

YOUTHS' RESTIVENESS AND THE QUEST FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

Markus, Yohanna Kamale

Department of Political Science and Administration

Faculty of Social and Management Sciences

Adamawa State University, Mubi.

Markus4real 77@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The pervasive and reoccurring nature of youth's restiveness has plagued Nigeria for a while now thereby making the jest of the Nigerian society. Lawlessness, frustration, ethnic jingoism, unemployment and the poverty among the Nigerians at the bottom of the economic ladder have become rified and provoked fear toward better stable Nigeria. This paper examines the core issues of the youth's restiveness, agitations, attacks and counter attacks ranging from diverse regions and localities in Nigeria. The study adopted documentary sources of data collections such as textbooks, journals, magazines and newspaper publications on frustration theory. This paper contended that every facet of our national life has drifted into a state of lawlessness or a state of normlessness as people are becoming disappointed with the Nigerian project. The paper recommended the need for policy makers to engage the youths in entrepreneurial activities which will reduce the incidence of unemployment to a great extent and as such would have dealt a massive blow to the problem of criminality and lawlessness. There should be a check on declaration of assets before and after leaving an official office by our ruling class with parasitic instincts characterised by greed and primitive accumulation wealth and Our leaders must correctly evaluate the past, boldly assess the present so that we can make useful contribution to the glorious tomorrow for the generation yet unborn.

Keywords: Youths Restiveness, Good Governance, Nigeria,

INTRODUCTION

The world is plagued with plethora of social issues generated from the complexity of the modern existence and Nigeria is not an exception. youth's restiveness is a social problem that has grave consequences on the overall national development in Nigeria. The phenomenon of youth's restiveness in the country has been at the front burner of political and academic discuss since the dawn of the new millennium (Nwagbra, 2008: Chukwemeka & Aghara 2010).

Nigeria youths are involved and are most time the vanguard of violent crises that erupted in various part of the country as a result of bad governance. Socioeconomically, politically or religiously motivated Youths restiveness in Nigeria is not a recent thing. In the past, it was economically motivated Niger Delta Militants in the south, the politically motivated Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the east, O, Odua People's Congress (OPC) in the west, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) and the violent Matasine violence in the north, the TIV, Youths organisation in the north central region and so on. Today, it is Boko-Haram insurgency in the north-eastern Nigeria, the Neo Biafra movement, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the South-Eastern Nigeria, Niger Delta avengers in the Niger Delta region of southern Nigeria, Fulani Herdsmen crises in the Middle Belt region and the Youths End Sars

Protesters across every nook and cranny of Nigeria to mention but few. Nigeria is currently experiencing unprecedented challenges that are adversely affecting national development. Many lives and properties worth billions of naira and unquantifiable values are lost as a result of Youths restiveness in different parts of the country. Social critiques and political analysts are of the view that Nigeria is tilting down toward a failed state as a result of its instability to successfully manage social upheavals (Ekweme, 2014). It is commonly reported that bad governance which led to high level of poverty, unemployment, lack of access to education (strike) among others were responsible for high level of insecurity orchestrated by youth's restiveness. Furthermore, this scenario was exacerbated by unwillingness from the side of government to curtail the phenomenon. It's against this background that this paper seeks to examine youth's restiveness and the quest for good governance in Nigeria. To precisely unveil the causes of youth's restiveness in Nigeria, challenges of good governance and what can be done to combat Youths restiveness in the country.

Methodology

In the course of this study, relevant literatures on youth's restiveness were utilized to analyse the causes, effects of Youths Restiveness and the need for good governance in enhancing public peace. The method adopted was qualitative in nature. This is because it was generated through secondary sources such as the data obtained from textbooks, journals etc.

Theoretical Framework

There are several theoretical underpinnings for explanation and understanding fact generated in research endeavour, for the purpose of this study, frustration aggression theory was adopted. The "frustration" theory presupposes that a continuing or unresolved motivational conflict is a source of frustration (Atkinson & Atkinson, 1975). This theory argued that when a person's progress towards a desired goal is blocked, delayed or otherwise interfered with, she/she encounters frustration. Blocked goal seeking therefore produces confusion bewilderment and annoyance. Frustration, by implication connotes an event rather than an emotional state; thwarting circumstances rather than their consequences. Apart from the various types of conflict that provide a major source of human frustration, there are other barrier to the satisfaction of drives (Atkinson and Atkinson 1975). Frustration whether it is the result of obstacles, deficiencies or conflict, has both immediate and remote consequences. This view point is premised on the reasoning that when blocked in goal seeking, the youths may react immediately or develop attitudes toward uncertainty or risk taking that has more enduring consequences.

Youths's aggressiveness is often the result of frustrating circumstances from bad governance orchestrated by high level of poverty, strikes and lack of access to education among others. Berkowitz (1965) suggest three alternatives to the theory. He opined that; emotional reaction does not compulsorily cause aggression but it creates a predisposition for aggressive act. The above act is typical of the Nigeria youths who have expressed their dissatisfaction due to insensitivity and neglect that characterise or underpin the activities and the role of Nigeria state. Thus, the inability of the Nigeria youths to actualise their goals through the institutional means in the face of the opportunities that abound in good governance has produced frustrations culminating in all shapes of social problems and deviant practices that consequently pose serious threat to the Nigeria state.

Conceptual Clarification

Youths restiveness has different definitions depending on different perspectives and user alike. According to Kelly (2014), Youths restiveness is a situation of the inability of the youths to be still or quiet and difficult to control, especially when they are unsatisfied with something. It relates to matters of agitation by youths over issues of deprivation, neglect, marginalization and other feelings of dissatisfaction. It can also be viewed as the engagement by youths in agitation for the restoration of their rights and dignity or self-seeking through criminal activities. In a similar vein, youths restiveness refers to the reaction of youths, both constructive (positive) and destructive (negative) to the ‘use and dump’ mentality and attitude of those considered to be involved in the acts of oppression and repression against interest. It is equally a deliberate instrument of organised response to perceived grievances that has an increasing potency and capability for destruction.

Youths Restiveness according to Elegbeleye (2009) is a sustained protestation embarked upon to enforce desired outcome from a constituted authority by an organised body of youths. Youths’ restiveness involves the combination of actions, behaviours, attitudes exhibited by Youths which are socially unacceptable and unwholesome in the society and it has been a device through which youths use to obtain what they want from authority. The recent cases of kidnapping abduction and cruel destruction of valued structures as well as lives and properties are mostly the activities of the youths that are publicly intolerable.

Good Governance

Good governance deals with how those who have the authority of the state make efforts to achieve the goals or the ends of the state through maintenance of law and order, the provision of welfare for its citizens and the pursuit of national interest in the global community (Eleigwu, 2011).

According to Akpa (2014) cited in (Abdulkarim and Kamale, 2017), good governance is concern with the measurement of government performance in relations to goal attainment. Udock (2006:4) submitted that:

Good governance refers to a system of government based on good leadership, respect for the rule of law and due process, the accountability of the political leadership to the electorates as well as transparency in the operation of government.

Abdulkarim and Kamale (2017) mentioned out the key features that surround the above definition. Firstly, the good governance depends squarely on good political leadership. Secondly, adherence to the principle of rule of law. Thirdly, political leaders must be transparent and accountable to the people. However, the absence of good governance would unavoidably lead to youth’s restiveness.

Causes of Youths restiveness and the quest for good governance in Nigeria

According to Ezedekachi (2020), the following are the causes of youth’s restiveness and the quest for good governance in Nigeria

1. Bad governance: good governance is required for the advancement of any nation state. Regrettably, in Nigeria bad governance is more public than good ensuring in disorganised development. World bank (1992) identifies the characteristic of bad governance to includes

- i. Failure to properly distinguish between what is public and private, leading to appropriation of public resources.
- ii. Inability to establish a predictable work frame for law and government behaviour in a manner conducive for development or arbitrariness in the application rule of law.
- iii. Excess rules, regulations, licensing requirements and so forth which impede proper functioning of market and encourage rent seeking.
- iv. Priorities that are inconsistent with development thereby resulting in misallocation of national resources.

These and more are the feature of most administration in Nigeria. For instance, Oyekpe (2017) observed that successive administration in Nigeria have not allocated much to the needs of the youths and worse still, the meagre allocation are often diverted by government officials to their private accounts and projects. Thus, youths are restive and agitative when they perceived that resources meant for them are being wasted by those in authority.

2. High level of unemployment: Inadequate job opportunities in the developing countries is responsible for youth's restiveness with dangerous consequences. Experts believed that the number of jobless youths is twice as high as official estimate. Ozohu-Suleiman (2006) notes that Nigeria youths are trapped by unemployment. Zakaria (2006: 46) believes that, 'the rising tide of unemployment and the fear of the bleak future among the youths in Africa countries have made them vulnerable to the manipulations of agents provocateurs'. These include aggrieved politicians, religious demagogue and greedy multinational that employed those youths to achieve self-fish interest.
3. Acute poverty rate: study revealed that more than 70% of Nigeria are in abject poverty, living below the poverty line and one third lived on less than one dollar a day (Zakaria, 2006). This figure includes an army of youths in urban centres who struggle to take out a living by hawking chewing sticks, bottled water and sachet water, handkerchiefs, belts etc. the sales per day and the profit margin on such goods are so small that they can hardly live above the poverty life. Disillusioned, frustrated, and dejected, they seek an opportunity to express their anger against the state. Aworawo (2000) and Zakaria (2006) agreed that there is a link among poverty, loss of livelihood, inequality and youth's restiveness as evidenced by the numerous violent protests against the wielder of power in Nigeria for good governance.
4. Inadequate infrastructural facilities: most urban slums and rural communities in Nigeria have no access to portable decent drinking water, health facilities, electricity, communication facilities, industries, commercial facilities etc. Behind social unrest and youth's restiveness in the countries is the agitation for good governance to ensure equitable distribution of resources for better standard of living.
5. Access to educational opportunities: quality education has a direct bearing on the national prestige, greatness and cohesion. The knowledge and skill that the young people acquired help to determine the degree of patriotism and contribution to national integrity and progress.

Youths restiveness is a problem to communities and the country at large. The way and manner through which youths try to achieve their goals by agitation have reduced societal progress and cripple productive level in the society. In the course of struggling to protect their interest through the use of youth's restiveness, they create more problems for themselves. These acts push them to commit crimes that they could be apprehended for, thereby worsening their situations. The effects of youths restiveness are:

Increasing Crime

According to Schaefer 2005, crime is a violation of criminal law for which some governmental authority applies formal penalties. Laws divide crimes into various categories. Depending on the severity of the offense, the age of the offender, the potential punishment, and the court that holds jurisdiction over the case. Crime is dangerous to all aspect of society; be it political, social, economic, religious or educational. Crime prevents good relationships between countries, it leads to destruction of lives and properties, it dampens the spirit of both local and foreign investors to invest in the country, and this increases insecurity and leads to underdevelopment.

Increased criminal activities have occurred from youth's restiveness. The desire for youths to have better lives without having meaningful skills and educational knowledge to meet up has pushed them into criminality. Crime is a risk to societal safety.

Unsecured Environment

The illegal activities of tare as a result of uncertainty or anxiety. They lose self confidence in themselves. In the Niger-Delta, everyone seems to be cautious of their environment because of fear of being kidnapped, and also to escape from any violence that may likely arise. According to Oromareghake et al (2013: 63), the oil boom has increased violence in the Niger delta, which in 2006 resulted in the reduction of Nigeria's oil export by 25%. The general insecurity caused by the activities of the restive youths and the security agencies costs the country treasury billions of naira each year. It should also be noted that in order to control unrest and boost production, the government has adopted strategies ranging from direct negotiation with the Militants to all-out Military assaults on them. However, these methods have not been successful. The youths are not relenting in the vandalization of pipelines. Oromareghake et al (2013:24) stated that "securing the pipelines and other oil and gas assets in the country has become a heavy burden to the government". Until date, the government still spends a lot on security to protect the country's natural resources from youth's restiveness, bunkering and smugglers activities. The problem of insecurity has driven away both foreign and local investors thereby increasing unemployment rate. This in turn, will encourage youths to partake in illegal activities thereby creating problems for the society.

Poor Financial State

Pettinger (2017:18) stated that "a low rate of economic growth can cause higher unemployment". When there is inflation, mismanagement of funds and misappropriation of funds in a country, there is bound to be financial crisis. When there is no proper circulation of funds in the society, there will be reduction in the demand for goods by the masses and industries will require few services. This will have adverse effect on the youths. If a country experiences decline in her finances, some industries will be shut down, thereby making many workers to become jobless.

Increased Underemployment

The unemployment rate in Nigeria is increasing rather than decreasing. This is affecting the youths tremendously that they are willingly to partake in plans that are detrimental to themselves and the society. Kazeem (2017: 56) stated that:

National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2016) pegs the unemployment rate at 14.2% in the last quarter of 2016, up from 13.9% in the preceding quarter. It's the ninth consecutive quarter that the unemployment rate has increase. Employment has faltered as businesses struggled amid Nigeria's first recession in two decades. These companies' dependent on foreign transactions are also suffering due to a critical shortage of dollars. In May 2016, nearly a million people applied for ten thousand (10,000) listed positions in the Nigerian police force. Also, in November 2016, the Federal Tax agency received 700,000 applications for 500 advertised positions. Majority of Nigerian youths within the median age of 21 are most affected. Fraudulent schemes have strived with millions looking to make quick buck in the absence of gainful employment".

Rebellious Behaviour

Rebellious behaviour by the youths is caused by incessant demands for their interest to be met. The Advocates for the advancement of youths Development Initiatives (AAYDI) 2012, have stated that the activities of youth's restiveness have affected the country negatively through low production of goods and services through disorder, by disrupting law and order in the society, e.g. militancy. Increased crime rates, increase in intra-ethnic and religious conflict, disturbing investors and other numerous criminal tendencies. The problems associated with rebellious behaviour are marginalization, unemployment, exuberance, poverty and poor educational opportunities.

Youths restiveness has led to destruction of oneself because when they are caught by the Government law enforcement agencies, the punishment could be devastating. They could be sentenced to life imprisonment; they could be sentenced to death and such activities can also lead to fight among the youths causing disability amongst others. The restiveness of youths affects social and economic activities negatively thereby leading to hardship.

Vandalization of pipelines by youths affects societies negatively, especially it destroys vegetation. The spillage on the community's river destroys their water and fishes. Youths restiveness has led to loss of lives and poverty. People now live in fear as a result of Youths insurgence.

Quest for Good Governance as Panacea for Youths Restiveness in Nigeria

Youths restiveness in Nigeria is tied to absence of good governance. Good governance is concerned with the measurement of government performance in relation to goal attainment. Its concern with the level of integrity, honesty, effectiveness and efficiency exercised by government in deploying allocated scarce resources in meeting the yearnings and aspirations of the citizens (Akpa, 2014). It is derived from the general concept of fiduciary stewarding function in judging the public office holder ability to utilize public resources effectively and efficiently in the delivery of improved public goods to the people.

Good governance depicts ideal. However, to work toward the ideal, Elaiegwu (2011) identifies certain practices even it is home grown must reflect international standard in the following areas.

Individuals, groups, corporate entities and governments must be guided by certain values, norms or principles in their dealings. These principles include participation, equity, rule of law, transparency and accountability as well as the effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of public services.

Participation: participation is the fundamental principles of good governance. It is an indication of the inclusive nature of the system of decision making. Are the interest of both men and women, Youths and old, the minorities and the vulnerable in the society considered in decision making? In essence such premium is put on such democratic values as equality and freedom (of association and expression). There should be avenues for the reconciliation of the interest group in the society in order to reach a broad consensus. This input by the people is regarded as an important feedback mechanism of good governance.

Equity and inclusiveness are also indicators of ‘‘good governance’’ to what extent is government fair to all-majority and minority group, male and female citizens? Government must be seen to treat all as equal citizens and this must be reflected in the distribution of resources. Government must be inclusive.

Good governance presupposes the rule of law. This means that there must be a constitutional/legal framework and a system of enforcement of laws, the administration of justice and fairness. Are fundamental human rights guaranteed and protected? How partial is the judicial system? How dedicated to constitutionalism are the public officials and servants? These are some of the indicators of the qualities of good governance in the country that can calm youth’s restiveness.

Transparency and accountability are the cornerstone of good governance. These have political/administrative and financial aspects. Are decision taken and enforced according to rules, procedures and regulations? What is the information flow? How accessible are the decision makers? How effective is the system of checks and balances among the various arms of government and across the rank of the public service? Transparent and accountable system of decision making and administration leaves little or no room for financial irregularities. The level of corruption indicates the level of good or bad governance in the society. It must be noted that corruption goes beyond issues related to money and other material things. Process of governance could also be corrupted. Thus, when EFCC white males legislator and probes them to impeach their governors, EFCC was engaged in a corrupt activity. It is the indicative of the maturity of the nation that judiciary reversed all case of impeachment through corrupt practices.

Subsidiarity, emerged from European political vocabulary (in the 1990s) as another principles of governance. It addresses the issues of decentralization in a political system. Subsidiary implies that the lower levels of government which are closer to the people and are better placed to deliver services more efficiently, should be given the responsibilities of providing such public goods and services. Between May 1999 and July 2009, the research conducted by the institute of governance and social research (IGSR), Jos Plateau State, Nigeria shows that there has been 343 cases of violent electoral and communal conflicts. These are violent conflict in which one or more persons lost their lives and properties destroyed. Electoral violence accounted for 176 of these cases while ethno- religious and land issues for the rest. In almost all cases, finger of accusation point to the political leaders, government officials, traditional leaders and religious leaders. Thus, our experiences in the path of democracy have been water by blood, littered by wanton destruction, and seen our impatience, intolerance, irresponsibility, disenfranchisement of

the people and disregard for the rule of law, low level of legitimacy, the violation of the principles of choice and freedom and highly demonstrable lack of accountability.

However, without any shade of doubt, all Nigerians especially youths without exception want and indeed desire good governance demonstrated in the management of public affair in the country to stop the issues of youth's restiveness. Nigerian youths are asking that government should open up more in the way they conduct its business. They are craving for the chance to hold all the three arms of government accountable for their success and failures. Akpa (2011) points out that good governance is a direct reflection of the quality of leaders who are manning the three arms of government including the bureaucracy. In this regard, it is perhaps timely to observe here that the fact that our country is on the top of heaps of abundant human and material resources is an open knowledge, yet the country faces a most annoying problem of youth's restiveness and finding sincere leaders.

Conclusion

Nigerian today is plagued with unprecedented challenges of youth's restiveness orchestrated by bad governance. This restiveness manifested into wanton destruction of live and properties, lootings, killings, kidnapping, abduction among others. In almost all cases, fingers of accusation point to our leaders in authority in the country as a result of bad governance. It is commonly observed that bad governance, poverty, unemployment, access to education, inadequate infrastructural facilities are conditions that facilitate youth's restiveness in Nigeria. This paper points out that ingredient of good governance is lacking in the country. This is attributable to the insatiable quest for personal aggrandizement and selfish interest of the leadership of the country since independence.

Recommendations

- i. There should be a check on declaration of assets before and after leaving an official office by our ruling class with parasitic instincts characterised by greed and primitive accumulation from our common treasury.
- ii. Choice of leaders should be determined by the people at the poll.
- iii. Our leaders must correctly evaluate the past, boldly assess the present so that we can make useful contribution to the glorious tomorrow for the generation yet unborn.
- iv. The system should sow and nurture seeds of accountability, transparent, integrity, fiscal responsibility and due process.
- v. The Ministry of Youths Development should be well funded to train graduate in the area of entrepreneurship and empowered them to start business not only skewed to sports.
- vi. Government should judiciously reduce the gap between the rich and poor through distributive justice

References

- Abdulkarim, H. and Kamale, M. Y. (2017). Political Leadership and Challenges of Good Governance in Nigeria: In Journal of Economic and Interrelated Studies.2 (1) 129-140.

- Akpa, A. (2014). *Government Accounting and Public Finance Management in Nigeria. Concepts and Application*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Atkinson. R. C & Atkinson, R. L. (1975) *Introduction to Psychology*. (6th ed). USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovlch.inc. 351
- Chukwuemeka, E. E. O, and Agbra, V.N.O.O. (2010). Niger Delta Youths Restiveness and Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria. *Educational Research and Review*. 5, 7, 400-407
- Elegbeleye, O.S. (2005). *Recreational Facilities in Schools: A Panacea for Youths' Restiveness*. *Journal of Human Ecology* 18 (2): 93-98.
- Elaigwu, J. I. (2011). *Topical Issues in Nigeria Political Development*. Jos: AHA Publishing House.
- Kazeem, Y. (2017). *Nigeria's unemployment Problem in showing No signs of slowing down*. Retrieved from <https://qzcom.cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/qz.com/africa/999641/theunemployment-rate-in-nigeria-has-climbed-for-nineconsecutive-quarters/amp/?amp-js-v-a2amp-gs1&usqpmq33AQA#referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&-if-from%20%25>
- Amorawo, D. (2000). *Mal-Distribution and Poverty as Factors in the crisis of the Nigeria State*. *The Constitution: A journal of Constitutional Development* 1 (2): 1-13
- Odock, C.N. (2006). *Democracy and Good Governance*. Lagos: National Open University of Nigeria.
- Oromareghake P., Arisi, R.O., Igbo, O.M. (2013). *Youths Restiveness and Insecurity in Niger Delta: A Focus on Delta State*. Retrieved From. https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS_Volume_13/6-Youths.restivess-and_Insecurity.pdf. *UJAH Volume 21 No.3, 2020 (Special Edition)*89
- Ozohu-Suleiman, A. (2006). *The Nigerian Youths in Compemporary Political Development: Relevance, Challenges and Role Expectation*. *The Constitution: A Journal of Constitutional Development* 6 (4): 97-111.
- Onyekpe, N. (2007). *Managing Youths at Elections*. *The Constitution: A Journal of Constitutional Development* 7(1) 76-87
- Pettinger, T. (2017) *Low Economic Growth and unemployment*. Retrieved from: <https://www.economicsHelp.org/Blog/10142unemployment/Law-Economic> Growth cUnemployment.
- Schaefer, A. (2005). *Sociology*. Ninth Edition. New York: Published by McGraw Hill.
- Zakaria, Y. (2006). *Youths, Conflict, Security and Development*. Available: <https://www.realityofaid.org/roareport.php?tableroa2006&id=6>.
- Onuba, I. (2019). *Trackling Unemployment through Entrepreneurship*. Retrieved from: <https://www.punchng.com/tacklingunemployment-through-entrepreneursip/amp>.
- World Bank (1992). *Governance and Development*: Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.