

## **Casual Labour in a Nigerian Urban Center**

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**ABSTRACT** Rapid population growth and rural-urban migration in Less Developed Countries (LDCs) have combined to result in serious unemployment problems in urban centers. The formal sector is not growing fast enough to absorb the labour force. The informal sector, which would have absorbed the excess, is incapacitated because of inadequate governmental policy framework, which has thwarted its growth and expansion. The end result is a pool of the unemployed who gather daily at urban road junctions for daily paid casual jobs. Unfortunately, this group seems to have been neglected not only by policy makers but also by researchers. The Sabo road junction in Ile-Ife town in Oshun state where about 150-200 casual labourers gather every morning has been looked into closely in this work in an attempt to bridge this knowledge gap on issues of unemployment, and rural-urban migration in Nigeria. The investigation covered the group's socio-economic background, immigration status, and attitude to self-employment and the kind of assistance they require from the Government. Interviews were conducted for fifty members of the group, two landlords in the neighborhood and two local government officials. The findings revealed that many of the group were educated, highly skilled and very vocal. The wasting away of knowledge and skill by the roadside should be regarded as a colossal national ailment which deserves the attention of policy makers. There is need to put in place a policy whereby this neglected grass root sector can be harnessed into the main stream of national development through job creation and /or self-employment orientation.