

# Elites and Governance and Its Implications on Youths' Political Behaviour in Nigeria

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## *Abstract*

*Good governance is imperative to the development of every society; and thus no society ever thinks of progressing without good governance. Moreover, the basic essence of governance is seen in law making function and implementation of crucial decisions that could affect lives and properties of individuals in their society. Considerably, good governance has resulted in poverty reduction as well as improvement of social welfare and better life for the citizens in so many countries of the world. However, elites are identified as the ones that govern the society and are considered the drivers of all the institutions in a society. Unfortunately, corruption, mismanagement, and lack of vision among the past and the present elites have severely affected governance in Nigeria. Additionally, misgovernance and corruption of the system has affected the political behavior of the youths in Nigeria which posed a fundamental question to the Nigerian democracy. Consequently, the Youths today are merely puppets used by the elites in securing their personal interest especially during election, political rallies, and electioneering campaign through corrupt means and destructive political culture which gradually and systematically polluted the minds of the youths and their political behavior. This paper using mainly secondary sources of data and content analysis set to examine the symbiotic relationship between the elites and governance, and its effects on youths' political behavior in Nigeria. The paper also examines the Nigerian elites as they operate in governance and as they relate with youths in politics. Findings were that, over the years of misgovernance, elites have succeeded in displacing the youths from their expected position as back bone of the society and engine of growth and development to a very lowly position as political thugs, instrument of violence and political corruption. The elites' mismanagement of leadership and abuse of trust constitute a major setback to Nigeria as a developing country and importantly destroyed any hope for its youths to make any difference. The multiplier effect of such resulted in erosion of values and rising rate of atrocities and insecurity amidst poverty that is systematically sinking the nation as a whole. The paper concludes by making recommendations that called for a total resurrecting of the youths to their requisite position and thereby reposition them for a better Nigeria.*

**Key words:** Governance, elite, political behaviour, youth, youths' political behaviour

## **Introduction**

The idea of having a good society revolves around having an organized society with well established institutions and good governance. Conformably, the progress of every society is dependent on the nature of its governance; and thus no society ever thinks of developing without good governance. Accordingly, Mohammed (2021) opined that, governance, particularly the good type, is the substratum for sustainable development. Additionally, Good governance brings to the front burner the question of how a society organizes itself to ensure social, political and economic development for the benefit of its citizens. Considerably, good governance has resulted in poverty reduction as well as improvement of social welfare and better life for the citizens in so many countries of the world. Certainly, in order to harness a good society, some of the fundamental requisite revolves around harnessing the society politically, economically and socially.

From time immemorial, youths have been identified as the backbone for the continuity, progress and development of every society. The youths are the prime movers of democracy and are considered being important in strengthening democratic institutions in both democratic states and hybrid regimes. Therefore, the role played by youths in all spheres of political development around the world is a magnifying one and is not unconnected to being a promoter of peace; demonstrate nationality, orderliness and a profound interest for unity and national integration. Equally, whenever the youths are provided with basic necessities of life such as education, economic empowerment, political orientation and supporting values; a healthy, balance and prosperous society is bound to be established. Good governance serves as a fundamental requirement that provides the establishment of a system and institution through which the youths' productivity is harnessed and development is attained. However, elites are identified as the ones that govern the society and are considered the drivers of all the institutions in the society.

Within the Nigerian Context, the governing elites considering their privileges of office function as an impressive team against the mass (people) whom are burdened by the means to sustain their lives and secure the basic necessities of life. Moreover, the elites are of the tendency of frustrating any serious exertion to advance common cause in form of qualitative education, shelter, basic infrastructure and other social amenities as deliverables of democratic governance (Ibietan, 2015). Nonetheless, Nigeria as a nation had a very long history of political governance since its formation in 1914 and independence in 1960, governance experience has been very challenging with track records of youths being sidelined in the political sphere and with various pointers of misused and abuse of youths when it comes to the issue of governance. Over the years of political experience in Nigeria and up to 2015, the political atmosphere has been such that sees the youths as mere instrument in the hands of the political elites towards achieving their political goals. These trends over the years breads severe damage on the youths physically, economically, socially and generally very destructive to the political

culture and society of Nigeria. Against this background, this paper set to examine the symbiotic relationship between the elites and governance, and its effects on youths political behavior in Nigeria. The paper also examines the Nigerian elites as they operate in governance and as they relate with youths in politics.

### **Conceptual Clarifications *Governance***

Like most concepts in social science, governance has not lent itself to a universally accepted definition (Linus, n.d). Operationally, Sahni (2003) in Adejuwon (2012) opined that, governance is seen as a set of values, policies and institutions through which the society manages economic, political as well as social processes at different levels, on the basis of interaction among the government, civil society and private sector. Srilatha (2003) defined governance as the act and manner of running public affairs. Through the process of governance, the essential link between the civil society and state is recognized, which gives the road map to the way decisions are made for serving public interest. The essence of the constitution and the laws are to provide the legal framework of governance. The institutions embodying the governance process include the executive, legislature, judiciary, army, bureaucracy, political parties and interest groups. It is the moral principles and rules of conduct, having a bearing on both the legal framework and the institutions, which basically determine the government and the governed (Srilatha, 2003).

Additionally, Galadima (1998) in Adejgun (2012) defined governance as the competence to ascertain and maintain workable relations between individual actors in order to promote collective goals. In the context of this paper, the definition of governance goes with the definition of Chazan (1992) where he defined governance as a process of organizing and managing legitimate power structures, entrusted by the people, to provide law and order, protect fundamental human rights, ensure rule of law and due process of law, provide for the basic needs and welfare of the people and the pursuit of their happiness.

### ***Elite***

The concept of elite has been used through different centuries, by different people, in different cultural and intellectual environments which made the concept to have plurality of uses. Concepts are not mere words (Zannoni, 1978). Elite connotes “a group of people regarded as the best in a particular society or organization” (Soane et al, 2006). In political and sociological theory, the elites are a small group of powerful people who hold a disproportionate amount of wealth, privilege, political power, or skill in a society (Wikipedia, 2021). Cambridge Dictionary defined elites as "those people or organizations that are considered the best or most powerful compared to others of a similar type. In Nigeria, the governing elite are derive from their social characteristics and privileges of office to work as a redoubtable team against the mass (people) who are weighed down by daily pressure for sustenance and necessities of life.

The manipulative tendencies and tool by the elite slow down any legitimate effort to advance common cause in form of qualitative education, shelter, basic infrastructure and other social amenities as deliverables of democratic governance (Ibietan, 2015).

### ***Youth***

Traditionally, youth is defined as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. Moreover, the definition of the youth population in several African countries is not the same. For example, Ghana, Tanzania and South Africa define the youth population as those between 15 and 35 years of age; Nigeria and Swaziland define it as those between 12 and 30 years; and Botswana and Mauritius define it as those between 14 and 25 years (Idike and Innocent, 2015). For statistical purposes, the UNO (2017) defines youths as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24. More so, the youth policy defines the youths as all young persons of the ages 18-35 years.

Aiyede (n.d) submitted that, the youth population in Nigeria according to the 2006 census has projected almost a hundred million. This means that the youth constitute more than two thirds of the country's population of 140 million. They are the backbone of the development of the country. Indeed, if Nigeria is to be sustained as a viable entity there must be a very good plan to tap the energy and resourcefulness of the youth population to achieve economic development. In the context of this paper, youth population is seen as a period between 18 and 40 years. This is because an individual is only eligible to exercise some political right such as voting if he is up to 18.

### ***Youths' Political Behaviour***

Political behavior refers to the way people think, feel, and act with regard to politics. Moreover, political behaviour is any action regarding authority in general and government in particular. Political behavior among the youths includes their participation in political activities such as joining civic/political groups, interacting with politicians, voting, signing petition online, volunteering or participating in campaign (Tang & Lee, 2013) These types of political participation are the important components and foundations of successful democracy (McManimon, 2014).

Nevertheless, an obvious example of an act of political behaviour is the act of voting. In casting your vote you are, in a democracy, relating to government by voting for whom you feel should form the government. In this act of political behaviour, you also decide who you do not want to form the government. In the context of this paper, youth political behavior manifests in their performing their obligations, participation during election through casting their votes, or contesting for power as well as other political activities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper adopted the elite theory as a theoretical framework for analysis. The elite theory was first developed by two Italian Sociologists namely: Vilfredo Pareto and

Gaetano Mosca. However, scholars submitted that, the elite theory has been developed by many scholars which makes it to have several versions ranging from that developed by Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca to those of C.W. Mills, Floyd Hunter and Raymond Aron.

The elite theorist postulated that, the elites share common values that differentiate them from the mass, and existing public policies reflect elite values, which may be summed up simply as: preserve the status quo. In other words, elite purposes simply and invariably slot in into the safeguarding of the status quo. Moreover, decision making process in the society is being dominated by the elites. This is because of their power, talent and wealth. Moreover, the elites are considered to be the best or most important group a country can boast of having because they are the best of all the professions (Osakwe, 2002). Additionally, elite theory is also concern with the source of policy flow and the interest of whom public policies serve. Obviously, elite theory provides a scientific explanation regarding the source of policy and how the policy reflects the interests of the elite rather than the interest of the masses in the society.

Within the Nigerian context, the elites are those that interpret and implement laws that govern the society. Moreover, what is to be shared, who gets what, how and when is all determined by the Nigerian elites. They have the tendency of drastically changing any decision taken at their back, unless it suits their personal interests. Within the context of this paper, the elite theory was adopted as the theoretical framework considering the effects of corruption, mismanagement, and lack of vision among the past and the present elites which have severely affected governance in Nigeria and thus severely affected the political behavior of the youths in Nigeria which posed a fundamental question to the Nigerian democracy as well as the youths' political behavior whereby the youths are merely puppets used by the elites in securing their personal interest especially during election, political rallies, and electioneering campaign.

### **Elites and Governance in Nigeria**

The quest for good governance and national development has been the major concern of the Nigerian state since its political independence in 1960 (Odo, 2015). Apparently, good governance is capable of directing the country (Nigeria) towards attaining developmental goals (be it social, political, economic etc). More so, good governance is capable of paving the way and manner through which the country (Nigeria) formulates and implements its developmental policies and crucial decisions which affect the lives of individuals in a variety of ways.

Unfortunately, since the return of democratic governance in 1999, Nigeria has been experiencing deepening political crises as a result of the shortcomings of the democratization process and the apparent incompetence of the political elites (Odo, 2015). Thus, the crises of governance in Nigeria is doubtlessly connected to the

emergence of corrupt and visionless political elites that dominated the Nigeria's political system and policy formulation and implementation processes which consequently obstruct any meaningful effort in the quest for good governance, political and economic development in Nigeria (Nwagboso and Duke, 2012). In fact, the present and the past Nigerian elites have failed to provide quality leadership capable of addressing numerous challenges confronting the country. In favour of this argument, Kuka (2012) opined that, Nigerian elites are responsible and blameworthy of all the socio-economic and socio-political challenges of the Nigerian nation.

Therefore, Ruling elites and public institutions have not provided essential collective goods, such as physical infrastructure, the rule of law, or legitimate symbols of state authority and political community (Fagnadebo, 2012). Subsequently, the main concern of the elites in Nigeria is their selfish political and economic interest, power aggrandizement and safeguarding their status quo. Visibly, the elites violates the constitutional, political and democratic right of the citizens in order to safeguard political power during election which include: votes buying, electoral ragging, snatching of ballot boxes, intimidation of voters, sponsoring political thugs, manipulation of electoral figures, hiring assassins, sponsoring electoral, political and ethno-religious violence.

Evidently, the policies implemented by the elites in Nigeria have woefully failed to provide solutions to the problems faced by Nigerians. This is as a result of lack of political will, corrupt practices, lack of vision, selfish interest and blindness of the Nigerian elites. For example, the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) of the Olusegun Obasanjo-led Military Dispensation (1976-1979) has woefully failed to achieve its target of eradicating hunger and poverty in Nigeria (Ojo and Adebayo, 2012). Also, the Green Revolution Programme of the Shehu Shagari Civilian Era (1979-1983) has also woefully failed to displace Nigeria from being the massive importer of food items (Ojo and Adebayo, 2012). Moreover, the implementation of Better Life for Rural Women Programme during the Military Dispensation of Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (1985-1993) was also not able to wipe away the bulk of the nation's 100 million destitute resides in the rural areas (Brammah, 2013). More so, there has been the Vision 2010 of the Abacha Military Government (1993-1998), a National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) Programme of the Olusegun Obasanjo Civilian Administration (1999-2007), a 7-Point Agenda of the Musa Yar'Adua Administration (2007-2010), the Transformation Agenda of present Goodluck Jonathan Leadership, the current anti-corruption policies and social investment policies of President Muhammadu Buhari and the rest of other policies have woefully failed in bringing about solution to the Nigerian problems.

Furthermore, the Nigerian elites have remained uncaring to the dilemma of the poor, the hungry and unemployed; instead, they are only concern with looting of the public treasury. For this reason, the desired national transformation of the country (Nigeria) remains an illusion in spite of the abundance of human and material resources

which should have been used to improve well being of the Nigerian citizens (Odo, 2015). Consequently, the country has been left in a poor state of development characterized by endemic corruption at all levels of government and society; abject poverty and hopelessness; insecurity of lives and property; high rate of unemployment and youth restiveness; kidnapping and armed robbery; religious extremism; infrastructural deficits; insecurity; social injustice; kidnapping; money laundry; banditry; political and electoral violence; ethno-religious conflicts; political upheaval and the rest.

Notably, the success and the failure of the political elites must be judge by their ability and vision in delivering their campaign promises to the people. Doubtlessly, the current crop of unpatriotic political elites in Nigeria are only interested in their pockets and maintaining their political position. Hence, makes them to lack patriotism, ideology, and clear vision in their act of governing their people. Consequently, Ogbeyidi (2012) contended that the state of Nigeria's disgraceful socio-political and socio-economic development has been a direct consequence of the actions and inactions of the elites that have mismanaged the affairs and wealth of the country since independence (Ogbeyidi, 2012). Pathetically, it is preposterous that Nigeria as a country endowed with many so many mineral resources, and beside; been the world's eighth largest exporter of crude oil, still has more than 70 percent of its population living below the poverty line as a result of corruption and economic mismanagement of the power elites.

### **Elites and the Youths in Nigeria**

The youths have been considered as the foundation of the society; and also the back born for the development and progress of the society by many scholars. This is by considering their energies, inventiveness, character, eagerness, cutting-edge ideas, knowledge of technology, orientation and willingness to take risks which defines the pace for the socio-political and socio-economic development, as well as peace and security for every society. Equally, all nations around the world irrespective of the political system in operation have recognized the prominent roles and contributions of the youths in relation to socio-political and socio-economic development. More so, it is through the youths' creative talents and labour power that countries like USA, China, Germany, France, Britain, Russia, Saudi Arabia, India, Brazil, Nigeria and rest make giant strides in economic development and socio-political attainments.

Thus, the youths must be at the grace of the political, social, and economic change, as well as the technological development of all nations around the world. In favour of the later argument, scholars posited that, the future prospects of any nation depend on the current prospects of its youth. In this way, youths can come to view themselves as partners in the process, stakeholders in securing peace, and agents for positive change. This is because, the youths are the prime movers of democracy and are considered being important in strengthening democratic institutions in both democratic states and hybrid regimes. Therefore, the role played by youths in all spheres of

political development around the world is a magnifying one and is not unconnected to being a promoter of peace; demonstrate nationality, orderliness and a profound interest for unity and national integration. Thus, scholars contended that, when youths are provided with access to skills, training, and encouragement, they can effectively and constructively engage in their communities and politics.

Accordingly, the prominent role played by the youths and the elites to the development of Nigeria since independence in 1960 can never be overemphasized. The elites govern the society; and are considered to be the drivers of all the institutions within the society. Thus, the elites must demonstrate good governance and quality leadership which serves as a fundamental requirement that provides the established system and institution through which the youths' productivity is harnessed and development is attained. This is by considering the immense benefits of the youths' quantum population as well as their productivity to the development of the Nigerian state. Accordingly, the 2006 census result shows that, the youthful population has constituted over 70% of the population in Nigeria. Onyeke (2007) posited that, the youths; apart from being the owners and leaders of tomorrow, outnumber the middle-aged and the aged in Nigeria. Besides the numerical dominance of the youths in the society, the youths have energy and ideas that are society's great potentials. By considering the influence of the youths in the society, Idike and Innocent (2015) described the youths as the critical masses of people whose action and inaction can develop or destroy the hegemonies/fabrics of their society. Essentially, the elites and the youths in Nigeria must work collectively and as integral part for the achievement of development.

Unfortunately, the exploitative nature of the relationship between the Nigerian elites and the youths is not farfetched. In favour of this argument, Arowolo and Aluko (2012) contended that, the disposition of the Nigerian elites is spontaneous in their pursuit of personal aggrandizement and promotion of egocentricism rather than altruistic policies that are nationalistic in nature. Sorrowfully, the Nigerian elites have remained uncaring to the dilemma of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and unproductive nature of the Nigerian youths; instead, they are only concern with looting of the public treasury. Considerably, the Nigerian elites have not taken a devoted interest in providing quality education through adequate budget provision and funding for the youths as a process of transforming them to be responsible citizens capable of contributing to the socio-political and socio-economic development of the country; also, they failed to take a devoted interest in building skill acquisition centers for the youths to acquire skills capable of transforming them to be self-employed; and they also failed to take a devoted interest in providing capital for this youths to enhance their businesses which will help to transform the youths to be financially and economically independent.

In favour of the later argument, Idike and Innocent (2015) contended that, the Nigerian government and other voluntary youth agencies did not target the youths in the

development agenda since the 1960s. Apparently, the problems of unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy among the youths have continued to be a big challenge. Even the various National Development Plans of 1962-2014 were not successful in bringing about solutions to the problems affecting the Nigeria youths. Moreover, other subsequent youths development policies and programmes been initiated such as SURE-P, promotion of Small Scale Enterprises, and the National Poverty Eradication Plan 1999-2015 as well as an increased number of agencies dealing with the problems affecting the youths have failed to bring about solutions to the problems faced by the Nigerian youths. Idike and Innocent (2015) added that, the failure of these policies and programmes is attributed to lack of devoted interest of the elites to put down a comprehensive policy that serves as a blueprint for the youths. Thus, Arowolo and Aluko (2012) submitted that, Nigeria is vacillating between democratic stagnancy and governance backwardness.

Despondently, even the political narratives in Nigeria cheering the appointment of youths in political positions and encouraging youths participation in politics has faded and no longer provide a readable map. Furthermore, the elites in Nigeria have neglected the fact that the youths are the back born of the society. Even so, those few youths lucky to possess political support from the elites are only regarded as godsons and must be dancing to the tune of their political godfathers. In this sense, the youths are only tools in the hands of the elites especially when it comes to using them (youths) in protecting their selfish political and economic interest, power aggrandizement and safeguarding their status quo. Hence, the constitutional, political and democratic right of the youths is been neglected and violated by the Nigerian elites. Consequently, Muxel (2009) submitted that, the youths are now facing a new and very specific situation, and adopting negative political attitudes and behaviours which attributes to the declined in youths' political participation in the recent decades.

Wretchedly, even the youths' political participation being categorized as the institutionalized and non institutionalized participation has been influenced by the corrupt practices of the visionless Nigerian political elites. The youths' participation in politics is with mixed feelings displaying negative reactions to the Nigerian political and democratic development. For the elites to protect their selfish political interest and positions, corruption has always been used as the most crucial tool used by the political elites in order to engage the youths in all sorts of bad political and electoral behavior which include: buying and selling of votes, electoral snatching of ballot boxes during, intimidation of voters, political thuggery, manipulation of electoral figures, hired assassins, electoral violence and the females being constantly dragged in for sexual expeditions abound; which all demonstrates bad political and electoral behaviours. Indeed, the consequences of youths' participation in these illicit practices are that their potentialities, energies, talents and abilities are channeled toward unproductive venture such as restiveness, drunkenness, hooliganism, cultism, stealing, and irresponsible life style.

By this, the Nigerian elites must acknowledge the fact that the connection between the youths and national development as well as national integration is obvious and not farfetched. In favour of this argument, Idike and Innocent (2015) posited that, the youths serve as the wheel of development for any country, and the development of every country lies on the shoulder of how productive and creative the youthful populations are.

### **Elites Egocentrism and its implication on the Society**

Throughout the whole world, there has been a burning desire among various people and government for unity, justice, peace and stability. Conformably, the thrust for this desire is understandable through the social, political, and economic policies of nations around the world (Obasola, 2002). Noticeably, this has urged nations toward the realization of political and economic liberalization. In this process, the productive and magnificent role played by the youths toward the attainment of political and economic liberalization around the world can never be overemphasized. This is because; the youths are the creative force championing innovation in politics and governance in the society. In favour of the later argument, Aminu (2012) contended that, the youths are considered to be the active working group in any economy and thus their significance as future leaders in the political and social-economic development of a country is undeniable. At this juncture, Bamidele (2021) contended that, for the youths to contribute immensely to the development of their societies, structures of governance must be accessible to them which must be an enforcement of their right and not a privilege. This is by justifying the fact that, democracy only thrives on the ability of citizens to enforce their rights to participate in decision-making through the expression of political aspirations and securing party candidature to run for office through democratic means.

Within the Nigerian context, the youths are known to the prominent role they play in the electoral processes; as well as providing the needed manpower required for elections at all level of government. By considering this fact, the youths must demonstrate good conscience and insist on due process. Moreover, there is an array of youths in Nigeria that can begin to explore the political space in order to influence the decision-making process as well as contributing to sustainable developmental process in the country (Amanda, 2003). Furthermore, Sulaiman (2006) asserted that, another process through which the youths can make their impact in the political and developmental process is through their active participation in governance at all levels including the local government level which is the grass-root that affords the youths the opportunity to identify with the masses, appreciate their problems and master the terrain. Additionally, the youths have the greater responsibility to promote peace, security, stability and national unity. Nonetheless, the youths have the ability to build bridges of understanding across ethnic groups, across political affiliations and religious divide through their political education, public enlightenment campaign, through their

policy advocacy, and through their active involvement in the electoral process. Doubtlessly, democracy and good governance can only survive in an environment of peace, security and stability. Whenever these are lacking, it is not only democracy and good governance that suffer, but also social progress and the future of the youths is seriously compromised.

Unfortunately, the history of governance in Nigeria has been ruined with the absence of good moral and ethical values especially in the conduct of the ruling elites and unproductive Nigerian youths. From 1960 to the present democratic dispensation, Nigeria has been struggling with leadership dearth prominently found in the character of our political elites. Nigerian political leaders have found politics as a quick way of becoming very rich and economically powerful people, as a result of this; they explore all corrupt avenues to siphon, misappropriate and embezzle public funds into their own personal coffers. As a result of this, the elites in Nigeria have failed to provide quality leadership capable of addressing numerous challenges as well as initiating transparent and accountable institutions capable of securing economic progress, effective governance, protection of the citizenry, as well as improvement of the youths' productivity. The Nigerian youths on the other hand are only spectators in the fare of governance and how their country is being run particularly within the purview of the egocentric power elites that built vast patronage networks and whom use political office to expand these networks and their personal fortunes.

Thus, the fact that the Nigerian youths are being marginalized by the egocentric Nigerian political elites is not farfetched. At this point, Bamidele (2021) posited that, in all the governmental intentions of implementing a National Youth Policy that lays out a very bold vision for harnessing the potentials of youths as a strategy of making the youths to be capable of contributing to national development, there is no single design of a concrete role for youths to attain political power. In support of this argument, Amzat and Abdullahi (2016) submitted that, the cabinets at the federal level have not been “youth-friendly” since from the beginning of the Fourth Republic. Considerably, most of the members of the Federal Executive Councils have been older politicians that served in government in one form or another since the 1970s. The average age in the cabinets has been 50, with other members being in their 60s, and some in their 70s. Also, it has been noted that from 1999 to 2016, no Minister for Youth has been a youth. At this point, Bamidele (2021) added that, politics in Nigeria has been fully commercialized, and it is now regarded by the Nigerian elites as a business with anticipated returns and no longer about public service which has made the political selection process at the discretion of merchants of power, the godfathers, who wield near absolute control over political party machineries and processes.

Agreeably, scholars have contended that, the Nigerian political elites must be held accountable to the emergence of factors that affects the political behavior of the youths and hinders their active political participation. Bamidele (2021) opined that, poverty is one of these factors which resulted from the failure of the state to focus on the

welfare of its citizenry as a primary purpose of government. As such, the lack of adequate social provisioning for education, health and decent housing has put the youth at the disadvantage of being fundamentally distracted by existential issues. However, when programmes and schemes are put together to tackle poverty, the persistence of corruption detracts these programmes from working optimally in achieving their desired objectives. Related to poverty is the unfortunate situation of youth unemployment, seeing many youths lacking access to the opportunities for providing meaningfully for themselves; as well as many youths that are not trained enough to have skills that make them employable, others are yet routinely offloaded from tertiary institutions into non-existent labour markets which were destroyed by the poor economic policies of the political elites.

Consequently, this has served as basis for many political elite to consider the youths as only being suitable for roles as political enforcers, purveyors of violence and other nefarious purposes. Obviously, the alienation and exclusion of the youth from political and decision-making processes of the society can equally make the youths to lend their skills and energies to illicit acts, such as electoral brigandage and violence. Evidence suggests that youths with few economic prospects and limited political voice are more inclined to be radical, fundamentalist, revolutionary, or to abuse drugs or commit suicide. Due to idleness, especially after formal education, the youths become restless and try anything. Some end up in crime or with deviant behavior (Idike and Innocent, 2015).

Obviously, any society that politically alienated its youths and allows them to be economically handicap must cultivate an upcoming generation of beggars, parasites and bandits. Factually, the increase rate of obnoxious behaviours prevalence among the youths and all manner of social delinquent behaviours are all problems rooted from the egocentric actions inactions of the visionless, selfish, mediocre, tribalistic and opportunistic small money-minded people masquerading as leaders who have continued to regenerate Nigerian political landscape over time.

In solution to this, Zohdy (2017) suggested that, the inclusion of the youths in governance, as well as in the socio-political and socio-economic activities is influential in avoiding societal costs occurring with the exclusion of youths, such as lower voter turnout rates, a loss of several percentages of GDP, violence, extremism, crime, and instability. Patently, the youths must be regarded or treated by the Nigerian elites as partners or agents of governance, rather than regarding them as mere recipients of the dividends of governance. This statement is in support of the fact that good governance is seen as the most influential tool to be employed by the Nigerian elites in order to provide an established system and institution through which the youths' productivity would be harnessed.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

All nations around the world irrespective of the political system in operation have recognized the prominent roles and contributions of the youths in relation to socio-political and socio-economic development. However, the Nigerian elites have failed in providing quality leadership capable of addressing numerous challenges as well as initiating transparent and accountable institutions capable of securing economic progress, effective governance, protection of the citizenry, as well as improvement of the youths' productivity which will help to maintain unity, justice, peace and stability in the country. More so, understanding the reasons why the Nigerian youths have few economic prospects and limited political voice requires the examination of the exploitative nature of the relationship between the Nigerian elites and the youths. This is by considering the fact that, the Nigerian elites are much concern on their pursuit of personal aggrandizement and promotion of their egocentric political and economic interest rather than altruistic policies that are nationalistic in nature. Yet, the Nigerian elites do not care to provide policies that will curb the menace of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and unproductive nature of the Nigerian youths; instead, they are only concern with looting of the public treasury. Thus, the fact that the Nigerian youths are being marginalized, alienated and excluded from the political system by the egocentric Nigerian political elites is not farfetched. Drawing from the exploitative political relationship between the elites and the youths as well as bad governance and leadership in Nigeria as we have seen in the analysis above, the study recommends the following measures as remedy.

- i. The Nigerian elites must be aware that immediate task of governance is to restore hope. To pull out the people out of the pit in which they have found themselves. To rescue the people from all sort of ravages.
- ii. The youths must be recognized by the elites as the engine of growth and development because they provide the labour force for production of goods and service to take effect.
- iii. The Nigerian political elites vested with the responsibilities of governing the country must be willing to put the country in a right developmental track by providing quality leadership capable of addressing numerous challenges as well as initiating transparent and accountable institutions capable of securing economic progress, effective governance, protection of the citizenry, as well as improvement of the youths' productivity which will help to maintain unity, justice, peace and stability in the country.
- iv. The Nigerian youths must be aware and be conscious of their political right which will help them to be vigilant in demanding accountability from the political elites. For all these to be possible, the Nigerian youths must be politically educated and mature. This would enable the present and the future

- leaders to make ethical decisions concerning the improvement of youths' condition as well as their productivity.
- v. The Nigerian elites must devoted their efforts and show keen interest in the formulation and implementation of policies that will positively affect the unproductive nature, illiteracy, poverty, unemployment and all sort of irresponsible life styles of the Nigerian youths.
  - vi. Nigerian elites should make effort in transforming the youths into being financially and economically independent, as well as providing a platform where they can exercise their rational faculties and to participate in politics through peaceful voting system and contesting for political offices independent of any political prejudices.
  - vii. The fundamental challenge rest within the youths to wake up from their slumber and fight for their rights by ensuring that they are adequately and properly placed and involved in governance.
  - viii. Corruption must has been a major challenge within the issues of governance in Nigeria, there must be a way to ensure workable fight against corruption so as to ensure good governance which by extension guarantees youths' rights on all aspect of their growth and development. This is because, under a democratic dispensation right are not easily given. Thus, youths must struggle for their rights otherwise it will be business as usual with the elites.
  - ix. Nigerians should make sure that they elect the right people that will represent them in the position of authority. This is because, governance must not only be selfless but also, the power elites must be able to judiciously utilize the resources of the state in providing people-oriented and quality services in the state. By this, the elites must view governance and leadership as service to the people.
  - x. Nigerians must put attention to the elites' compliance to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which should be the first step in judging every leader. Thus, the visionary political elites that desire to deliver quality services to the people must be willing to abide with the constitution he sworn to obey. This is succinct because, it is from the said constitution that he derived his powers.

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