
COUNSELLING FOR PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF MILITANCY AND YOUTH RESTIVENESS IN NIGERIA

By

¹Mohammed Mahmoud Baba PhD, and ²Babaji Mohammed

Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Technology Education
Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi
Student Affairs Division
Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi
mmahmoubaba@gmail.com

Abstract

The Nigerian society of today is so much plagued by very many social ills which adversely affect individuals and the entire society. The consequences spell volume the level of progress and development of the society. The youth, who are supposedly the vanguards for peace, unity and progress are today being used to the contrary. Through the negative values they imbibe, the use of un prescribed drugs and drug abuse, peer influence, influence of politicians, the media, and above all the vices and criminality in the society, make the youth prone to militancy and restiveness. Lives and properties are lost on daily basis, which spell doom for the collective survival of the society; hence progress and development are thwarted. This paper attempts to identify the genesis, causes, manifestations and dimensions. Counselling psychological solutions are therefore proffered, which will go a long way in ameliorating and assuaging the effects of youth militancy and restiveness in Nigeria to guarantee progress and development.

Key words: Counselling, Management, Militancy, Restiveness

INTRODUCTION

Today, the effect of youth restiveness stare us in the face. Youth restiveness is devastating both to individuals and the society at large. In fact youth restiveness makes the youths to be disabled in performing their expected roles as developers of the economy. Youth restiveness is a global phenomenon and this in Nigeria has become a kind of behavioral pattern

which has degenerated into topical issues. Youth restiveness displays negative side of social development. This negative attitude has become one of the many societal challenges facing man nowadays.

Lives and properties worth millions of naira have been lost, vandalized or raised down by restive youths. They destroy their productive lives and the social fabrics of the society. Nigerian state and all stake

holders must bring this large number of unemployed and energetic youths into the mainstream of the society to participate in all round development so as to be creators of jobs and wealth for themselves and others.

They can constitute a reservoir of energy and dynamic for any national struggle if they can be guided, mobilized and fully integrated corrected into the social fabrics of the nation. They may also constitute a threat to national survival, development and stability if they are left uncoordinated well utilized, unemployed and morally bankrupt. No nation aspiring to greatness can afford to ignore the relevance of her youths in all positive aspects of contributions they can offer. Chukwuemeka and Agbara (2010) observe that human society and in fact the entire universe is a complex entity, and as such, individuals and of course groups have their needs, aspirations, hopes, goals opinions, views and values which could be social, religious, economical, political and psychological, and if not checked would cause restiveness among different groups especially youths who are agile and at prime age. Youth restiveness constitutes socially unacceptable behavior exhibited by youths in the society youths has been a device use by the youths to get what they want own the relevant authority.

Conceptualization of terms

Youth - National Youth Development Policy (2001) defined youth as people aged 18-35. They constitute about 40 percent of the more than 140 million people of Nigeria. The total population of youths between 10 and 24 in Nigeria was 45.4 in 2006 which is 34 percent of the total population. Ndu (2000) and Yusuf (2001) defined youth as neither adolescent, nor children

characterized by excessive energy that needs to be exerted, which if not guided, will be channeled into negative tendencies.

Restiveness (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 unfavorable. Youth restiveness constitutes socially unacceptable behavior exhibited by youths in the society.

Effects of Youth Restiveness

Youth restiveness has a lot of negative and undesirable effects on both the individual psychology, socio-economic and political development aspect of the nation, the social development of any society or nation. The social development of any society or nation could be adversely affected when the youths become restive. The restiveness of the youths in a particular area scares people and visitor who come to do business. Nigerians and visitors are afraid of visiting some parts of the country like Yobe, Borno and some states in the South as a result of youth restiveness in those areas. People become suspicious of each other, mutual trust is lost and cooperative activities from individual to communal levels can always be disrupted due to restiveness.

People need to interrelate and depend on one another for transaction of businesses and survival from local to international levels. If this cannot happen, then social life will retard growth in all aspects of life. Youth restiveness affect political development adversely and seriously, as it denies people of the opportunity to participate in the process of governance, and to benefit from democratic dividend installation of a chosen

government by the people will be attained if there is political development.

When there is restiveness, leaders cannot attract projects to such areas thereby denying the community of numerous benefits of if democracy. Children who grow up in areas associated with killings and brutality, witness psychological disorder and develop severe consequences like post traumatic stress disorder and other types of psychological problems. Youth restiveness also encourages or aid circulation of weapons within the society as it creates market for the sale of weapons for war or self defense.

Relevance of Youth in the Society

Youth occupy a prominent place in any society. Apart from being owners and leaders of tomorrow, they outnumber the middle aged and the aged.

Besides numerical superiority, youth have energy and ideas that are society's great potentials (Onyekpe, 2007) the National Youth Development policy (2001,p.1) asserts that: youths are the foundation of a society, their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the place of development and security of a nation. Through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in economic development and socio-political attainment.

In their dreams and hopes, a nation finds her motivations, on their energies; she builds her vitality and purpose. And because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured. This acknowledges the role of the youth's in the peace and security of a nation. As the most active segment of any society, youths are the major determiners of peace and stability of a nation

Ozohu, Suleiman (2006) conversely; the degree of disorderliness and instability in society is also determined in part by youths. The absence of peace means that no meaningful development can take place. The National Youth Policy (2001) affirms that, the extent of the youth's responsible conduct and roles in society is positively connected with the development of their country.

Historical development of youth restiveness

Youth restiveness historically has become a device used by the youths to get what they want from the relevant authority. Its origin can be traced back to 1934 as (Chika and Onyene 2010) asserted that youth resistance to conditions, issues and unwelcomed leadership regimes date back to 1934 when Herbert Macauley floated a political means to kick against dependency with fellow elites, youth that had contact with the west.

In addition, political parties like the National Council for Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.), the Northern people congress (N.P.C), The Action Group (A.G) had their youth wings as the other parties. Since then, there were proliferation of youth associations in the country like Students Union, ethnic cliques and other youth movements which included the following:

Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Odua People Congress (OPC), movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Arewa Consultative Forum (AFC) in the north etc. who champion the cause of crime prevention and

control but their activities are parallel with state recognition are threat to national security.

Causes of Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

A number of studies have identified factors responsible for youth restiveness in Nigeria, and some of those factors include:

1. Bad governance-good governance is required for the growth and development of any society and nation, unfortunately in Nigeria bad governance is more common than good one resulting in disjointed development. (Onyekpe 2007) observes that successive administrations in Nigeria have not allocated much to the needs of the youths, and worse still, the meager allocations are often diverted by government officials to their private accounts and projects due to corruption and making youths more restive and agitated when they perceived resources meant for them are being wasted or stolen by those in authority.
2. Unemployment is a hydra-headed monster which is staring the youths in all developing countries. Experts believed, the number of jobless youths is twice as high as official estimate. Ozuhu, Suleiman (2006) notes Nigerian youths are trapped by unemployment. Zakari (2006) believes the rising ride of unemployment and the fear of a bleak future among the youths in Nigeria and African Countries made them vulnerable to manipulations by grievied politicians, religious demagogues and selfish individuals who use them to achieve their needs.

Zakari (2006) strongly believes that absence of jobs opportunities in developing counties is responsible for youth restiveness with disastrous consequences.

3. Poverty connotes inequality and social injustice and it 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 81 us dollar a day. This figure include a lot of youths in urban centres in Nigeria who live by either hawking packaged water, hand kerchiefs or chewing sticks etc. the sale they make per day and the profits are so little that they hardly live above the poverty line with this, they are frustrated, dejected and feel rejected, cheated and seek an opportunity to express their anger against the state Aworowo (2000) and Zakari (2006) agreed there is a link among poverty, loss of lively hood, in equality and youth restiveness as evidenced by the numerous violent protests against the authority in Nigeria.
4. Inadequate educational opportunities and resources-Quality education has a direct bearing on national prestige, greatness and concession. The knowledge and skills young people acquire determine their degree of priritotism and contribution to national development, integration and progress. Between 2000 and 2004 about 30 percent of Nigerians. Youths between 10 and 24 years were not enrolled in secondary school (population Deference Bureau 2006) perhaps the prohibitive cost of acquiring education was responsible for thousands of youth roaming the streets in Nigerian cities without education.

Those who managed to complete secondary education have no opportunities for tertiary education. As a result of this they are disoriented and are readily available for anti-social activities Onyekpe (2006)

5. Poor parental upbringing-majority of parents have abandoned their parental roles child upbringing in historical African context is that, the child belongs to everybody and every adult was viewed as a parent and was free to either correct or punish any child that misbehave or commit an offence of any kind. Gone are the days when a child in a community is everybody's, nowadays people are afraid of correcting children other than their own because of the way most parents react when their children or wards are corrected by others, and this helps to give the youths the believes that they can do anything and go free as long as their biological parents did not notice.
6. Lack of Basic Infrastructure-Most rural communities and urban slums in Nigeria have no access to portable water, health facilities, electricity, commercial and communication facilities, and these are responsible for unrest and youth restiveness an agitation for equal distribution of resources.

Counseling implication against youth restiveness

One of the tools that might make positive impact is information services in counseling. Through these services, the guidance counsellor may help the youths to acquire knowledge they are ignorant of and this information will help liberate them from falsehood and misconceptions they learn from their peers and some

bad adults who use them to achieve their goals. The youths also need economic information that will empower them on entrepreneurial skills that can sustain them economically. Such information librates them from mental and psychological torture they pass through in acts of restiveness.

Counsellors could also engage youths in group counselling in school and non school settings through organizing workshops, talk shows and seminars for youths through youths organizations, schools and religious organization. The youths should be told that as the future leaders the future belong to them and should not be destroyed by restiveness rather they should be productive members of the society.

The same people who use these youths to cause problems, like politicians, religious leaders, pressure groups etc could benefit from counseling to educate them on the need to do the right thing while handing the youths.

One of the outstanding causes of youth restiveness is poor child upbringing. This is a challenge to the marriage and family counselors. Seminars and workshops could be organized for parents internally to help them understand effective child rearing or upbringing and characteristics peculiarities of adolescent and youths and how best to handle them, and parents could also be told of the positive effect of having children they can carter for.

Value re-orientation to change the psychic of Nigerian youths is another means counselors can use, as most Nigerian youths seem to believe that the only source of wealth is through resource control and sharing national cake and embezzling money meant for the generality of Nigerians by the public officials, such

beliefs and these conceptions should be replaced with good values of honesty, hard work and concern for the country's development. Social vices that are inimical to national development and threat to security and stability of the nation like gang formation, kidnapping, drug trafficking and alcohol abuse, corruption and terrorism etc should be replaced by healthy habits through effective counselling strategies for the youths.

REFERENCES

- Adewuyi, T.D.O (2008). Utilization of self counseling theories for youths peer relationship. *The Lagos Counsellor*, 1,15-21.
- Chika, P.F and Onyene, V. (2010). Youth restiveness in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. Implication for education and leadership, *European journal of social sciences* 18,2,286-296.
- Chukwuemek, E. (2008) Bourgeoisie against peasants. A political diagnosis of the evil consequences of multinationals in Africa. *Journal of interventional studies* 1,2,45-50.
- Coleman, J. S (1996), Nigeria; Background to Nationalism, Benin city: Borburg and Witnston.