

Government failure to develop a job creation model in South Africa

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DOI: 10.47750/pnr.2023.14.S02.241

Abstract

The government of South Africa does not have an economic development model that seeks to address poverty. Economic policies are not specifically developed to create employment opportunities but the main focus is on public service delivery. Job creation is not the primary objective of economic policies. This paper, therefore, focuses on the government's failures to develop a job creation model in South Africa that directly focus on job creation. Subsequently, job creation can be made possible if the economy of the country is well-balanced. The lack of political will and the leadership deficiencies in the country has contributed to the failure of the government to develop a job creation model. The study applied secondary research methodology and reached conclusions based on the existing data. The study found that a lot can be done if there is a political will to resolve the poverty and unemployment challenges. The study recommends that the leadership must be changed especially complacent leadership and replace them with visionary leaders.

Keywords: Poverty, unemployment, job creation, government failures, job creation model.

INTRODUCTION

The State of the Nation Address normally referred to as SoNA presented by the President of South Africa Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa presented hope for South Africans and particularly the unemployed youth. This address would have been a turning point after the era of administration that was characterized by corrupt activities which led to the establishment of the State Capture Commission. The new dawn as it was classified by the administrators and the general public was a hope for the nation (Juncker, 2018). Unfortunately, the address was one of the government rhetoric's to make empty promises to the people. Five years later, the conditions have gone worse instead of better and improved. The statement that was made by the president in 2018 was poetic, embracing the former president Dr. Nelson Mandela with no clear vision of improving the lives of the people in the country (Hertel-Fernandez, 2019). The long walk to freedom and the achievement of a democratic society are good but do not bring food to the table of the poor. When leaders speak the public expects to hear how the leaders are planning to change the historical conditions. In the main, the people require a leader who would come with ideas and vision that seeks to better the lives of the general public (Francis and Webster, 2019). Embracing the wisdom of the former leaders simply means those who are in leadership positions now do not possess wisdom that they can share with the general public. Leaders are expected to come with significant changes during their tenure as leaders. Those changes cannot be measured by leaders themselves but they must be measured by the public. Societal challenges are changing all the time and leaders should be equal to the task. They must be elected based on their skills and competencies and their potential of dealing with societal challenges, not based on their historical contributions to the liberation struggle (Van Wilgen, Measey, Richardson, Wilson and Zengeya, 2020).

Even though the current administration admits that there is a high unemployment rate in the country and particularly youth unemployment but they are doing too little to change the situation. The youth unemployment rate is going up yearly (Kingdon and Knight, 2004). Graduates are not able to find employment because there are no employment opportunities. Investors over the past few years have withdrawn and the current regime has not been able to attract enough investors. The current regime in government focuses mainly on the fight against corruption which is a good fight but job creation is not prioritized (Kingdon and Knight, 2007). The high unemployment rate in South Africa is attributed to the imbalances in the population rate and the economy. There is a significant rise in the population of South Africa yet the economy has not improved to meet the population demands. The current leadership in government has not introduced a new mechanism to deal with the unemployment rate in the country. Using the same old tactics while the conditions are not the same is a problem (Hodge, 2009). It is not simple to resolve current challenges using historic tactics to deal with such issues. The current regime was regarded as a solution to

various societal challenges. They were referred to as a new dawn that is equal to the task of dealing with community challenges(Altman, 2003). This paper, therefore, outlines the government's failures in dealing with unemployment over the past five years. South Africa is a country that is dominated by young people and the current regime in government cannot win the hearts of the current generation based on what happened decades ago. Young people need employment and the government should prioritize the employment of young people. The high unemployment rate directly contributes to poverty and crime in the country. This also has a direct impact on the rise of inequalities in the country(Banerjee, Galiani, Levinsohn, McLaren and Woolard, 2008).

Theoretical framework

Job creation theories and labour market theories are likely to provide possible solutions for the policymakers who are responsible for job creation policies. The theories provide an analysis of how job creation takes place which depends mainly on the availability of workers and the number of job openings(Varpio, Paradis, Uijtdehaage and Young, 2020). The first theory that is discussed in this article is the bargaining theory. This theory provides emphasis the importance of balancing the level of employment and the wages paid to the employees. It further speaks about the labour demand. This theory, therefore, states that many employment opportunities are at a lower level. This refers to the general workers who earn just a minimum wage as prescribed by the South African government(Malle, 1999). In a sense, this could not be regarded as an employee because in many cases these employment opportunities are temporary. The second theory of the job creation model is the search-matching theory. There can be more job creation theories out there but for the sake of this article and the relevance of theories in the objectives of the article and the discussions thereof, these two theories are discussed(Friedman, 1970). Job searching theory is the proponent of labour demand in the job market. In other words, the theory put more emphasis on the availability of employment opportunities based on the needs of the national economy. The growing economy would create more employment opportunities(Levinsohn, 2008).

Both these theories are important for this article because they provide important analyses that are more relevant to the situation in South Africa. Employment opportunities in South Africa cannot be created if there are no changes in the national economy(Mortensen and Pissarides, 1994). Businesses have to be created and people can be employed in those businesses. Investors need to come to the country and invest for people to get employment opportunities. Mass employment opportunities can be created if the government is passing policies that seek to allow private companies to easily start their businesses(Carlsson, Eriksson and Gottfries, 2006). Even though the government must regulate businesses and the labour market but there is a need for the government to create a business-friendly environment for business people. The government needs to invest in the economic empowerment of the local citizens. In doing so the government can allow foreign investors to transfer their business skills to the local communities or citizens(Kirchhoff and Greene, 1998). In this way, the local communities will not be job seekers but job creators and employ more people. This can only be made possible if leaders in the country think objectively and are visionary. This can be achieved if leaders themselves understand the urgency of the unemployment and the collapsing economy in the country. All government leaders should be focusing on how they want to improve the South African economy(Haltiwanger, 2015). Failure of this will lead to a failed state. Government leaders are only consuming whatever is available in the government purse and further borrowing money from external forces. This becomes a burden to the South African communities and does not improve the economy of the country(Meyer, 2014). The government focuses on social security more than economic development and job creation. The above-discussed models can be used as a tool to start developing ideas for economic development and job creation.

The government job creation plans do not meet the market demands. The above models or theories discussed in this paper prove the fact that the labour market is readily available and competent in the main but employment opportunities are not available(Cray, Nguyen, Pranka, Schildt, Scheu and Rincon Whitcomb, 2011). The government should be looking fundamentally at what is job creation. What type of jobs is being created and for who in society? The country produces graduate every year and the majority of those graduates are unemployed. Fair enough not all graduates in all fields of studies can be employed immediately after graduating but the government has a responsibility to create employment opportunities by ensuring that the economy is improving continuously(Moscarini and Postel-Vinay, 2012). The economic model adopted and applied by a country plays a major role in job creation. South Africa as a developing country has a slow developing economy and leaders have a huge responsibility to look into economy-improving activities. In doing so they can also look into foreign companies that can assist in improving the South African economy. At the same time, the government needs to protect the local communities(Habanabakize and Muzindutsi, 2018).

Research Methodology

The simulation data in the main are generated through the imitating tactics to imitate the real-world process or system. This is done using the computer system through the computer test models. The system predicts the possible outcome based on the available information(Kothari, 2004). This system is used to determine what would happen in the future under certain conditions or circumstances. Tested information through the systems assiststhe researcher to produce conclusions and findings that are more accurate and efficient(Goddard and Melville, 2004). This article used the simulation data collection method and utilized the secondary research methodology. Recent data on the unemployment rate is presented on different platforms such as the government gazette, newspaper reports, online news, and government statistics(Noor, 2008). Some data was collected from public and private libraries. Such research material assisted in reaching accurate conclusions about this article. Libraries contain data that is accurate in different research contexts. Libraries of institutions of higher learning have data that seeks to solve specific problems. This contributesto the body of knowledge(Ketchen Jr and Bergh, 2006).

History of job creation in South Africa

For many years in South Africa, the economy has not grown enough to create employment opportunities. The government claimed not to have enough money or financial constraints and not having the ability to expand the economy(Ndedi, 2009). This in a sense has a lot to do with the type of leadership that is leading the country in government. Non-visionary leadership is likely to have a country that is not developing the economy and does not sustain the existing economy. South Africa is struggling because of the leadership that is utilizing the existing resources without a clear plan to develop the economy(Philip, 2003). The government of the day, however, claims to have changed the lives of the people and claims to have created employment opportunities for the people. Well, this depends on the individual point of view and the generational opinion of the government take on job creation. At this point, government officials believe that jobs have been created but slightly difficult to absorb new entrants(Rodrik, 2008). Job creation should not only have been seen by government officials but the public at large. government officials should not be found trying to justify job creation but the public should be able to see the opportunities created by the government. Job creation in the past has been a responsibility of multi-stakeholders not just the government. This, therefore, suggest that the government should ask for extended assistance from different stakeholders(Hart and Padayachee, 2013).

The government of the day in South Africa claims to have created more than 3.2 million job opportunities however, unemployment is too high, especially among young people. When government refers to employment opportunities they include all types of employment opportunities which include part-time vacancies(Van der Berg, 2011). Employees that are employed on a temporal basis should not be included by the government as the statistics of the employment opportunities created by the government. This is because such employment opportunities are not sustainable(Van der Berg, 2011). This includes construction employment opportunities which are temporal. People are employed for six months or less and thereafter their economic conditions remain stressful. Nevertheless, temporal employment is beneficiary to the public in different aspects. Firstly, the public gets a temporal income and can survive and provide for themselves temporarily, secondly, the public who are employed on a temporal basis acquire the necessary experience and training. The cost of living does not consider these difficulties. The cost of living is rising for everybody whether employed or unemployed(Blaauw, Louw and Schenck, 2006).

Over the past few years, the government has identified job creation as a challenge that directly affects the livelihood of the people. Many people are unemployed and not able to support themselves which then forced the government to make means to support those who are drowning in deep poverty(Ram, Aghahosseini and Breyer, 2020). In trying to ascertain bridging the gap between the haves and have-nots, the government invested in the social support system. This initiative has good and bad results at the same time and has different impacts on different people. People have different opinions about this initiative and it affects them differently(Rogerson, 2018). The government dispersed more than 17 million grants every month which is likely to benefit a third of the South African population. The government is losing a point, social grants are not a solution to poverty and unemployment(Francis, 2019). The projected long-term solution of the government to end poverty and bridge the gap between the poor and the rich is to provide education for the poor(Fine and Rustomjee, 2018). Educating the children of the poor could be seen as the solution to breaking the chains of poverty but this is not always a solution(Payne, 2020). Looking at the high number of unemployed graduates in South Africa shows that even educating the children of the poor is not a solution. This, therefore, suggest that the government has to go back to the drawing board and fix the current system(Ross, 2022).

The South African government boasts about the country being the favorite for foreign investors but not taking into account the type of businesses the investors intend to operate in the country. Foreign business confidence is not automatically a solution for job creation, especially for businesses that make more profit and pay workers less(Mukole, 2010). The momentous task of the

South African government is to create a sustainable economy for the country which will indirectly create some sustainable job opportunities for the people. This will then make a sustainable improvement to the lives of the people (Mahadea, 2012). The meaningful difference in the lives of the people can only be realized if the government plays its role in economic empowerment. Economic growth, employment opportunities, and transformation should be at the centre of the South African government. The government initiative to invite social partners to collaborate with government entities to build a social impact in driving the economic recovery is not producing good results. This might have been caused by the processes that are being followed in identifying the social partners (Neneh, 2013). Another possibility could be the role that is played by such social partners in economic development. The government is seen to be doing something and this is a tick-box exercise for the government with no clear intention and enthusiasm to produce positive and effective results. The commotion between government, labour, and businesses makes it completely impossible for the government to develop a sustainable economy. The government as the centre of economic development should not just implement policies but also deal with how the government ensures maximum participation of different stakeholders (Snowball, Collins and Tarentaal, 2017). The government needs to take tough decisions to close a fiscal gap and not always resort to borrowing money from financial institutions if the economy is declining. There is a need for the government to restore and revive the existing institutions and improve the existing economic activities. The government can do so by investing in the local economy without having to rely on external investors.

If the government of South Africa was genuine about job creation, they would have invited the youth to a summit and discussed the job creation plans and invite young people to have an input. The majority of the young people in South Africa are unemployed and the majority of them are employable but there are no employment opportunities. The government cannot decide for young people without their presence. They need to have a voice on how they want the government to help them change their current economic conditions (Antonopoulos and Kim, 2011). The caring government would therefore call a summit and invite young people and implement the possible suggestions. The summit would involve different sectors and some of the stakeholders would immediately employ young people. Some stakeholders would also assist the young people to start their businesses (Chigunta, Schnurr, James-Wilson, Torres and Creation, 2005). The job summit would also assist in ensuring that all efforts are towards the common goal. Stakeholders working together have more impact compared to stakeholders working in silos. Government should coordinate all stakeholders and contribute to providing a direction and guide the stakeholders in policy perspectives (Fatoki, 2014). Job creation is beneficiary to all stakeholders and the communities at large. High employment rates reduce crime and violence in the communities. A combined effort has an impact of a much greater scale in job creation. Economic infrastructure can be expanded and more jobs can be created. This type of summit could not be planned as some of the normal talk shows of the government. The government has been classified as the talking government without any implementation by society (Magwentshu, Rajagopaul, Chui and Singh, 2019). This then disengaged many community members from participating in government-organized programs. The job creation summit could better be organized by credible stakeholders that can be trusted by the other stakeholders and the society at large. This type of summit is likely to produce practical solutions and initiatives that can be easily implemented. The government needs to reindustrialize on a bigger scale that can create millions of job opportunities (Habanabakize and Muzindutsi, 2015). That can promote greater investment in key manufacturing factors. Localization of industrial programs will help in the improvement of textile industries, clothing, furniture, and many other industries. The government has already tried to prioritize locally produced goods. The government has spent R57 billion on locally produced goods but the impact on job creation is not realized. However, this had assisted in ensuring that the goods that are usually imported are locally produced (Tswalo, 2010).

The government claim to create employment opportunities for the youth through internship programs. Internships are a high level of exploitation of the youth by the government in many ways but in the main, there are two ways. Firstly, the youth who are mainly graduates are exploited and overworked by the government institutions wherever they are placed (Chitiga, Mabugu and Maisonnave, 2016). They do not enjoy the benefits of those that are employed by the institution that employed them as interns. Secondly, the internship is for a short period and thereafter the participants become unemployed. This is not balancing the government's theoretical and rhetorical plans of creating employment opportunities for young people. The unemployed youth is not eligible for employment opportunities because the vacancies require a minimum of three years of experience while the internship is for two years and these youngsters only have two years of internship which then disqualify them from applying (Kerr, Wittenberg and Arrow, 2014). The government has ignored all the calls of balancing the internship with job requirements. Government institutions are not all-absorbing those that are placed for an internship even if there are employment opportunities.

The government seems to lose the war on unemployment in South Africa. What becomes more problematic is the lack of urgency from government leaders to deal with issues of unemployment. Most government leaders and their direct relatives and friends are not affected by unemployment hence leaders don't see the urgency (Robbins, 2010). The unemployment problem is taken seriously by other stakeholders in society other than the government because they can feel the impact of unemployment. Unemployment leads to poverty and poverty contributes to the increase in crime levels. This is confusing for many people

because the unemployment rate has increased and kept increasing since the democratic government took over power. Perhaps critics can argue that this could be caused by the increase in the population and the changes in government policies that allow everyone to work regardless of their gender but only guided by the legal age (Maisonave, Mabugu, Chitiga and Robichaud, 2013). In 1994 before the democratic government took over power about 7 971 000 people were unemployed and eligible for employment according to the government policies. In 2016 which is 22 years after democracy, the number has increased by 95% and more than 15 545 000 in numbers were unemployed. This number has since increased and increased daily and there is no government plan to deal with this issue. For the government to deal with this issue they should consider creating employment opportunities for at least 340 000 people per annum. These opportunities must be sustainable and meaningful to the lives of the people (Webster, Attwell, Bank, Naidoo, Bond and Buccus, 2011).

Findings

Job creation in South Africa remains a major problem and it requires a joint effort from all different stakeholders. The debates on job creation in South Africa focus mainly on government policies and government attempts to create employment opportunities (Mahadea, 2012). South Africa is a capitalist state and not a communist or socialist state which makes it difficult for the government to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. The government needs to unlock resources and also mobilize the private sector (Mahadea and Simson, 2010). The government should not be seen as an enemy of the business or corporate establishments but as a corporate partner. There should be a discussion between labour, capital, and the government on how all parties can work together in finding a solution to end unemployment or reduce the rate of unemployment. There must be a clear strategy that will be able to link the government and all stakeholders. Government must not outsource the job creation responsibilities to the private sector but must be an active participant in job creation (Bhorat and Rooney, 2017). The public sector should have a vested interest in businesses and apply proper business skills in dealing with parastatal institutions. It became very difficult for the government to be trusted by the business communities because the government failed to manage and control the parastatal institutions. The government has dismally failed to manage and sustain State enterprises and the collapse of the State enterprises contributed significantly to unemployment. The business fraternity is adamant to trust government initiatives to strengthen the economy (Godfrey, Muswema, Strydom, Mamafa and Mapako, 2017). The common narrative is that State enterprises are shifting towards the private sector. This has been evident when prominent State enterprises that used to be the pride of the country collapsed and the government requested the intervention of the private sector. Under normal circumstances, the government should not be found begging the private sector to intervene. The government should be the centre and lead by example but this is not the case in South Africa. The government seems to lose focus; on the other hand, the government is promising to create employment opportunities a massive number of people are losing their jobs in the state enterprises. Government failures to sustain and develop state enterprises affect the entire economy (Lewis, 2002). External investors are hesitant to invest in the country because of the failures of the government to manage state enterprises. State enterprises are responsible for different sectors in the country and contribute significantly to supporting the operations of businesses. For example, the government's failure to deal with the issue of ESKOM is evident that many companies are pulling out. Companies are not able to operate because the electricity is not stable and that affects their businesses. These failures have a double blow to the people of South Africa. Firstly, it deprives the people of specific services and when companies pull out people get stranded because of their dependency on the services that were offered by that particular company. Secondly, the collapse of the state enterprises discourages investors which contribute significantly to the high rise of unemployment (Mukole, 2010).

The government is expected to play an entrepreneurial role yet the government is failing to control the state enterprises and lack to deliver services to the people. The apartheid government before 1994 managed to sustain and develop the state enterprises. The strategy of the current government to isolate companies has a dire impact on the economy and the labour market. Without trying to praise the apartheid government which was declared a crime against humanity but the fact is that the system that was used by the government to develop the infrastructure and economic development strategies was more effective (Lekhanya, 2015). Parastatal institutions or state enterprises were intact and businesses and investors had faith in the government systems. While others can argue about the segregation system and marginalized economy that was imposed by the apartheid government but the systems could have been improved by the democratic government to accommodate everyone. The democratic government could have learned from the systems that were used by the apartheid regime instead of fixing things that were not supposed to be fixed. The one-million-dollar question that many South African people should be asking themselves is where the country is going. This is the question even the leaders themselves could not answer. South Africa has become a country that consumes what is left in the reserves with no intention to create or develop a sustainable economy that will subsequently lead to job creation (Mutiyenyoka and Madzivhandila, 2014). The country is collapsing in all aspects. All sectors in the country are suffering with includes the government itself. This, therefore, suggests that there is a leadership crisis

in the country. Leaders who are not visionary and who cannot develop ideas that would sustain the economy of the country for the next 50 years are not good leaders for the country. In this sense, South Africans should expect a decline in job creation in all sectors of the government and society. The country needs visionary leaders who are not selfish and who don't think about today only and leaders who are not obsessed about the history of the past but rather more obsessed about the future and sustainability of the economy. The intention of this article is not just to critique the government without providing possible solutions to deal with the problem of unemployment in South Africa. One of the possible solutions to deal with the matter of unemployment is the expansion of the role of the state. The government must not be seen as a role player in making the ground conducive for the businesses to trade and only provide policies but should be hands-on in everything. This could only be made possible if the government itself fix the state enterprises effectively and this could lead to the businesses and communities gaining the trust of the government again. At the moment the government is allowing businesses to trade as they wish because of the capitalist state regulations. The capital is not necessarily concerned about job creation. Capitalists' states and affairs mainly focus on maximizing profit. There is no plan to create employment opportunities and empowering of the poor and marginalized communities. The government has a role to balance relations between all stakeholders in the country and the general population remains the majority while the business fraternity is the minority.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study found that unemployment in South Africa will never decline because of the unequal society that was created deliberately by the apartheid regime and the democratic government failed dismally to bridge the gap. There might have been numerous attempts from the government to bridge the gap but the impact is not visible and cannot be felt by the general community. The living conditions of the majority of South Africans have not improved since the democratic government took over power. Promises that have been made by the ruling political party in every manifesto have not been fulfilled. There is no balance between the available employment opportunities and the labour market. This could have been addressed by simply improving the economy of the country. The issue of unemployment in South Africa is very sensitive and the government usually blames the apartheid regime for the inequalities of the country. To some extent this could be the case by failure to change the conditions could not be attributed to the apartheid regime. After more than 28 years of power surely the government of the day could have developed enough strategies and ideas to deal with unemployment. There is less intervention and commitment from the government in dealing with the rising unemployment in the country. With the economic decline, mass unemployment is expected to rise, and that directly contributes to everything in the society which includes but is not limited to high crime rates, poverty, and people being demoralized and revolting against the government. Government is not only failing to create employment opportunities but also failing to sustain the existing jobs. People that are resigning or retiring in government are not replaced by the new entrants and that alone shows that the country is in trouble. The government claim to be taking the right steps to eliminate poverty yet fails to create employment opportunities. While economic development solves numerous problems which include job creation but the government needs to be more involved in developing a growth path framework that could be easily followed by all critical government leaders and cascade to all government departments and stakeholders.

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