

Decent Work and Social Security: A Myth or Reality in Nigerian Macro Communities?

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ABSTRACT

This study examined jobs in formal and informal sectors of macro communities of Ekiti State, Nigeria, with a view to determine whether they could be described as decent work. The study also examined the existence of social security in the state. While random sampling was used to select nine communities used in this study, a purposeful sampling technique was used to select a total of ten respondents who were currently employed in the formal sector and another ten respondents in the informal sector. These respondents were used for the study. Three research questions guided the study and the instrument used for data collection was combined questionnaire administration and interviews. Questionnaires were administered on 180 purposely-selected respondents. The data obtained from these set of respondents was analysed by using Likert rating scale. Results obtained in the former sector were negative for all the jobs attributes considered while the positive attributes observed in the informal sector were enveloped by failure of the workers in this sector to meet their basic needs for survival. The State lacked social security that could alleviate workers' poverty. Hence decent work is lacking in the State. Also the enabling environment for decent work is lacking in the state. The inconsistency in policy formulation and implementation, lack of sincerity by government as well as the recently experienced economic recession in Nigeria does not enhanced social security in the state. The study concluded that decent work and social security in the state could be described as a myth rather than a reality. Recommendations capable of attaining decent work and social security in the state were made.

Keywords: *Decent Work, Social Security, Myth, Reality, Macro Communities*

INTRODUCTION

Decent work refers to employment that respects the fundamental rights of the human person as well as the rights of workers in terms of conditions of work safety and remuneration (Wikipedia 2018). Thus the employment has respect for the physical and mental integrity of the worker in the exercise of his/her employment. According to ILO (2018), decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

In the recent time, there has been a lot of concern for decent work as productive employment and decent work are key elements

to achieving a fair globalization and poverty reduction. Decent work involves opportunities for work that are productive and deliver a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

Decent work is presently made up four pillars in its agenda. These are employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue. In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly recognised decent work as an integral element of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda calls for the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work. Thus decent work is expected to eradicate poverty and improve worker standard of living. Nigeria is one of the countries that

ratified ILO conventions that deal with the rights of the worker in the workplace and even enshrined some of its provisions into the 1999 Constitution yet the observance of some of the rights have been weak. Workers in the country have been subjected to all manner of indecent treatments. The three tiers of government in the country, corporations, financial institutions, trading institutions as well as local private employers who are supposed to respect these rights, are the key violators. Thus poverty persists and apparent lack of social security abounds in the country.

Consequent on the above, this study examines decent work and social security in a macro community, Ekiti State, Nigeria, with a view to determine whether it a myth or reality.

Theoretical Framework

A categorical approach is used for this study. This approach evaluates the worthiness of work. It involves the allocation criteria and elements of the decent work for employees’ groups. Hence Smirnova (2010) offers criteria of decent work for workers of intellectual activity, which are divided into two groups (basic and additional). The basic include employment income (remuneration, insurance and welfare benefits package); work conditions (accidents at work, the conformity of the equipment and working place with modern requirements, conditions and work safety); social security (documentary registration of labour relations with the employer; free employment; free choice in the sphere of activity (work, employment); labour law compliance; employment stability); (training at the expense of the employer, work abroad, career development, self-realization, etc.). The additional criteria included the relevance of and respect for labour; collective; corporate spirit of the company; moral satisfaction; no overtime; an evaluation of the results; colleagues behaviour of colleagues; positive personal relationships in the team; the company's reputation; mental work; content of work; etc.).

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is a signatory to ILO conventions that deal with the rights of the worker in the workplace. Some of the provisions of ILO have been enshrined into the 1999 Constitution. Despite these efforts to ensure decent work in the country, the observance of some of the rights has been weak. Workers in the country have been subjected to all manner of indecent

treatments. Thus Nigeria has continued to record decent work deficits which include employment and labour market deficits, labour standards deficits, deficits in social protection, labour administration deficits, and social dialogue deficits.

Purpose of the Study

This study sets out to determine whether decent work and social security is a myth or reality in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are:

- To assess whether decent work and social security abound in Ekiti State, Nigeria
- To determine the factors hindering decent work and social security in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Research Questions

- Can the available jobs in Ekiti State, Nigeria be described as decent work?
- Does enabling environment available for decent work in the state?
- Is there any social security in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

- The available jobs in Ekiti State, Nigeria, cannot be described as decent work.
- Enabling environment for decent work is not available in Ekiti State, Nigeria
- Ekiti State, Nigeria, lacks social security.

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Ekiti State, Nigeria, between November and December 2018. The state was divided into three zones based on the existing political classifications into Ekiti Central, Ekiti, North and Ekiti South. In each zone, three local government headquarters were randomly selected and used for the study. The towns selected are:

Table1. *List of communities used for the study*

S/n	Zone	Communities selected	Local Government Area
1	Ekiti Central	a. Ado-Ekiti b. Aramoko-Ekiti c. Ijero-Ekiti	Ado-Ekiti Ekiti West Ijero
2	Ekiti North	a. Ido-Ekiti b Otun-Ekiti c. Ikole-Ekiti	Ido/Osi Moba Ikole

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3	Ekiti South	a. Emure-Ekiti b. Ikere-Ekiti c. Ilawe	Emure Ikere Ekiti South West
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In each community, a purposeful sampling technique was used to select a total of ten respondents who were currently employed in the formal sector another ten respondents in the informal sector.

These respondents were used for the study. Three research questions guided the study.

The instrument used for data collection was combined questionnaire administration and interviews.

Questionnaires were administered on 180 purposely-selected respondents.

The data obtained from these set of respondents was analysed by using Likert rating scale as follow:

SA - Strongly Agreed - 4 Points

A - Agreed - 3 Points

D - Disagreed - 2 Points

SD - Strongly Disagreed - 1 Point

U - Undecided - 0 Point

The scores obtained above were weighted to get their means and the means interpreted as follows:

0.0 – 0.9 = U

1.0 – 1.49 = SD

1.50 – 2.49 = D

2.50 – 3.49 = A

3.50 – 4.00 = SA

The data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics especially frequency, means and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socioeconomic classification of the respondents (Table 2) revealed that respondents from both formal and informal sectors cut across sex, age, marital and educational status.

The respondents from both sectors were male dominated (74% and 64% formal and informal respectively), in the age range of 20-60 years (82% and 91% formal and informal respectively), married (88% and 83% formal and informal respectively) and literates.

However, there were more respondents with tertiary education among the respondents in the formal sector than those of the informal sector (Table 1).

The occupational classification of the respondents (Table 3) revealed that in the formal sector, 64%, 11% and 13% of the respondents were teachers, health and Local Government officials respectively while in the informal sector, 13%, 40% and 47% of the respondents were engaged in trading, vocational and technical jobs respectively.

Table2. Socio-economic classification of respondents in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Feature	Description	Respondents			
		Formal Sector		Informal Sector	
		f	%	f	%
Sex	Male	67	74	58	64
	Female	23	26	42	47
Age	< 20 Yrs	2	2	7	8
	20-60Yrs	74	82	82	91
	> 60 Yrs	14	16	1	1
Marital Status	Single	11	12	15	17
	Married	79	88	75	83
Educational Status	Illiterates	0	0	0	0
	Primary Education	5	6	17	19
	Secondary Education	28	31	68	76
	Tertiary Education	67	74	5	6

The questions answered in this study tend to define the status of decent work in these macro communities as either a myth or a reality.

Interviews and observation reports from field study were also used to support or refute the questionnaire analysis

Table3. Occupational classification of respondents in Ekiti State, Nigeria

Sector	Occupation	Respondents	
		Frequency	%
Formal	Teaching	58	
	Health Officials	10	64

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	Local Govt. Officials	12	11
Informal	Trading	12	13
	Vocational	36	40
	Technical	42	47

Research question 1

In the informal sector, freedom of expression abounds, jobs are secured, wages received were as fixed by the professional associations of each vocation hence could be said to be commensurate, motivation, physical and mental integrity of worker exit on their jobs. Discrimination is equally lacking in the informal jobs. However, wages obtained were grossly

inadequate to meet their needs, social security is lacking and they lacked freedom of association as they are mostly restricted to be members of their professional association and were restricted to the dictates of these association.

Thus, in the former sector, the results were negative for all the jobs attributes considered while the positive attributes observed in the informal sector were enveloped by failure of the workers in this sector to meet their basic need for survival and the lack of social security that could alleviate their level of poverty. Hence the null hypothesis that, the available jobs in Ekiti State cannot be described as decent work is sustained.

Table4. Means ratings of features of jobs of respondents in Ekiti State, Nigeria

S/n	Features	Frequency of Responses*		
		Description	Mean	Interpretation
1	Freedom of association abound in job place	Formal	1.94	D
		Informal	2.17	D
2	Freedom of expression abound in job place	Formal	1.87	D
		Informal	3.47	SA
3	Security of job ensured	Formal	2.36	D
		Informal	3.97	SA
4	Wage obtained commensurate with job done	Formal	2.00	D
		Informal	3.92	SA
5	Wage obtained meet one's need	Formal	1.27	SD
		Informal	1.87	D
6	Physical and mental integrity of worker exit on the job	Formal	2.40	D
		Informal	3.91	SA
7	Social security abounds for dependants	Formal	1.83	D
		Informal	1.97	D
8	Motivation abounds on Job	Formal	2.27	D
		Informal	3.70	SA
9	Discrimination abound on job	Formal	3.94	SA
		Informal	1.92	D

Research Question 2

Does enabling environment available for decent work in the state?

Results obtained in Table 5 revealed that both workers in formal and informal sectors could afford primary and secondary education for their children. Field observation revealed that the ability of the workers to afford primary and secondary education could be attributed to the policy of a new state government that came into office in October 2018. The government declared primary and secondary education free in the state.

Workers in both sectors could not afford the cost of energy (electricity), cost of health management and maintenance and lacked portable water hence were usually liable to attack of diseases.

The cost of telephone is unaffordable to workers in both sectors. Similarly, they decried the unaffordable high costs of transport and accommodation. Thus the enabling environment for decent work is lacking in the state. The null hypothesis that enabling environment for decent work is not available in Ekiti State is equally sustained.

Table5. Means ratings of features enhancing decent work in Ekiti State, Nigeria

	Features	Frequency of Responses		
			Mean	Interpretation
1	Affordable primary education abounds	Formal	3.93	SA
		Informal	3.91	SA
2	Affordable secondary education abounds	Formal	3.93	SA

		Informal	3.91	SA
3	Affordable energy abounds	Formal	1.81	D
		Informal	2.24	D
4	Affordable health facility abounds	Formal	2.33	D
		Informal	1.72	D
5	Hygienic water abounds	Formal	1.89	D
		Informal	2.07	D
6	Affordable telephone services abound	Formal	2.07	D
		Informal	2.12	D
7	Cheap transportation abounds	Formal	2.21	D
		Informal	1.92	D
8	Cheap accommodation abounds	Formal	2.49	D
		Informal	2.46	D

Research Question 3

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Consequent on the sustenance of the research hypotheses formulated for this study, it could be concluded that decent work and social security in macro communities, such as Ekiti State, Nigeria is a myth not a reality. Thus, for decent work to be attained in the state, an enabling environment needs to be provided. The existing minimum wage for workers in the formal sector, #18,000 per month, is no longer sustainable. This should be increased. Social security need to be introduced for the unemployed youths and the aged. Ghai (2003) has classified the social security needs in developing countries into three categories. The first comprises basic needs such as access to adequate nutrition, primary health care, primary education, clean water, sanitation and shelter. The second category concerns contingencies such as sickness, accident, death of the principal breadwinner, disability, old age and the needs of vulnerable groups such as abandoned children and widows. The third category includes calamities such as floods, droughts, earthquakes, riots and conflicts that can result in massive destruction of property, livelihood and sources of support. Education should be made free at all levels. Mehran (2000) and Kucera (2001) asserted that the non-enrolment of children in secondary schools often resulted in the abuse of children. Subsidised mass transits should be introduced. Also provision of affordable infrastructures such as electricity, telephone, portable water and accommodation should be priorities of Ekiti State Government. Workers should also be

allowed to associate freely. ILO (2000a) and ILO (2000b) have asserted that freedom of association is necessary for workers and employers to defend their interests, to organize joint activities and to participate in negotiations and discussions affecting their interests.

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