

An Overview of Challenges of Unemployment in South Sudan, Theoretical and Empirical Review

Dr. Akashraj. D. P¹, Kom Kom Geng Atem²

¹Associate Professor, Department of Economics, University of Juba, South Sudan.

²MSc Student, Department of Economics, University of Juba, South Sudan.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Akashraj. D. P

ABSTRACT

The problem of unemployment in South Sudan is a national issue that should be handled with care. The rate of unemployment in South Sudan since 2011 has been growing in a geometric progression. Its source could be traced to the diversification of South Sudan economy into oil sector, agriculture, construction etc. that provides less employment opportunity to its labor force. The main aim of this article is to illustrate the major challenges of unemployed people in South Sudan and around the world in general, through various studies conducted in the country and around the globe. The performance and problems of government functioning varies regionally based on the implication of system by state governments and the central, hence this article would give a holistic picture of major problems in creating employment opportunity in the country. The assessment of previous studies represents, corruption, less efficiency in the day to day functioning of the public, private and bi-lateral bodies in formulating and implementing policies to regulate in reducing unemployment in the country.

Key words: *Unemployment, Classical Theory, Demand Theory, Innovations Theory*

INTRODUCTION

As noted by Bello (2003), from time immemorial, the subject of unemployment has always been an issue of great concern to the economists, policy makers and economic managers alike given the devastating effect of this phenomenon on individuals, the society and the economy at large. The classical school of thought that

provided the earliest thinking on economic issues did not fail to give a central point of reflection on the undesirability of unemployment. The Keynesian revolution of the 1930's, which commandeered the explosive attack on economic orthodoxy apparently, treated unemployment as a central issue of great concern. Following the path of the predecessors, economists at all times and in all ages have expressed various degrees of concern over the threat of the monster called unemployment.

Thus, the population of every economy is divided into two categories, the economically active and the economically inactive. The economically active population (labor force) or working population refers to the population that is willing and able to work, including those actively engaged in the production of goods and services (employed) and those who are unemployed. Whereas unemployed refers to people who are willing and capable to work but are unable to find suitable paid employment. The next category to the economically inactive population refers to people who are neither working nor looking for jobs. There seems to be a consensus on the definition of unemployment.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) defined unemployment as the people who are out of work, want a job, have actively sought for work in the previous four weeks and are available to start work within the next fortnight; or out of work and have accepted a job that they are waiting to start in the next fortnight

(ILO, 2005). The unemployment definition can differ from one country to another according to how it is measured and implemented. Unemployment can also be described according to region, sex, educational level, age, and economic conditions.

Here our focus is on the classification of unemployment according to educational level (graduate unemployment).

However, graduate unemployment is unemployment among people with academic degrees. It is a situation where tertiary institution graduates do not get jobs after going through the academic ladder successfully. One of the major causes of this is the mismatch between the aspirations of graduates and employment opportunities available to them.

According to Juan 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. They are forced to accept marginal jobs that do not use their qualification, for instance, in sales, agriculture and manual labor. Therefore, graduate unemployment requires coordinated action between education and the labor market.

I. Theoretical Literature

1. Theories of Unemployment

Scholars have propounded various theories relating to employment, underemployment and unemployment. These include those of the Classical theory of unemployment, Innovations theory of

unemployment and Effective Demand theory of unemployment.

a. Classical Theory of Unemployment

In line with Hayek theory of unemployment, 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.

Hayek contends that unemployment is due "to a discrepancy between the distribution of labor and industries, and the distribution of demand among their producers. This discrepancy is caused by a distortion of the system of relative prices and wages." In other words, the unemployment is caused by "a deviation from the equilibrium prices and wages which would establish them with a free market and stable money." This is actually a mismatch between demand and supply of labor, which is usually caused by expansionary monetary and fiscal policies and powerful trade unions. These policies create economic dislocation and structural changes in an economy which misdirect labor and other economic resources to other alternatives. Unions are also able to set higher wages compared to market wages, which generate unemployment, particularly in industries that become less profitable. In short, for Hayek the unemployment problem is caused by resources being in the wrong places at the wrong time and can be corrected if wages and prices are determined by the equilibrium of supply and demand. (Nishhiyama and Leube 1984)

The classical theory, as analyzed by Pigou (1933) and Solow (1981), argues that the labor market consists of demand and supply of labor. Demand for labor is a

derived demand, obtained from the declining portion of the marginal product of labor. The demand curve is a negative function of real wage in that if wages increase, the quantity demand for labor will decline and the opposite is correct. The supply of labor is derived from worker's choice whether to spend part of their time working or not working (leisure). Supply of hours worked is a positive function of the real wage, because if the real wage rises, workers supply more hours of work. In equilibrium, demand and supply of labor are intersected at a clearing point that determines the equilibrium real wage rate and full employment.

Essentially, for Wick sell the cyclical unemployment was due to the wrong investment of capital. Capital was invested in areas where rates of return were low. He concluded that public works is the best measure to fight cyclical unemployment. After World War I, Wicksell thinks that the boom and the rise in prices induced by the war would come to an end. Thus, unemployment would rise. Workers would have to accept lower wages. He also thought that government should provide financial support to the unemployed who could not find jobs. After 1921, Wicksell turns to Malthus. He thought that the causes of the unemployment are the surplus people, shortage of capital brought about by the war, and the disorganized state of the monetary system. For the third cause, after the war prices were falling and producers decided to produce lower amounts of production because they knew they would receive lower prices for their products. Thus, they let their money lie idle in banks and workers became unemployed. These causes suggest that emigration became one of the important policies for solving the unemployment problem.

Wage reduction is not a competent policy to increase employment. The increase in wages is most likely due to increased labor productivity and wage reduction will reduce work intensity and productivity. Wage reduction will not force some capital

intensive firms to switch to labor intensive techniques in the short run. Higher wages should stimulate the substitution effect by employing more machines for labor. And this substitution will increase labor productivity and employment in the long-run.

b. Innovations Theory of Unemployment

Originally, this theory was developed by the German economist Von Mangoldt in 1855 in a book of entrepreneurial profits which connected profits to risk but this theory was refined in 2007 by Ekelund and Hebert. They provided several ways by which the entrepreneur can make profits. These ways are (1) finding particular markets, (2) acquisition of productive agents, (3) skillful combination of factors of production, (4) successful sales policy, and (5) innovations. It is a well understood proposition that entrepreneurial profits will increase employment (Mohammed 2010).

According to Schumpeter (2004: 64), economic development generates changes in the socio-economic environment, including the existing equilibrium. As he puts it, "Development is spontaneous and discontinuous change in the channels of the flow, disturbance of equilibrium, which forever alters and displaces the equilibrium state previously existing." The essential driving force for generating development is innovations introduced by the entrepreneurs whose leadership becomes the triggering device for the discontinuous dynamic changes. Innovations start by "the producer [not consumer] who as a rule initiates economic change and consumers are educated by him if necessary" (Schumpeter 1934: 65).

The concept of innovation which creates changes according to Schumpeter (1934: 66) covers the following five areas of development:

- "(1) the introduction of new good...or of a new quality of a good.
- (2) The introduction of a new method of production,

(3) The opening of a new market,
(4) The conquest of a new source of supply of raw materials, or manufactured goods,
(5) The carrying out of the new organization of any industry, like the creation of a monopoly position or the breaking up of a monopoly position.” The new combinations are usually embodied in new productive enterprises which start by utilizing the unemployed working people, the unsold raw materials, the new technologies, and the unused productive capacity.

Schumpeter (1934) does not provide explicitly a theory of unemployment but his theory of the business cycle does demonstrate clearly how unemployment can be reduced. Innovation (Vecchi 1995) which creates more jobs relative to job destruction is the basic force beyond the increases in employment and the decreases in unemployment. When entrepreneurs innovate something new such as the production of a new product, the finding of a new market, the finding of a new method of production, and the introduction of new technologies and a new organization they increase investments to materialize those innovations. Domestic investment expenditures will increase demand on economic resources and will increase their prices. Other entrepreneurs will imitate the leaders by adopting the new innovations. Labor and materials will be employed to produce the new items. Consequently, wages will be increasing and unemployment will be declining, assuming that employment creation will outweigh employment destruction due to the new innovations (see also Mortensen (2000).

c. Effective Demand Theory of Unemployment

The level of aggregate demand will provide the necessary increases in total revenues. On the other side, the cost of production has to decline. If revenue rises and cost declines, then the reasonable level of profits can be found. There are various forces in Veblen’s work that reduce the cost of production. Technology increases production and reduce the cost of inputs

used in the production process, and enterprises cut wages and increase productivity in order to cut cost per unit of output. Better technology can reduce the prices of capital goods, and government can cut taxes. Banks can reduce the interest rates as well. Administrative and insurance cost can be declined in order to stimulate business enterprises. The decline in costs, given rising revenues, will increase the profit level according to Veblen. Consequently, higher profits will force the business enterprises to expand and employ more workers. Thus, employment will increase and the rate of unemployment will decline.

Keynes (2006) considers unemployment as an involuntary phenomenon. He thinks that employment is cyclical, generated by the deficiency of aggregate demand (Mohammed, 2010).

Capitalists hire workers and invest to produce output when the expectations about the economy and profits are favorable. If expectations about the future are supported by reality, investments and employment continue rising until equilibrium is reached. This equilibrium is attained by the intersection of the aggregate demand and supply the point of the effective demand which may be less than the full employment equilibrium. If expectations about the future of the economy are not favorable, capitalists invest less and employ less number of workers. Hence, the equilibrium is achieved where cyclical unemployment exists. This unemployment is due to the deficiency of the aggregate demand, particularly investment expenditures.

II. Empirical Literature

A number of empirical literatures on the drivers of employment and labor demand exist both in country and cross-countries.

Broersma and Butter (2012) examined the influence of labor market flows on wage formation and they applied the Johansen multivariate cointegration analysis for Netherlands. The estimation

results suggest the combination of the outflow from employment to unemployment and the outflow of vacancies as indicators of labor market tightness, qualifying for inclusion into the wages equation.

Puhani (2012) estimated the changes in the Polish wage and unemployment structures between the years 1994 and 1998 in order to identify the labor market characteristics associated with increasing and decreasing relative demand as well as relative wage rigidities. The evidence from his paper showed that the relative demand for workers with a low level of education has decreased.

Turunen (2008) presented disaggregated wage curve results by individual characteristics, occupations, industries and regions in the United States, using a panel data set of young workers.

The results suggest that instead of a strong aggregate wage curve there are a number of different wage curves over time and for different workers groups. The slope of the aggregate wage curve varies over time, with the strongest wage curves appearing in the late 1980s. Wage curves exist for most labor market groups: the wages of the least educated, those in relatively low-skill occupations or service industries are most sensitive to changes in unemployment. Wages of government workers and those in the mining industry increase with unemployment.

According to the qualitative results they suggest that although there have been some important changes in the labor markets of these three examined economies taking into account a greater degree of flexibility, there are no common characteristics among them. Indeed, this is rationale if someone takes into consideration the different starting points and policies followed in the three examined economies.

Shapiro and Stieglitz (2004) state that unemployment plays the role of a macroeconomic “discipline device” in order to induce employees to intensify their efforts in their job. They are based on the

shirking models, where the firm, differentiating from the unemployment salaries, increases the dismissal cost for the employee, thus inducing him to intensify his effort.

Hsing (2001), based on the augmented Phillips curve and the autoregressive conditional heteroscedasticity model, studied the impact of the union wage increases to non-union wages and found that the growth of non-union wages is positively associated with the expected inflation productivity growth and negatively correlated with the unemployment rate

Manolas (2000) investigated the relationship between employment, growth rate, labor productivity and wages rate in the case of Greece for the period 1970-93. This period is divided into two sub-periods 1970-1980 and 1981-1993. In the first period they indicate that the employment level is positively related to the growth rate and wages rates are negatively related to the labor productivity. The reverse result is observed in the second period, which is characterized by the restructuring of the Greek economy.

III. The extent of youth unemployment problem in South Sudan

Nadia Ilyas, (2015) also argues that, unemployment may not only affect an individual's life but it has an adverse consequence on the whole economy of the nation. Additionally, society can also become a prey to unemployment because people without any work can create many problems for the people of specific society. This can be true given the case of South Sudan. One fear is that by becoming unemployed in the future the impact is that it may lower a young person's subjective wellbeing, injure self-esteem and foster feelings of helplessness among young people.

Regarding population participation in South Sudan it is reflected that male participation in the labour force is generally higher than that of females. Some findings from the Understanding

The Africa Development Bank (2014) reported that the poor population rate as a share of South Sudan's larger population in percentages in urban area is 7.5% and in rural areas is 92.5%. Based on these percentages it can be said that the affected population by unemployment is mostly in rural areas compared to urban. Further, indicators show that the labor force participation is higher in rural areas than in urban places across almost the whole 15–64 years' age spectrum in

South Sudan. Looking at the nature and extent of youth unemployment problem in South Sudan the reasons given is that the problem is associated by the impact of existing labor-intensive agriculture in absorbing the rural work force which is not productive at all (South Sudan Statistical Yearbook, 2011).

The above argument has also been qualified by Dhillon and Yousef (2012) as they indicated through their literature on youth unemployment that, unemployment is associated with increase in the gap between education, skills and jobs. It has also been suggested that; a speedy school-to work transition for young people can also provide work experiences and help develop interpersonal skills, improving individuals' productivity and employability in later life. It can be stressed that this situation is not different from South Sudan. The nature and extent of youth unemployment problem in South Sudan requires a better understanding of the situation.

In the situation focusing in agriculture is important as it plays a critical role in South Sudan's economy; it also represents an important sector for youth. As this is particularly true in other countries of the world according to Guletal (2012) the private and social effects of unemployment include "rigorous financial suffering, poverty, debt, homelessness and housing stress, family tensions and breakdown, boredom, alienation, shame and stigma, increased social isolation, crime, erosion of confidence and self-esteem." (p.26).

As observed that, unemployment has a profound consequence for poverty reduction, equity, social stability and the self-worth of individuals (African Economic Outlook, 2012).

Children Work report revealed that even though there is a high participation of males in the rural work force it is not the case among young people (15–24-year-old) (Understanding Children Work Report, 2011). The literature gives differences between states in labor force participation and status and this can be said to be large. The results underscore the importance of state government specific approaches in dealing with this issue.

The literature review on the nature of the youth unemployment problem facing South Sudan is not a country specific issue. Evidence from most development practitioners and scholars tend to indicate that this is a global issue. As reflected by development practitioners, researchers and scholars this unemployment problem brings about the lack of inclusive growth, reduction in the absorption of young people into the labor market and lack of participation of youth in the economy, retarding economic growth and resulting in a high tendency for youth to join extremist movements, as currently noted from the number of youth joining the current conflict in South Sudan and any in the future. Such indication is attributed to weak labor markets that have remained a challenge (Understanding Children Work Report, 2011).

As of 2010; half of the South Sudan's young people are surviving on less than \$2 a day. This is slightly close to the World Bank's \$1.25/day poverty measure. The households that earn a living through wages or salaries in South Sudan are known to be only 5%. A significant share of the active population in South Sudan (12.6 %) is without jobs. Among the inactive population, about 25 % are in education, but it can be argued that the number which has a larger share is comprised of discouraged workers (31%). Some of the remaining

inactive persons are “neither in education nor interested in employment” (Understanding Children Work Report. 2011, p. 7). The statistics suggest that, females predominate in this latter group and their levels of unemployment are higher for young people and for persons from disadvantaged and poor families.

Poverty as a result of economic failure is a serious concern in South Sudan. The concern underscores the development challenges South Sudan is facing as a country. Statistically it has been indicated that almost one-half of the population (45%) has no access to improved sources of drinking water and 80% has no access to a toilet facility. The data indicate that, half of the population in South Sudan earns their living by using firewood or grass as the primary source of lighting. The National Baseline Household Survey (2009) indicated that 27% of the South Sudan population has no lighting at all on whatever form. Since there are no electricity young people who have the desire to startup businesses which energy dependent will not started those businesses, and hence they remained unemployed.

An advance argument has also been made that, most of these increase with the expanded period of unemployment. The Commission for Social Development (2007) pointed out that, for a society to advance they should consider youth employment because youth employment can promote social integration, and intergenerational cohesion. The commission also argues that “creating and fulfilling income- generating job opportunities for young people can have direct positive consequences for poverty alleviation, benefits social development and economic development” (p.2). Coupled with the above, facilitating the entry of young people with skills into the productive sectors of an economy will yield the real benefits for sustainable economy and thereby increase economic productivity. Young people are also faced in a society on how they tie to their family when they have weak economic base and income.

IV. Factors that contributes to youth unemployment

Among known factors and causes of youth unemployment are; Poor performance of a country economy, lack of privatization, lack of budgetary allocation to productive sectors, high population of youth, lack of capital, lack of adequate and quality training, low wages and income for youth, cultural factors hindering female youth participation in the employment sector, formal and informal engagement of youth, the ineffectiveness of the informal sector to progress due to poor business environment and policies to support self-employment and income generation.

These factors are highlighted by a number of authors and scholars.

a. Poor quality education

According to OECD (2015) "Giving young people the required skills and tools to find a job is not only good for their own prospects and self-esteem, it is also good for economic growth, social cohesion and widespread well-being" (p.1). It must also be highlighted that, investing in youth must be the world policy priority. As many education experts also put it, education is a way of achieving social well-being and sustainable development and good governance. Also it can be argued youth with multiple social economic disadvantages, as some example suggest, low education attainment, physical and mental handicaps and young girls with early pregnancies are most likely to comprise the bulk of young people in this high risk group of unemployment (Jacob. O, 2011).

Callaway (1971) argues that, in most countries, the rapid extension of formal education has itself been a considerable dynamic in the advancement of youth unemployment. At most times the education system at the lower levels in many countries are mostly theoretical and do not adequately prepare the youth to earn a living and offer solutions for employment. Education is supposed to substantially increase skills that would help young people gain employment and support young ones to generate

economic growth. According to Callaway, “Gradually, it became clear that large numbers of young people completing different stages of education were not finding work that represented the years spent in classrooms” (1971, p. 6). One way to make youth unemployment to become a thing of the past is to redesign education system to suit the changing situation as currently affects South Sudan.

b. Lack of experience

The United Nations “World Youth Report”, 2012 indicates that “with less experience and fewer skills than many adults, young people often encounter particular difficulty accessing work. The global youth unemployment rate, which has long exceeded that of other age groups, saw its largest annual increase on record in 2009; at its peak, 75.8 million young people were unemployed” (The Youth Unemployment Challenge and Solutions Report, 2011. p.3)

As outlined by the Youth Unemployment Challenge and Solutions (2011) youth unemployment has been impacted by factors such as lack of experience and credentials. Many employers are skeptical about young people’s ability to apply the skills they learn in schools to the practical challenges of the workplace. As the report suggests employers also question the social skills and work ethic of youth. Employers see these deficits as a significant barrier to the productivity of inexperienced young people, and at the same time employers are reluctant to invest resources in training young people when more experienced adult workers may be unemployed and available for hire.

By the same token, Niall O, (2007) argued that more and more young people are having trouble when first looking for work, and that most importantly to know is that youth unemployment levels are certainly serious in many member countries in the world today. It was also stated that, in many transition economies, youth unemployment levels show a similar pattern. The known pattern also reflects the

case of South Sudan. Some of the attribution of this pattern is suggested to be due to the massive reductions in economic output in many of the countries and also moving towards a market economy without considering labor. Further evidence also revealed the problem is undoubtedly more serious than in most industrialized nations (Niall O, 2007). As stressed by World Bank, those youths who leave school and enter the labor market may need a quick transition to productive employment. The issue of labor market and transition to productive employment now is seen as increasingly being recognized as important for reducing poverty in later life increasing economic growth, improving well-being, and optimizing returns to investments in education and health (World Bank, 2007).

c. Skills Mismatch

Development Bank (2012) “The skills mismatch occurs in various areas, including entrepreneurial and managerial skills, analytical capabilities, language acquisition, and other technical skills (p.10). Also it can be advanced that, the mismatch between available skills and the job market’s needs in most African countries hinders employment growth.”

From a global perspective it is asserted that, there is real concern that by targeting young people through various policies this may simply be promoting the substitution of younger workers for older ones. As it may be said, undoubtedly, some types of policies might encourage employers to engage young workers rather than older adults. The competition between young and old people could also be seen as an obstacle to young people accessing jobs. There are also a number of reasons that can be said for believing that the extent to which this would occur would be extremely limited since many young people may not have the required experience and skills. As such the young people cannot realistically compete for jobs with skilled and experienced workers; competition will tend to be limited to unskilled jobs and, to some

extent which then creates unemployment for young people, (Niall O, 2007).

The mismatch between the type of education provided at schools and the requirements of the labor market is a reason that has been both mentioned by the academic literature on many countries and this can also be apply to South Sudan (Chigunta 2002, ILO 2012, Kellow, 2010).

The youth need to develop initiatives which promote skill building that must be rooted in the needs of the local economy. To put it positively, such initiatives will enable young people to build demand-driven skills, which will ultimately increase their chances of finding work and may also assist in reducing some of their attitudes towards violence.

CONCLUSION

Unemployment is a serious issue in the world which affects groups of individuals, community and on the economy. From the study it shows that it creates a negative effects on unemployed population and also it shown that there is lot of research gap which increases the scope of the study. After a detailed review, it is found out that no specific study has been conducted in the Juba county with the targeted payams/taluks like RAJAF, MUNUKE, KATOR, JUBA, GUDELE. Therefore keeping this as a scope in the area of study a detailed methodology will be developed and a good empirical study will be conducted.

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