

**ADULT EDUCATION AS PANACEA FOR YOUTH RESTIVENESS, SECURITY,
SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND LIVELIHOOD IN OHAJI LGA, IMO STATE,
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Adult education is seen as a practice in which adults engage in systematic and sustained self educating activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values in work and life and is becoming increasingly important, not only as a key organizing principle for all forms of education and learning, but also as an absolute necessity for curbing youth restiveness which has been a prominent issue of concern in Ohaji Local Government of Imo State. Therefore, adult education as panacea for youth restiveness, security, sustainable peace and livelihood among the citizenry (youths) cannot be overemphasized. Adult education programmes are parts of the 21st century skills that are becoming entrenched in the education industry. On the strength of the foregoing, this paper discusses youth restiveness, security, sustainable peace and livelihood in Ohaji LGA, Imo State. Also, the causes, social consequences and psychological effects of youth restiveness and the role of adult education in checking youth restiveness in the study area were examined. Finally, conclusions and recommendations which include provision of adequate adult education programmes and enabling environment by government were made.

Keywords: Adult Education, Livelihood, Sustainable Peace, Security, Youths Restiveness

Introduction:

The United Nations (2002) defines youth as young women and young men aged 15-24 years. This group includes teenagers aged 15-19 and young adults aged 20-24. National Policy on Youth for Nigeria (2000) definition for youth does not necessarily

conform to this age group. The definitions often depend on such factors such as voting rights, land rights, the end of compulsory education and eligibility for military service and others. Efforts are made to compile data that meet international standards. Definitions of youth vary in different countries, starting with a lower age from 17 years and some give an upper age limit as high as 39 (Onuekwusi, 2015). The National Youth Development Policy (2001) defines youth as people aged 18 to 35 years. They constitute about 40 percent of more than 184 million people in Nigeria. The total population of young people between 10 and 24 years of age in Nigeria was 45.4 million in 2016, i.e. 34 percent of the total population (Anyanwu, 2017).

Young people everywhere set out in life with dreams, hopes and aspirations. They bring with them numerous assets “relevant and recent education and training enthusiasm, hope and new ideas, willingness to learn and be taught, openness to new skill and technology, realistic expectations on entry into the labour market, mobility and adaptability, and represent a new generation to meet the challenge in countries with an ageing work force (Morris, 2006). The youths are imbued with certain unique features or characteristics. Apart from being the future leaders, Adesope, (2007) identified the following as some of the characteristics of youth: proneness, minimal risk aversion, innovativeness, faster reaction time, less fear of failure, less conservative, greater physical strength, greater knowledge acquisition, some propensity and faster rate of learning. Similarly, in Ohaji Local Government Area, youth may be characterized by such, qualities as resilience, impatience, aggressiveness, rebellious, restless quest for experimentation and

change, and dissatisfaction with the status quo. This might be the reason Nwosu (2000) referred to the youth as the cultural phase of life, a period of cultural crises in which the existing values and practices of the larger society are brought into conflict with the fundamental values, aspirations and character structure of persons in the group. Youths are the foundation of the society. Their energies, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pace of development and security of a nation. Through their creative talents and labour power, a nation makes giant strides in economic development and socio-political attainments. In their dreams and hopes, a nation finds her motivation, on their energies she builds her vitality and purpose. The future of a nation is assured because of their dreams and aspirations. The above statement depicts the role of the youths in the peace and security of a nation. As the most active group of any society, youth are the major determinants of peace and stability of a nation. Conversely, the major causes of disorderliness and instability in society are the youth.

Youth restiveness refers to “a sustained protestation embarked upon to enforce desired outcome from a constituted authority by an organized body of youths” (Elegbeleye, 2005:93). Generally, youth restiveness in Ohaji in Imo State is a combination of any action, conduct or act that constitutes unwholesome, socially unacceptable activities engaged in by youths in the society. Youth restiveness is not a recent phenomenon as it could be motivated by economic, political or religious reasons. The phenomenon has led to a near breakdown of law and order, low productivity, due to disruption of production activities and high crime rate. It has also led to intra-ethnic hostilities, harassment of

prominent citizens and expatriates, kidnapping, oil bunkering, arms insurgence, cultism etc across the nation (Uranta, 2011).

Peace in essence means the absence of strife, rancor and upheaval in one's life, communities or between groups. It is a license for oneness, cooperation, mutual understanding and filial respect for life. Peace gives solemn feelings of hope, trust and tranquility. Peace disappears in the presence of conflict, protest and hostilities. Peace is promoted by justice, fair play and mutuality. It enhances law and order, equity, locality and good governance. However, peace thrives better in societies where it is easy for people to willingly build good relationship, skills, listening ability have self blames as well as accept blames and display the spirit of forgiveness and mutual reconciliation.

The concept of security is multi dimensional in terms of definitions, it is associated with protection and when peace is not disturbed. It is defined as free from danger, safe, assured and affording safety (Kirk Patrick 2013). Sustainable security implies continuous protection from espionage and simply certainty given to citizens (Denga, 2012). Human security "symbolizes protection from threats of diseases, hunger, unemployment, crimes, social conflict, political and environmental hazards" (New Dimension of Human Search, 2010).

Threats to global security, according to Tor-Anyiin (2012), also threaten the national security (Denga, 2012, Ajoku, 2013). Kofi Annan (2000) posited that security means much more than the absence of conflict but also that casting peace with inherent ingredient that encompass areas such as education, health, democracy, human rights, the protection against environmental

degradation and the proliferation of deadly weapons. In fact, there can hardly be security in the mist of starvation. Peace and security building without poverty alleviation and true freedom amounts to injustice.

Moreover, Ya'u (2015) stressed that sustainable livelihood hinges on people's ability and capacity to sustain their normal lives. It also hinges on the existence of peace and harmony, which are the requirements for day-to-day engagements through which they sustain their lives. This could best be achieved through the provision of functional adult education which also encompasses entrepreneurial skills, vocational skills, extension education, peace education, civic education, etc.

Adult Education according to Oghenekohwo (2017) is all learning activities designed to assist any person or everybody who had deficiencies at the initial stage of learning due to circumstances beyond self control in order to remediate such deficiencies for the purpose of social, economic, personal and cultural adjustment to the environment. The United Nations Economic Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2008) defined Adult education as the entire body of organized educational process whatever the content, level and methods, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in the schools, colleges or universities as well as in apprenticeship – whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop abilities, enrich their knowledge improve their technical or professional qualification or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitude or behaviour in the two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and

cultural development (UNESCO, 2008). The above definitions help us to understand that Adult education programme enables individuals to gain the skills and knowledge needed to develop critical reasoning ability for wise decision-making, which helps one to be functional, identify problems and causes and effects. It equips the individual to adapt to the dynamics of the changing world. The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) (2017) policy strategic objectives for Adult and Non-Formal Education shall be to:

- a. Ensure mass education for the Nigerian people to significantly increase literacies in all its forms.
- b. Ensure proportionate distribution of adult and non-formal educational opportunities and resources across the country.
- c. Ensure flexible development and delivery of curriculum modules and programmes to serve specific populations such as street people, nomads, vulnerable children and adolescents, prison inmates, and people with special needs, so that adults and out-of-school youth learners can meet their goals, for vocational skills training, apprenticeship, wage employment or self-employment.
- d. Provide opportunities for early school learners to return to formal schooling.
- e. Provide non-formal education programme specific to the needs of women and parents, so that they can be effective mothers and members of the society to which they contribute and from which they should drive optimum equal social, economic and political benefits, and
- f. Provide public enlightenment programmes in tune with contemporary

times, popular demand/needs and circumstances.

However, situations in Imo State, especially, in Ohaji local government area were terrible. There were issues of joblessness, poverty, hardship, poor educational facilities and illiteracy. These generated activities among the teeming youths who saw the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) oil workers as preys through who they are to earn living by hijacking and taking them as hostages. There was an agitation that if these youths were occupied and taught skills, they will be able to generate job for themselves and others and thereby reduce tension in the land. This idea of occupying the youths in skill training is part of Adult Education programmes.

Therefore, Adult education and its programmes, if adequately mounted, will address the problems of unemployment and restiveness among the youths in Imo State. Not only that, the strategic policy of the adult education programme is to address the unemployment problems in the various areas of operation by training youths in various skills and trades which will enable the trainees become self reliant in their various occupations. It will offer the trained youths the opportunities to generate jobs for others, which in turn would reduce unnecessary tensions in Imo State.

Causes of Youth Restiveness

Unemployment:

The issue of unemployment, which to some observers, is the core of the problems among the youth in Nigeria, considering the large population of school leavers. According to Anyanwu (2012) unemployment among youth demands effective strategies for combating it at all levels. Zakari (2006) believed that “the rising tide of

unemployment and the fear of a bleak future among the youth in African countries have made them vulnerable to the manipulations of agents provocateurs”. These include aggrieved politicians, religious demagogues and greedy multinationals that employ these youths to achieve their selfish ambitions. Anyanwu (2012) strongly believed that the absence of job opportunities in developing countries is responsible for youth restiveness with disastrous consequences. The issue is applicable to Ohaji Communities in Imo State.

1. Lack of Basic Infrastructure

Most communities both rural and urban slums in Nigeria have no access to good roads, portable water, health facilities, electricity, communication facilities, industries and commercial facilities (Anyanwu, 2019). Youth resort to restiveness in Ohaji because of their perceived marginalization by the leaders over inadequate distribution of resources.

2. Youthful Exuberance

Youth want to express exuberance. The youth are described as full of youthful exuberance. The raw energy has of late been channeled into unwholesome and socially unacceptable venture that threaten the very fabrics of the society in Ohaji. It is believed also that some disgruntled leaders, elders and politicians resort to recruiting youths for settling scores or using them against perceived enemies. With this trend, the activities of these youths have regenerated, bordering on out right criminality. Once these youths get mobilized for these nefarious activities, they become uncontrolled and the communities are the worse hit for it.

3. Defective Communication and Information Flow

Information is shared through adequate communication. It enables youth express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, charity problems and alternative ways of coping and adapting to their situation. Therefore, having access to communication facilities, communicating with the people making the decisions that affect the youth is necessary. Ifidon and Ahiauzu (2005), in their study of the Niger Delta, showed that inadequate communication and information flow is one of the factors responsible for youth restiveness in the area. This is also a major problem in Ohaji communities.

4. Poor Educational Opportunities and Resources

Quality education has a positive effect on national prestige, greatness, development etc. The knowledge and skills acquired by the young people help to determine their level of patriotism and contribution to national progress. Many Ohaji youth between 10 and 24 are not enrolled in secondary school. This could be as a result of high cost of education. Many that managed to complete secondary school education have no opportunities to tertiary education. The implication of this is that thousands of young people roam the streets in Imo State due to lack of opportunities to continue their education, and as well as harness the inner potentials in them; they re-direct them to antisocial activities.

5. Bad Governance

Good governance calls for the growth and development of any nation. The World Bank (2012) identifies the main attributes of bad governance as:

- failure to properly distinguish between what is public and what is private, leading to private appropriation of otherwise public resources,
- inability to establish a predictable framework for law and government behaviour in a manner conducive to development, or arbitrariness in the application of laws or rules,
- excessive rules, regulations, licensing requirement and so forth which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent seeking,
- priorities that are inconsistent with development thereby resulting in misallocation of national resources, and,
- exceeding narrow base for non-transparent decision making.

These attributes are common in Imo State and youth had resort to restiveness in order to express their grievances.

6. Poverty

Poverty suggests inequality and social injustice. More than 70 percent of people in Nigeria are poor, living below the poverty line, and one-third survive on less than US \$1 dollar a day (Anyanwu, 2012). This figure includes youth in urban centres in Imo State who struggle to make a living by hawking chewing sticks, bottled water, hand kerchiefs, belts etc. the sales per-day and the profit on such goods are so small that they can hardly live above the poverty line. Dejected and frustrated, they seek an opportunity to vent out their anger in hostility against the state. Aworawo (2010) and Zakari (2006) agree that there is a link among poverty, loss of livelihood, inequality, and youth restiveness as evidenced by numerous violent protests against the wielders of authority in Nigeria. The case is not different to that of Imo State.

Social Consequences of Youth Restiveness

An idle mind is the devil's workshop. Due to lack of job prospects and the livelihood of a hopeless future of unemployment, youths have contributed to social deviant behaviours such as:

- **Kidnapping:** Kidnapping has become a lucrative business in Imo State particularly in Ohaji today. Children, adult, men, women, young or old are being kidnapped today for ransom. This is being planned and executed by youth who are trying to survive by "all means". This is not good for the nation, if the youth are empowered and adequately engaged in gainful activities, they will not go into such a social vice.
- **Cultism:** If the youths are empowered and engaged in gainful activities that put them in a sure economic pedestal, they will not think of going into cultism and cult activities that end up destroying them by putting their life at risk of being killed, either by their fellow cult members, rival groups or the government (police).
- **Militancy:** Youth restiveness leads to militancy, whereby the youths take up arms against the government in protest. The criminal neglect of the people by the government of Nigeria has now given rise to the emergence of many militant groups, the most popular of them being the Movement for the actualization of Biafra as a country in South East, Nigeria.
- **Oil Bunkering:** When the youth are not positively and adequately engaged in constructive activities, they occupy themselves with destructive activities. The youths of Southern part of the country have now found oil bunkering as

a way to level up with the government for their near total neglect by the government, which is an affront to the peace and economic development of the nation.

- **Area Boys and Girls:** This group of youth is almost everywhere in Nigeria. In Kano, you can locate them in Jadi Yani bus stop axis, in Enugu, you can locate them in 9th mile area, in Ohaji popularly called “Agwa guys joint”, in Lagos state the area boys and area girls have virtually overpowered the police. They could steal, snatch cars, rape, maim and kill without much challenge by the security operatives, who are in turn afraid for their own lives. If the youth are empowered, they will not have time for this.
- **Terrorism:** Idle youth easily drift towards restiveness and finally settle for terrorist attacks both on the people and government. Terrorism is an abuse of human existence and also a cog in the wheel of proper functioning and performance of the government. It makes the government to lose focus on this important issue of good governance as much time, energy and resources are directed towards eliminating this monster. A good example of this is the Agwa community clash with the Shell Petroleum Company in Imo State. These security challenges threaten peaceful co-existence and reduced value for life.

Psychological Effects of Youth Restiveness

Every year, 3,000,000 graduates are churned out from the tertiary institutions nationwide. The number grows yearly and translates into more and more unemployed people littering the streets of Nigeria cities. This development has some psychological

implications on the youths which include the following:

- **Mental health problems:** Mental health problems like: low self confidence, feeling unworthy, depression and hopelessness. Penury and the frustration it brings make the unemployed to develop negative attitudes towards common things in life and may feel that all sense of purpose is lost. Such a person can develop frequent emotions such as low self esteem, inadequateness and feeling dejected and hopeless. According to Banks and Ullah (2008), there will also be increase in admission into psychiatric hospitals (for mental illness) and also imprisonment arising from the criminal tendencies of idle hand.
- **Disease issue:** The unemployment overall tension can increase dramatically on general health issue of individuals. Research findings by Hary and Nutman (2000) indicated that in a period characterized by a permanent stable high unemployment situation, there will be considerable increase in deaths due to cardiovascular diseases and cirrhosis of the liver and murders too. Fajona (2002) opined that unemployment can lead to the following: loss of status, loss of prestige, economic strength etc.
- **Emotional problems:** It may lead to tension at home due to quarrels and arguments which may lead to increased number of divorces etc. Youths who have no job feel insignificant and inferior, and always having the feeling that they are ostracized from the rest of the society. Most often, they are regarded as parasites by other people.

The Role of Adult Educational in checking Youth Restiveness

The role of adult education in checking youth restiveness and achieving sustainable peace, security and value for life cannot be exaggerated. Adult education entails the entire body of organized educational process, whatever content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities, as well as in apprenticeship whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical and professional qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the two fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and initial development (Okoro, Anyanwu & Adindu, 2017). It could also be defined as the provision of an opportunity for the disadvantaged people to initiate a better living in their community. The general purpose of adult education is to assist adults/ youths to increase competence to adapt to their society through the acquisition of regular practical skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values that will enable them to solve personal or community problems. Therefore, all the various types of adult education namely: Mass education, community development, vocational training, learning of reading, writing, arithmetic, non-formal education which entails a variety of programmes such as adult literacy programmes, apprenticeship, skills acquisition programme and co-operative education among others can be used to check youth restiveness.

The regular practical skills, value, knowledge attitudes gained through adult

education will enable the youth to recognize their own needs. It will also enhance the ability for self-direction, personal understanding and building of self confidence and mental maturity necessary for healthy growth and proper judgment. The programmes of adult education provided by stakeholders (government and private voluntary organizations) will also benefit facilitators, development experts, change agents etc in terms of assisting them with necessary information for the improvement of the youth and to understand individual differences where they matter most. Information is knowledge and knowledge is power. With proper information, skills, values and knowledge through adult education, the youth are better equipped to appreciate the importance of peace, security and value for life. Adult education enables them to gain accurate knowledge of themselves, their needs or problems, order or rank them, find the resources-internal and external, their abilities and then weaknesses. Adult education helps to equip themselves and their children with necessary materials, knowledge and skills to become better citizens. Adult education facilitate apprenticeship to those who have never had the advantage to formal education or who did not complete their primary education, especially, the disadvantaged gender to enable them get ahead. It also prevents the tendency to a fall or collapse, especially, among youths. Adult education acts as a kind of rescue mission against self destruction and societal chaos. No wonder Ya'u, (2015) was quick to add that adult education has effective intersection with issues of offence and diversity among individuals and cultures as it has provisions for socialization and peace education aimed at fostering communal and societal harmony

and tranquility. Adult education enables youth to make wise decisions which help to prevent wastage and misplacement of priority.

Conclusion

The youths of Ohaji Local Government Area of Imo State are faced with certain challenges that are more or less peculiar to them. Some of these problems are created by their social environments, while others emanated from the behaviour of the youth and their psychological disposition. Their problems are enumerated as socio-economic, psychological and sexual dimensions. The mere fact is that if these youth were occupied and taught skills, they will be able to generate job for themselves and others and thereby reduce tension in the land. This idea of occupying the youth in skill training led to the adult education programme. Adult education enhances skill acquisition and entrepreneurship among the youth. In fact, the gain involved in adult education is too numerous to be taken for granted. It remains a commendable and acceptable phenomenon.

Recommendations

The level of restiveness witnessed among youth will be drastically reduced if efforts are made towards the implementation of the following recommendations:

1. **Provision of adult education programme and enabling environment by government:** This includes entrepreneurship education, provision of cheap loans and grants for those who

wish to become self-employed, ensuring equitable, distribution of information and telecommunication facilities in both urban and rural areas and setting of good examples by the nation's leaders.

2. **Increase youth participation in civic processes of community, society and nation building:** The issue here is to empower young people to contribute positively to the economic, social and political progress of the society and instill in them, a sense of purpose and discourage youth violence
3. **The society needs to invest more in the Youth Development:** The society needs to invest more in areas that will benefit and develop Nigerian youth in order to give strength to the nation's socio-economic, political, as well as cultural/ethnic issues. This includes smooth access to quality education for all and social welfare package for youths. Increase allocation for youth development and youth related programmes are mandatory.
4. **Engagement of private sector:** Since government alone no longer has the capacity to provide jobs for this large population, it has become imperative to reach out to parents, stakeholders, private organizations/sectors etc, who can assist to engage the youths in productive ventures. This includes good home training by parents or guardians.

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