YOUTHS PROTESTS IN NIGERIA: THE ENDSARS IN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This paper explored youths' protests in Nigeria. Unarguably, youths are assets imbued for national development arising from their strengths, potentials and initiatives when galvanize, empower and streamline into the national wealth. However, where neglected, unskilled and lacked the requisite social security in the event of poor governance, low education, poor investment environment and other essential qualities of lives, youths becomeliability, threat and object of national instability to their country. Against this backdrop, this paper attempts an assessment of youths' protests, its causes and implications in view of the agitations that swept across the nation tagged "EndSARS". This piece employs discourse analysis and uses secondary sources of data. While many researches had looked into youth protests mostly in the advanced countries, Africa generally, only a few assessed youth protests in Nigeria so far. Hence, this effort is undertaken to deepen the understanding of the EndSARs as a youths uprising in Nigeria. The paper argues that the protest is more of reflection of the societal decadence emanated from poor governance that had encapsulated the country for long than the behaviours of Special Anti –Robbery Squad (SARs) operative that ignited it. In the concluding remarks, the paper urges Nigerian leaders and citizens at the helms of authority to address human rights abuses perpetuated bythe SARs and other security agencies, youth unemployment, poverty and culture of impunity thatheralded and sustained societal ills that made lives miserable for youths given its future dangers if left unaddressed.

Keywords: Analysis, end SARs, mobilized, protests, threats, and youth

Introduction

Protestis a phenomenon traceable to theremote - less and ageless past.Scholar like Carothers and Young (2015) asserted that manyofthese protests have been profoundly important events in the countries where they have been taken place as the citizens in their large gatherings are determined to challenge fundamental policies or structures of power. The young ones being the least vulnerable layer of society; and in a case of reaction, degeneration – or deterioration of a culture they are certainly the last to be affected and no social malady can ever find its origin among the young (Noy,1970). According to Noy, youth throughout the ages across cultures possessed the sensitivity and openness to any forth –coming social or cultural change. Thus, when such social or cultural change is received hook, line and sinker, it becomes a danger where the bad sides became domineering given youthsstrengths, innovations and importantly as theassets of nations.

Retrospectively, according to Abayomi –Alli(2014) prior to the modern governments, pre-colonial African states had moments in history in which centralised and non –

centralised monarchical systems of government had no opportunity for an institutionalized absolutism rather had an organised system that allowed each society and its citizenry active participation through lineages, age – sets and titled societies(Abayomi –Alli, 2014). This was meant to ensure fairness and expression of citizens' views and feelings directly and indirectly on matterthrough which would –be rulers –monarchs or elders were to be designated, maintained or removed where necessary (Abayomi –Alli, 2014).

Irrefutably, denials of citizens' right of participation in affairs that collectively affect them especially the youth could be an invitation for protest. Submission of Kulish (2011) buttressed this best "with the political action movements of the Third Wave democracies there emerged three elements in common according to Kulish (2011)- the dominant role of youth; the absence of political parties as the main organizers; and the widespread use of social media as means of political action were all intertwine and latter of it is even more dangerous.

Therefore, it becomes easier with the widespread of social media in particular considered as a tool of social

engineering and participation in the conventional politics that excluded youths in the midst of endemic poverty, unemployment, and insecurity and many other problems thatendeared them to the wrongful pathways. In that sense, marginalization of the youth as important segments of the society could fuel instability. It is in line with the above thatOboli (2020) asserted that the bottom-line is lack of trust in the country leadership (Oboli, 2020). Therefore, protest is not a new occurrence rather is a popular form of social movement - use to express disapproval, rejection and invalidate a policy or decision particularly of the governments consider harmful or anti – people especially where it impinges on the citizens' rights, liberties and welfare.

It is from the above tradition that social protest of pro – independent movement for Nigeria was shaped and later metamorphosed into early political parties led by Nigerian youths. Prior to the 1960, Nigeria's independence, protests were rampant but mainly staged by activists against social issues like colonialism, slavery, rising inflation, unemployment and corruption in the colonial times (Akeredolu, 2021). While protestshave taken new dimensions from 1900 when the

masses were disgruntled over a government policy and took to the streets to make their grievances known (Adebowale, 2020),the modern era offers a broader pattern of protests in a manner that stimulates public awareness on issues of general concerns. Thus, the inability to manage the outbreak of protests –or social movement by nations is as a result of the interconnectedness of the protesters, and the emerging dimensions of protests across the globe especially in Africa where issues of insecurity, poor governance , social and economic inequalities are of grave concerns. Therefore, the new momentumof protests is driven by the internet, twitter, facebook andother moderndigital technology of global broadband speed.

In the recent time,social movement as an insurrections, agitations, and demonstrations had become part and parcel of most of the African states given the endemic level of poor governance, discrimination, marginalization, autocratic tendencies and constant abuse the citizens were subjected to by governments in Africa in the midst of avalanche human and economic resources.

Against this backdrop, protests has become a strategic tool in the hands of youths in Africa as means of participation in governance, legitimate means of expressing their views concerning government policies and fighting the aged long diseases of political marginalization, racketeering, unemployment, insecurity and poverty confronting them. Examples of rising youths protests are abound and demonstrated across African states such as the Tunisia Revolution , Arab Spring, the Syrian uprising, the Libyan revolution, the Egyptian revolution, protest in Gambia, Term Limit Guinea protest, and the Bahraini uprising being testaments to the rising of protests in Africa.

Sequel to the above, this paper explores the trends of youth protest, using the EndSARS uprising against the government, citing the excesses of SARS as the driving force of the agitation in Nigeria. While many scholars have looked into protests generally and youths protests mainly outside Nigeria,due credence has not be given to youths protest in Nigeria especially with the emerging trends of social media. Thus, the Endsarsagitations being a protest staged mainly by the youths offered the opportunity for thisstudy. The findings revealed that

youths possess the clout, populations and strength to transform the economy, create development and enhanced growth and at the same time could weaken the country where such potentials are allowed to be diverted to criminal activities that could undermine the prosperity of the country. Therefore, the paper presupposes that the deep outcry of EndSARs agitation is poor governance and portends future anarchy for the country if not urgently addressed. In a bid to address the issues raised, the paper after the introduction covers the followings: reviewed literature. Section three gives an overview of EndSARSas a youth protest. Section four examines some of the prompting factors for EndSARSProtests in Nigeria. Section five makes discursive overview of some dangers ahead, looking at the long term threats of the EndSARS. Section six summarizes the findings, and concludes the work.

EndSARsas Youth Protests and the Literature

In an attempt to justify the basis for this study, some extant scholarly works were consulted. This enabled the scholar to assess and compare what other scholars have said concerning the youth protest in Nigeria. Thus, literature provides the perspectives of scholars on the

subject of youth protest and by extension the EndSARs whichhas changed the narrative of protest in Nigeria from what it used to be. While scholars like McCarthy and Zald (1977)saw protests as a social movement that conveys a "set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and /or reward distribution of a society'. Tarrow's perception seems to be concise, clear and precise. Protest to him entails collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities (Tarrow, 1994).

To understand issues relating to protest scholars like Ebiede(2020) in his work titled "The Massive Protest in Nigeria explained" asserted that protests are not unusual in Nigeria as it has formed one of the most common forms of political engagements foryoung people who are often marginalized from the centre of power in Nigeria. He further adduced to the fact that government more often than not responded to past protests with violent repression. However, Ebede (2020) was not considering the EndSARs as a mother of all protests for the youths

and at the same time looking at some threats it evokes if not addressed.

Another relevant work was"Fayehun and Isiugo – Abanihetitled, Endsars: How Nigeria can tap into its youthful population". While this work acknowledged the youths as the major victims of extortion and police brutality in the country. These scholars further submitted that one of thecauses of the protest was the country's inability to provide the education needs, provide more jobs for the increasing workforce, and provide essential infrastructure and services such as roads, electricity, and stable food supplies. The work also warned the state of implications of demographic fatigue - a condition where the state lacks the financial muscle tocater for its population growth and the capacity to manage available resources. Though, the work gives vivid assessment of endSARs, but their views were more on implications of youth populations. In consonance to the above the present work intends to deepen the thoughts.

To Chisom (2021), his paper entitled: 'Democracy and Right to Freedom of Expression: A case study on the Nigerian Youth Protest on Police Brutality' emphasized

that the protest was caused by flagrant violation of human rights despite the practice of democracy in Nigeria. The work further makes a glimpse at human right situation in Nigeria. He was concerned with the fact that despite the existence of several constitutional provisions for protection of human rights, the agencies of government breached the inalienable rights of the citizens in Nigeria. He however, submitted that it is necessary for the government to re –orientate the security agents through training on the needs to always respect the rights of Nigerians.

The work of Valenzuela et al, 2012, titled ' The Social Media Basis of Youth Protest Behaviour : The Case of Chile. Their major concern in this work was the import of social media to protests. According to them, young people through social media created the kinds of collective experiences that are necessary conditions for successful protest movements. Although, this work is revevant to this current work as it reveals the roles of social medial in youth protest. However, this work centres on Chile.

Uwazuruike(2020), entitled: EndSARs: The Movement Against Police Brutality in Nigeria. In this work, the

scholar gives a critical assessment of EndSARs which according to him, has moved from mere protest against police brutality to a movement for social justice and government reforms. Although, there are convergence between this work and the current study, however, this current work tries to look at the danger that come with the protest, considers endsars as a youth protests of its kind and beyond the clamour for social justice ad systemic abuse.

Furthermore, Onubogu (2020) work "Protests Test Nigeria's Democracy and Its Leadership in Africa. This work assesses endsars protests as more of fundamental crisis of governance and abuses of human rights by security forces. He adduces to the fact that the Nigeria's protests against police brutality were the largest in the country's history before security force.

EndSARsas a Youth Protest in Nigeria: A Brief Background

The Nigerian Police Force emanated from such acrimonious tendencies and context in which violence, suppression, duplicity and impunity were merged as the sordid means of maintaining colonial power (Osha,

2020). It would be recalled that SARS was of the police unit formed in 1984 as a semi – autonomous tactical police team. The establishment was aimed at curbing a national up swell in robberies, kidnappings, carjacking, and more (Ward, 2020). In the course of time, the SARs have witnessed lots of transformation based on the changing levels of criminalities in the country and leadership. However, in the recent times, the goal for its formation has been gradually supplanted by greed, corruption, and intimidation of the populace they were meant to protect. This act of unsavour and injustice alone had continued to fuel citizenry agitationsagainst the police force to the contemporary time. Consequently, the emergence of social media has made the retaliations worst as it developed the youth knowledge of technology, advancing and projecting their voices globally on issues of concerns in the country. The power of the internet and digital technology has empowered the youths to organize protests seamlessly using hashtag.

Thus, the hashtag,EndSARs, first became a popular epithet on Twitter in 2017. Thereafter, it emerged as a social movement in Nigeria and it eventually recorded a greater momentum when a video went viral of how

SARs operatives were shooting a young man in a white SUV, made away with his car, and left him dead on the road (Abbo, et al, 2020). After the video was shared across social media platforms, resulting in criticism of SARS officers, Nigerian government officials claimed that the video was fake and eventually the person who filmed it was arrested (Banka, 2020). The denials and actions was what eventually triggered the anger of the Nigerian citizen (Banka, 2020). This becomes so given several reports against the SARs without commensurate sanctions or trial against them. Thus, bringing into reflection many incidencesthe years of malfeasances and degree of experiences innocent youths have suffered in the hands of SARS, which spread and received wider participation on social medial metamorphosing into public outcry calling for its disbandment. Prior to this time, the EndSARShashtag had been in circulation since at least 2017 and the Nigerian government has reportedly disbanded and reinstated SARS four times in the past four years (Adebayo, 2020). The movement to end SARS was born in 2017 from the hash tag Endsars which trended on Twitter and was employed to track SARS noticeable wholesome activities.The government promised to investigate reports of impunity, lack of

accountability of the SARS and pledged to disband it following reports of corruption (Banka, 2020). Consequently, the refusal of the government to take urgent actions to stem the SARS activities, the crisis of deep socio –e economic challenges of the country became a mixed bag feelings that fueled the agitation culminated in the EndSARS protest as the biggest and longest – running series of national protests in a generation (Adegoke, 2020).

Endsars Movement in Nigeria: The Prompting Factors

The deep gang - up that resulted into what is popularly called EndSARS Protest today, is beyond the immediate clamouring for SARS disbandment as a cause. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the prompting factors to determine both the immediate and the remote causal factors. In a nutshell, the immediate cause of the EndSARS protest could be traced to the activities and actions revolving around the operation of Special Anti – Robbery Squad (SARS) as earlier observed.Thus, resulting into agitation mounting by the Nigerian youths for its immediate disbandment. Therefore, the SARS brutality is the immediate cause of theEndSARS protest

because rather than tackling the epidemic of armed robbery in the country which it was created for, the activities of the SARS unit became another robbery unit, extorting at gun point and engaging in extrajudicial killings. It is in line with this submission that Mayowa (2020) noted that the protest was triggered by the public lack of confidence in the SARS operatives due to prolonged acts of coercion and intimidation of Nigerian citizens. Beyond this, the smearing acts of indiscipline and corruption had dented the image of the personnel most. This had mounted the levels of hatred for the SARS personnel by citizens particularly youths most of who had experienced frustrations in their hands. For example, between 2017 and 2020, SARS operatives were found to have committed at least 82 acts of torture or extrajudicial execution (Effoduh, 2020). Some of these acts were even unknown as over the years, SARS officials have been implicated in widespread human rights violations and have garnered a reputation for arbitrary arrests, torture, rape, extortion, unlawful detention, and extrajudicial killings (Ayandele,2021). While there was a numbers of petitions and several calls for their disbandment by the government as a result of these corruptible acts, such appeals were falling on deaf

ears. Irrefutably, it was the killing of the young man in Ughelli, Delta State, on October 3, 2020 as went viral on the social media that caused the immediate reactions that culminated into the protest. Beyond the immediate cause discussed above, many factors had remotely fuelled the outburst that resulted into the EndSARs some of which are identified below:

Unemployment and Underemployment: One of the fast growing monsters bedeviling the youth is unemployment and underemployment. The current situation of a terribly high level of youth unemployment facing Nigeria is worrisome because a "high youth unemployment rate is synonymous with increased insecurity and poverty (African Heritage Institution, 2021). Many viable Nigerian youths are found roaming the streets on daily basis as they could not get meaningful jobs after obtained various degrees. The Chartham House's submission painted the scenario in a more despicable way when it observed that "if Nigeria's unemployed youth were its own country, it would be larger than Tunisia or Belgium(CNN,News, 2020). This is nothing than the true state of unemployment in the country. According to National Bureau of Statistics

(2020), the Nigerian unemployment rate as at the second quarter of 2020 was 27.1% showing that 21.7 million Nigerians remained unemployed. It further revealed that only 14.7 million were fully employed in a number of 40 million eligible youths to work (African Heritage Institution, 2021). In summary, NBS(2020) stated in clear terms that theyouth population is also 64% of total unemployed Nigerians suggesting that the most agile working – class population in the country remains unemployed (Umar, 2021) . It is difficult to be denied that such severe hardship and chronic unemployment was solidly one of the major factors that prepared the way for the protest and if not addressed remains an invitation of future anarchy.

Politics of Exclusion/ Marginalization: It is indeed politics of exclusion and marginalization of the viable segment of the population –youths that could inform such strong feelings and fraternal deprivation that strongly motivates the youth into street activism. In a country where, the larger army of youths could not boast of three square meals, while there are people at the helms of affairs lavishing wealth on mundane and inconsequential things. In such scenario, there is bound

to be a serious problem sooner or later. Youths are not given a voice in the political arena neither are considered important in policies formulation nor implementation. Today, it is no longer news that the government budgets more money for the members of the National Assembly than for health and education (Umar, 2021) that directly affects the total well –being of the general populace. Hence, the nature of politics in Nigeria is the one built around divisions and personal gains at the detriment of national development. Therefore, there is a total breakdown of trust in the country between the governed and the govern across the board. Today, the downtrodden perceives that than delivery of public goods, politics has become more of a crass opportunism for the leaders to loot, acquire wealth and place their own people at the strategic positions in the country and nothing more. The attitudes of many leaders in the contemporary times have not proved this to the contrary as politics has truly become who gets what, how and the means. Thus, the EndSARSto the youths was an apple opportunity for them to express their grievances, unhappiness and anger about the parlous states of affairs of the country.

Corruption: Corruption is anendemic and monster nations continue to grapple with for a long period of time across the globe. It has fueled and sustained the levels of poverty facing most of the less privileged in the country today especially in developing countries like Nigeria where institutions are susceptible to manipulations. Corruption cases in Nigeria have gone beyond the jamboree of constituting anti –corrupt agencies but rather needs a whole societal approach to reform given its spread and systemic nature. The violence that erupted was as a result of the corrupt activities of the SARS as general fall out of wider failures of governance(Onubogu, 2020). It hasfestered across the nook and cranny of governance and even emboldened the criminal elements within the security agencies. The country is blessed with both human and natural resources, yet many of the masses are living in perpetual suffering due to the privileged few who that often lay siege on the wealth of the nation concomitantly and cooperatively.

Social Injustice and Abuses: There is injustice and breach of human rights left, right and centre in Nigeria. Although, human rights abuses by men in the uniform

dates back to military dictatorships in Nigeria. However, in the case of endsars, earlier to the protest, SARS operatives were known for engaging in warrantless searches, and make arrest based on suspicion of guilt, tattoos or dreaded -locks by their victims who were mostly youths. They were also known to mount illegal road blocks, conducted unwarranted checks and searches, arrest and detain without warrant or trial, rape women, and extort young male Nigerians for driving exotic vehicles and using laptops and i –phones (Chisom, 2021). More so, they were accused of intimidation of even those well-dressed have their privacies invaded and intimidating often on unfounded and unsubstantiated allegations. This has ranged on for years and the outcry for checkmating their excesses have been on since 2017. These acts of abuse of human rights had raged for too long without adequate attention from the government to addressing them. All these were happening despite the existence of several constitutional provisions in the country.

Poverty and Inequality: The prevalence of inequality and poverty in Nigeria continue as two evils that had defiled solutions. No amount of equipment imported in

this world to fight insurgency, banditry or any insecurity crises would yield any meaningful result (Afemai Reporter, 2021) if poverty and inequality continue to fester. This is truism given the impact of poverty on citizens. Poverty fuels inequality and both of them traumatize the less privilege(Zoaka, 2019). Also, it could push citizens into thievery and other unwholesome acts of crimes. According to the United Nation Human Rights Commission economic inequality in Nigeria has got to its apogee while Oxfam denoted that in 2019 close to 70% of the country's population lives below the poverty line (CNN, News,2020). With hashtags in one hand and a will to defend the defenceless in the other hand, young people have projected the crises of Africa's injustices to the world stage (Okunola&Mlaba, 2020). Elites have beautiful mansions in gated communities, drive expensive cars, and travel abroad for health care at detriment of the poor masses. Poverty and hardship are national security threats that government at all levels should look into. All these were done at the detriment of the large masses who are reeling in endemic poverty. Hence, the desire to get out from the entrenched political order that they believed has not served their interests further fueled the zeal for the protest (Ojewale, 2020).

Incontrovertibly, EndSARs was perceived by the youths as a way of rupturing the system that does not favour their interests.

Insecurity and Culture of Impunity: In a period every country is aiming at high quality of life and education for its citizenry, strong based and diversified economy, internal cohesion and political stability to promote wealth, Nigeria is overwhelmed by diverse insecurity crises. There is no two ways about it; a country cannot be in such level of socio – economic challenges built around poverty, unemployment and poor governance without experiencing insecurity problems. Eric (2011) corroborates this view point when he affirmed that violent unrest in Nigeria are mostly due to the fallout of frustration with corruption and the attendant social malaise of poverty and unemployment. The level of insecurity ranging from banditry, terrorism, kidnapping and the likes are with impunity with everyone under frustration in the country.

EndSARs Movement and Youths in Nigeria: The Dangers Ahead

Prior the Endsars, Nigeria has witnessed several protests in the past. However, the EndSARS protests has become a unique one as it attracted a wider publicity, gainednational and global audience with an open support from the entertainment industry, religious organizations and other several organizations across the globe throwing their weights behind the campaigns. Interestingly, the protest had shown the strength of the Nigerian youths and proved what they are capable of doing. While Samuel (2020) had argued that the mass civil protest against SARS was spurred on the ground of brutality against the public and youths in particular. Besides the above, various remote and immediate causes of the protests have been exhaustively identified by scholars and some of them have equally been discussed in this paper. Fundamentally, the protest was staged in disparage to the prolonged, continuous and unsavour acts of SARS indiscipline, extrajudicial killings, intimidation, culture of torture indiscriminately of the youth populace. Beyond the above, it was a protest staged against the general wrath of the country particularly in defiance of the elite in Nigeria whose leadership styles as perceived by the larger youth populace had sustained the pauperized nature,

unemployment and poverty status through acts of corruption and political racketeering. The trashing of the Oba palace, a respected traditional ruler of Lagos - a sacred place ought to be revered explained the symbolic mood that poverty is a threat to national security when left to fester. It is against this backdrop that total attention should be given to some of the elements that served as cannon –fodders for the crisis to thrive as it has the capacity to sustain it in the future where the grievances, challenges and yearnings of the youths are not adequately addressed.

Patriotic Spirit and Culture of Rights: The protest was not only a political rebellion, but also a social as well as a radical movement staged to assert the aged long deprived recognition of disability rights, human rights and importantly the absolute rights of the youth populace. It was unique in a way as it precluded tribal sentiments, ethnic attachments and every act of religious bigotry that may rubbish the newly found spirit of patriotism that bounds the vision for a better Nigeria of their dream. Unlike previous protests inundated by religious divides - predominantly Christians South and Muslim north - as fodder for clashes of near bestial

proportions; the youth were able to build a formidable common front of mass movement that cuts across the divides of creed or ethnicity (Egbunike, 2020). From the above, it could be seen succinctly that in a case of collective assault, collectivism becomes a bestial tool of war.

Accountability and Reinvention of Social Contract: The Endsars protest has shown that social contract remains the first systematic explication and defense of democracy as truly a government professed by the people. The movement expanded to include demands for good and accountable governance as SARS officials were equally accused of profiling young Nigerians, mostly males based on fashion choices, tattoos and hairstyles without them being sanctioned by the government (Chisom, 2021). As a member of the community therefore, the youths have the right to a protest and query the uncivilized action of the government. The Endsars movement is just a warning for the leaders to live by the terms and conditions agreed upon in the law of social contract as co –signed with the people. This is necessary given the venom outbursts of the youths through the protest as it saw the political class

jittery, running, and scared. More so, the youth action is a reflection of their consciousness as to the rights to demand a wholesale change in how Nigeria is governed. It is needless to affirm that the crisis is a consequence of deep citizens' anger and lingering frustration against failed expectations and crass institutional decay (Igwe,2020). As asserted above, it was nothing than a show of trust deficit and distrust in act of governance that the youths resolved to fight.

Force or Coercion: The use of coercion or force is gradually waning as a western approach known to solving problems in a country like Nigeria. This is because the youths are getting radicalized by the socio – economic and political conditions of their environment. Force is also fizzling out as men in uniform are not angels but members of the sociological environment who in a way suffered the collective mess of bad governance. Besides, the use of maximum force is becoming obsolete in the contemporary times in Nigeria as most of the Nigerian youths of nowadays were not familiar with the era of military rule and knowledgeable in the events of 30 months civil war of 1967 -1970 unlike about 30% of Nigerians who were adults and

perhaps have experienced military rule that seemed to have etched deep into their psyche (Agbalajobi, 2020). To buttress the above submission, for example, the allegation and counter allegation of killings from the Lekki Toll – gate, has shown that the presence of security personnel to the youths was nothing than to protect and serve them and as a result they are not deterred by the use of force in any forms not even the imposed curfew could dissuade their vigour. No wonder there outright disregard to the curfew announced by the state government in the event of the hit of the agitations. This is a call for the government to adopt a more civilize and nuanced approaches in dealing with issues relating to the youth given its implication when go weird.

Social Media: Social media such as Facebook, Google plus, Twitter, blogs, chat rooms and others are increasingly playing the role of the public sphere where public issues are debated outside the control and the dominance of government (Hari, 2014). On Twitter alone, there were about 28 million tweets bearing the hash tag ofendSARs by then (Chisom, 2021). This was a demonstration that the world has not only become a global village as issues are easily reported with the

presence of social handles but it had helped to galvanise the young people on issues of collective concerns.. The EndSARS protest was unique for the fact that the protesters were largely young, educated and digitally Savvy(Makura, 2020). And that allowed them to use these social handles for fundraising and mobilization in a manner unexpected as in just a few days into the protests; activists were able to secure a helpline to respond to emergencies, legal and other services. Social medial allowed financial supports to be raised to feed the protesters, pay for the hospital treatment of those wounded and pay for the services of their defense lawyers (Ajisafe et al, 2021). This was relatively new, innovative and at same time could threaten the sovereignty of the country. For the fact that young Nigerians are well equipped for the internet age with a plethora of tools and skills is giving way for the social media to become a hub of social and political activism in the near future as it enables them to compete in today's globalized world (Laketu,2020). Undeniably, the social media access to information is a right of the citizenry, however, the fast role it has played in public space in terms of social interaction, information sharing, fast and easy communication poses security threats to

the government and the overall unity of the country. This is true given the level of divisiveness in a country like Nigeria. It is on this premise that the government should engage in strategic communication with the people, win their trust and build confidence in order to douse the proliferation of fake news that portend grave consequences for the country as displayed in the monumental destruction of some of the country's beautiful edifices.

Security: In terms of safety and security, Nigeria is one of the most unsafe, insecure and dangerous places to live in the world – ranked 3rd of the most terrorized country globally, behind Afghanistan and Iraq (African Heritage Institution, 2021). The inability of government to provide a secure and safe environment for lives, properties and the enabling business environment has made the citizens to put their destinies into their own hands. The attendant action of jail breaks, destroying of government monuments, killings and burning of police stations across the country during the EndSARS protest explained the extent of radicalization of the youths and that potentially foreshadows dangers for overall security of the country(Ojewale, 2020). Importantly too, the

EndSARS protest has shown ingenuity of young Nigerians and the vulnerability of the Nigerian security personnels especially the policemen who are at the epicenter of the crisis. Many lives were lost and properties destroyed at the height of what started as peaceful marches for the end to police brutality(Ward, 2020). The above had demonstrated the orgy nature of the country at the moment as further witnessed in the daily killings and burning of police stations by unknown gunmen especially in the South –East of the country. On a whole, this may not be divorced from the infractions recorded from the EndSARS protests as it did not leave without demonising the government, creating the worst impression about the ugly state of affairs of both the country and the policemen after demystifying the strength of the youths.

United Goal and Unity of Purpose: The EndSARS protest was a unique one despite the fact that there was no central leadership or structure to coordinate the exercise. From inception, EndSARS protesters denounced the possibility of having a leader or a spokesperson. The rationale for this perhaps is traceable to trust deficit among themselves in their determination

to fight a common course that would enhance workable system of governance in Nigeria. Regardless of all odds, young Nigerians in all six geopolitical zones united around a common goal and purpose to end police intimidation, oppression, brutality and bad governance in the country. The rejection of a leader or spoke person is to discourage the possibility of the government to clamp down or manipulate the protest. There was good coordination and arrangements were made for food, water and music. More so, there were medical personnel on standby, ambulances and mobile toilets for convenience(Agbalajobi, 2020). Conversely, such display of sophistication calls for a sober and urgent reflection on the part of government that truly the country is sitting on a keg of gunpowder.

Diaspora Support: The widespread of unemployment, poverty, insecurity, corruption, extra -judicial killings and general bad governance of the country were factors that led most Nigerians out of the country to seek greener pastures in foreign lands. Today, many Nigerians are in virtually all countries across the globe reading happenings across the country. While they are outside of the country the situations at home made them

part and parcel of the agitation as social media gave a global coverage of domestic issues. Consequently, when the EndSARS protest broke out it attracted massive global support with solidarity protests from Nigerians in UK, US, Germany, and other parts of the world (CNN, News, 2020). This shows the levels of interconnectedness of diaspora Nigerians to issues at home as many individuals support donations came from Nigerians in diaspora. This is a serious warning for the country to do the needful in relations to youths' empowerment and capacity to encourage partnership or collaborations of Nigerians at home and abroad in ways beneficial to the country's survival course and not otherwise.

Conclusion

The EndSARs movement was a youth protest no doubt. It is a protest staged to register youths' state of unhappiness, neglect and general relegation of their collective strengths and potentials in the overall administration of the country to the extent of being intimidated, targeted and abused by government agency like SARs. In the first place, there is a collective assault and a disproportionate recognition of youths 'population

despite their huge potentials and strategic roles in a country. This stems from poor policies of the government and leadership as it could be seen in the level of unemployment, poverty, insecurity and injustice confronting the youth populace. While the EndSARs protest is not the first youth movement against the government, it is the first of its kind in terms of coordination, mobilization, obstruction of laws and orders and importantly destruction of monumental symbols of the country. It is true that the immediate cause was the clarion call for the disbandment of SARS personnel whose reputations has been soiled by acts of indiscipline, brutality, corruption and malfeasance. Beyond this however, findings indicated that the protest was heightened due to governance deficits and break down of value system that permeated injustice, corruption, and state of affairs of the citizens 'especially that of the youth that had endeared to a point of anarchy. The monumental destruction, killings and burning of police stations across the country calls for holistic reforms and resuscitation of justice system, respect of human dignity, police reforms, right –based policing and above all meaningful engagement of the youths populace in heart and soul of the governance of

the country and building of lives – impacts projects. It is also worthy of note that looting of innocent individuals, private properties and general looting spree perpetrated by some youths in the disguise of endsars protests, showcases the levels of moral decadence and abyss the country has fallen into and the general attitudes of some of the contemporary youths whose senses of humanism had been clouded by the love for money as reflected in kidnapping, banditry, killings and maiming of innocent individuals in quest for quick and fast wealth.

In tandem with the above, the government across all levels should be alive to perform their responsibilities and address culture of impunity that elicited and sustain insecurity problems through the challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequalities and makes the laws as enshrined in the constitution to work effectively and unabashedly in order to forestall the orgy of future anarchy looming over the country.

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