



Curbing Youth Restiveness in Rivers State: The Role of Adult Education

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Abstract

The Study examined the Role of Adult Education in Curbing Youth Restiveness in Rivers State. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprises the members of the registered community-based youth Associations (CBYAs) in the six Local Government Areas under study in Rivers State. A multi-sampling system was adopted. The first stage was the random sampling of two Local Governments Areas from each of the senatorial districts of Rivers State. The second stage involved a purposive sampling of 50 youths from each of the six local government areas; comprising mainly the executive members of the youth associations. This was applied to realize a sample size of 300. The instrument used for data collection is a questionnaire. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire is 0.68. Three research questions were posed. They were analysed with frequencies and weighted mean. The findings revealed that a catalogue of closely related factors is responsible for youth restiveness in Rivers State. These include: lack of humanitarian and social welfare, lack of good governance, corrupt practices of government officials, inadequate training programs, unemployment, lack of quality education and so on. The findings also showed that adult education can play prominent role in curbing youth restiveness in Rivers State. It also revealed that resources - human and material - for adult education are not adequate to make the desired impact. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended amongst others that Government should provide more investment in terms of finance, personnel and materials for the various adult education centres across the state; and that Adult Education centers should be established in the rural areas in the state. This would enable more people, especially rural dwellers to access and benefit from it. Key Words: Youth, restiveness, adult education.

Keywords: Curbing, Youth Restiveness, Adult Education, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

The words 'youth' and restiveness have become so commonly used together in the last couple of years that it seems to have acquired a life of its own. In the last decade and more there has been a proliferation of cases all over the country and indeed the world, of youth agitations which have left several people dead and valuable infrastructure as well as personal properties lost and destroyed.

The National Youth Development Policy (2001) defines youth as people aged 18-35. They constitute about 40 percent of 140 million people in Nigeria. Elegbeleye (2005) defines restiveness as a sustained protestation embarked upon to enforce a desired outcome from a constituted authority by an organized body of youths. It is marked by violence and disruption of lawful activities. It is also a combination of any action or conduct that is unwholesome and socially unacceptable.

Relevance of Youths

Youths occupy a prominent place in any society. Apart from being the owners and leaders of tomorrow, they outnumber the middle-aged and the aged (Onyekpe, 2007). Besides numerical superiority, youths have energy and bear the greatest aspect of a society's potentials. National Youth Development Policy (2001:1) asserts that:

Youth are the foundation of a society. Their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the peace 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 attainments. In their dreams and hopes, a nation finds her motivation. On their energies, she builds her vitality and purpose. And because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of a nation is assured.

The statement above acknowledges the role of the youth 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 (Ozoha-Sulaman, 2006). Conversely, the degree of disorderliness and instability in society is also determined in part by the youths.

Peace is a precursor of development. 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 correlated with the development of their country".

Causes of Youth Restiveness

Several factors have been implicated in the recent dimension of youth restiveness in the country. Elegbeleye (2005) identified three major factors: peer influence, inordinate ambition to get rich and perceived victimization arising from economic exploitation. Similarly, Ofem and Ajayi (2008) identified lack of a social welfare system in the country, lack of good governance, corrupt practices of government officials, unemployment, inadequate recreation facilities, inadequate

training programs, lack of quality education etc. as the reasons behind incessant youth restiveness.

It is often opined that an idle mind is the devil's workshop. True to this fact, youths without any legal means of livelihood resort to vices capable of disrupting the social order of the society. Unemployment is a hydra headed monster which affects youths in most societies. The unemployment rate in Nigeria was last reported at 23.9 percent in 2014. Population Reference Bureau (2006) has put the figure of unemployed Nigerians in the first half of the year at 23.9 percent, up from 21.1 percent in 2013 and 19.7 in 2012. Zakaria (2006) believes that the rising tide of unemployment and a bleak future among the youth in African countries have made them vulnerable to manipulations of politicians, religious demagogues and greedy multinationals that employ these youths to achieve their selfish ambitions. He also contends that the absence of job opportunities in developing countries is responsible for youth restiveness with disastrous consequences.

The notion appears to have gained ground that the youth resort to restiveness because of their perceived marginalization by the 'selfish' elders in the scheme of things in the communities. The youths, in order to get their share of the benefits accruing to them resort to taking on their elders headlong, culminating in the restiveness rampant in most of our communities today.

There is also the problem caused by a disruption in family structures and single parenthood occasioned by the high rate of divorce in our society today. There are strong indications that some of these tendencies to crime and deviant behaviors among youths are partly due to the fact that a good number of them are being brought up by single parents. It is a fact that a generation of children who grow up without father or mother will certainly be prone to crime and deviant behaviors.

Similarly, the youth are described as full of exuberance. This raw energy has very recently been channeled into anti-social behaviours that threaten the peace and unity of the community. The availability and accessibility of drugs in street corners which predispose the youths to abnormal behaviors also adds to youth restiveness. It is also believed that some leaders and politicians in our society recruit youth to settle scores and use them against perceived enemies. These highly placed individuals provide resources and protection from the law for their 'boys'. With this trend, some degenerate to outright criminality even to a level where their principals can no longer control them.

In every good society, good governance is required for the growth and development of the citizenry. Unfortunately, Nigeria is characterized by bad governance, resulting in disjointed development. Development experts identify the main characteristics of bad governance to include, failure to properly distinguish what is public and what is private, leading to private appropriation of otherwise public resources; arbitrariness in the application of law and rules and excessive rules, regulations, licensing requirement and so forth which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent-seeking. Other forms of bad governance are priorities that are inconsistent with development, thereby resulting in misallocation of national resources, and exceedingly narrow base or non-transparent decision making. World Bank (1992) identifies 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 behavior in a manner conducive to development, or arbitrariness in the application of laws and rules;
- Priorities that are inconsistent with development, thereby resulting in misallocation of national resources; and
- Exceedingly narrow base for or non-transparent, decision making.

Onyekpe (2007) observes that successive administration 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. The youths are restive and agitated when they perceive that resources meant for them are being wasted by those in authority.

Poverty is another cause of youth restiveness. There is so much poverty, inequality and social injustice in Nigeria. Due to poverty, many youths in urban centers in Nigeria have taken to hawking on the streets just to eke out a living. The sales they make per-day and the profit margin on their goods are so small that they can hardly live above the poverty line. Disillusioned, frustrated and dejected, many of them seek an opportunity to express their anger against the State. Scholars agree that there is a connection between poverty, loss of livelihood, inequality and youth restiveness evidenced by the numerous violent protests against the power brokers in Nigeria.

Amorawo (2000) agrees that there is a link between poverty, loss of livelihood, inequality and youth restiveness as evidence by the numerous violent protests against the power brokers. Again, many of the youths lack quality education. Quality education has a direct bearing on national prestige, greatness and cohesion.

The knowledge and skills that young people acquire help determine their degree of patriotism and contribution to national growth. However, the truth about our situation is that quality education is either in short supply or come with a prohibitive cost. The inevitable consequence is that our graduates remain half-baked as so many other eager youths are unable to gain admission into the university due to limited spaces. The youths become disorientated and readily available for anti-social actions.

Meanwhile, most rural communities and urban slums in Nigeria have no access to potable water, health facilities, electricity, communication facilities, etc. Behind social unrest and youth restiveness in the country is the agitation for equitable distribution of resources. And the youths are willing tools.

The Relevance of Adult Education

The consequences of youth restiveness on our society are better imagined. Besides the social disorderliness it tends to create, it has grave implications on the nation's economy. One sure way of addressing this social vice is by giving the youth a sense of belonging. This can be achieved through creation of more jobs for the teeming population of youths, provision of social basic infrastructures needed to encourage small scale businesses. There is the need for the youth to be liberated psychologically and economically from the control of self-seeking business and political elite who often use them to cause social disorderliness in the society.

Youths must have access to information and communication with the people making decisions for them, which sadly is not presently the case. Above all, more awareness needs to be created, for the youths to change their orientation towards positive contribution to the development of the society. As the future of our country, the youths should lay a good

foundation for tomorrow. Against this backdrop, Adult Education – formal and non-formal- in the right quantity and quality becomes very relevant. Adult Education as noted by Nzeneri (2010) is all-embracing and covers so many areas of concern which include:

- Remedial Education – making well the deficiencies many experience through non-acquisition of certain levels of formal schooling
- Vocational, technical and professional education–these are concerned with either preparation for work or the recurrent needs for updating and refreshing knowledge or skills
- Health, welfare and family life, including guidance education. These are concerned with physical and mental health, family problems, parenthood, social security and consumer education.
- Civic, political and community education–these include instructions about national and inter-national matters, and
- Self-fulfillment education which embraces all aspects of education mainly for the enjoyment of the individual.

Barikor (1984) identified adult education as a process by which men and women, in group attempt to improve themselves by developing their knowledge, insight, skills, attitudes and other capacities to enable them meet their occupational needs or educational needs or professional competences as well as their social and physical responsibility and self-fulfillment needs.

It has therefore been argued that adult education as an all-inclusive pattern of adult development has the capacity to address the needs of adults not only as individuals but also as members of a community. The contention is that when the youths who are mostly adults are empowered sufficiently, restiveness will be reduced to the barest minimum.

The Problem

There is a general notion that positive and meaningful development across cultural settings are usually engineered, fostered and shaped by the generations of youths in that society. It is however sad to note that youth restiveness and social vices have apparently become a threat to the realization of our potentials as individuals and as a group. It is a phenomenon which has in so many cases led to near breakdown of law and order, low productivity due to disruption of production activities, increasing crime rate, intra and inter community conflicts, harassment of development providers and other criminal tendencies. It therefore follows that any society that fails to make adequate preparation for the youth literarily risks its future.

It is in the light of the above that the researchers saw the need to investigate the causes of youth restiveness in Rivers State, the roles of adult education in curbing youth restiveness and the extent the various adult education programs influence the lives of the people.

Therefore the provision of adequate information based on empirical evidence, to enhance the role of adult education in curbing youth restiveness and as a consequence enhance peace and development in Rivers State is the problem of this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the causes of youth restiveness in Rivers State?
- What are the roles of adult education in curbing youth restiveness in Rivers State?
- How adequate are the facilities and resources for teaching the adults to minimize youth restiveness?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprises the members of the registered Community-Based Youth Associations (CBYAs) in six Local Government Areas under study in Rivers State. The first stage was the random sampling of two Local Governments Areas from each of the senatorial districts of Rivers State. The second stage involved a purposive sampling of 50 youths from each of the six local government areas; comprising mainly the executive members of the youth associations. This was applied to realize a sample size of 300. The instrument used for data collection is a questionnaire. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire is 0.68. The data collected were analysed with percentages and weighted mean.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the causes of youth restiveness in Rivers State?

Table1: Showing the causes of youth restiveness in Rivers State

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	Mean	REMARKS
The absence of a social welfare system in the state can be a cause of youth restiveness.	124 (496)	98 (294)	56 (112)	22 (22)	924	3.08	Accepted
Lack of good governance can be a cause of youth restiveness.	137 (548)	122 (366)	32 (64)	9 (9)	987	3.29	Accepted
High rate of unemployment is a cause of youth restiveness.	128 (512)	94 (282)	49 (98)	29 (29)	921	3.07	Accepted
Activities of corrupt government officials could lead to youth restiveness.	126 (504)	96 (288)	54 (108)	24 (24)	924	3.08	Accepted

Table 1 presents the analysis of the roles of adult education in combating youth restiveness. The options on the roles of adult education in combating youth restiveness that; the absence of a social welfare system in the state can be a cause of youth restiveness; lack of good governance can be a cause of youth restiveness; high rate of unemployment is a cause of youth restiveness and the activities of corrupt officials could lead to youth restiveness were accepted by the respondents. Each of these items (3.08, 3.29, 3.07 and 3.08 respectively) has a mean that is greater than 2.50—the criterion mean.

Research Question 2: What are the roles of adult education in curbing youth restiveness in Rivers State?

Table 2: Showing the roles of adult education in combating youth restiveness.

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	Mean	REMARKS
Adult Education can play prominent role in combating youth restiveness in Rivers State.	136 (544)	121 (363)	33 (66)	10 (10)	983	3.27	Accepted
Adult Education can provide youths with adequate skills and training to be self-reliant.	128 (512)	96 (288)	42 (84)	34 (34)	918	3.06	Accepted
Adult Education has the capacity to solve youth unemployment problems.	134 (536)	123 (369)	34 (68)	9 (9)	982	3.27	Accepted
Adult Education is a life-long process that can change the mentality of the youths to end restiveness.	124 (496)	96 (288)	59 (118)	21 (21)	923	3.07	Accepted

Table 2 shows responses on the roles of adult education in combating youth restiveness in Rivers State. The options that adult education can play prominent role in combating youth restiveness in Rivers State; adult education can provide youths with adequate skills and training to be self-reliant; adult education has the capacity to solve youth unemployment problems and that Adult Education is a lifelong process that can change the mentality of the youths to end restiveness were accepted by the respondents. Each of these items (3.27, 3.06, 3.27 and 3.07 respectively) has a mean that is greater than 2.50—the criterion mean.

Research Question 3: How adequate are the facilities and resources for teaching the adults to minimize youth restiveness?

Table 3: Showing the adequacy of the facilities and resources for teaching the adults to minimize youth restiveness.

ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	Mean	REMARKS
Instructional materials for teaching and learning in adult education programs are sufficient.	33 (132)	43 (129)	96 (192)	128 (128)	581	1.90	Rejected
Government has made sufficient investment in the provision of facilities for adult education.	20 (80)	59 (177)	98 (196)	123 (123)	576	1.92	Rejected
Conducive learning environment enhances teaching and learning in adult education.	10 (40)	33 (99)	123 (246)	134 (134)	519	1.73	Rejected
There are several non-qualified adult facilitators in your local government.	128 (512)	93 (279)	50 (100)	29 (29)	920	3.10	Accepted

Table 3 shows that the options suggesting that: instructional materials for teaching and learning in adult education programs are sufficient; Government has made sufficient investment in the provision of facilities for adult education and conducive learning environment enhances teaching and learning in adult education were rejected by the respondents. Each of their means 1.92, 1.73 and 1.73 respectively is less than the criterion mean; while the option that there are several non-qualified adult facilitators in the local government areas with a mean of 3.10 was accepted by the respondents.

DISCUSSIONS

Results of the study showed that the respondents were mainly executive members of the youth associations. These people are mostly adults and as such should be in the best position to understand and express the true feelings and sentiments of the group in the issues within the scope of this study.

The findings revealed that the respondents agree that the absence of a social welfare system in the state, lack of good governance, high unemployment rate and activities of corrupt government officials could be causes of youth restiveness. This finding agrees with the finding of Ofem and Ajayi (2008) who identified lack of humanitarian and social welfare, lack of good governance, corrupt practices of government officials, inadequate training programs, unemployment, lack of quality education and so on, as the reasons for incessant youth restiveness. To him this implies that catalogues of closely related factors are responsible for youth restiveness

The findings also showed that the respondents agreed that adult education can play prominent role in combating youth restiveness in Rivers State. Adult Education can provide youths with adequate skills and training to be self-reliant. They recognized adult education as a life-long process that can create awareness against youth restiveness and has the capacity to solve youth unemployment problems. This finding agreed with Barikor (1984) who identified adult education as a process by which men and women, in group attempt to improve themselves by developing their knowledge, insight, skills, attitudes and other capacities to enable them meet their occupational needs or educational needs or professional competences as well as their social and physical responsibility and self-fulfillment needs.

The findings also revealed that resources-human and material-for adult education are not adequate to make the desired impact. This agrees with the view of Onyekpe (2007) who observed that those who manage to enroll in various adult education programs drop out due to lack of basic learning facilities. He attributed the situation to the lack of commitment of government at both federal and state levels.

Recommendations

Based on the findings above the researcher made the following recommendations:

- There is the need to engage qualified adult educators and community development workers in our rural communities so as to meet the demands of creating the desired awareness to change the youth perception on restiveness.
- Oil companies should include creation of awareness in communities on issues that bother on youth restiveness and their socio-economic development as part of their social responsibility to host communities.
- Government should provide more investment in terms of finance, personnel and materials for the various adult education centers across the state.
- Adult Education centers should be established in the rural areas in the state. This would enable more people, especially rural dwellers to access and benefit from it.
- NGOs should include community education and capacity building for youths to check restiveness in their plans for local communities.

- The capacity of Community leadership should be strengthened to enable them cope with the challenges of youth restiveness in a world highly influenced by advancements in information technology.

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