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The Role of Orientation in Youth Empowerment for National Development

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Abstract

Young and competent people are often recognised as the vibrant conscience of the world being the active drivers of social change, cultural heritage, viable economy and democratic polity for shared prosperity of any progressive nation. Challenges of the ailing Nigerian community which necessitate re-orientation of youths include family instability, moral bankruptcy, increasing population and unemployment, incessant strikes, declining fortunes of education, bad governance, defective service delivery, and unhealthy lifestyles of the citizenry. A strategic plan for creative orientation of youths toward their empowerment should be anchored on functional education and entrepreneurial training, acquisition of core family values, exemplary leadership and mentorship, self-development for self-reliance, exhibition and preservation of cultural heritage, career fairs and seminars, good self-concept, and inculcation of safety and security of life and property. Hence, it is suggested that adequate funding of qualitative education and specialised training, resuscitation of ailing manufacturing industries, provision of functional modern infrastructural facilities in schools and society, display of purposeful democratic leadership, inculcation of core family values and professional standards within the context of our cultural heritage, and exposure to basic principles of healthy living would empower our energetic and talented youths for quality human life. This could strengthen the youths to become excellent professionals that will manage the national economy and

polity for shared prosperity of the people in a dynamic world of greater possibilities and achievements.

Keywords: Youths, orientation, family values, education, empowerment, self-reliance, employment, economy, prosperity and quality human life

Introduction

The contemporary Nigeria needs an extensive change in orientation as a means to achieve a comprehensive improvement in capacity building, democratic governance, economic diversity and quality of human life. Otherwise, the growing children and youths may be destined to inherit the profligate values and destructive mindsets of our showy leaders, and bear the brunt of our collective inaction, incompetence and impunity. In Oyekan's (2000) opinion, young people are the vibrant conscience of the dynamic world being the active drivers of social change, cultural heritage, national economy and democratic polity for shared prosperity and harmony in any progressive nation. Hence, youths should be resilient and patient enough to be well educated, empowered and mentored by successful professionals with sufficient erudition, vocational passion and intrinsic determination for exemplary leadership excellence in expeditious service delivery and wealth creation as a gateway to quality human life (Oyekan, 2000; Curtis, 2009; Okwelle & Ayonmike, 2014). A society whose vibrant youths are adequately provided with functional education, healthcare services, entrepreneurship training and gainful employment with mutual love, respect and dignity will grow, develop and prosper in peace and excellence (Oyekan, 2013). Such versatile youths shall become the bedrock of any nation whose progressive development, vitality, destiny and well-being are inherent in their creative talents and visions of sustainable human survival. It is imperative for self-reliance and self-fulfillment to make these indispensable youths imbibe the core values of humanity and best global practices as hallmarks of effective citizenship and responsible leadership from home, school and their living community.

However, leadership failures from revered educative agencies, unified governmental organisations and organised private sector have resulted into the prevailing high rate of illiteracy, unemployment, low industrial productive capacity and depressed economy, closure of some labour-intensive manufacturing industries, incompetent workforce, infrastructural decay, brazen corruption, poverty, insecurity and desperation of the citizenry in all aspects of human life. Grating economic conditions and societal malfeasance have forced the poor and hungry unemployed youths to become prostitutes, killers, kidnappers, thugs and armed robbers (Ojo, 2015). It is an irony of life in a land enriched with abundant human and natural resources. The purpose of leadership excellence in quality human life is to be useful, happy and responsive individuals with a vibrant passion for worthwhile desires in our living environment (Oyekan, 2013). What this implies is for the school, in collaboration with

parents and captains of industries, to inculcate the core values of the community and world of work in our children and youths. Expected change should embrace effective transformation of hearts, minds and attitudes that are deep-rooted in our value system and ethos (The Guardian, 2015a). It is expected to produce capable future leaders who are brilliant, efficient and self-reliant citizens of exemplary distinction and wisdom. They will be blessed with an expansive capacity and tenacity to engage in independent work with minimal supervision, intellectual resourcefulness, optimal productivity and positive mindset for testimonial achievements.

Youths constitute a unique group of energetic young people who are growing from childhood towards adulthood with inquisitive minds, latent talents and purposeful vision of a better rewarding future (Arijesuyo, 2011; Oyekan, 2013). They usually love to engage reflective thinking, seek generative ideas and identity, and explore creativity in doing things differently with liberty to display their vitality and innovative talents for satisfactory resolution of human and environmental problems. Herein our dynamic youths should be assisted with relevant community resources in developing their creative imagination, ideas, talents, and vision as a means to nurture responsible and competent manpower aptly required to drive the ailing national economy. The school should be made an expansive world of creative ideas, exciting fun and endless opportunities for meaningful intellectual engagements, professional insights, career choices and entrepreneurial initiatives in the course of sustainable human capital development. With the requisite education and orientation on empowerment for national development, youths can become inevitable agents of impactful change and hope of reviving Nigerian society from its ailing economy and polity. A well coordinated orientation for sustainable youth empowerment becomes an expedient strategy to develop the creative potentials, entrepreneurial initiatives and professional vision of vibrant youths in rectifying the challenges confronting individuals and their communities.

Orientation is an organised provision of useful training, information and exhortation to sensitise individuals for capacity development and quality human life. It is a proactive act of adapting or directing the person's beliefs, feelings, attitudes, interests, talents or ideas toward a purposeful activity and vision at home, school, workplace and any other human organisation. Otherwise, the present day disorientation among youths can fuel cognitive dissonance, misconceptions, conflicts of interest, defective career choice, job dissatisfaction, leadership failure, industrial disharmony, social vices and insecurity of precious life and property. Promotion of sustainable national development, therefore, requires justifiable orientation as the children and youths choose subjects and vocations, embark on capacity building, and /or adopt viable business ventures for their gainful employment, wealth creation and existential survival. What this really implies is an entrenchment of rational orientation mechanism in all aspects of humanity including effective learning and vocational guidance as well as ethical, sexual, political, and religious orientations. This will concretise an enduring empowerment of youths in professional education, vocational

training and profitable enterprises that will enhance creative entrepreneurship and gainful exploitation of our resources for shared prosperity and well-being of the citizenry.

Wikipedia (2015a) defined youth empowerment as an attitudinal, structural and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people, including youth and adults. It is an important outcome of making a contribution and promotes a sense of self-worth (Almquist et al, 2015). Progressive nations such as Nigeria, Kenya and United States of America recognise youth empowerment as a gateway to intergenerational equity, civic engagement, democracy building and educational reform for self-reliance in sustainable wealth creation and national development. Thus, empowerment is the process of strengthening the spiritual, political, social and economic power and capability of individuals to improve their efficiency in creating meaningful opportunities for sustainable character development, wealth creation and quality human life. Being a student-centred learning and community-based mentoring programme, youth empowerment imparts on its participants relevant knowledge and skills to build exemplary character, strengthen decision making and reinforce the value of efficient community service. It is a reformative mechanism of encouraging young people to acquire the relevant competence and orientation to do great things which ensure working towards accomplishing their personal, educational, vocational and national goals. With adequate focus on sustainable motivation and persistence to help the young people to succeed and do great exploits, youth empowerment shall become a generative solidarity for shared prosperity, harmony and development of the society.

Hence, the purpose of this paper is to examine the vital role of orientation in effective youth empowerment for national development. Discussion will be centred on the need to redirect the thinking, beliefs, feelings, interests and opinions of youths on education, self-development and exhortation about the world of education and work for gainful living. Youths surely deserve a vibrant orientation on the prevailing issues and problems confronting our dynamic community. Adequate exposure of youths to the basic moral principles and professional standards, words of exhortation on quality life and safe environment, information on life-supporting educational programmes, training workshops on entrepreneurship initiatives, basic hints on job and wealth creation, and seminars on healthy lifestyles will help in raising well educated, informed and inspired competent citizens. Such a crop of healthy, educated fellows might have expansive capacity and commitment to make rational contributions towards meaningful development of our dream nation.

The Necessity for Youth Orientation and Empowerment

The prevailing social, economic and political crisis in our community is an impactful function of bad leadership, corruption, unemployment, insecurity and poverty at all levels of humanity. Ehusani (2015) noted that what Nigeria lacked are disciplined,

purposeful, visionary, courageous and selfless leaders, whose very lives encapsulate the values that are necessary for nation building. African policy makers have recognised the challenges of creating gainful employment opportunities and the related need for economic and labour market transformations (International Labour Organisation, 2014). Emerging conflicts, disputes, contradictions and inadequacies in our homes, schools and governments are creating the critical gaps in skills' acquisition, training needs and ethical orientation for the youths to cope with the vicissitudes of nation building.

The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) effectively addressed the persistent gaps in education policy provisions and implementation in Nigeria with diversified curriculum in the post-basic education and career development of learners for self-reliance and gainful employment. Hence, Omotere (2011), Oyekan (2013), Ehusani (2015) and Fowler (2015) reflected on a variety of problems of our ailing Nigerian community and identified some challenges having significant impact on youths, namely:

1. **Family instability** typified by divorce, wife battering, child abuse/labour, prostitution and rape often result from destruction of basic values of the community which promote humility, diligence, integrity, cooperation, trust, peace, unity and harmony with caring love for all;
2. **Indiscipline and immoral behaviours** depicted by corruption, cultism, criminality, militancy, insurgency, examination malpractice, hate campaign, electoral fraud, thuggery, kidnapping, indecent dressing, arson and vandalism;
3. **Diseases** which may severally weaken the intellectual capacity, entrepreneurial capability and physical fitness of human beings who are formidable assets of production and national development e.g. malaria, sickle-cell anaemia, autism, cholera, obesity, diabetes, cancer, HIV/AIDS, hypertension and stroke;
4. **Rising unemployment rate** of the school graduates and artisans with relevant knowledge, useful vocational competence and professional standards in their fields of specialisation;
5. **Infrastructural inertia** as exemplified by irregular supplies of electricity and clean water; bad roads, air/sea ports, and railways; dilapidated school buildings, ill-equipped laboratories and workshops, and poor healthcare facilities;
6. **Rapid population growth** that overstretches and defies all developmental plans, statistics, policies, programmes, projects and facilities in public and private sectors of the economy;
7. **Alcoholism, smoking and drug abuse** which could hinder healthy development, physical fitness, emotional stability, learning proficiency, labour productivity, discipline, harmony and security of life and property;

8. **Incessant strikes** by workers, students, associations and communities which often disrupt the school calendar, achievement motivation, industrial harmony and labour productivity;
9. **Apathy towards education** engulfed with large classes, poor teaching, learning failure, examination malpractices and high unemployment rate of the school graduates; and
10. **Closure of critical manufacturing industries** worsened by inadequate support for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to flourish with employment opportunities which would enhance gainful living, wealth creation and well-being of the citizenry; and
11. **Mentality and ideology of political leaders** with insatiable appetite for public funds.

Above-mentioned stressful conditions are the excruciating catalysts of attitudinal failure and underdevelopment that can hinder effective growth and useful contributions of youths to meaningful national development. They can severally promote bad attitudes toward quality education, democracy, personal health care, environmental management, productive work, wealth creation and peaceful co-existence of the community. Prevalence of these impediments to viable human capacity building, prosperous national economy and well-being of the citizenry appears to be worsened by leadership failure in a threatening season of brazen impunity and insecurity. The Chancellor, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria, Dr. David Oyedepo, in Saturday Punch(2015), opined that:

The major reason the economies of many African countries are in comatose is the dearth of innovative, knowledge-based education. Africa was ahead in education in 500 BC. Greek historians went to Egypt for education until something went haywire (p.10).

Given the historical and contemporary realities of youths in the progressive development of nations, it seems unbridled corruption, unemployment, poverty, criminality and indiscipline in all aspects of our national life is at the root of the political, economic and social ills afflicting the Nigerian society. This surely necessitates an inclusive orientation and empowerment of youths as the key to enrich their quality education and entrepreneurial training for sustainable national development.

Practice of politics of bitterness, violence and destruction by our leaders is usually assisted by the use of unemployed and greedy youths. They serve as willing partisan tools of conflicts, disputes and crises in kidnapping, intimidating and beating up critics and opponents, organising demonstrations/riots with hate speeches and curses, and destroying precious lives and property. During elections, some youths aid invidious electoral malpractices through rigging, replacement and snatching of ballot

boxes, and inflation of votes. What do youths actually gain from these eternal offences against humanity? Emerging bad leadership may not care for our well-being in terms of good tarred roads, functional ports and railways, well-equipped hospitals/health centres well-stocked laboratories and libraries, regular supplies of electric power and potable water, furnished classrooms and hostels, comfortable recreation centres, and good town planning.

Apathy towards full schooling, further education and professional training with entrepreneurial mindset makes some youths lazy, nonchalant and unproductive without employable skills and industrial experiences. Such passive and incompetent fellows often drop out of schools without any creative knowledge and credible certificates for good income-earning jobs. Thereafter, some indecent youths severally engage in cultism, prostitution, internet fraud, stealing and armed robbery, thuggery, kidnapping for a ransom or become street urchins with explicit aggression and intent for destruction. Excessive smoking of cigarettes, marijuana and tobacco; drinking of strong alcoholic beverages, and taking of hard drugs by some youths may turn them into addicts, thugs and criminals. They can become intolerant of constructive criticism, other religions, lack safety culture in riding motorcycles and cars/trucks, and exhibit brazen disrespect for elders and constituted authorities. Hence, these youths may develop a penchant for extortion of the public, sexual abuse, cultism, armed robbery and insecurity by causing crisis, violence and destruction of life. Vandalisation of infrastructural facilities such as electric wires, oil pipelines, water pipes, vehicles, hostels, houses and furniture items usually disrupt enjoyment of services from these public utilities. Concerted efforts aimed at counselling these indolent young dropouts, smokers, drunkards, and vandals could change their attitude toward greater improvement in their education, work, business ventures and community relations.

However, Omotere (2011) discovered that poor monitoring and supervision of youth programmes, lack of funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor management of youth recreational facilities and vocational centre, and lack of qualified youth personnel, among others, were hindrances responsible for the poor implementation of youth empowerment programmes in Taraba State, Nigeria. The quality, attitude and vision of the school, government, philanthropic organisations, and community leaders will intensify the moral rectitude, decency and pursuit of excellence required by youths to live a purposeful life. Such a strategic orientation and empowerment of youths have the tendency to resolve many inadequacies, conflicts disputes and crises that are decreasing the existential fortunes of education, economy and the community in enhancing the well-being of the people.

Strategy for Orientation and Empowerment of Youths

The Nigerian society is fraught with endemic corruption, poverty, unemployment, impunity and insecurity in the recent times. Perhaps, this saddening situation might have resulted from declining fortunes of education and economy, glaring inequality

in accessing the common wealth and general incompetence of the leadership in ensuring national cohesion, peace, unity and prosperity of the citizenry. Is there any means of addressing the scathing critique and displeasure with the pervasive impunity of the government and its mode of democratic governance? What should be the collective responsibility of the government, private sector of the economy, the living community and the family towards a strategic action plan for youth empowerment? Should schools, at all levels of education, be involved in rectifying the prevailing social vices and inadequacies of the Nigerian society? In reality, youths need qualitative education, specialised training and life-changing experiences from kind-hearted citizens for true transformation and change towards a better future in this land of boundless opportunities. The quest for functional education and empowerment of the younger generation should be anchored on creative entrepreneurship and ethical morality with a gaze on sustainable positive youth development. Emerging self-reliant employment opportunities for production of goods and services could facilitate wealth creation, self-fulfillment and shared prosperity of the people.

Positive youth development (PYD) refers to intentional efforts of other youth, adults, communities, government agencies and schools to provide opportunities for youth to enhance their interests, skills, and abilities (Wikipedia, 2015b). Central to its philosophy, the theory of PYD suggests that “if young people have mutually beneficial relations with the people and institutions of their social world, they will be on the way to a hopeful future marked by positive contributions to self, family, community and civil society (Lerner et al, 2005). The basic tenets of PYD can be organised into to 6Cs, which are: competence, confidence, connection, character, caring and contribution. Thus, PYD focuses on the active promotion of optimal human development for positive outcomes that meet the needs, interests and aspirations of the young people in their family, schools, leisure and among peers.

Human resource is the greatest asset which makes an appreciable improvement in sustainable development of nations across the world. In spite of the harsh environmental variables, the prosperity of a nation is dependent on the quality of its functional infrastructures and healthy productive citizens that can produce durable goods and efficient services. Really, the youths are the hope for sustainable future and development of any prosperous nation. Our youths constitute a greater proportion of the workforce that is endowed with the required talents, energy and creativity to harness the vast resources of the community. This justifies the necessity to empower youths and spur them to contribute towards viable economic growth, democratic governance and social development of their people and society. The reality is that there is no substitute to the power of knowledge and to quality, life-transforming education for balanced development of all nations. From the earlier identified challenges having significant impact on the younger generation, a viable strategy towards effective orientation and innovation in creative empowerment of youths, who owns the future, should adopt integrated actions on:

1. Quality education

- (a) functional education and specialised training spiced with career fairs
- (b) population/family life education (Pop/FLE)
- (c) a mix of entrepreneurial initiatives in subject curricula and co-curricular activities
- (d) self-development for self-reliance and gainful employment

2. Core family values

- (a) acquisition of core family values for vitality in character and moral development
- (b) good parental care with personal, vocational and sexual counselling
- (c) healthy lifestyles for healthy living in a healthier world

3. Purposeful leadership

- (a) exemplary leadership and mentorship with required competence and exhortation
- (b) diversification of the national economy

4. Preservation of human assets

- (a) membership of socio-cultural and cooperative societies for peaceful life
- (b) exhibition and preservation of our collective cultural heritage
- (c) (c) safety and security of life and property.

Experience has shown that effectively empowered, re-oriented and mobilised youths are the critical agents of change and development in the society. Our collective responsibility for meaningful change and realization of our aspirations and expectations requires an ethical revolution (Adeloye, 2015). Such an ethical re-orientation must both challenge and appeal to our conscience nurtured by truth and fortitude to do the right thing at the right time.

Quality Education

Adequate investment in functional education and specialised training will enable the youths to acquire relevant knowledge, practical skills and good attitudes required for problem solving, wealth creation and development of the community. The tendency is to facilitate human capacity building (manpower supply), effective work performance (productivity), and comprehensive management of resources (total quality assurance) for national development. In reality, young people will learn better and participate more fully when they feel physically and emotionally safe at home, school and in the neighbourhood which encourages honesty, trust, merit, friendship,

respect and quality relationships among peers and adults (Almquist et al,2015). Schools would become the generative learning centres which severally nurture and blend sound minds and creative skills with best global practices through comprehensive intellectual development, pedagogical engagement and entrepreneurial refinement of individuals for positive transformation of their growing society. The vitality and potency of specialised learning and training to vibrant human capital development in nation building underlines the critical essence of functional literacy for the evolution of an educated society. Such a veritable knowledge-based community will comprise a crop of competent and well-behaved fellows who are resolutely committed and responsive with practicable solutions to the prevailing challenges of their living environment. Within the developmental context of their cultural heritage, the enduring power of literacy is inherent in its building of capacity and capability of youths to use their acquired creative knowledge, practical skills and value-orientations to enhance quality human life. Hence, the school graduates will have the requisite professional and vocational competence, worthy strength of character and learning, and enthusiastic fortitude to mitigate the social, economic and political crisis in all aspects of national economy and polity.

The Nigeria's philosophy of education is, among others, based on a comprehensive and functional education which offers diversified curriculum to cater for the varying needs of learners and the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). At the post-basic education and career development level of secondary schooling, learners are exposed to civic education, science and mathematics, technology, humanities, business studies, vocational and entrepreneurship subjects. The motive is to prepare each student in consonance with his/her potential, interest and capability for tertiary education or for the world of work, wealth creation and entrepreneurship (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Herein a meaningful orientation of adolescents and youths should comprise vital information and exhortation on relevance of chosen subjects, vocations and job-specific skills for prospective careers, employment opportunities and well-being of learners. The school becomes the enduring instrumentality of nurturing vibrant personality ingrained with professional versatility, entrepreneurial ingenuity and ethical morality towards personal satisfaction and joyful human life.

There is a population crisis which influences the dynamics of education and family life in Nigerian society. A stressed human community is characterised by a spate of stressful conditions typified by family instability, moral decadence and gross indiscipline, poverty, diseases, unemployment, incessant strikes, infrastructural inertia, and learning failure in the wake of rapid population growth and large classes (Oyekan, 2000). In a decent society where leadership role is not defined by money, qualitative education and population would be given utmost attention in its developmental objectives for nation building. The school should provide sufficient infrastructural facilities, funds and professional staff with adequate knowledge of the dynamics of population and family. It is intended to strengthen teachers with capacity and vision to cope with the global challenges of economy, population and family life

in a democratic society. This demands a happy family, control of our population, respect of the physical environment, encouragement of environmental friendliness or 'going green' with abiding faith and vigour for human survival and world peace. It is instructive that schools, from primary through secondary and tertiary educational institutions, should make bold attempts to highlight rational aspects of qualitative population and good family life in their instructional practices. The purpose of population/family life education (Pop/FLE) is to sensitise, enlighten and equip the children, youths and adults with relevant knowledge, skills and experiences to make intelligent decisions on good lifestyles, healthy living, and pleasant learning. Adequate caring opportunities at home, school and workplaces shall strengthen the youngsters to imbibe the core human values and participate in preventive health promotion anchored on disease control, stress reduction, drug education, sexual counselling, birth control and quality nutrition in a happy and stable family.

Hence, the youths will have an enabling environment spiced with vital information and inspiring support for well-rounded education that can promote good self-concept, self-reliance and gainful living. Youths need to be exposed periodically to the contemporary challenges of human life, good nutrition, entrepreneurship studies, career education, and successful mentors to ensure quality assurance of their professional vision towards self-fulfillment and peaceful life. Efforts of the government, schools, and parents should also enhance organisation and sponsorship of educational competitions, exhibitions, career fairs, skills acquisition training workshops, and collaborative exchange programmes with industries and innovation enterprise institutions for sharing of knowledge and prosperity. When children and youths are exposed to the biographies and autobiographies of prominent successful leaders and captains of industries across the world, they will be inspired with an intrinsic desire to succeed with rational exploits and greater heights. This would influence the vision, vocational choice, productivity and effective use of talents by intelligent youths with creative minds to generate innovative solutions toward enhancement of sustainable economic development, industrial harmony and world peace.

Core Family Values

Family life provides high levels of love and support, parental advice and counselling, achievement motivation, safety, stability, and social justice for young people within a caring and peaceful neighbourhood (Almquist et al, 2015). Nowadays, increasing instability of the family results from erosion of the core values of humanity as parents and elders are failing in their responsibilities to raise well-behaved intelligent children and youths. These important core values include:

- Humility, decency, honesty, hard work, self-esteem
- Excellence, love, cleanliness, teamwork, patience
- Creativity, discipline, kindness, commitment, consistency

- Trust, friendship, respect, transparency, accountability
- Tolerance, integrity, confidence, justice, meritocracy

When youths acquire and exhibit these values as moral principles and operational standards, they will develop good character, exhibit excellent performance and receive abundant blessings in their life activities. Such ethical re-orientation must challenge and appeal to our conscience in chosen vocations of youths and adults. Fowler (2015) espoused some character-forming values and behaviours, which are the bedrock of nation building, that can be learnt and embraced through agriculture to include hard work, discipline, good judgment, investment of time and resources, responsibility, commitment, tenacity and work-based rewards. Once assimilated, these life skills which are lacking in our youths are readily transferable and adaptable to other spheres of human endeavour. In reality, meaningful learning and good character with due integrity, perseverance and self-esteem will make our youths to shun social vices such as selfishness, pride, anger, envy, lust, corruption, forgery, laziness and examination malpractice as well as rape, kidnapping, thuggery, arson, assassination, stealing, Internet fraud, vandalism and hatred of self-help projects in their community. This expectedly could bring back discipline, diligence, self-respect, accountability, equity, patriotism, productivity and security to homes, schools, workplaces, fields, political parties and civil service.

Parents should take care of their children with adequate provision of basic necessities of life and necessities of education. Children and ladies should be prevented from being deceived of exotic gifts, juicy jobs and becoming entrapped as pawns in the custody of depraved human traffickers and kidnapping syndicates, who ferry them to foreign lands for commercial sexual and labour exploitation amidst excruciating adversity. In the face of high rate of unemployment in the country, the government needs to provide more job opportunities for school graduates in order to reduce crimes and poverty which has changed the lifestyles of Nigerians in terms of basic necessities of life (Adeleye, 2015). Schools should create sexual awareness and sexual abuse policy to protect pupils and staff. Early sex and marriage which are facilitated by ignorance, illiteracy, poverty and religion should be carefully discouraged among the youths. This will save teenagers and youths from painful unwanted pregnancies and abortions; dropping out of schools and training workshops; sexually transmitted infections (e.g. HIV/AIDS, gonorrhoea, and cervical cancer); and untimely deaths. Help links include good parental care, democratic parenting and sexual counselling in a supportive family to prevent early initiation into sex and marriage.

Children, youths and adults must be exposed to decent accommodation, quality nutrition and parental guidance to make them become healthy, productive and responsible professionals in future. Adoption of good lifestyles, quality nutrition, regular exercises and routine medical check-up will provide the essentials for healthy growth of the body. Effective functioning of the brain, hands, legs and the body system

require the basic nutrients from regular consumption of balanced diet spiced with green leafy vegetables, fresh fruits and water. However, consumption of sugary and fatty food substances should be minimised to prevent some deadly diseases such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, kidney failure, stroke or any cardiovascular illness. If the body is to function well, it is also advisable for developing youths to avoid smoking, drinking of alcoholic beverages, taking of hard drugs, and participating in all forms of indiscipline and criminal activities. These unwholesome lifestyles may hinder effective development of the body, precipitate emotional stress and further retard efficient functioning of the brain. Hence, children, youths and adults are implored to eat balanced diet, embrace healthy habits and do regular exercises to keep them mentally alert, physically fit, emotionally stable and responsively accessible to meaningful learning, lucrative performing arts, and sporting activities such as athletics, football and tennis. This could make the youths to acquire well-rounded education ingrained with entrepreneurial orientation towards money-spinning vocational and technical subjects such as agriculture, basic electronics, bead making, clothing and textile, commerce, masonry, music, photography and wood work. Emerging trained and skilled manpower would be healthy, intelligent, emotionally stable and self-reliant professionals with creative minds to devise new survival strategies and innovative solutions to cope with the vicissitudes of life.

High unemployment rate is greatest globally among the active young generation of the Nigerian population. The youths, who constitute close to 70% of the 170 million Nigerians, are disadvantaged in getting jobs because most of the school subject curricula lack learning contents on critical knowledge, career skills and industrial experiences that can facilitate their vocational development and employment opportunities. It is, therefore, imperative for youths to engage themselves in relevant creative ideas, survival skills and right attitudes with positive entrepreneurial mindset. Regular attendance of viable skills training programmes on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), after the school hours and during holidays, will put them at an employment and additional income advantage among their peers. Youths should always embrace hard work and willingness to learn, read and accept novel ideas with commitment towards professional competence and excellence in workplaces and business ventures. This can make them to become self-reliant employees and/or employers of labour with self-fulfillment.

Purposeful Leadership

Nigerians want enduring changes in the management and boost of the economy. It is expedient for the government to fight corruption; provide job opportunities; end the gross indiscipline in the civil service; repair decrepit Kaduna, Port-harcourt and Warri refineries; and ensure steady power supply (Ehusani, 2015). The prevalence of infrastructural inertia hinders effective functioning of public utilities, (cottage) industries and companies, employment opportunities, industrial harmony and well-being of the people. Such politicians precipitating these hardships seem to have

chronic mentality and anti-people ideology with insatiable appetite for public funds. They need to be refined with relevant reformative information and experiences from effective study of civic education, voter education and effective citizenship on democratic principles of electoral process and sterling qualities of prominent successful leaders across the world. Self-control and sacrifice for the common good are aspects of integrity which is central to good leadership governance (The Guardian, 2015). A purposeful leader exhibits exemplary performance, mentorship and willingness to learn new ideas with requisite cordiality and diplomacy. Such a creative leader is driven by competence, dedication and passion for quality management of resources and improvement of infrastructural facilities. This provides enabling environment that will enhance total capacity utilization of industries, job creation and security of the citizens. When parents, elders and leaders display moral integrity and provide adequate welfare for the children and youths, these youngsters would be empowered to live a productive and decent life in a safe environment. The re-oriented youths could be strengthened to challenge and halt inequality, marginalisation and oppression which severally breed poverty, unemployment and social vices in the society.

Inability of the leadership to grow inclusive economy and development of the nation seems to be linked with the sustenance of a monolithic oil-reliant economy. Above 70% of the national income accrues from the exploitation and sales of petroleum products, often hamstrung by the global market. However, the Federal government could source substantial revenues also from exploitation and utilisation of abundant resources ingrained in agriculture, solid minerals, hospitality and tourism, construction sector, sports development, revitalisation of comatosed industries and supportive growth of SMEs. What is really expected to sustain the national development is an organised diversification of the economy in the wake of dwindling oil revenues and pursuit of job-led growth. Supply of trained manpower to manage the emerging growth and development of the economy demands diversified curricula at the senior secondary and tertiary levels of schooling. Learners would have to be exposed to a combination of civic education, effective citizenship, business studies, science and mathematics, vocational, technology and entrepreneurship subjects. Incorporation of co-curricular activities in sports, youth clubs, societies, exhibitions, and competitions on a variety of issues and challenges could prospect creative development and empowerment of youths in a knowledge-based economy. The objective is to produce responsible, enterprising and self-reliant manpower who can apply their expertise to raise their productivity, generate income and solve emerging problems in their society.

Preservation of Human Assets

Workers need multiple sources of continuous income streams and capital through some empowerment and investment platforms to attain financial freedom. When working in the nearest future, youths should endeavour to join progressive and

achievement-oriented associations which share their career objectives, welfare needs and joy of quality life. Membership of a registered Cooperative Multipurpose Society (CMS) will encourage the youths to imbibe savings culture, and secure low interest loans for their business ventures, academic programmes and life supporting projects. The Project Fix Nigeria Consulting Limited opined that cooperative societies can maximise the critical mass, provide cheap capital and economy of scale, galvanise business growth and employment, and promote self-reliance and well-being of the people (The Punch, 2015a). What should be done to tackle unemployment and boost productivity across the country is to leverage on the abundant resources and opportunities in agriculture, cooperatives, cottage industries, information and communication technologies (ICT), and entrepreneurship development of youths in productive skill acquisition. Building a network of entrepreneurial leaders necessary to drive the growth of SMEs, therefore, could facilitate consistent production of quality goods and services thereby promoting sustainable industrialisation and inclusive economic development in Nigeria.

Our youths should be implored to adopt, refine and preserve the cultural heritage of their living environment. It is necessary for parents, schools and community resource persons to encourage regular use of mother tongue, attendance of traditional activities, watching of culture-based films/plays, excursion to historical museums and gardens, impartation of basic tenets of the society, and learning of the rational ways of life of their people. Acceptance and use of locally-produced goods and services by children, youths and adults should be encouraged by all as a collective responsibility for promoting local industrial production towards national development. This could support and prompt the continual survival of endangered manufacturing industries towards sustainable profitability, and provision of jobs to qualified school graduates and artisans.

Viable preservation of quality human assets is dependent on the consistent security of life and property. Security could be defined as an enduring freedom from potential danger or threat to the well-being, harmony and safety of the citizenry and their resources. It is the statutory ability of the family and nation to feed, protect, shelter and develop the creative talents of children and youths for shared prosperity and social harmony of their living community in a happy expectancy. However, Nigeria is confronted with daunting security challenges which include armed robbery, ethnic crisis, assassination, militancy, kidnapping and terrorism (Umaru et al, 2015). The onus is on youths to imbibe and exhibit safety culture at home, offices, classrooms, laboratories, studios, workshops, industries, farms, fields, recreation centres and in their journeys. This prevents avoidable accidents, damages injuries, deaths and expenditures which might have been saved and used on improving their comprehensive education, technical and vocational training, medical care, security surveillance, and infrastructural facilities for the continuity of quality human life. What is expected of the youths is a continuous commitment to meaningful learning, orientation and empowerment that will strengthen their path of knowledge,

innovation and responsibility for self-development and self-fulfillment. These rational leaders with purposeful vision could renew the society with the mantra of reformation, re-orientation and rehabilitation in their policy framework for sustainable development, industrial peace and social harmony.

A strategic plan for creative orientation of youths toward their empowerment should be anchored on functional education and entrepreneurial training, acquisition of core family values, exemplary leadership and mentorship, self-development and self-reliance, exhibition and preservation of cultural heritage, career fairs and seminars, good self-concept, and inculcation of safety and security of life and property. The Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria advocated for universal access to education and health services, financial services, new technologies, affordable mortgage facilities, bank loans and equal distribution of resources to support economic development (The Punch, 2015b). Youths are advised to avail themselves of the limitless opportunities and accruable benefits in some national and international orientation and empowerment schemes which include:

1. National Directorate of Employment (NDE), which helps in orientation and empowerment of youths and adults in a variety of skills acquisition training programmes;
2. Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), a product of the Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) that provides orientation and training for interns on mechanism of job hunt, running small businesses and career fairs aimed at empowering young graduates and taking them off the streets;
3. United States Agency for International Development (USAID);
4. FirstBank Sustainability Centre , which focuses on empowerment;
5. Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme, a \$100 million entrepreneurial training scheme for producing 10,000 creative African entrepreneurs to manage the continental economy.
6. Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP) in Kenya. It is a youth-focused initiative dedicated to fighting illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, crime, drug and substance abuse among other social evils by providing academic, talent and sports training coupled with internships and jobs to the less fortunate across the country. Youths are empowered through (i) Scholarships and Training, and (ii) YEP Club which bridges the gap between class work and practical world. Website: www.youth-employment-program.org
7. Youth Empowerment Nigeria (YEN), Lagos is involved in skill acquisition programme that includes training in bead making, event decoration, cake baking and decoration, makeup and Gele tying, and website design. It has a start-up SME Loan Scheme between N50,000-300,000.00k.

8. Website: www.youthempowermentnigeria.org
9. Rise Networks, Ikeja, Nigeria. A leading social enterprise with a deliberate interest in technology and youth education in Africa. Tel: +234 909 807 0080, +234 706 054 5017
10. Website: www.ngex.com/bd/search?q=YouthEmpowermentProgram&place=Nigeria
11. New Era Foundation, Ibeju-Lekki, Lagos, Nigeria. It implements programmes and activities focused on youth development and women empowerment. Tel. +2348060666696
12. Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria, Surulere, Lagos.
13. NGO offering empowerment business training and management programme for women and youths. Tel: +234 803 331 0751, +234 802 315 3359
14. Youth Empowerment for Innovation in Nigeria. It provides platforms that foster and promote youth empowerment. Youths are the sustainable future.

Website: www.ebusinessnigeria.com/business/youth-empowerment

Barring any interfering drawbacks, these basic components of youth orientation and empowerment could promote development of competencies and information for effective citizenship, labour productivity and wealth creation in gainful living. Ethical approach will strengthen and reflect firmness, coherency, thoroughness, and sincerity in constructive analysis of issues and creative resolution of problems associated with man and his living environment. The youths will be able to feel secure about the future for gainful employment and quality human life.

Prospects of Well-Oriented and Empowered Youths

Youths are the most valuable and precious resources whose creative talents and innate abilities would enhance their entrepreneurial capacity to nurture SMEs as the engine growth of the economy. While noting that the modern day economy is driven largely by craft exemplified in SMEs, Honeywell Flour Mills Plc believed that unemployment would reduce considerably if youths shunned the quest for non-existent white-collar jobs and rediscovered themselves through entrepreneurial training in life-sustaining vocations (The Punch, 2015c). This why an exposure to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) will empower the youths and adults with learning experiences which are relevant to the vibrant world of work thereby enhancing sustainable human resource development, industrial productivity and quality of life for all (Okwelle and Ayonmike, 2014). As vibrant workers or employers of labour someday, youths are crucial to balanced development and sustainable wealth creation of nations. Herein it is instructive that youth empowerment in the changing digital and technology landscape of the 21st Century must be committed to driving inclusive economic growth and industrial development

for shared prosperity and harmony of the society. This would facilitate strategic planning, collaborative engagement and effective deployment of technological tools for development of creative talents, skills and visions of youths towards human capacity building and self-reliant employment.

A well-oriented and empowered youth would have been well educated, informed and equipped with necessary vocational competence, industrial experiences and professional standards from senior secondary schools, tertiary educational institutions and innovation enterprise institutions. Such an enterprising and self-reliant manpower can apply their expertise to raise their productivity, solve human and environmental problems, and generate income to enhance their well-being. Hence, the prospects of well-oriented and empowered youths for national development include their resilient abilities to:

1. discover their creative talents, survival skills and vision of quality life with self-esteem;
2. acquire the necessary expertise, experience and confidence for productive investments;
3. develop a sense of responsibility and autonomy as rational vanguards for continuous functioning and maintenance of critical infrastructures;
4. display good lifestyles, healthy living and emotional stability in powering total quality management of national economy and polity;
5. acquire an entrepreneurial mindset for positive thinking, problem solving, wealth creation and happy living;
6. minimise the scourging menace of social vices of corruption, poverty and insecurity;
7. secure the proficiency, information and fortitude for effective leadership and good governance and sustainable development;
8. combine vocational and entrepreneurship subjects with the school curriculum;
9. enhance development of vibrant personality ingrained with intellectual sagacity, professional versatility, entrepreneurial ingenuity and moral integrity towards enduring work productivity, personal satisfaction and joyful human life;
10. promote gainful self-reliant employment that will boost national productivity, inclusive economic development, public well-being and social harmony; and
11. imbibe the vibrant power of investment and culture of savings from inclusive financial literacy initiatives of being diligent, prudent and conscientious leaders with entrepreneurship acumen and excellence in their chosen careers.

From the above, well educated and trained youths exposed to effective orientation in their educational and innovation enterprise institutions would have acquired the necessary capacity and capability to perform and excel with outstanding achievements. They might have been empowered with relevant knowledge, specialised industrial skills, moral rectitude and appropriate certification in their chosen trades or careers. Such youths could become vibrant workforce with inherent discipline and professionalism as critical agents of change to mobilise resources in overcoming learning difficulties, barriers to business management and obstacles to national development for shared prosperity and social harmony. Effective orientation and empowerment may become a brilliant strategy to integrate academic and vocational ideas in learning activities, provide real-world life experiences and unleash the creative energies within the Nigerian people.

Effective orientation towards youth empowerment could minimize the scourging menace of employment by increasing the employability and self-reliant job opportunities which might halt the growing army of unemployed school graduates, street-roaming youths (street urchins) and retrenched adult workers. The Trade Union Congress (Nigeria) asserted that unemployment rate is a very important indicator of a country's economic strength and growth (The Punch, 2015d). Against this background, competent and responsive school graduates with entrepreneurial mindset should work to acquire the required expertise, experience and (financial) resources to venture successfully into productive investments related to their inherent talents, enterprising abilities and intrinsic aspirations for quality human life. The tendency is to promote sustainable human capital development largely needed to produce essential goods and render functional services toward our collective prosperity and well-being. In reality, this enhanced labour productivity will upscale inclusive economic growth as the main impetus to increase Gross Domestic Products (GDP) of national economy.

Fruitful engagement of youths with functional education and viable vocations is envisaged to develop a sense of responsibility and autonomy with exhibition of sterling tradition of qualitative character and learning in their living community. Schools, parents, public and private sectors, and significant others would have inculcated the core values for scholastic achievements, excellent performance, healthy living and existential survival in a changing world. Perhaps this eclectic orientation in all variants of humanity may empower, strengthen and renew the youths to help in eradicating the scourge of corruption which heightens excruciating lifestyles, poverty and criminality among the citizenry. This onerous task could eradicate the rural-urban drift of youths in search of greener pastures for non-existent jobs in cities. Such a disposition is more likely to leverage their intellectual capacity and entrepreneurial capability to enhance sustainable maintenance and functionality of infrastructural facilities in their locality. The community-oriented youths could become veritable vanguards for the safety, longevity and cost-effectiveness of critical infrastructures for national development, namely the oil and

gas pipelines; industrial machinery and tools; electric power lines; classrooms, hostels and laboratories; medical facilities and drugs; office equipment and furniture; vehicles and roads.

Meaningful orientation and empowerment of youths shall bless and inspire them with robust health, enriched operational consistency and fecundity of their innovative ideas. Effective utilisation of acquired professional knowledge, enterprising skills and industrial experiences in their chosen careers is more likely to promote good lifestyles, healthy living and emotional stability. Such a healthy professional strength of character and contentment will improve consistent work performance with requisite humility, integrity, harmony, peace of mind, dedication and vision to increase the fortunes of their learning centres, workplaces and living communities. When the rational risks of investing on their entrepreneurial intentions to solve human problems are fructified with appreciable wealth, courageous educated youths will become the critical change agents and visionary professionals to power total quality management of national economy and polity. Hence, re-oriented competent youths would serve as formidable catalysts for strategic thinking, planning, and execution of viable people-oriented policies, programmes and projects. These conscious leadership efforts could help to renovate dilapidated schools and hospitals, reconstruct failed roads and ports, resuscitate epileptic supplies of electricity and water, reform archaic judiciary and electoral systems, modernise security tools, and revive comatosed industries as platforms to create jobs and enhance the living standards of the people. From these landmark achievements, healthy youths will be regarded as nation builders as they contribute immensely towards eradication of unemployment, poverty, corruption, insecurity, infrastructural inertia and apathy towards standard education for all.

Effective orientation and empowerment of youths can strengthen them with audacious power of positive thinking, intellectual engagement, value addition and entrepreneurial mindset for creativity to explore new ideas, produce unique goods and render beneficial services that will make life much interesting, worthwhile and fulfilling to mankind. Such well oriented and empowered youths would not constitute human impediments to our collective change for sustainable national development. As Sote (2015) envisaged, the youngsters might not grow to become:

The crafty civil servants (who) may compromise the programmes of the government; the oil subsidy and import cartel (that) will resist a change in policy to run the local refineries efficiently; the military contractors that supply hardware, kits and foodstuffs for the prosecution of Boko Haram insurgency ... (p.64)

Youth empowerment is our solidarity for the creative minds to develop innovative solutions that promote our collective prosperity and well-being in a safe and secure environment. The severity of the prevailing social, economic and political challenges underscore the quest for empowerment as a strategic means for youth development. In other words, empowering youths is developing what is best in youths: their vision,

creative power, and drive to make the world an inclusive, sustainable place for themselves and future generations (Curtis, 2009). Consistent motivation, cordiality, patience and personal example depicted by acts of exemplary leadership would assist youths to gain useful knowledge, life skills, job training, ethical values and the confidence necessary to help them become enterprising, secure employment and create bright, rewarding futures for themselves. Such an orientation in youth empowerment should expose them to academic and vocational subjects, industrial experiences and professional trainings that will blend vibrant minds with creative skills required to solve varying problems confronting their communities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The critical role of an inclusive orientation in youth empowerment in subject curricula and co-curricular activities could engage them on strategic acquisition of great ideas, survival skills and right attitudes with positive mindset for healthy living and national development. Such a cream of proficient youths who are empowered and destined to excel, prosper and radiate stellar experiences of common humanity in a digital world. They would constitute the engine of growth that propels a strident mechanism of finding a lasting solution to the challenges of quality education, infrastructural management and sustainable development. In the same vein, these refined youths with requisite competence and orientation would imbibe the power of investment and culture of savings that could help to ensure total quality management of resources for our collective prosperity. These rational leaders with purposeful vision could renew the society with the mantra of reformation, re-orientation and rehabilitation in their policy framework for sustainable development, industrial peace and social harmony. The tendency is for the productive youths with vibrant personality to display effective leadership which will promote good governance and functioning infrastructures with critical opportunities for continuous development of cottage industries, economic growth, industrial peace and poverty reduction among the citizenry. A viable school-industry partnership should be a vital component of subject curricula that could address critical issues associated with human capacity development, industrialisation and shared prosperity of the citizenry in nation building.

Youths hold the key to greater growth and development of our community. They should be focused, diligent and committed with enduring patience, passion for discipline and integrity in good character. Our youths with good character, honour and vision of good life can serve the community at all levels of appointive and elective positions. It implies that parents always should spend valuable time with their children by having useful discussions with them, allowing them to express their own views, and counselling on ways of preventing early initiation into sex and marriage. The rising cases of vulnerability of females to domestic abuse, trafficking and sexual violence demands regular exhortative enlightenment on sound educational, behavioural, social and vocational values for effective citizenship. Hence, parents

should send and retain their children in standard schools with all the necessities of education to reduce the gradually increasing rates of out-of-school-age children, illiteracy, immorality, poverty and insecurity of life and property. Installation and use of information and communication technological (ICT) resources in schools and vocational enterprise institutions will empower teachers to boost instructional efficiency and cost-effectiveness, increase value addition to the national and global economy, and improve the well-being of the people.

Globally, politics is the rational appropriation of power and resources to govern and enhance the welfare, security and development of the community. Youths should not see their involvement in politics as a vocation, partisan tools of hate campaigns or as a replacement of their education and professional training for transient interests. They need to be well educated and trained with an entrepreneurial mindset for gainful employment, self-reliance and self-fulfillment. The culture of effective learning for gainful employment, wealth creation and useful life has to replace the present culture of nonchalance, mediocrity and materialism among the youths. Schools should intellectually engage the children and youths in educational competitions, skills acquisition training workshops, career fairs, seminars and learned conferences to promote the profundity and practicality of their potential talents, creative ideas and industrial skills as basis to earn gainful living with contentment. When in schools and workplaces, youths should be empowered with essential professional insights and strategic thinking ability to generate creative ideas and concepts that will facilitate quality learning and vocational counselling, imbibe a culture of business integrity, improve work performance, and enhance excellence in a digital world of limitless possibilities and achievements. Emerging sound professionals as diligent leaders and captains of industry will be inspired to promote our collective prosperity, industrial harmony, unity and moral integrity for national development. The functionality and relevancy of orientation in youth empowerment stipulate the need to diversify the school curriculum and national economy towards meaningful resolution of varying challenges confronting viable human development and environment.

The prevailing social, economic, and political crisis in Nigeria is a function of seamless leadership failure severally precipitated by illiteracy, corruption, poverty, unemployment, infrastructural inertial and insecurity of life and property. Across the nation, it is time to diversify and invest in quality education, developmental economy and democratic system of governance. Hence, the government is urged to prioritise and fund quality education and sound healthcare for all, train and renew human capital, fight the pervasive corruption to end the gross indiscipline in the public and private sectors, eradicate insurgency and insecurity, wholly repair the decrepit petrochemical refineries, revive moribund industries and comatosed business ventures, and ensure a steady power supply for domestic chores and industrial productions. Given their historical and contemporary realities, it is envisioned that the functionality and success of these efforts could produce proficient youths and

adults with an enduring entrepreneurial clout to generate innovative solutions aimed at smashing all barriers against functional education, balanced personality, ethical practices, job creation, excellent performances, purposeful governance and infrastructural efficiency. Emerging conducive environment for sustainable human capital development and productive workforce shall facilitate total quality management of resources for self-reliance and fulfillment of developmental objectives within the framework of the overall philosophy of building a great prosperous nation. These well-oriented and empowered youths would use their creative competence, industrial experiences and transformative capacity to improve labour productivity, provide job opportunities and enhance social harmony for quality human life.

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