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ABSTRACT

This sudy contributes to the arguments by scholars in the social sciences over the relationship existing among education, social mobility and poverty reduction using Nigeria as a case study. The argument has been championed by those in the functionalist camp who have established that education guarantees higher social mobility and poverty reduction. In fact, it is argued that it is true that higher educational attainment or qualifications are a strong predicator for higher social mobility and living above the poverty line in an open society, but this link cannot be adequately established in the Nigerian context because of high rate of unemployment. Increased unemployment has ensured that many graduates, even up to doctorates, roam the streets of Nigeria unemployed. We have also argued that this high unemployment rate perpetuates poverty among significant number of Nigerians and in turn, poverty ensures that a lot of people remain untaught (without formal education). An appraisal of some poverty alleviation programmes reveal that these programmes have failed to minimise poverty because of certain structural and policy problems such as inadequate funding, corruption, inadequate coordination, political instability, infrastructural inadequacies and lack of proper focus, among others. The study recommends, among other things, that tackling the problems of unemployment in an effective manner will inevitably reduce poverty and help Nigerians attain the quality education that can develop our nation, and that adequate funding should be provided to our educational institutions so as to guarantee their accessibility by all Nigerians.

Keywords: Education, functionalist, poverty alleviation, poverty reduction and social mobility.

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INTRODUCTION

The post-colonial period has witnessed much emphasis on education like never before in Nigeria. Interestingly, the utmost desire of almost all parents is to send their children to school, their socio-economic conditions notwithstanding. It is now seen as an aberration to be illiterate or untaught. A more current trend is that attention has been drawn towards higher educational attainment whose utilization ensures that the individual and his immediate family members will live above poverty line if the educated is employed. This is a symptom of credentialism, a term defined by Brinkerhoff and White (1988), as the use of educational credentials to measure social origins and social status. As the level of education in society increases, educational requirements also must rise to maintain the status quo. Education has become a guarantee for upward social mobility.

Ekong (2003) has aptly summed this up - "the acquisition of formal education and skills with high market value has been found to be the route for social mobility. This means that inequalities in educational opportunities are crucial in social mobility". Credentialism has one grave consequence for Nigeria - first degree is gradually becoming valueless, as companies or organisations now advertise that "Postgraduate Degree" is an added advantage. According to Collins (1979), credentialism is a way of manipulating the educational system for the benefit of the well-off.

Education is a life-long process that aims at imparting skills needed to live a productive life and for an individual to adjust well to his immediate environment and the ultimate world or universe in which he finds himself (Jekayinfa and Kolawole, 2008). Okolo (1989) defines education as whatever one learns through experience, from self, or others to help one survive and master one's social milieu. Durkheim (1956) views education from a sociological perspective as the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Education, which is one of the main keys to economic development and improvements in human welfare, is the process of acquiring general knowledge and skills, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life (Emeh, 2012). Education is also one of the key determinants of lifetime earnings. As a result, nations of the world see rising educational attainment as a way of tackling poverty and deprivation (Caincross and Poysti, 2011). Education is thus concerned with how

individuals develop their intellectual capacities, skills and social awareness that equip them to surmount challenges of their social and physical environments. It is channelled through all agencies which enable man to master the various aspects of his environment – social, physical, political, economic, religious, cultural and psychological. In this process, man adapts himself to the demands made upon him by the society of which he is a member. It is thus, a process of imparting literacy, numeric and a generally accepted body of knowledge in society (Nweke, 2008).

It is obvious that irrespective of the complexities in culture, every society has the responsibility of transmitting general knowledge, values, skills, technical knowledge and ideas to its younger generations to enable them function and cope with life adequately in the social and cultural milieu into which they are born.

From an expanded point of view, education can be conceived in its informal and formal senses. Education becomes informal when it concerns itself with all sorts of learning or acquisition by which individuals frequent themselves with and consequently survive their immediate environment. This informality involved in learning can be casual or haphazard and is very common among preliterate people or nation.

In its formalised conception, education can be viewed as something systematic and deliberately executed to achieve ends or inculcate values in a society. In this way, the mode of transmission can be through social agencies such as the school, church, family, State or pressure groups (John, 2003). Formal education is the product of western modernization and development process. It generally takes place in a defined environment called the school system, within which knowledge and skills acquired are helpful for the survival of the entire society. It is organised on a level by level basis: pre nursery or kindergarten, nursery school, primary school, secondary and tertiary institutions (Nweke, 2008).

It is important to note that our emphasis in this study is on formal education and its relationship with social mobility and reduction of poverty in Nigeria. Thus, we operationalise education to mean a formal process of learning in which individuals are taught how to develop their intellectual capacities, skills and social awareness, and to become well equipped to secure a better living condition and overcome challenges of life. It prepares people for the various roles demanded by other social institutions, such as family, government and the economy. Education is a tool for reinforcing

inequality. To an impressive extent, credentialism may reinforce social inequality. Credentialism refers to the use of educational credentials to measure social origins and social status (Brinkerhoff and White, 1988). It is a term used to describe the increase in the lowest level of education needed to enter a field (Schafer, 2001). As the level of education in society increases, educational requirements also must rise to maintain the status quo.

In this work, we refer to credentialism as "credential inflation" – a situation where there is high demand for credentials or certificates. Nigeria as we know today is a "certificate" country; credentialism is high in the country. Because of the high emphasis on certificates as a determinant of higher social statuses and eventual reduction of poverty when utilised, Nigerians now tend to concentrate their efforts toward attaining higher educational positions or certificates. Thus, jobs that used to require a high school diploma now require a bachelor's degree and jobs that used to require a bachelor's degree now require a master's degree. This is because as the elite class increases its pursuit of higher degrees as quickly; the lower class increases its pursuit of a high school diploma, no real change occurs. Credentialism, it is argued, is a way of manipulating the educational system for the benefit of the well-off (Collins, 1979).

Over time, there have been serious arguments by scholars in the social sciences over the relationship existing among education, social mobility and poverty reduction in open societies. The argument has been championed by those in the functionalist camp who have established that education guarantees higher social mobility and poverty reduction. This study contributes to this argument using Nigeria as a case study. Arising from the foregoing, what readily comes to mind are; why and how has education become a guarantee for social mobility and poverty reduction? What can be done to education to ensure maximum poverty reduction in Nigeria? Providing answers to these and other related issues is the main thrust of this study.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Sociologists employ functionalist, conflict and interactionist perspectives as distinctive ways of examining education as a social institution (Schaefer, 2001). The functional analysis of education is concerned with the consequences of educational institutions for the maintenance of society

(Brinkerhoff and White, 1988). Generally, functionalist view of education tends to focus on the positive contributions of education to the maintenance of the social system (Nweke, 2008). The major manifest (intended) functions of education include transmission of culture, maintaining social control, promoting social and political integration, training and development of skills and talents, serving as an agent of change as well as selection and allocation of roles and statuses (Brinkerhoff and White, 1988; Schaefer, 2001). The last function is simply referred to as "bestowal of status" and is credited to Davis and Moore (1945). In their view, society must distribute its members among a variety of social positions. Education can contribute to this process by sorting people into appropriate levels and courses of study that will prepare them for appropriate positions within the labour force.

Conflict theory of education looks much like the functional theory, except in their value judgement on the final product. Conflict theorists agree that education reproduces or transmits culture, socialises young people into patterns of conformity, sifts, sorts and rationalises inequality. Since conflict theorists see the social structure as a system of inequality designed to benefit the rich at the expense of the poor, they naturally see an institution that reproduces this culture in a negative light. Three of the major conflict arguments concerning education are summarised as "education is a capitalist tool", "credentialism" and reproduction of inequality (Brinkerhoff and White, 1988). Some conflict theorists argue that mass education developed because it benefited the interests of the capitalist class. Capitalists demanded educated workers, not only because literacy made workers more effective, but because they had been taught obedience, punctuality and loyalty to the economic and political systems (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). To support this argument, theorists point to the school's *hidden curriculum* which socializes young people into obedience and conformity (Brinkerhoff, Weitz and Ortega, 2014).

Interactionist perspective generalises about everyday forms of social interaction in the educational institution. The labelling approach and the concept of the self-fulfilling prophecy suggest that if we treat people in particular ways, they may fulfil our expectations (Schafer, 2001). Becker (1952) studied public schools in low income and more affluent areas of Chicago and notices that administrators expected less of students from neighbourhoods; he wonders if teachers were accepting this view. Subsequently, in Pygmalion in the classroom, Psychologist Robert Rosenthal

and school Principal Lenore Jacobson (1968) documented what they referred to as a *teacher-expectancy effect* – the impact that teacher's expectations about a student's performance may have on the student's actual achievement (Brint, 1998).

Nigerian formal education is a colonial heritage. Modern education was brought to the southern protectorate by Christian missionaries who were confronted with the challenges of penetrating the hinterland through evangelism. Muslim education came into Nigeria by over 300 years before the arrival of Christian education around the 1840's (Fafunwa, 1975). However, Muslim education was retarded because education in the 19th Century in Nigeria tended to mean Bible knowledge, Christian ethic, Christian moral instruction, Christian literature, some arithmetic, language and crafts; directed towards the production of good Christians (Fafunwa, 1975). The goals of Christian missions' education were to produce teachers to assist in teaching of the gospel and commercial activities (Oghuvbu, 2007). The post-colonial era witnessed educational drive by the education administrators who went into the hinterland and other remote areas to recruit children into primary schools. Nevertheless, education was meant to inculcate respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals; faith in man's ability to make rational decisions; moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations; shared responsibility for the dignity of labour and promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children (FGN, 2004).

Nweke (2008) identifies major problems of modern education in contemporary Nigeria as inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructure and teaching aids, inadequate and unqualified teaching and administrative staff, commercialisation of education (high costs of education), falling standard of education, student cultism, sexual harassment of students, and the enrolment of unqualified candidates into the higher institutions.

Social Mobility Defined

Social mobility refers to the movement of individuals and groups between different class positions. It refers to movement of individuals or groups from one position of a society's stratification to another. The rise of a child from a poor background to some positions of great prestige, power or financial reward is an example of social mobility. There are two ways of studying social mobility. First, we can look at people's own careers – how

far they move up or down the socio-economic scale in the course of their working lives. According to Giddens (1996), this is called "intra-generational mobility". Alternatively, we can analyse where children are on the scale compared with their parents or grandparents. This is mobility across generations and, thus, is called "intergenerational mobility" (Giddens, 1996).

Intra-generational mobility occurs within a generation and is defined as changes in social status over a single life time. It occurs when a person strives to change his or her own social standing. In some societies where people are divided into castes, social mobility cannot occur. Whatever caste a person is born into, is what he or she will remain for the entirety of his or her life. However, in Merit Based Cultures, people are free to move up and down the social ladder. For instance, a woman who enters the paid labour force as a teacher's aide and eventually becomes superintendent of the school district experiences upward intra-generational mobility (Schaefer, 2001).

On the other hand, intergenerational mobility occurs across generations and is defined as changes in social status that occur from the parents' to the children's generation. This type of mobility is both merit and non merit based. Ability and hard work affect social mobility, but so does parents' wealth, race, gender and luck (Lareau, 2003). Intergenerational mobility involves changes in the social position of children relative to their parents. Thus, a plumber whose father was a physician provides an example of downward intergenerational mobility. A film star whose parents were both factory workers illustrates upward intergenerational mobility (Schaefer, 2001).

According to Devine (2004), parents' influence can affect the child's social mobility. Parents provide a good education to their children and also help them make important connections with people in order to expand their social network. Parents that can create social capital for their children tend to increase their children's social mobility.

Sociologists also distinguish between structural and exchange mobility, horizontal and vertical mobility and upward and downward mobility. Structural mobility is a type of forced vertical mobility that results from change in the distribution of status in a society. It occurs when the demands of a particular occupation reach its climax and more people are needed to fill the positions. Giddens (1996) refers to structural mobility as "upward mobility made possible by an expansion of better paid occupations at the expense of more poorly paid ones.

Exchange mobility is that which is not structural. The key word "exchange" means trade off. This means that instead of positions reaching the climax and more people needed, positions are dropped and someone else must step up to fill the position. According to Giddens (1996), what is meant by exchange mobility is that there is an exchange of positions, such that more talented people in each generation move up the economic hierarchy, while the less talented move down.

Horizontal mobility refers to a situation where one moves from one social position to another of the same rank. An airline pilot who becomes an air force officer (occupations of the same prestige ranking) experiences horizontal mobility. However, if the pilot were to become a lawyer (an occupation that has higher prestige ranking), he or she would experience "vertical mobility" -- the movement from one social position to another of a different rank. Vertical mobility can also involve moving "downward" in a society's stratification system, as would be the case if the airline pilot becomes a bank teller (a position with lower prestige ranking). According to Schaefer (2001), Pitirim Sorokin was the first Sociologists to distinguish between horizontal and vertical mobility.

Upward social mobility is a change in a person's social status resulting in that person receiving a higher position in their status system. Likewise, downward mobility results in a lower position. A prime example of an opportunity for upward mobility nowadays is athletics. There is an increased number of minorities seeking careers as professional athletes which can either lead to improved social status or could potentially harm them due to neglecting other aspects of life, such as education. Otite and Ogionwo (2001) note that upward social mobility is when the individual is supposed to have "moved up" and downward social mobility is when he is supposed to have "moved down".

Poverty Reduction Explained

Social scientists, especially sociologists, conceive of poverty in either absolute or relative terms. Absolute poverty means the inability to provide the minimum requirements of life. It refers to a minimum level of subsistence. By contrast, relative poverty means the inability to maintain what ones society regards as a decent standard of living. It is a floating standard of deprivation by which people at the bottom of a society, whatever their

lifestyles, are judged to be disadvantaged in comparison with the nation as a whole (Brinkerhoff and White, 1988; Schaefer, 2001).

Generally, poverty is seen as a multidimensional concept and thus involves both income and non income factors. Thus, poverty refers to a general condition of deprivation which comprises social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, powerlessness and humiliation. This means that the poor have no access to basic needs of life such as food, clothing, decent shelter and are vulnerable to meet social and economic obligations (Chambers 1995). Using the "basic needs approach", the World Bank sees poverty as a situation in which people are unable to fulfil their basic needs as well as lack of control over resources, lack of education and skills, poor health, malnutrition, lack of shelter, poor access to water and sanitation, vulnerability to shocks, violence and crime, and lack of political freedom and voice (Uzoh, 2016).

Poverty could be expressed in three ways: by the inability of an economic unit (an individual or a family) to satisfy his basic needs due to lack of adequate income or property; by lack of opportunities for the economic unit to generate adequate income with which the basic needs could be met; and by lack of means to change this condition of lack (Repnik, 1994). Within almost all societies, the poor tend to obtain the worst education and vocational training and to have the least social status and connections to help them to obtain stable and remunerative income opportunities (Broomley and Gerry, 1979). Their very poverty usually prevents them from supplementing their income to a significant degree through investment, inheritance or major windfall gains (Ekpenyong, 2003).

One simple truth behind different approaches to the explanation of poverty is that the poor are poor because they do not have good jobs. The crux of poverty is lack of jobs that provide steady work at a decent wage; a wage that would enable people to support themselves and their families (Brinkerhoff and White, 1988). Poverty reflects glaring defects in the economy because it manifests itself in the forms of mass penury, mass unemployment, poor welfare services and increased dependency among other things. The failure of the Nigerian government to provide adequate welfare services and infrastructure development has continued to promote low human capital development and increased poverty. Poverty reduction aims at improving the living conditions of the poor. That is increasing their access to the basic needs of life and enhancing their ability to meet social,

political and economic obligations. Of a truth, poverty cannot be completely eradicated in any society, but its rate or magnitude can be drastically reduced or alleviated.

Some Poverty Alleviation Strategies in Nigeria

A lot of strategies have been suggested for poverty reduction. World Bank (1990) has suggested that poverty would be reduced if economic growth is promoted and special programmes carried out to increase human capital formation. Van de Walle (1990) opines that investment in human capital and satisfaction of basic needs would directly solve the problems of poverty. Rural development has been indicted as an essential factor in poverty reduction. According to World Bank reports, fast rural growth accelerated the improvement in the quality of life of the poor (Obadan, 1997). Repnik (1994) and Robb (2000) argue that if general conditions which would allow man to live in dignity, permit people to be free to take their own decisions in life and the poor to participate in social, political and economic decision making are created, then poverty would be alleviated to a great extent. Archibong (1997) submits that population restraints are a vital tool for poverty reduction and that poverty reduction should be linked with education and health policies for the poor. For Ukpak (2000), poverty could be reduced if remunerations to the working poor are improved.

Several strategies have been adopted by Nigerian governments to reduce or alleviate poverty. However, early poverty alleviation measures were targeted at the agricultural sector. Agricultural or rural development aimed at increased agricultural productivity, increased income and increased standard of living of the rural dwellers (Ekong, 1991; Ojo, 1991). Agricultural Development Project (ADP) was therefore adopted to achieve the above desired objectives. The common features of ADP included: an input and credit delivery system through well defined farm service centres close to farmers; massive programmes of rural feeder roads construction to open up rural areas and enhance input delivery and produce evaluation from the hinterland; an efficient extension and manpower training system supported by adaptive research; and a semi autonomous project monitoring and evaluation unit (Ojo, 1991). ADP became very popular among farmers but failed woefully because farmers were very slow to adopt the recommended practices due to poor planning, particularly, with regard

to the agricultural research and extension component (Ojo, 1991), and the programme could not meet the criteria of integrated rural development (Ekong, 1988).

The poor performance of ADP led to the design and adoption of the Green Revolution (GR), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the River Basin Development Projects (RBDP) and the launching of the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme (ACGS) between 1976 and 1978. The aims of GR, OFN and RBDP in aggregate were to; (a) regenerate rural agriculture; (b) provide modern farm settlements with basic amenities such as electricity and portable water supply; (c) create a congenial environment in the rural areas to discourage farm labour from migrating to urban centres (Ekong, 1997). Instead of these programmes to regenerate the rural agricultural process so as to alleviate poverty, they accentuated poverty in Nigeria (Ettah, 2004).

Various anti-poverty programmes were also launched between 1986 and 1990. These included Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI); Primary Health Care Scheme (PHCS); Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI); National Directorate of Employment (NDE); Mass Mobilisation for Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction (MAMSER); Better Life for Rural Women; National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NEFR); Peoples Bank (PB) and Community Bank (CB). DFRRI was mainly for the provision of public goods like electricity, portable water and access roads among others. PHCS and EPI were to bring health services and awareness to the rural dwellers. NDE was to train the unemployed youths in diverse arts, crafts and trades and afterwards provide them with soft loans and equipment for self employment. MAMSER was to bring awareness to the rural dwellers, encourage and mobilize them to participate effectively in political, social and economic programmes. The Better life for Rural Women was to enlighten and train rural women in various cottage industries and to support them with funds and equipment to become self employed. The Community Bank and Peoples Bank were to provide credits to the poor, rural and small investors. Apart from PHCS and EPI which are still surviving, these programmes have failed (Ettah, 2004).

In 1991, the Federal Government launched the National Housing Scheme as a variant of poverty reduction programme. Handled by the Federal Mortgage Bank, the scheme was to provide financial assistance (soft loans) to civil servants to aid them build their houses. Both the Federal and State governments supplemented the scheme by constructing "low cost"

houses to be sold to the low income public. However, the poor could not benefit from the scheme as they did not have the money to afford the rent or outright purchase of the houses (Egware, 1997).

In 1997, the Federal Government launched the Community Programme for Poverty Alleviation (COPPA). The aims were to: (a) improve the nutritional status of the poor through food security and improved services; (b) improve the living conditions of the people through targeted cost-effective, demand-driven and promptly delivered programmes and (c) enhance the productivity of the poor through skills improvement (Ekong, 1997). COPPA also failed to alleviate poverty. COPPA's failure to achieve poverty reduction led to the adoption of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) in January 2001 (Ekong, 2003). The overall target of NAPEP was to completely wipe out poverty from Nigeria by the year 2010. The formulators of the programme identified three stages to the attainment of the ambitious target: the restoration of hope in the mass of poor Nigerians (through providing basic necessities to hitherto neglected people particularly in the rural areas), the restoration of economic independence and confidence as well as wealth creation.

What then is responsible for the failure of poverty alleviation programmes in Nigeria? Eminue (2005) identifies the problems of poverty alleviation programmes to include lack of proper focus; inadequate coordination; political instability; unwieldy and expansive scope; lack of executive capacity; corruption and mismanagement; "top-down" rather than "bottom-up" approach; duplication of implementation agencies; micro-credit problems; absence of cost effectiveness in some poverty alleviation programmes; high administrative cost; inadequate funding; slow economic growth or infrastructure inadequacies and macroeconomic and sectoral problems such as inflation, unemployment, and lack of modern technology among others.

Education, Social Mobility and Poverty Reduction: Establishing the Nexus

Empirical literature is replete with evidence that education ensures high social mobility as well as reduction of poverty. Two sociological studies (Blau and Duncan 1967 and Featherman and Hauser 1978) find that education plays a critical role in social mobility. The impact of formal schooling on

adult status is even greater than that of family background (Schaefer, 2001). Furthermore, education represents an important means of intergenerational mobility. Three-fourths of college-educated men achieved some upward mobility compared to only 12 percent of those who received no schooling (Davis, 1982). According to Okogie (1997), education constitutes a major indicator of knowledge and skills development. Hill and King (1995) observe that the benefits of knowledge and skills development may be grouped into market and non market categories. The market benefits include higher earnings and greater labour mobility at individual levels, higher gross national productivity as well as GNP growth at the macroeconomic level. The non-market benefits, on the other hand, include improved health and nutrition, lower infant mortality, greater fertility control and many others.

Appleton (2001) discovers that high living standards and poverty reduction were influenced by education which has a role in determining access to different sources of income in Uganda. He found that primary education raises access to "non-agricultural self employment"; poverty is lower in educated households; and employment wage earnings grew proportionally to levels of educational attainment – primary school graduates generally earned more than the uneducated, secondary school graduates earn more than primary school graduates but less than the tertiary level graduates. This situation would seem to be the same in Nigeria where graduates of tertiary institutions earn more than undergraduates.

Some developed nations attained their current status due in part to their heavy investment in education and human capital development. For example, the East Asian nations in their economic transformation bid invested heavily in human capital and thereby drastically reduced the technological gap between them and the advanced nations (Ekpo and Umoh, 2004). This was achieved through the encouragement of technological transfer from foreign investors, investment in knowledge and skills development and the education of large number of skilled engineers who were able to adapt the most advanced technology (Stiglitz, 1996).

Education occasions social mobility and enhances the acquisition of skills and competencies that are connected to income. It is a key to national development (Tugbiyele, 19771). Education in general is not just associated with national development and poverty reduction but also with personal development and the emancipation of women (Mwenakatwe, 1977). A

situation where the Nigerian woman is highly educated would make her stand a better chance of contributing to the household income and to the national economy, thereby reducing poverty in her home. Wages and earnings tend to correlate with the amount of education a person has obtained. Higher educational opportunities are necessary in order to pull away from the poverty line. According to Jacobs (2005), of the 30 fastest growing occupations, more than half require an associate degree or higher. Yet, these jobs are less likely to supply additional jobs to the labour market, meaning that the majority of job growth is found in low-wage jobs (Jacobs, 2005). These low-wage jobs are linked with those people who have less education. Workers in these areas are deemed unskilled because it does not require a great amount of education in order to perform these jobs, so the stereotype goes.

How Strong or Real is this Link in Nigeria?
From the foregoing, it is evident that education is a strong determinant of higher social mobility and improved living conditions in open societies. Improved living conditions come as a result of high salary earnings, with which one can take care of his basic needs and that of his household. In Nigeria, higher educational qualifications or certificates are needed for high income yielding careers such as law, medicine, teaching in the higher institutions, politics, and so on. Higher educational attainment is required for the occupation of higher positions or offices in large organisations, whereas low education qualifications are reserved for lower positions. In these cases, education becomes a sure way to higher social or occupational statuses and to eventually alleviate poverty. However, there are clear circumstances where the reality of this link does not apply. There are several Nigerians who have higher educational degrees, even up to Doctorate, and are still poor or unemployed.

How do we explain the condition of millions of unemployed graduates roaming the streets of Nigeria vis-à-vis the nexus of education, social mobility and poverty reduction? Increased unemployment has made nonsense of the reality of this nexus in Nigeria. This country has all it takes to create jobs for the teeming population that is turned out from higher institutions every year. But government has not prioritised provision of employment as a sure way of enhancing the much talked about development we desire. It suffices to say that unemployment is a structural problem and strong

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