

Negative effects of youth restiveness on the health of affected victims in Nigeria

Suleiman, Suleiman Chado¹ and Mohammed Gambo Saba²

¹Department of Counselling Psychology,

Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Lapai, Nigeria.

²Department of Education, Bayero University Kano, Nigeria

Corresponding E-mail: suleimansuleiman7@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper dwelt on negative effects of youth restiveness on mental health of victims in Nigeria. It is a known fact that youth are leaders of tomorrow. Contrarily, youths that are lawless and restiveness, create threat and anxiety in the society. Ultimately, restiveness can negatively affect the mental health of individuals in various communities. This paper therefore, discussed meaning, causes of youth restiveness and how they can affect mental health of citizens, such as; post-traumatic stress disorders, forced migration, depression, psychosis as a result of drug abuse and somatic symptoms. Therefore, counselling becomes very necessary to address preventive measures of this menace. Conclusion and recommendations were proffered such as provision of professional counsellors, psychologists, health workers and security agents to help the victims in the areas affected. As for the youth, they should be trained in various entrepreneurs and government should support them with soft loans to establish in various business enterprises.

Keywords: Mental health, restiveness, victims, youth.

1. Introduction

It is often said that the idle mind is the devil's workshop and therefore jobless youths are insinuated by devils to indulge criminal acts which cause restlessness, fear, insurgency, anxiety among Nigerians. Restiveness has become a tangible topical concern for discussion in the social, economic and polity domain in Nigeria. The security, peace and mutual co-existence in Nigeria is being threatened as a result of the prevalence of youth restiveness. The causes of youth restiveness are connected to marginalization, unemployment, lack of basic and inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate social amenities, bad governance, corruption and misappropriation of fund, lack of accountability among government officials. The spiraling impacts of youth restiveness are evident in Nigeria such as ethnic militia, kidnapping, looting, killing, cultism, armed robbery which have led to

underdevelopment and insecurity in Nigeria. (Zakari; 2006). The United Nations International Children Education Fund (UNICEF) (2022) presented that 10.5 million children are out-of-school in Nigeria, which is the highest rate in the world. The figure indicates that one third of Nigerian children are not in school and one in five out-of-school children in the world is a Nigerian. Some children are more likely to be affected than others such as girls, children with disabilities, children from the poorest households, those in the street, those affected by displacement or emergencies and children in geographically distant areas are all disproportionately affected by the education crisis. Therefore, need to look towards government, community leaders, parents, teachers and caregivers to find the best strategies to ensure that all children are enrolled in schools, have access to continuous learning. Not only this, they should be trained and

orientated with quality skills that can equip them for a prosperous life.

The conflict theory, according to Raymund and Austine (2020), such as wars, revolution, domestic violence and others are as a result of competition and limited resources. To worsen the situation, Nigeria has not adequately provided employment opportunities, sustainable entrepreneurial training for youth empowerment and sustenance. Restiveness has led to inactiveness of the youth to face their socio-economic problems, discharge their responsibilities effectively and inability to meet goals of the society. The inability of youth to exercise self-control to issues that has led to conflict and protest has been narrowed down to scarcity and unequal distribution of natural resources, non-recognition, marginalizing their society, having feelings of discontentment, non-favorable government laws, lack of equality education and high rate of unemployment. (Elegbeleye, 2005). Nisirdihe, Emaimo and Amah (2017) stated that restiveness orchestrated by youth has been on the increase in almost all communities in Nigeria. Since the inception of our nascent democracy, there has been a proliferation of unraveled violence, killing of innocent people by Boko haram, the insurgence in the North East, militancy in Niger Delta and marauding attack by Fulani herdsmen across the country. There has being anarchy, destruction of lives and property when youth seem to be dissatisfied. The actions of the youth are regarded as criminal since their expressions are usually violent and violating law and order and disruption of various activities in various communities.

Agu and Paul (2021) noted that as gainful employment is important in preventing crime, those who do not have jobs, the idle hands, are more likely to become involved in criminal pursuits, partly, to provide for their daily needs and partly because they lack discipline and skills for sustainable jobs. According to Chris, Keith, Azrini and

Emma (2013), Marxist theory emphasized the roots of social inequality as the gamut of class differentiation in all societies. They added that Marx, Engels, Adam Smith and other thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries identified material resources like land, labour and capital as the basis for social contention and stratification, Akujobi and Jack (2017) revealed that social change in the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe has been sustained for the increasing indices of the social change problems. Restiveness plaguing the Nigeria society today, including armed robbery, advance fee fraud (419); internet cybercrime, drug peddling and drug abuse among students and youth, insurgency and militancy; cultism, cultural violence, thuggery and religious intolerance constitute negative effects of restiveness. Mezieobi, Nwanbami and Anyanwu (2012) discovered that the causal factors of youth restiveness include sponsorship by interested groups, inadequate possession of skills for life sustenance, poverty, gangsterism and peer influence, use of hard drugs, economic purpose of self-enrichment and youth unemployment. They added that the above menace affect nation building by destabilizing the various communities and hindering foreign investments.

Also, looking at remediation measures taken against restiveness, the government is not resting on its oars regarding insurgency, orchestrated by youth restiveness. However, the round peg is always put in a square hole. Because various strategies adopted in curbing most of the instances of restiveness in Nigeria was more of violent acts through the deployment of the military and the police to curb the menace. For instance, in the Northern part of the country, particularly, the North-East, most of where the atrocities of Boko Haram had devastated the region, the insecurity is still in a standstill and the story is in a recurring decimal. Politicians also use some youth as thugs who are drug

addicts. The committees constituted for a dialogue with members of Boko haram never register any progress. Another case study is the issue of Niger- Delta. Despite the amnesty declaration, the government continues to use reprisal means to suppress the restiveness in the region. Furthermore, the development commissions, Board and the Ministry established by the government as the response to the demand of the dwellers or aborigines never yielded any meaningful achievement. Rather, they serve as avenue for self-enrichment, bribery and corruption at the expense of poor stinking mass. (Chukuezi, 2009 & Yusuf, 2014). The state of insecurity in Nigeria, according to Alubo (2012), is no more news, as the worrisome is the way and manner which the leaders are handling the state of affairs. Government should go beyond what has being on the ground by addressing the cause of and solutions to youth restiveness. Such as job creation, practical entrepreneurial development for the youth coupled with soft loan for self-sustenance, creating avenue for foreign investors, particularly the establishment of industries and development of social amenities including regular supply of water and electricity, to mention a few. Hence, this paper is aimed at discussing the causes of restiveness and probable measures that can mitigate negative effect of mental health of victims.

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Perspectives

2.1 Youth

Youth are young adolescents who possess excessive energy that needs to be exerted. Adolescence is described as the period of storm and stress (Yusuf, 2014). Of course, this is more reason why youth restiveness is possible among youth. The National Youth Development Policy (N.Y.D.P.) (2001) defined "Youth", as people aged 18-35. They constitute about 40 percent of the more than 140 million people in Nigeria. The NYDP added that the total population of youth between 10 and 24 in Nigeria was 4,504 million in 2006, which is 34 percent

of the total population. In the context of this paper, youth refer to young adolescents who are within the age of 18 and 35 (in line with the above definition by NYDP. If the energy of disciplined youth is properly channelled, they can be productive but if they are law-less, and violent youth, they can create threat in any society.

2.2 Restiveness

This is from the word 'restive'. Chika and Onyene (2010) observed that to be restive, is to be unable to stay still, and unwilling to be controlled because of dissatisfaction of the situation or condition at hand. It constitutes unwholesome, socially unacceptable behaviour exhibited in the society. Youth restiveness which has been the context of this paper refers to the young people within the range of 18 and 35, who are not satisfied or are discontented with government, individuals, groups, community and resolve to show their anger by destroying lives and property, kidnapping, robbing citizens to amass wealth to replace job opportunity or marginalization.

2.3 Mental Health

Mental health refers to cognitive behavioural, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. It is the state of making individuals realize his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of conditions of life, can work productively, and is able to make contribution to his or her community (Timothy, 2020). According to Mental Health Foundation (MHF) (2022), Mental health refers to your feelings, keeping one's self active, eating well, drink sensibly, keep in touch with others favourable, ask for help when need arises, have adequate break or rest, to do what you are interested in doing, self-realization and care for others. In this paper, mental health refers to health condition of Nigerian citizens while its negative effects are referred as ill-mental health or poor mental health.

2.4 Poor Mental Health

Mental health illness is sometimes referred to as mental disorder or poor mental health etc, which is being defined as health conditions involving changes in emotion, thinking or behavior. According to Wikipedia (2022), it is associated with distress, impairment of personal functioning, anxiety and having social problems.

2.5 Victim

Victim in the context of this work refers to the individuals affected as a result of youth restiveness. The victims face problems of post-traumatic disorder, stress, loss of lives and property. Youth Restiveness and mental disorder of victims. Youth restiveness negatively affects the mental health of affect victims or displaced people. The harassment, forced migration and armed conflicts always lead to dysfunctional economic systems. The public and personal social amenities and facilities are destroyed, loss of lives, poverty, hunger, joblessness, cases of children out-of-school and school drop-outs are the negative consequences. According to Miracle, Temilade and Isaac (2020), children, victims of sexual violence, families that lost their lives and property and internally displaced persons are the main victims of mental illness. Ten mental health specialist groups in the North-East Nigeria conducted 294 outreach sessions from April to June 2018, and 5,031 individual victims with mental illness in various internally displaced camps. A total of 1,276 had severe emotion disorders, 1,229 had seizure disorders associated with psychological distress, 925, medically unexplained somatic complaints, 774 had psychotic disorders, 349 had substance use disorder and 337 had other complaints (Mental Health and Psychological Support, MHPS, 2018; Miracle, Temilade and Isaac, 2020).

2.6 Theoretical Perspectives

The unfortunate economic downturn, coupled with inequitable distribution of

national resources, corruption, marginalization, poverty as well as unemployment have forested the youth to dive into restiveness thereby creating insecurity in the country. Two theories come into focus in this discourse, to proffer explanation for youth restiveness. The theories are conflict and strain theories. According to Crossman (2019), he stated that tension and conflict arise when resource, states and power can be understood as control of material resources and accumulated wealth, control of politics and institutions that make up society, and one's social status relative to others which is determined by race, gender, sexuality, culture and religion among other things. On the other hand, the classic strain theory focuses on the deprived youth. The inability for youths to accomplish set goals, to satisfy Maslow's hierarchy of needs of 1943 forces them and indulges them in criminal acts. That is, food, shelter, love, esteem, belonging need, self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Resources derived from social factors such as lack of income or lack of quality education drives individuals to commit crimes. Strain theory explains deviant behaviour as an inevitable outcome or the strain individual experience when society does not provide adequate and approved means of achieving culturally valued goals. That is, when a society places cultural value on economic success and wealth, but only provides legally sanctioned means for a small portion of the population to achieve these goals, those excluded may turn to conventional or criminal means of attaining them (Crossman, 2019).

From the foregoing, it could be understood that the various governments in the past 3 – 4 decades have failed masses that they represent since the national economy has not improved and employment opportunities are not available to occupy the youths that now create insurgency and restiveness in the country. It is therefore, expected that government should treat the citizens fairly and shun all sorts of

corruption, deprivation, marginalization, embezzlement of public funds, in order for the resources to go round to stop all sorts of criminal offences of kidnapping, robbery, killings, looting, so as to pave way for national development.

2.7 Causes of Youth Restiveness in Nigeria

A number of studies have identified factors responsible for youth restiveness. Ofen and Ajayi (2008) identified lack of humanitarian and social welfare, lack of good governance, corrupt practices of government officials, inadequate training programmes (to occupy youths), unemployment, inadequate recreational facilities, lack of quality education, and so on. Elegbeleye (2005) added that lack of enough water and electricity supply, peer motivated excitement of being in a group, the jingoistic pursuit of patriotic ideas, and perceived victimization arising from economic exploitation. According to Happiness and Innocent (2013), they affirmed that students' union is meteoric cliques, cleavages as well as ethnic militia are cause of youth restiveness. These include, among others, 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-South. These local forces which claim relevance in crime prevention and control but whose activities are parallel with State recognition is threats to national security as it is sometimes characterized by manifesting restiveness among youth. Agu and Paul (2021) observed that composite unemployment in Nigeria increased from 3.8% in 2006 to 4.2 in the first half of 2011, Macrotrends (2022) added that for 2020, it was 9.01 %. Zakaria (2006) stated that poverty is another cause of restiveness, as poverty connotes inequality and social

injustice and this of course, traumatizes the poor. He maintained that more than 70 percent of people in Nigeria are in object poverty, living below the poverty level and that one-third survive on less than US \$1dollar a day. The disillusioned, frustrated, dejected youths seek an opportunity to resort to restiveness. He added that between 2000 and 2004, about 30 percent of Nigerian youth between 10 and 24 were not enrolled in secondary schools, because of either illiteracy and ignorance among parents or dwindling economy of the country.

2.8 Preventive measures of Youth Restiveness

According to Dickson, (2020). We have found the magic wand to curb or totally eliminate youth restiveness in Nigeria. The following are some workable solutions.

1. The youth should resort to dialogue rather than reckless destruction of lives and property whenever they are aggrieved or have issues with the government.
2. We should strongly suggest the involvement of the youths in key decision and enactment of policies that affect their well-being.
3. Fairness and equity should be the watchword of the political leadership in the distribution of the gains and pain of development.
4. Gender-sensitivity and gender-balancing in addressing the problems of the youths in Nigeria.
5. Entrepreneurship education is the key production of skilled manpower and innovative and self-reliant citizens.

2.9 Maintaining Mental Health of Victims of Restiveness

Youth violence and restiveness resulted to nearly 2.1 million internally displace people in Nigeria. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNRA) (2021) stated that in 2021, the Nigerian refugee crisis will be going into its seventh year. Despite the

efforts of government and humanitarian aid, some 12.5million people remain in need of humanitarian assistance in the lake Chad Basin region with 5.3 million people remaining food insecure. This is compounded by the deteriorating security situation, socio-economic fragility chronic poverty, a harsh climate condition of sahel, recurrent epidemics, poor infrastructure and limited access to basic services. The probable solutions to the above is first and foremost, is to come to negotiation table with internal and external sponsors of Boko haram and other ethno-religious crises in the country. There should also be a provision of effective information device such as wireless Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) the radio survey once which can be monitoring and reporting the activities of those involved in restiveness. Rehabilitation of refugees should be embarked upon and necessary food supply should be ensured, preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence through the provision and implementation of Legal and psycho-social support to survivors. They should be involved in entrepreneurial training to learn skills for sustainable business enterprise, provide, various devices of power generation such as coal, solar and hydro. Prevention approaches of diseases affecting the victims of restiveness such as screening, surveillances, health education, immunization and pre-diseases management are most effective in humanitarian conditions.

2.10 Counselling and Psychological Implications

Going by the above problems of social and economic needs of youth that are involved in restiveness, government should make effort to provide alternative means for youth by exposing them to various entrepreneurship skills and soft loan as source of sustaining their lives. External investors should be invited to establish industries to occupy the jobless youth. Happiness and Innocent (2013) identified

counselling services that could be adopted to displaced persons such as psychotherapeutic counselling, individual counselling, group counselling consultation counselling, reconciliation counselling and the use of dialogue. Counsellors should be provided in all educational institutions so that the professionals can guide students in terms of drug use, and good attitude formation, towards peers, family and society. Career orientation and provision of vocational materials for effective vocational and entrepreneurial training be embarked upon so that students can have alternative employment opportunities rather than relying on government. Students should be exposed to orientation where by various professionals can come to school to educate or enlighten them on various careers. Group counselling could also be organized as well as talk shows, workshops, and seminars. Assertive training and cognitive restructuring could be adopted in order to serve as behaviour modification strategies for youths so that there will be change of attitude or to serve as avenue for learning positive attitude towards peers, family and society.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper discussed negative effects of youth restiveness the health of affected victims in Nigeria. The paper listed that post-traumatic disorder, forced migration, depression, psychosis, joblessness; somatic symptoms are some of the negative effects of youth restiveness. The paper recommended counselling intervention, entrepreneurship education, and soft loans to be given to youth for investment as self-sustainable individual. The following are recommendations:

1. Government should rehabilitate victims of restiveness in various societies so that they are not affected by diseases or psycho-social problems.
2. The government and non-governmental organizations should invest in the

establishment of industries to occupy youths.

3. Vocational centers should be expanded and equipped with necessary materials for theoretical and practical lessons that can benefit the learners.
4. Youths who are trained in various entrepreneurial skills should be given soft loans so as to use it as capital for investment in their business enterprises.
5. Functional social amenities such as power supply, water, health centers should be provided in order boost the economy of the country and to return those in diaspora to make their contributions in developing the country.
6. Advocacy campaign can be launched on regular basis to campaign against restiveness among youth and adults as well.
7. School administrators and professional school counsellors should sensitize students in the school assembly, against youth restiveness to create awareness about negative consequences of youth restiveness.
8. During the Parents' Teachers Association, the counsellor is in position to guide parents on good attitude formation of their children and how it can help in their manifestations in the family, the school and the community.

References

- Akujobi, C.T. and Jack, J. (2017). Social change and Social problems. In Abasie Kong, E.M. Sibiri, E.A. & Ekpeyong, N.S. (Eds) Major Themes in Sociology: An Introduction Text. Benin: Mase perfect prints.
- Agu S. I & Paul Eke (2021) Youths and restiveness: Examining the landscape of inequality and social injustice in Ohjai/Egeme. Retrieved 16/05/22 from www.seahipj.org
- Alubo, O. (2012). Sociology: A concise introduction; Jos: Ichejum Press.
- Crossman, A. (2019) Understanding conflict theory. Retrieved 16/06/22 from <https://www.thought.com/conflict-theory> – 3032-6622
- Chika, P. E., & Oyene, V. (2010). Youth Restiveness in the Niger Delta of Nigeria: Implication for Education and Leadership. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 18(2), 286-296.
- Chris, H.; Keith, H., Azrini, W., & Emma, W. (2013). *Criminology*. Thirds edition ISBN: 97801996912096 London: Oxford University Press.
- Chukuezi, A.Y. (2009). Poverty and youth restiveness in Nigeria: Implications for national development. *Ozean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 2, No. 2, PP 97–103.
- Dickson, A. (2018). Combating Youth Restiveness in Nigeria: Preferring Workable Solution *American Journal of Humanity and Social Sciences Research (AJHSSR)* e-ISSN: 2378- 703X, Vol. 02, Issue 08, pp 65-73 www.ajhssr.com
- Elegbeleye, O.S. (2006). Recreational facilities in schools: A panacea for youths' restiveness. *Journal of Human Ecology*; Vol. 18, No. 2, PP 93–98.
- Happiness, I.I. & Innocent, I. (2013). Causes, effects and ways of curbing youth restiveness in Nigeria: Implications for counselling. *Journal of Education and Practice*; Vol. 4, No. 6, PP 131-133
- MHPS (2018). Mental Health issues. Retrieved 16/0522 from <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resource>

- Macro Trends (2022). Nigeria unemployment rate 199-2022. Retrieved 12/05/22 from <https://www.macrotrends.net>>NGA
- Maslow, A.H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*; Vol. 50, No. 4, PP 370–396.
- MHF (2020) Types mental health problems. Retrieved 29/10/22 from <https://www.mind.org.uk>
- Miracle, A.A., Temilade, A. & Isaac, I.O. (2020). Mental Health and conflict in Nigeria: An Overview. *European Journal of Environment and Public Health*; Vol. 4, No. 1, PP 214–218
- Mezieobi, D.I. Nwaubani, O. & Anyanwu, J. (2012). Youth restiveness: Implications for achieving sustainable nation building in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Science and Research*; Vol. 2, No. 2, PP 31-42.
- NYDP (2001). Definition of Youth m.facebook.com
- Nsidihem Al. U. Emaimo, I. E. & Amah, M.W. (2017). Implications of youth restiveness on sustainable development in Nigeria. *South South Journal of Culture and Development*, Vol. 19, No. 1, PP 13-18.
- Ofen, N.I. & Ajayi, A.R. (2008). Effects of youth empowerment strategies on conflict resolutions in the Niger-Delta of Nigeria: Evidence from Cross-River State. *Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development* 6(12), 139–146.
- Raymond, A. & Austine, E. (2020). Youth restiveness in Nigeria: Implications on sustainable National development. Retrieved 12/06/22 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.431/ujah.v2113,4>.
- Timothy, J.L. (2020). What is mental health? Retrieved 28/05/22 from <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com>>.
- UNRA (2021) 84 million forcibly displaced people worldwide. Retrieved 10/05/22 from <https://www.unhor.org.nigeria-em...>
- UNICEF (2022). Nigeria. Retrieved 15/05/22 from <https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/education>
- Wikipedia (2022). Poor mental health/mental health illness. Retrieved 15/05/22 from <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-f>.
- Yusuf, A.Y. (2014). Youth Restiveness: Nigeria's security and sustainable development. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*; Vol. 4, No. 15, PP 151–153.
- Zakaria, Y. (2006). Youth, conflict, security, and development. Retrieved 17/05/22 from <https://www.realityofaid.org/roareport.php?Table=roa2006&id=boe>.