

# Value Deficiency, Employment Generation and Crime among Youths in Nigeria

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## Abstract

Value deficiency and crime among the youths reflects the plethora of contemporary societal challenges that appear to inhibit social progress and national development. This paper therefore discusses value deficiency, employment generation and crime among youths in Nigeria. It examines the relationship between value deficiency and crime among youths in Nigeria despite several government efforts at employment generation. This paper argues that, although employment is a critical requirement for youths to realize their potentialities and release their contributory efforts to national development, the burden of value deficiency appears to vitiate such efforts and propel youth towards increasing crime. The paper identifies factors such as degradation and relegation of values as the causes of value deficiency in the Nigeria society. This paper adopted the Social Impact Theory to emphasize its points. Secondary data collected from previous researches and analysis of scholars to demonstrate the facts stated here were analysed using the descriptive method. The study finds that value deficiency increases the incidence of crime among youths and vitiates the efforts at employment generation in Nigeria. It recommends among others that youth development strategies must necessarily include value re-orientation and further re-orientation programmes and this requires the active support of the family, the community and the government.

Diverse social challenges of different magnitudes are being encountered daily in Nigeria. These diverse social challenges have adversely affected the effort at sustainable development in the country. Among the most topical of these are social issues relating to value deficiency, employment generation and a rising crime rate among the youth population. While these social issues, and the associated challenges and problems they continuously constitute, are a global phenomenon, they appear noticeably ubiquitous and on the rise in Nigeria. Hence, crimes such as kidnapping, yahoo-yahoo, yahoo plus, credit cards and internet robbery and theft, drug abuse, armed robbery, cheating and exam malpractice, cultism, prostitution, militancy, etc., that are found to occur among the youths appear to have better appeal than the various employment generation programmes that have been formulated by various governments to harness the advantages that reside in the youth. This is against the backdrop that the various employment generation programmes arose out of the predominant belief that “the level of national development in any given country is largely dependent on the extent to which the enormous potentials of its youth are harnessed and utilized by the government to promote and sustain economic growth and social progress. However, despite the effort that has been invested in ensuring that youths, through various youth empowerment and employment generation programmes, realize their potentialities and release their contributory efforts to national development, such effort appears to be vitiated by the propensity to take to crime among a large section of the youths in Nigeria. Thus, it is believed in many quarters that “Nigeria is currently caught in the web of crime dilemma, manifesting in the convulsive upsurge of both violent and non-violent crimes.

The menace of crime has therefore, become a source of concern to the Nigerian society. This becomes critical considering that despite the creation of several schemes (such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Subsidy Re-Investment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P), National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)), youths in Nigeria, variously identified as hardworking, enterprising and innovative, are becoming increasingly prone to deviant behaviours which culminate in various forms of crime. There appears to exist a reluctance to translate these positive attributes to gainful, honest employment and thriving businesses for wealth generation and sustainable development. In recent times, the incidence and menace of crime among the youth in Nigeria has become an issue of worry and

concern to parents, businesses, citizens, governments, and international organizations. This worry and concern arose from the perception that crime constitutes: A threat to the economic, political and social security of a nation and a major factor associated with underdevelopment, discourages both local and foreign investments, reduces the quality of life, destroys human and social capital, damages relationship between citizens and the states, undermines democracy, rule of law and the ability of the country to promote development.

The import of the above could be gleaned from Imhonopi, assertion that: The number of violent crimes such as kidnappings, ritual killings, carjacking, suicide bombings, religious killings, politically motivated killing and violence, ethnic clashes, armed banditry and others has increasingly become the regular signature that characterizes life in Nigeria since 2009. Various authors have identified that it is the youth that are primarily involved in the commission of crimes in Nigeria. According to Nwogu, “violent crimes committed in Nigerian societies of contemporary times involve the youth in most cases”. This is also affirmed by Ogbebor when he opined that over 70% of Nigerian prisoners these days are young people and majority of these persons are youths. However, while numerous studies conclude that youth unemployment is a factor in youth participation in crime; few studies have considered value deficiency in the society as fundamentally underlining youths’ propensity to take to crime despite government’s efforts at youth empowerment and employment. To this end, this study is therefore necessary to investigate the relationship between value deficiency and crime among youths in Nigeria despite several government efforts at employment generation.

**Keywords:** Teaching, music, primary school, constructivist theory