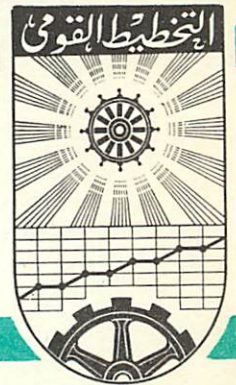


UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC

THE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL PLANNING



Memo. No. 417

MANPOWER PROBLEMS
(GENERAL)

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LONDON, S.W.1.
(April 1964)

This Paper was Submitted
to the International Seminar on
Manpower Problems
held at

LAGOS, NIGERIA

2nd - 13th March 1964.

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON MANPOWER PROBLEMS IN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO NIGERIA

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Introduction

The Federation of Nigeria has embarked on a bold and imaginative effort to create a national framework for development - integrating the four development plans of the Federal Government and the three regional government into a comprehensive national development plan, to cost £676.5 millions, covering the period 1962-1968. The planned objectives of development are the raising of general living standards and the achievement of a diversified and self-sustaining economy. These objectives, in turn, call for a rapid improvement in the supply of trained manpower, the improvement of agricultural production and accelerated industrial development. At the base of the structure of the national development plan, and fundamental to it, is an educational plan broadly based on the Ashby Commission Report on Post-Secondary Education.

2. A difficulty facing most of those participating from overseas in the seminar must be the shortage of up-to-date information about developments in the manpower field in what is a rapidly changing situation. In particular, results of the work of the National Manpower Board since 1962 will be an important ingredient in the work of the seminar which cannot be anticipated in a paper prepared in advance. It is possible,

however, to suggest a number of salient aspects of the Nigerian situation which might profitably be examined. These might be divided into two separate groups. First, manpower matters deriving from the Ashby Report - and, in particular, from the chapter by Professor F. Harbison on the high-level manpower needs of the country. And second, those manpower problems of a social as well as economic character - such as, for example, rural unemployment and the drift to the towns which lie within the general scope of manpower planning and tend to be over shadowed by the more technical aspects of high-level manpower forecasting.

3. The present emphasis on manpower planning has derived its principal impetus from the preoccupation of governments in recent years with problems of economic planning, and the economic aspects of manpower planning have tended, therefore, to be given priority of treatment, the sociological aspects revealing themselves as a situation develops. But what has been called the 'revolution of rising expectations' and the unprecedented population explosion produce problems of a profound social and political as well as economic character. For example, 'the tendency towards resignation', which has been described as a characteristic of the working mentality in traditional society, is tending everywhere, under the impulse of education and political awakenint, to make way for a more progressive attitude, for a belief in the need for improvement in the conditions of everyday life. Economic development cannot concern itself, for example, with the so-called modern sector of the economy and hope that the traditional sector, in God's good time, will be dragged into the Twentieth Century. Whether the advocates of "balanced" or "unbalanced" development are right, a form of economic development which failed to share at least some of the benefits of the rising standards of life in the towns with the great mass of the people in the rural areas would be likely to give rise to serious social and political tensions.

level by over five hundred per cent, so that the relative targets for 1965-66 are 12,000 and 19,000 graduates and technicians respectively. It is worth noting that in India it was accepted from the beginning that the factors affecting the demand for scientific and technical personnel differ from one sector to another. Various studies were undertaken of the distribution by employment of scientists and technical personnel in different branches of specialization, and norms were built up for estimating future requirements for different types of work.

6. It should be noted also that the provision for technical education in the Nigerian National Development Plan 1962-68 is £5.7 million - manifestly insufficient for a programme designed to produce five thousand technicians a year. The dramatic impetus given since 1959 to university education has yet to be matched in the technician field, and the absence of authenticated targets may be a contributory factor. All the more urgent, therefore, is the production of much firmer and realistically based estimates of what, in fact, future needs are likely to be.

Apprenticeship

7. It has been estimated that there are about 2,700 apprentices in industry, the public corporations and government workshops. In addition, something of the order of two thousand students are enrolled in eight government trade centres, with a somewhat lower number in technical institutes. The inadequacy of these numbers is apparent, even allowing for the large amount of 'on the job' training not included, when placed against the projected out-turn of five thousand technicians a year. The numbers are astonishingly small by any standards. Faced by a similar dilemma, India has taken two decisive steps; the first is to raise the number of places

in vocational schools from 43,000 in 1960-61 to 1000,000 in 1965-66. The second step was the Apprenticeship Act of 1961, which makes it obligatory for employers to provide facilities for the training of apprentices. Moreover, the Central Government is authorized to determine, after consulting the Central Apprenticeship Council, the ratio of apprentices to craftsmen for each designated trade, and to maintain a close oversight of the quality of training. In Nigeria the possibilities of formalized apprenticeship and close cooperation between Government and industry about standards and technical training facilities are, so far as available information goes, not yet very well developed. Given the heavy cost of providing trade schools, are the available facilities which already exist in industry for apprenticeship training being fully utilized? Are all employers pulling their weight? It may be that some system such as that which we are proposing to adopt in Britain for employers to share the cost of training might be worth examining, both to reduce the burden on the State and on the goods employer, and to increase the production rate of fully apprenticed craftsmen and artisans. The expression 'fully apprenticed' itself begs a question; cannot some of the apprenticeship periods be reduced without loss?

Agriculture

8. As in most developing countries, agriculture remains the dominant industry in Nigeria, both as an avenue of employment and as a source of foreign exchange earnings. According to the 1951-52 census, 78 per cent of Nigeria's occupied manpower was engaged in agriculture. The steady reduction of this proportion must remain an aim of policy, but it would be optimistic, in view of the considerable increase in population during the last ten years, to expect the latest census to show any substantial

decrease. (To take India again as an example, the percentage of workers engaged in agriculture at 70 per cent has change only slightly between 1951 and 1961 in spite of two large-scale and, on the whole, successful development plans). The rural areas in Nigeria must absorb the majority of the young people coming on to the labour market. Some of the implications of this are discussed later, but for the moment it might be useful to concentrate on the high-level manpower problems of agriculture, beginning with the Ashby Report: "We emphasize that the crucial importance of agriculture to Nigeria is not reflected in its Federal Government organization, in education, or in the scale of its research and advisory work in the field of agriculture. All these activities need to be strengthened". The Report went on: "Veterinary education should not be tied to the requirements of overseas professional bodies, but should be closely related to the special needs of Nigeria. It should particularly emphasize animal husbandry, animal nutrition and preventive medicine. Agriculture, being the largest element in the Nigerian economy, should have a much greater part in university education. We recommend that, in addition to the present faculty of agriculture at University College, Ibadan, schools or faculties of agriculture with research and extension programmes should be established in a university in each region. In due course, departments of home economics could well be added". Prof. Harbison noted that, "in 1959 the number of vacancies for agricultural officers and research personnel was about equal to the total number actually employed". What is the present position? The figures for enrolments at Ibadan and Nsukka in agricultural courses between 1959 and 1962-3 totalled 442. During the same period the number of arts students enrolled totalled 1,841. Engineering and science were similarly outnumbered. A comment on Indian experience might again not be out of place. It has been admitted in India that there was a good deal of

unplanned expansion or arts courses during the First and Second Five-Year Plan periods, which outran the demand for persons with these qualifications. The proportion of science students to the total enrolment fell from 38 per cent in 1950-51 to about 36 per cent in 1960-61. It is hoped, however, that measures undertaken for the Third Plan period will increase the proportion of science students to total enrolment to 42.5 per cent. Is Nigeria going through the earlier Indian phase?

9. As a first step, it would be valuable to know whether the facilities in Nigeria for education in the agricultural faculties are being fully utilized. The signs are not suspicious. During 1962-63 the University of Ife had an enrolment capacity of fifty four courses in agriculture; admission was offered to 68 students, but only 13 finally enrolled. It is interesting to note that Prof. Harbison foresaw the possibility of difficulties arising as a result of the salary structure: "The compensation for professionally trained agricultural officers is far too low in comparison with other professional positions, considering the particular hardships involved in their kind of work. In our judgment, agricultural officers and similar categories of personnel should be paid for at a scale substantially higher than that prevailing for engineers. By the same token technical personnel in the senior categories should receive higher compensation than the general levels of the administrative grades, thus reflecting the comparative supply and demand situation". If young men of suitable quality are not offering themselves for agricultural training (also forestry and veterinary) in sufficient numbers, the causes need to be thoroughly explored. A separate question concerns the adequacy of the existing facilities for agricultural education and training. As such a high proportion of activity in the agricultural field rests on government initiative, the assessment of future manpower needs should present fewer

difficulties in the agricultural field than in industry and commerce. But this field more than others is affected by the current taste for urban life and dislike of life in the bush. This lack of mobility has been identified in South-East Asia as a serious drag on development in the rural areas, and salary differentials of a substantial kind to government officers serving in such areas have recently been introduced by the Government of Thailand, among others.

10. To summarize the preceding paragraphs - technician training and the education and training of agriculturists are fundamental factors in Nigeria's development. The measurement of needs in both categories should be early targets of the National Manpower Board, together with the modification of educational plans to ensure that realistic targets, once established, are met. India, faced with similar problems in the agricultural field, established in 1957 an Agricultural Personnel Centre for assessing the requirements of trained personnel for the whole of the agricultural sector, including agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, community development and co-operation during the Third Year Plan period (1961-66).

Employment Objectives of Economic Planning

11. Perhaps the first benefit of development which people look for is productive work - and the main manpower problem must be therefore to measure and attack unemployment and under-employment. The results of the recent census in Nigeria will provide a valuable guide to the rate of population growth, but it is already evident that Nigeria is sharing in the almost universal increase in population, and it will be surprising if the final figures show less than 43-44 per cent of the population as being under the age of fifteen. These are young people who year by year will

come on to the employment market somewhere in Nigeria over the next fifteen years. This was the proportion revealed by the 1951-1952 census and bears a close resemblance to the present position in Asia, where proportions between 41 per cent and 44 per cent are general. In the United Kingdom the figure is only 24.7 per cent, and yet we are preoccupied with the education and employment problems of the so-called post-war "bulge".

12. What is the prospect of absorption into non-agricultural employment (i.e. outside the traditional sector)? The experience in India has been instructive; out of a total increase of 48.4 millions in the number of workers between 1951 and 1961, 69.7 per cent were absorbed into the agricultural sector and 30.3 per cent in non-agricultural occupations. But of the latter, after a massive programme of investment totalling approximately £7,500 millions, the greater part of which was directed to the creation of infrastructure and the promotion of industry, the number of workers employed in industry had increased by the relatively small figure of 6½ millions; at a rough and ready calculation, rather more than £1,000 of investment for each job in industry. There is an equally rough and ready correlation between the current Nigerian investment programme of £676.5 millions and the projected creation of half a million new jobs in non-agricultural occupations during the period of the plan. The entire current six-year plan is unlikely, therefore, to absorb into non-agricultural employment more than a small proportion of each year's young work-seekers. This is not an exceptional position - India and Egypt, to take two examples, are in a similar predicament.

13. It might be worth posing the problem in another way. If the projections of Nigeria's future manpower needs of high-level middle-level manpower to fulfil the National Development Plan should prove to be accurate

and well-conceived, and the educational planning adequate to meet these needs - if, in short, a balance is struck between future demand and supply - there would remain the serious and pressing problem that the population is growing faster than job opportunities. In the absence of powerful remedial measures, rural under-employment is likely to be aggravated and urban employment (due to migration) to be increased.

14. As regards migration to the towns, improved education operates on occasion as a process by which rural under-employment is converted to urban-employment, and the faster the rate of development of the modern economy the greater the pull exerted by the towns. This is a universal phenomenon. In Latin America, for example, where development is accelerating, the rate of urbanization is the highest in the world. But these movements are accompanied by serious increases in urban unemployment. In short, the aspirations for a better standard of living have grown much more rapidly than the means for providing higher standards. I.L.O. surveys in South-East Asia have shown that visibly under-employed, i.e. those part-time workers who are looking for and are at least available for extra work, account for nearly 20 per cent in rural and 10 per cent in urban areas in Ceylon: 12 per cent in rural areas and 8 per cent in urban areas in India; and 10 per cent overall in the Philippines. In the urban areas there is, however, much total unemployment, aggravated by the effect of migration to the towns from the rural areas, and, according to the results of I.L.O. surveys, the rate of total unemployment has been found to be higher in urban than in rural areas.

15. Measures to stabilize the rural population and to promote productive employment in the rural sector must therefore be essential aims of economic development and manpower planning. In all the so-called

developed countries industrialization was either preceded or accompanied by a sharp increase in agricultural output. The industrial revolution was accompanied by an agricultural revolution. In Nigeria the problems are immense. Rural development does not readily capture the imagination and hopes of people as do the factory chimneys. Yet the facts are clear. Industrial development in Nigeria must for many years to come depend on the foreign exchange earnings of agriculture which, at present, represent no less than 85 per cent of total exports. Nor is this the complete picture of agricultural contribution to the economy, since surpluses accruing to the various Marketing Boards are an important source of internal investment funds. Reference has been made earlier to the priority of training and education for agricultural employment. But this would in any case represent only a portion of the whole problem. Much experience has accumulated about rural employment problems which suggests that the dissemination of improved agricultural techniques, while important, is not a decisive factor in improving either employment possibilities or the stability of the rural population. Modern Agricultural methods, to take an obvious example, often use less labour than older methods. The aims of rural development might be summarized as increased agricultural production, increased employment, a reduction of under-employment, and the development, through the capacity of the villagers themselves, of a standard and pattern of life which can act as a counter-attraction to the towns. The encouragement of rural industries, the improvement of village amenities, community development, land reform and co-operative enterprises all have a part to play; but the bringing in of fresh ideas to rural areas and the encouragement of local initiative is vital. This can often be facilitated by a firm policy of placing government establishments, wherever possible, in those areas including schools and institutions, and by measures to attract

doctors, teachers and other essential personnel to take up employment there. The encouragement of industry to move to these areas can also help to create the basic 'growing points' around which improved rural standards can develop. Only the rejuvenation of village life can create a counter-attraction to the pull of the towns and diminish the rest-less migration of young people which is the basis of so much urban unemployment and which can have deeper consequences. As Rupert Emerson¹ said of South-East Asia:

'One significant point which deserves close and continued observation is the extent to which Westernization, if this term may be used to indicate the whole trend toward a breach with the traditional past, will find adequate reflection in other than the capital and a few main urban centres. The attraction of these centres for the rising elite and the newly educated is obviously very great, and the demands of the central government services and the headquarters of major economic institutions are immense when measured against the available trained manpower. It is by no means difficult to foresee a situation in which there will be a constant drain away from the provinces and the more rural areas of sufficient magnitude seriously to delay their progress and to make of them a stagnant hinterland which the "enlightened" centre would administer with greater or less benevolence as the case might be.'

16. These measures do not fall within the narrower definitions of manpower planning, but if the rural areas are to absorb 70-80 per cent of the young people coming on to the labour market each year, and if urban unemployment is to be kept at a manageable level, then the planning of rural development must be of direct interest to the National Manpower Board, which can indeed give powerful support to the urgency of such development.

1. Rupert Emerson: "Representative Government in South-East Asia." 1955.

The Role of Education

17. In developing countries the traditional role of education as a means by which society achieves its social and cultural objectives has necessarily to be modified to accord with the limitations of resources and the objectives of economic planning. The struggle to eradicate illiteracy is the first step towards improving living standards, but beyond that level an important element in education planning should be the satisfaction of the manpower needs essential to orderly economic progress. The interaction between education and manpower is a delicate relationship between what are often two divergent sets of purposes, and it is not always easy, therefore, to establish on a clear and rational basis the criteria for investment in education. Education can never be wholly vocational; equally it must have a more positive aim than a mere raising of general education standards. The effectiveness of the arrangements for co-operation between the Nigerian Ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry of Education in the field of education planning are therefore of particular significance for the success of Nigeria's effort to plan for her future manpower requirements.