YOUTH RESTIVENESS IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATION TO COUNSELLING

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Abstract

Youth restiveness in Nigeria has been a prominent issue in recent times. There has been an increase in the occurrence of acts of violence and lawlessness, hostage-taking of prominent citizens, oil bunkering, arms insurgence and cultism, etc. Nevertheless, youth restiveness is not a recent phenomenon. Youth restiveness can results from economically, politically, or religiously issues that manifest its self in all over the country, Nigeria.

Introduction

Youth all over the world are the most vital segment of the society. A disciplined, focused, and law- abiding youth can create a bright future for any nation. Contrary to a lawless, indulgent, and violent youth is a great threat. Thirty-four percent of the people of Nigeria are between 10 and 24 years old. Poverty, unemployment, lack of infrastructure, and other factors have aggravated the problem of youth restiveness. In Nigeria youth have rendered valuable contributions to the struggle for liberation and national development. They constitute the reservoir of energy and dynamism for any national struggle or campaign if they are correctly guided, mobilized and fully integrated into social fabrics of the nation. This is why it is universally acknowledge that positive fundamental and meaningful changes across cultural settings are usually engineered, fostered and shaped by the generation of youth in the society. Thus, they are vital source of manpower and posse's leadership potential which if properly channeled their contribution to national development will be immersed (Alabi, 2004).

Youth may also constitute a threat to national survival and stability. If they are allowed to be drifted, left unemployed, indiscipline and morally bankrupt their positive contributions would then be drowned by frequent and sometimes violent protest actions. This is why they are now perceived as a social problem characterized with defilement of traditional core values. Youths lack respect for elders and authority figures, defile family honours, lack good manners, work ethics and full of indiscipline (Onyekpe, 2007). In Nigeria where economic problems have provided the needed veneer for expressioii of violence and conflict be it political, ethnic or religious (Ozohu-Sulaiman, 2006).This became a hydra-headed monster that threatens the political and economic security of the nation in the name of restiveness and militancy. That is why the consequences of this action are devastating to the society and youth. It is therefore the responsibility of the counsellors in Nigeria to look for ways of bring end to this menace which recently engulf our country Nigeria. It is the contention of this paper to investigate causes of youth restiveness in Northern part of Nigeria and to find out counselling mode of curbing it.

Concept of Restiveness

Chikuezi (2009) opined that youth restiveness is a combination of actions or conduct that constitutes or runs contrary to be accepted as societal norms and standard. Therefore, youth restiveness is a despicable act of being perpetrated by a significant proportion of youths in various communities. Restiveness is the ability to stay still or unwilling to be controlled, especially because of dissatisfaction. Youth restiveness is a sustain protestation embark upon to enforce desired outcome from a constituted authority by an organized body of youths. It is marked by violence and disruption of lawful activities (Elegbeleye 2005). It is a combination of any actions, conduct or act that constitutes unwholesome socially unacceptable activities engaged in by youth in any community. Conversely, it leads to degree of disorderliness and

instability, breakdown of law and order, low productivity due to disruption of production activities, apparent increasing crime rate, intra-ethnic hostilities, harassment and other sundry criminal tendencies such as self destruction of the youth which when arrested by law enforcement agencies lead to their imprisonment, lead to societal unrest, economic wastages, death and loss of property.

Review of Related literature

Abdullahi (2011) opined that the current youth restiveness have been caused by youth exuberance, imitation of activities in video film, vicious poverty cycle, unemployment, incapability of parents, families and the school to organize counselling sessions and education that will be functional and which tap the potentials and the talent of the youth for productivity. Similarly, youth restiveness in Nigeria has been a prominent issue in recent times because there has been increase in the occurrence of acts of violence and lawlessness, including things like hostage-taking of prominent citizens and foreign workers, suicidal attacks on government establishment, places of worship, burning of schools building, among others. Abdullahi further reaffirmed that the politicization of youth development programmes has led youths to find them in the devil's workshop controlled by secret cult, moneybags, and do-or-die politicians in a bid to win elections.

No wonder Akanmidu (2004) lamented that many youths especially or those living on highland resort to restiveness because of government abandonment of their areas thereby the area is left with acute shortage of drinkable water due to contamination of their wells or boreholes with crude oil spillage, lack of serious development in educational standard of the area which has made many youth grew up as illiterate young adults who only appreciate gangsters, kidnapping and robbing as pirate on waterside. In another misleading submission made by Abdullahi (2011) on the cause of youth restiveness in Northern Nigeria which stated that Politician or some fanatics or extremist mallams have conscripted many youth in almagiranchi as Jihadist and have been trained as warriors to lynch terror on communities or tribes and individuals that defies their religious and political ideology such situation have been witnessed in Zango Kataf in Bomo State by Boko Haram whose leaders were killed and are still bombing many part of North

The truth of the fact is that the writer provides misleading information on many issues. But the most fundamental issue is that of what he named as conscription though not specific between politician, some fanatics and extremist Mallams trained Jihadist to lynch terror .This false and fabricated statement which is based on sentiment because no any politician or some fanatics or Mallams trained Jihadist since the three have conflicting ideas and opinions. Another issue which vividly indicates the ignorance of the writer is to sited Zango Kataf in Bomo State and link the attack of Zango Kataf with Boko Haram, in which the attack at Zango Kataf of Kaduna State took place longago before the advent of Boko Haram Syndrome.

Similarly, Elegbeleye (2005) identified three major factors responsible for youth restiveness. These factors are: the peer motivated excitement of being students, the jingoistic pursuit of patriotic ideas and perceived victimization arising from economic exploitation and emphasized that there is no difference on the understanding of these factors among youth in terms of their sex and origin of their political zone. However, Ofem and Ajayi (2008), identified lack of humanitarian and social welfare, lack of good governance, corrupt practices of government officials, inadequate training programmes, inadequate recreational facilities ,lack of quality education as the reasons for incessant youth restiveness. Ozohu - Suleiman (2006) noted that unemployment among youth and they believe that they have rising tide of unemployment as well as they fear of a bleak future among the youth in African countries have made youths vulnerable to the manipulations of agent provocateurs and greedy multinationals that employ these youths to achieve their selfish ambitions as reasons for youth restiveness. Similarly, Aworawo (2000) established a link between poverty, loss of livelihood, inequality in sharing national resources with youth restiveness as evidenced by the numerous violent protests among the wielders of power in Nigeria. More so Onyekpe (2006) noted that the denial of the youth to have access to qualitative education in Nigeria because of the exorbitant cost of acquiring education, which lead them to be disoriented and readily

available for antisocial actions such as restiveness. But Ifdon and Ahiauzn (2005) noted inadequate communication and information flow as a factor responsible for youth restiveness.

Restiveness among youths globally and those in Nigeria has become a behaviour pattern which has degenerated into a topical global issue. Youth restiveness portrays man's negative side of social development. This negative development is rather unfortunate and has become one of the many security challenges facing man in the contemporary society. In many occasions, lives and properties worth millions of naira have been lost or vandalized and some razed down by restive youths. As observed by Chukwuemeka and Agbara (2010), human society and in fact the entire universe is simply and squarely a complex entity. In view of this, individuals and groups have their complexities, needs, aspirations, hopes, goals, opinions, views and values which could be social, economic, religious, psychological or political. Consequently, there is bound to be restiveness among different groups of people especially youths who are at their prime age. The term youth has been variously defined. Ndu (2000) and Yusuf (2001) saw youths as neither adolescents nor children characterized by excessive energy that needs to be exerted, which if not guarded, is channeled into negative tendencies. The United Nations General Assembly and World Bank cited in Adewuyi (2008) defined the youth as people between ages 15 to 24 years. In Nigeria, the people within the age limit of 30 years are considered as youths hence they are allowed to participate in the National Youth Service Scheme (NYSC). For this paper, the NYSC definition of youth is adopted. Youths are filled with energy and when this energy is positively channeled or guarded, they are highly productive, and hence they are likely to contribute to the overall development of the society. On the other hand, when the energy is negatively channeled, restiveness and its resultant effects are likely to be felt. Chika and Onyene (2010) observed that to be restive is to be unable to stay still, or unwilling to be controlled especially because one is bored or not satisfied with certain decisions, changed or existing laws considered to be unfavourable.

Youth restiveness involves the combination of actions, conducts and behaviour which constitutes unwholesome, socially unacceptable behaviour exhibited by youths in the society. Youth restiveness has been a device used by the youth to get what they want from the relevant authority. Chika and Onyene (2010) asserted that youth resistance to conditions, issues and unwelcomed. Leadership regimes date back to 1934 when Herbert Macaulay floated a political party to kick against dependency with fellow elite youths that had contact with the West. In addition, political parties like the National Council for Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), the Action Group (AG), has their youth wings as vibrant as the other parties. Since then, there has been proliferation of youth association like students' unions, ethnic cliques. A Number of studies have identified factors responsible for youth restiveness. Elegbeleye (2005) identifies three major factors: the peer motivated excitement of being a student, the jingoistic pursuit of patriotic ideas, and perceived victimization arising from economic exploitation. Another study carried out in Niger Delta region by Ofem and Ajayi (2008) identified lack of humanitarian and social welfare, lack of good governance, corrupt practices of government officials, inadequate training programmes, unemployment, inadequate recreational facilities, lack of quality education, and so on, as e reasons for incessant youth restiveness.

Ozo-Eson (2008) saw kidnapping in the Niger Delta as a cheap source of making money since ransom are always demanded. A high court judge in Delta State was kidnapped and a ransom of 50 million naira was being demanded, Vanguard, Sunday 12, 2012. Alechenu and Ibanga (2007) quoted Senator Folarn as saying that this is unacceptable. There is so much waste of wealth, a lot of lands are destroyed. This statement is with reference to the level of environmental degradation by oil producing companies as one of the causes of kidnapping. Also, Ogoni elders according to Shaibu as quoted by Enueme and Onyene (2010) attributed youth restiveness to lack of access to quality education due to collapse of facilities resulting from neglect and activities of multinational oil corporations. This neglect made Ofeghe (2007) to say that the restiveness has been expressed in the forms of bombing of oil installations and kidnapping of foreign workers.

Another form of youth restiveness is cultism. Stown (2012) stated that economic conditions in the a make cults intriguing for students who want security against enemies and substance. Ofeghe (2008) opined that youth restiveness in the Niger Delta is as a result of employment and sufferings among the youths of the area which has metamorphosed into various acts of restiveness. Elegbeleje (2005) observed that some restive acts are peer motivated jamboree and perceived victimization arising from economic exploitation. Another cause of youth restiveness is the intellectual class as suggested by Shill, 1978. He is of the opinion that thorough view of the areas were youth restiveness thrives, there must always be an intellectual class. Yet another cause of youth restiveness is indoctrination as suggested by Shill (1978). When youths are taught from early age that certain groups of people are their enemies or not good, there is no doubt that the seed of hatred had been sown from that early age. Youth restiveness can also be caused by marginalization Osalor, (2012). According to him, the youth resort to restiveness because of their perceived marginalization by 'selfish' elders. It means they resort to it in other to get their own share of the national wealth. Unemployment is another contributing factor to youth restiveness. Osalor, (2012) gave the figure of Nigerians who are unemployed in the first half of the year to about 3.9 percent of the entire population. The choice of undergraduates was made because these are the youths, many of whom are the brain behind youth restiveness.

Also, Delta State is used as it comprises many ethnic groups whom the researchers have used with ease instead of travelling to other states. This implies that catalogues of closely-related factors are responsible for youth restiveness.

Poverty

Poverty connotes inequality and social injustice and this traumatizes the poor. More than 70 percent of people in Nigeria are in abject poverty, living below the poverty line, and one- third survive on less than US $1 dollar a day (Zakaria, 2006). This figure includes an army of youth in urban centres in Nigeria who struggle to eke out a living by hawking chewing sticks, bottled water, handkerchiefs, belts, etc. The sales-per-day and the profit margin on such goods are so small that they can hardly live above the poverty line. Disillusioned, frustrated, and dejected, they seek an opportunity to express their anger against the state. Aworawo (2000) and Zakaria (2006) agreed that there is a link among poverty, loss of livelihood, inequality, and youth restiveness as evidenced by the numerous violent protests against the wielders of power in Nigeria.

Inadequate Educational Opportunities and Resources

Quality education has a direct bearing on national prestige, greatness, and cohesion. The knowledge and skill that young people acquire help determine their degree of patriotism and contribution to national integration and progress. Between 2000 and 2004, about 30 percent of Nigerian youth between 10 and 24 were not enrolled in secondary school (Population Reference Bureau, 2006). Perhaps the prohibitive cost of acquiring education is responsible. The aftereffect of this situation is that thousands of young people roam the streets in cities in Nigeria. Those who manage to complete secondary school have no opportunities for tertiary education. Having being denied the chance to reach their potential, they are disorientated and readily available for antisocial actions (Onyekpe, 2007). Worse still, some who struggle to enroll in various educational institutions drop out due to lack of basic learning facilities. This situation is attributable to the dwindling resources of government at both federal and state levels as a result of an economic meltdown.

Bad Governance

Good governance is required for the growth and development of any nation. Unfortunately, in Nigeria bad governance is more common than good, resulting in disjointed development. The World Bank (1992) identified the main characteristics of bad governance to include; failure to properly distinguish between what is public and what is private, leading to private appropriation of otherwise public resources, inability to establish a predictable frame work for law and government behaviour in a manner conducive to

development, or arbitrariness in the application of laws and rules, excessive rules, regulations, licensing requirement and so forth which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent-seeking, priorities that are inconsistent with development, thereby resulting in misallocation of national resources; and exceedingly narrow base for, or non-transparent, decision making. These and more are the features of most administration in Nigeria. For instance, Onyekpe (2007) observed that successive administrations in Nigeria have not allocated much to the needs of the youth, and, worse still, the meager allocation are often diverted by government officials to their private accounts and projects. Thus, youth are restive and agitated when they perceive that resources meant for them are being wasted by those in authority.

Lack of Basic Infrastructure

Most rural communities and urban slums in Nigeria have no access to potable water, health facilities, electricity, communication facilities, industries and commercial facilities, etc. Behind social unrest and youth restiveness in the country is the agitation for equitable distribution of resources.

Inadequate Communication and Information flow

Communication creates room for sharing information. It helps people express their thoughts and feelings, clarify problems, and consider alternative ways of coping or adapting to their situation. Such sharing promotes social cohesion. People must have access to communication facilities, to communicate with the people making the decisions that affect them. Sadly, rarely do people in Nigeria participate in decision-making processes on issues that affect their lives. Ifidon and Ahiauzu (2005), in their study of Niger Delta, revealed that inadequate communication and information flow is one factor responsible for youth restiveness in the area.

Unemployment

Unemployment is a hydra-headed monster which exists among the youth in all developing countries. Experts believe that the number of jobless youth is twice as high as official estimate. Ozohu-Suleiman (2006) noted Nigerian youth are trapped by unemployment. Zakaria (2006) believes that “the rising tide of unemployment and the fear of a bleak future among the youth in African countries have made them vulnerable to the manipulations of agents' provocateurs”. These include aggrieved politicians, religious demagogues, and greedy multinationals that employ these youths to achieve their selfish ambitions. Zakaria (2006) strongly believed that the absence of job opportunities in developing countries is responsible for youth restiveness with disastrous consequences.

Statement of the Problem

Youth restiveness in Nigeria is presumed to be as a result of catalogue of closely related factors. Some of the presumed factors include poverty, corrupt leaders, unemployment, lack of vocational skills; and lack of humanitarian and societal welfare. Thus, youth restiveness phenomenon in recent years in Northern Nigeria has paralyzed the social, economic and political activities. Similarly, it may hypothesized that significant difference may or may not exist between male and female students on their perception of the causes of youth restiveness because males students by virtue of their physique are found in acts leading to restiveness on like females. For instance, their involvement may due their on the need to resort to restiveness. Equally, religious affiliation may also be hypothesized to be a cause for restiveness among the youth. Both religions preach peace but the current happenings have made particular religion to be more violent than the other. It may be hypothesized that the origin of Geo-political zone of the youth may also be resulted to significant or no significant difference on the perception of the causes of youth restiveness because the youth in different zones resort to restiveness various reasons when a Niger Delta youth resort to restiveness because of crude oil and environmental degradation, a youth in North may resort to restiveness for religious or political reasons.

Counselling Implication

Anti kidnapping, cultism and terrorism campaign by using jingles and posters in our University campuses. This might help to reorient our undergraduates of the ills, of youth restiveness in whatever form. Counsellors can organize workshops and seminars in our institutions to expose students to the ills of youth restiveness. Government should try to create employment for her citizens to reduce the unemployment level which gives rise to kidnapping and other forms of youth restiveness. Counselling centres in our universities should braze up to their responsibilities of counselling students and provide follow up for students who renounces. Our leaders should lead by good example and provide basic amenities for the citizens. The government should also provide loans to unemployed youths who are willing to establish small scale business such as snail farming and grass-cutter rearing so that they could be self-sufficient. Counselling centers in Nigerian universities should on annual basis, organize workshops and seminars for new intakes to intimate them on the ills of youth restiveness so that they can desist from such vices. Since science students have a different perception of the causes of youth restiveness because they deal mostly with things (chemicals), it is hereby recommended that courses that will make them to be more conversant with human behaviour be introduced into their programme as one of their general course in all the universities in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has attempted to capture the counselling role in pre for prevention of youth restiveness in Nigeria. It first and for most give the theoretical review of the topic, the review of related literature, the concept, the causes and the counselling ways of preventing youth restiveness in Nigeria. The future belongs to youth who make productive use of information and knowledge. With adequate selling Nigerian youth can achieve their potential and participate actively in local and national affairs in a manner that eschews violence.

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