

Youth at Crossroads: The Challenges of Social Change in Nigeria

Ajibade Ebenezer Jegede
&
Adenike Esther Idowu

Abstract

Economic backwardness remains the most defining feature of several developing economies globally. The major precursor of this development is represented in colonial experience and in other external infiltrations, which directly or indirectly alter the socio-structural arrangement of the affected nations. Chronologically, local and external interventions aimed at correcting the imbalance in Nigeria and in several other African countries for instance have not yielded the expected results due to some factors, which were not only internally endemic but also externally induced. The erosion of Nigeria's cultural values occasioned by global pressure introduced through capitalism and its affiliates; democracy, borderless economy and ICT revolution became incompatible with local realities and negatively plunged the country into divers' socio-economic crises. The economic crisis, which became fully manifest from the late 70's in Nigeria, generated monumental socio-cultural consequences for the citizenry. When examined, the prevalence of acute poverty, crime, malnutrition, moral confusion, value erosion and environmental degradation does not only impact the lives of the adult population but also more significantly affects the identity and well-being of the youth. The growing rate of youth disillusionment or hopelessness accounts for high participation in crime and an engagement in several other social vices. It is within this framework that this paper examines the impact of social change on Nigeria's youth and adapts Lea and Young's deprivation model to capture youth disorder in the studied area. Finally, the paper concludes by proffering solutions that are far enriching to checkmate the current trend.

Key words: Youth, Modernity, social change, Unemployment, Youth crime

Introduction

When considering what it takes to be young in a rapidly globalizing society and in modern technological age, one may be apt to encapsulate youth experienced world within the mainstream adult world. The tendency to do this may likely engender the missing out of the uniqueness of the youth world. McRobbie (1993) once observes that the youth represents a major symbolic investment for society and ultimately, the richness of young people experience must be explored to deeply appreciate their lived world. Understanding youth lived world in modern age, rest fundamentally on knowing the plight of young people in this increasingly unpredictable society. Imperatively, current sociological discourse globally must consider those socio-economic processes and developments that affect both young people and adults in order to arrive at the reflexive youthfulness of the late modernity (Giddens, 1991). The flow from this is the fact that human society is dynamic so likewise the lived experience of the youth. This is better explained from the position of Layder (1994) when he states that society is inseparable from its human components because the very existence of any society rest fundamentally on the activities and lived experiences of its agents. Youth situation in all ages is not isolated from the dynamics of the social structure which not only create or give it representation but that which determines the life processes of the agency.

With the wind of transformation sweeping across various landscapes, youth are continually affected by all forms of developments in all communities. Youth in this context must be seen as both drivers and victims of change. Just as Miles (2000) opines that young people are barometer of social change, Wallace and Jones (1992) equally observes that young people's world can be explored from an index of social ills. Sociologically, to achieve an accurate exploratory account of youth situation in this rapidly changing world, social researcher must engage the interrogation of the young people's cultural, political, social, economic and structural environment with the view of knowing how young people interact with, and negotiate the social worlds in which they construct their everyday life (Miles, 2000; Archer, 1995).

In a modest reaction to the foregoing, the current discourse explores the socio-economic situation of the Nigerian youth with a view of establishing the vulnerableness of the group in their quest for social survival. The paper therefore commenced with a brief conceptualization of youth and proceeds to locate those factors responsible for youth vulnerableness (crime) within the examined environment. It adopts Lea and Young deprivation model to establish the prevalence of displaced values and youth crime in Nigeria it concludes with measurable solutions to current youth problems.

Conceptualizing Youth

Youth is understood as youthfulness—as an abstract construct of such characteristics as the quality of being young and evincing peculiar trait subject to social evaluation (Kloskowska, 1988). Importantly, youth has long been contentious designation with most emphases in sociology on generationalism,

ageism and specificity (Wulff, 1995). As defining age category, “youth” is often regarded as a state of becoming, as necessary partway to adulthood. The age category of youth can extend from thirteen to twenty-five years especially in the western world (Mallan and Pearce, 2003) but mostly extended to late thirties in African society due to delayed transitional phase from youth to adulthood. Age classification of youth is often done for institutional and policy purposes. Another defining characteristic of youth is done in relation to models of behavior. Across several disciplines there is growth in the tendency to view youth as out of control and as a threat to both society and themselves. Viewed from the context of moral panic, youth have often been read as dangerous from media representation and become an object of spectacle and desire for mass audience (Oswell, 1998; Giroux, 1997). Irrespective of the diverse dimensions youth have been conceptualized, the definition central to current discourse take into account the socio-historic and dynamic dimension that affect the experience of being youth. In this context, youth are viewed as victims of social change and at best an endangered species in most Third World nations. What really informed this position will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Locus of Youth Problem In Nigeria

Evolutionary account of change in Africa and in other less privileged regions of the world reveal that the major crises inhibiting socio-structural progress in many developing economies is attributed to external factors or at best on internal dynamics generated as by-products of contact with elements of developed economies. Analyzing the external environment, it is clearly evident that the socio-economic and political woes suffered by many classified Third World nations (especially those in Africa) remain closely linked to pernicious effects of slave trade and colonialism. Apart from the fact that the former occasioned the siphoning of human potentials and thwarting of tangible/measurable development across the continent, colonialism equally bequeath further secondary impact severally recorded in capitalism, imperialism, globalization, borderless culture and others externalities that mutually re-enforces the socio-economic stagnation of several nations in Africa (Ayittey, 1997). In his reaction, Adepoju (1993) asserts that African economies have experienced numerous disruptions since independence in the 1960's. The major reason for this development is the nature of assimilation that occurred at independence especially the manner through which significant African societies are engrafted into the world capitalist system as second and often inferior partners. The negative development that birthed the initial socio-economic backwardness equally functions to nurture and sustain the ills currently suffered by significant portion of Africa's population.

Evaluating the contributions of each of the instruments that re-enforces stagnation in Africa, it must be noted that imperialism intensifies subserviency and inequality in relations of trade; globalization with its fundamentals in borderless economies occasioned the systemic destruction of indigenous industries thus paving ways for acute unemployment and; ICT revolution re-

enforces the re-colonization of indigenous ideas and further displaces local values needed for the ordering and re-ordering of Africa's society. Western contact generated structural dislocated developments for many nations in Africa and simultaneously impacted the world of its young people with visible distortions. Just as it creates an environment of 'enableness' for the group it also introduced measurable 'dis-enableness' for the youth. This rightly typifies what Archer, 1995 describes as world embedding both freedom and constraints and; suggestive of Gidden (1984) position that the analytical youthfulness of modern age must by necessity make reference to both the purposive, reasoning behavior of young people and to the intersection of human society both providing constraining and enabling framework for social continuity. This resonate challenges involved in self-identity creation and social adjustment among Africa's youth.

Assessing the internal environment, there also exists a disjunction between western values (both in theory and in practice) termed "pre-requisites" for development hitherto wholesomely package at independence and the socio-economic realities which became visible across diverse Africa's environment at post independence. Considering the specific measurable effects of socio-economic problems faced by these nations, one can readily observe that there exists a non-uniformity of socio-economic retardation or stagnation across the continent and its effects can also be distinguished in relations to the experiences of diverse segments that make up the community. It is quite unimaginable that a myriad of socio-economic backwardness which presents diverse unique defining characteristics for each of the affected states across Africa's society equally generates differential impacts for the citizenry. Lack of or thwarted development portends different meanings for different classes. Visible distortions generated by unequal trade relations between the western and the mostly tagged Third World nations such as Nigeria can be examined from the dilapidated economic structures inhibiting human progress. In this region, economic backwardness functions to increase the level of unemployment and poverty and/with secondary impact traceable to disillusionments and rising rate of anti-social behavior among youth.

To deeply appreciate the economic pressure on youth in this modern rapidly globalizing world, a discursive sociological analysis of Nigeria's socio-economic environment becomes imperative. First, the exploration of Nigeria's economic sector basically for current discourse will help ascertain the state of Nigeria's employment market so as to determine how it expand and contrast in the absorption of youth especially after educational certification. Second, the product of the examined economic structure will occasion the critical analysis of the socially generated strain which increases youth vulnerability in their quest for identity and survival. The consideration of the employment market will help establish the magnitude of youth predicaments and deprivations in Nigeria. The choice of employment as a tool of appraisal is anchored on the view of Yesufu (2000) that employment constitutes the epicenter of any consideration of the

economics and social development of any country and equally finds a rightful place in Obadan and Odusola (2000) submission that productivity and employment are issues that are central to the social and economic life of every country and that of the citizenry.

Review of Nigeria Economy and Youth Unemployment

Analyzing Nigeria's socio-economic environment for instance, the social cost implicit in economic decline which became manifest as from 1970 onward generated multiplicity of negative effects on group interaction and social stability/relationships. Starting from the mid 1981, the world oil market began to collapse and caused serious economic crisis for Nigeria economy (Anyanwu, et al 1997). Apart from the problem of poverty and unemployment generated as a result of recession, it equally triggered chains of value displacement. Basically the administrative response to the bedeviled economy got to its climax when structural adjustment programme (SAP) was introduced in July, 1986, a step which further intensified the existing social degeneration and caused untoward hardship for majority of youth in Nigeria. The aspects germane to the understanding of current discuss involve the magnitude of erosion of values, youth deprivation, and multiplicity of social vices attendant of the economic predicament brought by the dislocations or contradictions created at post independence Nigeria.

Prior to the period of economic recession, Olaniyan (1996) accounts that the oil boom of 1973-1974 affected not only the investment, production and consumption patterns of the country but also its socio-cultural values, political aspiration, style of economic management and policies and programmes implemented. With the continued decline in public earnings due to dwindling economic progress and over reliance on crude sale as major source of revenue, there exists a visible distortion in all sectors of Nigeria economy leading to measurable decline in capacity utilization of labor and invariably necessitating mass unemployment. This negative situation impacted the lives of all segment of Nigeria's society with the youth being at the helm of the most affected. Although it is a common place for people below the age of 15 and those above the age of 55 to be excluded in labor statistical survey, this omission tends to disguise the true volume of unemployed youth and other category of people (Obadan and Odusola, 2000).

In considering the Nigeria's economic climate as it affects the condition of youth in relation to employment, the assessment of the performance of each sub-sector of Nigeria economy becomes necessary. It must be pointed out that despite the potential of agriculture (which constitutes the mainstay of Nigeria's economic for many decades) for employment generation prior to and during colonialism, there appears to be measurable fluctuations in its output to Gross National Product at independence and there-after. For instance, while agriculture moved from 62.9% in 1960, it declined to 48.8% in 1970 and to 22.25% in 1980, 33% in 1990 but picked up to 39.3% in 1995. Agriculture equally accounts for

26% and 17% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the 2003 and 2004 (World Bank, 2006). The declining contribution of agriculture to job creation and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) can be attributed to government reduced interest in the promotion of agriculture. With an increase in oil income and percentage share of oil revenue to all levels of governments, there exist a greater reliance on oil thus leading to displacement of persons from the agricultural sector. Massive importation of several commodities equally introduced acute competition between local and international products, a development which made local efforts unrewarding.

The discovery of oil in commercial quantity in 1956 occasioned the displacement of other sectors of Nigeria economy. The acute de-emphasis on agriculture and the growth in migration from rural to urban centers for industrial job placement equally explain subsequent problems which plagued Nigeria economy. Industrial production gradually took over from agricultural economy and consequently the sector could not keep pace with the volume of migrants seeking job placement. The low capacity utilization of the few available industries functioned to saturate the labor market. The youth were severely affected by this development since many of them were not absorbed by the few openings that exist in the industrial sub-sector. Evaluating the contributions of oil sub-sector, the share of oil and mining rose from a mere 1.2% in 1960, to 10.1% in 1970, to 28.8% in 1980, with a leap in 1993 to 2002 culminating in an average of 90% of GDP (Ezeaku et al, 2005). The manufacturing sector of Nigeria's economy continued to record a low share in employment generation when assessed from its contributions to the Gross National Product over most period afore-reviewed. Its contribution stood at 4.8% in 1960, to 6.8% in 1995. The sector's contribution was 6 per cent in 1990, and 4 per cent for 2003 to 2005 respectively (World Bank, 2006).

Construction sector's share rose between 1960 and 1980 (from 4.8% to 8.5%) before falling to an average of 1.8% between 1985-1995. There exists an inadequate share of utilities in Nigeria's GDP, since electric, gas and water's share hovered between 0.3% to 0.7% between 1980-1995, while transport and communication share to the GDP fell from 4.9% in 1960 to 3.4% in 1995. The sector represented in trade and finance recorded the contributions of 12.4% in 1960 to 21.4% in 1995 and public revenue accounted for 25.5 (1993); 18.5 (1994); 22.6 (1995); 19.7 (1996); 20.0 (1997); 16.2 (1998); 29.3 (1999); 45.4 (2000); 48.7 (2001) and; 40.2 (2002) (World Bank, 2004). The limitations recorded in public revenue are a factor of deficient growth in both industrial and manufacturing sector of Nigeria's economy.

Quantifying the foregoing in its implications for employment generation and unemployment as affects the plight of Nigerian youth, it should be noted that Nigeria labor force in 1981 was 30.8 million and the unemployed population in the same year was 32.2 million people. The public sector of Nigeria economy constitutes the largest employer of labor during this period having 60% of the

employed. It was in the 1980's the economic crisis became acute with low performance of public enterprises thereby causing the adoption of privatization and commercialization programme (Iganiga, 2004). In 1984-86 40 per cent of the industrial workforce was retrenched or made redundant (MAN, 1988). In 1985, 10% of Nigerian labor force was left redundant and by 1987 12.2 per cent were jobless. The development that generated the down turn in the employment structure is attributable to the promulgation of Decree No. 25 of October 1988 which listed thirty-one enterprises for de-investment and eighty others for partial divestment. In the year 1991, 47 per cent (20, 768, 548) of the active labor force was reported to be either out of job due to retrenchment attendant to increment in SAP implementation or could not secure job openings in any of Nigeria's economic sector (Yesufu, 2000).

The estimated unemployment rate in 1992 was put at 28 per cent. Further unemployment problem was generated as result of Nigeria's political crisis between 1993 to 1999 following the annulment of 1993 presidential election. This crisis increased the de-investment of foreign capital and equally occasioned the closure of significant industrial infrastructure. Ironically, as the economic sector of Nigeria is experiencing an acute downturn, the labor market was experiencing an unabated increment in employable segment of the national population. The ILO Employment Mission reveals that Nigeria labor force is growing at 2.8% per annum and estimated the total level of Nigeria's labor force at 50.4 million in 1996. With the coming of democracy, Nigeria had an estimated labor force of 42, 884 million in 1999 and by 2000 the estimated unemployment rate increased to 32 per cent. Demographically, secondary school graduates and women make up the largest proportion of the unemployed (Pendergast and Pendergast, 2002). Considering the development that affected unemployment between 1999 to 2004, the promulgation of Decree 28 of 1999 (Public Enterprises Privatization and Commercialization Decree) which signaled the second round of privatization and commercialization further intensified the problem of unemployment in Nigeria. Thirty-six public enterprises were listed for either total de-investment or divestment of government interest. In its impact for unemployment, significant portion of Nigeria labor force was affected either by retrenchment or lay-off since the affected enterprises embarked on restructuring and repositioning. The third phase of privatization targets the monopoly sectors thus affecting energy, petroleum and telecommunication sub-sectors of Nigeria's economy.

Visible effects on labor and growth in unemployment became manifest with this additional privatization policy implementation. In the year 2003, Nigeria labor force was 54.5 million (World Bank, 2006) especially after the first four years of Nigeria's democratic experiment. To ascertain the nation's current unemployment status, a reversion to ILO's Nigeria labor growth rate projection is important (Jolly and Diejomaoh, 1996). Making a rough estimate from ILO's Nigeria labor force 2.8% growth rate projection to obtain the current number of unemployed portion of Nigeria population, the labor force may have hit 55, 473,

214 in the current year and drawing an inference from this number using the subsisting 32 per cent unemployment rate of the year 2000, the number of the unemployed might have reached 17, 751, 428 assuming other factors remain constant.

It can also be argued that significant portion of the unemployed falls within the category of youth that are ripe for productive sector assimilation. As far back as 1970's Diejomaoh reports high rate of joblessness among Nigerian youth a condition attributed to poor education and absence of requisite skill and experience. At the same period it was reported that the scourge of unemployment was taking root among university graduates and skill workers. Fashoyin (1993) attested to this when he reported the structure of unemployment in Nigeria. He argues that the overwhelming majority of the unemployed is young people below 24 years of age and gave the demographic characteristics of the majority within this category as being poorly educated, untrained and inexperienced. In the same vein, Anyanwu et al, (1997) argue that unemployment in Nigeria is primarily youth unemployment. In 1986, youth under the category of unemployed was put at 65.3% of all the unemployed in Nigeria. The figure for 1987 for this group was 70.7%. In the year 1988 the figure marginally declined to 68.9% and by 1995 it was 59.5%. During 1993 and 1997 the unemployment rate among Nigeria's youth fluctuate between 41.6 per cent and 70.4 per cent FOS: Annual abstract of statistics 1998).

Similarly, Umo (1996) accounts that an annual average of 2.8 million fresh graduates enters the Nigerian labor market with only about 10 per cent of youth getting employed. Apart from the backlog of unemployed graduates, several internal dynamics also help sustain the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria. Evaluating the volume of unemployment among Nigeria youth from 1999-2007, there are measurable incremental rate in youth unemployment under current democracy than that which existed prior to it. Although the proliferation of ICT technologies generated new forms of employment under this dispensation than ever before, the continual closure of industries due to Nigeria's energy crisis further dampens the employment market. The epileptic nature of electricity not only increases the cost of production, it also increases the down-sizing and outright retrenchment of workers in the few surviving industries. Youth are always at the receiving end of the economic environment dynamics. The situation functions to increase youth disillusionment, intensifies hopelessness, poverty and increases youth violence and crime across Nigeria's landscape. Major development in this area will be explored theoretically in the next section of the paper.

Similarly, the contribution of poverty to the plight of young people in Nigeria can be appreciated by considering major indicators explaining deprivation within the studied environment. It is understandable that in an environment characterized by acute unemployment, poverty, squalor and crisis dominate. Farrington et al (1986) argues that young people living in area of multiple

deprivations are more likely to engage in amoral behaviors. Youth unemployment is closely correlated with criminality (Farrington, 1990). Fitzgerald (1993) also holds the view that young people from working class families with a higher levels of deprivation caused by unemployment are likely to experiment with their identity in order to meet up in an excruciating environment. Looking at the number of Nigerian living below poverty line over the years, it is very glaring that 49.5% of the population were accounted to be living below poverty line in 1985 and from 1992 to 2003 an average 36.4% was recorded (World Development Indicators, 2006). Population below 1\$ per day for 1997 was 70.2% and as at 2003, it was 70.8%. Evaluating this in the light of youth predicaments in Nigeria, it must be noted that youth are continually displaced and isolated from socio-economic plans and resources that ought to increase their self-identity and self-worth. In line with this development, current sociological discourse will attempt a reflexive theoretical analysis of youth adaptation to several socio-economic closures prevalent in Nigeria's environment.

Theoretical Perspective on Youth Deprivation and Growth in Anti-Social Behaviour

The appropriate theoretical model that best explains the predicament of Nigeria's youth is the relative deprivation model developed by Lea and Young in 1984. The core argument of the theory is that the youth will often develop the sense of deprivation when there are noticeable or measurable gaps in access to socio-economic resources vis-à-vis other group and when their need for socio-economic identity and worth are not met. They opine that it is not the fact of being deprived as such, but the feeling of deprivation which is important. Lea and Young traced challenges in modern society to an excessive exposure and internalization of value of economic success and the pressure on youth to aspire to middle-class life-style and patterns of consumption. Human life itself is continually fraught with non-predictabilities and displaced certainties caused by other risks the youth will have to negotiate in their day to day life. Identity experimentation and crime often result because of rising expectations for high standards of living combined with restricted opportunities to achieve socio-economic success because of unemployment. Campbell (1993) locates youth problems in decline experienced in manufacturing employment and as a consequence of lack of opportunity in the youth labour market. The crave for affluent life-style and the consummation of choice resources tends to aggravate crime among youth. Youth deprivation in the view of these theorists must by necessity be a precursor of frustration and a causative factor of youth violence and other anti-social behaviours.

The second related concept anchoring Lea and Young deprivation thesis is youth sub-culture. As the modern youth face new risks of socio-economic closure, conditions of doubt penetrate all aspect of social life and self identity becomes fragile and in need of recurring re-interpretation (Giddens, 1991). Furlong and Cartmel (1997) submits that the constant re-interpretation of youth identity

signifies that life is becoming a “reflexive project” since the affected group and individuals within it are constantly forced to reconstruct their biographies in the light of changing experiences. Though Lea and Young believe that sub-culture may not be the ultimate to situational interpretation but there is a conviction that youth must invariably see sub-cultures as a collective solution to a group’s problems. In the same vein Reimer (1995) observes that with the growth in the processes of individualization, there are measurable impact recorded in greater degrees of freedom and choice defining youth adjustment in modern age. Nigeria government environment often engage in programmes which hardly consider youth inputs and burdens. With increment in the denial of young people becoming stakeholders in the contributions to decisions and material condition of their existence, they look for alternative sources of satisfaction, some of which may be akin to criminal career. In Nigeria, the volume of youth in crime is explained by socio-economic closure and attendant response in their quest to belong in the face of annihilating or excruciating socio-economic conditions. With prevalence of haphazard transitional process from adolescent to adulthood, there is high tendency for crimogenic response to non-existence of socio-economic opportunities. This is more so according to Rutherford (1992) that youth without gainful employment, and lucrative responsibilities are more likely to be involved in crime. The sub-culture of robbery, burglary, forgery, cyber fraud and scam remain an important area of youth response to socio-economic deprivation. Lea and Young opine that crime is fractional response to frustrating condition and more so this paper is of the view that prevalence rate of crime should never be construed as a national culture as often erroneously conceived from diverse quarter about Nigerians. Theoretically, it is a rational alternative conceived and embarked upon by few Nigerians with fatalistic view of the modern world.

The third relevant concept used by Lea and Young is that of marginalization. Significant number of Nigeria youth in this regard is viewed as living without a clear cut aim and means required for the realization of set goals for life. This development is birthed by the non-predictable nature of Nigeria’s socio-economic environment. Youth tends to respond to their state of hopelessness in variety of forms. Borrowing from Lea and Young, they feel a general sense of resentment that the future does not seem to offer an interesting, worthwhile and rewarding life hence their recourse to crime and other anti-social behavior. The value for life is relegated and the need to uphold family and collective integrity is assumed to be secondary.

The absence of major tools for group’s interest articulation often occasion’s the embracement of criminal career. Lea and Young blamed recent increase in crime to change generated in the late modernity which nurtures visible structural unemployment, economic precariousness, a systemic cutting of welfare provisions, and growing instability of family life and interpersonal relationship especially that which is measurable in Nigeria’s socio-economic environment. Due to growth of less consensus on moral value, coupled with well pronounced

individualization across Nigeria's society and the celebration of market force on who get what, when and how, youth are given a leeway to pursue any course of action in tandem with the end justifies the means. Apart from the problem of unemployment and poverty that generated current state of development, it must be agreed that Nigeria youth lost their true identities because of several other factors prevalent in Nigeria's environment. The endemic nature of corruption in Nigeria, displaced morality and other contradictions inherent in post independence constitution of Nigeria function considerably in the destabilization of hope needed to usher Nigeria youth to the dreamed land.

Deductive Approach on Deprivation Model

Youth perception of belonging to the same economic category constitutes an induced socio-economic predicament and a common experience exemplifying scuttled aspirations. This material condition calls for borrowing of ideas from one another in order to enable them wrestle their survival from what they have perceived or evaluated as totally unfriendly society. The resultant effect is chaos and social instability. The existence of strain caused by government neglect and public apathy leading to economic closure affecting the youth forms the basis for the formation of group identity and generating resultant activities located in embracement of social vices. The excruciating socio-economic climate severally explains mass unemployment, deprivation, hunger, starvation and poverty. The reflection of youth on the hardship caused by this development account for misplacement of values and anti-social behavioural choice among Nigeria's youth. The venting of anger on several mediums generated by borderless economy and ICT technologies including the cyber space, and E-business/payment results in the illegal manipulations of such mediums for money making. The correlation between group members' economic situation (pulling people of similar situation together) and personal need to ameliorate the excruciating economic problems invariably necessitates the engagement in immoral and value displaced behaviours.

Solutions to Youth Related Problems in Nigeria

The need to engage a comprehensive strategy for poverty alleviation and youth economic empowerment remain the major solution germane to youth problems in Nigeria. History has shown that major government alleviation and development programmes often neglect the youths. Apart from the fact that significant economic programmes embarked upon by Nigeria's government portends anti-youth posture, this group access to facilities of empowerment are inhibited by sectionalism, corruption, bottle necks and several other obstacles instituted at either micro or macro levels of implementation. It is however suggested that impact evaluation strategy should complement government initiative in ameliorating youths plight. The role of civil society and general public in the planning and execution of youth related programmes will invariably reduce youth vulnerability to amoral activities. National rebirth is also crucial to solving youth problems. Within the government environment, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and commitment to social welfare

should become the norm and thus translated into values underpinning youth aspirations.

The engagement of youth in community driven development also constitute one important area youth problems can be addressed in Nigeria. Strengthening and financing local initiatives such as entrepreneurial development efforts, micro-finance loans, and other advances will go a long way in reducing the current level of unemployment and poverty prevalent among the youth. Youth energy should be re-directed towards positive productive efforts and must be made result driven. The need to revisit the deteriorating energy base of Nigeria hitherto disenabling the exhibition of youth potentials and the provision of quality basic services constitute another important area that will generate sporadic response and ginger economic spirit among the affected group. Finally the state should function to reduce youth physical and economic shocks and help youth overcome their victimization caused by economic battering, neglect and institutional deprivation which often occasion diverse recourse into anti-social behaviours.

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