

Youth Restiveness: Nigeria's Security and Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Youth restiveness has been on the increase in almost all communities in Nigeria, most especially in recent past. Since the inception of transition from military to civilian regime, there has been a mass proliferation of unravelling violence, killing of innocent people; and, most recently, the bomb blasts, kidnapping and abduction. The study examines the incidence of youth restiveness in Nigeria and how this has affected Nigeria's security and sustainable development. The paper used secondary source and personal observation to generate the required data. The paper argues that poverty, unemployment and lack of access to education, among others, have been responsible for this unprecedented increase of youth restiveness. Similarly, this unfolding scenario is further exacerbated by unwillingness from the side of government to curtail the phenomenon. The study contends that unless this scenario is remedied, security and sustainable development will not be attained in the country.

Keywords: Youth restiveness, poverty, security, sustainable development

1. Introduction

Restiveness among youth has become one of the global phenomenon and those in Nigeria has been on unprecedented increase. Since last decade and more there has been a proliferation of unrivalled violence, the cases of kidnapping, abduction and wanton destruction of valuable infrastructures as well as lives and personal properties. These are mostly the activities of youth that are socially unacceptable triggered by enforced desired of outcome from the constituted authority. This negative development according to Igbo and Ikpa (2013) is unfortunate and has become one of the security challenges facing man in the present society.

It is commonly reported that poverty, unemployment and lack of access to education among others were responsible for this high level of insecurity orchestrated by youth restiveness in the form of bombing mosques, churches, markets and killing of innocent people. The phenomenon of insecurity has become one of the major concerns of the citizen in Nigeria and particularly Borno, Niger, Plateau, Kaduna, Kano and Yobe states respectively. Recently, more than 90 people were killed at Bin sheik, a town of few kilometres away from Maiduguri city. Similarly, 40 students were also reported to be killed in school of Agriculture Gujuba, Yobe state and more than 200 girls were reported to be abducted in Chibok, Borno state. There are similar activities epitomized by killing and kidnapping of oil workers in Niger-Delta area. Those that are involved in these activities were reported to be between 18 and 20 years. Furthermore, this scenario was exacerbated by unwillingness from the side of government to curtail the phenomenon. In a nutshell, the problem bedeviling Nigerian country is insecurity demonstrated by the activities of youth and this has affected the sustainable development of the country. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to determine the causes and implication of youth restiveness to our security and sustainable development.

To clearly understand the activities of these restive youth a questions was posed first, what actually causes the youth to perpetrate these acts? Secondly, what are the implications of youth restiveness to our security and sustainable development? Thirdly, what role do government play in curtailing the phenomenon? To answer these questions the paper set out to investigate the phenomenon through qualitative interpretation and analysis.

2. Conceptualization

The three major concepts made used of in this research are youth restiveness, security and sustainable development. Before analysis of the implications of youth restiveness on security and sustainable development, there is need to establish a synergy between the three concepts and their meanings are worthy to be clarified.

2.1 Youth restiveness

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

The common features of these organised bodies of youth are the resort to violence, and one would agree that

their activities posed great challenges to the security of the country. The violent nature of these youth activities has been responsible for the wanton destruction of valuable infrastructures, kidnapping and lost of lives. These acts had not only created dirty atmosphere but also endangered the security and affects of national sustainable development.

2.2 Security

For workable understanding of national security, especially when referring to nation-state, Security means likely hood of survival; it means confidence in the maintenance of state boundaries and the preservation of it territorial, ideological and cultural integrity (Asamu 2006). Okpaga (u.d) observed that there have been no generally and universally accepted conception of national security but it is more than the military aspect, it should encompasses all facet of national life in preservation of its values. Looking at national security from this perspective we can deduce that youth restiveness has posed a challenge to Nigeria’s security.

2.3 Sustainable development

Sustainable development is another important concept to be briefly discussed; it is all about stability (Yusuf, 2013). Development is the general improvement in the well being of all citizens of a country which is measured by the unhindered access to all availability of the convenience of life for the greatest number in nation-state. (Alanamu, Muhammad & Adeoye 2006:137).

Youth constituted a very important portion of Nigerian population as cited in Anasi (2010). They are the foundation of society; their energies, character and orientation define the pace of development and the security of the country. This paper seeks to explain the activities of youth and how they affect the security and the development of the country.

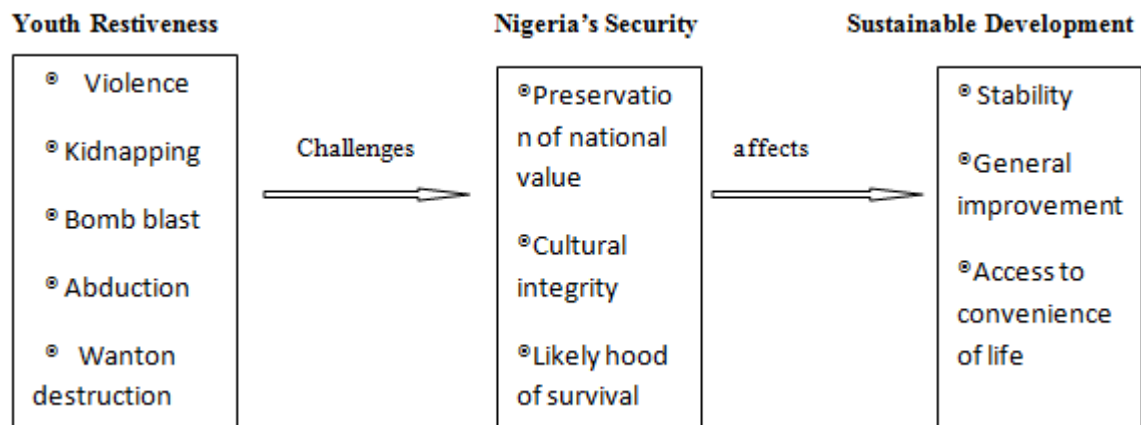


Figure1. The Conceptual framework showing how Youth restiveness has challenges Nigerian security and it affects to the Sustainable Development of the country.

SOURCE: Author

3. Cases of Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

Nigeria in recent time has witnessed massive involvements of youth in various violence, the nature of these violence were religious, political or economical violence. The emergence of these conflicts and the involvements of youth in it has attracted a lot of researchers to focus their studies and highlighted the roles of youth in it. These studies includes the kidnapping and killing of police by the Egbesu youth group in Odi on November, 1999 in retaliation of killing their members. The government later deployed an army, who killed and razed down the town of Odi in Beyelsa state (Asamu 2006). Similarly, Asamu (2006) documented the involvement of youth militant of Agyrasu town in the crisis erupted on 14, April, 2000 as a result of locating a local government head quater against their wish. This has led to the killing of their fellow indigenes.

Also in 1992 Zango crises as Akintoye (1999) observed that youth from Ayaf and Hausa were massively involved which are mostly unemployed. Marielu Tenuche (2009) has examined the role of the Ebira youth in the intermittent burst of violent conflict in Ebira land and north central Nigeria. This study indicates that Ebira youth were involved in most of the crises in the area as a result of various factors such as poverty, unemployment, outdated system of education, and inability of state to live up to expectation. Similarly, in the study of politics of thuggery in north eastern region of Nigeria conducted by Haruna and Ayuba (2011) they have identified the emergence of different groups of thugs since the inception of fourth republic 1999-2011, the groups includes Ecomog in Borno and Yobe, sara-suka in Bauchi, Yan-kalare in Gombe, Banu-israila in Taraba and Yan-shinko in Adamawa state. According to them most of these groups that perpetrates election crises in those state are armies of unemployed youth and the most unfortunate was that they were employed and sponsored by desperate politicians to protect their political interest.

There are also the activities of young graduates and undergraduates, which most of whom have dropped out of universities and colleges. Their major focus was to establish Islamic law at any cost. While attempting to do so, they were engaged in bloody battles. For instance on 21 September, 2004 youth from so called local Taliban movement were said to attacked Bama and Gwoza police stations in Borno state, in Bama six police officers were killed, while in Gwoza Taliban killed more policemen and the police stations were set ablaze (William, 2004). These activities metamorphosed to what is today being referred as boko haram phenomenon. The activities of these youth have deeply rooted in instability and sectarian strife. Herskovit (2012) observed that boko haram began in 2002 as peaceful Islamic splinter group after sometime Politicians started exploiting it for electoral purposes, after the extra-judicial killing of its leader Mohammed Yusuf, they seek for revenge, and they began to target the police, the military and even politicians which mostly are Muslims. While the original core of the group remains active other criminal groups have adopted the name boko haram to claim responsibility of attack when they wish.

The activities of boko haram youth has now turned to battle without direction or objectives, because in September, 2013 they have lunched an attack on travellers in Binsheik few kilometres to Maiduguri city. The same happen in school of agriculture Gujba, Yobe state where they killed about 60 students and lecturers. Similarly, on 14 April, 2014 more than 200 girls were abducted in Chibok. Another instance was on 4th and 5th November, 2013 where about 60 people were killed 30 out of them were killed on their way to Konduga and 30 in a village near Bama local government, Borno state. The most surprising is that the killers appear to move in crowd of about 70 people, 17 riding motorcycles and others driven various motors. (Germany Hausa Radio evening session). It was also reported that still on 12 February, 2014 in Konduga, 39 people were killed and 50 sustain injury, the most unfortunate was that about 70 percent of the town was destroyed. Similarly, more than one hundred people were massively killed in another village call Isge in Goza L G in Borno State. This clearly demonstrated the level of insecurity in the Nigeria.

On 5th.november, 2013 there was a misunderstanding between Egon youth and army at road block where one of the youths refused to stop for check and this resulted the killing of three youth. (VOA Hausa morning session). The phenomenon of youth restiveness in Nigeria is endemic and prevalent; it has reached a peak to the extent that the country is in security predicament and limbo. Also there are a lots of cases of kidnapping and abduction presently in the country, example more than two hundred girls were abducted in Chibok Secondary in Borno State. Still more than seventy women and men are taking away by the boko haram youth to Sanbisa forest, and many villages were destroyed and annihilated in Borno and Yobe state. This situation has rendered the security of the country very fragile and the sustainable development retarded.

4. Methodology

The study utilizes relevant reviewed records and literature on youth restiveness in Nigeria and their relation to security problem visa-via the sustainable development. A personal observation was also adopted to draw some facts and information. Therefore, the data collected was analysed and interpreted qualitatively.

5. Causes of Youth Restiveness in Nigerian

Scholars and Researchers have advanced several causes of youth restiveness in Nigeria. Anasi (2010) identified six factors: bad governance, unemployment, poverty, inadequate educational opportunities and resources, lack of basic infrastructures and inadequate communication and information flow. Another study on youth restiveness carried out by Chukuezi (2009) Posited that the causes are many, ranging from individual to societal factors and he mentioned such as Marginalization, Unemployment, Exuberance and the role of politician in employing youth against their perceived enemies as the main causes of restiveness among youth in Nigeria. Similarly, Snapps and Hamilton (2011) in their studies of “youth restiveness and industrial Disruption in the Niger Delta” they have identified factors such as economic, political socio-cultural as the causes of youth restiveness. While to elegbeleye (2005) the jingoistic pursuit of patriotic ideas, the peer motivated excitement of being a student and the perceived victimization arising from economic exploitations are the causes of incessant youth restiveness. These imply that a plethora of closely related factors are responsible for youth restiveness in Nigeria. These include:

5.1 Poverty

Report from World Bank, (2005) Indicated that Nigeria is third country of the world with poverty after china and India. This was evidence in the study Undertaken by Zakari (2006), which shows that 70 percent of people in Nigeria are living below poverty line; in which one third survive on less than US\$1 a day. This figure includes the number of youth because they constituted about 40 percent of the Nigerian population as snapps and Hamilton (2011) observed. More over, the most severe region with poverty was north as the former Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria Charles Chukuma Soludo reiterated in July, 2008; in fact to him poverty is a northern phenomenon.

In taking north east as an example a large army of youth were Unemployed and this according to Haruna and

Jumba (2011) have accounted for high level of poverty in the zone there by precipitating the youth to join any group of militia/thugs. In the last north eastern economic summit held on 3rd – 4th, December 2013 in Gombe state, the six state Governors of the region have unanimously agreed that poverty, unemployment and insecurity are the major problems bedevilling the security and the development of the region. In view of these, they promised to tackle this menace through youth empowerment and poverty alleviation programmes. Similarly, in Niger Delta because of the endemic poverty that afflicted the people a midst plenty has led youth to recourse to violence against the state and the multinational oil companies (Chukuezi, 2009). There is paucity of collated data that indicated the link of violence and poverty in Nigeria, Bako (1994) has argued that the genesis of violence among the youth can be traced in the Unprecedented poverty and massive Unemployment, thus, providing an avenue for their involvement in the ethno-religious crises across the country. This prevailing explanation often indicates the deviant behaviour among the youth as a result of some gap felt needs that are not filled by the government overtime. Therefore, youth are prone to violence and conflicts as means of expressing their dissatisfaction. Furthermore, political elites manipulate and mobilize youth to violence as mean for achieving their political objectives. Thus, a lot of youth are trained to maim and kill opponents; conversely, even their sponsors are not spared from their acts as they equally attack them, if they fail to meet their demands.

5.2 Unemployment

Unemployment has become one of the prevailing phenomenons among the youth in almost all developing countries. In Nigeria about 70% the population were believed to be Unemployed all fall within the working age of 17-65 years. Surprisingly out of this Unemployed percentage, 80% are youth that fall within 17-45years by conventional definition of the youth source: (NBS SC/10533:2012). NBS in collaboration with the Nigerian federal Ministry of youths Development stated that 54 % of youth were unemployed in 2012, out of this statistic females stood at 51.9 % compared to their counterpart males, while that of males stood at 48.1 %. Furthermore, the report disclosed that out of 46,836 youths recorded against many types of crime, 42,071 which represent 75.5 % were males and the remaining 24.5 % were their counter parts females (2012, National Baseline Youth Survey Report). This clearly indicates the level of unemployment among the youth and it link with many crime. Zakari (2006) posited that lack of job opportunities in developing countries is responsible for youth restiveness with disastrous consequences. May be this was the reason Why Imomoh (2002) assumed that youth are mostly in the vanguard of the crisis that usually erupted in the oil producing areas. The activities of the oil companies predisposes the youth to restiveness because they damages the environment without commensurate compensation.

In northern Nigeria yan-daba and political thugs were also largely unemployed and mostly involved in the re-occurring ethno-religious violence in Kano, Kaduna and Bauchi. These have threatened the political and security of the country; and the most unfortunate is that government is not doing enough to create job opportunities for youths. Abdullahi (2012) posited that the increase in insecurity and crime in Nigeria could be traceable to youth as a result of unemployment, created relatively by the collapse of industries and nepotism. Recently, there was an advertisement by ministry of internal affairs to employ more emigration services in which about 6M people apply and invited for interview, the available positions are only 4,056, closed observation revealed that a slot was given to prominent people even before the commencement of the interview which resulted to the death of 16 and many other causalities after they have stampede at the interview venue in Abuja and other states. This clearly demonstrated how unemployment has deeply rooted in the country.

5.3 Lack of access to Education

Another factor that is responsible for youth restiveness is lack of access to education, and even those that were opportune to be admitted in various educational institutions there was a problem of lack of learning facilities. Education is one of the fundamental human rights and it was the key index of development since it improves productivity and health. Anasi (2010) strongly believed that quality of education has a direct bearing on national integration and progress. In Nigeria, most especially northern part has low literacy level. Nigeria Universities are closed for more than 5 month (July-December, 2013) partly because of the industrial action. Worse still, they government interpreted it as politics; these may cause more social atrocities to the society in near future.

Further more, the present and the previous policies of education have compounded the problem of unemployment in Nigeria, because the knowledge received is not functional, it does not go a long way in developing skills among students. The 1977 National policy on education which was revised 1981 and even the new senior secondary school curriculum structure which was implemented September, 2011 and have the first set June 2014. Government have to introduce functional and free education to its citizens, if it really needs to solve the problem of youth restiveness.

5.4 Marginalization

According to the Chukuezi (2009) youth resort to restiveness because of their perceived marginalization by the selfish elders in their communities. This means that the elders have occupied every position without empowering young generation; this precipitated restiveness among youth.

Other causes of youth restiveness includes; environmental degradation, discontent with multinational companies

in Niger-Delta region. The failure of the state to remedies the situation and the influence of political elites on thugs.

6. Implications of Youth Restiveness to Security and Sustainable Development

Youth restiveness and its attendant consequences have greatly contributed to insecurities and Uncertainties in Nigeria. It has hindered and destroyed a lot of developmental programmes and other business activities. In 2009, for instances in Maiduguri during Boko Haram crisis, people were killed, houses were destroyed, market and schools were closed and destroyed. This demonstrated clearly how educational and other business activities were halt in the Maiduguri city. The security agencies deployed there to bring back peace have turned hostile to the people. A part from that people was subjected to shortage of food, water and other medical facilities. This bleak situation has rendered a lot of government projects uncompleted in the area; ditto to Yobe State, where statistically 139 students were killed in separate attacks and in less than a year, 4 schools and colleges were destroyed.

Table1. Showing the statistic of student and teachers killed in Gujba College of Agriculture, Yobe State, Nigeria

School/college	Date	No. Of Student/Teacher killed
Government Secondary School Damaturu	June, 2013	9
Government Secondary School Mamudu	July, 2013	29
College of Agriculture, Gujba	September,2013	40
Federal Government College, Buni Yadi	February,2014	59

Source: Daily trust 26 feb.2014.

This has a greater implication to the country development and man power, as youth were killed and maimed massively, and it would retarded the progress of Yobe State in particular and Nigeria in general.

In another development, the ethno-religious crisis of plateau state has also led to lost of many lives and properties, reports has shown that from 2001 to 2004, about 25,129 houses, 865 shops and 1,326 cattle, were lost. Furthermore, public institutions like schools estimated at over N 130 million were destroyed by the rioters (Peter Omale 2004).

This has great implications to our development, since the security of lives and properties are not guaranteed. The provision of relief materials, the deployment of security personnel and the constituting of various committees of inquiries by the government are usually a drain to our treasury and the entire nation's economy. Another effect of youth restiveness to our security and development could be seen from angle of deterring an investment as no investor will venture into business with insecurity and uncertainties. Similarly this has a direct bearing on our economic growth (Yusuf 2013).

Further more, Vandalization of oil pipe lines and kidnapping of oil company staff in oil producing areas have posed threat to the Nigerian foreign investment and economic recovery; this is because crude oil is the sustainers of the Nigerian economy. The vandalization of oil pipe lines also causes health hazards and environmental pollution, economic activities such fishing and farming was affected. These are responsible for our under development. Another implication of youth restiveness is it potential of destroying the unity of the country, which is the basis of development in any country and it has direct correlation with the security.

7. The Nigerian Government and its response to Youth restiveness

Youth restiveness in Nigeria today has become devastating and has constituted one of the securities concerned to both individuals and the society in general. Youth which are considered as leaders of tomorrow are turned to be society destroyers since they were mostly involved in all conflicts and violence that the country suffers.

Obviously, government has not been reluctant to the phenomenon, but the strategy adopted in curving most the restiveness in Nigeria was more of repressive and violence acts through the deployment military and police to curve the menace. For instance in Niger-Delta despite the amnesty declaration, the government continues to use reprisal means to suppress the restiveness in the area. Again, the development commissions, boards and ministry established by the government as the responds to the demands of the people never made any meaningful achievements rather the serves as avenue for self enrichment and corruption at the expense of the poverty stricken masses of the region (Chukuezi 2009). The state of insecurity in the contemporary Nigeria is no more a news. But the worrisome is the way and manner which the leaders are handing the state of affairs (Alubo 2012).

In the northern region, most especially north east where the atrocities of boko haram is taking place, the government did not put in place a proper strategy of curving youth restiveness. The committee constituted with the objective of dialogue with members of boko haram never register any progress. It is even surprising that why government should adopted military approach simultaneously constituting a committee for a dialogue. How can these strategies work together?

The government needs to go beyond all these, and it should put into consideration the causes of youth restiveness. Government should improve the life of the people through developmental programmes, poverty alleviation and jobs creation, as these will go along way in enhancing the security of the country and its development

sustainability. The system of party and election in Nigeria has also provided a fertile ground for negative manipulation and mobilisation of the youth and clannish identities which has become a tool of competition for the elites for the scarce public goods such as contracts, employment, scholarship, land, political appointment among others (Tenuche 2009). Despite all these the government is not doing any thing to change the situation.

8. Recommendations

From the analysis youth restiveness in Nigeria revolves around unemployment, lack of access to education, poverty, environmental degradation, marginalization, inter alia, government should employ strategies to bring about stability and sustainability development in Nigeria through empowerment of youth to address the social problems of insecurity, poverty and unemployment.

Government should provide functional and free education to the citizens as this will advance the level of country literacy and awareness. Our elites should also be re-educated and re-oriented as they have been accused of causing or employing youth in achieving their political objectives.

Creation of jobs and employment opportunities to our youth would also hinder them from all restive activities as joblessness makes them willing tools in any conflict. Poverty eradication programmes like youwin introduced by Jonathan administration and similar programmes should be continuing at local, state and federal levels.

Multinational oil companies should rechannel some of their profits to improve the lives of the communities and rebuilds the environment of those who suffers from the direct consequence of their operation. This will reduce restiveness demonstrated in form of seizing of oil workers as hostage and vandalization oil pipe lines and destruction of properties.

There should also be a policy of youth education and development through provision of scholarship and empowering them technically by providing them employment facilities. The Niger Delta Development commission established with the responsibility of developing the region should be empowered and checked regularly to reduce the corruption in the commission.

The system of parties and election in Nigeria need to be revisited as well as the institutional problem of INEC.

9. Conclusion

Youth restiveness in Nigeria has constituted a security problem and can endanger the peaceful co-existence of the country, in the same manner conflict and insecurity can be very havoc to the sustainable development of the country.

Poverty, unemployment, lack of access to education among others has driven the youth into restiveness in Nigeria, and has degenerated to the extent that every body is affected. More over, the government is not doing enough to stop the phenomenon. It is pertinent that government should adopt a strategy of curving youth restiveness through empowerment of youth in order to uproot the main causes of social biases and poverty in the country. Until this was done security and sustainable development can never be attained in the country.

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