

SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND THE 2020 #ENDSARs PROTESTS IN IBADAN METROPOLIS: IMPLICATIONS FOR PEACEBUILDING

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Abstract

Prior to the 2020 #EndSARs protests in Nigeria, various degrees of human rights abuses and impunity against the youths by the defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad unit of the Nigeria Police Force were rampant in the country, with virtually no SARS' officer facing prosecution for violating the law. Consequently, in October 2020, there was an eruption of the #EndSARs protests by the youths in Nigeria, especially in the southern part of the country against the SARS over the gruesome murder of a young man in Ughelli, Delta State. While studies have blamed the 2020 #EndSARs protests on the abuses of the youths' rights by the officers of the defunct SARS, scarcely has any study looked in the direction of the prevailing social inequality at the time as a remote precursor to the protests, particularly in Ibadan, where this paper is centred. This paper therefore, examines social inequality as a precipitating remote factor for the 2020 #EndSARs protest in Ibadan Metropolis. The paper is theoretical in approach hence, secondary sources of data (i.e. published articles, textbooks, reports, the internet, etc.) were utilized, content-analysed and deductions drawn. Findings implicated the prevailing social inequality in Ibadan at the time as largely responsible for the 2020 #EndSARs protest in Ibadan Metropolis, notwithstanding its purported immediate trigger – rights abuses by the Police. It is therefore, recommended among others, that the Oyo state government should make concerted efforts in containing the high rates of unemployment, underemployment and poverty driving social inequality among the youths in the state.

Keywords: #EndSARs; Ibadan metropolis; Peace building; Protest; Social inequality

Introduction

Globally, calls for higher standards of living are frequently the focus of civil disobedience and protests, as exemplified by the works of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. on non-violent actions which changed the course of the oppressed in India and the USA respectively. The same clamours for improved quality of life brought about the sustained protests against the South Africa's apartheid era 1948-1994 where the indigenous blacks were not allowed the same rights and privileges with the colonial minority whites; the Libyan revolution of 2011 over the gross misrule of late Gaddafi and the need for a regime change; and the United States of America's 'Blacks Lives Matter' protests of 2020 over the gruesome murder of Mr. George Floyd by Derek Chauvin, an officer of the Minneapolis Police (Williams, Mezey & Singh, 2021).

In Nigeria, experiences of protests over unfavourable policies of government are equally replete. For instance, there were the Aba Women riot of 1929 over imposition of unfavourable tax policy by the colonial government and the Egba/Abeokuta Women riot of 1947/8 over imposition of obnoxious tax policy by the colonial government. Similarly, we had the 'Ali Must Go' protests of 1978 over arbitrary increments in tuition fees in tertiary institutions; the subsidy-removal protest tagged (#OccupyNigeria) protest of 2012 over increment in pump price of fuel by the government; and the the #Not-Too-Young-To-Run protests of 2017/2018 aimed to amend the nation's constitution to accommodate and mainstream the youth age-range for political contest eligibility; etc.

Conflicts and acts of terrorism have been ubiquitous in Nigeria in recent years, which many academics have occasionally interpreted as a form of protest against the country's unequal resource distribution, corruption, injustice, and extreme alienation of its people from the nation's common patrimony (Pu & Scanlan, 2012; Power, 2018; Mamokhere, 2020; Tanyi, et al., 2022). However, because of inadequate methods for handling these demonstrations, they frequently turn into social malaise with detrimental impact on the nation (Alao, Atere & Alao, 2012; Aro, 2013; Aytac, Schiumerini & Stokes, 2018; Tanyi, et al., 2022).

As a corollary from the above, inadequate methods for handling demonstrations in Nigeria by the Nigerian government turned the 2020 #EndSARs peaceful protest into a violent one. In October 2020, there was an eruption of the #EndSARs protests by the youths in Nigeria, especially in the southern part of the country against the unprofessional conducts and human rights abuses against the youths by the defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad

(SARS) unit of the Nigeria Police Force. The 2020 #EndSARs protest which is unarguably, regarded as one of the famous in the history of the country was geared toward the need to bring about significant changes in governance and people-oriented policies (Tanyi, et al., 2022).

Nigeria's economic disparity is unprecedented, with unemployment rates increasing from 23.1% in Q3 2019 to 27.1% in Q2 2020, and underemployment rising from 21.1% to 28.6% within the referenced period (Tanyi, et al., 2022). Additionally, the unemployment rates in Q4 2022 was 5.3%, Q1 2023 standing at 4.1%, Q2 2023 standing at 4.2%, Q3 2023 stood at 5%, Q1 2024 stood at 5.3% while Q2 2024 stood at 4.3% respectively (NBS, 2024; Nigerian Economic Submit Group, 2024). Consequently, the combined unemployment rate and time-related underemployment rate of the labour force nationally stood at 18.2% in Q4 2022 and 15.8% in Q1 2023 (NBS, 2023). While the combined unemployment rate and time-related underemployment rate of the labour force nationally was 15.3% in Q1 2024, as against 17.3% in Q3 2023 (NBS, 2024).

Furthermore, in all these harrowing experiences captured above, young people, particularly those without productive employment are mostly affected, with 13.9 million unemployed by Q2 2020. Similarly, youth unemployment rates for Q4 2022 was 8.3%, Q1 2023 standing at 6.9%, Q2 2023 standing at 7.2%, Q3 2023 standing at 8.6, Q1 2024 standing at 8.4% while Q2 2024 stood at 4.3% respectively (Tanyi, et al., 2022; NBS, 2024; Nigerian Economic Submit Group, 2024).

The main objective of the study was therefore, to examine social inequality and the 2020 #EndSARs protests in Ibadan Metropolis, with a focus at its implications for peace building. The specific objectives included:

- (a) To examine the concept of social inequality as the cause of the 2020 #EndSARs protest in Nigeria and particularly, Ibadan.
- (b) To identify the role of stakeholders in mitigating the 2020 #EndSARs violence in Ibadan Metropolis.
- (c) To suggest measures that can be adopted toward forestalling future occurrence of related protest in Ibadan Metropolis.

Literature Review

Literature review is often considered the heart of a research. It has to do with a researcher relating their work to those of others and build on what they have done. To this end, the investigator will have to deploy the research strategy such that it takes an informed view of the literature on the subject vis-à-vis unraveling the achievements and lacunae that can be found in the works of previous investigators (Albert, 2014). In this section, attempt is made clarify some of the concepts used in this study as follows:

Social Inequality

Social inequality is a social condition of unequal distribution of wealth and other socio-economic and political privileges among members of a society. Where the existence of such dichotomies among members of a society is embedded in the social structure of a society, such is referred to as 'structural/social inequality.' Nigeria's economic disparity is unprecedented, with unemployment rates increasing from 23.1% in Q3 2019 to 27.1% in Q2 2020, and underemployment rising from 21.1% to 28.6% (Tanyi, et al., 2022).

Additionally, the unemployment rates in Q4 2022 was 5.3%, Q1 2023 standing at 4.1%, Q2 2023 standing at 4.2%, Q3 2023 stood at 5%, Q1 2024 stood at 5.3% while Q2 2024 stood at 4.3% respectively (NBS, 2024; Nigerian Economic Submit Group, 2024). In the same vein, youth unemployment rates for Q4 2022 was 8.3%, Q1 2023 standing at 6.9%, Q2 2023 standing at 7.2%, Q3 2023 standing at 8.6, Q1 2024 standing at 8.4% and Q2 2024 stood at 4.3% respectively (Tanyi, et al., 2022; NBS, 2024; Nigerian Economic Submit Group, 2024).

Consequently, in all the forgoing harrowing experiences, young people, particularly those without productive employment became mostly affected, with 13.9 million unemployed by Q2 2020 (Tanyi, et al., 2022). Retrospectively, approximately 91 million Nigerians were estimated to be living in extreme poverty in February 2019 (living on less than \$1 per day), surpassing India as the country with the highest rate of poverty in the world at the time (Olasehinde-Williams, 2019; World Bank, 2022; Agidi, 2023; Ogunoye & Adeyemi, 2024).

Furthermore, the combined unemployment rate and time-related underemployment rate of the labour force nationally in Q4 2022 stood at 18.2% and 15.8% in Q1 2023 (NBS, 2023). Similarly, the combined unemployment rate and time-related underemployment rate of the labour force nationally was 15.3% in Q1 2024, as against 17.3% in Q3 2023 (NBS, 2024).

Nigeria was ranked as a country to watch in the Fund for Peace' global fragility index (Figure 2) in 2018 due to its poor ability to manage conflict, create and carry out public policy, provide basic services, or effectively respond to difficulties and crises (Olasehinde-Williams, 2019; Pompe & Turkewitz, 2022).

With the above expositions, it was therefore, no surprise that Nigeria was ranked 91 out of 156 countries on the 2018 World Happiness Report (Olasehinde-Williams, 2019; United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network, 2019). While in 2022, Nigeria got a worse ranking on the 2022 World Happiness Report as she (Nigeria) occupied 114 positions out of 149 countries surveyed (United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network, 2022).

Similarly, even though Nigeria ranking got improved on the 2023 World Happiness Report by its rank of 95 out of 137 countries surveyed (United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network, 2023); this seemingly improved rank notwithstanding, was even still higher than those of the war-torn Russia and Ukraine who occupied 70 and 92 positions respectively. And the 2024 World Happiness Report ranked Nigeria 9 in Africa, and 102 out of the total 143 countries surveyed (United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network, 2024).

It appears the undesirable factors that plunged majority of Nigerians into abject poverty before 2020 have largely remained unchanged, as 133 million Nigerians were multidimensionally poor in 2022 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). No wonder the Global Hunger Index (GHI) in 2022 reported that Nigeria's poverty and hunger level was 'serious', ranked 103 out of 121 countries (Guardian, 2022); while in 2024, Nigeria ranked 110 out of 127 countries surveyed (Global Hunger Index, 2024). In the same vein, the World Bank, in its 2022 Poverty and Prosperity Report, revealed that Nigeria contributed three million people to global extreme poverty hence, the country is home to a large share of the global extreme poor (World Bank, 2022).

The nature of the unfortunate experiences described above may have reflected the mind of De Tocqueville (1954, p. 266) when he said:

Remove the secondary causes that have produced the great convulsions of the world and you will almost always find the principle of inequality at the bottom. Either the poor have attempted to plunder the rich, or the rich to enslave the poor. If, then, a society can ever be founded in which everyman shall have something to keep and little to take from others, much will have been done for peace (Stewart, 2009, p. 1).

The foregoing is in consonance with the submission of Gurr (1970) in his ‘theory of relative deprivation’ that people rebel when there is a growing perception of a widening discrepancy between their expectations (mostly in economic terms) and actual rewards because of discrimination (Onapajo & Uzodike, 2017). The encapsulated economic inequality indices and the submission by Gurr (1970) above are believed by some scholars to perhaps, be remotely responsible for the eruption of the 2020 #EndSARs protests in Nigeria generally and Ibadan in particular.

Protest

The right to protest is within the ambit of enabling laws and global treaties, especially as it concerns human rights violations. Protest is a form of individual or collective action or reaction to perceived unfavorable policy concerns and aims to convey thoughts, opinions or principles of disagreement, resistance or condemnation against a party, entity or government (Kiai, 2012). According to Aidonojie, Ikubanni & Oyebade (2022), a protest is a formal, nonviolent complaint, declaration, or expression made by a person or group of individuals expressing disapproval with an act that has been performed or is about to be performed.

Protest can take the form of interactions between and among people with similar interests either over the social media platforms such as Twitter (X), Instagram, Facebook, etc with the aim of ventilating their displeasures or grievances online over perceived unpleasant situations that they have no power to change; or via an offline assemblage of like-minds employing blockades, rallies, boycotts, etc to express grievances. Protest is a valid and essential means for citizens to demand solutions to problems that the government or decision-makers, especially in democracies overlook.

The right to peaceful protest is universally recognized, particularly in democracies, as a means to address state wrongs. This is supported by Articles 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and various international laws, including Article 11 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights. In Nigeria, sections 39 and 40 of Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution (as amended) guarantee freedom of expression, assembly, and association, allowing people to protest peacefully (Aidonojie, Ikubanni & Oyebade, 2022).

It is however, pertinent to recall that despite the universal recognition of peaceful protest as a mechanism of calling state to order where it appears government vies off the mark of good public policies and good governance, the military regime of General Olusegun

Obasanjo on 16th February, 1979 made a Public Order Decree whose aim was to control public assemblies, meetings, and processions in Nigeria. To this end, Section 1 of the Public Order Decree empowered state governments to not only grant a license to any association that intends to host a public gathering, but also to specify the event's route and timing (International Labour Organisation, 2021).

However, in the case of *Inspector General of Police vs All Progressive Peoples Party & Ors*, the Court of Appeal, Abuja Division, quashed the 1979 Public Order Decree in 2007. The court ruled that the decree violated provisions of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) and other pertinent international laws to which Nigeria is a signatory. But surprisingly, however, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has persisted in suppressing or thwarting nonviolent demonstrations by intimidating or detaining demonstrators (Uwandu, 2020).

The non-adherence to the provisions of the Nigeria's 1999 Constitution (as amended) which guarantee freedom of expression, assembly, and association; and the Appeal Court ruling in 2007 espousing the above fundamental human rights of citizens, therefore, led the Nigeria Police to suppress with force, the 2020 #EndSARs peaceful protesters in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopted the Theory of Relative Deprivation as one of the most suitable socio-political theories to explain the subject of this paper. The most prominent proponent of the theory of relative deprivation in modern times is Ted Robert Gurr (1970), notwithstanding the fact that Aristotle (384–322 BC) is recognised as the original proponent of the theory, having demonstrated that deprivation and conflict are related (Toriola & Jacobs, 2021).

In the social sciences, the phrase “relative deprivation” is frequently used to characterise subjective or quantifiable indicators of economic, political or social deprivations that are relative rather than absolute. ‘Relative deprivation’ has been mentioned by social scientists, especially political scientists and sociologists, as a possible cause of social movements, riots or protests, deviance and terrorism. In severe cases, this might lead to political violence and revolution.

According to the theory of relative deprivation, there is a greater chance of some pockets of agitation and conflict in a society where the wealth disparity between the rich and the poor is quite large. The point of departure of this theory is the idea that resources are not allocated fairly to all parties, which causes people to feel as though they are being denied

something to which they are entitled. Comparing one's status to that of the rich and realising that one has less of what one feels one is entitled to than those around them is a common feeling among the less privileged and dissatisfied members of society. This may help to explain why Schaefer (2003) characterizes "relative deprivation" as the conscious perception of a negative disparity between reasonable expectations and current reality.

Deductions from this theory is that 'relative deprivation' produces feelings of 'social exclusion' on the part of those who feel deprived and alienated from their common patrimony hence, recourse to conflict behaviour toward what they perceive to be responsible for their unmet needs. Indicators of 'relative deprivation' in human society include mass unemployment, deliberate imbalance opportunities for citizens, sectional marginalisation, wide-spread poverty, social exclusion and hunger which were believed to be the experiences of most Nigerians, especially the youths prior to the eruption of the 2020 #EndSARS protests in parts of the country.

Methodology

This paper utilized qualitative method hence, theoretical in approach. Due to the goal and scope of this study, the researchers sourced data through secondary sources (i.e. published articles, textbooks, reports, the internet, etc.). Data from the secondary sources were content-analyzed within the context of the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Ibadan Metropolis and deductions drawn.

Discussion

The 2020 #EndSARS Protests in Ibadan Metropolis: Implications for Peace building in Focus

Prior to the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, the SARs faced accusations of intimidation, invasion, privacy violations, detention without trial, torture, unaccounted disappearances of crime suspects from its detention facilities nationwide, and forced bank account emptying of crime suspects before extra-judicial execution. For instance, between 2017 and 2020, SARs in Nigeria committed acts of extortion, torture and ill-treatment against the public, including physical and psychological torture against Nigerian youths (Amnesty International, 2020; Dajo & Akor, 2021; Abimbade, Olayoku & Herro, 2022).

The foregoing revealed the 2020 #EndSARS protests as a consequence of cumulative years of abuses and impunity against the Nigerian youths by the defunct SARS. For instance,

Mbombo (2020) submits that starting in 2009, certain Nigerian youths, referred to as “Yahoo Boys” became easy targets by the SARS for harassment, illegal profiling, extortion, torture, and even summary execution in the name of thwarting online fraud. To this end, disgruntled young people in Nigeria repeatedly called for the government to dissolve SARs, with 10,195 signing a petition in 2017 (Ojewale, 2020). However, despite police restructuring and decentralization measures, no SARs’ officer was prosecuted for violating the law (Mbombo, 2020).

Consequently, On October 3, 2020, a video depicting a young man’s death by SARs officers in Ughelli, Delta State, sparked social media uproar, especially on Twitter (X); with over 28 million tweets using the hashtag #EndSARs (Mbombo, 2020; Tanyi, et al., 2022). To this end, young people assembled peacefully in front of the Nigeria Police Force Headquarters in Abuja while those in Lagos State rallied peacefully in front of the Government House in Ikeja, asking for the dissolution of SARs (Mbombo, 2020).

However, reports of police brutality against peaceful youth protesters in Abuja – including the use of tear gas, water cannons, batons, as well as the murder of Jimoh Isiaka and other individuals in Oyo State turned the peaceful demonstrations in Lagos, Abuja, and Ibadan, as well as the majority of the nation’s state capitals, into violent protests. As a result, Mohammed Adamu, the Inspector-General of Police at the time, reluctantly announced the abolition of SARs on October 11, 2020 (Dajo & Akor, 2021; Abimbade, Olayoku & Herro, 2022). The dissolution of SARs was commended by demonstrators as a victory, but asked for justice for victims of police violence and to confront the “unemployment monster.”

Unsatisfied with the way the 2020 #EndSARs protesters were handled by security personnel in Abuja, Lagos and Oyo, youths in Ibadan Metropolis joined the nationwide October 2020 #EndSARs protests against the activities of the defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARs) unit of the Nigeria Police Force, which resulted in destruction of public property, looting, arson, maiming and deaths among the youths as well as security personnel, particularly the Police in Ibadan Metropolis (The Blueprint, 2020; Toriola & Jacobs, 2021).

However, the 2020 #EndSARs protests in Ibadan Metropolis are particularly believed to be remotely linked to the socio-economic struggles in the Metropolis at the time. This is in addition to the three months lockdown occasioned by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic which confined the adventurous youths to unusual sedentary lifestyles, and exacerbated

existing socio-economic inequalities thus, suggesting a connection between these issues and the protests.

For instance, Oyo State experienced high unemployment and underemployment rates in Q2 of 2020, with unemployment figure standing at 521,216 and underemployment figure at 575,218 out of 3,174,707 workers (NBS, 2020, p. 70). Similarly, the state also had a high poverty headcount rate of 9.83, poverty gap index of 1.85, and 0.52 squared poverty gap index (severity) (NBS, 2020, p. 70; NBS, 2019, p. 15). Furthermore, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) surveyed by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2024 ranked Oyo State as the third most expensive state in Nigeria, highlighting social inequality and poverty among its population, particularly in Ibadan (NBS, 2024).

The rates of unemployment and underemployment for Oyo State by the NBS above are higher compared to most states in Nigeria within the referenced period. Hence, the statistics by the NBS above ironically denotes gross social inequality and poverty among the people of Oyo State, particularly Ibadan – the state capital. Whereas where gross social inequality and poverty exist, conflict behaviours are inevitable. This may, as a corollary, have accounted for a remote reason the 2020 #EndSARs protest in Ibadan was ignited in the first place, since Oyo State, of which Ibadan is a significant component was earlier reported by the National Bureau of Statistics to account for higher rates of unemployment, underemployment, poverty and inequality surveyed among the youths between 2017 and 2020 (NBS, 2017; 2019; 2020).

Therefore, the October 2020 #EndSARs protests in Ibadan, Nigeria, believed on the surface to be triggered by a viral video of a young man's murder by the defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad in Ughelli, Delta State, is in fact, seen as more than just a call for action against SARS, as the protest occurred amid economic crisis and the three months lockdown occasioned by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic which exacerbated existing socio-economic inequalities in Ibadan Metropolis at the time. As captured by an opinion of a youth respondent in a study in Lagos by Tanyi, et al., 2022, p. 58),

The government cannot completely satisfy us, but the government needs to at least, try to solve some of the problems affecting us. We are hearing rumours of a second lockdown due to the second wave of Covid-19; we are against this and we will resist it. Many of us cannot feed daily if we do not go out to work and we will not steal. We are not salary earners and we cannot survive another lockdown. The people proposing lockdowns have food and other necessities stocked up in their houses and they care

nothing for the poor. I am willing to die in this struggle, so the government better act right.

Inferring from the evidence above, the Covid-19 pandemic caused estrangement and anger among young people who were already enmeshed in economic hardship due to lack of safety nets, closure of economic and educational activities, leading to unusual sedentary lifestyles for the adventurous youths. Amid the harrowing experiences by the youths above, former President Muhammadu Buhari's administration increased fuel pump prices and electricity tariffs amid inflation and youth unemployment; thus, creating an imagery of a "bomb in a keg" ready to explode at any given opportunity.

The calibrated indices of economic inequality, poverty and hunger above negate the ingredients required to foster peace building, which undoubtedly is the fulcrum of a peaceful and functional society. Peace building is primarily a post-conflict reconstruction mechanism that promotes peaceful relations and violence eradication through a positive altering of structural contradictions, and other various activities (Aigbovbioisa, 2021). Peace building process aims to improve conflict relations, promote constructive attitudes, and stimulate economic development through the provision of economic opportunities, social justice, reconciliation as well as humanitarian support, which are all capable of engendering social inclusiveness that fosters the transformation of negative peace into positive peace (Aigbovbioisa, 2021).

Findings

The paper investigated social inequality and the 2020 #EndSARs protests in Ibadan metropolis with a look at its implications for peace building. To this end, critical interactions with literature on the subject showed a nexus between social inequality and the 2020 #EndSARs protests in Ibadan Metropolis. Of course, where gross social inequality and poverty exist, conflict behaviours are inevitable hence, these variables constituted a remote factor that ignited the 2020 #EndSARs protests in Ibadan Metropolis. This finding is attributable to the prevailing socio-economic struggles in the Metropolis at the time; in addition to the three months lockdown occasioned by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic which confined the adventurous youths to unusual sedentary lifestyles, and exacerbated existing socio-economic inequalities thus, suggesting a connection between these issues and the protests (Toriola & Jacobs, 2021; Tanyi, et al., 2022).

Another finding of the paper equally revealed that Oyo State, of which Ibadan is a significant component, accounting for higher rates of unemployment, underemployment, poverty and inequality surveyed among the youths between 2017 and 2020 (NBS, 2017; 2019; 2020), negate the ingredients required to foster peace building, which undoubtedly is the fulcrum of a peaceful and functional society. Therefore, the 2020 #EndSARs protests in Ibadan Metropolis was remotely a function of the undesirable factors calibrated above. This finding is consistent with the theory of relative deprivation by Gurr (2000) that 'relative deprivation' produces feelings of 'social exclusion' on the part of those who feel deprived and alienated from their common patrimony hence, recourse to conflict behaviour toward what they perceive to be responsible for their unmet needs.

The paper also showed that despite the initial entreaties by the Oyo State Command of the Nigeria Police to the protesting youths to suspend the protests, and the hurried interventions by other stakeholders such as state government officials, traditional rulers, community leaders, religious leaders, politicians and notable entrepreneurs appealing to the consciences of the protesting youths to desist from been violent in protest and embrace dialogue, the violent protest and destruction of public property went on unabated.

The non-adherence to the pleas by the above stakeholders by the protesting youths is attributed to the way and manner the security agents, particularly the Nigeria Police had handled the hitherto peaceful protest in an unprofessional manner, causing the deaths of some of the protesting youths in areas like Ojoo, where a Police Station was burnt down, Agodi-Gate, where a Police Outpost was also burnt down, Idi Odo/Iwo Road and Gbagi market areas where casualties were equally recorded among the youths and the Police personnel respectively (The Blueprint, 2020; Toriola & Jacobs, 2021).

Conclusion

The paper has been able to unravel some expository facts on why the 2020 #EndSARs protests erupted in Ibadan Metropolis and ended up been destructive, unlike in some states of the federation. In this connection is a factor of unbridled social inequality pervading the Ibadan Metropolis at the time, including the three months lockdown occasioned by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic which confined the adventurous youths to some sort of sedentary lifestyles during the period.

The above undesirable variables therefore, remotely precipitated and sustained in a destructive manner, the 2020 #EndSARs protests in Ibadan despite the initial entreaties by the

Nigeria Police, Oyo State Command to the protesting youths to suspend the protests, and the interventions by other stakeholders such as traditional rulers, community leaders, religious leaders, politicians and notable entrepreneurs in the Metropolis.

Recommendations

- i. The government of Oyo State and concerned stakeholders such as traditional rulers, community leaders, religious leaders, politicians, captains of industry and notable entrepreneurs must make concerted efforts in containing the high rates of unemployment, underemployment and poverty driving social inequality among the youths in the state so as to foster peace building. Good enough, the Nigerian government has approved Agenda 2050 (Vanguard, 2023), which aims to drastically reduce among others, unemployment, poverty and inequality. If the Oyo State government keys in as designed and proclaimed by the federal government, this would go a long way in engaging the youths economically while forestalling the occurrence of future similar protests in Ibadan and Nigeria at large.
- ii. Also, the proposed reform in the nation's secondary school curriculum by the Federal Ministry of Education (Channels TV, 2024), to accommodate vocational education encompassing carpentry, building, vulcanizing, plumbing, tiling, hairdressing, tailoring, satellite and CCTV installations, etc would catch the youths young while fostering entrepreneurship and economic prosperity among the youths, if encouraged to fester.
- iii. Although the SARs unit of the Nigeria Police Force has since been disbanded (Dajo & Akor, 2021; Abimbade, Olayoku & Herro, 2022), government should make concerted efforts at training and retraining of police officers on global best practices of handling peaceful protesters. Usage of live bullets on peaceful protesters is not only absurd but also barbaric and unfit for a democratic society like Nigeria in this 21st century.
- iv. Identified stakeholders such as traditional rulers, community leaders, religious leaders, politicians, captains of industry and notable entrepreneurs can play a complimentary role alongside the government by articulating and fostering initiatives capable of engaging the youths, particularly the unemployed graduates for economic benefits. Also, initiation of monthly or quarterly meetings by the isolated stakeholders, with the Nigeria Police to identify areas of possible breach of the peace, and thus, raise early warning signal accordingly, will be helpful, going forward.

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