

Youth Restiveness and the Challenges of Educational Development in Etche Local Government Area, Rivers State

URIAH, Obada Alafonye PhD

Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, P.M.B. 5047,
Port Harcourt
uriahoboada@yahoo.com

INWEREGBU, Monica Ogechi.

Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt
Corresponding Author: Promise_ordu@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper examined the challenges of youth restiveness to educational development in Etche local government area of Rivers state. Specifically, it identified some factors that cause youth restiveness, challenges of educational developmental in the area as a result of youth disorder. It also highlights ways of tackling youth restiveness so that education, as well as other developments in the area, could be achieved. Content analysis and extensive literature review were employed for this paper. It is revealed that educational development, as well as other infrastructural development in the study area, has suffered some setbacks due to the restive activities of the youths. As a result, many have dropped out of school and resorted to activities such as kidnapping, cultism, gang activity as well as online scamming (also known as yahoo yahoo activity) amongst others. As a consequence, most infrastructures and facilities including the social development Institute located in Okehi, the Headquarters of Etche LGA (a training and rehabilitation centre) had been vandalised, looted. Moreover, some other institutions have been deserted, including primary and secondary schools. With this situation, future educational development in the areas is even more at risk. Additionally, the causes of youth restiveness have been linked to a variety of institutional factors (eg corruption, bad leadership, unequal distribution of resources and unemployment, as well as inefficient communication of political leaders; psychological (instability/frustration, illiteracy), abuse of drugs) and caused by young people (peer / cult influence) or their parents (poor child education, poverty). The implication is that educational development has been hampered and unless efforts are channelled towards curbing youth restiveness in the area, the worst is expected. Consequently, the government and all stakeholders must put their hands on deck towards tackling the menace. The paper then suggested some of the ways of tackling it which include: embarking on education and empowerment programs, including (giving monthly allowances and skill acquisitions programs to unemployed youths), especially in areas where there are relative peace and stability. Embarking on media and enlightenment campaigns with the youths as a sole target while positive and negative consequences of youth restiveness should be reemphasised as a way of discouraging them from restiveness amongst others.

KEY WORDS: *Challenges, Educational Development, Etche, Youth Restiveness,*

1: INTRODUCTION

Educational development in Nigeria has witnessed many challenges that have led to partial or non-actualisation of the Millennium development goals set out by the United Nations that is geared towards education for all in all nations. Some of the challenges are centred on funding and secure environment by which the schools and teachers could do their works effectively. Insecurity has been termed a great challenge that hampers educational development in Nigeria generally and particularly in the Niger Delta region of the nation (Amanchukwu, 2011). Furthermore, the issue of youth restiveness has increased in dimensions in some areas that have led to, total abandonment of schools by students and in some cases, the teachers. Etche local government of Rivers state could be termed amongst the regions where educational developmental has suffered some set back due to activities of the youths. Youth restiveness has been on the increase, thereby leading to low enrolment and participation in educational activities. Youth restiveness is known as a sustained protestation embarked upon by individuals in order to enforce the desired outcome from a constituted authority by an organised body of youths (Elegbeleye, 2005). Violence and disruption of lawful activities are the hallmarks of this kind of protestation by the youths. Although youth restiveness is not generally new in Nigeria, there are various forms including political, economic, religious amongst others (Elegeye, 2005). In recent times it has taken a different dimension and has been on the increase, especially in the Niger Delta region, including Rivers State. As equally noted by Anasi (2011), there has been an increase in violence, lawlessness, hostages, as well as cultism amongst the youth. Furthermore, kidnapping has been on the increase where even locals, expatriate workers, are kidnapped for ransom before they are released. Several factors have been identified as the remote causes of youth restiveness where ever they occur. These include the level of the educational background of the youths, gender orientation and cultural inclinations, socio-economic background of the youths, leadership crisis (bad governance) amongst others (Uriah, Ololube & Egbezor, 2015). One paramount thing, therefore, is that with a large number of youths engaged in restive activities in an area, infrastructural development including educational development would be difficult to take place, hence the need to curb youth restiveness as quickly as possible as been advocated in several quarters, hence this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Etche local government is an upland community in Rivers state that is bordered by the towns which are part of the Port Harcourt city. It is one of the strategic local government areas being part of the Rivers East senatorial district which consists of about 45 per cent of the total state population as well as resources deposits (City Population Report, 2018). In addition, it is blessed with abundance of resources (including Oil deposits) as well as arable land for agriculture production activities which are capable of generating employment to its teaming population, as a result farming is a major occupation of the people, hence it is known as “food basket” of Rivers State (Nwokogaba, 2013). To cap it all, Etche is the third-largest producer of crude oil and gas in the state and thus places the area high in the scheme of areas with resources needed for its development. With this pedigree, it makes it a major contributor to the wealth of the state and nation as such infrastructure development, including education, should not be an issue in the area. However, Etche has witnessed little development and especially concerning educational development due to several factors. One of the greatest factors in recent times is the issue of youth restiveness. Over 75% of the total population of Etche consist of youths between the ages of 18-45 (City Population Watch, 2018), yet of these youths, only a third of them are engaged in meaningful activities (Nwokogba, 2013). This,

coupled with the problems of lack of infrastructure such as hospitals, schools and clinics to tackle health emergencies (Nwekpe, & Nworgu, 2015), all have made the youths result to restiveness. Many have dropped out of school and resorted to activities such as kidnapping, gang activity as well as online scamming (also known as yahoo yahoo activity) amongst others. As a consequence for these restive activities, most infrastructures and facilities including the social development Institute located in Okehi, the Headquarters of Etche LGA which has trained and rehabilitated over 1000 ex-militants including youths from the area in the past (Uriah et al, 2015), that attracts non indigenes have been vandalised, looted and some deserted including the schools, and these have posed great challenges to educational development in the area. Given this situation, educational development has faced several challenges which could continue unless a lasting solution is provided towards tackling youth restiveness in the area.

1.3 Aim and objectives

This paper aims to examine the challenges caused by youth restiveness to educational development in the area. Specifically, it will:

1. Review literature and identify some factors that trigger or causes youth restiveness
2. Institutional developmental challenges encountered in the area as a result of youth restiveness.
3. Also, highlight ways of tackling youth restiveness so that educational, as well as other infrastructural development in the area, could be achieved

2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual review

Concept of Youth and Restiveness

Nwanna-Nzewunwa, Girigiri & Okoh (2007) defined youth as “any person that is over twelve (12) years but not more than forty (40)” To Akinboye (1987), a youth is any “youngster between twenty and thirty years” The World Health Organization (WHO) viewed youth as “anybody between the ages of 15 and 24” However, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2004) officially placed the age bracket of youths between 16–30 years. Uriah et al. (2015) defined youth to include young men and women who are no longer children, but not yet adults; also given the Nigerian context some cultures consider men of the age bracket of 40-45 years as membership of youths organisations. Hence, the concept of youth is a relative one: a person is a youth if he or she believes so. This range of people is usually those in education both formal and informal so that they can develop the capability, skills and training needed to fend for themselves and their families. Where this population is not empowered, restiveness and other vices can take preminent place in their lives. In other words, while the youth can be found in the primary and secondary schools as well as tertiary institutions, others are out of school with all its grave implications to the individual and the society including the restiveness (Okorosaye-Orubite, 2008).

Youth restiveness on its own refers to a plethora of activities expressed in the various forms including but not limited to kidnapping or hostage taking of foreign nationals, local oil workers and citizens for ransom; illegal bunkering; peaceful or violent demonstration; bombing of public places, etc, in the Niger Delta of Nigeria (Epelle, 2010). Similarly, Agina-Obu (2008) refers to restiveness’ “as a kind of human behaviour geared towards the realisation of individuals or groups' needs. It emanates from individuals or group failures or inability to meet their needs through institutional provisions or arrangements that result in youth restiveness. Hence, the youths opt to take laws into their own hands” (Uriah et al., 2015). Interestingly, the

youths expect something from society, including providing better means of survival for them. However, when the expectations of the youths are delayed, denied or dissatisfied, they tend to be fidgety. Restiveness could be seen in someone who has surplus dispensable energy, zeal and drives to forge ahead. Youths are full of energy, which make them twitchy. These energies when intentionally and positively channelled received social approval in creative vendors like music and dancing, gainful employment, engagement in community development, economic and academic activities, participation in sports among others. On the other hand, if these vitalities are not effectively and properly handled, the outcome is negative vices leading to anti-social activities such as hostage-taking, kidnapping, rape, stealing, cultism, prostitution, demonstration, wanton destruction of lives and properties, rioting. With this situation, educational development, as well as other infrastructural development within the area where these youths are found, will face many challenges which can, in turn, affect the overall development of the area. Several causes have been identified to be the root causes of youth restiveness. The preceding paragraph discusses some of those causes.

Causes of Youth Restiveness

According to Igbo & Ikpa (2013), Youth restiveness has been a scheme used by the youth to get the attention of relevant authority. However, youth restiveness is not new both in form and display. Chika & Onyene (2010) asserted that “youth resistance to conditions, issues and unwelcomed leadership regimes dates back to 1934 when Herbert Macaulay floated a political party to kick against dependency with fellow elite youths that had contact with the West” Also, political parties such as National Council for Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), the Action Group (AG), had their youth wings as vibrant as the other parties. “Since then, there has been a propagation of youth associations like students’ unions and ethnic groups, as well as clannish orientation among students which seem to have legitimised restive reactions among the youths on campuses. The phenomenon of ethnic militia such as the Odua People’s Congress (OPC) in the West, Movement for the Actualisation 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 chain relevance in crime prevention and control but whose activities are parallel with State recognition are threats to national security”

Regardless, youth restiveness may be caused by several factors. Igbo & Ikpa (2013) in one of the comprehensive studies conducted on the causes and effects of youth restiveness in Nigeria highlighted several factors that cause youth restiveness and their effects which are summarised as follows: Illiteracy, unequal distribution of natural resources, poor child upbringing, poverty, unemployment, political instability/frustration, corruption, bad governance, ethnic/tribal crisis, drug/alcohol abuse. Others are religious crises, overpopulation under population, peer group/cult influence, false teaching in churches/mosque, insecurity, as well as ineffective communication from political leaders. When these occur, there are consequences, some positive while other negatives. The effects include; increase of social vices, devastation of lives and properties, civic turbulence, delay of national development, encourages sectionalism, overall insecurity of the country, religious crises, depreciation of natural resource, increase poverty, discourages foreign investment, heightens unemployment, in addition high mortality rate among youths (Igbo & Ikpa, 2013). In an earlier study, Coleman (1996) observed that “psychological variables and deprivation are the primary product of conflict and restiveness of any kind” He further argued that the “more widespread and intense deprivation is among

members of a population, the higher is the magnitude of violence in one form or the other” In the preceding, therefore, one can contend that the unsatisfactory socio-economic development of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria led to inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts. For example, Chukwuemeka, Anazodo and Nzewi (2011) found that “dissatisfaction of the people of South-South especially the youths on the level of attention given to the development of their region and the damages to their ecology by oil spillage are the significant causes of the alarming rate of youth restiveness”

Chika & Onyene (2010) in their study attributed youth restiveness to adults’ “coercive control over their children, denial of participatory opportunities to youths, resource scarcity and financial constraints and leaders failures, peer groups, and foreign intrusions” The apparent effects of youth restiveness on the Nigerian society are loss of lives and properties, which constitute a significant threat to the security of the state as well as its corporate existence. Where there is a prevalence of high rate of youth restiveness, development- education, social or political could not be effectively achieved within the area, hence the need to tackle youth restiveness. The next paragraph discussed some ways of tackling youth restiveness to engender educational development amongst others.

Identified Ways of Tackling Youth Restiveness

Generally the following are identified as ways of tackling youth restiveness by various scholars: 1) through education and empowerment programs including trainings and acquisitions (Uwhejevwe-Togbolo, 2005; Amanchukwu 2011); 2) through the use of information and ICT including the use of Library for providing such information and supports (Anasi, 2010); 3) through counseling (Igbo & Ikpa, 2013). However, Igbo & Ikpa (2013) studies highlighted and summarised the various ways of tackling youth restiveness as revealed from the study participants, to include: through skill acquisition programme for youths, enlightenment campaign against youth restiveness, ensuring that the citizens have formal education, provision of employment opportunities, neo marginalisation of any tribe/ethnic group, provision of basic social amenities, restricting of security agents, adequate parenting of children, elections should be free and fair at all levels, religious tolerance, good governance, traditional rulers to take charge of their domains, implementation of school guidance and counseling services at all levels of education, giving monthly allowances to unemployed youths, religious intervention teaching citizens fear of God. Whilst these measures are identified, however, others have argued that counseling remains the best option of tackling youth restiveness since the action is usually Psychological in nature (Igbo & Ikpa, 2013; Ajiboye, Adebayo & Adegboyega, 2016). As noted by Igbo & Ikpa (2013), counselling intervention becomes a compelling necessity for the Nigerian youths. Hence youth restiveness stems from thinking (cognition), the use of cognitive behaviour restructuring is eminent. They further assert that one of the tools that might make positive impact is information service in counseling. Through this service, the guidance counsellor may help the youths to acquire knowledge which they are ignorant of. In addition, Group counselling of youths in school and non-school settings could also be beneficial. Guidance counsellors could organise workshops, talk shows, and seminars for youths in schools, youth organisations and youths in religious settings. One thing to deduce from this is that educational institution is to provide these services. However, a situation where the educational institution within the area has been deserted due to restive activities, the fate of tackling the issue hangs on a balance then.

Youth Restiveness and the Challenge of Educational Development

Education is any act or experience that has a foundational effect on the mind, character or physical capacity of an individual (for instance, a child is educated by his environment through interaction with his environment) (Briggs, Ololube, Kpolovie, Amaele and Amanchukwu 2012). It is the whole variety of experiences in life through which an individual learns something new. In a technical logic, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, values and abilities from one generation to another through institutions and education (Ololube, 2011). Given the centrality of education throughout the world, education is a powerful tool for social progress, without which no individual can achieve development.(Uriah et al., 2015).

With this importance, governments at all level endeavours to provide educational infrastructure in the form of schools, training centres as well as skill acquisition centres so that people especially its youthful population could be trained and thus be empowered to be gainfully employed so that they can take care of their family and themselves.

Teachers and trainers are as well engaged in delivering this causes and empowerment program to the people. In doing this, educational development and thus empowerment of the youth would have taken place. As important as this may seem, yet where there is a restive activity, this program cannot thrive. Rather than provide a supportive atmosphere, where the youths are engaged in the restive activity, there will be retrogression of education rather than progressive development. This is what has characterised the educational development in Etche LGA. With few schools in existence (Wekpe et al. 2015), coupled with insecurity and kidnapping, the schools and training centres have been deserted, and thus, the youths have remained in restive activities since they could be not be trained or empowered for better living or provisions of alternatives to their current lifestyles. This situation continues to pose challenges to educational development in the area.

Generally, there are peculiar educational challenges that have affected the Niger Delta Region. Naninghe (2011), noted these challenges to include those of the challenge of educational policy analysis, the challenge of relating curriculum to workforce needs, the overt silence about the regulation of senior secondary education amongst others. Take the issue of educational policy analysis, for example; he noted that the several educational reform efforts that gave birth to the different educational policies suffered tremendous setbacks in policy linkages through appropriate policy analysis. According to Babalola (2000) “several efforts to understand government policies, the purposes for each policy, how the policies were implemented, who were behind the formulation and the environment under which the policies were formulated, the implementation of the policies on the peoples including intended and unintended effects where not achieved due to inadequate policy analysis” The cardinal aim of policy analysis according to Dye (1972) is the concern with explanation rather than prescription, a rigorous search for the causes and consequences of such polices. So studies should be focused and centred on creating pool of findings and data for basic improvements in ensuring that the Niger Delta region adopts right policies to achieve desired goals. Apart from the improvement in quality and creating higher level of public policy on education, the generation of informed political discussion stands paramount (Nanagihe, 2011). Further, as Babalola, (2000) assert, “the UPE policy was not analysed, using the tools of systematic and rational inquiry before the UBE was introduced. Its impact on education, economy, politics, social life and religion would have been great assets (inputs) in planning UBE. No considerations were given appropriately to the emerging world order of globalisation” A considerable gap was created, and the factors

similar to those that plagued the UPE have taken centre stage in the UBE now. There is, thus, the need for a systematic description and explanation of the cause and effect relationships of the present policy on education and the other factors that impinge on educational development in the Niger Delta such as politics, religion, environment, the impact of oil companies' activities. By this, the region would adopt a workable adjustment in the policy on education based on critical analysis of felt needs, and the desire for change than a mere prescription (Nanaghie 2011). Ways of tackling the challenges as asserts by Nanaghie (2011) includes improving the quality of primary education; reorient existing education programmes to address sustainable development, developing public awareness and understanding and as well as providing training for all sectors of private and civil life.

2.2 Empirical Review

Ajiboye, Adebayo & Adegboyega (2016), investigated the perceived solution of youth restiveness using guidance and counselling method in Kwara state, Nigeria. Using data collected with the aid of a questionnaire from a sample of 145 respondents drawn across learning institutions in the state. Data were analysed using the measure of central tendency and t-test statistics. The study results showed that acquiring and the use of assertiveness skills by youths was perceived as the primary solution to youth restiveness while the significant category of solutions is the youth-related. There was a significant difference between married and single respondents in their perception of solutions to youth restiveness. The study concludes by stating that counsellors should organise programmes where youths can be trained in assertiveness skill.

Uriah, Ololube & Egbezor (2015), examined academic background, socio-economic status and gender and their implication for youth restiveness and educational development in Rivers state. Data were collected through questionnaires, and analysed using quantitative methods to strengthen the validity of the findings. The sample size of this study was 700 respondents (124 Females and 576 males) randomly selected for the study from the Social Development Institute (SDI) Okehi, Etche. Data were analysed using multiple statistical procedures as Percentages, Mean Point Value, Cross Tabulation, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The study revealed that the basic role of youth restiveness has implication on educational development, which tends to be similar across the world. Further there is a significant relationship between academic background, socio-economic status, gender and youth restiveness, which in turn affects educational development.

Igbo & Ikpa (2013), examined the effects and ways of curbing youth restiveness in Nigeria. Using data drawn from a population of 1200 Batch National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members from 2012 in Benue State, of which 200 were the sample for analysis. Data was analysed using frequencies and percentages. The result revealed that “youth restiveness is mostly caused by illiteracy, unequal distribution of national resources, poor child upbringing among others, while the effect include upsurge of social vices and destruction of lives and properties. Furthermore, the studies revealed that youth restiveness could be curbed through skill acquisition programmes and enlightenment against the phenomenon”

Amanchukwu (2011), examined the challenges of quality education and good governance in developing economy such as Nigeria. Using extensive literature review and critical analysis of secondary data from the USAID 2002, the study revealed that quality indicators should move beyond inputs governments provide in terms of infrastructure, teachers and materials, to that of paying greater attention to what goes on in the classroom with special reference to teaching and learning time utilisation. Furthermore, educational development were shown to relate with good governance that is seen in terms of infrastructure, provision of security; social amenities

in terms of good health services, good roads, model schools; good communication network, water supply, housing etc.

All these studies, as reviewed have one thing in common: youth restiveness in its purest form is terrible not just for educational development but affects the growth and development of the economy of the state. Efforts have to be made towards tackling them, and these include the use of counselling as well as a mixture of varieties of ways. This is important because a variety of factors are responsible for youth restiveness. Some could be institutional while others could be Psychological and caused by the youths or their parents as the case may be. These are ascertained via empirical studies as reviewed here.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the John Locke theory of social contract for the study. The central assertion of social contract approaches is that law and political order are not natural, but are instead human creations. The social contract and the political order it creates are simply the means towards an end—the benefit of the individuals involved—and legitimate only to the extent to which they fulfil their part of the agreement. As explained by Epelle (2010), oil spillage and environmental pollution in the Niger Delta region is mostly a manifestation of the processes of a fail and collapse state. It is indicative of the people's insurgency against the Nigerian state, which has not been able to faithfully deliver on its terms of the social contract to the Niger Delta people. According to Epelle (2010), for oil violence and pollution to be tackled appropriately, there must be a comprehensive reorganisation and refocusing of the Nigerian state. Additionally, there must be justice, adequate funding of development projects, the political will to punish criminals accordingly, checking arms running in the region and creation of employment opportunities for the youths (Ojakorotu & Gilbert, 2010).

2.4. Summary of Literature Review

This section of the paper reviewed the various literature on the study topic. In doing this, however, it looked at the conceptual review which includes the concepts and explanation of youth and restiveness; causes of youth restiveness; identified ways of tackling youth restiveness as well as youth restiveness and educational challenges in the area. Furthermore, empirical reviews and theoretical framework for the study were discussed here as well. On the theoretical framework, this study adopts the John Locke theory of social contracts as its framework for analysis.

3: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Conclusion

There is no doubt that educational development, as well as other infrastructural development in the study area, has suffered some set back orchestrated by the restive activity of the youths. As a result, many have dropped out of school and resorted to activities such as kidnapping, and other forms of criminality. As a consequence for these restive activities, most facilities including the social development Institute located in Okehi, the Headquarters of Etche LGA (a training and rehabilitation centre which has trained over 1000 ex-militants including youths from the area in the past) have been vandalised, looted while some other institutions have been deserted including primary and secondary schools. With this situation, future educational development in the areas is even more at risk. This is undermining the essence of education which is the entire range of experiences in life through which an individual learns something new; a process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, values, and

skills from one generation to the next through institutions and instruction. With few schools in existence (Nwaogu, Ezekwe, & Wekpe, 2015), coupled with insecurity and kidnapping, the schools and training centre have been deserted, and thus, the youths have remained in restive activities since they could not be trained or empowered for better living or provisions of alternatives to their current lifestyles. This situation continues to pose challenges to educational development in the area.

Causes of youth restiveness have been linked to a variety of factors as responsible for it. Some could be institutional such as corruption, bad leadership, unequal distribution of resources and unemployment as well as ineffective communication from political leaders, while others could be Psychological (instability/frustration, illiteracy, drug abuse) and caused by the youths (peer/cult group influence) or their parents (poor child upbringing, poverty) as the case may be. With the study area, it could be said combinations of these factors are responsible.

3.2 Implications

The implication of this is that educational development has been hampered drastically and unless efforts are channelled towards curbing the youth restiveness in the area, worst is expected. As crucial as educational development may seem, yet where there are restive activity, educational programs and activities cannot thrive. Rather than provide a supportive atmosphere, where the youths are engaged in restive activity, there will be retrogression of education rather than progressive development. Consequently, the government and all stakeholders must put hands on deck towards tackling it. This can be done in the following ways:

1. Through embarking on education and empowerment programs including giving monthly allowances to unemployed youths, training and acquisitions programs especially in areas where there is relative peace and stability so that they can pass the message to others as they are trained.
2. Embarking on media and enlightenment campaigns whereby the youths could be the target while positive and negative consequences of youth restiveness could be reemphasised as a way of discouraging them from those actions.
3. Through counselling and mentoring sessions, both government and private individuals, including NGOs.
4. Engaging religious and traditional leaders to reach out to the youths in order to receive spiritual and social transformation that could lead to a change of attitude. Through religious intervention, citizens, including the youths, can be taught the fear of God. A typical example is a reach-out program organised by churches such as Salvation Ministries, Omega Power Ministries (OPM) amongst others, in Port Harcourt, where cultist and ex-militants are reached out to so that they can embrace Christ and give up their old live styles and weapons of violence. This can be extended to the rural areas, including the area of study, targeting the youths, especially those engaged in restive activities.

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