



Youth alienation: A path to understanding development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The youth remains the greatest asset in any nation for development. However, the overwhelming majority of these youth in Africa and Nigeria specifically have experienced alienation arising from the political, social, economic as well as the health spheres. Youth alienation emphasises that the youth in the country have been shut down of opportunities, separated from wealth and good health, making them exposed to several challenges. This paper utilized qualitative research approach to gain an insight into the phenomenon of youth alienation and development. The source of data was solely secondary, accessed from various academic journals including online articles relevant to the issue of youth alienation and development. This paper argues that the alienation experienced by the youth is associated with risks, resulting in anxiety, deviant behaviours, less involvement in school activities, fewer social skills, lower self-esteem and others. All of these show that youth alienation is predictive of other social problems in the country. Youth alienation does not exist in a vacuum but associates with causes like poor education and training; poor political participation/low political representation; health-related problems; unemployment/poverty inequality, exclusion and unfairness; lack of leisure time activities and recreational facilities, to mention a few. It is concluded within this paper that the youth are the spirit of today and the hope for a better tomorrow. The ideas and vision of the youths are important for continued development in Nigeria. Their intellectual capacities are fundamental to the progress and growth of not only Nigeria as a country but the world generally. Thus, the paper recommended that governments in any respect ranges should make sure that growing poverty indices be reversed and a sensible social safety programme is pursued and systematically implemented to make certain that the populations meet their simple wishes. It was also suggested that the government should create programmes, build recreational centres and parks, empower the youths technically and pay serious attention to human capital development through collaboration with NGOs and community members.

Keywords: Alienation, Development, Discrimination, Inequality, Health-Related Problems, Youth

Introduction

‘Youth-hood’ may be described as that phase or period of life wherein one passes from adolescence to maturity. Maturity, alternatively, refers to a scenario wherein one becomes fully developed. In Nigeria, the youth commonly fall into the 18 – 35 years age bracket, this is, both genders (male and

female) (Abdullahi, 2008). For this work, youth is defined within the Nigerian context, involving both young men and women between the age bracket of 18 and 35. This is beneficial in capturing lots of individuals who may have completed schooling, are sexually lively, facing livelihoods/unemployment troubles,

engaging in all forms of illegal activities due to perceived alienation. Alienation is conceived as poor inclusion of youth in the developmental processes of their country as well as negligence and poor treatment experienced by these youths which have an impact on them to live unworthy life or engage in any illegal activities contrary to the morals and values of society.

Normally, youth are one of the finest properties that any country will have and therefore, want to be evolved and empowered. They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce and sustain itself. As established by the United Nation Development Programme [UNDP] (2008), the youth is described as the greatest in any nation as well as the greatest investment for a country's development. Youth do not constitute a homogeneous group; their socio-economic, demographic and geographic conditions range extensively both inside and between regions. Notwithstanding these differences, the regional-level analysis provides a general understanding of their development profile. A few 87 per cent live in developing nations and face demanding situations deriving from limited access to resources, education, training, employment, and broader economic development opportunities (United Nations, 2018).

Today, there are more than 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years, accounting for 16 per cent of the global population (United Nations, 2019). Majority of these youth experience several challenges, making them feel alienated. It was estimated by the UN (2019) that 142 million youth of upper secondary age are out of school, 71 million young people are unemployed, and millions more are in precarious or informal work. It was also estimated that disparities within and between countries in education and employment among youth are stark, with

gender, poverty, rurality, disability, and migrant/refugee status all being major elements of disadvantage. The International Labour Organisation (2014) estimated that about 156 million youth in low- and middle-income countries are working poor, while almost 30 per cent of the poorest 12- to 14-year old has never attended school.

The overwhelming majority of youth in Africa feel alienated, are poorly educated and poor to the extent that those residing in the rural areas are migrating to the urban centres. Their needs are overlooked even as they overwhelm the cities they are flocking to in unprecedented numbers. Sommers (2007) notes that a profile of this population is instructive, as it is simultaneously enlarging in size and detaching from the rest of society. He reveals that one simple irony delineates the essence of their condition which he called 'marginalized urban youth' to refer to a demographic majority that sees itself as an outcast minority. With the fact that these young people are alienated, considering themselves as social outcasts, their condition is significant and potentially dangerous. In most African cities, this irony is an undeniable, self-evident fact (Sommers, 2007).

According to Sommers (2007), few civil society representatives represent the interest of the youth. Significantly, female youth tend to be seriously underrepresented in both youth and women's groups. Most youth especially those residing in the cities, live in squalid ghettos or, increasingly, in the mushrooming peri-urban areas that surround cities. Few have any chance of accessing any youth development programming that may exist. Budgets for ministries of youth tend to be small, while education ministries primarily invest in formal education. Most African youth lack secondary education; only a third of boys and just over a quarter of girls in Sub-Saharan Africa ever enrol much less



complete secondary school (Population Reference Bureau 2006, p.18).

United Nations (2003) revealed that young people across the globe, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, where the population density and growth is also highest, face unprecedented challenges in their capacity to access public resources and family resources, stemmed from waves of cultural and economic globalization. Most critical issues for youth development are poverty, health practices, gender biases, education, employment, social responsibilities and good citizenship, juvenile delinquency etc. To capture the significance of youth in the economic development process, Essays, UK (2018) reported that the Central Bank of Nigeria stressed that the current economic development efforts will not amount to anything if the youth who are the real economic agent is not part of the economic transformation. Furthermore, robust economic growth will only be achieved if the youth are adequately empowered, which is an important path to prevent youth alienation and sustainable economic development.

The United Nation's (2003) World Youth Report, which focuses on youth education and employment, explores the complex challenges facing the largest generation of youth the world has ever seen. The report provides insight into the critical role of young people in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related frameworks. The factors contributing to youth alienation are not only failing the youth but also the system. Ironically, the very youth who are being treated the worst are the people who are going to lead us out of this nightmare. The youths are the hope of the future, and the governments have failed the youths. Without a doubt, Nigeria is a blessed country with abundant human and natural resources. At the

level of global policy, finance and measurement are major issues to be addressed as part of worldwide youth development efforts. At the national level, policy and programmatic responses to the Sustainable Development Goals have been slow and should be accelerated.

The tragedy that engulfs alienated youth is that while their energy, creativity, and resilience are not adequately recognized by government, civil society, and international actors, their many assets may be well recognized by those who seek to manipulate them (Sommers, 2007). Drug and gang operators and others seeking to exploit the youth labour all appreciate at least some of what youth potential can readily provide. All too often, they work on the youth with few competitors. Social, economic, and perhaps even political alienation, together with the dangers of HIV/AIDS, prostitution and trafficking, form an explosive cocktail for youth. The problems faced by young people can be found in the social structure, characterized primarily as transitional and unstable. The challenges in society these days only serve to aggravate these problems. Most youths are not adequately provided with material resources for instance, they do not have own housing, and some are forced to rely on the financial assistance of parents (Ikande, 2017). The desire to get an education often keep them from entering the workforce earlier and a lack of experience and knowledge at the right age prevents them from getting high-paying jobs. The wages of young people are much lower than average and scholarships are very rare. As the country experiences an economic decline, recruitment of Nigerian youth decreases and it becomes more difficult for young people to achieve a state of economic independence. Ikande (2017) expresses that, these days, most young people are unable to hold on to their moralities and are often caught in the

wrong crowd. They also lose traditional values that could have served as a way to keep them in check. Youths are the most vulnerable to all the vices that can be noticed in our present society. So, the values of labour, freedom, democracy, tolerance are gradually weakened. Now, more youths uphold values of intolerance and 'quick wealth,' which leads to the death of what most consider 'outdated' values. All these crises and instability in society only serve to worsen the situation. There is a higher crime rate and such vices as alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution, among others, continue to spread even more widely among youths. The youth, on the one hand, have become a destabilizing force in society, but on the other hand, this is a generation on which the future of the country depends. This paper observes that several studies (Malik, 2014; Safipour, Schoplocher, Higginbottom & Emami, 2011; Sommers, 2007) have been written and published on the challenges facing youth. However, only few have discussed the causes of youth alienation in relation to development. Thus, the need for an adequate examination of the causes of youth alienation and its impacts on national development. Also, the study was borne by the need to alleviate the various means through which the youth are alienated in the country and to suggest ways through which the youth can be made productive and creative in the phases of development.

Conceptual Clarification

Youth

There is hardly any universally accepted definition of youth. As defined by the United Nations (2019), "youth" is best understood as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. The age range of 15-24 is identified as the specification for youth. The definition of youth is not limited to age but factors, like economic, cultural and environmental conditions. The continuing

debate on who is a 'youth' has not resolved the confusion surrounding the concept. In many African countries, laws define 'adulthood' as commencing from the age of 21, although recently, there have been attempts to lower the age to 18 years (Curtain, 2000). Sociologically, 'youth' denotes an interface between 'childhood' and 'adulthood'. Youth, as a social group is defined in terms of age. Hence, the majority of youth has been variously defined as ranging from the ages of 10-11 years to 35 years. The United Nations has come up with a specification of age bracket 15-24 years as a youth, while the Commonwealth uses the age category of 15-29 years (Essays, UK, 2018). For this paper, youth is defined as young women and men who fall within the age bracket of 18 and 35 years. Furthermore, anyone who is acknowledged by deed as identifying with and committed to youth development may be recognised as a youth.

It has been recognised the world over that youth constitute the most important human resource potential that can contribute significantly to the overall development of a nation. The youth constitute the driving force of society, the spirit of today and the hope for the future. Besides, youth constitute the largest segment, they are also the most socially active and productive sector. United Nations (2019) notes that youth remain the major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation in all countries. Their imaginations, ideas, considerable energies and visions are essential for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. The problems that young people face as well as their visions and aspirations are essential components of the challenges and prospects of today's societies and future generations". Youth constitute a unique group within society. While they are often considered one of the

most vulnerable groups within the social fabric, they are also regarded as the greatest source of hope for the nation's future.

Alienation

Alienation as a term was etymologically originated from a Latin noun *alienation* which is derived from a Latin verb *alienare* meaning to *take away, remove or cause a separation to occur* (Sarfraz, 1997). It initially appeared in theological writings and denoted separation and distance between man and God (Musto, 2010). The idea of alienation has been used to connote extraordinary meanings, designating all type of negative attitudes which might be found in individuals or society. It has sometimes been seen as a negation of the world in such forms as estrangement, powerlessness, normlessness, and meaninglessness, isolation, and loss of self or so on.

Alienation is a concept that finds a place in all social sciences like Sociology, Theology, Psychology, Philosophy and literature also. Alienation has been utilized in diverse ways through philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists as a further ordinary form of psychosocial disorders, which includes loss of self, anxiety kingdom, anomie, depression, depersonalization, rootlessness, apathy, social disorganization, loneliness, atomization, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, pessimism and the loss of beliefs or values (Clark, 1959; Honwana, 2015; Malik, 2014). Nettler (1957) and Keniston (1965), understand alienation as a feeling of estrangement from American society and lifestyle. In an attempt to synthesis, Olsen (1969) subsumed all of the descriptions of alienation under three dimensions: social isolation, normlessness, and powerlessness. Similarly, the Encyclopaedia Britannica (cited in Honwana, 2015), has defined alienation, state of feeling estranged or separated from one's environment, paintings, products of work, or

self," encompassing such versions as "powerlessness (the feeling that one's future is not below one's control however is determined by external agents, fate, luck, or institutional arrangements).

Alienation is a term that has been used in the educational institution to refer to students' estrangement in the learning process. It is also defined as a state or experience of being isolated from a group or an activity to which one should belong, or in which one should be involved (Mann, 2001). The concept of alienation is deeply embedded in all the great religions and social and political theories of the civilized epoch, namely, the idea that sometime in the past people lived in harmony, and then there was rupture which left people feeling like foreigners in the world, but sometime in the future this alienation would be overcome, and humanity would again live in harmony with itself and nature (Brown, Higgin & Paulsen, 2003). Alienation is described as the shutdown of others, or society in general, including isolation and withdrawal that may affect young people's perception of health, the political, educational, religious, economic institutions, among others (Safipour, Schoplocher, Higginbottom & Emami, 2011). The fact that youth alienation is caused by several factors, it is also a factor to numerous challenges.

Development

Development is a many-sided concept, though, man remains the key target. It is the process of empowering people to maximize their potentials and expand their expertise ability to make the most natural to fulfil everyday human needs (Onuoha, 2012). Development affects members of a particular country through improvement in their economic and social conditions. The improvements surface in the way the natural and human resources are better managed for the creation of wealth and better lives. The

transformation of society and the emergence of recent social and economic organisations are essential indicators of development (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013). Sen (1999) cited in Ewetan (2014), emphasizes the concepts of capacities and entitlements (or social rights).

Development is an economic concept that has positive connotations involving the application of certain economic and technical measures to utilize available resources to instigate economic growth and improve people's quality of life. In the 1950s and 1960s, development was largely referred to as economic growth, which meant a quantitative rather than qualitative change in economic performance (Rabie, 2016). Consequently, different development theories have been designed to accelerate the spate of economic growth. The explanations of these theories are predictive to advancing the growth of the developing countries along the path charted by the developed nations of the West.

Seers (1977) defines development from an economic perspective, as the progressive elimination of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Accordingly, if all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. To Seers, all these three must be at low levels before a country or society can be declared developed. This invariably means that a rise in any one of these central challenges disqualifies that society or country from being called developed. Critically, Nigeria is currently experiencing the three important criteria for defining development. To conclude, development is the socio-cultural, political, economic and religious well-being of society. In a developed nation, there is a guarantee of properly first-class lifestyles, workout of all human rights, and freedom to take part in the democratic process. From the foregoing,

development implies greater pleasures of life, fairness and justice, taking into consideration the wellness, growth and advancement of individuals in the society. This definition adopted considers youth as a crucial device for development. This implies that development can infrequently be executed in any state where youth alienation is widely wide-spread.

Methodology The study is contextualised within the purview of Africa and Nigeria in specific. This paper utilized qualitative research approach to gain an insight into the phenomenon of youth alienation and development. The source of data is solely secondary, accessed from various academic journals and online articles relevant to the issue of youth alienation. Subsequently, relevant sources of this research were fairly and professionally scrutinized, understood and tested with the available literature for the purpose of the research. Inter alia, it included scan-reading, comprehensive and critical reading and writing down ideas. Authoritative scholarly sources were reviewed, during a desktop study. The literature was reviewed and analysed to bridge the gaps identified and helped to get the views of other authors on the subject matter.

Literature Review on the Causes of Youth Alienation and Its Impacts on Development

More than a few causes have been observed to be responsible for youth alienation. Some of them are caused by the structure of society while a few are inherent inside individuals. These elements can serve as boundaries to youth involvement in any developmental phase which can as well make them feel rejected and dejected. They are briefly explained beneath:

Poor Education and Training

Education is essential to developing creativity and capable of providing the youth

with all the necessary skills and knowledge prerequisite to being a competitive and productive individual. By implication, education helps the youth to prepare themselves for future challenges. However, Agbibo (2013) asserts that the educational system has not adequately equipped the youth with relevant skills and knowledge to face the challenges of after graduation from school. Hence, they find it enigmatic to access functional and qualitative education and to create opportunities for themselves rather than seek. Although, UNICEF (2009) notes that the educational crisis among youth was influenced by low school enrolment rates, poor quality education and gender disparity related to educational access. Impacts of these crises on the part of the youth include unemployment, underemployment, health issues and low growth in the nation's economy. World Bank (2019) observes that the crises are barriers in promoting fundamental human rights and civic engagement which can as well make the youth feel marginalised or alienated.

The absence of good education and inability of the youth to acquire quality education can render the bright and intelligent ones among them useless, leaving them to miss many opportunities that would have advanced their satisfaction, belongingness and inclusion in the country's development. The educational system of Nigeria has failed to adequately prepare the youth to be involved in decision-making processes. Hence, the youth find it laborious to acquire important analytical skills for critical thinking or problem-solving (Hopma & Sergeant, 2015). A few Nigerian youths appear to have access to formal education while a larger majority do not seem to have access to formal education nor opportunity to benefit from non-formal/vocational education and therefore do not possess skills necessary to guarantee their upkeep (Agbibo, 2013). Without proper

guidance and promise for a better livelihood, the youth may feel alienated.

Poor Political Participation/Low Political Representation

Political participation is the involvement of the citizens in the political system. It is the process through which an individual plays a role in the political life of his society, allowing him to take part in the decision-making process on the growth of the country (Falade, 2014). Accordingly, political participation is a factor of political behaviour and it reveals how people take part in politics. It is voluntary participation that can be direct or indirect including the selection or election of political leaders, formulation of policies, community activities and other civic engagements.

The level of political awareness and active participation of the citizens in the political processes serve to measure the extent of political participation. In Nigeria, politics is influenced by money, ethnic and religious factors (Arowolo & Aluko, 2010). Politically, youth alienation has manifested in terms of poor representation of youth in the political sphere leading to political apathy and some other political challenges. United Nations (2018) reported that about 13,000 respondents from 186 countries identified limited opportunities for effective participation of youth in decision-making processes. This is herculean for the youth to meaningfully participate in inclusive decision-making processes and makes them feel marginalized in their countries.

The participation of the youth in the political process of their country should be supported because it is beneficial for a vivid and resilient democracy. The Department for International Development (2010) revealed that there is strong evidence that the participation of the youth in political processes is relatively low compared to older citizens globally. As a result, many vibrant



youths are disenfranchised and poor representativeness becomes the order of the day in the political system. In some countries, youth alienation was strongly evident in the forms of marginalization linked to gender, location, culture and/or community (DFID, 2010). The need for participatory structures and greater trust between youth and institutions and for greater capacity development are needed for even development in the country.

Health-Related Problems

Youths are susceptible to disease, most especially the female youths commonly associated with Female Genital Mutilation and teenage pregnancy which can lead to school dropout and risky life through unsafe abortions. Abdullahi (2008) presents that youth face a myriad of health problems ranging from HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), substance abuse, malaria and malnutrition. These health problems are compounded by poor access to healthcare services which the governments have not successfully addressed. Abdullahi (2008) notes that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has affected the world very badly, although, is more common among the youths below 30 years of age. The statistics for the diseases keep on rising year after year. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS, 2015) reported that about thirty-four million people were infected and living with HIV/AIDS. These high infection rates are mostly rooted in women and young children due to sexual abuse.

As revealed by the study conducted by Abdullahi (2008), HIV/AIDS has made many children orphaned and resulted in the loss of skilled personnel. He further noted that the root cause of HIV/AIDS spread among youth is lack of knowledge about the disease and on the other hand it is their ignorance. There is low awareness of HIV/AIDS among the youth from the developing countries

compared to developed countries. However, many strategies were implemented to inform the public on the dangers of HIV/AIDS. Unfortunately, a significant number of youths remain ignorant to all the information and resources capable of protecting them from the disease. The disease is transmitted through unprotected sexual intercourse with a partner who has the virus, blood transfusion and mother to child at birth.

Youth affected by HIV/AIDS are often stigmatized by their friends and families including their societies. UNAIDS (2012) reveals that stigmatisation tends to compromise the human rights to freedom, education and career opportunities of the youth living with HIV/AIDS. In Nigeria today, youth infected with HIV are shamed to the extent that they find it difficult to speak out and come out as patients. This stigmatisation has given rise to alienation. The society has put in efforts in reducing the stigmatisation, however, patients with the virus still find it difficult to relate with friends and family members. The youth have experienced a lot of health challenges, feel neglected and alienated, as a result of inadequate attention from the government in terms of health bills, healthcare services and programmes, making life difficult for them as true members of society.

Unemployment/Poverty

Unemployment can be a manifestation of youth alienation as well as a predisposing factor contributing to the prevalent youth alienation in the country. According to Akande (2014), unemployment/poverty among Nigerians, especially the youth is a major cause of insecurity, violence and most importantly alienation, has rendered many youths useless, incapacitated and exposed them to challenges, including crimes. The feeling of being estranged from opportunities and chances or situation, rendered powerless to secure reasonable employment, with the

perceived influence of the elite in securing jobs for some of their children without following rigorous and due processes, can engineer some of these youth to result to crimes, causing a threat to the stability of the society. Particularly in Nigeria, youth unemployment has contributed to the rising cases of violent conflict (Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013).

It is important to note that poverty remains one of the leading problems of youth development as well as youth alienation. The level of poverty in the country is devastating whereby only the rich keep getting richer while the poor continue to struggle to make ends meet. The inability of some parents to uplift their family members most especially the youth out of the poverty cycle has impeded their learning skills and abilities. A poor family finds it hard at times to send their children to school and even when they try, most times they end up not being able to fund the rest of their child's education. In recent times, children drop out during secondary school education, a stage in which youth development should begin. Sometimes, parents indulge their children in any sort of trade or any kind of labour thereby exposing them and contributing to their social and behavioural problems. The implication of this is youth alienation which is associated with the failure of successive administration to address the challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities.

Inequality, Exclusion and Unfairness

A major factor that contributes to youth alienation, which then affects development in Nigeria is the growing awareness of inequalities and disparities in life chances. The perceived alienation by the youth in pervasive material inequalities and the exclusion from development empowerment programmes often lead to violent reactions among youths. There is a general perception

of alienation which appears in the image of marginalization by a section of the youth in areas of government development policies, political patronage, and these are triggers of disaffection, resentment, and revolt (Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpan-Robaro, 2013).

The incessant strikes and demonstrations by youth in the labour, professional groups and civil society groups are mainly due to pervasive material inequalities and unfairness. Their agitations are aimed at drawing public sympathy for their struggle for just and fair treatment by the government. Addressing inequality and the social exclusion of particular groups of youth is a big challenge within the youth sector, even for youth organisations. Creative mechanisms, such as the use of radio to reach out to every youth must always be strived for and reviewed.

Lack of Leisure Time Activities and Recreational Facilities

All societies recognize the importance of leisure time activities in the psychological, cognitive, civic, vocational and physical development of young people (Keniston, 1965). That is why most cultures have specified times when young people are let off from formal activities such as work or school to engage in various activities of their preference. Productive leisure is fundamental for both personal as well as social development of young people. Sports and recreation facilities provide the youths with an opportunity to socialize and spend their time productively, strengthening and developing their character and talents. However, such facilities are scarce and, where they exist, they are sometimes not accessible to the youths (Nettler, 1957).

The failure to provide productive leisure-activities has increased the level of youth alienation, preventing them from relaxing their minds whenever they are stressed.



Government and policymakers have failed to understand how youth nowadays spend their leisure time. Implementing wrong recreational facilities increases boredom among youth which also results in alienation. The right leisure programs eliminate social ills such as juvenile delinquency, drug abuse and other unpleasant behaviours as well as youth alienation. Engagement of youth in the right leisure activities appears to be higher in developed countries compared to developing countries (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2008). Accordingly, the lack of resources like libraries and sports facilities attribute to the lack of leisure activities in developing and undeveloped countries.

Lack of Support/Guidance to Youngsters

In recent times, it is visible to know that encouragements boost performance. However, some Nigerian youths who are blessed with great ideas and intellect, have no support to sustain their works and to even materialise their ideas. InfoGuide Nigeria (2020) accentuates that where youths with good plans or even good ideas capable of boosting the economy and developing the country in one way or the other, are not given the kind of encouragement they deserve such as funds, moral support, among others, they get frustrated, feel alienated and dash easily to committing crimes. In traditional African society, youth have been found to depend on family members for guidance in behaviour and personal relationships. This teaching is usually gradual and is expected to continue until the child becomes an adult.

Today, the socialisation of family members which was previously discharged by the family institution is being taken over by other institutions like the education, media, among others. This is corroborated by Sommers (2012) who posited that much of the task of the family has been left to formal education

and to chance which has made it possible for the younger generations to fall easily into bad habits. Alienation sets in when there is an absence of proper guidance and counselling which often leads the youth to various anti-social behaviour like stealing, robbery, murder, kidnapping, etc. Williams, Rivera, Neighbours and Reznik (2007) established that, as a result of advancement in technology, the use of expensive gadgets is highly preferable by the youth to feel respected and belonged among their peers. Achieving this will give them the false impression and satisfaction of being wealthy among the populace. All sort of gimmicks will be put out, most especially copying the false life of celebrities and expensive commercial movies, for impressing everyone around them. However, whenever they fail either to access expensive gadgets or impress as planned, they become frustrated and aggressive to the extent that they do anything to right the wrong.

Poor Infrastructure

When society is well structured with adequate infrastructure, youth and other members of society tend to benefit from its impact including employment, stable electricity, transport, potable water, irrigation, flood control, education and healthcare facilities. However, where the infrastructure is deficient, it results in a cost through disruption of livelihoods, increased pollution, traffic, with the accidents, etc. Adenikinju (2005) expresses that infrastructure is one of the most critical factors for economic development because it eases the production processes and brings about changes in the quality of available infrastructure. Therefore, the relationship between infrastructure and production reflects on the performance of an organisation's levels of output, profits, income, employment and wealth creation in the country. All of these will greatly make the

youth feel relaxed and happy with the system. World Bank (2013) stresses that the availability of infrastructure in most developing countries especially in the sub-Saharan African region is in bad shape, leaving the youth to always desire for better lives.

In remote regions, most youths are excluded from national life which may be the result of alienation (Adenikinju, 2005). Accordingly, those living in remote regions are poorly connected to the centres of population and economic activity even though in the urban centres also lack affordable transport to social services or workplaces. This implies that with lack and high cost of transport, higher costs of inputs and consumer goods, difficulties in getting products to market, limited access to information about prices in distant markets, and restricted access to basic social services will become the problem of the day which will probably result to youth alienation. The gap in the availability of infrastructure in Nigeria has greatly triggered youth alienation. The World Bank (2013) reveals that the challenges of accessing the institutional systems and structures within governments, the media and civil society sectors, severely impedes youths' ability to advocate for their rights. This destroys the youth's confidence and trust in such mechanisms most especially when the challenges are thought to be created by the government.

Discrimination

Most societies are noticeably influenced by gender discrimination which often empowers the male folks to dominate the females in terms of finalising decisions in the homes (Malik, 2014). This renders the opinions of most females useless, makes them feel powerless most especially when there is a need for them to contribute in any matter. The fact that discrimination appears blurred on the surface, though, it does not mean that the

youth are not discriminated in the society. Ojo (2014) notes that the discrimination of the youth is somehow supported by the scriptures as evident with stories subjugating women under the control of men. In Indian society, people have been divided along different strata in the name of caste, notably as 'touchables' and 'untouchables', which negatively makes the latter victims. The level of discrimination an individual under the caste system experiences is dependent upon his class. The untouchables are regarded as the lowest caste and are not treated as other fellow human beings. The discrimination, although fuelled by illiteracy, aversion to economic diversification, admiration of old traditions, and lack of consciousness, is responsible for youth alienation. Where the caste system does not believe that all humans are born equally and be treated as such, the youth in the lowest class feel threatened, depressed and isolated from the whole system. Those at the lower caste could perceive some levels of negligence and alienation. It is in conjunction with this discrimination that the people at the lower strata display some degrees of grievances over the poor treatment and isolation to disprove some alienation experienced.

Cost and Exploitation

Both the cost of involving youth in any governance and the exploitation experienced by the youth could trigger alienation. On one hand, it is wrongly argued that involving young people in decision-making at all levels is more expensive than involving adults (Falade, 2014). The positive financial repercussions of allowing young people to determine something that may have an impact on their own lives and others, and maybe more readily accepted or practical, are usually overlooked. On the other hand, the youth are vulnerable to sexual abuse and other forms of economic exploitation under

the guise of employment and support. The fact that little protection from the authorities and the failure to address this menace could metamorphose into alienation and other social problems.

Corruption and Inappropriate Allocation of Funds

The phenomenon of corruption among the political office holders has affected the development of youth in Nigeria. The leadership quality of the country is characterized by greed, recklessness and misuse of public funds, unfortunately causing the youth many socio-economic challenges. Corruption in government, in public parastatals and so on, have all negatively impacted on the youths, making it difficult for them to access resources to enjoy meaningful and satisfactory lifestyles. Corruption has indeed become one menace that is spreading across all areas of society. Corruption has changed the mind-set of any average youth to something negative. They now see being corrupt as a growing trend and as such feel optimistic to get involved. Where it becomes difficult for them to hold public offices to embezzle public funds, they get frustrated and infuriated most especially when it is glaring that those at the helm of affairs are making millions daily from their corrupt practices.

The government also being corrupt has ways in which they impede youth development. Even with a positive mind-set as a youth, the right things have not been put in place by the government to ensure better treatment for youths and of course, aid their development (InfoGuide Nigeria, 2020). Self-reliance, self-discipline and social responsibility are essential to youth personal development. However, the youths are lacking these essential attributes due to overdependence on the government to do everything for them. While blaming the government for the challenges experienced by the youth in the

country, it is also advisable for the youths to devise socially approved means of survival without depending on the government for life sustenance. Nigeria as a country is blessed with abundant natural resources but heavily depends on oil for income generation. The failure to diversify the economy remains the source of imbalances and increasingly unequal distribution of wealth between different sectors of society, leading to the experience of alienation among the youth.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The youth are the tools for today's and tomorrow's progress, implying that a better tomorrow, starts from the nurturing of youth challenges today. There is a need to prioritise their ideas and vision for a continued development of in Nigeria. Their development and intellectual capacities are fundamental to the progress and growth of societies. The challenges faced by excluding the youths in any developmental phases are a huge concern these days. It has been established within the context of this paper that youth alienation is triggered by several factors including poor education and training, low political participation, health-related problems, unemployment/poverty, inequality, exclusion and unfairness, among several others. The active engagement of the youth is a great asset to and central to achieving sustainable development, inclusive and stable societies. There is a need to tackle the factors responsible for youth alienation to address its associated threats. Therefore, the paper recommends that;

- i. Governments in any respect ranges should make sure that growing poverty indices be reversed and a sensible social safety programme is pursued and systematically implemented to make certain that the populations meet their simple wishes.
- ii. Poverty alleviation programs should be implemented and encouraged to

- help check the problem of poverty. This can be achieved by setting up businesses and motivation to learn a trade or new advancements in technology. Ultimately, it will enable the youth to live a worthy life and find it easy to take care of their family members.
- iii. The government should create programmes that would empower the youths technically. This will enable them to feel carried along, absorbed, be self-reliant and avert their minds from criminal tendencies.
- iv. Governments should rise to build recreational centres and parks to curb crime rates influenced by alienation and for the positive development of youth. International NGOs and local ones are urged to take part in volunteerism as a way to keep the youth off the streets. Provisions should be made to enable the youths to actively participate in sports with sufficient finance of the sports facilities for convenience and comfort. This also can check out the vices of youths.
- v. Serious attention should be paid to human capital development. This suggests that the educational system-including vocational and technical-be transformed to enable youth to acquire relevant and quality skills that can contribute to the mastery of their lives and therefore contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. Young Nigerians should be trained to possess skills and talents that are congruent with real societal demands.
- vi. Youths should be given roles in government and leadership in the country to help bring in young and fresh minds into the political

institutions. This will make them feel politically represented and satisfied.

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