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Full Length Research Paper

The Implications of Census Data for National Manpower Planning in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined by a desk discussion through a review of the literature the implications of census data for national manpower planning in Nigeria. Census data is seen as a veritable tool and input in manpower planning for effective socioeconomic development. Irrespective of the doused credibility of Nigeria's population census data arising from political and ethnic bonding, the census still furnishes needed information on labor force size and characteristics, age structure and employment issues among others. These are needed for proper assessment of the current manpower/labor force situation and to equally make realistic goals and plans for the future. Devolution of political, economic and financial powers to the federating units of Nigeria is recommended as the way forward for more credible census data in Nigeria.

Keywords: Implications, Census Data, Manpower Planning, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The census is a very important exercise and event in every country of the modern world. The data the exercise furnishes us with is of the very much essence, which we cannot afford to play with it. Such data concerns detailed information on the characteristics and conditions of the human population, which is very essential for development planning process. It is the population that benefits from development efforts and equally constitutes and provide the resources needed for the development. It follows, therefore, that the information provided by the census on the size and characteristics of the population can be fully maximized for the development process and so help effectively in forwarding the dividends of development planning efforts. Census data are essential to every community in Nigeria since it provides information on the population down to the local level on such wide ranging

features as age, education, occupation, literacy, health, language, etc. Touching on the issue of manpower planning, which of course is an inseparable aspect of economic planning, Eze (2017), echoing Umoh, maintain that we need to know how many persons are in the country, how many are employed and how many are unemployed. For short and long term planning of employment opportunities, government and private sector functionaries need to have an insight of labor-force characteristics which are readily provided by the census.

The various conflicts, controversies and rancor that have consistently bedeviled and trailed census exercises in Nigeria-especially along political, ethnic and tribal lines have doused the authenticity and credibility of the census results. This notwithstanding, there is a general consensus that a coordinated,

systematic and responsive population database is critical for government to make informed decisions on policy, planning, program execution and impact assessment of such activities. Absence of such data debilitates the ability and capacity of government in that direction. Seeing the salience of human resources in the nation's socioeconomic life, this paper examines the place census holds in the nation's national manpower planning. To achieve this goal, the paper is broken into the following subtopics:

- i). Census: Meaning, History and Importance.
- ii). Human Resource/Manpower: Clarification of Concepts.
- iii). Manpower/Labor Force Derivation and Dynamics.
- iv). Census Data in National Manpower Planning.

CENSUS: MEANING, HISTORY AND IMPORTANCE

A census is the enumeration of everyone residing in a country at a given time. It is said to be a photograph of the population characteristics and features of a country in such time of counting expressed in numbers. It is therefore aimed at collecting and collating data on the characteristics of the population (Eze, 2017). United Nations defines a modern scientific census as the total process of collecting, compiling, and publishing demographic, economic and social data pertaining at a specified time or times to all persons in a country or delimited territory (U.N. 1958). Population census should therefore determine total population, sex, age and status, place of birth, citizenship or nationality, mother tongues, literacy and educational qualification, economic characteristics, urban or rural domicile, household or family structure and fertility pattern (Eze, 2015).

The first documented census in Nigeria was conducted in 1866. Subsequently, others followed in 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921, and 1931. It could not hold in 1941 due to the exigencies of the Second World War. However, these censuses were largely inaccurate since they could not meet all the accepted characteristics of a census such as individual enumeration, universality, simultaneity and defined periodicity. The census results were derived from actual house to house enumeration in some places and estimates in the rest of the country. The first attempt at modern and scientific census, which was nationwide and was conducted between 1950-1953, so called the 1952/53 census. This census also breached the important principle of simultaneity due to the staggering of the dates of enumeration across the different regions of the country; so it fell prey to under or double-counting in the face of the continuous inter-regional migrations. Nigeria's attempt at carrying out successful and reliable

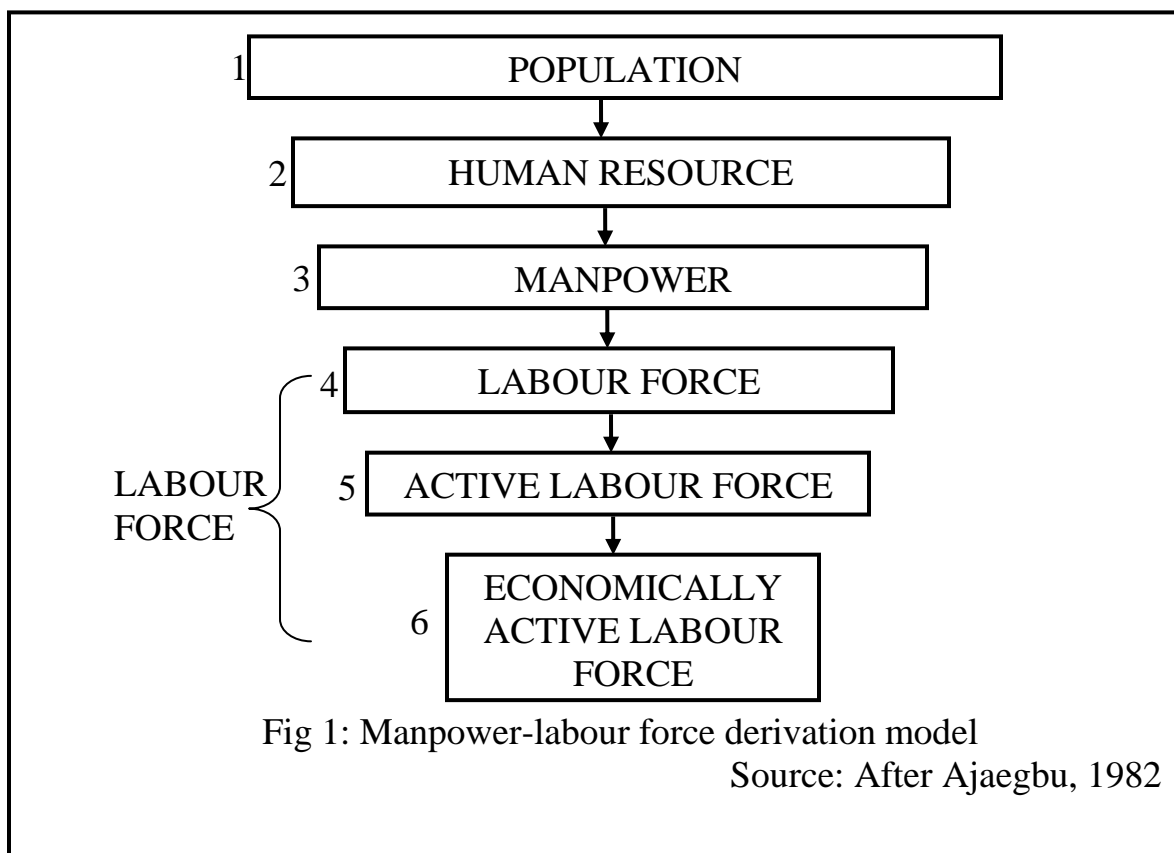
post-independence censuses has been mired with problems. The results of the first post-independence census conducted in 1962 were withdrawn after, its authenticity was hotly contested; consequently, in 1963, another census was conducted.

The contest for the acceptance of the result ended in the Supreme Court, which backed out on account of non-jurisdiction. Even though the 1963 census result was accepted, yet it was shown to be inconsistent with the census of earlier year since it implies a virtually impossible growth rate of 5.8 percent. The 1973 census results created so much rancor, altercations and criticisms across the country that it was thrown out and so never saw the light of the day. The 1991 census result, even though questioned, was accepted. The 2006 population was the latest in the series. The result was hotly contested and debated and was widely rejected by the southern states and southern socio-cultural organizations as Ohaneze Ndigbo and Afenifere, declaring it as 'doctored and tailored' and 'a well managed and manipulated demographic ventures' respectively (Tell magazine, 19th Feb, 2007). However, irrespective of all the debates, the 2006 census result was officially accepted and remains the document and a reference point for national socioeconomic planning.

Census holds a central place in a country's data provision for planning socioeconomic development. Information collected during the census is used to assess the current welfare needs of the population as well as project future needs to assist planners make realistic future development needs. Indeed, accurate data about a country's population is fundamental to rational policy making, planning and program implementation. Planners need population and development data to evaluate demographic trends, to assess the socioeconomic situation of women, men and youths and design population policies and programs.

The knowledge of the characteristics and trends of the population is also required to integrate population factors into development planning, to monitor and evaluate policies and programs and to help promote population awareness among decision makers in public and private sectors. Census data are specifically required in the area of health, education, and economic planning. It is also used significantly in the distribution of political positions state and local government creation and allocation of resources.

In economic planning, especially the issue of manpower and labor force matters, which this write-up is focusing on, census data, will bring us in the know of how many persons are in the country, how many are employed and how many are unemployed. For the short and long-term planning of employment opportunities, government and private sector functionaries need to have an insight of labor force characteristics which are easily provided by the census.



HUMAN RESOURCE/MANPOWER: CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The phrase human resource has been defined by Professor Frederick Harbison to mean “the native abilities, the energies, skills and knowledge of people which should be applied to the production of goods or giving of services in an economy” (Eze, 2006). Thus, human resources have to do with man and his work, with the production of goods and services of all kinds in the social, political, cultural and religious sphere and of course in the area of economic development. It includes the full range of human hopes and endeavors.

The thoughts, beliefs, feelings, aspirations and culture of human beings beyond and outside of work are also part of human resources and part of human development (Mbagwu, 1987). The word manpower, refers to human resources which are used in the economic development of any nation and this is the major tool needed for an economic advancement, that is, the creation of wealth/the alleviation of poverty. It is generally agreed that it is the human resources of a nation, not the capital or its natural resources that ultimately determine the character and pace of its economic and social development.

Professor Harbison maintains that human resources constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production. Human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations and carry forward national advancement (Todaro, 1994).

Despite the availability of other resources for economic development, if the necessary manpower needed for transforming these resources into satisfying human wants are not available, such resources are useless and this affects the economic development of the area or region concerned. It then implies that any country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the economic development of their nation, they will be unable to develop anything else.

The manpower availability and quality varies across space and time in terms of numbers and skills. This implies that some classes of people are a better or higher order resource than others and expected to have a higher economic development (Todaro 1994). This can largely account for the varying levels of socioeconomic and technological development across the different regions of the world.

MANPOWER/LABOUR FORCE DERIVATION AND DYNAMICS

The greatest resource of a nation is its population. The total population is the source from which the potential skill acquirers in any given country are drawn. The population is therefore, the base for the national manpower provision. The manpower or labor force of a country can never be better in quality, or larger in quantity than its population.

Fig 1 Illustrates that of the total population, we can derive the following: human resource, manpower, labor force, active labor force and economically active labor force (Ajaegbu 1982). Each of the aspects derived is just a segment of the population. The ultimate goal of developing the population is to build up an economically active labor force. Human resources refer to persons in the population with valuable potential. Specifically, human resources are defined in terms of the sum total of all the energies, talents, skills and knowledge available to a country at any given time and which can be mobilized for that country's development efforts. Those persons in the human resource who have been processed, and/or are being processed constitute manpower. Labor force is that segment of the population that contributes or is capable of contributing to the generation of income, simply put the labor force consist of all those who are able and willing to engage in economic activity, whether or not they are actually performing it. It is equally defined as a proportion of the total population using an age range – 15-60years for Nigeria but by United Nations standard – 15-65years. Active labor force are those persons in the labor force that are being utilized and economically active labor force constitute those persons in the active labor force who have been fully 'processed' (both in skill and attitude) and are optimally utilized. For the purpose of this write-up, one shall be confined to the segment-manpower which shall be interchangeable, used as a labor force as already defined and clarified.

CENSUS DATA IN NATIONAL MANPOWER PLANNING

Manpower planning involves all the processes undertaken to ensure manpower development and utilization. Manpower development or human capital development is seen as the resourcefulness of person(s) through the acquisition of skills, education and experience which are necessary ingredients for a country to develop economically, socially, politically and otherwise, it is associated with investment in man and his development as creative and productive resources (Anugwom, 2010). Gerald (1964), defined human

capital development as the process of acquiring and increasing the number of persons who have the skills, education and experience which are critical for the economic and political development of a country. It includes investment by society in education, investment by employers in training as well as investment by individuals in time and money in their own development (Okunrotifa, 1983). Citing Ginsberg, Eze (2006) shows that manpower/human capital development system explicates how people in different types of societies accumulate skills and use them.

In outline, the manpower development system consists of the series of major institutions loosely linked to each other which together are responsible for teaching the skills and competences needed by a population; which provide the conditions under which people are able to use their skills and further develop them, and which assures those who are unable to support themselves, either because of their lack of skills or inability to put them to use, the goods and services essential for their survival.

The development of manpower in Nigeria is carried out through various channels. It is developed through formal education in schools, technical training centres, colleges, polytechnics, universities and other institutions of higher learning, on the job training, in-service programs of formal training, management development seminars, part-time adult education classes and all the array of employing organizations of family owned enterprises to the multinational corporations (Okunrotifa, 1983).

Since manpower derives from the entire population and we have already made it clear that manpower/labor force cannot be higher quality and/or quantity than the population of the country from where it is derived, it follows that information needed on the features and characteristics of the manpower for planning at any point in time must be obtained from data on the population. Census as already defined provides enormous data on population, which furnishes necessary information on manpower for its planning such as labor force size, age and sex composition, education status, employment and unemployment situation, participation rate, sector composition; dependency ratio and activity rate. We shall now examine how population census provides the data and thereby facilitate manpower planning for forwarding national socioeconomic development.

Labor Force Size

Technically, Nigeria defines her labor force as persons in the population aged between 15 and 60 years. The census provides data on the total size of the nation's population and also provides details of the age-sex structure of the population, which enable us to identify

Table 1: Nigeria's population and labor force 1952 – 2006

Year	Population (million)	Increase in pop. (million)	% increase	Labour force (million)	Increase in labour force (million)	% increase
1952	30.30			16.90	-	-
1963	55.7	25.40	84	18.3	1.4	8
1991	88.5	32.8	59	42.06	24.76	35
2006	140.4	51.5	59	74.7	31.64	73

Sources: 1. Ajaegbu (1983)
 2. Umoh (2001)
 3. Author's calculations

the group within the labor force. This show again as we have already made clear before, that the population is the base for national manpower provision; so as the population increases, the labor force size increases as well. For example 1952/53 census, Nigeria's population was 30.30million; Nigeria's labor force size was 16,932,000, which means that during this period, nearly 17 million Nigerians needed to be gainfully occupied. In 1963, it was 55.7 million, the labor force was 18.3 million; in 1980, estimate of the population was given as 84.87million, the size of the labor force was put at 32.20 million; in 1991, the population was 88.514501 million the labor force size was 43.06million; in 2006, the population was 140million the labor force size was 74.7million. Even if Nigeria's population growth begins to decline now, an immediate corresponding decline will not be felt in the labor force. This is because persons who are expected to enter the labor force in the next fourteen years are now already born, hence a 'lag time' is needed for a decline in overall population to be reflected in the size of the labor force.

The table 1 below presents data on Nigeria's population and the corresponding labor force figures between 1952 and 2006. According to Ajaegbu (1983), at all levels, national, state, local government and even family/household, the labor force size increases as the population of that unit grow. It is therefore imperative for the economy to ensure that the labor force is gainfully occupied to avoid wastage and potential social crisis that portends with such bulging labor force size. It is the duty of government to create and ensure a convivial social and economic environment through appropriate planning and policy measures that generate economic growth and increasingly absorb the labor force.

Age Structure

As already noted, population growth influences the size of the labor force, however, whatever the overall magnitude of population growth rate; its fertility and mortality components have separate significance. This is because the age structure of the population will be different from a high-birth and death rate country than

for a low birth and death rate one, even though the natural rate of increase is the same for both. Birth rates affect only the numbers of the newly born, while death rates affect – unevenly – all age groups. A country with a high birth rate and a high death rate will have a greater percentage of the total population in the dependent age group (i.e. 0-15years) than will a low birth/death rate country. Rapid reductions in death rates will expand the size of the labor force as has been the case in Nigeria. On the other hand, continuous high birth rates create a high dependency ratio and a rapidly expanding/future labor force, a situation Nigeria is experiencing now, (Bolarinwa, 1987). The age structure of Nigeria's population as shown in the 2006 census is largely young with a high proportion of 43% under 15years while 15-60, the proportion is 54% and ages 60 and above is 3%. One implication of this age structure is brought out in the calculation of the dependency ratio. This ratio is very useful in the study of labor force and employment. The dependency ratio is defined as the number of persons in a population who are not economically active for every economically active person in that population. The census data have consistently posted high dependency ratios since independence and the implication of this is that much of the development effort is being expended on the provision of consumer goods such as housing, education, medical facilities and food rather than on capital goods. This could therefore reduce the level of savings and of capital accumulation causing a vicious cycle that retards development. According to Umoh (2001), the dependency ratio is usually positively correlated with the levels of consumption, but negatively correlated with the levels of savings.

Labor Force Participation

Census data equally provide us with information on labor force participation, which indicates to us the extent to which persons in the various age groups of the population take part in economic activities. Indices of labor force participation calculated from the census data provide a measure of labor supply; they give us an idea

of the number of persons in given age-groups or in the entire country who are able and ready to work. They also indicate to us the extent of labor utilization; they give us an idea of how much of the labor supplied is being actually used. The difference between the labor supplied and the labor actually used indicates a waste to the economy. In Nigeria with high rate of unemployment means there are low labor force participation rates. Declining labor force participation rates mean that more and more people are not engaged in labor force activities probably resulting from the high level of unemployment experienced in the country. Labor force participation rates are usually calculated separately for males and females, possibly because of the tradition in some societies for women to take part more in household and other domestic duties.

Employment Issues

Related to the issue of labor force participation is employment status, which census exercises equally bring out data on. The census thus assists in establishing the level of employment/unemployment for future planning and job creation by giving us the number of employed persons and type of work; distribution of unemployed persons and the number of persons in schools that will require employment in due course (Ezeoke, 2005). In Nigeria, where the problem of unemployment is so frightening, we need to know how many persons are in the labor force, how many are retiring and the number that is entering every year. For short and long term planning of employment opportunities, government and private sector functionaries need to have an insight of the labor force characteristics which is readily provided by the census (Umoh, 2001). For instance manufacturing and service firms make use of such information in selecting sites that meet their labor force needs (Weeks, 2012). Also census provides information on the number of persons engaged in particular economic pursuits, which information is necessary in economic planning as it shows the contribution of the citizens of the country and different sectors of the economy to her development.

Census equally furnishes us with data on the number of people who can read and write (Literacy level) and level of education attained (Education status) by those who have been to schools which will boost our understanding of the quality of our manpower and help inform necessary policy options for manpower planning purposes. Generally information collected during a census is utilized in assessing the current welfare needs of the population and equally used in forecasting future needs; including manpower needs to guide future development needs and goals especially in areas of manpower resources to which this paper concentrates on. For instance, census information on the number of

children as well as when they are due for school will guide planners on training and recruitment of needed teaching manpower.

A large number of countries have devoted time and effort to the systematic development and utilization of manpower and some like Nigeria have established manpower boards. The qualitative aspects of the labor force are highly significant to economic development. The manpower policy maker must therefore pay attention to particular skills and the manpower forecaster must attempt to measure the anticipated demand for and supply of the labor force for some date in the future. The base data for these activities comes from census results that emanates from census exercise.

CONCLUSION

The need for detailed and current population data for effective socioeconomic planning will always be there. It is already acknowledged that the population of any country constitutes the most vital component of its resource base as well as her potential for development. This aspect is based mostly on its size, growth rate, spatial distribution, demographic structure and quality in terms of level of education, health and social welfare. An accurate census is in everyone's interest. It provides the knowledge so that public resources can be shared evenly across the country and to ensure that services at the local level are relevant to people who live there. But in Nigeria, the census is not just seen as a purely administrative and statistical exercise as it should be. The political undertones and ethno-religious bonds still form, influence, and attempt to distort considerably the process of population enumeration (FGN, 2009).

This is, as evidenced by the diverse ethnic and political controversies that have mired the process since independence. The underlying cause being that population figures arising from the census are the core basis for revenue allocation socio-infrastructure facility's distribution and electoral representations, especially in a pseudo-federalism which we operate in Nigeria, where the federal government controls the resources and wields overwhelming power over the federating units-states. It is therefore suggested and recommended that to install sanity in our census, apart from the need to continuously create awareness of the administrative and technical essence of the census exercises, determined by the political class to ensure justice, equity and fairness in the polity to douse the sense of marginalization and enhance a sense of belonging is imperative. Moreover, devolution of power and resources to the federating units for such a multi-ethnic country as Nigeria is indispensable as this will curb the wild desire to do everything possible no matter

how corrupt, immoral and bizarre to grab a large share of the national cake from the centre.

In conclusion, one will agree that census data is paramount in ensuring effective manpower planning seeing that all indices relating to the quality, and quantity of the manpower resources is obtainable from the census result. It is equally generally agreed and accepted that the real basis for social, economic and political progress is the development of skills, knowledge and creative capacities of the people. Census information is therefore critical to analyzing, assessing and understanding the current manpower situation in the country so we can make good planning arrangement and forecast for its effective development and utilization. This therefore underscores the need for consistently periodic, timely and accurate census exercises that will produce credible data for effective manpower planning for national development.

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