CURBING YOUTH RESTIVENESS AND EMPOWERING THE NIGERIAN YOUTH THROUGH FUNCTIONAL QUALITY EDUCATION

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Abstract

The denial of social amenities, infrastructure, job opportunities to develop aggrieved youths have resulted to the manifestation of frustration, aggressive behaviour and youth restiveness in our society. This paper therefore examined the issue of youth Restiveness, the concept of youth restiveness and quality education. It also examined how functional quality education can be used as a means of curbing youth restiveness and empowering youths for national development. Based on this, conclusion was drawn and recommendation made.

The problem of chronic youth unemployment is very evident in Nigeria today leading to challenges like street violence, bomb blasts, insecurity and kidnapping in our society (Onwubiko and Okonkwo, 2013). In fact it is no longer news in this country to read in the dailies about incidents of kidnap of royal families or clergies/religious leaders as insurgence attacking military and security outpost or barracks in the Northern part of the country. The question of youth roaming the streets in search of jobs is now becoming an unsolvable problem that everyone is now forced to take it as a norm or way of life in this society. Every year thousands of graduate are churned out for the fact that there are no jobs and the relevant government agencies like the Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity the Youth and Social Development Ministry as well as the millennium development goals MDG and the National Directorate of Employment have spectacularly failed to formulate and implement pro-job creation policies to sufficiently galvanise the innate talents and overwhelming energy levels of these young Nigerian graduates of Nigerian Universities , polytechnics and other tertiary institutions (Onwubiko and Okonkwo, 2013). The situation has become so pathetic that these agencies now take pride in going on air and writing all over the dailies when they gather a hand-full of graduate suppose “special graduate” and provide them with peanut or token as take off grant to encourage them to go into small-scale business.

Nigerian streets are unfortunately littered literarily with youth hawkers who ordinarily would have found gainful employment in some enterprise and the female younger street traders are consistently sexually molested by depraved adults. The Nigerian government is very weak to take proactive measures to prevent the frequent cases of sexual abuses as well as offences meted on these young girls and bring indicted suspects to justice (Onwubiko and Okonkwo, 2013). The larger numbers of youths who are unemployed and capable of undermining democratic practice as they constitute threat if they are not engaged by the political class for clandestine activities (Adepegba, 2011; Ibrahim, 2011) cited in (Onwubiko and Okonkwo, 2013). Who are the youths ad what are their characteristics is the first question to be answered in this discourse. Next is what constitute Youth restiveness?

Youths are defined by Webster’s new world dictionary as “the time in life when one is young especially (a) the period between childhood and maturity (b) early period of existence, growth or development. Around the world the terms “Youth”, “Adolescent” “teenager” and young “persons” are interchanged to often meaning the same thing but occasionally differentiated sometimes. This has resulted in a lot of misgivings about what the term youth stands for.
Youth generally refers to a time that is neither childhood nor adulthood, but rather somewhere in between these two (Okafor, 2004). Youths are young men and women full with potentials that if not properly harnessed could lead to restiveness and wanton destruction of lives and properties in any society. Youths are characterised with excessive strength and energy that needs to be exerted for purposeful work but if unguarded is channelled into negative tendencies during or through restiveness (Adewuyi, 2004).

Youth restiveness refers to situations which results from the non-engagement of the excessive strength and energy of young men and women for creative and constructive works. This result in the abuse of these potentials in idol thoughts and destructive actions that give birth to what is generally termed ‘Youth Restiveness’.

Youth unemployment therefore could be described as the conglomerate of youths with diverse background willing and able to work but could not find any when the supply of labour outstrips the demand for labour. It leads to or causes a state of “joblessness” and conditions that are termed unemployment. (Echebiri, 2005; Onah, 2001) cited in (Onwubiko and Okonkwo, 2013). It is clearly evident that the absence of job opportunities in developing countries is responsible for youth “RESTIVENESS” with its disastrous consequences and the case of Nigeria as a nation is not an exception as traces of youth involvement in highly organized violent crimes like Armed Robbery, braking and entry into people’s homes, wild street demonstrations during protest, suicide activities, burning of government/companies premises, snatching and destruction of cars on the highway are becoming more disturbing and indeed, are on the rise without any feasible solution by all stakeholders in our security watch to confront these dangerous and security challenges/trends frontally.

In all these challenges resulting from youth restiveness, there seems to be only one way out, and that could only come through by providing the right education for these young ones on how to harness their great potentials. Education, they say in the right key to knowledge and knowledge, the Englishman says is power.

Generally education is concerned with the process of building, training and developing the inborn potentials and capacities of the individual learners so as to make him or her a useful member of the society (Uriah and Wosu, 2012). It is a systematic process that influences people’s knowledge, skills and attitudes and transmits as well as develops the cherished cultures, values, skills and attitudes of the community. This development enables learners and Nigerian youths to become functional adults who will take care of themselves and their future families as well as contribute to the country sustainable National development (Uriah and Wosu, 2012). Quality education on the one hand is that education that enhances an individual’s ability to impact positively on and improves his/her society (Dienye, 2011). It becomes imminent that education which focus on the development of the potentials of the Nigerian young one’s for productivity must therefore be advocated for so as to manage all odds associated with youth restiveness. Looking at how functional education could manage or curb youth restiveness and empower them for National development therefore, becomes a matter of urgency and the main trust of this discourse.

**Concept of Quality Education**

The quality of an educational system becomes a suspect when its recipients cannot perform efficiently in a society. Quality education should enhance the capabilities of its recipients to improve and bring about positive improvement in their societies.

Quality education is the hallmark of the ability, effectiveness, and efficiency to perform one’s duties that are required of one so as to function properly in the society and add value to its improvement.
Curbing Youth Restiveness and Empowering the Nigerian Youth through Functional Quality Education

(Dienye, 2011). Quality Education fulfils the needs and expectations of members of a society. The inability to fulfill these expectations in a society leads to suspicion of the quality of the educational system of that society (Dienye, 2011). Hence one could say, functional quality education becomes an inevitable ingredient to every society. A functional quality education is that education that put the individual in the right frame of mind to bring out the best in them. Functional quality education is not just an education that sells the right ideas to young ones or the learner but that one that causes the learner to produce the right ideas that could grow in any society and improve it. Therefore, functional quality education will not just be the right tool or solution to the problems of youth restiveness and unemployment but a tool if put in place could help curb or check and correct the anomalies and which could truncate the problems of manpower development for tomorrow’s generations.

Functional Quality Education for Curbing Youth Restiveness and Empowerment of our Youth for National Development

Functional Quality Education no doubt nurtures, preserves and widens the horizon for creativity, talents and potential of its learners vis-à-vis their contributions to societal and National development (Jega, 2013).

The definition of education as the bedrock through which development acquires its meaning stems from functional quality education (Dienye, 2011). Ibekwe, (2000) lends credence to the fact that functional quality education is a vital force in youth empowerment and subsequently national development. If education is what refines mankind by developing their lives meaningful, productively and responsibly in a society as well as creating productive and purposeful ideas in them, then every society needs the best of functional quality education that can guarantee a complete emancipation of its youth, curb restive tendencies in its youth and empower them for National development (Otunu-Ogbisi, 2010). It confers members of the society with the ability to make positive change in the society (Dienye, 2011).

There can be no development without functional quality education. It is a basic pre-requisite to curbing the violent nature of Nigerian youth to ensure sustainable development to the Nigerian society (Dienye, 2011). The Nigerian society can develop to the extent which her citizens aspire if the right functional educational system is powerful enough and this could empower the youth to be out of the streets to harness their ideas and build this nation instead of looking for unavailable jobs (Jega, 2013). This power comes with the quality of Education offered by the right Educational policies and this will ensure that the recipients of this education become functional members of the society and then youth empowerment is ensured and youth restiveness corrected Dienye, 2011; Jega, 2013).

1. This he explained involves ensuring the functionality of literacy and numeracy, inculcating the life skills of manipulative reasoning, that will empower the Nigerian youth and bring him/her to full social and knowledgeable application of his ideas as well as installation of a love for learning and continous self improvement which will transcend in arresting youth restiveness and play out as sustainable National Development.

2. In order to curb youth restiveness and empower the youths for National development, functional Education must cut across every spectrum of education from primary to tertiary institutions of learning. Hence it becomes expedient to look at the following;

3. Curriculum should be practically based such as what science, mathematics, technology education could ensure and bring out creativity in Nigerian youths. This could also ensure critical thinking,
better understanding, quantitative and logical reasoning that could help Nigerian youth to find their footing and look out for alternatives and means of creating jobs for themselves in this country where no job exists for graduates.

4. Free and compulsory education, a cardinal point of the MDG is one of the hallmarks of functional quality education.

Conclusion

The place of functional quality education in empowering Nigerian youths and curbing youth restiveness cannot be over emphasized. A functional quality education that stresses on non-formal education and poverty eradication should be encouraged. Laying a good foundation at the primary to the tertiary level of education is very essential as Obanya (2003) in Dienyi (2011) referred to this as “lifelong functional education”. This he explained involves ensuring the functionality of literacy and numeracy, inculcating the life skills of manipulative reasoning, that will empower Nigerian youths. With the application of practical skills, knowledge and abilities, a love for learning and continuous self improvement, the problem of youth restiveness will be curbed.

With teachers that lack the necessary skills in science, mathematics and technology with poor training and poor attitude to work will only end up with poor education. Lack of basic infrastructure in schools as well as certificates without practical and creative skills will produce poor education that is not functional and qualitative enough to care for the high potentials of Nigerian youths that could prevent restiveness in them and empower them.

These key areas of the Nigerian educational systems should be seriously looked into so that this menace can be corrected.

Recommendations

1. Periodic education review summits involving all levels of education as well as personnel in the education industry should be given the opportunity to contribute their opinions in order to achieve quality functional education for development.
2. Curriculum review to make education more practical and proactive rather than the present stereotyped one should be vigorously carried out in order to enable Nigerian youths manage themselves in the outer world where no white collar job exists.
3. Teacher training programmes must ensure that teachers are trained qualitatively for effective teaching in schools which involves more guiding than telling.
4. Government should embark on youth empowerment programmes so that youths can engage in meaningful activities that will make them useful to themselves and their communities. Job creation for youths is essential with emphasis on non-formal education programme. Non-formal education programme will enable youths to be trained as mechanics, carpenters, shoe-makers, vulcanizers, welders, fashion designers, caterers, hair dressers, etc. Poverty eradication programme should also be vigorously pursued to enable youth to survive and be self actualized in their chosen career.

References


