

**The
Journal**
...reason, truth and equity

VOL. 5 7-14 SEPTEMBER 2020

**NIGERIA'S UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS:
THE COLLAPSE OF YOUTH VALUES**

**PORTRAIT OF A TROUBLED LABOUR
MARKET**

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP: THE ROAD FOR
THE YOUNG**

NIGERIA

TROUBLE IN THE LABOUR MARKET



CONTENTS



The Journal
...reason, truth and equity

VOL. 5 7-14 SEPTEMBER 2020

NIGERIA'S UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS:
THE COLLAPSE OF YOUTH VALUES
PORTRAIT OF A TROUBLED LABOUR
MARKET
ENTREPRENEURSHIP: THE ROAD FOR
THE YOUNG



- 3. Stories Around the Globe
- 3. NIGERIA
- 4. AFRICA
- 4. THE REST OF THE WORLD

From the Editor-in-Chief

- 6. Nigeria's Unemployment Crisis: The Collapse of Youth Values

Cover Story

- 9. Entrepreneurship : The Road for the Young
- 12. The Youth Yearn
- 15. Portrait of a Troubled Labour Market

- 18. The Unfortunate Children of Fortunate Parents

Ugly and Awful

- 22. Mallam Nasir El-Rufai: Governor of a State

Culture and Lifestyle

- 24. The Impressive Life of Chadwick Boseman
- 26. Jaywon: On the Fringes of the Mainstream
- 29. Quick and Easy Snacks Anyone Can Make
- 32. Showcase: Phebean

Outstanding Careers

- 33. Clement Chukwudifu

HERstory

- 36 .Adetutu Adeleke



The Journal
...reason, truth and equity

www.thejournalnigeria.com

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief
Dr. Udu Yakubu

Editorial Board
LT. Gen Chikadibia I. Obiakor (rtd)
Chief Bisi Ogunjobi
Prof. Yima Sen
Prof. Mohammed Bhadmus
Dr. Niyi Osinowo, Rear Admiral (rtd)
Amb. Dr. Chijioke Wigwe
Dr. Isaac Mankilik, Commodore (rtd)
Prof. Adoyi Onoja
Dr. Anthonia Yakubu

Dr. Iwebunor Okwechime
Dr. Aminu Umar
Dr. Moses Yakubu
Dr. Abiodun Bello

Editor
Femi Morgan

Creative Director
Aduroja Olawale

CORE VALUES
Truth
Objectivity
Integrity
Analytical Reasoning
Empirical Research
Constructive Criticism
Professionalism

Website and social media handles

The Journal is a Pan-Nigerian online newspaper that engages all segments of the Nigerian life. The Journal provides objective and professional analysis on national and international issues with a critical and progressive balance.
The Journal is published by May University Press Limited.
Address: 51c Gbolahan Awe Close, off Jubril Liadi Street, off Emmanuel Keshi Street, Magodo Phase 2, Lagos.

Contact:
Editorial: Femi Morgan
Email: editoratthejournal@gmail.com
Tel.: 08068108018 | 08174717765

Adverts, Business and Partnership: Gabriel Esemokhai
Email: partner_thejournal@gmail.com
Tel.: 08087193172 | 09069340828
Instagram—journal news
Twitter—thejournal Nigeria; **LinkedIn**—thejournal Nigeria

The opinions expressed in the articles published in this newspaper are completely and solely those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views and perspectives of persons, groups and organisations associated with The Journal.

STORIES AROUND THE GLOBE

NIGERIA

CBN ORDERS BANKS TO REMIT 10% OF MPR ON SAVINGS

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) ordered banks to pay 10% of its Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) as the Minimum Interest Rate on savings deposit, which is the standard interest rate of the CBN.

The new exchange rate was announced in a directive signed by Bello Hassan, Director of Banking Supervision at the CBN. According to CBN, 'All deposit money banks are hereby informed that effective September 1, 2020, interest on local currency savings deposit shall be negotiated subject to a minimum of 10 percent of Monetary Policy Rate (MPR).'

TAKE MY LIFE AND SPARE MY CANNABIS FARM

Clement Akor, a 42-year-old father of six children from Enabo village in Ankpa Local Government Area of Kogi State, was arrested alongside David Ameh his accomplice by the Kogi State Command of the NDLEA for planting cannabis sativa, popularly known as 'Indian Hemp'.

Mr. Clement in his statement said, 'This is my

business. I spent a lot to allow this plant to grow up to this level... Now you people have come here to destroy it. Just kill me, so that I won't see you people destroying what I have laboured for.'

Alfred Adewumi, NDLEA Commander, however assured the state of his relentless commitment to put a check on the use of hard drugs within its area.

PREPARE FOR FULL REOPENING OF SCHOOLS - FG

The Federal Government urges state governments and school administrators to start making preparations for the reopening of schools. Dr. Sani Aliyu, the National Coordinator of the Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19, said the task force recommends phased return of students to classrooms.

He continued by saying 'However, we strongly recommend that states conduct risk assessment to ensure all schools are at a level of compliance and create a monitoring mechanism to assess, create and monitor this level of preparedness.'

COEASU: STRIKE WILL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY FG REOPENS SCHOOLS

The College of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) gave a directive at a conference in Abuja on Thursday that lecturers should without delay put on hold their services immediately schools reopen, until pending issues like poor funding, neglect of infrastructure, non-remittance of third-party deduction especially for staff cooperative societies and monetary allocation to colleges of education are sorted out.

Nuhu Ogirima, COEASU President, in his statement said 'So, the Union hereby formally declares that all options are open for an industrial action against FGN and some other notorious state governments.'

MKO ABIOLA'S HOME INVADED BY ROBBERS

Hakeem Odumosu, State Commissioner of Police, confirmed the robbery incident that took place in the Ikeja residence of late MKO Abiola on Wednesday.

He announced the arrest of three suspects who were involved in the operation and it was made known that the robbers gained entry

into the house through a canal and made away with lots of valuable items worth millions of naira.

The police noted that it had commenced a thorough investigation into the incident.

FEMI FALANA SET TO APPEAL DEATH SENTENCE

Human rights activist, Femi Falana, may have intentions to appeal the judgement that sentenced Yahaya Aminu, a singer, to death for blasphemy in Kano State. It was revealed that the legal luminary requested the certified true copies of the sharia Court Judgement from the Kano State Judiciary. This was done in less than seven days to the thirty-day grace period of appeal granted by the court. Meanwhile Governor Ganduje has expressed his readiness to sign the death warrant when the appeal to the death warrant elapses without an appeal.

SERAP KICKS AGAINST FUEL PRICE INCREASE

The Social Economic Rights and Accountability Project, SERAP, have joined Nigerians to kick against the recent hike in the pump price of fuel. The Product Marketing Company, PPMC, a subsidiary of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation,

NNPC, announced the increased of fuel price from N148 to N151.56K per litre.

SERAP has called the hike 'a travesty' that would affect millions of Nigerians. 'This is a travesty, as it would have a knock-on effect on millions of poor Nigerians who will struggle to meet the increased costs of transport & basic goods.'

AFRICA

SUDAN SIGNS PEACE DEAL WITH REBEL GROUPS

South Sudan's government has signed a peace pact with the Sudan Revolutionary Front, SRF, a major coalition of rebel groups in Darfur, South Kordofan Region, and Blue Nile. The pact, which is the result of mediation and talks since late 2019, was signed at Juba, South Sudan.

The peace pact is a major step in resolving the deep-rooted issues that caused the civil conflict in 2011. The peace agreement covers issues on security, transitional justice, land ownership, power sharing and the return of millions of people who fled their homes because of the war.

Meanwhile two rebel groups have refused to sign the peace deal.

THE REST OF THE WORLD

U.S. EXTENDS TRAVEL BAN TO NORTH KOREA

The US State Department has extended its travel ban restricting its citizens from travelling to North Korea. This restriction, which started last year, has been extended because 'the safety and security of US citizens overseas is one of our highest priorities,' said a state department spokesperson.

The travel ban provides exceptions for journalists, diplomats and sponsored representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross or the American Red Cross.

The travel ban to North Korea started in September 2017 when Otto Warmber, a 22 year old US citizen, died on home soil after he had been arrested and convicted to hard labour for stealing a propaganda sign.

AMERICAN MAN KILLED WIFE AND TWO SONS FOR BEING TOO LOUD

James Webb, a 57-year-old, was arrested on Monday on a murder charge after claiming to have shot his 35-year-old wife, Victoria Bunton and his two sons aged 16 and 13, because he had a headache, and they were being too loud.

In his statement to the detectives, the American father said he was 'tired' of his wife and children "yelling and telling him that there was nothing wrong with him", so he shot them.

FIRST FLYING CAR IN JAPAN

SkyDrive Inc. a Japanese Company has unveiled the successful test drive of a flying car by the name SD-03.

Tomohiro Fukuzawa, CEO of SkyDrive Inc., said 'We are extremely excited to have achieved Japan's first-ever manned flight of a flying car in the two years since we founded SkyDrive.' Fukuzawa said, 'We want to realise a society where flying cars are an accessible and convenient means of transportation in the skies and people are able to experience a safe, secure and comfortable new way of life.'

MAN WRONGLY ACCUSED OF RAPE GAINS FREEDOM AFTER 44 YEARS IN PRISON

Ronnie Long, a 64-year-old Black man, was freed from a North Carolina prison after being wrongfully accused and imprisoned for 44 years for allegedly raping a 54-year-old White woman.

Stephanie Thacker, US Fourth Circuit Court of

Appeal Judge, said in a filing that, since Long was pronounced guilty, a trickle of post-trial disclosures has unearthed a troubling and striking pattern of deliberate suppression of material evidence, like semen samples and fingerprints from the crime scene by the police. The Judge said that these samples did not match the genetic codes of the accused.

CARGO SHIP CAPSIZED, DROWNS THOUSANDS OF CATTLE AND 43 CREW MEMBERS ABOARD

Gulf Livestock 1, a cargo ship carrying about 6000 cattle and 43 crew members, was reported missing after being hit by a Typhoon Maysak, causing its engine to fail. According to Eduardo Sareno, 45, the Chief Officer of the Vessel said that all crew members were instructed to abandon the ship with their lifejacket on.

According to New Zealand officials, the ship set off from Napier, New Zealand on 14th of August and was heading to the port of Jingtian in Tangshan in China, before the unfortunate incident struck.

FEMI FANI-KAYODE WILL RULE OVER NIGERIA – CAN CHAIRMAN

Apostle Alex Bamgbola, chairman of the Lagos State Chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), recently informed Chief Femi Fani-Kayode that he would become the President of Nigeria, if he remained humble. The pronouncement was made at the celebration of 31 years of Bishop Isaac Idahosa's ministry. Fani-Kayode has trended on new and traditional media recently for denigrating a journalist at a press conference in Calabar.

GERMANY: 27-YEAR-OLD MOTHER KILLED HER FIVE CHILDREN

Christine K, 27, a mother of six, has allegedly poisoned five of her six children, while also attempting to end her own life in Germany.

A police source revealed that she hurled herself on the tracks at Dusseldorf Station, which was 20 minutes from her flat at Solingen, where the children lay dying. The dead children are three girls aged one and half, two, and three years old, and two boys, eight, and six years old. The police said that they were poisoned with tablets. Only her eldest son, Marcel, 11, remained unharmed. He was reported to have escorted her mother to the train station at the time of the report.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT UNVEILS A 20-MINUTE CORONAVIRUS TEST

Britain has greatly expanded its testing capacity since

the emergence of the pandemic and has invested in coronavirus test equipment that gives result in 20 minutes.

Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, made known that the government was expanding the trials of two new test – a no-swab saliva test and another that gives result in as little as 20 minutes.

Matt further said the system was working well despite some operational challenges. The equipment was reported to have the capacity of performing about 350,000 tests a day and processing about 180,000 persons per day.

DRONE DROPS FREE BAGS OF MARIJUANA IN TEL AVIV

Green Drone, a group on telegram which advocates the legalisation of cannabis in Israel,

distributed 'free love' on the streets of Tel Aviv. The group used a drone to share hundreds of cannabis over Rabin Square in Tel Aviv. Many Israelis scrambled for the sachets of marijuana scattered on the streets.

The Israeli Police have arrested two suspected members of the Green Drone. The medical use of marijuana is only permitted in Israel. The exportation of medical cannabis is also approved but recreational use of the grass is prohibited.



NIGERIA'S UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS THE COLLAPSE OF YOUTH VALUES

Africans, and indeed most people across the different cultures of the world, can relate with the maxim, 'whoever does not work, should not eat.' Embedded in this short saying is the primordial principle of human dignity and work values. From Kenya to Ghana and Lagos in Nigeria and many other cities, it is commonplace to sight commercial vehicles, including wooden articulated lorries, painted with all colour-shades of illustrative images accompanied with captions such as "No food for the lazy man," 'Life is too short...', 'Live and let live,' among other inscriptions that daily scream for public attention.

These captions convey nothing short of one central message: there is dignity in human labour! Indeed, creatures such as lizards appreciate this value when they nod their tuft-less heads after a momentary feat of securing a life-saving crumb. Basically, these illustrations signpost the dignifying sense of value that each person should feel in whatever vocation attracts the daily subsistence for them, regardless of their stations in life. Work is a compelling component of the human life, and working in any trade, vocation or professional calling is both an essential and an existential aspect of making meaning out of the already chaotic, laborious and short human life.

In his classic short literary work titled *The Prophet*, the Lebanese American writer Kahlil Gibran explores the many sides of the human condition that are essential to the process of making sense of life and existence. Of 'work' he writes that, '...to be idle is to become a stranger unto the seasons.' 'Always you have been told that work is a curse and labour is a misfortune / But I say to you that when you work you fulfill a part of earth's furthest dream, assigned to you when that dream was born...' Then he further stresses: 'And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God / And what is it to work with love? It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, even as if your beloved were to wear that cloth...'



These were the meditations of a writer of Lebanese origin who possessed a profound sense of human labour and transposed same into this literary litany. Little wonder that even the Nigerian work environment – with particular reference to business and industry – is populated with Lebanese nationals, of which many are factory owners producing consumable goods ranging from food to other household items. Many of these foreigners keep up with such water-tight daily routines that challenge the quotidian experience of most Nigerians. All of this they do, just to balance the business books. The same applies to the Indians and the Chinese in Nigeria. On the contrary, to a large extent, the Nigerian attitude towards work is a rough stone that repeatedly summons the intervention of moralists, psychologists and behavioural critics.

In what may be adjudged a candid nationalist self-assessment, if not considered an outright class-suicide

of any sort, a Nigerian observer on a popular online digital forum once considered some of the reasons why a lot of Nigerian youths are unemployable these days to include a culture of impatience and impulsiveness that manifests as a lack of capacity and willingness to delay gratification. At the start of a new job, a horde of Nigerian youths are in a hurry to show off to friends and their immediate community the ignition key to the latest automobile in vogue. The economic and ethical essence of having a gainful employment is completely lost on them.

Another factor that has become ingrained in the modern youths of Nigeria is the culture of irrational buck-passing that puts the government at the receiving end of all blames for their inability to secure meaningful jobs. Indeed, if the Nigerian entity were to be a sentient individual, he or she must have developed a thick-skin response to many of these transferred culpabilities. Time, and certainly recent history, has shown that even youths who have no idea of their lives' direction or have little or no sense of purpose, all find the government blameworthy for their no-employment status. The Nigerian social space is replete with cross-sections of youths who, in a decade of graduation as school-leavers or tertiary graduates, have no work history. In many instances, creativity, initiative and the enterprising spirit are conspicuously absent. Many will attest to the fact that resourcefulness is more of a personal trait, a factor that transcends what any government could directly impart.

Writing in the thirteenth volume of the *Global Journal of Management and Business Research Administration and Management*, Dr. Orok Arrey noted that the offhand attitude to work characteristic of the Nigerian worker is independent of geopolitical divisions, rural-urban residence, religious affiliation, sex or age. The Nigerian society is frequently exposed to a flurry of occasions in which monies acquired through illicit means had been spent with brazen profligacy not only at parties and other social functions, but also at religious houses.

The culpability of the latter institutions speaks to the evident breakdown of the moral foundations of society. Essentially, moral values often provide the tapestry for ethical behaviour that defines the general orientation of any society. As such, values are usually a composite of individual and collective principles and standards of

moral and ethical judgement that people live by. The predominant values of any society mark the identity of that society and a sense of what matters to it across ramifications.

Many youths wait for government jobs for reasons that include poor cultural and ethical orientation. While it should be an honourable and distinguished decision for the average Nigerian youth to desire to enlist for government employment, this should be streamlined to clear career paths in civil and public services. Where the ambition of a youth is to become a diplomat, a career in government is naturally deemed appropriate. But the percentage of persons in this category is of a small one compared to the population of applicants in most other areas. The vast majority of the youths want government jobs for security, a fact that appears antithetical to the natural expectation of youth who, in that time of life, should be daring and venturing because they are sure of themselves.

The general thinking is that government jobs come with no stress – physical and mental – as comparable to other sectors. Nigerian youths do not want 'stressful' jobs so they can have in their hands ample time to engage other 'side hustles'. In such dream jobs, nobody is going to stress them. They will have the liberty to resume for work at any time they like. This prevalent laid-back mentality that 'nobody can stress me,' or that 'I can make money' as against earning salaries and wages, is indicative of a systemic political culture where political players 'invest' in elective and appointive positions with the aim to 'recoup' such 'investments' when they settle down into such political offices. Hence, government work is considered a good source of 'easy wealth' acquired by fair or foul means.

These whys and wherefores perhaps provide an insight into the possible reason why Nigeria as a nation has a huge number of young people trying to join the Police, the Customs Service, Immigration Service, the NNPC, Ministry of Finance, among other MDAs. In 2016, the Nigeria Police had advertised opening for 10,000 personnel but the force had received about 796,152 applications. In 2018, the Nigeria Prison Service had called for applications for its 6,500 slots of jobs, but got up to 1.2 million applications. In 2019, up to 524,315 applicants had indicated their interest for the advertised 3,200 jobs at the Nigeria Customs Service. According to one media source, up to 828,333 people had applied,

while still a whopping 524,315 applicants completed the process. Also, by October 2019, about 2.5 million persons applied for the 10,000 job slots at the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) while up to 1.4 million applicants had jostled for the 5000 openings at the same defense outfit in January 2020.

While it is no longer news that Nigeria battles the crippling challenge of youth unemployment, it is equally important to query the genuineness of intentions of the thousands and millions of youths who do all things possible to get into the employ of state and federal governments. On September 4, 2020, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) announced its arrest of one Hajiya Hadiza Umar Abubakar who had defrauded a job seeker, Nuraddeen Abubakar of the sum of N3,000,000 through a fake promise of securing employment for him at the Commission. This episode is a typical exemplar reflective of the systemic dearth of youth values in the country.

With the general scale of ethical decadence among Nigerian youths reaching an all-time level, the government and indeed all religious and traditional institutions have a colossal task of getting the country's youth back on track. In her early years, Nigeria had a commendable record of demand by private firms and multinationals who wrote to religious organisations and important public personalities showing interest in having in their employ youths who were not only well-trained but also worthy of trust. And the nation had a battalion of these at that time of her burgeoning nationhood. The narrative is a different one today.

Government has the power to question the sources of an individual's wealth and this must be seen to be done where individuals are found living above their legitimate earnings. Closing the loopholes for corrupt practices in government institutions could help stem the tide of young people who believe that there are fortunes to be made in the civil and public service. The Nigerian civil and public service will be purged when line managers or superior officers get adequate punishments and sanctions for poor work ethics, or for erring from laid-down working procedures. The Nigerian youth is clearly in dire need of support as our moral substructures have badly caved in, paving the paths towards social and institutional collapse as the nation presently witnesses. Government, religious and traditional institutions, and all stakeholders must live up to what they preach, while the educational programmes and institutions should be restructured to make our youths more creative, resourceful and initiative-savvy. So much work also has to be done at the level of the family, where much of the rot can be situated. Only when these begin to happen can Nigeria return to the lost age of optimum youth employment with the befitting moral and ethical values that accompany labour.



Dr Udu Yakubu

PORTRAIT OF A TROUBLED LABOUR MARKET

Abiodun Bello

Economies across the world continue to share one singular feature that will remain constant: the human agency. Most economists will not dispute the pivotal and strategic place of human capital in defining labour as a means of production in any economic context. Regardless of whether it is an essentially capitalist, socialist or laissez faire economy, the human agent is critical to defining the power of the labour force. Writing for *The Balance* in a 2020 article, Kimberly Amadeo, for instance, describes a 'labour force' as statistically inclusive of the number of people in employment as well as those who are in search of work at a particular time.

Nigeria as a nation seemed to have got a lot right at the time of her political Independence, thanks to the colonialists who had provided the enabling structures and infrastructure to make practicable the preconditions for a modern economic take-off. The existence of a nation-wide railway service meant that a lot of Nigerians could transport themselves to various destinations for economic purposes, and goods could also be moved easily from place to place. The Nigerian Railway Corporation was at the same time a viable employer of able

men and women in both skilled and semi-skilled cadres. Since the economy of Nigeria was predominantly agrarian in nature, this had also meant that the cocoa farmers and the government of the Western Region, the oil-palm farmers and the government of the then Eastern Region and the groundnut farmers and the government of the Northern Region had adequate transportation for the movement of their respective agricultural produces across the country and to the ports for viable export. The creation of a value chain which saw the employment of thousands of produce officers and other key functionaries had raised the economic tempo of the employment market in Nigeria in the decade of the 1960s.

About this period, many companies already existed to keep the economy running, with hundreds of thousands of Nigerians in their employ. Some of these included the UAC, the AG Leventis Group, the Lever Brothers Group, among others. Indeed, the Nigeria Stock Exchange has to date retained many of these in their book of listed companies. Going down the memory lane, the United Africa Company



of Nigeria (UACN) was a leading contributor of employment in the real estate, food and beverage and later paint and logistics sectors of the Nigerian economy. Similarly, the Lever Brothers (West Africa) Limited, which would after decades of its operation in Nigeria change to Unilever Plc., had started out as primary traders in soap and, as a soap company had proven to be highly valuable to Nigeria's employment sector. Its cumulative success occasioned the company's morphing and expansion into a soap and food production company, which still remains active in the Nigerian economy today.

Partly like the UAC and like the Lever Brothers group, the AG Leventis has a long history of impacting the Nigerian economy and its labour force, greatly and positively, as traders in power and gas products, food products which included pastry and bakery products. It would later diversify into property and real estate, hotel services, auto-vehicle trading and servicing, as well as supplies of computer accessories. The economy was charged at an up-tempo tide. The Lagos-Ibadan express road was scheduled for construction when there came the need for more roads to pave the way for ease of movement of people and goods across the country – and the oil boom of the 1970s could support these. Graduates from Nigeria's universities, polytechnics and other post-secondary institutions had jobs readily waiting for them. In 1984, a fresh graduate settling down into a new job with good payment structure could afford the purchase of a brand-new Passat car for only N11,000.

The decade of the 1980s, better known as the IMF years, had marked a significant watershed in the trajectory of Nigeria's political experience. This had a ripple effect on the economy and employment sections of the country. Like many African, Caribbean and South American nations that had subscribe to loan arrangements offered by the International Monetary Fund, Nigeria began its national and economic safari into the orbit of irrecoverable economic losses. The gains made in the previous decades would soon be eroded through weak currency and exchange rate systems. Almost for the first time, riots and protests would hit the streets of the country for not any other reason than the rate of economic downturn and unemployment.

According to one archival source, issues of poor wages and increasing unemployment had crystallised into various labour actions. In May of 1991, employees of the Nigeria Railway would also stage a striking protest that lasted into ten days owing to issues of delayed compensations. Frustrated by constantly unpaid salaries and anticipated layoffs, railway

employees in Lagos also went rioting in July of the same year. In August, employees at the port services also downed tools, and by October, Nigeria Airways workers went on a strike. This series of labour actions had not been helped by the equally bad situation that many traders in the country had found themselves. Earlier in February of 1991, the police had demolished a significant number of trading shops and stalls in the central market district of Lagos, which were considered 'illegal'. These demolitions had deepened the negative impact of social and economic tensions in certain parts of the country. Masses of angry employed and unemployed people fought the police in the streets to vent the pains of their economic frustrations. Even when the global oil price went up briefly during the Gulf Crisis and Nigeria's earnings had increased by \$2.3 billion, this was not enough to assuage the effects of the country's continued high debt profile and fiscal expansion.

From the 1990s to the present time, the Nigerian economy and its labour sector have remained in doldrums. According to figures released by [statista.com](https://www.statista.com), employment rate in Nigeria for 2019 stood at 8.1%, a worse scenario compared to a figure of 7.06% for 2016. A more recent statistical breakdown by Nigeria's own National Bureau of Statistics indicates that the rate of unemployment in Nigeria had jumped to 27.1% as at the second quarter of 2020. The direct implication of this for the Nigerian is that about 21,764,614 (21.7 million) Nigerians are currently unemployed. Equally unsavoury is the figure which put the combination of Nigeria's unemployment and underemployment rates at 55.7%, which implies that underemployment in the country stands at 28.6% as at the second quarter of 2020. Also, consistent with analysis by Nairametrics, a Nigeria-focused online statistical platform, Nigeria's unemployment rate which stood at 23.1% at the end of the third quarter of 2018 has now increased by a 4-percent negative margin between that year and the second quarter of 2020.

While the number of persons in the economically active or working-age population, usually between ages 15 and 64 is put at 116,871,186 during the reference period of the survey, the number of persons in the labour force (within the same age brackets) is estimated at 80,291,894. This numerical information provides an appreciable sense of the critical nature of the national unemployment crisis in Nigeria. Hordes of Nigerian youths today fail to secure the kinds of jobs they are in pursuit of, either in the fields of their cognate trainings or in other areas where they consider their qualifications relevant in the Nigerian labour market.

At the same time, many who have turned in the direction of government jobs soon discovered a different scenario playing out with government jobs. Where the number of applicants for government jobs did not massively overshadow the number of advertised job openings, the factor of internal employment racketeering had foreclosed the chances of many brilliant and qualified job-seekers who could have secured such advertised jobs if the processes were to favour the principle of meritocracy.

The Nigeria Immigration Service made history not only for making up to about N520 million from about a 6.5 million number of job-seekers, according to media sources, but also for reportedly having recorded a tragedy of 23 deaths during its recruitment exercise of March 2014. The litigation process which saw the ex-Interior Minister, Abba Moro, sued over this tragedy and other associated corruption matters, is yet to reach a final conclusion as of September 2020. This illustration only exemplifies the typical scenarios that ensue with the advertisement and recruitment exercises associated with government employment and the civil service at large. Job recruitments in the Nigeria Customs Service, the Nigeria Police, and many other public service contexts are not any different.

With these setups, it becomes far from cloudy, the fact that the Nigerian labour market is currently like a vague puzzle, with the player lost in the mesh of confusion to unravel their situation. The employment context can be likened to a blind alley which has its labyrinths leading the navigator through clueless paths. The effectual absence of jobs in contemporary Nigerian labour sector has seen graduates of Theatre Arts pursuing livelihoods in agriculture, while the banking sector now houses a huge number of trained engineers, graduates in the fields of Medicine, Psychology, English and Yoruba. Failing to secure the jobs of their dreams, some graduates across various fields have become founders of phoney businesses under different names, rather than being gainfully employed in their respective areas of professional qualification.

Indeed, the situation is so decadent and degenerate that many companies in the top brackets are wary of employing graduates of Nigerian universities. The adducible reasons include having a long history with Nigerian youths in

the work space who could not live up to the demands and expectations of the jobs in questions. But the situation is, to a large extent, far away from these provisions. Many oil companies and multinationals do not think the educational sector of Nigeria offers them the quality of new entrants that befits their international standing. Certainly, the inadequacies in the quality of the education of many Nigerian youths contribute to their failure to secure the jobs of their desires. Many employees in this section of the Nigerian economy have often been employed based on nepotistic considerations, just as with a lot of government jobs.

The Nigerian Constitution provides that ‘The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that (a) all citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment; (b) conditions of work are just and humane, and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and for social, religious and cultural life; (c) the health, safety and welfare of all persons in employment are safeguarded and not endangered or abused.’ among other things. But the practicability of these provisions remains to be appreciated in all its ramifications.

The turns of political and economic events in Nigeria have created perennial gaps in the Nigerian labour force as witnessed in the down-turn of economic productivity and unemployment statistics. Most comparative examination of Nigeria’s employment rates agree on the one fact that the nation’s labour market has been reshaped by the years of bad economic policies and incoherent governmental decisions. The continuous metamorphosis of once economically active and viable factories into religious centres is symptomatic of the country’s failed industrialisation, which also signposts a national unemployment crisis.

Governments over the years have not shown demonstrable understanding of all the important economic variables and principles required to bring a developing country into a better place through focused industrialisation that would facilitate socioeconomic advancement. The critical truth in all of this cannot be looked away from: Nigeria remains in the hands of her citizens who must do all that is possible within the context of purposeful nation-building to rejig the labour situation.

THE YOUTH YEARN

Prof. Mark Nwagwu

There are letters in the alphabet that interest me, such as M, N, A, H, I, but none as much as the letter, Y. It has two arms reaching out to the sky, both borne on a stem rooted to the ground. The letter Y stands for all that humans desire; to grow roots, branches, and reach for great heights. If you desire humility then look to the letter Y: from low beginnings, it grows tall; from its lowliness it rises from the ashes. It stays down holding up the edifice of human success, splendour, and satisfaction. It makes it clear that, to move upwards, you should be firmly grounded. And it constantly reminds you that, when you are at the top you must remember the roots and the stem that carry you and sustain you. This is not all. Y teaches you that it is the first letter in the word 'you', perhaps, the most important word in the vocabulary of society and socialisation. Leadership is enshrined in working for others, putting others first; it is never about self. It is about you.

In its issue of September 1, Aleteia, a daily journal with edifying stories, spoke of a Nigerian boy whose video while dancing in the rain went viral. 'Whenever he is dancing, I feel happy, I have joy watching him dancing', says the mother of Anthony Mmmesoma Madu in an interview with the BBC. Anthony is an 11-year-old boy from Lagos, performing ballet in the rain – in uneven surroundings with trash and crates of empty bottles piled against an unpainted wall. The background has the features of what looks like a woman washing clothes in a bucket in the background. Yet Anthony seems to be in a different world as he gracefully pirouettes, leaps and poses elegantly.

The video caught the attention of celebrities such as actress Viola Davi, who won an Oscar for her role in the 2016 film *Fences*. She retweeted the video and commented, 'Reminds me of the beauty of my people,





we create, soar, can imagine, have unleashed passions and love... despite the brutal obstacles that have been put in front of us. Our people can fly.'

The American Ballet Theatre has given him a scholarship to train virtually this summer, using internet access they have arranged for him. The video has inspired many people to make donations to the Leap of Dance Academy in Lagos where Anthony has been studying till now. 'My advice to parents is, when they discover any talent in their children, they should follow it up and give their full support so that the child will go far with the talent', his mother told the BBC.

They are not all like Anthony but many have such blazing talent. Our youth pine before us and we watch them spend their life in wild, fruitless pursuits. The numbers are there and it appears we do not care. Does the President of Nigeria sleep well? How can he sleep well when, from the latest data we have, 40.8% of our youth aged 15-24 are unemployed?

You could well say that most of these young boys and girls, men and women, should be in school. Immediately you raise the question for the president, why are they not in school? What about the governors in the states where these youth live? do they sleep well when they bear the cross of responsibility for the state, especially for the young? How can they when 30.7% of our youth aged 25-34 years are unemployed? Do our legislators sleep well at night, even after we wish them a good night's rest? How can they sit there and pay themselves whatever they wish as salaries and allowances in multiple millions of naira, and receive COVID-19 hazard allowances when our youth walk around distressed? The case grows worse.

Does anyone in the NDDC sleep well at night, especially the Chairman, when billions of naira meant to provide work and alleviate the suffering of the people from the Niger Delta have found their way into insidious pockets of the self-same legislators? The numbers are mind boggling: 23.3% of our doctorates are unemployed! We should be ashamed of the dismal state of our lives when some of the best we have cannot fulfil their dreams.

It was not always like this. By our culture, children take care of their parents in their old age. Parents would suffer punishing penury and hardship for the education of their children in the hope that they would be successful in life. They were confident that when their children completed schooling, they would help to recover whatever was spent in their training, especially if some family property had been offered as collateral for a loan. My own father, in 1955-56, had to offer his lands as lien for funds to pay my fees, when I was studying for the Higher School Certificate. When I graduated in 1961, and had my marriage before me in 1962, I had no money anywhere to pay my brothers' fees. I went to Fr. Walsh, Principal of their schools and pleaded with him that I had no money for their fees and would pay later. Fr. Walsh told me magisterially: 'There are those things that cannot wait. Go and get married then come back and pay the fees.' I shall never forget his immortal words that saved me from failing my father. Yes, our parents sent us to school in the hope that we would help out if they were in difficulty. Many families till today have such stories to tell. But that is because their children got jobs and could restore the good name and image of the family by paying off any debts.

Things are not quite the same now. We have ‘yahoo boys’ who raid our bank accounts by their malfeasance, otherwise presented as ‘genius’. We have 419-ers who fraudulently obtain funds often from foreign accounts. Then there are the drug peddlars and carriers who jet from one airport to another laden with their wares. They all return home to Nigeria to us; poor suffering and feeble zombies lacking courage, to flaunt their ill-gotten wealth. We do not care how they got the money. We join them to enjoy whatever goodies it provides. Who cares? Just roll out the money and the music is on! What about ‘Area Boys’ in Lagos? They invidiously molest and maliciously extort whatever they can from innocent motorists who have worked hard for a pittance, scurrying to get safely home to their loved ones. I had read with copious trepidation an article by my good friend, Prof. Bode Lucas, Trapped in the Web of Area Boys in The Comet of July 7, 2006. I had to return to his story and I am still filled with fear praying that he, or anyone else, does not suffer such agony ever again. To the greater glory of God he escaped with his life after giving up all he had on him. How can the Governor of Lagos State sleep well with Area Boys breathing down our necks?

It gets more grotesque. Kidnappers can appear from nowhere and seize us and take us where they please, and demand that whatever money they please be paid as ransom before we are released. Sometimes, one is killed even after the ransom has been paid. Please where is our president? Does he sleep well at night? Even if he sleeps during the day, does he sleep well? Let us be good

and say, perhaps, he does not sleep at all! These deadly events have come into our lives because our youth are unemployed. They cannot find jobs and when they start enterprises and step out to make a difference for the Nigerian society, they often fail because they do not receive adequate financial support from the institutions established for this purpose.

Where do we go from here? I have a friend who wants his bride-to-be to pay the ‘groom price’ because he does not have the wherewithal to pay the bride price. That would be turning the letter Y upside down. That is where we are. We have turned our youth upside down and they walk on their hands with massive pain in their necks and in their heads. The stem that preserved the letter Y, the Youth, has wilted with corroding corruption, and the roots with the stem are fiercely destroyed.

All is not lost, though. As they walk on their hands, they are learning a new sport. They are learning to somersault, return, and regain their erstwhile formidable stance of vigour, vitality and victory. They are transformed and now victory, V, the strong powerful arms of work and industry stands on the strong stem — the reinforced roots of our veritable sacrifice for the young. We have our letter Y restored in its pristine elegance and beauty.

Anthony will dance his ballets in classical style, his arms victoriously caressing the air which bears the stem and his legs as they sweep through the horizon.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

THE ROAD FOR THE YOUNG

Femi Morgan

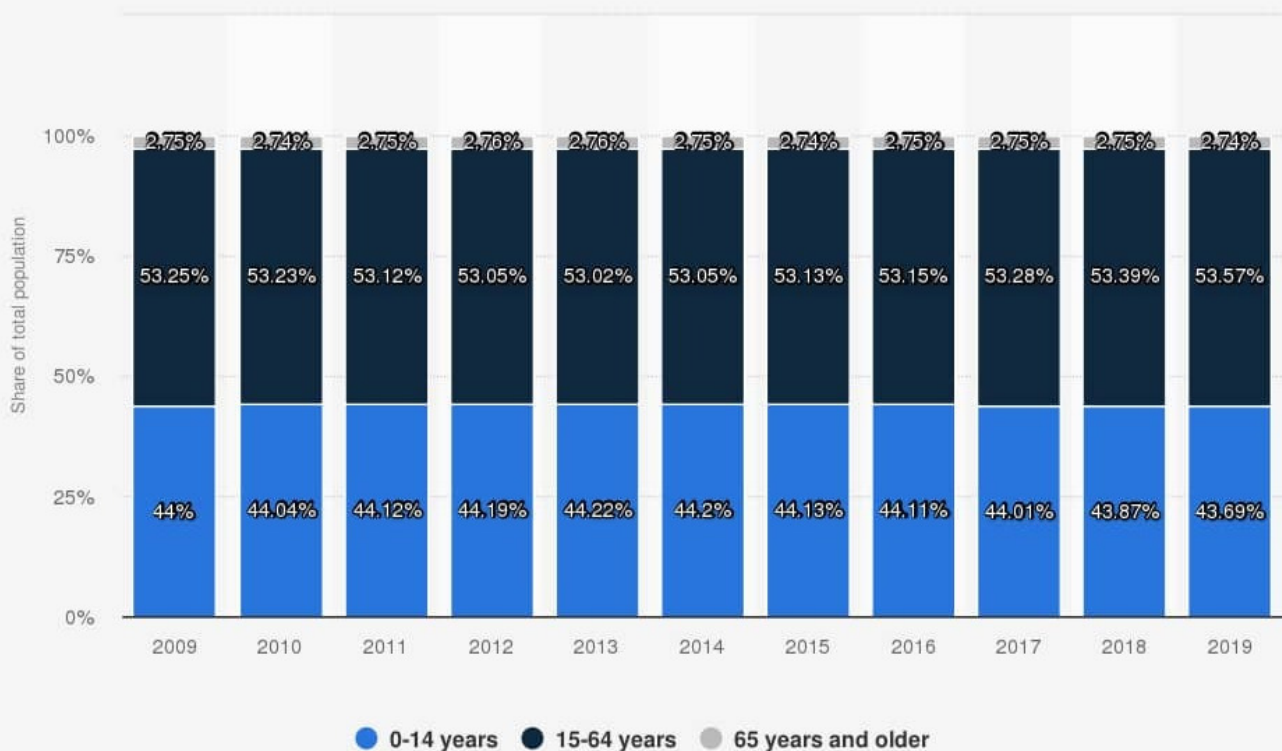
To be young is to be fearless, adventurous and daring. Young people are always expected to think out of the box, be innovative, inventive and to change the landscape with their verve and vibe. With changing technological and globalisation trends, coupled with the uncertainty of job availability and security in traditional workspaces, youth entrepreneurship becomes the basis for many young people to earn a living by living their dreams.

Worldometer puts Nigeria's overall population at above 200 million people with a yearly growth of 2.58%. The World Bank indicated that between 2009 to 2019, Nigerians between the ages of 15 and 64 grew from 53.25% to 53.57%, while also showing the potentials in children and adolescents which are reflected to make up 44% and 43.69% of the population in the years indicated. Index Mundi posits that Nigeria's youth population

between 25-54 is 30.44% with youth dependency ratio at 83:88.2 for the country. The reality therefore remains that many youths are unemployed and are dependent on their cultural mechanism of family, friends and old classmates to survive. Likewise, many youngsters are also dependent on the active and healthy adults in their lives to cater for them. Many youths choose different routes: they continue to look for the elusive white-collar job and, with a gamut of certificates, they begin to involve themselves in criminal activities or they acquire technical and technological skills in order to become blue-collar or become an entrepreneur.

A 2016 UNESCO-UNEVOC report titled, 'Making Youth Entrepreneurship a Viable Path,' indicated that the world needed about 600 million new jobs to cater for the teeming youth population. The report

Nigeria: Age structure from 2009 to 2019



Source:
World Bank
© Statista 2020

Additional Information:
Nigeria; World Bank

Source: Statista

also showed that the Middle East, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the European Union are facing high and suicidal unemployment rates amongst the youth – about 30% in most of the regions. It therefore asserts that youth entrepreneurship is a viable path to disrupting the unemployment challenges of these continents. The report urges policymakers to discover the barriers hindering young people from starting their own business, and to create policies and programmes that will make it easy for young people to express their full entrepreneurial potential for the good of the economy. The report also presented the agonising fact that, apart from the urgent need to find a nexus between adequate capital and technical know-how, many societies seem unprepared for the versatile potentials of the youth population. The philosophy behind education and curriculum of schools remains, among other things, to equip young people for jobs that are currently scarce instead of engaging in teaching training programmes and curriculum sessions that will provide the needed technical, managerial, social and emotional intelligence skills needed to shape the culture of a global entrepreneur. Other challenges are lack of access to experience and networks, negative cultural outlook to failure which may hinder young people from trying out new things.

Oluwatobi Ogundele did not study Fashion Design in school at the Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. There was no course to cater for his creative and managerial needs. He began to try his hands-on fashion during one of those long ASUU strikes. There, he decided that he would not be looking for a job after school. Oluwatobi who is the CEO of Owanbe Community crafted a niche for himself by styling Aso Oke fabrics for both ceremonial, bespoke and leisure outfits. He has been showcased on BBC Africa Enterprise and other media platforms as one of the young Nigerians making giant strides in the fashion industry.

Oluwatobi first launched CEOmania Alaso Oke in 2013. He said ‘I got my capital from managing the fashion taste of a client. I paid off vendors from the proceeds and began the journey step by step. It has been a journey of faith, love and trust all the way.’ Ogundele has now expanded the brand due to the partnerships that the brand garnered over the years. It is now Owanbe Community, a collective of fashion curators, designers, models, image consultants, trainers, storytellers who leverage on the strength of one another to curate cultural, marketing

and social impact. For Ogundele, young people should strive to embrace partnerships, while showing tenacity, professionalism and accountability in their craft.



Mr. Oluwatobi

Yet, it has not been easy for Owanbe Community. The firm constantly manages to catch up with all sorts of taxes from local, state and federal government. It also has to grapple with the high cost of generating electricity for itself while paying PHCN bills for largely unavailable power supply. Oluwatobi's turf is also very competitive because there are so many young people like him who are showcasing their craft, but are underpricing their goods to the detriment of the market. The availability of high-quality cotton and the large absence of young cotton weavers also gives him concern on the availability of home woven Aso Oke. There is no ease of doing business for people like Oluwatobi, yet he dreams that his evolving enterprise will become a major fashion brand on the continent. The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) noted that the ‘textile, apparel and footwear’ sector has grown on an average of 17% since 2010. Other estimates put the value of the Nigerian fashion industry at 4.7 billion Dollars.

Youth entrepreneurship is the engine room of job creation for the future. It fosters creativity and innovation in the delivery of goods and services. While the endeavours of youth entrepreneurs produce income, many of them are conscious of social discourses and issues like cultural identity, environmentally friendly postures and best practices for packaging and export. These youths aspire to economic leadership partly due to the fact that leadership in governance seem like an illusion. They hope to use their economic leadership to shape and change the status quo. A Raleigh International report stated that many youths prefer entrepreneurship

because it asserts their individual choices, which often goes against the grain of old and established industry people who often relegate the young to mid-level or low-level strata of company operations. For young minds who are looking for adventure, self-discovery and finance, working in a highly stratified organisation will lead to monotony, deigning and displacement. They aspire to be the future Dangotes, Alakijas, Otedolas and Ovias by leveraging on the immediate needs of the urban and countryside population.

When you ask the average young entrepreneur of his challenges, one of the topics that would likely be broached is the issue of capital or recapitalisation of the enterprise — either a Small-Scale Enterprises, SME, or a Medium and Small-Scale Enterprises. While many enterprises battle with their finances, smart entrepreneurs are leveraging on opportunities such as the Bank of Industry's Youth Entrepreneurship Support programme, The Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme among others. These funding organisations align with the position of Olatunji Fadeyi and others, who posit in their paper, Impact of Youth Entrepreneurship on Nation Building, stated that the biggest challenge of many young entrepreneurs is the managerial skills and background to transform their start-ups into world leading firms. A lot of funding organisations therefore take it upon themselves to train and present their businesses to scrutiny or venture capitalists.

Temitope Olukunle, a multi-entrepreneurial thinker runs Avant Services Limited, a real estate and facility management firm, alongside her micro training platform – The Academy of Personal Development and Business Solutions. She also uses social media platforms to engage and educate members of the public on entrepreneurship, while she distils deeper insights and knowledge for those who are willing to pay for experience and expertise. She is an example of leading female entrepreneurs who delve into many streams of passions in order to achieve their full potential. She is also one of the many experienced business people who are exploring an alternative education space where young entrepreneurs can learn the things that our education system has refused to include in their curriculum.



Ms. Olajolo

Finyinfoluwa Olajolo is also one of the youths who have carved a niche for herself in Agriculture. She is the founding partner at Heths Agro Services, a firm that produces, processes, packages and sells pigs and its derivatives, while offering farmers a neat, secured and affordable facility to rear their pigs. 'I started with Cassava plantation in 2016, thereafter, I moved into poultry before I started pig farming in 2019'. Olajola who has had to face an umbrage of cultural realities in the agricbusiness world due to her age and her gender has done well for herself, she is a recipient of the 2019 Tony Elumelu Grant, which helped improved her capital and operational base. She was recently nominated for the 25 under 25 Entrepreneurs Awards in the Agriculture category. It has not been easy for Olajola, she said 'running a business in Nigeria can be stressful, especially with the daily rise in the price for feed for livestock, and the inconsistent laws guiding business in the country. However, we are pushing and doing all we can to meet the demands of our customers.'

There continue to remain glimmers of hope for entrepreneurs who survive the three years of business in Nigeria. Nigeria has the largest start-ups in Africa. However, experts say that 80% of these businesses often fail or become moribund in three years due to many factors, such as poor marketing, a problematic product, capital, lack of consistency, lack of leadership and management skills.

THE UNFORTUNATE CHILDREN OF FORTUNATE PARENTS

Jude Nwabuokei

Many Nigerian youths would have been told at one point or the other about a Nigeria that used to be the envy of the world, a Nigeria that gave Malaysia palm oil seedlings before they became juggernauts in the export of palm oil. Perhaps those who were fortunate to have family time with their parents or grandparents would have been told those nostalgic tales of a time when the kobo and naira had more value than the N1,000 note of today. There were also tales of students who got funded by the government of that time to study to any point they desired home or abroad. Their Nigeria was a nation of possibilities, a nation that had promise, a nation that once requested that 'Ghana must go', not knowing that it was only a matter of time before a Nigerian consulate in Ghana would be reduced to a pile of debris. Indeed, as a notable journalist and public affairs analyst, Dr. Reuben Abati once said, the Nigerian youth is an unfortunate child of fortunate parents.

For the sake of clarity, this discourse is referring to people within the age bracket of 18 to 35 years. This is with due regard to other existing definitions of youth as provided by the United Nations, its member states

and other countries of the world. Besides, in Nigeria, 18 is considered to be the age of maturity or adulthood even though in reality an 18-year old male or female is considered a 'small boy' or 'small girl' – a socio-linguistic reference that unconsciously limits the potentials and aspirations of most Nigerian youths when it comes to achieving lofty heights, but considers them old enough to be jailed or prosecuted if they commit a crime.

Having established who a youth is in the Nigerian context, one can move on to examine the root causes of unemployment among Nigerian youths, one of them is the failure of the country's educational system, at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. When the Universal Basic Education programme was launched in 1999, it was aimed at providing free primary and secondary education for all. While there were some improvements in enrolment its results have been limited. Claudia Irigoyen in a 2017 article for the Centre for Public Impact, written on Universal Basic Education in Nigeria pointed that although the Nigerian public had a positive perception of the UBE, their perception of the country's education infrastructure was negative.



Irigoyen goes on to cite UNESCO's 2015 review of Nigeria's educational system. Their review revealed that participation in primary education was still low in comparison with primary school age population; the quality of the national school curriculum was undermined by the generally low quality of teachers which translated into low levels of learning achievement. These among other findings, contributed to the poor quality of education among youths in addition to poverty. At the tertiary level, the incessant strikes by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and other similar unions for the Polytechnics and Colleges of Education have affected the quality of graduates that are produced by these institutions. Government's insensitivity to the demands of these academics has had its ripple effect on the students who go into a labour market that is increasingly becoming competitive.

The contest between unemployment and underemployment is another area that should be analysed. Oftentimes, when politicians boast of providing employment, care is not taken to find out the kind of employment that is being referred to. Does the employment befit the beneficiary or is it a matter of scaling up the numbers to tick boxes? Some employed people in Nigeria fall under the category of those who are underemployed as they are forced to take jobs that are below their qualifications in order to survive. The National Bureau of Statistics states that about 13.9 million youths are unemployed with about 55.7% representing the number of youths that were unemployed as at the second quarter (Q2) of 2020. The key highlights of the survey showed that the highest unemployment rate was recorded for youths between 15 to 24 years at 40.8% followed by youths between the ages of 25 to 34 years at 30.7%. When these youths are left to their whims without any form of profitable enterprise, they become prone to seeking self-help which often leads to engaging in vices like internet fraud, robbery, insurgency, prostitution, child trafficking and abuse of narcotics.

The challenge of insecurity Nigeria faces will remain if the issue of the empowerment of youths is treated as a matter for political calculations. When one leaves the southern part of Nigeria and moves towards the north, one finds the debilitating effect of poverty and inadequate education on the youths. The present Boko Haram scourge, which has lingered like a festering sore on the genitals, is a resultant effect of unemployed and

uneducated youths and children who are recruited to join their ranks. The Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria's North-Eastern states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe also include youths who have had to drop out from school due to insurgency. Many of these youths join Boko Haram in a bid to escape from poverty and deprivation. Ruth Naylor and Stephanie Bengtsson in their 2016 publication titled 'Education for Refugees and IDPs in Low and Middle-Income Countries' state that while education is a high priority for most IDPs, humanitarian agencies are justifiably focused on meeting short-term goals like the provision of food, water, shelter and other basic amenities. Hence, it falls on the government at all levels to make adequate budgetary allocation to education.

The lack of profitable employment in rural areas which has led to the rural-urban migration has also contributed to the rise in youth unemployment. At a time when the government is talking about transitioning from an oil-based economy to an agricultural one, there is no better time to utilize the country's agronomy for boosting the nation's revenue than now. From the rain forests of the south to the savannas of the north, there are abundant resources that range from plants and mineral deposits that can be used to generate profitable employment for rural dwellers. Remarkably, there is a growing team of youths who are beginning to delve into viable ventures like animal husbandry in the form of fish farming, piggery, and poultry management. The effort of organisations like the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) that gives grants to budding businesses is a move in the right direction. When there is more emphasis on drafting business plans and creating small and medium enterprises, over time the issue of youth unemployment will fizzle out. Any youth who is gainfully employed will not give a second thought to joining insurgents or engaging in vices like robbery or prostitution.

Another point to consider in addressing the challenge of youth unemployment is leadership. As obvious as this seems, not many people take the pain to consider that the knowledge and values that Nigerian youths possess also emanate from the older citizens. The second stanza of the national anthem reads 'O God of creation/ direct our noble cause/ Guide our leaders right, help our youth the truth to know...' In other words, the Nigerian youth's knowledge is heavily dependent on the kind of guidance that the leaders have. In a country of career politicians and ostentatious oligarchs who feed on the

commonwealth to the detriment of the masses, what example do the youths have? Who are the role models and mentors of these youths? Whoever the youths look up to as a guide or mentor determines the kind of choices they will make career wise. Nigerians, who have been able to distinguish themselves in different fields of endeavour, should be deliberate about mentoring young people who show interest in their profession. Still on the anthem, the first line reads 'O God of creation, direct our noble cause'. This line indicates that Nigeria is a religious country that depends on the guidance of the Supreme Being, God Almighty to direct the affairs of people. But again, the question is, what noble cause is Nigeria pursuing? For a nation with a high spiritual wave length in relation to the metaphysical world, it becomes necessary to inquire if the nation really conforms to the ideals expressed in the anthem.

At this point, it becomes needful to dwell on solutions that can help the Nigerian youth to channel their energy and creativity to more legitimate and profitable ventures. Nigerian youths need to understand the times we live in. The post-Covid era promises to be one that will be reliant on digital technology. Businesses that are not digitally compliant may fizzle out, especially if they cannot use the data analytics of social media and websites to determine where their customers are and what they want. There is the gradual emergence of the creative industry in digital space as seen in Youtube, Instagram and other video streaming platforms. The post-Covid-19 economy calls for not just thinking out of the box, but doing away with the box entirely.

On a global scale there is a radical alteration of careers and business from aviation to manufacturing. An oil producing nation like Nigeria needs to seek new ways of doing trade and running the country from other sources which will include: agriculture and creative industries, human relations and culture, online business and other areas like artificial intelligence, 3D and automation, tele-services, forex trading and cryptocurrencies. In countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, people are beginning to work remotely from their homes. Any Nigerian business or organisation that wants to be relevant must begin to alter their usual way of operating. Nigerian youths, whether employed or unemployed, should begin to use their laptops and smartphones for legitimate enterprises that are entirely online.

The Nigerian creative industry has remarkably begun to catch up with the times. Musicians, film producers, stand-up comedians, dancers, entertainers and their ilk now have YouTube channels where their fans and followers can watch them and give feedback through the comment sections. Movie producers now think in terms of producing content for YouTube and gaining as much followers as possible. With the increased followership and views come deals for endorsements and dollar earnings from YouTube. It becomes a case of working in naira and earning in dollars.

Businesses now use social media to reach out to their target audiences. There are tools that also help them know where these audiences are located. For instance, Facebook has a virtual shop called 'Facebook Shops'. According to Facebook, 'Facebook Shops is a mobile-first shopping experience where businesses can easily create an online store on Facebook and Instagram for free. What this means is that one can connect with customers through WhatsApp, Messenger or Instagram. There are many techno-savvy Nigerian youths who can leverage on these opportunities offered by platforms like Facebook. Nigerian brands like Konga and Jumia are already into this.

In an age of reduced touch and face-to-face interactions, it might take a while before one might see a semblance of the normal, if it happens at all. Consequently, professions that usually involve some form of physical contact are beginning to think of ways to reduce human to human contact while carrying out their activities. One example to buttress this point is from healthcare. Medical consultations may gradually begin to take place on phones and laptops either through audio or video conferencing. It is only when it is ascertained that a situation is critical that physical contact becomes necessary. Nigerian youths should begin to gain skills that are woven around digital technology and IT as there is now a higher demand for these in almost every sector. Undergraduates in the various higher institutions of learning should become more conscious of thinking of ways in which they can apply digital technology in their disciplines. This is not restricted to the pure sciences alone as even the social sciences and humanities now incorporate platforms like Zoom and Microsoft Teams to organise seminars and workshops for human capital development.

The importance of educating females cannot be overemphasized when it comes to youth unemployment. When a woman is properly educated, she thinks less of early marriage and childbearing. As long as the number of females who drop out of school continues to increase, the country will have a population that it cannot manage; this will eventually lead to an increase in the number of unemployed youths in the labour market. Besides from investing in education, the government needs to find out ways of supporting small businesses either by cutting down on their taxes or providing some kind of grant during periods of economic recession. The youths who run some of these businesses can become influencers who will do all they can to have mentees who will replicate their success. The gerontocratic nature of Nigeria's political system should also be examined because youth unemployment is tied to the fact that there are little or no youths in the National Assembly and other arms of government that can formulate policies that will support entrepreneurship and other emerging forms of digital businesses like cryptocurrency which is still viewed with suspicion by the Nigerian government. Regardless of this, Nigeria is among the top five countries in Africa that practices cryptocurrency. Many of the people who are involved in this business are techno-savvy Nigerian youths who are genuinely seeking for alternative sources of income in the absence of traditional white or blue-collar jobs.

In all, the post-Covid-19 economy needs the input of youths, if the nation is going to thrive. Their

energy, vigour and dynamism can be channeled to create something like America's Silicon Valley as seen with the emergence of tech startups in Yaba, Lagos. Unfortunately, even these tech startups that have begun to solve the problem of youth unemployment are beginning shrink due to stiff regulations from the Lagos State Government. State governments across the nation should ensure that their policies do not stifle the legitimate businesses in their domain. Still on startups, mega corporations and establishments should begin to include the empowerment of youths in their host communities as part of their corporate social responsibility. The ones who are already doing this should be given more publicity in order to encourage others to do same. Experts in economics recommend entrepreneurship as the foundation of developed nations. The government must work to increase the ease of doing business by making Nigeria's business environment more attractive to investors. While they focus on dealing with the immediate causes of insecurity, they must deal with the remote causes as well if they crave for a conducive environment for business. For a country with a rapidly growing unemployed population, entrepreneurship remains the most feasible option. Nigeria's informal sector also needs to be examined as there may be business models that may be adopted at the national level that might be unnoticed. It is not enough to demand for taxes and votes; the time has come for political will to manifest in tangible terms for the Nigerian youth.

**Stay Safe
and pay with**

***773#**

Secure, safe and easy banking at
your fingertips. Just dial *773# to
begin.

Jaiz Bank
...FOR A BETTER LIFE



Ugly and Awful

MALLAM NASIR EL-RUFAI GOVERNOR OF A BURNING STATE

Chukwudera Michael

Mallam El-Rufai will be remembered for being one of the vitriolic critics of the Goodluck Jonathan government. While on the side of opposition, he went to conferences, to media to showcase a rare brilliance in governance and administration. Many residents of Kaduna who wanted a breath of fresh air were all out to vote for him as Governor of the state in 2015. Unfortunately, it seems that the government of Kaduna has been bereft of problem-solving ideas ever since. Latest news about Kaduna are not about physical and social developments nor are they about infrastructural landmarks. They tell tales of the clampdown on Shite protests, the shock from the mouth of an uncouth governor, the demolishing of an opponent's private property, and the disappearance of media critics, amongst others.

Mallam El-Rufai is now the tyrant that the people of Kaduna curse when they reach the hilt of their frustration. This is because the governor of Kaduna has done little or nothing to quell the crisis between the Fulani herdsmen and other tribes. He has not taken a governance lesson from the likes of Governor Simon Lalong, who has brought everyone together by providing equal social, infrastructural and governance equity amongst the many tribes that inhabit the landscape, neither has he used his powers to beef up the security of lives and property in Kaduna. It is a free-for-all in that space.

While freedom of speech remains a fundamental right in Kaduna, the fear of being reportedly kidnapped by government agencies like Daddiyata – whose whereabouts remains unknown, after his untrammelled criticism of the

governor – is a signifier to tyranny. In fact, the lack of decorum and respect for criticism was expressed by El-Rufai when he told international election monitoring groups that they would be shipped back in body bags if they interfered with the elections in Nigeria. Bello El-Rufai, his son, exhibited the same violent posture when he affronted a critic of his father's government on twitter, telling the fellow that he, Bello El-Rufai, would rape the fellow's mother and nothing consequential would happen to him. He had in the process used a tribalist slur and referencing the Nigeria civil war. After a major twitter backlash, Nasir El-Rufai's son and his mother, who perhaps had misconstrued the issues, apologised to Nigerians. They earlier refused to engage the people and presented a posture of demigods until the backlashes were too much to bear, in order to save face.

Social Critics like Ikhida Ikheola and Chidi Odinkalu have boldly accused El-Rufai's government of complicity in the crimes in Kaduna State. Their human rights sensors picked up signals when El-Rufai threatened to send electoral monitors home in body bags, besides the mass killings already taking place in the state. Chidi Odinkalu once made a thread on twitter in which he cited 23 instances where critics have been molested or oppressed by Mallam El-Rufai. He named it 'a litany of body bags' on twitter. Likewise, Pa Ikhida has never shied away from urging Nigerian creative writers to boycott the Kaduna Book and Arts Festival. For Ikhida, it is dining over the corpses of men and women of Southern, Central and Northern Kaduna, instead of posing an activist stance to address the germane issues on the ground.



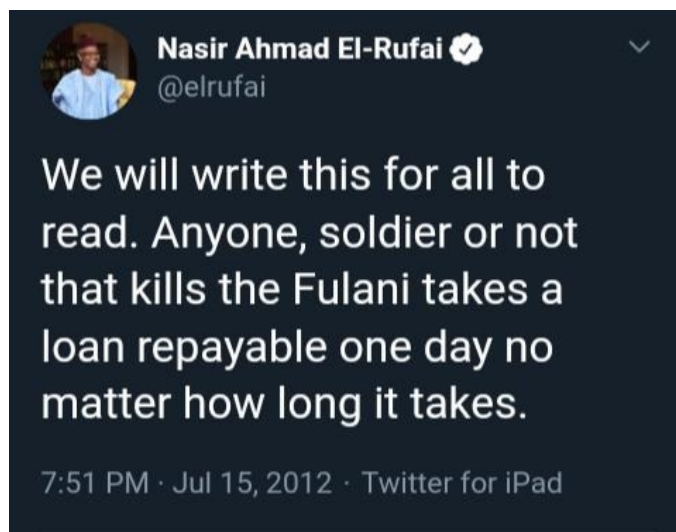
Many already fear the governor because of perceived relations with the President Buhari. However, it will be unfair to connect the malfeasance of El-Rufai to the bolstering relations with the Presidency. Many people link his close relations to Aso Rock because he belongs to the CPC bloc of the megalithic party – the APC – from which the President had emerged. Nevertheless, the Presidency needs to urgently intervene in protecting the lives and property of all residents of Kaduna, even if the governor continues to fold his arms, or rely on caustic tweets, and dangerous pronouncements. We have a replica of the Rwandan Genocide playing out in our backyard, yet we are dining and living in palatial houses as if nothing is wrong.

One wonders whether El-Rufai has media advisors. This is important because his utterances as the governor have so far heated up the distrust between Southern Kaduna and Northern Kaduna residents. El-Rufai recently accused Southern Kaduna elders of causing the crisis because they did not get their usual peace bribes from government. Yet, the same governor tweets generously, implying that anyone who attacks the Fulanis should naturally expect revenge no matter how long. He also said the state is willing to compensate Fulanis for their losses, peradventure they lose their cattle or property but did not say same for the other tribes. This is not the equity that the Nigerian constitution prescribes, neither is it the wisdom that leadership requires.

Governor Nasir El-Rufai has also concerned himself with politicking in the nation without giving full concentration to the urgent security affairs of the state that he presides over. He has been rumoured to be in the forefront of a 2023 Presidency by his public utterances. He has been engaging the discourse on zoning for the position of President in 2023. One then wonders where elections will hold in Kaduna in 2023 and what political leverages Mallam El-Rufai will have when Kaduna implodes into a full genocidal war before 2023. Perhaps the disinvitation of the governor to this year's conference of the Nigerian Bar Association will keep him at home in order to put his house in order.

Governor Nasir El-Rufai, in an attempt to displace the public outcry, compounds the problem by dismissing the peculiar nature of the crisis in Kaduna. He had said that the issue of violence in Kaduna was but mere 'media hype' and is no different from the crisis in the North-Western part of the country. This is largely untrue. The Kaduna crisis has been in existence for forty years while other hydra-headed problems in the North-Western Zone began to manifest about twenty years ago.

The Human Rights Watch clearly stated that Kaduna has suffered from communal clashes between the Hausa-Fulani, who are Muslims in Northern Kaduna and the 30 ethnic groups, who are Christians in Southern Kaduna. These two blocs are in fierce and dangerous 'competition over resources



including land, and political control,' the organisation had said. The Human Right Watch also noted in its report titled, Leave Everything to God, Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria, that 'The situation is more complex in Kaduna State, where the ethnic and religious divisions are more evenly split. In the northern part of the state, Hausa-Fulani hold the majority, and Christians claim they face discrimination, while in the southern part of the state — where numerous predominantly Christian ethnic groups, together, make up the majority — Hausa-Fulani complain that they are treated as perpetual 'settlers' and second-class citizens, despite the fact that, in some cases, their families have lived in those communities for multiple generations. The struggle for 'ownership' — cultural, religious, and political control — of these areas has been at the heart of much of the inter-communal conflict.'

In a media conversation, Jonathan Asake, leader of the Southern People's Congress, said that the massacre is a deliberate attempt by the Hausa-Fulani people to displace them from their lands and property. 'We are facing incessant invasion of our communities — We have recorded over 500 death in over 16 communities,' Asake said. Meanwhile Sanusi Maikudi, in a rebuttal, had asserted that Asake was merely selecting 'comfortable facts' when, according to him, the Southern Kaduna peoples have also killed Hausa-Fulani peoples. This is one matter that Governor El-Rufai can possibly handle with a fairness, while in the process advancing justice, a general sense of belongingness and creating a balanced playing field for political and social relevance for both groups in the governance spaces of the state.

Unfortunately, the posture of Mallam El-Rufai seems to be in favour of the Fulani. His recent tweet warning everyone of the Fulani prowess to carry out revenge no matter how long, is beneath the distinguished and decent position of a state governor. Governor El-Rufai reminds many of President Donald Trump: a man who is quick to tweet and make pronouncements without looking at the perpetual implications of his words.

THE IMPRESSIVE LIFE OF CHADWICK BOSEMAN

Chisom Nnachi



'In my culture, death is not the end. It's more of a stepping-off point. You reach out with both hands and Bast and Sekhmet, they lead you into the green veld where you can run forever.' – T'Challa, Captain America: Civil War, 2016

The world was thrown into deep mourning when screen actor, playwright, and superhero, Chadwick Boseman was confirmed dead.

Chadwick Aaron Boseman – Black Panther – born on November 29, 1977, raised in Anderson, South Carolina, America, as the only child of African American parents, Carolyn and Leroy Boseman, died on August 28, 2020, at the age of 43, in his home in the company of his newly wedded wife and family, after a 4 year battle with colon cancer.

Boseman was diagnosed with Stage III Colon Cancer in 2016. He battled on secretly with the ailment for four years, till it progressed to stage IV leading to his death.

Chadwick Boseman lived a life worth emulating; a life of a fighter. He never let his weakness determine how far he could go.

2016, the same year he was diagnosed with the disease, he starred in Captain America: Civil War, and Message from the King, bringing love and happiness through the screen. No one knew about the drug sessions, chemotherapy, and surgeries.

Chadwick Boseman made his first appearance on the TV screen in 2008 with drama – The Express, where he played the role of Floyd Little acting alongside Rob

Brown in the battle for victory through a football trophy season.

Boseman persevered in his career starring in numerous movies in the little space of time he lived; 4 years of great impact, even as he battled with a demon in his flesh.

Most of Chadwick Boseman's movies include *The Express* (2008), *The Kill Hole* (2012), *42* (2013), *Get on up* (2014), *Gods of Egypt* (2016), *Captain America: Civil War* (2016), *Marshal* (2017), *Black Panther* (2018), *Avengers: Infinity War* (2018), *21 Bridges* (2019), *Avengers: End Game* (2019), and *Da 5 Bloods* (2020).

Death never allowed Boseman to witness the release of his last movie, August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, a play directed by George C. Wolfe, which has been in anticipation to be released before the year runs out.

Black Panther, the movie which brought Chadwick to the limelight, scored high as the fourth highest-grossing movie in the domestic box office, the highest-grossing film by a black director, the ninth highest-grossing movie of all time, the third grossing movie in the US, and Canada, the second grossing movie in 2018, and earnings of \$1.3 billion, winning him an NAACP Image Award after its release. According to *Celebrity Worth*, Chadwick Boseman at the point of death ranked a net worth of \$12 million.

Chadwick Boseman kept his battle with colon cancer private and discreet from the eyes of the press and social media, while he made us laugh. He was sore in the inside while giving us the superhero we desperately needed. Boseman's life was a perfect narration of the popular phrase, 'What will you do if you were to die tomorrow?'

In his dark moments with colon cancer, Chadwick Boseman never seemed to limit the love he shared to the television screen, but also hit the streets with humanitarian services, touching the lives of as many kids as he could.

2018, He was reported to have visited St. Jude children's Research Hospital in Tennessee, where he shared toys, gifts, and more importantly, joy, happiness, hope, and love.

As he fought his battles, he sought to be an inspiration to all who were weak in the flesh.

In 2018, Chadwick Boseman went emotional in his press show with Sirius XM, narrating his ordeal and communication track with the family of two kids who were terminally ill while waiting for the release of his Marvel Studios movie, *Black Panther*.

It was touching to watch him go sober as he disclosed that although the family of the boys held on in faith for the movie, cancer took their boys faster than the release of the movie.

As Chadwick Boseman set up a niche for himself in Hollywood, he made efficient use of his stand as a celebrity to stand against racism, prejudice, and injustice.

In 2017, during a panel discussion after the shoot of the movie, *Marshal*, Boseman Chadwick made a loud declaration on his stand as an activist.

In his words, he said, 'First of all, I'm not just an actor, I'm an artist. You have to express the full scope of your being, physically, spiritually and that includes politically.'

Boseman wasn't just an actor who came for the trophy and medals that the film industry could offer, he came for impact. He left us with indelible imprints, and legacies which will stand the test of time.

Chadwick Boseman also said during his 2019 Screen Actors Guild (SAG) award, 'We know what it is like to be told that there is not a screen for you to be featured on. We know we had something special that we wanted to give the world.'

His life was an amazing blend of character, talent, purpose, and courage, making his roles become relatable to the audience. He became a projector of African-American concerns and a celebrated voice in Africa.

As we all get to celebrate the life of a legend, let us all remember that 'We must find a way to look after one another as if we were one single tribe' – Black Panther, 2018.

JAYWON**ON THE FRINGES OF THE MAINSTREAM***Adebayo Adegbite*

On New Year's Eve of every year since 2014, as soon as the clock ticks into the new year, television and radio stations switch to Jaywon's 'This Year' as everyone plays the song to express their thoughts, hopes and expectations for the new year through its lyrics. The song dominates the airwaves for a few days until the novelty of the celebrations wears off. Then it gets sent back to obscure playlists like Christmas decorations until the next year, when it will be remembered again. It may well be considered the secular pop version of 'Ọdún í lẹ S'ópín', the almost ubiquitous gospel track by Mrs. D. A. Fasoyin and the CAC Good Women choir that typically heralds the Christmas season in the Yoruba-speaking areas of Nigeria. 'This Year' is one song that Jaywon is most remembered for, and in a way, it is a fitting representation of his brand and his sound.

Born Oluwajuwon Iledare, in Egbe, Kogi State on the 6th of June 1986, Jaywon is bagged a Higher National Diploma in Accounting from the Federal Polytechnic,

Bida, in Niger State. But music has always been what he wanted to do and, consequently, in 2005, he left his native Kogi for the centre of Nigeria's music scene – Lagos. The nineteen-year-old soon caught the eyes of the likes of 2face and Sound Sultan, who noted that his distinctive vocals bellied his age. From then on, superstardom was a matter of 'when' not 'if' for the young artiste.

The 'when' would be 2009, at the Kennis Music Easter Fiesta, when Jaywon, then 23, caught the eye of the organisers of the event with his electrifying performance and got signed to the Kennis Music record label. It proved to be an instantly profitable partnership as Kennis Music, one of the top Nigerian labels at the time, and Jaywon hit the top of the music scene together. His gravelly husky baritone, unlike no other in the industry, proved popular with fans as his first song with Kennis, 'Filẹbẹ' flew to the top of music charts across. It was the herald of what was to come, as

hits such as ‘Facebook Love’ with Essence, ‘Praise’ with KSB and ‘Jawo’ with the late Goldie Harvey – all his label mates – followed. 2009 also proved to be a fruitful year for him as he won ‘Best New Act’ at the Nigerian Entertainment awards.

Then in December of 2012, He released the single that has proved to be the magnum opus, or at least the one that he is most remembered for to date in his career so far – ‘This Year’. The song was produced by Black Jerzy. The soulful lyrics of the song, combined with its slow reflective beats, and Jaywon’s own distinct vocals ensured that the song spread like wildfire. It was the perfect song for the gravitas and reflection that a new year brings. It was also fitting that ‘This Year’ would not just be Jaywon’s final hit track for Kennis music, but also arguably the final hit that the label would produce, bringing a fitting end to nearly two decades of the label being the top dog in the Nigerian music industry. Kennis had produced a long line of stars for the Nigerian music industry, Jaywon was the final act. The last big product of a long conveyor belt.

The very first line of the song ‘We’re making money this year’ would also prove prophetic, as Jaywon made money, and lots of it because of that track in 2013. The song raked several endorsements for Jaywon. It also won the ‘Recording of the Year’ at the 2013 Headies. It was the boost he needed to start his own record label, Next World Entertainment, after his contract expired at Kennis Music in mid-2013. One of the very first songs on the Next World label was a remix of ‘Madantin’, a song he had released on the Kennis label, in which he featured May D, Olamide, and Phyno. The song achieved some level of success, which was some assurance that he was ready to take on the music industry. His ‘Oba Orin’ album released in 2016 bore this out somewhat, with Wilfred Okiche of 360nobs describing it as ‘a fine collection of sounds that reflect Jaywon’s superior talent and the state of pop music’ and Joey Akan rating it a 3/5 for PulseNG — ‘Jaywon has performed personally for you, in a crowded local venue.’ Jaywon would also win the ‘Indigenous Act of the Year’ at the AICA Awards in 2016.

Describing Jaywon’s sound is not a particularly easy task. Jaywon’s sound comes from a variety of influences. One can spot bits of Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey and King Sunny Ade in his lyrics, as well as bits of gospel music. These are only few of the wide range of

his influences from hip-hop, to Afrobeat, to the more traditional sounds, which he combines into a vocally pleasurable, artfully distinct sound.

If one is to define the overall nature of Jaywon’s career, one can do it in terms of two of his songs: the aforementioned ‘Filebẹ’ and ‘This Year’. The hook for ‘Filebẹ’ which goes ‘Fi í leẹ bẹẹ, oun tí mò mò ní ẹ/Jẹ kó wá bẹẹ and do the one wey you sabi (Leave it that way, what I am doing is what I know how to do best/let it stay that way and do what you do best too’, is in many ways a reflection of Jaywon’s sound. Jaywon as a rule is a pop artist, with his main strength as his voice. He is not much of a lyricist. He doesn’t quite have that turn of phrase, or the reflexive adlibs, or the command of street lingo that artistes like Olamide and 9ice and lately the likes of Nairamarley command. Where the likes of Olamide, 9ice, Nairamarley, or Davido might entertain, Jaywon sings. The difference in the two is how the aforementioned artistes do on party and club tracks, versus how Jaywon’s music does in that circuit. It is also the reason why his songs are distinctive vocal marvels, and are soulfully lyrical but hardly compelling enough to be worth repeat plays, especially for a young vibrant population of Nigerians hooked on the Nigerian party and club music scene. It is not that Jaywon doesn’t try to get in those circles, but anytime he does, the resulting sound often comes out as something he does to fit in, not something that comes from his comfort zone.

In a 2016 review of ‘Jolly Muke’, one of the tracks on Jaywon’s Oba Orin Album which he featured 9ice, I had written that ‘9ice eats him up on his own song, and 9ice’s lyrics are more memorable than Jaywon’s.’ That assertion was made in the context of one song, but four years on it has become an overarching theme of his career. His most celebrated song, ‘This Year’, is one of reflection. It is the perfect summation of his career, the object lesson that what Jaywon knows how to do best is sing, and he is better off doing that than anything else.

And there is no doubt that he knows this, which is why he prefers music where he can pour out his soul into his lyrics. In recent years, his songs which feature the likes of Qdot, Barry Jhay, and Lyta, have rarely deviated from that norm. While at 34 he is far from being an old man, he has finally grown into his sound, and one can say he is now doing music that he wants to do, the way he wants to do it.



It is not a bad thing to be remembered for his voice either, after all Morgan Freeman will be remembered more for his voice, that baritone that lends gravity to the mundane, than for his acting which is not as memorable. Of course, his fans would no doubt argue that with such a distinctive voice and lyrics that speak deeply to the human condition deserves far more recognition than he is getting, the awards that he has won notwithstanding. To people who love his music, the fact that an artist like him has struggled for mainstream acceptance shows that something is broken in the Nigerian music industry. Perhaps in a certain sense, the turn of Jaywon's career was inevitable. In terms of musical personification, Jaywon is not, and will never be, the hip friend on twitter or Whatsapp whom you constantly hang out with and who knows the latest memes and slangs. He is more of your older, wiser, slightly old-fashioned uncle, whom

you visit from time to time and who always prays for you and who never fails to drop a pearl of wisdom or two about life for you. You might not always hang out with him because he can be boring sometimes, but you will always need his words of affirmation and his gentle voice assuring you that you are doing it right.

Jaywon is a rare breed, an artiste from a generation of musicians that lived in a very different era of Nigerian music. Thus, like a time traveler stuck in the wrong generation, he will always be at the fringes, unable to become a mainstream darling. But he will continue to sing on, because the likes of him will never die out. He might not know how to turn a phrase, but he can sure turn a note. And that is why we will always need him and his likes around; men who know what they are doing, and are doing what they know how to do best.

QUICK AND EASY BREAD SNACKS ANYONE CAN MAKE

Ameenah Oke

Are you one of those people who genuinely dislike the art of cooking? Or you tend to get so busy with other things in your life that food and the making of it seem like an uphill task?

What if I told you that all it would take you to make a truly satisfying meal is a loaf of bread and a few accompaniments? And you could have your meal ready in 20 minutes or less.

A lot of people tend to forget just how versatile food can be when they're overwhelmed. It will interest you to know that majority of food actually takes very little time to prepare if you do a little something called a 'meal prep'.

And if you aren't one for prepping meals, then you can use 'shortcuts'. Don't look so surprised, everyone could benefit from a shortcut here or there.

In today's world, one of the most readily available food items is bread, and I wonder why most people don't take advantage of it enough. Bread can be eaten as it is, or transformed into something else entirely. And whether it is eaten hot or cold, it always goes down easy. Here are a few recipes to help you elevate this humble food citizen to the level of the gods:



1. EGG-IN-BREAD ROLLUPS



This recipe uses two of the most commonly used ingredients in every household and transforms it into an adventurous food experience. Between the onions and the peppers packed in this bad boy, it is just loaded with delicious goodness.

You'll need:

2-3 eggs
 1/2 tsp dried thyme
 1 tsp garlic powder
 1 finely chopped red onion
 Finely chopped spring onions
 1/2 cup veggies of choice (tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage or mushrooms)
 Salt to taste
 Black pepper to taste
 Premade tomato/pepper sauce
 Oil for frying
 Sliced bread/Pita bread

Directions for Cooking

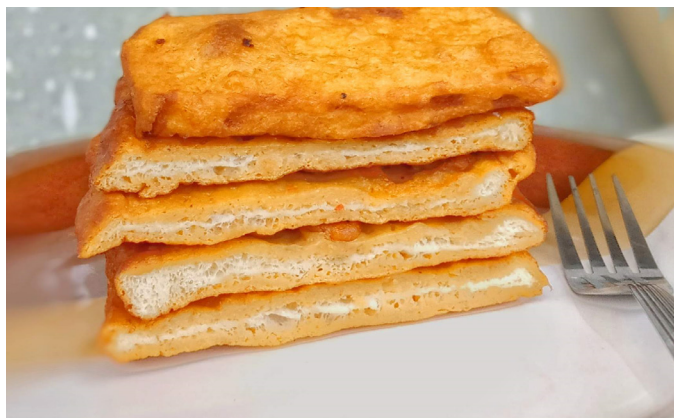
- Break your eggs in a measuring cup. Add in the salt, garlic, pepper, spring onions and thyme. Mix well and set aside.
- On a flat surface or chopping board, use a rolling pin or wine bottle to flatten out your bread slices.
- Spread the sauce on the flattened bread slices.
- Put a frying pan on medium heat and add a teaspoon of oil. When it becomes hot, add in a bit of the egg mixture.
- Sprinkle the chopped onions and veggies on the egg mix immediately.
- Top with a slice of bread, and leave to cook for about

30 seconds.

- Flip the whole thing over so that the bread is now on the bottom.
- Remove and put on a paper towel. Roll immediately into a cylinder.
- Repeat steps e-g until you have used up all the bread and eggs.

Enjoy your meal with a cup of tea or other beverage of choice.

2. VEGAN FRENCH TOAST



If you love to eat French Toast but you wake up one morning to find that you've run out of eggs, welcome to French Toast 2.0. I dare say that if you try this recipe, you just might kiss the conventional French Toast goodbye.

You'll need:

Powdered beans or chickpeas
 Habanero peppers
 1 onion
 Salt
 Seasoning powder
 1 egg
 Water
 Oil for frying
 Bread slices

Directions for Cooking

- Add all ingredients into a blender, except the water, bread and oil.
- Add enough water to just about the halfway point of ingredients in the blender.
- Blend on the medium high setting until everything breaks down and you have a thick batter. If you find it difficult to blend, add more water and if it's too runny, add more powdered beans.
- Pour the mix into a wide bowl and leave to sit for

about 10 minutes. Test for seasoning and add a bit more if necessary.

e. Add a few teaspoons of oil into a frying pan on medium high heat.

f. Stir the bean mix, and dip in one bread slice. Make sure every part of the bread is coated.

g. Drop in the hot oil and fry till golden brown on one side. Turn on the other side and fry till golden brown as well.

h. Repeat steps e and f till you use up all your ingredients.

i. Serve with tea or beverage of your choice. It's a perfect weekend meal

3. STUFFED FRENCH TOAST



You might be thinking, French Toast again? Don't worry, we're all about upgrading. These Frenchies will fill you up in a matter of slices, but still leave you wanting more. It's a little messy to make, but so worth it. The wonderful part is that you don't even need the stove for this, just small electricity.

You'll need:

Bread Slices

Melted margarine/butter

3 eggs

Salt and pepper to taste

Stuffing (This could be as simple as peanut butter and jelly, chocolate spread or a medley of veggies)

Electric toaster/sandwich maker

Directions for Cooking

a. Using a kitchen brush or paper towel, brush some melted margarine on your sandwich maker. Plug it in and leave to get hot.

b. Break your eggs in a shallow bowl, and add in the salt and pepper to taste.

c. Spread your stuffing on one slice of bread and top with another slice.

d. Dip the sandwich you've just formed in the egg mixture, making sure to coat both sides of the sandwich.

e. Drain the sandwich of excess egg and place in your sandwich maker.

f. When the light turns green and you can smell the egg cooking, take out the toast.

g. Repeat steps c-f until you use up all of your ingredients.

h. Enjoy!

Try any of these bread dishes by yourself, with your kids or with family members. At the very least, it's a new take on old recipes and you will definitely all have some fun making them. You can also feel free to explore and change up ingredients as you want just to see how different flavours are formed. Don't forget to give us a shoutout when you do.

Ameenah Oke is a blogger, adventurer and recipe creator. All recipes in this piece are original and have been created by her.

All pictures courtesy Ameenah Oke @foodsbyameenah

Showcase



Phebean is a Saxophonist and quasi-vocalist. Her style of music is deeply African fused with Jazz and popular culture. She is strongly influenced by Fela, Manu Dibango, Hugh Masekela, Angelique Kidjo, Gerald Albright and Asa.

She headlined the Satchmo Jazz festival 2016, Lagos Jazz Festival 2015. She has performed at Gidi Xmas, Stellenbosch Chamber music festival, Nigeria @ 50 celebration in Beijing, MUSON jazz festivals, Union bank Women's Day Celebration and Vlisco Women's Day Celebration, as well as acted in Saro the Musical, Band Aid stage play. She shared the stage with Femi Kuti and others in Felabration.

Phebean recently established the Mine Studios in Lekki, where she provides recording and Artistic Productions. Phebean is girded with a Diploma in music from MUSON Lagos, and a Grade 8 ABRSM (London) In Saxophone/Music theory. She also earned a Diploma from the Peter Kings College of Music, and Bachelor's Degree in Music from the University of Lagos.

She is currently working on her debut Album which would be defined by her dexterity with the Saxophone and a message to humanity.

Oustanding Careers

CLEMENT CHUKWUDIFU



Clement Chukwudifu. Teacher Extraordinaire

A seasoned teacher, educationalist, and a manager of educational services, Mr. Clement Uzo Chukwudifu has made a mark in the educational sector of Nigeria's national life. His over two decades of professional service in the industry has seen him lift many an institution and student from unanimity and mediocrity to visibility and excellence. Lead British International School, Abuja, of which he currently serves as Deputy Head of School and Head of Standards and Evaluation, is one such institution. The school boasts of early years, primary and secondary sections. From a negligible student population of twenty when he joined in 2008, numbers swelled astronomically to over 1,000 in just five years of operation, thanks in large measure to Chukwudifu's ingenuity.

An expert in English Language and the creative arts, the widely-consulted educational technocrat is at his best when he is tasked with bringing students to the optimum levels of their ability. He is also a qualified Educational Guidance Counsellor. In his hands, sub-average students have been transformed to being able to ace their internal as well as external examinations. This he is able to do simply by adopting a pedagogical approach that seeks to simplify otherwise complex rules of the English Language to the

enjoyment and easier comprehension of students. In addition to his classroom work, he also has administrative duties, which he ably discharges with panache.

The upward swing of students' performances is, undoubtedly, due to the creativity which he brings into his role as the head of standards. The intensive two-year staff training he initiated has helped teachers to acquire up-to-date and cutting-edge methods that have in turn improved the learning process among students with outstanding qualitative and quantitative benefits. Consistently, his JSS1 and SS3 students turn in impressive results in their English Language examinations. Put in perspective, such performances against the disturbing background of well-documented students' perennial weaknesses in this subject, put in bold relief Mr. Chukwudifu's feat. Little wonder, the Federal Ministry of Education has taken note by getting him to rise fast while he was with the ministry. It is also for the same reason, no doubt, that throughout his impressive career, Chukwudifu has been in high demand in this cadre of education in the country, as he struts his stuff from one highbrow college to another, taking beneficiary institutions to higher levels of performance in their businesses.



Clement Chukwudifu, Raising Generations

Some of the institutions that have benefited from Clement's sterling services include the Federal Government College, Ikot-Ekpene in Akwa-Ibom State, where it all began in 1974 as English Language Teacher. For nine years, he taught the subject at the ordinary level and English Literature at the advanced level, in addition to diverse roles at different times as House Master, Drama & Culture tutor, coordinator of Literary and Debating Club, and basketball coach. At King's College, Lagos which he joined in 1983, he performed similar roles before he became the Head of English Department in the school. Notably, Clement also edited the school's magazine, displaying distinctive creative and administrative acumen in the process. In 1996, the El-amin International School in Minna procured his services as its Vice Principal, taking him to a higher level of responsibility.

When in 1999 he moved to the prestigious Loyola Jesuit College as Head of the Faculty of languages, it was ample proof of Clement's track record as teacher and administrator par excellence, and he did not disappoint on the job. He brought his impressive pedagogical nous to bear on his role by helping non-English speakers to improve on their English Language proficiency. He also developed a Personal and Social Education Programme for students that guided them on societal norms and motivation for higher examination grades.

However, Clement in 2001 took a break from Loyola Jesuit College to work with Funtaj International School as its Principal which was called Coordinator. Guided by his

robust experience in management of educational matters such as in the areas of documentation and creation of structures, the young school quickly gained the approval of the government and other examination bodies like WAEC and NECO. In 2002, Mr. Clement who had already posted cognate profile in educational management returned to Loyola Jesuit College as the Chairman, Continuous Assessment and Examinations which is equivalent to Vice Principal Academic, combining it with the role of the School Counsellor and English tutor. It was from these roles that he transferred his services in 2008 to the Lead British International School, Abuja.

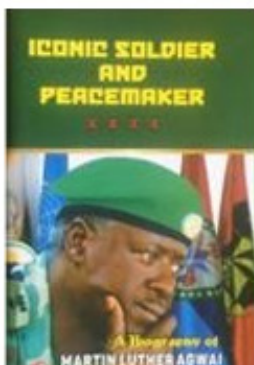
The depth of Mr. Chukwudifu's creative insight is best appreciated in the light of his publications with the Lantern Publishers and West African Book Publishers, in the area of effective learning in English Language. His intellectual output won him the British Council Award to study in Great Britain in 1989 and a summer grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to participate in the 5 African-American Classical programme in 1988.

Mr. Chukwudifu holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) degree in English from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, a Postgraduate Diploma in Education from the University of Ibadan, a Postgraduate Diploma and Master of Arts degree from Moray House College of Education in Edinburgh, Scotland, and a Master of Education (M.ED) in Guidance and Counselling from the University of Ibadan.

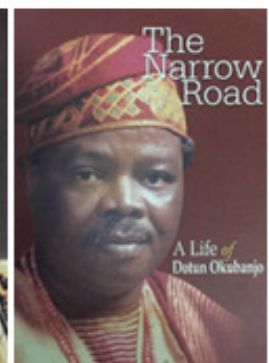
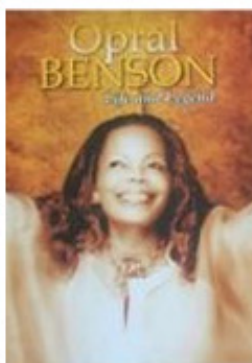
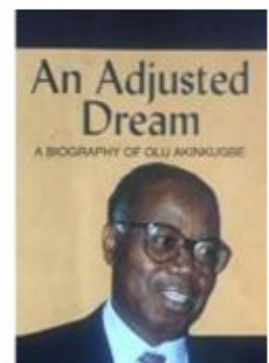
Are your legacies Professionally Documented?



We offer helpful pathways to the past and future



Tel: 09099547013 / 080103072762
Email: maybiography@gmail.com
www.mayeducational.com.ng



ADETUTU ADELEKE

Industrialist and Foremost Female Director



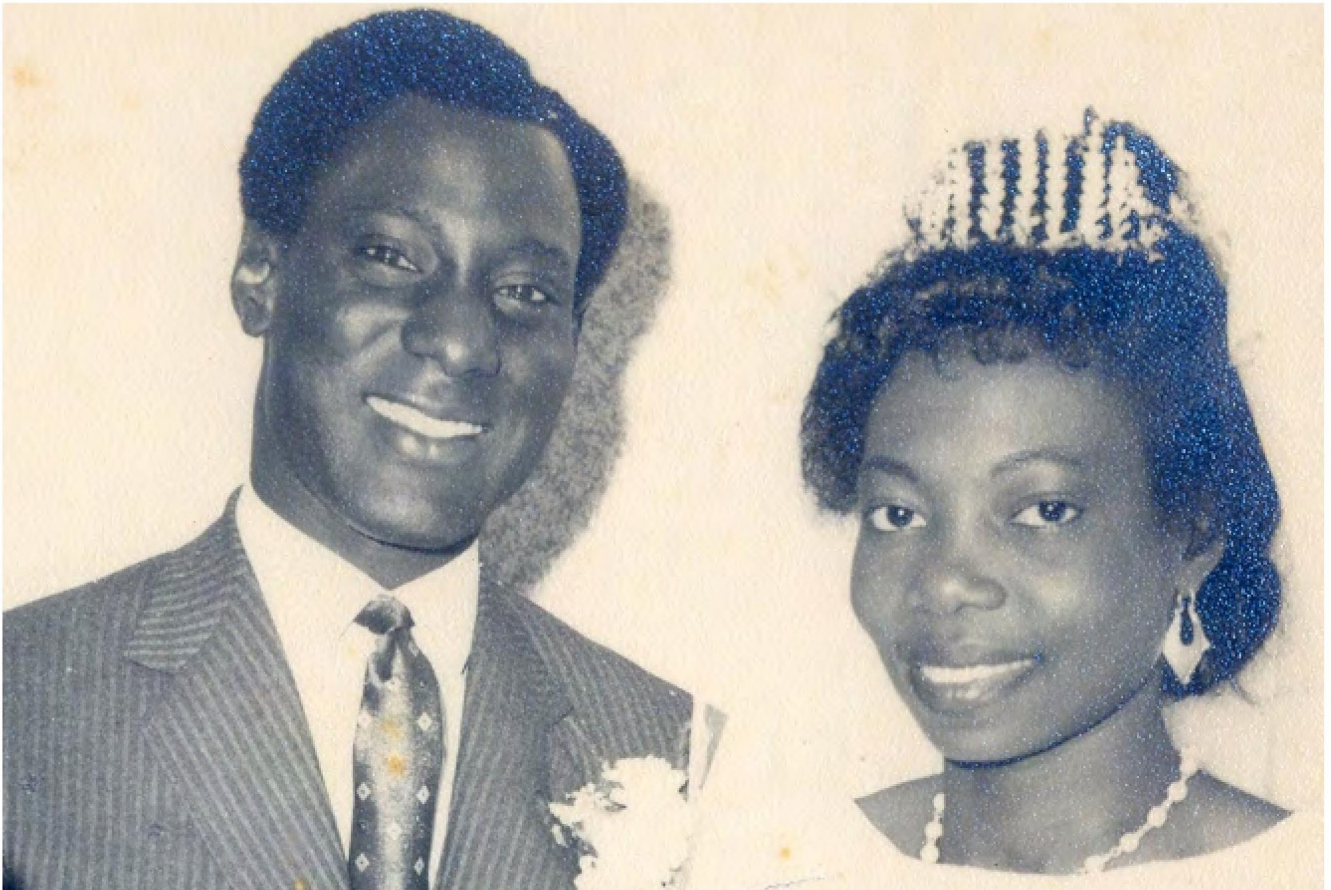
Industrialist and Foremost Female Director

Raised by a widowed father and an initially harsh stepmother, Adetutu weathered various storms in years of childhood. She was later employed by Tate & Lyle as an Assistant to the Company Secretary. Although her employment then was novel – as a young black lady in Europe – she rose through the ranks in the organisation to become its head and, in the process, Nigeria’s first female CEO of a publicly quoted company.

Concerning the business of Tate & Lyle, I had just finished my CIS exams in the UK and was in the process of taking up another course when my younger sister convinced me to look for a job, instead. She brought me a copy of The Guardian newspaper to look for job vacancies. Reluctantly, because I wasn’t expecting any invitation from British-run organisations to a young Black woman, I decided to write an application. I applied to more than three organisations for the post of

an Administrative Assistant. I was pleasantly surprised to get invitations from all of them. In each one, I was the only female and the only Black.

Eventually, in 1966, against all odds, I was employed as an assistant to the company secretary at Tate & Lyle. I maintained this position for the probationary period after which I was invited to meet the company’s Board. They told me that they were satisfied with how I tackled my job and would want me to continue in their Nigerian office. I wasn’t ready to return home but they encouraged me to give it a try. I told my husband and he offered to investigate the office in Nigeria for me. When he found it somewhere on Broad Street, which was fast becoming the centre of big business in the country, he urged me to return home. Besides, he told me that he was lonely. So, I came back to Nigeria as Assistant Company Secretary in 1967, but soon became the Company Secretary in 1969. I held this position for a decade before becoming a Director.



Married Life

My organisation wanted me to become their Finance Director. I rejected the offer because I was not a qualified accountant; but they were persistent. It was touching to see how much confidence they had in me. In the long run, I became the Corporate Affairs Director. Sometime later, the company started having financial problems. In 1983, the overseas director and chairman came around and invited everyone for separate interviews for the position of Managing Director. Soon, the visitors told me I was now the Managing Director. 'No! This couldn't be true. What happened to the others?' was the question that flooded my mind almost instantaneously. 'They all resigned,' I was told.

I immediately rejected the offer. My chairman wondered what could be wrong with me. He asked Francesca Emanuel, his friend and the first female federal civil service administrator, to persuade me to change my mind. My rejection was based on the context of the appointment and the strain and stress the new position would cause me. There was also the domestic consideration: I was still hopeful for more children. My husband eventually convinced me to take up the position.

He assured me that he wasn't particular about the number of children we might have. God helped me to utilise my gifts at Tate & Lyle. In addition to sugar production, we introduced pipes and flat sheets (used to make files and the back of albums).

We were doing well until the economic depression set in. A business merchant later came into the sugar industry and was the only one getting all the import licences. Things became difficult.

Getting bank loans was a major problem. Several companies then realised they couldn't operate effectively in Nigeria. Although we struggled on, the situation became unsustainable. We got into heavy debts and one of the banks took us to court. It was a trying time. I wanted to resign my presidency of the Nigeria Institute of Management but the Institute refused to let me go. They insisted I should complete my term. The economic crisis of the 1980s affected Tate & Lyle terribly. More worrisome was the fact that only one merchant got government's attention and he had the wherewithal to bankroll the production of tonnes of sugar. Critics said the problem was that I was a woman. They forgot



At the Zonta Club--women supporting women.

that I was also responsible for the resuscitation of the company. We eventually won our appeal against being wound up. After the euphoria of the court victory, I resigned because I didn't see the need to remain in the company. I thought the company needed some new persons to give it some fresh experience. Since then, I have teamed up with my husband's company, Peter Zion Nigeria Limited as the managing director.

NETWORKS

Over the years I have developed and maintained a close rapport with the professional world, especially with various chambers of commerce, institutes and associations. Among the lot, the Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce occupies a prominent space. I have a long history with this association which culminated in my ascension to the presidency in 2001. During my tenure, which lasted till 2003, I worked hard to bring the chamber back on its feet from the financial problems I had inherited as president.

My strategy was to rebuild its financial base. We stopped borrowing money to pay salaries, and our activities picked up tremendously. I have also been a member of the Lagos Chamber and was the chairperson of its agricultural trade group that toured India, Malaysia and Thailand in 1986. We submitted a report to the then Minister of Industry, General Alani Akinrinade

(Rtd.), who later visited India to understand more about their small-scale sugar production policy. That led to the introduction of small-scale sugar production of the Sunti and Lafiagi Sugar Plantations in Nigeria. Following the ban of cube sugar, I worked closely with the minister to create awareness for the domestic consumption of granulated sugar.

Other bodies I belonged to at various times included the National Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA). I was chairman of both the Association of Plastic Manufacturers in Nigeria, and Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria (MAN), Apapa Branch from 1991 to 1993. I also became the National Vice-President of MAN, Lagos Zone, a position I held from 1992 until 1995. Additionally, I was president of the Association of Food, Beverages and Tobacco Employers from 1991 to 1994. The most tasking of my service in the organised private sector was at the Nigeria Institute of Management, where I was president between 1994 and 1997. Before the end of my tenure, I had faced several challenges, mostly having to do with changes. I had planned to introduce some innovations – like making capacity-building programmes compulsory and having chief executives within the hierarchy of the Institute for easy successions. But many people opposed the ideas. Gradually, however, these innovations are now in

place. I believe it is proper for people to have a thorough understanding of their chosen professions. Besides belonging to professional institutes and associations, I am also an advocate for good training. This is because I was a beneficiary of such. I had one of such opportunities in 1998 when the International Labour Organisation sponsored my participation at a workshop on micro-enterprise in the US. In June 2000, I attended a workshop, 'Women – the Emerging Force', organised by the Centre for International Private Enterprise in Washington DC. I have also participated in other relevant training programmes which have sharpened my skills as an administrator and company executive.

THANK GOD FOR GRANDMOTHER

My maternal grandmother, Mrs Adeline Mann, played a significant role in my development, which I trace to my childhood. Her mother was from Sierra Leone while her father was from Abeokuta. Very strict and spiritual, she was particular about things pertaining to God or religion. For instance, she ensured that Sundays were observed as days of rest for the whole family, meaning no work whatsoever on that day. In fact, I used to wonder why we ate on Sunday because I felt cooking was also work! We all learnt to say prayers every morning and at night before going to bed. Once the prayer bell was rung, everybody was required to be indoors, whether they were ready to sleep or not. Grandma brought us all up to believe in God. She showed us the way of integrity and emphasised the need for abstinence from sex before marriage. She monitored our movements and saw to it that we never strayed.

As a boarding student, whenever I returned home and had male friends visiting, Mama would tell them I wasn't around, and I dared not show myself or open my mouth to say otherwise. Her influence contributed significantly to who and what I have become. Mama's training also meant we weren't allowed to mingle with other children in the community because she felt we might be negatively influenced. She overprotected us. She never allowed us to attend parties because she wasn't sure of what or how the meals were prepared. She preached the value of contentment. This made me grow up believing in myself and being satisfied with what I have.

Besides religious and moral grounding, our years with grandmother were decisive in shaping our lives. She played the role of a mother so well we never felt the reality of the demise of our mother until much later.

Once, a woman of my late mother's age (I guessed they were friends) saw my younger sister and me returning from church and started to cry. We couldn't understand until we told Grandma, who also wept while revealing to us that our real mother had died two years earlier. Prior to this time, they always told us that she had travelled. Our grandmother remained our mother and whenever any child said their mother did anything for them, we showed them what our granny did for us. She often told us stories, mainly fairy tales, which became very useful for me as I used them for my literary activities in the secondary school. When I was a teenager, Grandma encouraged me to bring friends home so she could assess them properly. Prayer took a significant position in our everyday activities. After attending the prayer meeting held every morning in our neighbourhood, we returned and got ready for school. Significantly, however, childhood also had its fair share of fun.

CHILDHOOD, A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

I was born on 27 August 1939 to the family of Michael Rowland Adeeko and Christiana Adebimpe Obisanya. My mother died at the young age of 32 while I was still a toddler. My father was of the Abejoye ruling house in Idowa, Ijebu-Ode, while my mother was the daughter of Chief David Oladehinde Adefolaju Sophehin-Mann, of the ruling house of Jibodu of Aké in Abeokuta. Surely then, I am a true Ogun State indigene! Following the death of our mother, Dad was reluctant to remarry. In fact, it took him eight years before he eventually succumbed to the pressure. My siblings and I wished Dad never remarried because of the way his new wife ill-treated us.

She was harsh to us, compared with the way she treated her own children. But for her hindsight, I might have continued with that bitter spirit which ultimately does no one any good. When I was in Form 2 in the boarding secondary school, she requested to see me and apologised for her past actions. She claimed she never wanted to ill-treat us but to make us grow up well. Dad was always in a three-piece suit, despite the heat, and spoke only English at home. Almost everything he wore was imported and he was very sophisticated. We dressed well for any outing. Despite his sophistication, however, he was highly disciplined. He was strict with his children and asked questions if we got home late. He didn't over pamper us. We were members of the Cathedral Church of Christ, Marina, which we attended regularly. Dad was a thorough churchman. He never joined any



society outside the church and he encouraged us to do same. He delighted in church music, and loved playing the piano. His love of music obviously influenced my joining the choir of my school, Reagan Memorial Baptist Secondary School. The school's choir always looked forward to and participated actively in the yearly Baptist Convention. Perhaps as a result of his religiosity, he never allowed us his daughters to use make-up. He argued that we were okay the way God created us. He gave us the opportunity to ask any questions that bothered us and told us about our mother and how he missed her. Without doubt, my father also contributed to who and what I have become.

LEARNING AND GROWING

Formal Primary education for me started in 1948 at the CMS Girls School on Broad Street, Lagos. It used to be called Seminary, and was initially for boys and girls until the Anglican missionaries introduced one for boys before establishing the CMS Grammar School, where the boys graduated to. My primary school years were spent in Grandma's home. Memories fade because it's a long time ago but one of my classmates was Professor Ronke Akinsete, while Mrs Abisogun Alo was a senior. I remember these among others because we became closer as we grew. Seminary was a day school which closed at 2.30 p.m. Back home from school, we undressed, washed our legs and hands and changed into our play clothes. We then had lunch, studied or did homework, after which we could play within our vicinity. This was a routine we considered fun because it was what everyone else did. I was eager to go to secondary school because of the constant encouragement I received from both my father and grandmother. Reading was a favourite hobby I inherited from my father and which helped my appreciation of art subjects, particularly literature. My secondary school education was at Reagan Memorial Baptist Girls Secondary School, Lagos between 1953 and 1959. It was a Baptist missionary boarding school and that made me happy whenever it was on session but sad when it was time for holiday.

I loathed going home because of my stepmother. But I still had to contend with the biblical teachings we received from school about showing love to those who hated us. We memorised scriptures and took on the identity of the virtuous women in the Bible. The management of my school apparently saw leadership traits in me, as I was made a prefect and asked to head several groups, including the literary society. The school



saw my fellow prefects and me as beacons of hope. The principal, Miss Hardy, and one of my teachers, Miss Roper, were very helpful. With their encouragement, I passed the entrance examinations into both Queen's College and Ibadan Grammar School for my A' Levels. I chose the former, but this did not deter Miss Hardy from monitoring my academic performance and welfare. She kept contact with me, encouraging me to be a teacher. There was this day I saw her with the Queen's College Principal, Miss Gentle. I thought they'd been friends for a long time. But I learnt they just knew each other because my former principal came to her colleagues to notify them that I was her student (I had scored the highest in one of the three subjects in the qualifying exams). They then called me out to congratulate me.

The relationship with my former principal, Miss Hardy, continued even when I went abroad and returned, as the school followed my progress, and pasted anything about me on the board for the students. After my A' Levels, I was to proceed to the University of Ibadan to major in a literary subject. However, my father decided I should go to the UK to read law, while my fiancé dissuaded me from law because he felt I was too shy. I then chose to become an administrator. I studied at the North Western Polytechnic, London, between 1962 and 1965, where I came in contact with both White and Black teachers. This wasn't strange to me because I'd been taught by expatriates while still in Nigeria. Strangely enough, the Africans were better in English than the native students. I found that the rigorous processes we passed through back home had prepared us for the challenge. My stay

in the UK enabled me to continue my education at Ashridge Management College from 1974 to 1975, and Sundridge Park Management Centre from 1977 to 1978. These were all critical background experiences that inspired my success in management in Nigeria in later years.

OF SISTERHOOD AND WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT

I owe my achievements to God. He has been and remains the main source of inspiration since my childhood days. He is my reason for everything. Being reared in a strong Christian background was instrumental to my grounding during the formative years. My grandmother played a major part in the success I am today. She made me to understand that whatever I have is given to me to benefit others. People like Professor Bolanle Awe, Mrs Gbemisola Rosiji (my aunty), Dr. Abimbola Silva, Magistrate Akerele, Mrs Teju Alakija (daughter of the former Ooni of Ife) among others, also made unforgettable impacts on my life. The values learnt over the years have carried me through. The friendship, love, strength and encouragement that I got from these sisters have motivated me tremendously into giving back to my society. For instance, my desire to see better, motivated me and successful Nigerian women got me involved with Zonta International in 1972.

Zonta is an international association which began in the US with the purpose of helping women grow and ensure they give service to their communities, particularly to the handicapped and underprivileged. Membership then was through invitation and I became one of its international directors, before becoming a vice-president from 1984 to 1987. There is also the Inner Wheel Club of Yaba, which is a club of wives of members of Rotary International in that area. We only complement the services of the Rotarians, holding meetings once in a month on a Sunday. Perhaps because of what I have been able to achieve, I have sometimes received offers both from my husband's state and mine to serve in one capacity or another.

I have found that a woman has to work twice as hard as a man to get to the top. Although the United Nations specified at least a 30 per cent slot for women, and there are agitations for more women in positions of authority in Nigeria, I don't subscribe to the idea of decreeing such an issue. Women should be able to earn their positions on merit or they won't command any

respect. Most men saw me as a threat at first, but when they found that I was willing to learn as well as excel, they were won over. Being a 'first female' is actually one description that has stuck with me over the years. Diverse opportunities have continued to come my way in various forms during my long career. In 1990, I was guest of the Canadian International Development Agency to show the capabilities of women entrepreneurs in developing countries, and to encourage business ventures with Canadian counterparts. I was the first Nigerian businesswoman to be invited. I was the first female company secretary of a publicly quoted company in Nigeria, as well as the first female executive director. I was also the first female President of the Nigerian Institute of Management, and the first female President of Nigeria– British Chamber of Commerce, as well as that of AFBTE (Association of Food, Beverage and Tobacco Employers).

ROSES AND THORNS

It is important to recall that I became a bit rebellious towards my father at a time during my growing-up years. Firstly, I jettisoned his suggestion to read law by majoring in a company-related course in London. Secondly, I got married to someone he objected to without giving me any convincing reason. He reacted to these by stopping the payment of my school fees; but that did not deter me because I was determined to work and excel. The academic programme was such that one had to pass all subjects entered for as failure in one course meant failure in all. I was initially scared of the situation, but I eventually passed as a result of self-organisation, hard work and perseverance. I then got wedded to my fiancé, Bola Adeleke, an engineer by profession. Dad was not happy at my disobedience. Besides stopping my fees, he returned the piece of our wedding cake we sent to him. When we wrote to him to suggest a name for our first child, he didn't even bother to reply to us or to offer us congratulations. My husband and I then realised we had a lot on our hands to convince him.

So, I advised my husband, who returned to Nigeria first, to always go to him and try to be a good son. The strategy didn't work for a long time but when it eventually did my father wholeheartedly accepted my husband and they became very close. It was incredible for me to later hear Dad encouraging me never to monitor my husband. I guessed he finally realised we had married for love. He also told me later that he was proud of my chosen career and how I made a success of it. Only then was I glad to

have been 'rebellious'. My marriage has been successful because of love and understanding between my husband and me. We make sure we never monitor each other and do not allow people to come between us. We became closer when people thought we would be separated due to our inability to conceive more children. In the midst of the heat, I told my husband that he had my permission to have a child or as many children as he wanted outside matrimony. But he told me he wouldn't rock the boat. I was amazed. Here was someone from a large Muslim family (although he had become a Christian before I met him) who chose to remain monogamous despite pressures.

He even sent his sister out when the latter proposed the idea of another wife. I had to kneel and beg my sister-in-law to disregard the threat. My father-in-law took me as a daughter and not as a wife. We were quite close and there were things he would tell only me. Today, my in-laws accept me as a mother, since my husband is now the head of the family. Whenever critical family issues are discussed, I am asked to participate, while other wives are excused from the meetings.

Without doubt, my marriage has been blessed. Even though we had our problems, like my son dying in my arms, my not being able to have more children, or my husband suffering a stroke, we have been able to pull through, coming out stronger each time. Our only child, our daughter, and her father naturally look alike. They were inseparable friends and played football together. They were so close that one started to feel ill whenever the other was, which I prayed against. She later read Engineering against my wish because she wanted to help her dad. While still growing up, she was closer to him than me probably because I was very strict. Although she didn't understand my actions initially, she later expressed how my counsels became invaluable. It is a joyful experience to know one's grandchildren, and mine is no exception. I am happy my daughter has been able to give me the children I couldn't have myself.

I am happy because my husband and I were together in her training. We did our best because we didn't know how long we would be available for her. I guess the training I received from people like my grandmother, dad and stepmother proved to be priceless. These are people whose thoughts always fill my mind whenever I think of my modest achievements in life.

instagram—journal news
Twitter— thejournal Nigeria
LinkedIn—thejournal Nigeria



**The
Journal**
...reason, truth and equity

www.thejournalnigeria.com

https://issuu.com/thejournalnews/docs/the_journal__1_