

## YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AS A CHALLENGE TO DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*Democracy as a system of government has waded off competition from other systems of government and has assumed ascendancy as a top political system in the world. In Nigeria, democratic system of governance has been in existence for the past two decades. For this system to be consolidated, all the relevant stakeholders must get involve for it to evolve seamlessly. One of the critical stakeholders in a democratic set up are youths; their numbers, strength, dynamism, and creativity are valuable resources which, if properly harnessed can reposition a nation on the path of social, economic, political progress and development. Despite these enormous advantages, Nigerian youths have been marginalized and atomized in the Nigeria political space. Using secondary sources of data through critical review of literature, the paper argues that, the monetization of the political process by political parties where nomination forms are bought at exorbitant rates has rendered the youth inactive. They lack financial muscles so required for effective participation. The inability of those in leadership positions to create job opportunities has made things more challenging for the youth; this has increased poverty rate, thereby encouraging youth restiveness, social unrest, political thuggery and all forms of militancy in our democracy. The paper recommends among others that for our democracy to be consolidated, the problem of youth empowerment must be adequately addressed. This can be achieved through strengthening our political recruitment machinery to de-emphasize money politics and embrace a political culture that is interested in featuring those with clear vision and mission. This will ensure that only those who demonstrate the capacity for good governance find their way into government.*

**Keywords:** Democracy, Democratic consolidation, Nigeria; Youth Unemployment; Youths

### Introduction

Democracy as a system of government is largely seen as one of the best forms of government. This notion is premised on the participatory opportunity it affords the citizenry in the selection and election of their leaders and representatives. The chosen leaders in turn are cloth with the mandate to provide for the welfare of the citizens by ensuring for security of lives and property, employment generation, socio-economic and infrastructural facilities for the good of all.

However, the state of affairs in the Nigerian political experience has raised concerns about the politics of democratization where godfatherism appears to be taking over the power of the people to participate in decision making. Rather than sovereignty being with the people which is the norm in an ideal democratic state; the Nigerian practice shows otherwise. This has thrown up great challenges for democracy to thrive. Democracy and democratic consolidation are two strongly related and mutually reinforcing concepts. While democracy is the state of existence or being, democratic consolidation is a process that brings democracy into being and also allows it to take the strong hold of the society. Therefore, for democracy to be consolidated and gain ascendancy in any society, all the stakeholders must be part and parcel of the processes. One of the critical stakeholders is the youth. The youth are the drivers of transformation and change in any society. Couched with this thinking, the United Nations Youth Strategy (2030) also emphasizes that youths have the resilience and innovative solutions to drive social progress and inspire

political change in urban and rural settings. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2009, p.1) reaffirm this position by describing the youths as the “greatest asset that every nation can have...not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country’s development”.

Apart from being drivers of socio-economic development, available records concerning the demography of youth shows that there are 1.8 billion youths in the world today (Dajo and Akor, 2022). Out of this number, 90% of them are living in developing countries. In like manner, the African Youth Charter (2009) states that youth constitute 40% of the population of the African continent. In Nigeria, the National Bureau of Statistics (2012) National Baseline Youth Survey reported that the population of youths (15 – 35years) in Nigeria is estimated to be 64 million.

In as much as the youth are strategic in terms of promoting democratic values that would mobilize and galvanized support for democracy to thrive. The youth are often relegated to the background by Nigerian political leaders. Couple with the double barrel problem of bad governance and corruption which is the hall mark of Nigerian political elites has created grave issues of unemployment, insecurity, poverty and political exclusion for the Nigerian youth. In view of this, youth unemployment in Nigerian has become very high with its consequences on democratic process. This has successfully contributed to the dramatic rise in social unrest and criminality. It has equally made the Nigerian political process to be associated with violence, thuggery and general malpractice. If young people are provided with employment opportunities, they can become productive assets and take their part in mainstream society offering the best of their skills and talents as well as contribute meaningfully to consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. It is in view of the foregoing that this paper beams its search light on youth unemployment and the challenge of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. For ease of discussion and clarity, the paper is divided into seven sections. Section one is the abstract which provide the analytical vision of the paper, section two is the general introduction, the third section conceptualized terms use in the paper. The fourth advanced the theoretical underpinning for the paper. The fifth section discusses the causes of unemployment in Nigeria while the six x-rayed youth unemployment and democratic consolidation in Nigeria which is perhaps the crux of the matter. The seventh section concludes the paper and ties it up with workable recommendations.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Youth**

There is lack of consensus among international organizations and nations across the globe as to who a youth is. The United Nations (1981) defines youths as young people between the ages of 15-24years. The African Youth Charter (2006) defines youths or young people to include persons between the ages of 15 and 35years. For the World Bank, youths are those persons who fall between the ages of 15 and 24 years; and for the Commonwealth, youth is the age bracket between the ages of 15-29 years (Ubi, 2007). The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2001) categorized youths as young people between 18 and 35 years. For some countries, the age could be extended to 35 years as shown in table 1 below.

**Table1. Youth Ages in ECOWAS Countries**

S/N	Country	Youth Age	Maturity Age	Voting Age
1	Ghana	18-35	18	18
2	Sierra Leone	15-30	18	18
3	Nigeria	18-35	18	18
4	Senegal	15-35	18	18
5	Gambia	15-35	18	18
6	Guinea Bissau	15-35	18	18
7	Mali	15-35	18	18
8	Cote d’ Ivoire	15-35	18	18
9	Burkina Faso	15-36	18	18

**Source:** Ubi, E.N. (2007). African Youth Charter: Prospects for the Development of African Youth. The Directorate for Social Mobilization (1989) sees the youth as young people between the ages of 18 and 35, although this age-range varies from culture to culture. The Report of the Political Bureau (1987), however, defined youth as those between 6-30 years of age. This age range in the latter definition rightly falls within the formal educational career structure that is between primary school to the university or post-secondary institutions. This definition of the youth is ridiculous. At first, it does not differentiate children from the youth. Second, not all youths are in school; third, people of less than 18 years cannot engage actively in productive activities or participate in democracy. In fact, some within this age bracket have never been to school. Out of those who are able to go school, only a small percentage gets into tertiary educational institutions.

The National Youth Development Policy (2001) defines youth as people aged between 18-35 years. They constitute about 40 per cent of the more than 180 million people of Nigeria, according to the 2006 National Population Census. Going by this definition, the youth are the most populous segment of the Nigerian population. They are a vital source of manpower (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1987). The youth constitutes the most active and virile segment of a population. It is the age of biological maturation, during which most individuals finish school, acquire skill and training, and get a job (Kari, 2013). Apart from being owners and leaders of tomorrow, they outnumber the middle-aged and the aged (Onyekpe, 2007). The National Youth Development Policy (2001, p.1) states that:

Youth are the foundation of any society, their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pace of development and security of a nation, through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in economic development and socio-political attainments. In their dreams and hopes, a nation finds her motivation; on their energies, she builds her vitality of purpose. And because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured.

This statement is loaded with multifarious contributions of the youth to any nation that properly harness these skills and energies. But as Anasi (2010, p.2) observes, "the degree of disorderliness and instability in society is also determined in part by youth". In present day Nigeria, the youths have become political thugs, rapists, abductors/kidnappers, hired killers, and they are key actors in armed violence in Nigeria. These able-bodied youths are usually engaged by political elite to achieve their political goals in a crude manner (IPCR, 2008). These thugs have been used in rigging elections and murder of political opponents, among other things.

For the youth to be relevant and grow up with a sustained sense of responsibility, they must be provided with: opportunities for self-fulfillment; scope and outlet for their patriotism, commitment and enthusiasm; employment opportunities; moral guidance, discipline and selfless service; civilized values for future leadership; opportunities so that they can be seen, heard and listened to; correct and timely orientation to promote and defend the interest of their country against social vices, anti-social behaviour and some emerging social maladies; educational and vocational opportunities to enable them to develop their potentialities to their fullest; opportunities to meet one another, exchange ideas, and get to know the country and the international system (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1987). It can be deduced from the plethora of definitions advanced above that while the demographic categorization of youths may vary, youths are generally adventurous and possess the energy, innovation and creativity to bring about change in the society.

### **Unemployment**

There is no accepted definition for the phenomenon of unemployment since it is so multifaceted. Instead, different nations choose definitions that align with their national priorities. Unemployment is a general phrase that refers to a state of being jobless or unemployed. In other words, anyone who is capable of working but doesn't find employment throughout the relevant period may be deemed to be unemployed. In computing the country's unemployment rate, Nigeria employs the ILO definition of unemployment. According to the ILO as cited by Adesina (2013),

The unemployed population is made up of persons above a specified age who are available to, but did not, furnish the supply of labour for the production of goods and services. When measured for a short reference period, it relates to all persons not in employment who would have accepted a suitable job or started an enterprise during the reference period if the opportunity arose, and who had actively looked for ways to obtain a job or start an enterprise in the near past.

The "labour force framework," which the ILO uses to define unemployment, divides the working-age population into three mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories based on a predetermined set of rules at

any given time. The categories are: those who are employed, those who are jobless, and those who are not in the labour force. The first two groups make up the labour force, which is effectively a gauge of the availability of labour at any particular time. Although the definition of unemployed has undergone frequent revision since 1954, its fundamental requirements remain the same. Therefore, a person is to be considered unemployed if during the reference period they simultaneously satisfy the following criteria: (a) "without work," which means they were not in paid employment or self-employment as specified by the international definition; (b) "currently available for work," which means they were open to paid employment or self-employment during the reference period; and (c) "seeking work," which means they had taken specific actions in a specified recent period to seek paid employment or self-employment. While the latter two criteria divide the unemployed into the unemployed and the out of labour force, the "without employment" requirement serves to distinguish between the employed and the unemployed, guaranteeing that these are mutually exclusive categories of the working age population. The availability for work condition is a test of current preparedness because its goal is to reject people who are looking for jobs to start later. On the other hand, the goal of the seeking employment criterion is to make sure that a person has taken some "active" actions before being labelled as unemployed. Therefore, unemployment is a condition of the economy where a person or people looking for work are unable to secure gainful employment. The level of unemployment varies depending on the economy and other market factors.

### **Democracy**

Democracy refers to philosophy of government where the supreme power is domiciled with the people and exercised by the people directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodic elections (Udoms and Atakpa, 2017). Tobi (1995) in Anger (2013) submit that democratic government is one in which both the government and the governed exercised freedom and participate in the practical working of a government. It therefore, conveys a collectivist connotation or content in the sense of a republican participation in the affairs of state. Democracy is thus an antithesis to despotism, tyranny and totalitarianism. In the words of Anger (2002) "democracy is meaningless amidst general poverty, hunger and deprivation of (whatever kind) in a country". Therefore, democracy as an ideal is primarily related to the themes of equality, liberty citizenship participation and self-determination of members of the society.

To Sokaa (1993), democracy involves the decentralization of power from the centre to the periphery in the society. It is his believe that, power is solely concerned with resource determination and allocation. What this means is that, in a democracy, citizens are equally empowered to make far reaching strategic decisions that could greatly influence fundamental policy matters. This shows that democracy provide the platform for finding solutions to the prevailing economic, social and political problems since it provides opportunity for mass participation in the social economic and political decisions making processes (Hembe, 2003). It should be noted however that, at the centre of democracy is the process of participation. As people continually participate in electoral process, they develop and foster impressive qualities which ensure that good governance is felt. Mass participation therefore negates constraining repression and discrimination by bringing into focus the larger communal identity of a society for no single group whether be it a majority or a minority, has a right to determine the future that would be for the interest of a common good. Democracy in which ever form whether liberal, African or modern must pay attention to the issues of popular sovereignty, equal opportunity for all, majority rule, minority rights, representativeness, right to choose between alternatives programmes, popular consultation, consensus on fundamental issues and more importantly periodic elections (Oke, 2005).

### **Democratic Consolidation**

Democratic consolidation suggests longevity and sustainability of democratic practice and principles among a people. It also refers to the sustained maturity exhibited in the conduct of democratic practice that gives birth to long-term viability and transference to good life for a greater number of people (George-Genyi, 2018). This implies that for democracy to be consolidated, it must be rooted in the society for quite a long period of time and must have demonstrated the capacity to meet the yearnings and aspiration of the masses.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper adopts Marxist theory as its theoretical base to explain youth unemployment and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Marxists theory is an offshoot of the writings of Karl Marx, a

nineteenth-century political economist and perhaps the severest critic of capitalism and its liberal adherents (Frieden, Lake and Broz, 2017). Other scholars with Marxist orientation include Frederick Engels and V. I. Lenin. Karl Marx as the main proponent of the theory assumed a radical posture in his interpretation of the economic process. The Marxian interpretation of history emphasizes social classes, productive forces and the social relationship of production. Marxist maintains that the economy is the substructure upon which the superstructure revolves. The implication is that economy which is the base of any society determines the nature and character of other spheres of human endeavour be it politics, religion, justice, culture and even mode of thought which is collectively called the superstructure. To Marx, the economic factor is the foundation upon which the socio-cultural and political superstructure is built. Using his logic of historical and dialectical materialism, Marx and Engels established the evidence of antagonistic contradiction in every economic epoch from slavery to capitalism and as such emphasis the existence of class struggle in each epoch.

Explaining further on the role of economy been a determining factor in the society Ake (1981) assert that in any society those who are economically privileged tends to be better educated, more cultured, to have higher social status, to be more successful professionally and even politically. The import is that economic inequalities are extremely important, tending to reproduce itself endless in a series of other inequalities. He adds that those who are privileged economically are usually interested in maintaining and preserving the existing social order while those that are disadvantage sought to change the social order especially the distribution of wealth. In this wise, economic structures set the trend of political interest and alignments. It is therefore clear that in the midst of economic inequalities society cannot have a stable political democracy because political power become polarize along economic power.

Applying the theory, the paper argues that since economy is the base upon which every other aspect of human lives revolves around those who control it tends to controls the polity. Therefore, youths without jobs cannot participate effectively in politics. This is because they do not have the economic power that is required to part take effectively in the Nigerian political process since it has been monetized. Recently, the two major political parties in Nigeria, All Progressive Congress (APC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) sold nomination forms between the range of 100,000 and 50,000 million naira respectively. The implication is that only those who have such resources at their disposal would participate in the contest. The 'Not Too Young to Run' Bill that was assented by President Buhari on 31st May 2018, which is meant to encourage youth people to participate in politics becomes useless. This is because reducing the age limit of political office holders without a corresponding increase in youth empowerment programmes may not produce the desired result. This irritates treatment of the youth by the political class triggered EndSars protest, political thuggery as well as the rise in banditry and kidnapping and other forms of violent crimes which has derailed our effort towards consolidating our democracy.

### **Causes of Youth Unemployment in Nigeria**

In the study of youth unemployment in Nigeria, Adebayo (1999), Alanana (2003), Echebiri (2005), Ayinde (2008), Morphy (2008) and Awobgenle and Iwuamadi (2010) have identified the main causes of youth unemployment in Nigeria.

**Rural Urban Migration:** Push-pull factors are frequently used to explain migration from rural to urban areas. Two push causes are the strain on rural areas caused by the mainland population and the existence of significant underemployment due to the seasonal cycle of the lack of infrastructure amenities, which makes rural living unpleasant. Young individuals relocate to urban areas in search of lucrative employment opportunities. In addition, social amenities are typically more prevalent in urban settings. This demonstrated that rural populations are not fairly provided with social and economic opportunities.

**Rapid Population Growth:** The population of Nigeria was predicted to be 140,431,790 as of the 2006 census. Future projections indicate that, with a 3.2 percent annual growth rate, the population may surpass 180 million by 2020 (National Population Commission and ICF Macro, 2009). With this population, Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa. It is said that the rapid expansion of the labor force has outpaced the availability of jobs by a large margin due to the high population growth rate. Nigeria's high population growth has complicated effects on the country's unemployment problem. The supply side is impacted by a significant and rapid increase in the labor force relative to the economy's capacity to absorb it.

**Low Standard of Education:** The general Nigerian graduate, according to some academics and observers, lacks the qualifications needed by labor employers for a formal employment in the formal sector since they are unemployed. Employers don't need workers they can pay or spend their money on, after all; they need workers who will grow their company and boost earnings, which is what every company wants most of all. This is sometimes attributed to Nigeria's educational system, which has liberal bent. Most higher education programs in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial content, which inhibits graduates from becoming job producers rather than job seekers. An obstacle to acquiring entrepreneurial education in industries like tailoring, computers, and incubators is access to start-up finance after training. Ineffective farming tools that could be improved by automated agriculture. Henrik (2006) asserts that the lack of career opportunities for recent graduates contributes to the issue of violence because they are unable to make a good contribution to society without a job.

**Lack of Steady and Sustainable Power Supply:** Despite numerous attempts to revive this industry, the reality is that Nigeria is losing its investment-friendly status, particularly as a result of energy crises and a lack of a reliable and sustainable power supply that have forced businesses to rely on generators, which are expensive to buy, fuel, and maintain. The expense of doing business in Nigeria is further increased by the large and many levies and taxes that these companies must pay. Businesses that closed their doors or relocated to regions with more favorable economic conditions lay off their staff, and opportunities to hire new workers dried up. All of them contributed to the worsening of the crisis of youth unemployment on the job market (Adeloye, 2010; Onifade, 2011).

**Corruption:** Corruption has permeated Nigeria's whole social structure, preventing the country from establishing a sound economic base. Money meant for development projects has been stolen, misappropriated, or embezzled and stashed away in foreign banks while some inept and dishonest bureaucrats and administrators in the public enterprise and parastatal have liquidated these businesses (Okafor, 2010). The claim made here is that Nigeria lost the chance to use the more than \$500 billion estimated revenue from oil sales in the last 50 years to develop a thriving economy that would have created jobs for the youth in a variety of sectors of the economy because the political elites, local and foreign contractors collaborated in the inflation of contract fees. As each succeeding administration took turns robbing the nation of its wealth by abusing public authority, resources, goodwill, utilities, and personal gains, the ruling (political) class failed because they substituted transactions (contract award and other routine financial-related activities) for the vision, policy, and strategy that should have been the focus of every leadership (Okafor, 2005). As a result, the economy suffers, the unemployment rate rises, and there is a rise in hunger, extreme poverty, and unhappiness.

### **Youth Unemployment and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria**

It is imperative that in the process of democratization, there should be genuine efforts to allow the people (especially the youths) the right to participate in politics. This will not only make the youth to have a sense of belonging but be part and parcel of the decision-making process. In Nigeria, attempts have been made by the Nigeria government to accommodate the youth. For example, the Not Too Young to Run Bill that was sponsored by Hon. Tony Nwulu in the House of Representative and Abdulaziz Nnyako in the Senate was passed and signed into law by President Muhammadu Buhari, the law aimed at reducing the age limit of people running for elective offices in Nigeria which according to the sponsors of the bill will address the problem of youth participation in politics (Ayo, 2019). The law altered Sections 65, 106, 131, 177 of the constitution which reduced the age qualification for the office of the President from 40 to 30; Governor 35 to 30; Senator 35 to 30; House of Representatives from 30-25 and State House of Assembly from 30 to 25 (Tukur, 2018).

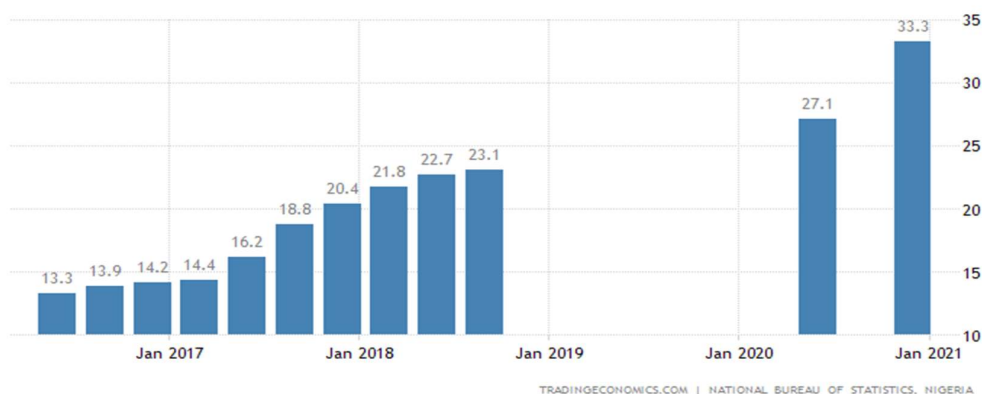
Supporting the call for youth participation in politics, President Muhammadu Buhari urged Nigerian youngsters to get ready for political leadership as his generation will eventually leave the scene and be replaced by the newer generation. Regarding the Ohaneze youths' bid for the Igbo presidency in 2023, he stated in his response that,

Youth are very virile and active. A greater part of the Nigerian population is made up of youths. They must always be a factor at all times. Youth must begin to groom themselves for the leadership of Nigeria. I said this to the leaders of National Association of Nigerian Students yesterday (Thursday)- sooner than later we will leave the stage and you will take over you have to equip yourselves properly (*Saturday Sun*, 2019, p.45)

This acknowledgement of the vigour and virility of the Nigeria youths by the President somewhat contradicts an earlier statement credited to him that Nigerian youths are lazy and uneducated. Though, this statement was heavily criticized by Nigerians across the length and breadth of this country for his inability to portray the correct picture of the Nigerian youths. In 2018, an analysis by the Rice University in the United States of America showed that Nigerians youths were the most educated of all migrants in that country (Ayo, 2019). Even though the presidency latter denied that he was misrepresented by the media the damage had already been done.

More so, since Mr President was kin on their generation bequeathing leadership to the youth, what has he done in terms of preparing the youth for leadership position? That's why Dajo and Akor (2022) argues that reducing the age of office holders to accommodate the youth without job creation or youth empowerment alone, may not be able to provide a remedial action concerning the participation of youth in electoral process in Nigeria. This is because economic power is what is needed for one to excel in Nigerian politics. A critical examination of the activities of political parties in Nigerian as regards nominating candidates for the 2023 general election shows the high level of monetization of the polity. The ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) for example settle for 100,000 million naira for the purchase of nomination forms for the office of the President. The opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on their part collected over 50,000 million naira for same purpose. The high cost of nomination forms which is the current norm is a deliberate ploy to keep the youth docile and away from contesting for public office hence they do not have the financial muscle to compete favorable for political power. The National Youth Development Policy (2001) espoused that since the youth are the foundation of any meaningful development in any society due to their productive capacities, inventiveness, innovation, character and orientation as well as security of a nation through their creativity and ingenuity which makes economic development and socio-political attainments possible they should be absolved into the polity not just as critical stakeholders but as drivers of the system owing to their demographic prowess. Conversely, the youth are the most marginalized and neglected political gateway (Ayo 2019). All manner of impediments and restrictions are placed on the path of their political participation and aspirations. These obstacles range from outright economic exclusions where politics has become so monetized to the extent that majority of the youth cannot be able to participate in the political process and make resounding impact.

However, available records from the National Bureau of Statistic concerning the unemployment rates in Nigeria shows that, Nigeria's unemployment increased to 33.30 percent in the fourth quarter of 2021 from 27.10 percent in the second quarter of 2020 (NBS, 2022). In 2022 it stood at 33 per cent according to the Statistics. This figure was projected to be at 32.5 per cent in the preceding year. A chronological data of unemployment rate in Nigeria shows a significant rise in the past years. In the fourth quarter of 2020, over 33 per cent of the labour force was unemployed, according to data. Reacting, a professor of Economics, Baldwin Asiegbo, warned that things may get drastic if nothing is done fast to address this issue. The chart presented below shows the rate at which unemployment continues to increase in Nigeria.



Source: National Bureau of Statistics 2022.

As can be seen from the above data, it is obvious that unemployment in Nigeria is so alarming and is increasing steadily. Politicians who are the cause of this predicament for the youth have continued to use

them knowing fully well that they have the capacity to circumvent the political process for the interest of the ruling class. Youths who do not have paid employments that would enable them earn a decent living get frustrated and throw themselves at every opportunity that present itself regardless of whether society frown at it. One can therefore deduce from the foregoing that with majority of the youth unemployed, it is very difficult and challenging for them to make any resounding impact as resources required to prosecute elections in Nigeria are not at their disposal thereby resorting to other deviant behaviors to sale themselves to members of the political class who in turn sees them as having nuisance value which can be useful during electioneering and polling periods.

This is because the nature and character of party politics in Nigeria shows how the country's democratic system of government has been influenced by the culture of non-ideological orientation. Rather than the culture of ideology, the various political parties focus on interests, all of which de-emphasize political party ideology and adherence to it. This lack of a coherent party ideology has thrown up so many issues be it at the individual, group and community level. To this end, democracy rather than been seen from a developmental angle, is instead, reduce to a system that breeds the mentality of primitive accumulation of capital. In essence, politics has become a 'goldmine'. In an attempt to maintain this status quo, political parties and their practitioners employ different strategies to capture political power. This process has intensified the culture of political thuggery, hooliganism, character assassination, names calling, persecution of opponents, harassment and intimidation by adherents of the different political parties and all forms of lawlessness with youth at the theatre of operations. This scenario is most prevalent at the electioneering and polling periods.

The concomitant effect of all the above issues is that the democratization process suffers because the youths who unarguably are expected to be the most formidable force to reckon with in the democratization process are rendered feeble and their valuable contributions to the consolidation of democracy is truncated due to their handicap. This goes a long way to slow down the pace of democracy in Nigeria. What follows in contrast is a high manifestation of political violence and unrest displayed by the unemployed youth population who are easily manipulated and the sponsored by the political leaders and who consider the financial reward as means of livelihood.

In another development, it has been argued that Nigerian's tertiary education does not pay enough attention to the development of mental and academic sophistication as well as technical skills for graduate required to participate in the competitive global world. What this portrays is that there is a mismatch between effective technical/vocational education and the development of entrepreneurship culture that is receptive to transformation and change. This is because skill acquisition which vocational/technical education provides is the gateway to self-reliance. In an instance where graduates of tertiary institutions cannot boost of white colour jobs they can quickly resort to their skills for sustenance. This will no doubt reduce the rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria. Akor, (2020) posit that an efficient public-private interface can significantly improve curriculum and lower worrisome current unemployment figures caused by asymmetrical relationship between skill sets gained and market demands. The idea is to reach a stage of equilibration whereby what is needed for employment is what is actually presented by Nigerian tertiary institutions hence any economy that is private sector driving must pay enough attention to the quality of human capital available in the market for absorption.

It can therefore be stated that the nature and character of the Nigerian political recruiting machinery which does not recognize competence, responsiveness, and integrity as the yardstick for governance, frequently contributes to poor governance and leadership deficits in Nigeria needs to be revamp since it is the political leaders that are the drivers of public policies which mould and shape the developmental stride of societies all over the world. The complete absence of this is largely why Nigeria keeps having series of electoral crises, malpractices, social unrest, insurgency and deaths. Eventually, we end up being far from engendering free, fair and credible elections as well as the consolidation of our democratic process.

### **Conclusion**

The rise in tertiary education output and the inelastic labour absorption capacity of the Nigerian labour market for the services of university and polytechnic graduates are the main causes of the increased youth unemployment in Nigeria over the past two decades. This study, in addition to the unsettling exclusion of



youth by the ruling elites who are uninterested in providing paid employment for the youth, makes them more susceptible to political participation. The high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria was attributed in the research to a disconnect between the promotion of entrepreneurship culture and efficient technical/vocational education. It makes the case that skill management, which vocational/technical education can offer, should be a complement to skill acquisition. The mismatch between skill sets acquired and market demands is the root cause of the current unemployment rates, which can be greatly reduced by an effective public-private interface. Poor governance and leadership shortfalls are frequently caused by the form and character of the Nigerian political recruiting process, which does not value competence, responsiveness, and integrity as the benchmarks for leadership.

It papers also argues that political heavy weight in Nigeria place loyalty as criteria for compensation as against competence, most of the governors in Nigeria came into government through this process. It is therefore difficult for this category of people to provide the desired development knowing fully well that sovereignty no longer rest with the people.

### Recommendations

In attempt to proffer solutions to the problems identified the paper therefore advanced some recommendations capable of reducing youth unemployment and enhances the consolidation of our democratic process.

- That all economic actors, including the government, the business sector, employees, private persons, and non-governmental organizations, must adopt policies and programs that would achieve this purpose. Economic growth must be made employment-intensive. Promotion of informal micro and small-scale sector enterprises, promotion of entrepreneurship culture through entrepreneurship development programs, accelerating the growth rate of the agricultural sector, tying education and training to labour market requirements, and promotion of enterprise culture that will encourage self-reliance, risk-taking, and a national environment that rewards effort and initiative are some of the immediate, short-term, and long-term measures that must be taken.
- Resource constraints should not deter the Nigerian policy makers from refocusing public expenditure towards young people. Increased funding to raise the educational and health status as well as generating more jobs for young people should be seen as a way of prioritizing allocation within the social sector.
- There should be a drastic shift in policy from the present incremental curriculum to scientific and technical subjects that promote student-centered learning. That is, emphasis should be place on vocational and technical education so as to encourage graduates to be self –reliant after graduation.
- Effort should be made to strengthen the political recruitment machinery where only those that are visionary, with clean political dossier and have demonstrated the capacity for good governance find their way in government. By this, pragmatic policies that would galvanize development will be put in place for the good of all.
- Political parties and their practitioners should reduce the amount slated for purchase of nomination forms for elective positions so as to accommodate and enhances youth participation in the scramble for political power.

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