

The Role of Traditional Education in Resolving Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

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Abstract

Restiveness among the youth globally and those in Nigeria has become a behavioral pattern which degenerated into topical global issue. Youth restiveness portrays mankind negative side of social development which has become one of the many security challenges facing humankind in contemporary society. This negative development is rather unfortunate as lives and properties worth millions naira have been lost or vandalized and some razed down by restive youths. Human society is a complex entity and individuals/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 at their prime age. This paper therefore, examines the causes effects and role of traditional education curbing youth restiveness in Nigeria. The study adopted an interdisciplinary approach which makes use of oral interview, participant observation and secondary sources in gathering information. The study observed that youth restiveness is on increase in contemporary Nigeria. It is social vice that is giving the entire nation sleepiness nights, and the causes are multifaceted and hence, curbing it demands multi-dimensional approach. The study believes that the effective role of traditional education in conscientizing the parents, teachers, political and religious leaders at various levels of governance could go a long way in curbing youth restiveness in Nigeria.

Keywords: Youth Restiveness, Traditional, Religious, Education and Nigeria

Introduction

The economic crises in Nigeria have posed on enormous challenge to citizens, especially the youths in all sphere of life. The inability of Nigerian economy to provide the domestic environment with basic needs of life of which job opportunities, access to education, adequate social amenities, among others, has led to restiveness of the youths in our society. Chukwemeka, Anazado and Nzewi (2011) opined that the dissatisfaction of the people, especially youths on the attention given to development and basic needs of the citizenry led to restiveness, inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts. Recent media reports and personal observations also show that youth restiveness has constituted security challenge in the country in contemporary times. There are cases of armed conflicts, killings, wanton destruction of lives and properties, kidnappings, lootings, pipeline destructions, religious insurgencies, among others in most Nigerian states. Recently, Federal and State Legislators were killed in cold blood in some states of the Federation, Churches/Mosques bombed and a lot of suicide bombers attacks were made on the residences of Nigeria (Ofem and Ajayi, 2008).

Shika and Onyene (2010) posited that youth denial of participatory opportunities, inadequate access to education, gainful employment and basic infrastructure, among others, have resulted to restiveness. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the cause's effects and the role traditional education can contribute in resolving youth restiveness in Nigeria.

Clarifications of Terms

Youth Restiveness

The term youth has been variously defined by different scholars. Ndu (2000) and Yusuf (2010) saw youth as neither adolescents nor children characterized by excessive energy that needs to be exerted, which is not guarded, is channeled into negative tendencies. The United Nations General Assembly and World Bank defined the youth as people between the ages of 15 to 24 years (Aghara, 2010). In Nigeria, 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). 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. But when the energy is negatively channeled, restiveness and its resultant effects are likely to be felt.

Idyorough (1988) defines youth in a general sense as "a person who is young at heart". This definition combines the biological and psychological definitions of the youth which is not limited to age bracket but it extends to maturity and the thinking of the individuals. This study therefore, adopts the general definition of the youth in this regards. The word restiveness on the other hand, denotes the state of unable to stay still or unwillingness to be controlled, especially because one is bored or not satisfied with certain decisions, change or existing laws considered to be unfavorable (Chika and Onyene, 2010). Youth restiveness involves the combination of actions, conducts and behavior which constitutes unwholesome, socially unacceptable behavior

exhibited by youth in the society.

Youth restiveness in Nigeria has been a device used by the youths to get what they want from the relevant authority. Youths restiveness to conditions, issues and unwelcomed leadership regimes dates back to pre-colonial times when Herbert Maculey floated a political party to kick against dependency with fellow elite youths that hold contact with the West during the independence period there were political parties like the National Council for Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), the Northern People Congress (NPC), and the Action Group (AG) that had their youth wings as vibrant as the other parties. Since then, Youth Association has become proliferated in Nigeria. Some of these Associations include: the Odua People's Congress (OPC) in the West, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), in the East, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) in the North and Tiv Youth Organization (TYO) in the North-Central, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), both in the South, students unions, ethnic cliques and cleavages as well as clannish orientation, among students (Chukwuemeka, 2008).

Traditional Religious Education

The word "traditional" denotes something that is "indigenous", "old", archaic", ancient" and "naïve (Mutiba, 2001). The term "religion" on the other hand, is defined as:

A system of beliefs and practices directed towards the ultimate concern of the society...ultimate concern has two aspects-meaning and power.

Farrant (1964), defines religion as "the serious and social attitudes of individuals or communities towards the power(s), having ultimate contact over their interests and destinies" to this study, therefore, religion refers to "a system of symbols, which act to establish power and motivation in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with the uniquely realistic moods" (Ikenga-Metuh, 1985).

Education on the other hand, can be defined as a systematic cultivation of the natural powers of the mind for acquisition of skills through training and instruction. It is the importation of knowledge that would affect discipline and maturity in the recipient to enable him/her survive as an independent entity (Ahmadu, 1996). Worsely (1975) defines education as "knowledge, is a systematic cultivation of the mind and other natural powers on the acquisition of knowledge and skill through training and instruction". Danfulani (1976) view it is from the above stand point that Fafunwa education as "the imparting of knowledge through instruction to effect discipline and maturity of the mind. Yusuf (2001) describes education as a science, when he asserted that:

Education, as other sciences, is based on facts and observations, which should be ranged in analytical tables easily compared, in order to deduce principles and definite rules. Education should become a positive science instead of being ruled by narrow and limited opinions, by whims and arbitrary decisions of administrators, to be turned away from the direct line which it should follow, either by prejudice of a blind routine or by the spirit of some system and innovation.

Based on these definitions, however, we can see education simply as: an activity of leading out" bearing in mind that there is a point from which it proceeds, and a future towards which the leading out is done (Elegbele, 2005). Traditional religious education therefore, is defined by Zakaria (2006) as:

A learning process that increases people's knowledge and awareness about the environment, beliefs system, norms, values and associated challenges; develops the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenges, and fosters attitudes, motivations and commitments to make informed decisions and take responsible actions in the society (Adewuyi, 2008).

It is from this stand point that traditional religious education can said to be functional and utilitarian in orientation and outlook. This is because traditional religious education was generally extended from the *Sasa* (immediate) into the *Zamani* (beyond the grave) periods for the good of man are surviving family. Traditional religious education whether formal or informal, the object of the educational training was to produce a person who was capable of surviving amidst all odds in life (Farrant, 1964). African religious education and child rearing in particular emphasized social responsibility, job orientation, political and economic participation, and the inculcation of spiritual, moral values and virtues (Danfulani, 1991).

It is against this backdrop that Farrant (1964) warned that it is important for all who play a part in the work of school to remember that traditional religious education existed long before organized schools and school teachers were thought. He therefore, noted that African religious education is not something different from life and society, but it is in fact, the process of learning to live as a useful and acceptable member of the community. In times past, the community accepted and supported traditional religious forms of education as provided by parents and other kin at home and by religious functionaries or specialists (Ndu, 2000). Such experts, priests (sacred rulers or priest chiefs and chief priests), medicine persons, rain-makers, diviners, leaders of other cults and secret societies operated both formally and informally (Ndu, 2000). It was a continuous process, integrated

and harnessed throughout the life span of the individual.

Formal education then was a characteristic feature adapted during life crisis rituals, especially where neophytes were personally taught by experts in various skills and disciplines. In other words, formal education was practical and involved a short or long term period of apprenticeship. Traditional religious education then, was an integrated functional experience, combining physical, psychological, philosophical, socio-economic and political training, including military training, character formation, respects for manual labour and intellectual development (Fafunwa and Aisiku, 1982). The advantage of traditional religious system of education was that it possessed no rigid compartmentization in structure, orientation and programming as experienced in contemporary situation (Hiskett, 1970).

Thus, a man was a nexus of activities, he would be a farmer, and simultaneously be a mason, wood carver, hunter, musician, priest, medicine-man and diviner (Fafunwa, 1974). There was thorough training in trans-survival values like preservation of life, brotherliness, love for kin, obedience to group, generosity, respect for humanity, diligence in duty and patriotism, gallantry, honesty, happiness, motherhood and fatherhood, harmonious human relationship, among others (Danfulani, 1996).

Situation of Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

Restiveness is a problematic issue that affects not only the Nigerian youths but the whole of mankind. It is a global problem that has been on the increase in the world. The reports given by newspapers and the media have indicated that youth restiveness has its roots in the home, school, society and the Church/Mosque (Chukwuemeka, 2008). It is insidious crime that constitutes a great problem to the society. The youths obey the dictates of the poet, long fellow who states: "trust no future, however, pleasant, let dead past bury the dead; act in the living present (Ikenga-Metuh, 1985). Adewuyi (2008), posited that where variables such as composite and structural employment, access to adequate education, social amenities, among others subsist or are denied of the youths, this degenerate into restiveness in the society. This manifests a direct impact on the youths, and they become vulnerable to anti-social behaviours such as violence, revolt, mass agitation, protest, demonstration, looting, vandalism, cultism, ethnic militia, political thurgery , among others (Chukwuemeka and Agbara, 2010).

According to Chukwuemeka, Anazodo and Nzewi (2011) youth restiveness stems from distress in the family (home), school, society and perception of/and relationship of the youth with the Church/Mosque. The sudden degeneration in these institutions have affected the youths in all aspects of life-economic, moral, social and religious dimensions. The obvious effects of this on the youths of today are gracious and this has constituted a threat to national security and wellbeing of our citizenry (Coleman, 1986).

Restiveness in Nigerian Families or Homes

The family or home is the first school of a child and it has a big role to play in the formation and development of any child in the society. Coleman (1996) noted that:

The family or home is the first and vital cell of the society. It has vital and organic links with the society since it is its foundation, and nurturing it continually through its role of service to life. The family is the first school of social virtue that is the animating principles of the existence and development of the society itself.

As the first school as Onykpe (2007), the family or home has the responsibility of training up the children, and hence the youth in the way they should go, providing them with spiritual, moral and material values that would help them develop into well-balanced individuals, willing to serve the society and the Church/Mosque. This shows that parents and guardians are expected to play significant role in the formation of the youths but most of them are not living up to expectations of teaching and inculcating their norms and values that are required of them as they grow and meet their peer groups in the society. Thus, a family or home ravaged by problems of retrenchment, poverty and greedy acquisitiveness of money cannot carry out its moral duties effectively. Many parents for one reason or another have become absentee care takers and their families no more than daycare centres staffed by baby sitters, especially now that both mother and father goes out to search of daily bread in other to put food on the table and pay some other bills. These are very serious issues when properly handled will go a long way in solving this problem of youth's restiveness in Nigeria.

Another reason for the failure of the family or home to give the youth's proper guidance is limitation in what it can do. With the diversity of the present times and the rapidity which the situation and condition change, the family may find itself behind the time. And wherever the family found itself handicapped, the school provided ready support. As Achebe recorded in *Arrow of God*, "a father who found that his home was not abreast of the times could send his son to school to bring home his share, if there was anything in it, instructing him to learn and master the white-man's knowledge until you can write it with your left hand". Even in pre-colonial period, when formal system of education did not exist, there was a system of education that trained children to obey constituted authority, practice the beliefs of the society and to follow customs and traditions of the land (Fafunwa, 1974). Particular attention was paid to domestic work, with children accompanying their parents to

the farm. The boys followed the activities of their fathers while the girls follow their mothers.

Today, however, the school is heavily handicapped and the family or home cannot claim to be the safest place for transmission of positive moral values to the child. Lack of infrastructures, lack of committed teachers and lack of attention to religious and moral education prevent school from carrying out its time-honoured functions. Thus, the Nigerian youths of nowadays, experience restiveness and distress for a variety of ways which invariably makes them to learn the worst habits from other peer groups. The result is as predicted by Theodore, the American President that “to educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society” (Onykpe, 2007).

The society itself contributes immensely to the restiveness experienced by the youths. There is lack of social services that should make life more comfortable. The constant water shortage and electricity outage, fuel scarcity, lack of health services, bad roads, poor funding of education, non-existent telecommunication, among others, have deepened the level of youths restiveness in Nigeria (Zakaria, 2006). Compounding this distress is the economic and political state of the nation. The astronomical increase in price for every commodity or services brings frustration and pain to every citizen, including the youths who see their hope of earning a decent standard of living through hard work dimming daily. The political uncertainties of the day, do not offer the hope that things will soon change. In such a situation of helplessness, the Nigeria youths perceive their world not only distressed and confused but also crumbling. In the words of Ahmadu (1996):

Nothing holds any longer (for the Nigerian youths; failed by the family, which no longer provides security and a sure foundation; failed by the school that no more teaches the way to goodness and right; failed by the larger society, which inspires unrealistic dreams, makes wide promises and fulfils non; the youths lives a life that is best described as falling apart without any sense of direction and enthusiasm.

Lack of ecumenism in the Christendom with highly commercialized nature of faith and different groups springing up daily give growing perceptions among many youths that the one true mother Church may not be relevant in their daily lives. This added more confusion to youth restiveness. The youths perceived the religious teachers who propagate the faith as not always trying to live up their vows and what they preach. The honour and prominence attached to people who donated handsomely to the development of the ministry of God make many youths to perceive the Church as an irrelevant force in their lives. The consequences of this is that, many of the youths resort to all forms of anti-social behaviours, ranging from violence attitudes, destructions of human lives and properties, brigandry, disregards for the laws of the land, peer groups and elders. Nothing seems to be sacrosanct any longer, neither government, nor personal property, life nor holy places. Churches are broken into and the holy places desecrated. Governments of facilities are burnt down, armed robbery, or 419 becomes the order of the day (Ofem, and Ajayi, 2008).

Young people are determined to surmount the economic hurdles and they stop at nothing, trickery or savagery to get rich quick. The generally accepted standard of behavior and moral conduct are being eroded a new way of doing things. There is rapid growth of cultism on universities campus, which forms the heinous secret cult system. The various secret cult groups fight for supremacy on campuses so that they are constantly in a state of war. Secret cults have become hatching ground for all kinds of desperate acts such as political thurgeryy, rape, armed robbery, student’s riots and examination malpractice (Mutiba, 2011). These forms of evils are threatening the university system and the entire Nigerian society.

Causes of Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

Youth restiveness in Nigeria is caused by many factors. Prominent among them are: marginalization, unequal distribution of natural resources, poor child upbringing, poverty, unemployment, youthful exuberance, inadequate educational opportunities and resources, lack of basic infrastructure, corruption, bad governance, political instability and frustration, inadequate communication and information flow, ethnic/tribal crisis, religious crisis, drug/alcohol abuse, over population, under population, peer group and cult influence, false teaching in Churches and Mosque, insecurity, among others. Marginalization of the youths has gained ground that many of them resort to anti-social behaviours because of their perceived distress in the scheme of things in the society. Thus, in order to get their share of the benefits accruing to the society from selfish elders who marginalized them, some youths resort to taking on their elders headlong, culminating in the restiveness, rampant in most of our communities today (Coleman, 1986).

The unequal distribution of resources has led to magnitude of youth violence in one form or the order. Sometimes, the unequal socio-economic development of the various ethnic groups leads to inter-ethnic and intra-conflicts due to dissatisfaction of the people. Chukwuemeka, Anazodo and Nzewi (2011) affirmed this fact thus:

The dissatisfaction of the people of South-South, especially the youths on the level of attention given to development of the region and the damages to their ecology by oil is the major causes of the alarming rate of youth restiveness.

The level of poverty connotes inequality, social injustice in Nigeria which traumatizes the youths.

Disillusioned, frustrated and dejected, the youths seek an opportunity to express their anger against the state. Scholars have overtime agreed that 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 dollary a day (Chukwuemeka, 2008). This indicates that there is a link among poverty, less of live hood, inequality and youth restiveness as evidenced by the numerous violent protests against the wielders of power in Nigeria. Poor child up bringing and youthful exuberance also contributed for youth restiveness. Youths from the broken families who have been brought up in an atmosphere of conflict and neglect suffered restiveness. Some of the youths from rich families are over-pampered by their parents who give them impression that they can do anything to finance and support the anti-social behaviours. This makes many youths to strive to get whatever they want by any means, no matter how immortal.

The availability and accessibility of drugs in street corners predisposed any of the youths to abnormal behaviours when they come under their influence and this adds to their restiveness. Some disgruntled leaders, elders and politicians in our society resorted to recruiting youths for setting scores or using them against perceived enemies. With this trend, the activities of these youths have degenerated to outright criminality. Once the youths get mobilized for these nefarious activities, they become uncontrollable and the society suffers (Ndu, 2000). The rising tide of unemployment and the fear of black future among the youths have made them vulnerable to manipulation agent's provocateurs, such as aggrieved politicians, religious demagogues, and greedy multinationals that employ these youths to achieve their selfish ambitions (Coleman, 1996). The unemployment in Nigeria is a root cause of youth restiveness, with desirous consequences. The national Bureau of statistics (NBS) has put the unemployment rate in Nigeria in the first half of the year 2011 at 23.9 percent up from 21.1 percent in 2010 and 19.7 percent in 2009 (Worsely, 1975).

Adesina noted that Nigeria unemployment rate is spiraling upwards, growing at 11 percent yearly. According to him, youth unemployment rate is over 50 percent. Our unemployment rate is spiraling, driven by the wave of four million, young people entering the work for every year with only a small fraction able to find formal employment (Chika and Onyene, 2010). Lack of basic infrastructure in most rural communities and urban slums in Nigeria such as no access to portable water, health facilities, electricity, communication facilities, industries and commercial facilities, among others, has led to social unrest and youth restiveness in Nigeria (Zakaria, 2006). Inadequate educational opportunities and resources makes thousand of Nigeria youths to roam the streets in cities since many of them could not afford to go to school, they are dropped out. With this trend, the youths who felt denied of the education opportunities become restive (Zakaria, 2006).

Inadequate communication and information flow has also caused youth restiveness in our society. The ineffective communication from political leaders and false teachings by the parents and Churches/Mosques influenced the restive youth to choose the wrong way to life. Ofem and Ajayi (2003) noted that youth restiveness is associated with lack of humanitarian and social welfare, lack of good governance, corrupt practices of government officials, ethnic crisis and political instability. This indicates that causes of youth restiveness are multifaceted in nature. It therefore, means that curbing youth restiveness might also take multidimensional approach. Youth restiveness in recent years have been linked with youths in the Niger-Delta and Northern parts of Nigeria, where kidnapping armed robbery, hostage, education and destruction of lives and properties are paramount (Hiskett, 1970).

According to Aghara (2010) the invasion of the multinational oil companies by restive youths in the Niger-Delta, the abduction and kidnapping of foreign nationals working in oil companies, the incessant harassment of traders in Lagos and every-day-clash in some parts of Nigeria are outcomes of youth restiveness in the country (Mutiba, 2011).

Effects of Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

Youth restiveness is a social vice that giving the entire nation sleepiness night. The effects are multifaceted. Chukwuemeka, Anazodo and Nzewi (2011) asserted that the effects of youth restiveness on Nigerian society are loss of lives and properties, civil unrest, upsurge of social vices and crimes, retardation of national development, religious crises, high mortality rate, especially among the youths, insecurity of the country, increase in poverty and depreciation of natural resources. Chika and Onyene (2010) agreed that youth restiveness encourages sectionalism, discourages foreign investment and escalates unemployment opportunities of the youth in the country. Coleman (1996) observed that where the youths are idle, there is likelihood for them to be used as the devil's workshop. The more widespread and intense deprivation is among the members of a population, the greater is the magnitude of violence in one form of the others.

The Role of Traditional Religious Education in Curbing Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

Traditional religious education can contribute in many ways in curbing youth restiveness in Nigeria. Onyekpe (2007) listed these way7s of curbing youth restiveness to include: Introduction of skill acquisition programmes for the youth, enlightenment campaigns against youth restiveness, ensuring that the citizens have formal education,

provision of employment opportunities, provision of basic social amenities, adequate parenting of children, religious tolerance, good governance, restricting of security agents, neo-marginalization of any tribe/ethnic group, free and fair elections at all levels, among others.

In the same vein, Elegbele (2005) identified implementation of school guidance and counseling services at all levels of education, giving monthly allowances to unemployed youths, intervention of religions, teaching citizens fear of God and traditional rulers taking effective charge of their domains as possible ways of curbing youth restiveness in Nigeria. Traditional religious education in corroboration with educational institutions in Nigeria and other parts of the world could create access to functional vocational education for Nigerian youths. The World Bank advocates a three lens approach to youth empowerment, namely; working engaging youth as leaders (Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC World Cat, Universe Digital Library, Newjour, and Google Scholar). This “three-lens approach” would provide hope to the young people as well as the incentives to positively re-shape their destinies.

Investment in youths, especially during the five life transitions of youth will develop, safeguard and put in place proper human capital. As the youth undergo each transition from learning, family and citizenship, this can determine their directions and prevent them from going off-track, especially when there are economic crises and markets do not provide sufficient economic opportunities (Aghara, 2010). Traditional religious education can create a productive working life in the youths by assisting them to acquire the necessary skills through apprenticeship programme. This can be done by implementing programme that involves pragmatism and functionalism to benefit all the youths. In doing this, both the State and the Federal Government have to be involved.

Resources have to be directed towards the youth and provide them access to jobs that are created due to liberalization of the economy. Policies should be frame to enhance youth as decision makers, especially where economic marginalization is a major need to help the young people make appropriate decisions to seize the opportunities that do exist. These can affect their future. The government at all levels and the society should inform the youth about other issues unknown to them by intervening in the school and educational institutions on a regular basis, by making use of the media, by enhancing the content of campaigns directed towards the welfare of youth and by harnessing new technologies that would help to educate the youth. These programmes should be directed properly to make the youth overcome economic marginalization. An economic programme targeted towards enhancing the social and economic welfare of youth is of no use if it fails to reach the youths who need it.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is undisputable that traditional religious education is good machinery in curbing youth restiveness. An educated person would not want to waste his/her future, unless such person is heartless and made to go the way he/she came into this life. Traditional religious education is to refine an individual from his/her biological being to a social being; mortgaging his/her future will not be the best thing to do. Based on these facts, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. Skill acquisition programmes should be introduced for the youth to help them develop their potentials.
2. Enlightenment campaigns against youth restiveness be encouraged to curb anti-social behaviours of young people in society.
3. Ensure that the citizens, especially youth acquire formal education modeled towards value inculcation and citizen education at all levels of our education.
4. Provision of employment opportunities, basic social amenities, and good governance to curb youth restiveness.
5. There should be religious tolerance, adequate parenting of children, restricting of security agents, fair and free elections at all levels as well as neo-marginalization of any tribe/ethnic group.

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