



ROLE OF YOUTHS IN NATION BUILDING: NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of youths in nation building with focus on Nigerian perspective within the periods of 2010 to 2020. Specifically, the paper looks at the importance of involving youths in national building and challenges facing youths in Nigeria and proposed some policy frameworks for resolving the boney issues. The paper theoretically adopts an analytical and qualitative research method, relying upon secondary sources of information including researches, textbooks, journals and CBN Bullions and provides essential frameworks within which better practice of nation building can be evolved for appreciable corporate results in the Nigerian national development environment. The paper started by examining the various ways the concept of youth and nation building has been viewed from different dimensions and basic principles as a major instrument of ensuring sustainable growth and development globally and specifically, Nigeria. The finding shows that the extent of the youths' responsible conduct and roles in Nigerian society is positively correlated with the development of the country. This is because the youths are the engine of growth and development; they provide the labour force for production of goods and services to take effect. They are problem solvers, have a positive influence on other young people and the nation, and are extremely ambitious. They have the ability to create an identity for themselves and move the nation forward. They are the critical masses of people, whose action and inaction can develop or destroy the hegemonies/fabrics of their society. The paper recommended amongst others that Nigerian youths should be given the opportunity to develop their capacities through balanced education and exposure. They should be engaged in skills acquisition and entrepreneurship that will help reduce idleness and keep them from being involved in crime and other activities that are counterproductive in nation building. The paper concludes that it will be a great wastage of human resources if these youths are not given an opportunity to exercise their talent. This beautiful land (Nigeria) needs these youths in order for our soil to become a brighter one. So help us God. Amen!

Keywords: Building, Development, Nation Building, Peace, Peace Development and Youth

Introduction

The role of youths in nation building in recent times has generated serious discussions and clear-cut policy agenda which are necessary for the development, plan and policy action of any country. Uhunmwangho and Oghator (2013) succinctly elucidated that current happenings appear that the majority of our youths are on the edge of reason and good conduct. Rather than exploring the opportunities for securing better lives, facing the challenges of a rapidly changing world, and thinking about the future of their nation, it is quite disappointing that the majority of our youths know more of how to showcase anti-social behaviours. It is shocking to realize that the constructive attitudes of

youths in traditional society of Nigeria have gone with the wind (Aghahowa, 2006). Interestingly, governments at all levels of governance, parents, guardians and all the stakeholders in our youths developmental processes are finally waking up to the realities that the surprisingly negative attitudes of our youths can be traced to the fact that we have tens of millions of unemployed Nigerian youths, and millions others living in abject poverty, penury etc, even having seen the four walls of Universities.

From the above situation, there have been considerable efforts around the world aimed at addressing the ever-increasing needs of the youth population. This ranges from empowerment to call for appropriate programmes,

services and advocacy efforts to harness and enhance the youth capacities and capabilities for nation building. This therefore shows the importance of youth participation in nation building which is the main thrust of this paper.

The significance of youth participation in nation building is of apt relevance considering their vast majority in the world's population. According to Udensi, Daasi, Emah and Zukbee (2013), the numerical strength of the youth folk is an unlimited avenue to which the socio-economic development of any nation can strive and national development improved. Hence, if the youths are sidelined in the articulation of any nation building programme, experts have argued, that it will be impossible to reach the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets, particularly on extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1), child mortality (MDG 4), maternal health (MDG 5) and environmental sustainability (MDG 7).

With this knowledge, youths are better able to make choices that support the pursuit of educational goals and the development of life skills necessary for national and local leadership positions. Ignoring maximum commitment and engagement of youth in national development today will have dire global consequences for decades. To better understand how to move the youth forward towards nation building, this paper examines the rationale for expanding the youth frontier for active participation in nation building. The rest of the paper is divided into six (6) sections outlined thus: conceptual framework (youth and nation building), the situation of youths in Nigeria, the role of youths in nation building, the importance of involving youths for national building, suggestive approach for youth empowerment in nation building in Nigeria, concluding remarks and references.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Conceptual Issues

The Concept of Youth

There exist mixed feelings among researchers, countries, cultures, and development experts including governments on the actual delimitation of who a youth is. Thus, this has generated controversies on a unified definition of youth. The difficulty to bring out a clear-cut definition for youth prompted Uhunmwangho and Oghator (2013) to posit that:

...the growing commitment to the involvement of the youths in global development process is a clear recognition of their potentials as change agents within the civil society. This awareness has attracted scholarly attention in an attempt to clarify and articulate a conceptual category for youth. In most literatures, scholars have often employed the criterion of age to define youth. However, sociological studies have shown that this criterion is fluid and therefore vary from one society to another.

The foregoing raises definitional issues and implications for the meaning of youths to include biological, sociological and cultural criterion. The presiding paragraph will carry out definitional x-ray on the issues and implications in this regard.

Youths, according to the dictionary, is seen as “the state or time of being young – young men and women” (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Current English, 2001). Hornby (2007) defined youth as the time of life when a person is young especially the time before a child becomes an adult. It is also used to mean the quality or state of being young. MacMillan English Dictionary (2007), adds that youth refers to the time in peoples life when they are young or looking young. Generally, the term youth refers to a time of life that is neither childhood nor adulthood.

The National Youth Policy (2010:10) in its position on the meaning of youth posited that “the way in which a nation defines its youth is related to the object conditions and realities that exist on ground especially historical and contemporary socio-economic and political issues that need to be addressed”. For the purpose of this presentation, we will exploit the age bracket of 18 – 35 to look at the meaning of youth, with emphasis that “this category represents the most active, most volatile, and yet most vulnerable segment of the population, socio-economically and in other respects (National Youth Policy, 2001)”. Angulu-Sani (2018) considered persons within the age range of 6-36 years as youth. Other scholars employed the age bracket of 15-30 to define youth. It is also helpful to add that progressive-mindedness is one of the defining characteristics of youth. Therefore, the current thinking is that people beyond the age of 36 who share the ideals of a progressive society are also considered as being

youthful. Whatever the age limit, youths are men and women considered to be young, energetic, vibrant and resourceful, who are often engaged in social enterprises that requires physical strength and mental capacity (Suleiman, 2006).

The Concept of Nation Building

The task of nation building has been argued to be historically contingent due to the fact that the process is inextricably tied to the formation, growth and demise of nations as well as factors that influence the process (Oghi & Ajayi, 2011). The attempt at integrating the diverse elements in a country in order to promote a sense of belonging among people is also part of nation building process (Wallenstein, 1961). Nation building therefore, involves not only the implementation of political and economic policies that will improve the lives of the citizenry, but also a recognition of values and other aspects of the state that would act as a national catalyst to bind the people (Elaigwu, 1983). Culture, which is the totality of a people's way of life, is crucial to nation building because its non recognition could promote fissiparous tendencies among the citizenry. According to Wikipedia (2013), Nation-building refers to the process of constructing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state.

However, Irele (1999) defined nation building as "the process whereby people transfer their commitment and loyalty from smaller tribes, villages, or petty principality to the larger central political system". Nation building can also be defined as a process of bringing diverse groups together to develop their common land.

This process as Eme and Onyishi (2014) noted aims at the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run. Nation-building can involve the use of propaganda or major infrastructure development to foster social harmony and economic growth. It is also the development of behaviours, values, language, institutions, and physical structures that elucidate history and culture, concretize and protect the present, and insure the future identity and independence of a nation. For the purpose of this presentation, nation-building is viewed as purposeful interventions in the affairs of a nation-state for the purpose of changing the state's method of governance. It includes deliberate efforts to

promote institutions which will provide for a people's enhanced economic well-being and social equity.

The Situation of Youths in Nigeria

Nation building is a dynamic process involving all segments of the locality, including the often-overlooked and undermined youth population. Youths represent a vast and often untapped resource for immediate and long-term community development efforts. They also provide an invaluable resource for the progress of any society as well as its development. As youths are brought into and connected with national issues and programmes (they have often times been ignored/excluded), they can participate actively and contribute to decision-making at multiple levels. As youths are engaged in more sustained positive relationships with adults, other youths, and national development programmes, apart from realizing that they are valued citizens of their nations, such collaborations and participation may lead to skill enhancement, empowerments and confidence-building traits, which will help prepare them for active interest and involvement in nation building (even in future) (Johnson, 2012).

The total population of those between the ages of 15 and 34 was about 30 million in 1991, equivalent to one of every three Nigerians. It was projected that by the year 2000, the total population of this category of young person's would be about 38 million (National Youth Policy, 2001). In 2006, a nation-wide population and housing census was conducted to update the records. It indicated that the youth profile in the Nigerian population has tremendously improved to 53 million (NPC, 2006). Apart from the issue of numerical strength, global trend is towards emphasizing the primacy of youth in the developmental process, with deliberate efforts by national governments to create conditions that will encourage youth to utilize their energies and resourcefulness for growth and sustainable development of their nations. It was in the light of this development that the Nigerian Youth Organizations in their memorandum to the last National Political Reform Conference maintained that:

Nigerian Youth must have a voice and must be given a greater say to contribute in the way he is governed and allowed to play greater role in

leadership and governance so that at all times, he is properly equipped to assume the mantle of leadership which inevitably must come someday (National Political Reform Conference, 2005:15).

However, the prevailing conditions in much of the developing nations, especially Nigeria, have seriously extenuated the potentials of the youth as agents of social change. These challenges range from the economic and social to the cultural. The treacherous triangle of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment in which the bulk of Nigerian youths are currently trapped, has severely challenged their sensibility and has in the long run given rise to what sociologists term attitudes of fatalism, resignation and acceptance of the situation (Haralambos, 2001). The persistence of these social problems has created an environment where youth are cheaply available for manipulation by self-seeking politicians. Poverty, illiteracy and unemployment are interrelated conditions that generate human needs and therefore constitute a state of deprivation.

As the youth continue to remain in this state, there is pent-up emotions and untapped energies. They provide cheap labour to execute the design of political gladiators and ethnic and religion champions. In an apparent indictment of Nigerian politicians, Togbolo observed: "They take advantage of the poverty-stricken nature of the country to exploit the people; politicians are fond of using the youth restive nature as a political strategy to have their way" (Togbolo, 2006).

Empirical Review

Series of researches conducted confirmed that youth are the greatest assets to societal and national development. Example, Johnson (2008) stated that youth are one of the greatest assets that any 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, they serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce as well we sustain itself, the extent of their vitality, responsible conduct, and role in society is positively correlated with the development of their country, the issue of Nigeria population is predominantly young.

Furthermore Johnson (2008) said that having given due consideration to the significance of the youth in socio-economic and political development has found it most desirable and necessary to invite this national youth development policy so that there will be a purposeful, focused, well articulated and well resourcefulness of the youth and development of the country well into the 21st century.

Chillegbu (2009) view that youths are the foundation of a society, their energy, inventiveness, character and orientation define the peace of development and the security of the nation through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giants strides in economic development and socio-political attainments, in their dreams and hopes, a nation founds her motivation, on their energies, she build her vitality and purpose. Furthermore Chillegbu emphasized that because of their dreams and aspirants the future of a nation is assured, he opined that youth constitute Nigeria's only real hope for a great future, therefore, taken a critical look at the plight of Nigerian youth and caused to be prepared a consensus blue print for their development consultation were held nationwide with relevant youth organization, administrators, and nongovernmental organizations through zonal youth summits, their reconciled views term the basis of this draft policy document which you are here to deliberate for final adoption.

Jacki (2001) view that it is indicative of the readiness of the federal government to meet the needs and aspiration of the youth as well as seek solution to their problems it sets a guidelines for all the stake holders to empower the youth to realize their potentialities and take advantage of the opportunities available to make position contribution to the well-being of their communities and the society as a whole, the policy takes into account the range of problems faced by the youth anticipates the challenges that they are like to comfort and outline appropriate objectives, policies and programmes and implementation.

He opined a plan which will be put in place so as to empower the youth to take charge of their own destiny as well as make them actives.... Participants in the shaping of the political and economic destiny

of our nation, the policy also recognize that youth are not a homogenous category and that differences exist among them. Therefore, the policy contains provisions that will address the specific and special needs of each of several identified target groups.

Batten (1999) said that this resolve and commitment to the development of the youth has been reinforced by resolutions of various international organizations which draw attention to the need to concretely address the problems of the youth and empower them, (e.g. the common wealth plan of action for youth empowerment approved in may 1998). He emphasized that the unprecedented number of young people in the world today can be isolated as one of the crucial reality factors conditioning political and cultural development.

He was of the view that this ascertain would be very much true of France where a student revolt of may-June 1995 was so serious enough that the Gauls regimes come within a hairs breadth of collapse, the above ascertain would also be true of Thailand where the youths are force to reckon speak they are listened to, Nigerian system not only physical but also physiologically the plan truth of the matter is that Nigerian youth actively desire to maintain the status although there are shouts here and there on corruptions and others societal ills and mal practices.

Okolo (2009) said that to build a youth with a sense of hope, self confidence, imagination, creativity and pride in the nations heritage, youth who represent hope in the future of their nation, youth who are disciplined, well focused, law abiding and good citizens, youth full of the spirit of entrepreneurship, self reliance, mutual cooperation, understanding and respect, youth who are not corrupt and self serving, youth with equality of opportunity, free from gender and other forms of discrimination, exploitation and abuse.

Furthermore, Okolo (2009) said that some of the advantage of youth, who imbibe a culture of democracy and good governance, youth who take pride in our diverse cultural heritage and geographical conditions, and youth committed to the ideal of national unity and development as enshrined

in the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria.

Nicolas (2009) opined that are the position future role of the youth in national socio economic development it is the vision of empowered Nigerian youths to full realize their potentialities and positively contribute to the overall development of their nation, to make decision, foster appropriate values and positive attitudes amongst youths, the advent ages is to ensure that all youths are given equal opportunities and guided to reach their full potentials, recognize the rights of youth choose in building their nation.

Theoretical Framework

The paper adopted the theory of state-planned nation-building strategies as developed by Harris (2007). State-planned nation-building entails a parallel process where the ruling political elites maintain and reinforced differences with “nations” in surrounding states and eliminate differences within their own boundaries (Harris, 2007). Although people have been conscious of national ethnic differences for many centuries, with the advent of modernity, this consciousness is becoming intertwined with the political programmes of self-determination. Citing Max Weber, Harris (2007) defined the state as ‘the organization that has the monopoly of legitimate use of force and extraction within a clearly defined territory’. He therefore opined that the ultimate goal of the ruling political elite of every modern state is to master the loyalty of its population and remain sovereign. This political elite group controls the coercive apparatus of the state and can use it to make or mar the progress and development of the State. A government is therefore considered legitimate when it enjoys the consent of the citizens. Accordingly, Harris noted that, ‘legitimate rule enhances the taxing abilities of a state, facilitates conscription to the army, fosters compliance to the law, and prevent separatist movements. Troubles ensue when a section and population do not consider the government legitimate’ (Harris, 2007).

Consequently, the following deductions can be made from the theory of state-planned nation-building:

- i. The existence of a culturally distinct group does not necessarily involve a competing claim to the political loyalty of this population in modern nation-state.
- ii. Cultural distinctiveness is politically irrelevant unless there is a group formation process of turn it into a social identity, only then can member shall be drawn.
- iii. The non-core groups (the minorities in a very narrower sense) are often territorially dispersed and are likely to quickly assimilate into a higher status group in order to maximize their self-esteem. This has led to the absorption of these non-core groups by their surrounding core groups(s). However, certain variation may occur there some non-core groups who are territorially concentrated become politically conscious and being to espouse distinctive political identity (this usually the case in countries whose nation-building is still in doubt).

On the basis of the following, the study assumes that:

- i. States with ethnic and religious conscious political elite group will have more problems of nation-building than those with less ethnic and religious conscious political elites.
- ii. Ethnic and religious consciousness creates divisiveness and corrodes national consciousness that breeds common political and national identity.
- iii. Many factors, such as prior democratic experience, level of economic development, and social homogeneity, can influence the ease or difficult of nation-building, but the single most important controllable determinant seems to be the level of effort, as measured in troops, money, and time.
- iv. Finally, there is no quick fix for nation-building. The hard way is the only way.

The tenets of this theory are that the pursuit of nation building becomes a lot much simpler in the face of workable and functional national integration.

Okobiia (2017:7) referred to national integration as a state of fusion or harmonious interaction and interrelation of People and groups (within a nation) to make them an identifiable single entity with common goals which include nation building accomplishments. From the foregoing, it is apt to note that any conception of national integration that aimed towards nation building accomplishments must be looked at as the fusion of culturally, socially, politically, and ethnically, desperate groups or people in a given geo-political setting into a closely knit cohesive group involved in repetitive cordiality, dominated human interaction geared towards building a territorial nationality (Mezieobi, 1995:2).

In a nut shell, the theory is especially suited to the study because it contains the processes of nation-building in a society that had experienced colonial rule like Nigeria. Besides, the theory also captures the essence of the nation-building process in Nigeria since 1960.

The Role of Youths in Nation Building

First of all we have that the youths are the period between childhood and adulthood. Secondly, the nation is a country considered as a group of people living in a certain territory under one Government. Thirdly, we also have to know “Building” here means not masonry constructed, instead the development of the nation, the future of our country (Nicolas, 2009).

The primary role of young people is to get a good education in order to become better citizens of tomorrow. They need to learn skills to do the job that their country’s economy needs. They also need to know how to read, write, think, understand, analyse, and discuss the issues their country faces. The entire success of the nation depends on the youths. However, in order for continuous success to take place; it is the Government’s responsibility to provide the youth with proper facilities for, getting equipped with the knowledge of the modern era (Okolo, 2010).

Youths are the spring of life. It is the age of discovery and dreams. They have the power to transform the nation into a better place. They also have the ability to lead their fellow citizens into the right direction. Youths

are fighters. They fight for an identity in society, equality, the homeless, bullying, unemployment, exploitation, poverty and other problems which the world faces today. All of them hopes for a world full of opportunities, so great minds can conquer them and become better individuals. They need good morals and values to handle conflicts in a positive way (Jacki, 2001).

We have aspiring doctors, entrepreneurs, scientists, and who knows; maybe the next president.

Illiteracy is a major around the world. About ninety percent of the people who reside in villages are illiterate. The reason is their utter ignorance and lack of initiative to lead them in the right direction. Someone has to pull them up. Here also, the young people can be of immense help (Jacki, 2001).

The role of the youth is the most important in today's time. They have underplayed themselves in the field of the politics. Youths are strong forces in social movements (Jacki, 2001).

Youths are problem solvers. Our nations need them to resolve most of our problems. The nation is facing a lot of problems, and I believe that the youths are capable of solving them. They just need to be given a chance to prove themselves. Youths have the power to unite individuals in the six ethnic groups. Racism is an ongoing issue around the world. Individuals are fighting against each other because of the complexion of their skin and the texture of their hair. Religion is another issue, the youths can convince their fellow man to live in peace and love. All of us are one and we should not allow these little differences to push us away from each other (Johnson, 2008).

There also a lot of crime taking place. Women are being killed or rape by their abusive husbands or male counterpart. Person's homes, businesses, are being broken into. All of this crime and violence needs to stop. The youth once more has the ability to bring about a change in their country (Johnson, 2008).

Youths seems to have the ability to face any challenges and problems. They have a positive influence on their fellow young people. They are able to teach them the positive things in life. The ones whom are destroying

their future, they tend to listen to their fellow youths. They will make them understand the importance of a good education (Batten, (2009).

The wise youths that we have out there should be taken into consideration. Some of them, though educated are unemployed. They should be given an opportunity to expose their intelligence to the world and make themselves into someone. Some organisations and other firm should assist the youths; so they can make our land a great and educated one. They will make a huge difference in society and the entire world (Suleiman, 2006).

Let me end this section by saying, the youths are our life and nation. They will make our country proud. The country will be recognized. The youths just need the support from their fellow citizens and they will perform their duties of building a peaceful and progressive society (Odonye, 2018).

Importance of Involving Youths in National Building

According to (Gribble, 2010) more than half of the world's population is under the age of 25 (between ages 15 and 24) are in greatest need of empowerment, those who are younger will quickly come of age and share these same needs. This segment of the population (15 to 24) is expected to continue growing faster than other segments for at least 20 more years (Gribble, 2010). With the swelling wave of young people, access, empowerment and their engagement in nation building becomes critical if they are to contribute effectively.

Uhunmwuango and Oghator (2013) suggested two (2) major motivations which have brought the converge of youths (young person's) into the policy agenda of national governments, thus, fascinate and prioritized youth inclusion to the building process of any nation. According to them, the first is the global process of democratization, beginning in Southern Europe, extending to Latin America, Asia and Africa, and more recently to Eastern Europe (Almond, 2004). The second is the phenomenon of globalization that has seriously challenged the capacity of nation-state to govern and which according to Heady, et al, embodied a transformation of the spatial organization of social relations and transaction (Heady, 1979). The combined effects of these global trends has confronted and

dismantled authoritarian regimes in a decisive way, and at the same time rekindled the spirit of civil society in the political process (Suleiman, 2006). The youth as an important component of the civil society is in the process of self rediscovery in an era characterized by the intense movement of the social forces of democratization and globalization. As they interact with other actors in the social system, the youth express their interest and needs, they relate with relevant political institutions and political processes to articulate their views and promote shared interest (Suleiman, 2006).

The role of education in positioning and providing youth with access to effective engagement in national development which is a way of incorporating them in the decision making process of the nation's governance, nation building activities where they are welcomed, with accurate and comprehensive information which will empower them to make healthy decisions (Suleiman, 2006).

Suggestive Approach for Youth Empowerment in Nation Building In Nigeria

There is no how the untapped capacities in youth can be tapped and utilized with an all-inclusive, participatory and synergy approach; thus, a suggestive dimension for involving the youth in nation building. There are myriads of approaches to nation building (depending on the peculiarities of the country in question), however, for the purpose of this paper, two basic approaches will be examined, namely; the general approach and peace building approach.

1. The General Approach

Youth participation according to Cornwall (2010), refers to the involvement of youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with opportunities for planning and/or decision-making affecting others in an activity whose impact or consequence is extended to others i.e., outside or beyond the youth participants themselves. Rajani (1999) notes that, it is only through participation that youth develop skills, build competencies, form aspirations, gain confidence and attain valuable resources. This shows that youth participations therefore is a product and strategy of sustainable human development.

Youth comprise nearly 30 per cent of the world's population, these large numbers of young people are an opportunity; an investment to their country. Youth participation in nation building programmes/activities therefore is to:

- i. Strengthens young people's abilities to meet their own subsistence needs;
- ii. Prevents and reduces vulnerabilities to economic, political and socially unstable environments;
- iii. Promotes ownership and sustainability of change interventions;
- iv. Helps gain entry into target communities and build up trust and social capital.

2. The Peace Building Approach

The second dimension is harnessing youths for peace building. The term "peace" simply means a state of calmness or silence in a society. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary Current English Edition (2001) defined peace as "a situation or period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or an area". Peace is the oil of progress. The absence of peace means that no meaningful development can take place. Young people who have experienced conflict firsthand have a vital role to play in peace building. They have a clear vision of what peace could look like in their countries and communities, and have the drive to work towards the realization of these goals.

However, in many cases they are seen not as positive forces for peace, but rather as threats to it. Recent research conducted by Conciliation Resources (CR) (2020) peace building department of United Nation (UN) with youths from five different conflict regions of Nigeria identified the five key changes which need to be made to ensure young people are able to participate in creating more peaceful societies for national development. In Georgian's words:

Older people often remember the old days, and young people would prefer to think more about the present and look to the future. The older generation finds it hard to forget old wounds and grievances, and young people

can start from a clean sheet (Georgian, 2020).

Even against tremendous challenges, youths are actively engaging in their communities, and are making positive contributions to peace. Unfortunately, they are facing numerous barriers to participating in formal and informal peace processes. This includes a lack of trust in governments and political institutions; voicelessness based on identities including age, as well as threats of violence and radicalisation. Women and girls face additional challenges when it comes to exclusion from public spaces.

Because youths are both actors and victims in Nigeria conflicts they are the only capable force to implement the peace agreements that will pave way to national unity and progress.

It is clear that not harnessing the power of youth is detrimental to peace building efforts. The challenges they are facing need to be addressed, and young people should be involved in the design of any responses to conflict resolution if nation building in anything to come by.

Closely related to the above, is the United Nation's (2015) suggestive approaches/measures as presented here.

In December, 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security. The resolution was the first to recognise the important role young people can play in preventing conflicts, and sustaining peace towards nation building.

Conciliation Resources was invited by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to contribute to the Progress Report on UNSCR 2250. Between July and September, 2017, Conciliation Resources conducted participatory research with 494 young people living in Afghanistan, Jammu and Kashmir, South Sudan, the Georgian-Abkhaz context, and among youth of the Ogaden diaspora living in the United Kingdom. Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda and South Africa were also included in the study area.

Five key findings emerged on how young people can play a greater role in peace building for national development. Thus:

1. Support Youths Visions of Peace

Even when they have not known life without conflict, young people have clear visions of what peace should be, and have a strong desire for a future without violence. Peace processes need to ensure meaningful inclusion of these views in their design and implementation.

For me when there is no firing and shelling, it is peace. When children do not become victims of mine blasts in my village, it is peace. When I see my mother going to the fields to collect wood and graze animals, it is peace. When I see children playing in the common fields or grounds then I consider it peace (Jegade, 2015).

2. Create Space for Youths to Engage in Political Processes

Many youths feel excluded from political processes, and from making meaningful contributions. It is crucial that governments make sustained commitments to rebuild the young people's trust and confidence in governments. There are also additional challenges facing women and girls in gaining access to public spaces which need to be addressed. "We have few opportunities to act politically outside the house, let alone take part in the peace process on either a local or national level" (Mensa, 2015).

3. Facilitate and Support Dignified Livelihoods

Greater economic opportunities for youth are necessary to motivate young people to pursue peaceful and productive paths in their lives. Youth are keen to increase their opportunities to learn skills and develop entrepreneurial capacities but these need to be made available to them.

The main concern of both young and older generations is to ensure daily well-being, that is, to find a job, get an education etc. Only after these problems are resolved will it be

possible to increase the youth's interest in resolving the societal conflict. (Abdulsalam, 2015).

4. Support Education and Capacity-Building for Peace

Access to education is fundamental for facilitating young people's positive engagement in peace. In a recent research conducted by Lagi (2019) on reasons for youth restiveness, results reveals that Youth suggested specific and practical ways this could be realised, including reforms to civic education, and the introduction of peace education.

"The only thing that can ensure us a better future is education... Without education, the country will not have a future" says Azeri (2019).

5. Facilitate Inter-Community Dialogue and Exchanges

Distrust, stereotypes, and prejudices can be tackled by initiatives, such as exchanges, which encourage continuous dialogue and engagement between youth from different communities. It is particularly important that young people who have been directly victimised by conflict are involved.

The problems of young people are due to the fact that, during their upbringing, we were in a state of blockade. Young people did not have the resources to receive any information from the outside. We stewed in our own juice. There was no way to learn from the experience of other countries (Aisha, 2020).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the foregoing analysis, we wish to conclude that Nigeria with over 180 million people and with over fifty percent of youths cannot afford to lock out the youths if they must compete politically, technologically and scientifically in order to align itself with the sustainable development in Africa in particular and the developed world in general. Nigeria can build a strong

and viable nation if and only if there is an existence of common values, beliefs, attitudes, effective leadership and a will to live together as a nation. Such transformations must allow every group (especially the youth population) to participate in the economic, political and the social spheres of the nation.

The role of the youth in the nation building is crucial. They are problem solvers, have a positive influence on other young people and the nation, and are extremely ambitious. They have the ability to create an identity for themselves and move the nation forward. However, they will not be able to do this without the support of their Government and fellow youths. So the youths can make their beautiful land flourish and shine in success.

It is important to reiterate here that the vision of our country lies in the hands of our youths. They are filled with tremendous and towering ambitions. It will be a great wastage of human resources if these youths are not given an opportunity to exercise their talent. This beautiful land needs these youths in order for our soil to become a brighter one. So help us God. Amen!

The following recommendations are discernibly based on the foregoing:

- i. Youths should be given the opportunity to develop their capacities through balanced education and exposure.
- ii. Skills acquisition and entrepreneurship will help reduce idleness among youths and keep them from being involved in crime and other activities that are counterproductive in nation building.
- iii. Youths should be made relevant and involved in leadership at different levels of government.
- iv. We must moderate our demands on our youths and as well condition their behaviour in line with our cultural values.

We wish to also add that the youths of today must not fail this nation. Despite the missing link, the time is not yet up.

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