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**THE NIGERIAN DREAM (INSIGHT INTO THE LIFE OF AN AVERAGE NIGERIAN)**

In great contrast to the American dream, I coin the “The Nigerian Dream”, a life of imbalance, of great injustices and struggle, a life where people are driven to extremes in pursuit of money and power, the Nigerian dream is a corrupt one, a selfish desire to continue to amass wealth at the expense of the poor. And for too long we’ve been plagued by this disease of corruption, it has now become a norm for us.

In its Holistic sense its encompasses many challenges that we face in the country. And so I attribute all these problems to what I call “The Nigerian dream”, It is this dream that we young Nigerians are made to live, our futures of tireless struggle have already been predestined long before our births, we have since been subjected to live and build a future in an already broken system, the pertinent question now is, how do we fix it? Unarguably some of the many problems we face range from, bad leadership, countless economic problems, poverty, illiteracy, lack of national unity and maybe worst of all the countless security challenges.

Of the most common of the many problems is bad governance, politics has become a get rich scheme, the Nigerian youth has been gravely affected by bad leadership, the Nigerian leaders are constantly enriching their pockets and those of their generations to come, taking more and more and making the poor even poorer, Nigeria as it is today, serves its leaders and not its leaders serving it. If the bogus money spent on the legislators for the jobs they do for less than 150 days a year, for which they collect in one month what some people collect over a life time, it is just indispensable, and this country needs to be restructured towards the benefit and consideration of its people and not the leaders.

The average Nigerian is also faced with problems generated as a ripple from bad governance, we see high levels of poverty in the country, people are unable to cater for even for their most basic needs (food, shelter, electricity) many Nigerians barely have access to these things. We see high levels of illiteracy in the country all spawning from the fact that enough hasn’t been provided for Nigerians, resources haven’t been directed towards education and other sectors where it should have been.

Of these issues one of the most menacing is insecurity, were the task forces charged with protecting and upholding law do the complete opposite, the police force is highly incompetent and are more of a risk to the Nigerians, we see many cases were police have killed innocents when they refuse to spare loose change, for most Nigerians, these things are uncannily accurate. The police are seen as a force of occupation, who, with untrammeled impunity, often deploy their weapons to intimidate and oppress them. An average police man appears beggarly; many of them drink on duty, many are: disorganized. A former president blamed the rot partly on the recruitment of criminals into the service, as a result, armed robbers, kidnappers, street gangs and Islamist terrorist are having field day. Criminals operate for hours’ end in our neighborhoods and on the express ways.

Another one of our social banes Is unemployment, the youth struggle to find jobs: at least two-thirds of unemployed youth are between 15 and 24 of age. The incidence of unemployment in Nigeria in this 21st century is alarming. The rates keep on rising without any appreciable effort to cushion the effects and as such we suffer. Findings also reveal that corruption in both public and private and individual levels, industrial decay, neglect of the agricultural sector are among many other factors responsible for the scourge. Widespread poverty, youth restiveness, high rate of social vices and criminal activities are prevalent because of joblessness, and if not controlled, apathy, cynicism and revolution might become consequent.

Evidently we as Nigerian youth are surrounded by a number of challenges, one cannot begin to imagine what the young Nigerian passes through, the statistics are sobering, dreams are dying and young Nigerians among the most frustrated groups on earth. The plight of the Nigerian youth becomes all the more pathetic when one considers their virtual inability to renew their rents and afford some basic necessities of life. These struggles are what drives many youths to the insatiable struggle for money, our youths are willing to go to any lengths to make money, to be amongst the elite, to drive the flashiest cars and own the most expensive houses, and that is why online scammers, fraudsters (yahoo boys) that is, the 419 trade is more rampant than ever, and to me this summarizes THE NIGERIAN DREAM.

But whether or not we have been accustomed to these injustices we must fight for change, as the popular saying goes “where there’s a will there’s a way”, therefore the only way Nigeria can solve its many problems is by giving youth more opportunities to participate in the government, economy, and society. Young people are the prime beneficiaries of school improvement, and the percentage of youth in higher learning institutions is currently very high. If young people were in charge, the educational system in Nigeria would not be in its current state, and unemployment would be reduced.

At the same time, young people shouldn’t wait for good things to come to them; they need to take individual initiative. Youth empowerment and initiative will improve life for all Nigerians. Nigerian government officials and other elites need to share power with the county’s youth and listen to young peoples’ ideas for how to better the country. The young men and women of Nigeria are tomorrow’s elder and, if included, could transform Nigeria. Without energy of youth society will decay and perish.