

# Enhancing Good Governance in South Africa Through Youth Protest : A Catalyst for Social Change

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study looked at youth protest as a catalyst for social change in enhancing good governance in South Africa. The aftermath of apartheid presented South Africa scouring for good governance. The successive governments constantly restructured social and economic sectors through policy implementation and ambitious programs to promote good governance. Yet, there has been numerous demonstrations and protests reminiscing the days of the anti-apartheid struggle, particularly towards the quality of service delivery provided. **Methodology:** The paper is a qualitative study, which employed eclectic literature in analysing the role of youth protest towards the promotion of good governance in South Africa. **Findings:** The study discussed the reason for the occurrence of youth protest in South Africa, as well as how it could promote good governance is strategically managed. **Implication:** The study emphasizes the catalytic role protests play as social change in enhancing good governance. **Originality:** So far, no available study has identified youth protest as a catalyst for social change in enhancing good governance in South Africa. **Conclusion:** It was recommended that government should include and involve more youths in integral processes like constitutionalism, rule of law and leadership roles.

**Keywords:** Corruption, Democracy, Governance, Public services, Protests.

## INTRODUCTION:

The study attempt to understand the role of the youth in protest as a catalyst for social change in enhancing good governance in South Africa. The aftermath of apartheid presented South Africa scouring for good governance, as the enormous desires for a state were to have greater access to basic public services, as functions of democracy and good governance. However, the apartheid's legacy raised immense obstacles to emerging South Africa in 1994, including a high poverty rate and social inequality (Enaifoghe, 2018). This, therefore, tasked the new democratic government to begin with tackling the identified challenges by enshrining legitimate rights to access services, restructuring both social and economic sectors, through policy implementation and supporting ambitious programs for service delivery (Enaifoghe, 2018). The Government embarked on a program to promote social cohesion to resolve the high level of violent crime that characterizes society and promote positive national identity in a diverse, heterogeneous, racialized and stratified community (Seekings, 2000, Nthambeleni 2009). In addressing the effect of violent crime on emerging forms of society, Pillay (2008: 4), states that the actions of post-apartheid communities display a tendency towards division "rather than unification, undermining the efforts of 'nation-building'". For instance, the second decade of South African democracy shows an explosion of widespread demonstrations, a rise in protest and violence reminiscent of the days of the anti-apartheid struggle. In the first quarter of 2014, statistics revealed that Gauteng has witnessed more than 500 demonstrations, with over 100 been violent (South African History Online, 2014). Ironically, the majority of the protests

constitutes the youths.

To [Enaifoghe and Adetiba \(2019\)](#) youths constitute a large fraction of the Africa population, South Africa inclusive. According to a mid-year population report by STATS SA in 2019, estimated youths (ages 18-34) constitute one-third of the population. However, with a large fraction of these numbers unemployed and feeling marginalized ([Maganga, 2020](#)), the youths have resorted to protests and demonstrations. This is to change political systems and leaders that are perceived to be incompetent and responsible for the daily suffering of the people. For instance, the Soweto uprising of 1976, the protest against an increase in University fees under the #feesmustfallmovement.

[Lekalake \(2016\)](#), an average young South African sees the country's leadership as inaccessible and desires to hold the elected leaders accountable. On this note, the study will be examining how youth protest can enhance good governance in South Africa. To get a detailed insight, the study will be answering questions such as: Why does youth protest occur in South Africa? How can it enhance good governance in South Africa? This paper is structured into four sections with section one presenting the introduction and the method adopted, section two looks at the literature consideration. Section three present the theory used in the study, the section presents the discussion of findings and concluding remarks

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study adopted a qualitative research method based on a wide range of literature sources.

This includes relevant articles, reports, books, and internet sources. The search for information was streamlined from 2014 to 2020. However, exceptions were made to years before 2014 based on the information gotten and its relevance to the study. According to [Enaifoghe \(2019: 114\)](#), the method permits "researchers to access over 200 literature through advance search and streamline them with themes and keywords to determine the relevance of the documents that they consult based on their significance to the study".

### LITERATURE CONSIDERATION:

South Africa has since 1994 experienced several movements of home protests resulting in an uprise of the less privileged, demanding service delivery and good governance. The issue of protest has been prevalent and sometimes intense, getting to a dissatisfied proportion in some cases ([Alexander, 2012](#)). The government, established by the African National Congress (ANC), encountered socio-political and economic instability that is embodied in an assortment of demonstrations that are degrading at the metropolitan level. The various demonstration and protests were linked to poor service delivery at the municipal level ([Alexander, 2010](#)). [Enaifoghe \(2019a\)](#), argued that there is increased service delivery protests were associated with economic downturns, dual recessionary strains, and the rising level of unemployment in the country. The above argument was confirmed by [Enaifoghe and Adetiba \(2019a\)](#), as seen on the grounds of the public demands to establish work opportunities or the despondency with the distribution of tenders and workers by the unemployed group.

[Nirhsa \(2012\)](#), concluded that although dissatisfied people may have legitimate reasons to do so protests on service delivery is viewed as having a detrimental effect on government services, companies, consumer trust and employment. The ongoing service delivery protests, as suggested by [Patel \(2013\)](#), is viewed as a counterproductive tactic for territories more vulnerable to them, mainly communities situated in the peri(urban) areas. This has been illustrated as municipal infrastructure delivery strikes have demolished various schools which have impacted the standard of teaching and schooling (Vuwani in Limpopo province is a typical example) ([Enaifoghe, 2019b](#)). These marches negatively affect businesses when they are commandeered by lawbreakers who breaks in to plunder shops, driving organisations to block their entryways ([Du Preez, 2014](#)). Moreover, market opportunities for development are diminishing with the loss of many days of strikes around the world.

The devastating effect of "service delivery protests" do not improve investor's faith, it rather decreases or dent South Africa's image as an investment destination and can also adversely impact tourism arrivals. Given the above-identified issues associated with protest in South Africa, quite several critics have attributed poor service personnel to the proliferation of violent protest in South Africa, to failure in service delivery at the municipal level, low productivity and poor communication ([Alexander 2010; Ngwane 2010; Booyesen 2009a](#)). Scholars like [Enaifoghe and Adetiba \(2018\)](#) and [Vally \(2009\)](#), argued that high poverty, youth unemployment, low citizen involvement in "decision-making systems and lack of access to

information”, while Matebesi (2011), stated that poverty and unemployment sparked allegations of partiality, collusion and negligence by authorities. Pithouse (2009: 251) claims that the “official State discourse, scholars and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including human rights campaigners and NGOs, more or less unanimously defines these demonstrations as 'service delivery protests”.

It is the authors' view that public outcry is mostly perceived as attacking domestic municipal councils believed to be the reason for failed delivery of public services. Several researchers such as (Alexander 2010; Ngwane 2010; Sinwell et al. 2009; Vally 2009; Booysen 2009a), indicated that protest activity usually stems from an increasing amount of study, in addition to a range of diverse, mostly subjectively-based protest data collection initiatives in South Africa.

### **Debate and Trends of Youth Protest in South Africa:**

The debates around protests resulting from failure in service delivery are seen to be the most common form of protest in South Africa. These protests and demonstrations are launched are often led by youth, who mainly resides in townships (Matebesi, 2011), as well as the civil society campaigns, personally-motivated and local communities and immigrants (Akinboade, Mokwena and Kinfact 2013; Hough 2008). Accordingly, the failed service delivery demonstrations experienced in South Africa are marked by large gatherings. They also include “memoranda writing, motions, 'toy-toys,' parade, stay-aways, referendum boycotts, roadblock, burning of tires, plundering, smashing houses (Enaifoghe and Adetiba, 2019b). The protests also involve the chasing of ostracised people in the townships, clashes with “the police and forced resignations of elected officials” (Akinboade et al. 2013:467; Alexander 2010:26; Sebugwawo 2011).

There are only a few published studies on failed “service delivery protests in South Africa”, however, the available pieces of literature are mostly subjective and briefing by the mass media, rather than concepts that emanate from observational data. This is evident as the Municipal IQ (2019), registered the highest number of “failed service delivery protests in 2018, accounting for 24 percent more protests than the previous record-holder in 2014”. According to Municipal IQ (2019), the Gauteng province occupied the largest spot for “service delivery protests between 2004 and 2008, accounting for 24 percent and hitting 36 percent in 2017. Conversely, 2018 was entirely different, with the Eastern Cape province leading by 20%”. Western Cape province with 17% comes next and the Gauteng province is seen to be leading by 16% (Nyar and Wray, 2012).

The scholars further claim that demonstrations often take place in urban areas, including working, “unemployed and homeless, shack dwellers, informal traders, students, local populations” and ordinary people whose concerns contribute to socio-economic justice issues (Nyar and Wray, 2012). The brutal reaction of the law enforcement officers in countless situations, culminating in the injury and death of demonstrators along with guiltless onlookers, emphasizes the deep chasm between the government and the metropolitan poor (Beall, Gelb and Hassim, 2005). According to Akinboade et al. (2013), (Alexander 2010; Hough 2008 and Thompson and Nleya 2010), service delivery protests may be aggressive or nonviolent with domestic individuals unhappy with the lack of resources offered.

Service delivery demonstrations have shed light on the general dissatisfaction with the civic authority system in South Africa (Mathekga & Buccus 2006:13). Scholars also propose that service delivery demonstrations are considered a threat to safety as a result of the reluctance of elected councillors to supply the communities with sufficient basic services. The government is seen to issues false promises and opposing government privatization and private capital accumulation practices by crooked local politicians. Thompson and Nleya (2010) claimed that insufficient service quality and inadequate transparency, lack of personnel with appropriate governance expertise, underfinanced, and the ANC's rollout policies have escalated protests over service delivery. The links between local demonstrations and radical activity including additional layers of common society are minimal, although this is expected to improve in a democratic system (Gumede, 2017).

The new system of governance and legislative agreement for racially diverse areas was built, as the new arrangement had to develop quickly in providing the enhanced services expected by the people in the new democratic system (Enaifoghe, 2019). There have been several protests actions in South Africa as a result of government failure to deliver the dividend of democracy through governance to the people (Enaifoghe and Adetiba, 2019), particularly at the grassroots level, such that South Africa is dubbed as "the protest capital of the world" (Rodrigues, 2010).

*“One of the highest levels of mass demonstrations in the world is experienced in South Africa (Alexander, 2012). It is often argued that the rate of youth-led protests has risen since 2004 (Alexander, 2012), but Steven Friedman claims that the latest wave of protests dates back to the 1970s (Friedman, 2013)”.*

Dauids (2012), observed that the protest rate has increased sharply in the first 32 weeks of 2012, with over 540 confirmed protest cases in the province of Gauteng from April 01 to May 10, 2013 (Patel, 2013).

*“In February 2014, it was announced that there have been nearly 3,000 protest actions in the last 90 days – more than 30 every day – affecting more than one million people” (Du Preez, 2014).*

It must be noted that over 2 million people protest every year since 2008 (Plaut, 2012). A scholar argued that the "widespread service delivery demonstrations could soon take on an organizational character that would start as discreet formations and then coalesce into a full-blown movement" (Ndebele, 2012). Major repression of popular demonstrations has been experienced in South Africa due to failed service delivery (Duncan, 2012). According to Moetsi (2015), the most collective grounds for such protest are “urban land and housing grievances”. Herskovitz, (2013), indicated that:

*“nearly 75% of South Africans aged 20-29 did not vote in the 2011 [local government] elections and that “South Africans in that age group were more likely to take part in violent street protests against the local ANC than to vote for the ruling party”.*

In September 2013, the police announced that more than 14,000 arrests ++ has been made in demonstrations over the last four years" (Evans, 2013). As reported in *The Times*, “Informal settlements have been at the forefront of service delivery protests as residents demand homes and basic services” (Dlamini, 2014). During “the 2004/05 financial year, some 6,000 protests were officially registered, an undisclosed number of protests went unrecorded, and some 1,000 protests were unlawfully prohibited” (Dlamini, 2014). This by calculation implies that there were at least 15 demonstrations every day in South Africa at this time (FXI, 2011; Losier, 2010; Pillay, 2008). Therefore, the total amount of reported service delivery public demonstration has risen significantly, and it is estimated that "2009 and 2010 together account for around two-thirds of all protests since 2004" (Enaifoghe and Adetiba, 2019b; Heese and Allan, n.d).

Immediately after Jacob Zuma first took office, the number of reported confirmed cases of failed service delivery was a sensational upsurge in protest, and 2009 protest cases were about tenfold higher than in 2004 and even higher in 2010. The protests cases arrived at a record-breaking high in 2010/2011 (Alexander, 2012) and afterwards a record-breaking high in July 2012 (Duncan, 2012) with increased public outcry taking place in the Western Cape than in any other province (Oryx Media, 2012) and just under half of all protests in shack settlements (Marrian, 2012). Research showed a widespread protest reaching its peak since the post-apartheid era in 1994 by the beginning of 2013 (Stone, 2013). The beginning of 2013 experienced as many as 3,000 demonstrations (Saba and Merwe, 2013) and has been doubled in the last four years (Enaifoghe and Adetiba, 2018). Stone (2013: 8), indicated that “between 1997 and 2013, most of the demonstrations were linked to workplace problems or crime and were rarely disorderly”.

The “total number of protests” declined in 2013, but the “rate of disorderly protests” increased significantly (de Wet, 2016). The scholar further highlighted that there were nine out of 11 peaceful demonstrations (de Wet, 2016). There has been a large degree of repression of widespread demonstrations (Duncan, 2011a; Duncan, 2011b; Buccus, 2011). These demonstrations are generally denoted as failed “service delivery protests in the media”, however evidence shows an increase in discontent as regards “service delivery” (Benjamin, 2011). Scholars claim that this “term is too narrow and misleading” as well in its context (Pithouse, 2009 and Pithouse, 2011). There are a certain amount of “poor people's movements” that maintained their protrusion (Kirshner, 2011), they include the “Unemployed People's Movement” (2011). Others, however, have described the “rapidly increasing wave of youth-led protests since 2004 as a rebellion of the poor” (Alexander, 2010), while others see it as a “series of municipal revolts” (Majavu, 2011).

*The increasing rate of popular protests is described by Zwelinzima Vavi, COSATU Secretary-General, as a ring of fire, closing down major cities that could lead to a Tunisian-style revolution (Mkokeli, 2011; Hassen, 2011).*

Some of the most prominent protests during this time have taken place in “Harrismith, Kennedy Lane, Durban, Diepsloot, Balfour, Thokoza”, (News24, 2009). Other areas include; “Khutsong, Macassar Village, Lansdowne Road (Cape Argus, 2009) and Mandela Park” (Mandela Park, 2010) in Khayelitsha, KwaZakhele, downtown Durban (Hawker, D. 2010), Masiphumelele, Ermelo (de Wet, n.d), including Grahamstown and Thembelihle (Lenasia) (Duncan, 2011). Public outcry proceeds and certain observers are of believes that outcries are becoming extra-extremist (Pillay, 2011). few critics presumed that "a vast majority of South Africans believe that traditional methods to engage the state are failing and that alternatives can be more effective" (Pillay, 2011). Finally, it is seen from the above literature that many scholars and advocates have agreed that “failed service delivery” demonstrations are a piece of the prominent uprising of the less privileged. This is a huge uprising to be recorded in a single country around the world, with no comparable degree of unrest. Having said that, it safe to conclude that South Africa is “the protest capital of the world”.

### **South African Youth Participation in Democracy: Protest for Good Governance:**

The participation of the youth participation in South African protest has been seen as a function of democracy and demand for Good Governance. Many Western nations have benefited from colonization and racism in the last few decades (Miller 1988; Thornton 1998), utilizing caste as an approach to transfer her plot to their territories and institutionalizing servitude to accomplish abundance and satisfaction for their kin (Enaifoghe, 2019; Beckert 2014). These nations not only colonized Africa and Asia to dominate financial and human resources, but they have normalized racial disparity in every sphere of life by basing apartheid on their central belief system. As a result, although many colonized countries eventually achieved independence, colonial legacies continue to haunt them (Guha 2002; Hountondji 1992).

A distinctive long-lasting adverse implication of this footprint has been the emergence of a patriarchal Westernized economic structure controlled by white populations (Hahn 2005; Harvey 2005). As a result, Western multinational companies (MNCs) had a secure passage to manipulate the everyday lives of exploited colour classes (Onimode, 1978; Chowdhury, 2019a). Strong players such as government governments, multinational corporations (MNCs), first-class non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and Western assistance agencies and entities dominate these oppressed communities (Chowdhury, 2019). Powerless neighbourhoods, socially disadvantaged working classes, ethnic minorities, and racialized populations are examples of vulnerable groups. The powerless populations, socially disadvantaged labour classes, religious minorities, and people vulnerable to racial bias and prejudice as a result of being trapped within white-dominated capitalist mechanisms are examples of oppressed groups.

### **The Role of South African School Involvement n Protest as Social Change?**

In the early years of colonial rule in Africa, young individuals protested in different ways against the racial nature of colonization, oppression, and segregation policies known as apartheid, especially in South Africa. South Africa's apartheid policies exposed people of colour, both young and elderly, to degradation and subordinate status (South African History Online, 2019). Schools have been common sites for youngsters to get mindful of the issues confronting coloured individuals and to be motivated to orchestrate protests at odds with apartheid and the decline of their status since the early twentieth century (SAHO, 2019). These early demonstrations were few and had little to do with other school protests occurring all over the nation. Before the founding of the African National Youth League in 1945, youth policy was carried out in the absence of a national body without a public body to accommodate diverse local territories going from rustic to metropolitan regions, as well as a council to tie together various schools (SAHO, 2019).

At first sight, school uproar seemed to be largely concerned with interim profit, as well as parochial and political problems such as nutritious eating, rules of ethics, and teacher harassment. That, though, was not the case. Due to White people's imprecise along with their ignorant views of what coloured people were familiar with, students in boarding schools received substandard meals (Girei, 2017). Because of White people's imprecise and ignorant views of what Black people were accustomed to, youths (students) in boarding schools received very poor quality food (Khan et al, 2007).

These racist stereotypes shaped the bond between students and school officials, reinforcing ideas of white

superiority and black inferiority. According to a note composed by an understudy during those early years, students were aware of South Africa's apartheid practices and the government's efforts to replicate these racial policies in classrooms. School strikes were more popular and prominent on the political agenda and in the media in the 1920s and beyond. In February 1920, the newspapers focused on the first school riot, which was mostly composed of young people (Maher, 2018). The end of World War I, as well as the Great Depression of 1930, exacerbated the situation. There was zero indication that the African students' school circumstances were changing. During this period, the majority of education was provided by chapels, which were somewhat financially supported by the government. Masika has pointed out (2017).

Lack of access to schools has been a major issue in a township like Soweto as a result of African youth urbanization. The government was compelled to appoint two commissions of inquiry, in the 40s, due to an increase in school disruptions (Pal, 2016). The administration, on the other hand, was unconcerned about the reasons or responses to the school crisis. The two reports were never published or followed upon. Then again, the government was anxious that the new syllabus could produce "Black supremacists." In terms of faith, the government was frequently dismissive of "Christian ethics taught by sects other than Afrikaner denominations, such as the Dutch Reformed Church" (Rosenthal, 2018). The Afrikaner National Party won the general election in 1948, however, announced its intention to overhaul South Africa's school system for coloured citizens. In February 1949, the government formed a commission of inquiry chaired by Dr. W. W. M. Eiselen to investigate how African-American education could be modified to address requirements as a free race (SAHO, 2019).

The Commission recommended that the government create coloured Municipal Councils to regulate Black citizens' education (SAHO, 2014). In rustic regions where there were local officials (chiefs), traditional rulers and officials were given control and authority over education. The aim was to halt Black people's schooling at the "expense" of white people. According to Varman and Al-Amoudi (2016), the government believed that African American citizens should bear the financial burden of Black schooling. However, the Bantu Education Act was passed in 1953, which redirected the responsibility of colored education to the Department of Native Affairs and established the government's financial contribution at R13-000-000 (SAHO, 2019). Above this figure, Black people would have to share (Chowdhury, 2019a). Dr. Verwoerd claimed the following year:

*"when I have charge of Native Education, I will turn it so that Natives will be taught from childhood to know that equality with Europeans is not for them... People who believe in equality are not desirable teachers for them, as my Department regulates education, it will know for what class of higher education a Native is fitted, and whether he will have a chance to use his experience in life". (Dr. Verwoerd was the then Minister of Native Affairs),*

To what essence is mathematics taught to a Bantu child if they will never use it? That is thought to be absurd. It was now clear that inferior education for Black citizens was a matter of strategy, and that the government would be driving endeavours to build up a racial oppressor society (Chowdhury, 2019a). Furthermore, the African National Congress (ANC) proved to be too frail to mount a meaningful threat to government policies. It orchestrated a national strike, which was quickly suppressed by government attempts to oust all students who skipped school or were associated with a blacklist.

The youth movements began to take shape again in the 1970s thereby causing social change. The youth protests in rural regions of Lebowa, Northern Transvaal, Transkei, and Ciskei turned brutal when the school land was burnt to ashes by students. Students have been convicted and given court penalties such as fines or corporal punishment (SAHO, 2014). Moroka High School in Thaba Nchu has devolved into a battleground. Students became unhappy with the gradual lack of educational freedom and increased government control of the school curriculum in both of these protests. "The government directed the Department of Education to teach half of all subjects in Standard Five in Afrikaans" near the end of 1975. (SAHO, 2019). This teaching was met with immediate resistance from parents and colleges. At the beginning of 1976, the Soweto Schools have been in a state of revolt. In June, several schools banded together in protests that culminated in the notorious June 16 rebellion. Youth Politics in South Africa, 1976-16 June (Chowdhury, 2019a).

### **South African Youth Organization's Participation in Protest:**

South African youth had organized themselves to participate in protest during the 1970s, it was regarded

as the watershed for youth policy in the country. From campus to campus, the South African Student Organization (SASO) was attracting favour. Their exercises were more extremist and aggressively opposed to apartheid law and racial oppressor rule in summary (Maher, 2018). During this time, SASO seemed sure enough to communicate its diplomatic message to secondary school students. Notwithstanding, it stayed a wary methodology with the restricted objective of preparing youthful scholastics for guidance in the Black community. Nonetheless, the national climate was charged with opposition to campaigns and practices that appeared to reinforce the Black inferiority complex.

In 1972, the Black People's Convention (BPC) was founded to unite people of colour and conduct the Black Consciousness approach. The number of scholars and colleges in townships around the country has increased. This resulted in a rapid concentration of youth in townships in schools. Youth networks have evolved to be even more complex. Youth politics has taken a confrontational stand against the racial segregation regime in public. The early Manifestos of the Congress of South African Students, on the other hand, centred fundamentally around student issues such as school tuition the utilization of whipping, and an absence of incorporation in school administering bodies (Maher, 2018). These were not insignificant issues at the time, whereas South Africa's education system was built on a firm discipline system along with a conservative agenda (Girei, 2017). The 1976 uprising heightened students' political mindfulness and ignited a reestablished articulation of youth empowerment and an attempt to change their environmental factors, beginning with classrooms.

The South African Student Association has been the umbrella organization representing various school groups leading up to the June 16 rebellion since the early 1970s. However, the technique was limited to Soweto and no significant attempt was made to create a national body (Pal, 2016). The youth argued that as local advocates and responders to the call to wage war against the establishment, they were supported in making an immediate move against those who were behaving against them or the community as a whole. Since South Africa's return to democracy in 1994, public demonstrations against service delivery, undemocratic rules, or land allocation have become an integral part of society, especially since 2004, when the country's democracy was ten years old. The second decade of independence saw an uptick in street protests and armed brutality reminiscent of the anti-apartheid movement.

The police have estimated that over 500 protests have taken place in Gauteng alone since the beginning of 2014, with over 100 of them turning violent. Some of the protests turned brutal, bringing about death, property harm, and plundering. The death of Andries Tatane, a protester, on 13 April 2011 during a demonstration service in the Free State of Ficksburg, reportedly at the hands of eight police officers, was the most highly publicized. In August 2012, 34 workers were killed as a result of a strike at the Marikana mine in Amplats, North West. In October 2013, protesters in Cape Town split away from the group and began plundering stalls and shops in St George's Mall, provoking storekeepers and merchants to pack their things inspired by fear of being assaulted by the crowd (Chowdhury, 2019a). This paper discovers a connection between conflict in South Africa and its effect on citizenship and governance.

It is crucial to objectively explore the implications of relying on 'community as a way of countering youth-led activism, as well as how it can better counter the unity and cultural traditions that bring the conflict to life. These real styles of society in the post-apartheid era may contradict the government's attempts to unify the country, resulting in balkanized areas of government practice mapped into spatially distinct networks of a life controlled by racialized risk and mortality estimates.

### **The Effective use of Protests in a Democratic System as a catalyst for social change:**

The fundamental feature of youth engagement in politics is the large investment by a new group of warriors, comprising exclusively jobless youth as well as school students. This is on the surface of youth activism regarding citizen demand for good governance and service delivery in the face of callous, self-serving, and incompetent elected officials. The Afrobarometer poll, conducted in 2016, to assess whether or not Autonomy is still wanted by Africans, concluded that the Most Africans wanted democracy and rebuked any form of dictatorship (Afrobarometer, 2016). Anyway, it was discovered that the fortification of the majority rules system is dwindling, by all accounts part of a worldwide example (Gumede, 2017). Scholars believe that nations become fit through democracy.

According to Amartya Sen, "the challenge to facilitate a positive evolution in practice and commitment to democracy, using innovative approaches, remains the more important" (Sen, 1999). In majority rule government and 'dissent' distinctively summons the pictures of a defiant minority that are taking a general viewpoint, as in meetings against specific conflicts or bars against the logging of a rainforest (Martin, 1994).

Youth participation and effective adoption of protests in a democracy are seen as a catalyst for social change as well as just as they are fundamental for resident cooperation in a pluralistic democracy. As noted by the [Open Society Justice Initiative \(2019\)](#), protests “enable individuals and groups to share their views and interests, express dissent, and make demands of the government for good governance or other institutions”. However, more or less few Law enforcement officials and civil servants view protest as a nuisance, an interruption that needs to be controlled, while others treat it as a threat that needed to be extinguished (Committee on the Administration of Justice, 2018). a portion of the difficulties encountered by the social orders is guaranteeing the option to gather and dispatch a legitimate dissent. In a situation in which protesters are protected from unfair or unjust treatment, police officers are trained to adequately conduct protests, and the use of force during demonstrations is monitored (CAJ, 2018). Protests are often affiliated with movements that are unconventional and lack inside relations with those in positions of authority. According to [Martin \(1994\)](#), the opposition is often 'against' anything or other, an effort to halt a procedure or activity that would otherwise go unquestioned. Most people equate demonstrators with the rabble in the streets.

[Booth \(2011\)](#) noted that “although the vast majority of protest activity in liberal democracies is nonviolent in reality and intent, an aura of actual or potential violence commonly accompanies media presentations and popular perceptions of protest”. These images are part of a larger picture that weighs the 'right to dissent against the need for 'peace and order' ([Grindle, 2010](#)). The conformist media portrayal of opposition by governments and scholars ([Mauss, 1975](#)) generally centres around political activity by a specific part of the populace. Protest acts by members of the public are thought to be controversial, whereas other government processes are thought to be less so ([Momoh, 2015](#)). To get a deeper or broader perspective on what is often referred to as dissent, it is important to make a stride back and inspect the entire environment. [Enaifoghe \(2019\)](#), articulated that “the dominant political actors that are in liberal democracies are the state”, establishments as well as the professions. The routine activities that are usually held by these players, tend to establish the society's ongoing political and economic structure such as in South Africa.

## CONCLUSION:

The young people in South Africa have shown an enthusiastic need for a Government that responds to their needs like quality education, good and affordable health care facilities, jobs, and other equitable components of service delivery. They have become disillusioned, restless, L and frustrated for change. Particularly, towards the state of leadership and the quality of service delivery in the country and this has been evidenced through series of protests. The youths have realized what is expected of the government to do and they seek to drive the government into doing better. The notion that government knows what citizens want is long outdated. Thus, there is a need to modernize and rethink policies to encourage greater participation and ensure that all citizens are fully represented particularly the youths. Likewise, youths should constitute an integral component of processes such as constitutionalism, rule of law, and electoral processes in Africa.

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