **UN Joint Program:** The UN Joint Program aims at reducing youth unemployment and increasing the participation of young women in the labour force. (UNDP:2013). The target of the UN Joint Programme is to increase the percentage in placements of young unemployed people into decent jobs. The Joint Program "Growth with Decent Work for All: A Youth Employment Program in Antalya aims to create a "National Youth Employment Action Plan" and to reduce unemployment among young population; especially vulnerable members of migrant families and increase the participation of young women in the labour force in the province of Antalya. In this Joint Program, four UN agencies (FAO, ILO, IOM and UNDP) bring their respective capacities and experience in close coordination with ISKUR (National Employment Agency) to address the national priority of increasing employment as laid out in Ninth Development Plan.

Growth with Decent Work for All: A Youth Employment Program in Antalya will have impacts at both national and local level.

At the national level, the Joint Programme will improve the capacities of ISKUR and the Provincial Employment and Vocational Training Boards, developing a National Youth Employment Action Plan, adaptation and the implementation of this action plan by the relevant institutions.

At the local level, the Joint Programme will support the dynamics of labour supply and demand and ensure effective delivery of employment services, by providing better coordination between the needs of the labour market and the quality of the labour supply in Antalya. In addition, the Joint Programme will secure the implementation of employment, youth and migration management measures effectively for the benefit of youth in the labour market.

6.3. Indonesia

- **National Action Plan:** In Indonesia, top priorities have been set up for national action plans focusing on employability, entrepreneurship, employment creation, and equal opportunities. (Hasoloan:2013).

These programs are principally aimed to employ and utilize youth optimally and humanly; accomplish an even

distribution of youth employment creation, provide labour protection for youth, and increase the welfare of youth workers.

The main focus of the policies are as follows:

- Preparing young people for work by overcoming the problem of youth labour surplus, unemployment, and underemployment through macro, regional, sector, and special policies, expanding employment creation: labor-intensive or self-employed programs, small and medium enterprises, and cooperatives.
- Development of labour quality and productivity policy: developing work competency of youth in order to increase capability and productivity.
- Labor protection policy : creating a peaceful and harmonious industrial relation between

employers and youth employees and better working conditions, welfares, and social security systems for the youth employee.

To achieve the above objectives, the Ministry of Manpower And Transmigration has come up with policies and strategies to combat youth unemployment as follows;

•**IYEN (Indonesian Youth Employment Network)**: The four pillars of IYEN policy recommendation to reduce youth unemployment include the following;

a) **Youth Training**

- Develop individual, social and professional competency;
- Strengthening regulation in training and productivity through policy and regulation adjustment in national and province/regency/municipality levels in the effort to improve manpower quality and productivity;
- Strengthening infrastructure training and productivity through institutional performance development;
- Strengthening training and productivity systems and methods through standard, norm, guideline, criteria, and procedure development to improve efficiency and quality of training and productivity
- Revitalized vocational training and productivity institution through facility and infrastructure, quality, of instructor, program, and institutional management for promoting function and performance of training productivity institution.

b) **Youth Apprenticeship:**

- Domestic Apprenticeship increasing cooperation with the business/private sectors in promoting quality of apprenticeship , based on industry need by revising selection mechanisms in company, and getting certification of competence.
- Overseas apprenticeship working with Japan since 1993 to have a recorded 45.826 people posted in a number of Japan companies in industry, automotive, electric textile, manufacture, machine and building sectors.

c) **Youth Empowerment And Entrepreneurship Strategies:**

- Capacity building for youth including vulnerable groups, through: Business Management Training (business planning, finance administration, marketing, taxing, life skill, etc.); Technical skilled training; Mentoring assistance/Labor intensive program

d) **Accessing Information Services For Job Vacancies:**

- Procuring equipment for the online job exchange
- Integrating domestic and overseas labor market information systems
- Developing employment services room
- Creating national and provincial job fairs targeting young job seekers including young disabled people
- Cooperating with JICA for Employment Placement Services (EPS) establishment
- The Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration and Ministry of Education and Cultural support career guidance teachers and counselors in secondary schools.

6.4. *Mexico*: Some of the Policies that have aided the decline of youth unemployment in Mexico were implemented by the Mexican Secretariat of Labour (STPS), The Secretariat of Education (SEP) and the Mexican Institute of Youth (IMJUVE).

The STPS' programs focused on the need to make it easy for the youth to find a job by helping them to improve their skills through different training programmes.

The Secretariat of Education (SEP) through their Training Centers for Industrial work (CECATI) offered a catalog of 246 courses in 55 specialties encompassing 26 economic areas, with various forms of educational quality and relevance. The youth were being trained for the work that suits their individual needs and business requirement.

The Mexican Institute of Youth (IMJUVE) has five programs that seek primarily to facilitate and prepare the youth for school-work transition. These are; (1) Job Opportunities for Youth: It promotes the employability of young people through a system of participation, where you can find a large labour supply and training courses for work. During the years 2009 to 2011, 133,756 young people benefited from the program.

(2) Social Service and Trainees: Aimed at people between the ages of 16 and 29, this program offers the opportunity to apply lessons learned in addition to gaining experience by integrating the projects developed at IMJUVE. During 2012 there were 200 students working and participating in this program, (3) Training Grants Program for Work: It offers young people who are unemployed, alternative Job Training to enable them to expand and update the knowledge available to them and thus get more job opportunities. During the years 2009 to 2011, 6,157 young people benefited from the program, (4) Joven-es Servicio: This program is aimed at fostering the participation of youth and students from various Institutions of Higher Education and Upper Technical schools across the country to apply their professional knowledge to practical job situation. 3,500 students benefited during the 2011-2012 period. (5) Employment Integration Program for Youth with Disabilities: This program supported youth with disabilities seeking to improve their quality of life by inserting them into a decent job. 805 youth benefited between 2009 and 2011.

The Secretariat of Agrarian Reform also created the Young Rural Entrepreneur Program and Program for Women in the Agricultural Sector to encourage young people create rural agribusinesses.(IMJUVE: 2013).

6.5. *International Labour Organisation:*

The ILO (2013) provides five policy recommendations regarding alleviating youth unemployment. The ILO (2013) suggests the following:

1. Stimulate demand and create jobs for youth through pro-employment macroeconomic policies.
2. Invest in education and training to enhance employability and facilitate the school-to-work transition.
3. Improve labour market integration of young people through targeted labour market policies.
4. Provide career opportunity to young people by supporting entrepreneurship and self-employment.
5. Ensure that young people receive equal treatment and are afforded rights at work.

7. **Recommendations and Conclusion**

GDP growths in the MINT countries have not translated into more jobs and several structural problems most especially youth unemployment and youth inactivity, persist with very grave consequences including but not limited to high incidence of crime, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, armed robbery, insurgency, political violence, as well as a high percentage of young people remaining inactive and dependent on their families until a very late age.

Poorly-skilled individuals are replete in all sectors of the nations' economy. To address this, acquisition of vocational skills has been identified as a tool for moulding employable individuals as unemployed individuals need more skills than they already have to find new jobs. Graduates of various institutions should be encouraged to acquire vocational skills that can prepare them for self-employment and financial independence.

On skill acquisition trainings for graduates, all universities, colleges of education and polytechnics should introduce skills acquisition and entrepreneurship training for all students, including graduates undergoing the mandatory one-year national service as is the case in Nigeria. Afe Babalola University and Landmark University in Nigeria are taking the lead by introducing agriculture and entrepreneurship training in their curricula.

All states and provinces as the case may be should establish skill acquisition training centres across the states where youths and adults are trained in various vocations of their choice, after which they are provided with needed capital to start off on their own. Each state Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives should train willing youths on various agricultural skills.

Agricultural revolution should be introduced. This will provide the much-needed employment for youth in addition to opening up more opportunities for growth in each nation's economy. The agricultural sector remains one area in the MINT countries through which youth unemployment could be addressed. Governments of the MINT countries should invest massively in Agriculture and make agri-business attractive to the younger generation through establishment of modern farm settlements with electricity and other modern agricultural facilities. A country like Israel has turned around its agricultural sector and its youths are finding employment in the sector.

Equally, foreign investors should be mandated to give adequate and necessary training to their local employees to suit the needs of their duties. This is important because most foreign companies refuse to train their workers for fear of losing them to rival organisations. (Bakare: 2013).

Other recommendations include the introduction of youth Employment Fund as a new youth employment strategy that will help youth get work experience, start a business or build job skills. "For Youth between 15 and 29 who are unemployed, and not in school full-time, a youth employment officer in each local government should be designated to help these youth connect with employers and get a job placement of four to six months. Government should provide incentives to employers to help cover the cost of wages and training for

new hires and help youth cover costs like transportation or tools required for the job. These Job placements will provide more opportunities for youth to build skills and confidence, get valuable work experience and connect with employers” (Durotoye:2014).

The tourism sector should be enhanced to generate employment. Each of the MINT countries has the potential to generate employment for its youth because of its tourism potentials.

Monetary policies should include provision of soft loans to intending youth entrepreneurs to start small scale businesses. Government should also provide enabling environment and adequate electricity for the manufacturing sector to thrive and provide employment.

Basic financial training should be introduced in all elementary schools in the MINT countries to train kids on the habit of saving for the future. This habit will help to provide the much needed capital for small business take-off.

Youth unemployment is a major problem but the MINT countries are all working hard to combat it.

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