

YOUTH RESTIVENESS AND NATIONAL SECURITY: COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

Youth restiveness in Nigeria has become alarming and now of serious concern. Almost all the communities in this country, most especially in the recent past, has witnessed one form of restiveness such as violent protest, Thuggery, cult clashes, riots, killings of the innocent people, which has also lead to the cost of lives and properties and slowing down developmental goals. The focus of this paper is to examine the concept of youth restiveness in Nigeria, National security, major causes of youth restiveness in Nigeria, the youth and National security, the government approach towards curbing youth restiveness in Nigeria, and the counseling implications. It is therefore recommended among others that government should provide functional and free education to its citizen in order to take the children out of street.

Keywords: Youth Restiveness, National Security, and Couselling Implications

Introduction

Nigeria is commonly described as under developed, conflict ridden and fragile due to the ascendancy of restiveness and near conflict institutionalization. There is any region of the country that has not experienced full blown conflict in the recent times. In fact, in all regions of the country, it is either there is a violent conflict going on or one has just subsided or one is about to erupt. Consequences of conflict, destruction of lives and property have become so much of a common place that Nigerians are nearly no longer shocked when hundreds of human deaths are reported in the media. In this country today, one is only waiting for the next report of deaths and kidnapping in any part, from the Niger-Delta conflict to the Odua Congress in the West, Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the East, Banditry and Bokoharam in the North (Abolurin, 2017 & Amaraegbu, 2017).

Nigeria only enjoys relative peace and youth are central to the current high spate of restiveness and conflict in Nigeria (Akale & Oladosu, 2018). The youths form the basic and major armies perpetrating and driving conflict across the country (Abolurin 2011). The people perpetrating the conflicts are of age 18-35 (National Youth Policy, 2009). Youths are targeted on two fronts during conflict in Nigeria for recruitment and to be attacked. The youths in Nigeria today confront many challenges that are not their making (Akanle & Oladosu 2018). According to Chukuemeka and Agbara (2016) human society is nothing but a complex entity. Nigerian youth find themselves in a very complex nation and most times find it very difficult to navigate those

complicities and often become trapped in the complex systems. Nigeria is complex and layered relative to ethnicity, resource distribution, wealth flow, class dynamic and general socio-economic structure that predates the existence of the youths. The complex national structures are dangerous recipe for conflict and when they erupt like socio-cultural and political volcanoes manifested in conflicts, the youth are caught in the middle. They experience conflict, fight within conflict for survival and bear the consequences conflict. The youths are thus trapped in restiveness and conflicts that are motivated by issues that predate their existence. It is against this backdrop that this paper has discussed the youth restiveness and national security with counselling implications.

Concept of Youth Restiveness

This is the extreme form of deviant behavior among youth which is socially unacceptable in any society. Youth restiveness involves the combination of actions behavior attitudes exhibited by youths which are socially unacceptable and unwholesome in the society (Igbo & Ikpa, 2013). Youth restiveness has been device through which youth use to obtain what they want from the relevant authority. Similarly, Elegbeleye (2005) viewed it from different angle as a “sustain protestation embarked upon to enforce desired outcome from a constituted authority organized body of youths”. It is accompanied by disruption of law, conflict and violence.

The common features of these organized bodies of youth are the resort to violence and one would agree that their activities posed great challenges to the security of the country. The violent nature of these youth activities has been responsible for the wanton destruction of valuable infrastructures, kidnapping and loss of lives. These acts had not only created dirty atmosphere but also endangered the security and affect the national development.

Concept of National Security

Security means likelihood of survival. It means confidence in the maintenance of state boundaries and the reservation of its territorial ideological and cultural integrity. Asmau (2016) observed that there have been no generally and universally accepted conception of national security but is more of the military aspect; it should encompass all facet of national life in preservation of its values.

Causes of Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

Asamu (2006) identified six factors that cause youth restiveness in Nigeria. They include bad governance, unemployment, poverty, inadequate educational opportunities and resources, lack of basic infrastructures and inadequate communication and information flow. Chukuezi (2009) posited that the causes are many, ranging from individual to societal factors and he mentioned such as marginalization, unemployment, exuberance and the role of politician in employing youth against their perceived enemies as the main causes of restiveness among youth in Nigeria. Similarly, Snappy and Hamittion (2011) in their studies of “Youth

restiveness and industrial disruption in the Niger Delta, identified factors such as economic, political socio-cultural as the causes of youth restiveness. Elegbele (2015) the jingoistic pursuit to patriotic ideas, the peer motivated excitement of being a student and the perceived victimization arising from economic exploitation are the causes of incessant youth restiveness, these imply that a plethora of closely related factors are responsible for youth restiveness in Nigeria, These include:

Poverty: Report from the World Bank (2015) indicated that Nigeria is third country of the world with poverty after China and India. This was evidence in the study undertaken by Zakari (2016), which shows that 70 percent of people in Nigeria are living below poverty line; in which one third survive on less than one US Dollara day. This figure includes the number of youth because they constituted about 40 percent of the Nigerian population. As Snappy and Hamilton (2011) observed more-over, the most severe region with poverty was north as the former Governor of central Bank of Nigeria Charles Chukuma Soludo reiterated on July, 2008; in fact to him poverty is a Northern phenomenon. In taking North-East as an example a large army of youth was unemployed and this according to Haruna and Jfumba (2011) have accounted for high level of poverty in the Zone there by precipitating the youth to join any group of militia thugs. In the last North Eastern Economic Summit held on 3rd-4th December, 2013 in Gombe State, the six state Governors of the region have unanimously agreed that poverty, unemployment and insecurity are the major problems bedeviling the security and the development of the region.

Unemployment: Unemployment has become one of the prevailing phenomena among the youth in almost all developing countries. In Nigeria about 70% of the population was believed to be unemployed. Surprising out of this unemployed percentage 809 are youth that fall within 17 – 45 years by conventional definition of the youth (NBSSC/10533:2013). NBS in collaboration with the Nigerian Federal Ministry of youth Development Stated that 54% of youth were unemployed in 2012, out this statistics females stood at 51.99 compared to their counterpart males while that of males stood at 48.19. Furthermore, the report disclosed that out of the 46,836 youths recorded against many types of crime, 42,071 which represent 75.5% were males and the remaining 24.5% were their counter parts females (National Baseline youth survey report 2012) this clearly indicates the level of unemployment among the youth and it link with many ones.

Lack of access to education: Another factor that is responsible for youth restiveness is lack of access to education and even those that were opportune to be admitted in various educational institutions there is a problem of lack of learning facilities. Education is one of the fundamental human rights and it is the key index of development since it improves productivity and health. Alubo (2012) strongly believed that quality of education has a direct bearing on national integration and progress. In Nigeria, most especially northern part has low literacy level. Nigeria universities are closed for more than 8 month in 2022 living the students to roaming

about the streets without knowing their fate worse still, the government interpreted it as politics, these may cause more social ills to the society in near future.

Marginalization: According to the Chukuezi (2019), youth resort to restiveness because of their perceived marginalization by the selfish elders in their communities. This means that the elders have occupied every position without empowering younger generation, this precipitate srestiveness among youths.

Cases of Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

Nigeria in recent times has witnessed massive involvement of youth in various violence, the nature of these violence were political, religious rivalry and economic. The emergence of these conflicts and the involvement of youth in it have attracted a lot of attentions. These include end SARRS protest in all over Nigeria in 2019. Asamu (2016) documented the involvement of youth militant of Agyrasutown in the crisis erupted on 14, April, 2000 as a result of locating a local government headquarters against their wish. This has led to the killing of some many youths. Similarly, the study of politics and Thuggery in north region of Nigeria conducted by Haruna and Ayuba (2011) identified the emergence of different group of thugs since the inception of 1999-2023, the groups includes Ecomog in Borno and Yobe, Sara-suka in Bauchi, Yandaba in Minna, Yan-kalare in Gombe, Banu-Israila in Taraba, Yahoo Boys in Benin and Yan-shinko in Adamawa State. According to them, most of these groups that perpetrate election crises in those states are armies of unemployed youth and the most unfortunate was that they are employed, sponsored and dumped by desperate politician to protect their political interest.

On the 5th November 2013 there was a misunderstanding between Eggon youth and Army at road block where one of the youth refused to stop for check and this resulted the killing of three youth (VOA Hausa morning session)

The Youth and National Security in Nigeria

If Nigeria will ever be secured, the place of the youth can never be trivialized against the background of their parameter and characteristics already demonstrated above. Moreover, the youth are the sustainable vanguard of the nation and leaders of tomorrow. They are thus the conscience of the nation and sight of the country. Any nation that underestimates the capacity of its youth in the quest for national security will soon become history. There is thus the need for sustainable understanding and appropriation of the youth's capacity if Nigeria is to ever be secured and develop. National security provides the enabling environment for development (Orji, 2011). For people and resources to be sustainably mobilized and deployed for National development there must be a strong sense of security within the nation (Orji, 2011). Local and external aggressions must be seen to have been checkmated.

No investor will invest in a nation seen to be insecure and constantly under threat, this is why nations, especially developed ones, spend huge amount of money to secures their nation boatels and deploy ideological apparatus especially the mediator

create both real, imagery and managed impressionist sense of security in their nations and any appearance of insecurity is dealt with decisively. National security achievement thus must be systematic and not unnecessarily violent as has been the case in Nigeria. To achieve national security also, preventive actions must be attended to rather than curative combative and reactive actions which most of the time are destructive and aggravate occurrences of conflicts and institutionalize them.

National security is thus very critical for development and all machineries must be put in place to guarantee it, for without it, development can never be achieved and the real sense worth of the nation with ultimately be traded. For the youths to function effectively for national security they must be of effectively empowered and re-orientated. Negative outcomes of involvement in conflict must be made known to them and the need to embrace peace and have positive view of life must be well inculcated into them. The education sector must be made more functional to enable a well well-trained youth that could compete internationally, since however, it is impossible to maintain that the education system in Nigeria is very functional (Ojua, 2012). Graduates from the Nigerian higher institution are constantly descended as either half-baked or outright unbaked. This is largely because the outputs from graduates of Nigerian higher institution have been poured to below their peers in other higher institutions. This is also why many youth engaged in cybercrimes popularly known as yahoo yahoo in the country regardless of the backlash on the nation even when they know the negative socioeconomic and diplomatic implication on the country.

Government Approach toward Curbing Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

Youth that are considered as leaders of tomorrow are turned to be society destroyers, since they were mostly involved on all conflicts and violence that the country suffers. Obviously government has not been reluctant to the phenomena, but the strategy adopted in circuiting most of the restiveness in Nigeria was more of repressive and violence acts through the deployment of military and police to curb the menace, for instance in Niger Delta despite the amnesty continues to use reprisal means to suppress the restiveness in the area. Again, the Development Commissions, Boards and Ministries established by the government as the response to the demands of the people never made any meaningful achievement rather they serves as avenue for self-enrichment and corruption at the expense of the poverty stricken masses of the region (Chukuezi, 2019).

Counselling Implications

Youth restiveness in Nigeria revolves around unemployment lack of access to education, poverty, marginalization and environmental degradation, thus, the need for counseling intervention. The goal of counseling process is to improve adjustment, higher functioning, self-direction, self-supporting and greater happiness. The focus is usually placed upon the process involved in the learning that occurs and the assistance that is given to the person who needs help (Oladele, 2000). This is a clear indication

of the importance of career guidance in our schools and specified on our educational system. In other word, education and work are interrelated, as such there are no two worlds, one for youths the other for adult but there is one world-life.

The development of career guidance programme from nursery to secondary school is based on the premise that, as all children mature; they pass the various developmental stages vital to their growth. The programme should focus on helping youths understand themselves in relation to the world around them on learning how to explore opportunities which are in consonance with their abilities, interests and values (Sambo, 2009). One of the seamier deficiencies of the existing career programmes in Nigeria is lack of vocational information which could facilitate vocational decision making. There is therefore a great need to develop vocational information. The need for career guidance has been intensified by certain limiting factors in the Nigeria society:

1. Most youth from low income families have relatively little prospect of maximizing their occupational goals that require graduation from a higher institution of learning.
2. Some parents have how education and certain values that cut their children off from certain occupations.
3. Occupational stereotyping by sex has brought un-healthy discriminating barriers in the world and against women (Sambo, 2009).

Conclusions

Youth restiveness in Nigeria has pose a lot of challenges to the security architecture of the country and can endanger the peaceful co-existence on its people, in the same manner conflicts, terrorism, banditry and kidnapping has caused havoc in achieving a sustainable development goals. Poverty, unemployment, under employment, poor education system among other has driven the youths into restiveness in Nigeria, and has degenerated to the extent that everyone is affected. Moreover, the government of the day is not doing enough to stop these menaces. It is important that gov't should adopt a strategy of curbing the youth restiveness through some forms of empowerment in order to arrest the station until that is done, the security and other developmental stridence of the government cannot be achieved.

Suggestions

1. Government should provide functional and free education to its citizen on order to take the children out of street.
2. Vocational and technical education should be properly funded in order for the youth to acquire skills that can create job for self-reliant.
3. Guidance and counseling activities should be seriously emphasized in our schools.

4. Multinational oil companies should re-channel some of their profits to improve the lives of the communities and also creating job opportunities for the youth from the communities.
5. Youth should be empowered by ways of given scholarships and some incentives in order to support their dreams.
6. Sensitization programmes should be organized for the youth to enable them discovered their god given potentials and properly annexed them on ventures that can better lives.

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