

Ushering a New Dispensation in a New Dispensation to undo ‘*An idle mind is the devil’s workshop*’ in Zimbabwe

By

Emmanuel Dumbu (PhD)

Sabbatical Fellow: University of Swaziland, Faculty of Commerce, Department of Business Administration. Private Bag 4, Kwaluseni M201, Swaziland

Abstract

Changing of governments is normally associated with a number of challenges related to economic governance. In Zimbabwe, the deposed Mugabe era saw the new dispensation inheriting high levels of youth unemployment, which automatically poses a challenge. In labour economics, the idle mind (unemployed) is the devil’s workshop. The present study aimed at revealing how the ushered in new dispensation in Zimbabwe undoes the idleness of the youths because of high unemployment level. Literature indicated that youth unemployment is a great challenge to the governance of the economy. Consequences of high unemployment of the youths are negative to socio-economic development. The study employed a desk research design. It was established that the new dispensation has put in place measures to mitigate youth’s unemployment ranging from re-engagement with the international world that has attracted billions of dollars in form of Foreign Direct Investment to the highly developed Command Agriculture, which forms the backbone for availability of raw materials in the industrial rejuvenation process. The study recommended that the current economic governance agent should nip corruption on the bud, reorient private and public sector towards harmonised operations through partnerships, rejuvenate and revamp agricultural sector continue to support Special Economic Zones and canvass for more international re-engagement with the international community. This will drive up the economy and create more job opportunities for the youths.

Key words: New dispensation, workshop, an idle mind, devil, ushering.

Background to the study

At the centre of the new dispensation in Zimbabwe is the creation of jobs for the unemployed, the mantra that the current Zimbabwean leader spelled out at his inauguration and at international gatherings soon after deposed Robert Mugabe, led government failed the nation for the past 37 years. The unemployed people in Zimbabwe await the purported revitalisation of the economy to become one of the competitive economies in the region. However, the previously mentioned policy, the pro-poor policy hinges on exuded governance by the players in the game of national governance. Governance is definitional imprecise as there are two definitional dimensions of the concept. When attempting defining governance firstly, one has to focus on the fundamental role

of the state in management of state structures and institutions (statist conception) and secondly view governance as involving the steering of the whole society towards realisation of common good. Governance sets a mechanism of selecting, monitoring, adherence to constitutionalism, rule of law and promulgation of implementable sound public policies to deliver public goods and services that empower citizens (Adejumobi, 2006). In a state government and the society, interdepend drawing a social pact between the two, which is interactive in defining objectives, and negotiating approaches to achieve goals collectively. Such ways ensures realisation of the collective goals of the society democratising the dispensation.

Governance generally describes how the various stakeholders in the society are given the opportunity and space to participate and influence decisions that are about human development (Zondi, 2009). The manner in which governance works has a direct link and impact on the well-being of the individuals of the whole society. Governance that is usually blamed for success or failure of any human development programmes in the country. To provide satisfaction and unquestionable services to the public governance must be capacitated, that is, it should be efficient and effective in responding to socio-economic needs of the society. According to Darkwah, Nketia-Amponsah, and Dako-Gyeke (2015) governance accords protection of human rights essentials to provide an environment where all members of the society are free to contribute their talents and skills to the development of the country's economy. For the past 37 year, under the Robert Mugabe regime, Zimbabwe lacked such kind of environment because of chronic poor governance of the economy that precipitated undeserving sufferings due to lack of employment in the country. Zimbabwe, endowed with natural resources in form of minerals, good agricultural soils and climate, and one of the refined human capital base that it could not have nosedived its economy to the levels that are experienced now facing unprecedented levels of unemployment.

Urban unemployment is a worrisome socio-economic and political pandemic in Zimbabwe. The phenomenon portends serious governance challenges to the new political dispensation inheriting it from the Robert Mugabe regime that ended in November 2017 in a soft transfer of power to the Emmerson Mnangagwa dispensation political outfit. Unemployment has serious consequences in any state usually associated with political violence. In the past two decades, elections in Zimbabwe were marred by rampant political violence perpetrated accusingly by the ruling party Zimbabwe African National Union, Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the largest opposition party, movement for Democratic Change (MDC). When elections are around the corner political stream starts rise, like the July 2018 dubbed elections where contesting members from both parties campaign and jostle for the ticket to represent their parties. Idleness is ridden on by the politicians for use in their campaign and these unemployed become campaign tools. Unemployed are used in politically orchestrated violence for immaterial things such as beer, meat, and sadza, drugs to stimulate violent behaviour. Sometimes politicians' organised militias to orchestrate political violence on rivals pounce on the unemployment. Poverty makes the unemployed easy to exploit leading them to commission of crimes. Frustration and desperation have exposed the unemployment to participate in incentivised political violence. Unprecedented

upsurge of unemployment in Zimbabwe can be attributed to lack of good governance. Economic haemorrhage and meltdown precipitated over the past two decades is responsible for rampant unemployment leading to trapping of the increased number of job seekers being pawns of political violence.

Idleness is a serious challenge that needs to be addressed in the short term and long lasting solutions being developed in due course. The phenomenon of idleness is not a good thing to the new dispensation although it is inheriting it from the previous government. Arguably, political violence proliferating in Zimbabwe at present cannot wholly be blamed on the barbaric behaviour of the unemployed. Governance needs to be straightened. That will see creation of conducive environment that is enabling for business and attraction of the need Foreign Direct Investment. World Bank Report (2011) argued that a large cohort of people failing to get gainful employment become a real time bomb for governance. Zimbabwe, as we speak is sitting on the deadly time bomb because it is facing a mass of frustrated and desperate unemployed. There is a potential danger of socio-political instability if checks and balances to the status quo are not massified in terms of creating real income earning jobs. The unemployed, just like anybody else demand access to health, education for the children, transport, decent accommodation, clothing, and most importantly food on the table for them and their loved families. Demands of this kind can only be met by one gainfully employed. Back to the unemployed, if the above mentioned demands are not satisfied they are pushed to wall and the last resort is to engage in politically motivated violence fulfilling the old adage that 'an idle mind is the devil's workshop'

Statement of the problem

For the past two decades the government of Zimbabwe tried all the possibilities of dealing with unemployment promulgating several policies, one after the other from the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). Home grown policies such as Zimbabwe Programme of Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST), Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP), New Economic Recovery Programme (NERP) and the current dubbed Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio- Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) have failed to ameliorate the unemployment pandemic that has plunged several people into unemployment statuses accelerating exploitation of the later in politically orchestrated violence in the past decade. The above policies in their nature sounded good in dealing with the problem of unemployment because all were focusing on resuscitating the economic fortunes of the country. However, the challenges of idleness culminating from corruption and partisan governance have fast overtaken the policy implementation to the advantage of the common average person. The current study focus on how the New Political Dispensation (NPD) is turning around the economy to address exploitation of the unemployed in political wrangles.

Research question

- What strategies are at the disposal of the New Dispensation dealing with the unemployment pandemic?

Theoretical framework

The present study will be anchored in the New Public Management Theory (NPMT). The theory has its roots in the Public Choice theory and managerialism (Gruening, 2001). The development of the NPMT was a result of deficiencies that were observed in public management associated with incompetence, inefficiencies, and corruption. The drive of adopting the NPMT, a 21st century concept undoubtedly aimed at transforming dramatically the public governance (Robinson, 2015). In the past governance or steering, the machines of economic development were based on bureaucracy red tape. Proponents of the NPMT such as Osborne (2006), Carrington, DeBuse and Lee (2008) and Katsamunskya (2016) assert the superiority of private sector managerial methods and processes over those of public administration. The assumption in mind was that the adoption of the private sector management techniques and tools for decision making into public administration in the dynamic globalised environment of public management, would automatically lead to improved service delivery improving the welfare of the general society. The movement is driving public management towards a consumer and competition realisation that are at the core of market economy. Such a move would bring efficient utilisation of public resources and increase public administrators' accountability to the public.

Carrington et al (2008) advocated for the paradigm shift from the traditional way of doing business in the public management to the contemporary approach of governance that seeks to reduce red tape and other bureaucratic processes that hinders efficiency and economic utilisation of scarce public resource. It is believed that using private methods of doing business and its management approaches; public governance is highly improved (Fatemi and Behmanesh, 2012). In the process of steering the society to achieve the common good, governance is at the centre focusing on solving current and anticipated problems bedevilling the economy. The actor in this is the democratic government using democratic reforms (Xu, Sun, Si, 2015) aimed at revamping the economy through participation of the able bodied public in using their skills and talents to contribute to development (Adejumobi, 2006). For the New Dispensation in Zimbabwe to reach the winning line in the race for economic transformation that would address the challenge of bulge unemployment a number of intelligent strategies have to be adopted to deal with emerging issues from the public that need immediate attention.

Literature review

Unemployment has existed for time immemorial as a concept and a phenomenon in the history of the world (Kawaguchi and Murao, 2014). It is not a new phenomenon anywhere. Many countries have experienced it but with varying severity of it (Gregg, 2001). People regard unemployment as a loss of income to the families of the unemployed and this is the central issue at stake in developing countries (Sohn, Ryu, and Park, 2010). A cacophony of voices are now

characterising the discourse on governance and administrative reforms as the panacea to problems faced by nations. The urgent problem that collaborates with inflation bedevilling many economies of the world is unemployment. Economies regard inflation and unemployment the twin devils of the economy (Dumbu and Musingafi, 2010). Zimbabwe has faced the scourge of unemployment for the past 37 years of autocratic rule by Robert Mugabe. Governance has developed to its lower levels with many cases of corruption going unchecked in the public sector. The role of the state to steer the economy to prosperity remained a dream. Adoption of several economic blueprints to turn around the economy did not arrest the problem of unemployment. This and other political motivated crimes labelled on Robert Mugabe resulted in mass protest that removed him from power in November 2018 paving the way for the dubbed New Dispensation in Zimbabwe. However, the problem that strikes the attention of the New Dispensation is the inherited high unemployment that need urgent attention, failure to do the government is sitting on a time bomb of idle minds, which become the den of the devil.

An observable situation in Zimbabwe is youth graduating from institutions of higher learning during the time of adverse economic conditions. The scenario fervently brings with it harmful effects on youths' subsequent employment opportunities (Oreopoulos, von Wachter and Heisz (2012). Kawaguchi and Muro (2014) weighed in saying that the turmoil of the financial crisis of 2008 sharply increased youth unemployment especially in developing countries like Zimbabwe. To deal with the rampant youth unemployment, optimists argue that an economic recovery and transformation as engendered in the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio- Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) has the potential to reverse unemployment rates. Considering youth unemployment is necessary in developing countries because the youth form the largest proportion of the population. Unemployment has long lasting negative effects on employment earning of the youth in their later life hence forcing immediate solutions to the pandemic in Zimbabwe. Selenko and Pils (2017) added their voice to the discourse on youth unemployment describing it as a phenomenon that deprives the youth of appropriate opportunities to accumulate human capital from career jobs. Indeed, Oreopoulos et al (2012) found that youth unemployment has a scaring effect in economics that governance is compromised. Zimbabwe is not spared from the youth scaring effect because of the grievous mismanagement of the economy in the last decades failing to create a single job opportunity for the youth.

Sohn et al (2010) lamented in their study on economic effects of youth unemployment and fundamental measures that youth labour market is still showing no signs of returning to the pre-crisis level since the global financial crisis of 2008. This evidently makes it clear that the youth unemployment scourge is lingering over the Zimbabwean economy despite the transfer of political power from the past to the new dispensation. The pandemic seems to remain far from being resolved unless a trajectory of economic reforms is put in place by the new administration. Youth unemployment is a bad phenomenon because if it becomes a chronic problem, it has the potential of not only inhibiting national human capital accumulation but also weakening steadfast economic development and growth (Robinson, 2015). National competitiveness is heavily dependent on the youth therefore requiring urgent attention on youth employment creation

because youth unemployment threatens to damage both the quality and quantity of the country's workforce (Osborne, 2006). Economically looking at the economic causation-effect, youth unemployment triggers downwards the personal consumption, which will inevitably lead to a decline in domestic demand. Thus, prolonged unemployment becomes a devil to the contribution of youth to Gross Domestic Product of the country that requires good governance of economic transformation policies. Youth unemployment has the potential of aggravating social instability as it increases poverty leading to increased crime rates. Therefore, a challenge is confronting the new dispensation to dispense policies that have to seal all the open vents that eludes youth unemployment.

Unemployment in Zimbabwe is rising at alarming rate posing a political challenge to the governance of the country (Bell and Blanchflower, 2010). Graduates churned out by the higher education institutions fail to find job opportunities in the labour market. Chimucheka (2012) argued that lack of formal employment leads to devastating situations of increased anti-social activities. The problem has been experienced in other countries in Africa like Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mozambique, and others that the idleness has leveraged domestic conflicts in those countries (Oosterroom and Pswarayi, 2014). The situation if not contained and nipped in the bud now can have the potential of exploding into conflict plunging the country into serious problems of economic transformation as has been dubbed by the new dispensation. Onus is on the new dispensation in Zimbabwe to put in place governance mechanisms that are both short term and long term to revitalise the economy so that more job opportunities are created for the massive unemployed population.

Research methodology

The study will apply the qualitative approach in which the New Dispensation in Zimbabwe will intensively use archival data and document reviews to analyse approaches of dealing with idleness in the economy. In broadness sense, the study will use the desk research design, which accords the researcher opportunity to manipulate data already existing (Boslaugh, 2007). I opted to use desk research because it uses existing data to find answers to research questions that are unique to the questions asked in the original research. Of recent, re-use of archived datasets is increasingly firming (Johnston, 2014) because researchers are beginning to recognise that qualitative datasets offer narratives that discuss issues related to the primary research questions (Long-Sutehall, Sque and Addington-Hall, 2010). In some cases when analysing original datasets some of the narratives may not directly be analysed, therefore the use of desk research would accord an opportunity to do that. Desk research was favoured in the present study because it gave the opportunity to use information that has already been collected and is available in textual form. This allowed time to evaluate appropriateness and quality of data in advance of actual use. Long-Sutehal et al (2010) argued in favour of desk research saying that

secondary data has breadth and data collection for the original research is informed by expertise and professionalism that make it reliable source of data in a qualitative research.

Discussion of results

Public sector lethargy has characterised Zimbabwe for quite a long time with cases of corruption going unchecked. Poor governance was associated with several impediments in facilitating ease of doing business frustrating the foreign investors. This developed for a long time and investor frustration resulted in less inflow of much needed Direct Foreign Investment (FDI) in the country (Dumbu and Mahachi, 2016). Normally, when government transition takes place in any part of the world the new incumbent government is worried about winning the next election and form a government. The reverse is true for the new dispensation in Zimbabwe where the Mnangagwa administration seems not to be perturbed by the acquisition of votes for the coming harmonised elections to be held in July 2018. Instead of seeking votes, the new dispensation is seeking the economy, a completely different approach used by the predecessor government and the opposition political parties in the current Zimbabwe. The opposition parties are gearing themselves for the next harmonised election hoping to form a government and the million-dollar question remain unanswered that if they form a government what economy will they govern. Perhaps, the time has come for the country's fortunes to be turned for the better by the new administration under the tutelage of His Excellence, Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa.

Under normal circumstances, elections are the fundamental determinant of which party will form the next government. Elections are won based on who has the best ideas to improve the economy and the welfare of the majority interests. Electorate is supposed to make choices after freely and fairly weigh the ideas on the political campaign market. The new dispensation is realising that the world has proved that is can do without Zimbabwe but Zimbabwe cannot do with the world. The current dispensation is not intending to approach the electorate with an empty basket of promises. These will no longer help in this new era because it is now time politics to deliver than talk.

Zimbabwean economic governance has seen the entire economy nose-diving in the past decades coupled with high levels of youth unemployment, low productivity, and low inflow of the much-needed Foreign Direct Investment in the country. The role of FDI cannot be overemphasised in the economic crisis albeit with devastating levels of youth unemployment (Fouri, 2014, Karodia, Soni and Soni, 2016, Omorogiwa, Zivkovic and Ademoh 2014). Increased inflow of FDI guarantees the resuscitation of the falling apart industrial sector that has been in a mercy in the past decades, not only producing below capacity but some going to the extent of shutting down operations throwing many people to join the reserve army of labour. The new dispensation is working hard in terms of improving the operations of the industrial sector. The current signing of the USd 100 million to facilitate the retooling of the industry sector will go a long way in creating employment opportunities for the youth. In order to have long-term effect contribution of the industry, the agricultural sector should be revamped.

Malunda and Musana (2012) in their study on Rwanda's development trajectory indicated that emerging economic transformation is significant if the package of transformation has a bias towards agricultural productivity leading as the source of raw materials needed in the transformation process in the industries. In line with this, the current administration in Zimbabwe governing the economic has embarked on Command Agriculture to boost production of food and more input resources to the industries. The downstream benefits accrue to the youth in terms of employment generation. With the introduction of Command Agriculture, with the aim to retain the country to its original status of being the food basket of Southern Africa, there is an incipient structural shift in the mode of production away from low productivity to high degree of market orientation. Malunda and Musana (2012), Okosun and Aihie-Ezomo, 2017 and Ukuma, Ochedikwu and Deke, 2013) advocated for such transformation because it is fundamental for the dynamic and sustainable development which resultantly creates more job opportunities for the youth. Pace of agricultural development is immensely important because it is the backbone of raw material supply chain into the industries if the national industrialisation. Sustainable increases in agricultural output are evidence of high dividends of the agricultural structural change driven by the new dispensation to foster increased youth employment opportunities.

International Monetary Fund (2013) and Orji, Antony-Orji and Mba (2015) that states in economic crisis should undergo tremendous economic transformation reforms in its. Like Rwanda made strides in economic transformation from its post genocide conflict to reconstruction. Rwanda drummed up anti-corruption campaigns and succeeded in reconstructing the economy that was devastated by the genocide during the tribal conflicts in the country. Zimbabwe has to wake from the muds of corruption that has been rampant and uncontrolled in the previous era. The current new administration is preaching against corruption of any kind at any level. Corruption is not condoned in the new dispensation, which has seen a number of high profiled people dragged to courts over charges of corruption. Dealing with corruption uprooting its roots and reorienting the society towards a corruption free society help restoration of lost confidence in doing business with the country. No investors that would be attracted into the country if there were high corruption. Together with the drive of ease of doing business in Zimbabwe, the new dispensation is scoring in the governance of the economy that will ultimately pave way for employment creation for the youth.

Employment creation is critical for the Zimbabwean youths. Efforts by the new administration in luring investment are noble idea that will see thousands of jobs created. Imagine the new dispensation sealed a 5.2 billion dollar coal-to-fuel project in Zimbabwe with a Canadian investor. As soon as the deal unfolds over 20,000 jobs in both downstream and upstream industries will be created. The youths are the immediate beneficiaries because they are skilled and dynamic and who take to their advantage such opportunities. Boosting of mining of coal and turning it into fuel affects a number of industries' employment opportunities positively. More over the project is not going to boost youth's employment alone but will go a long way boosting the country's energy security that is so important to revive the economy. As the project is key to

national economic development and self-sufficiency in terms of all liquid fuels, prices of fuel will go down leading to expansion of agricultural output and output in other sectors that depend on energy. Fuel is a major driver of costs in the industry. Consequently, more jobs for the youths are generated in almost all sectors of the economy because of the expansive deal. Such projects have massive employment capacities and contribute to billions of dollars in year taxes to the government. Clinching such mega deals that have potential of changing the complexion of employment status in the country dwell in the unflinching and unwavering administration that is dedicated to see employment of the youth. What it shows is that Zimbabwean economy governance is in safe hands that are steering the economy to prosperity. Evidence at hand is the one, 5 billion dollars' worth of investment including other commitments, which have greeted the hands of the new administration in the last five month from its inauguration. Projects like the 3 billion dollar Batoka Hydropower project are massive national projects in a country that has been dry of FDI and strained international relations. The influence of the new administration on the international for financing the economy will see employment for the youth improving demising the idle mind is the devil's workshop.

Another juggernaut of the new administration in economic governance is the support it is receiving from the local business people as one of the intervention measures to set that country on a development trajectory. Local businesses are expanding and through this, the envisaged employment creation for the youth in the country tends to increase. This is one of the broad economic programmes to transform the country in the short-run and possibly if driven further in the long-run youth unemployment will be demised.

Conclusions and recommendations

The study concluded that the new administration in Zimbabwe is doing all it can do to rejuvenate the economy though implementing a raffle of industrialisation strategies. Strategies that are being pursued by the current new dispensation are tackling the idle mind is the devil's workshop among the youth as more employment opportunities are being given the green light. Corruption is regarded as the enemy number one that does not allow trickling of FDI into the country. The country is taking it by the horns to reduce the prevalence of corruption and improving the ease to do business in the country. The new administration has opened up to its erstwhile colonisers and other old enemies to transact as partners in dealing with the economic development that is proving to create a fertile ground for employment creation that will benefit the youth at large. The government in its drummed up re-engagement with erstwhile enemies is gaining momentum. More FDI is coming all its way into the coffers of the government. This through the ability of the new administration to flex its muscle and build confidence aimed at transforming the economy. The study therefore recommended the following:

- Corruption is foremost a threat to rule of law, public order and socio-economic development of the country that impedes employment creation resultantly affecting youths. Government should articulate a zero tolerance to all forms of corruption and put

in place a mechanism that deals with those cases promptly. Stiffer penalties must be given to the offenders to act as a deterrent to the would-be offenders.

- There is need to reorient both the public and private sector towards an attitude of doing business in a more serious way that leads to more production. Increased production and service delivery are coupled with the potential of increasing employment in the country. Partnerships between the public and private sector have to be forged forward by the current administration.
- Rejuvenation and revamping of the command agriculture remains the hope for the country's dream to become a middle-income nation by 2030. Agriculture is the major source of raw materials needed in the industries. Availability of such raw materials needing no foreign currency to obtain it will pave way for lowered costs of production in the industries that will see output increasing. As output increases to meet rising demand, more labour will be required in the production and service sectors of the economy because the demand for labour is driven by the desire by firms to produce more in order to meet excess demand in the market.
- The government must continue to develop the concept of Special Economic Zones because these are critical for economic turnaround efforts. Special Economic Zones are designated geographical regions that operate under special economic regulations that are different from other areas in the same country. It is important to give incentives to those firms operating under Special Economic Zones because incentives foster international competitiveness, which resultantly bolster industrial growth and development.
- The process of international re-engagement drive should be accelerated to the point of convincing the Washington government to remove the punitive sanctions on the country that is in the recovery path. It clear that Zimbabwe cannot do without the world but the world can do without Zimbabwe. All these will see a drastic improvement in the employment of the youth and the demise of the idle mind is the devil's workshop in Zimbabwe.

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