

## **Causes and Socio-Economic Implications of Youth Restiveness in Maiduguri Metropolis**

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### **Abstract**

Youth restlessness in Maiduguri metropolis is a hot topic for conversation in the social, economic, and political spheres. It is evident that with restless youth, Maiduguri cannot prosper and make meaningful development. This issue is so common that it poses a threat to the city's business survival, peace, and security. Among other things, the absence of basic and inadequate infrastructure, poor social amenities, and unemployment are linked to the causes of young restiveness. Youth restiveness has a negative impact that can be seen in the city in form of robberies, kidnappings, cults, agitations, and engagement in societal unrest. The root causes and implications of youth restlessness have fostered uncertainty, which has caused fear, failure, and underdevelopment in the hitherto home of peace. This investigation upholds the hypothesis that in order to manage youth in the city, their abilities, skills, and education need to be acknowledged, supported, and directed towards the appropriate societal sector in order to promote growth and sustainable development. The present study examined the discourse around youth restiveness in Maiduguri and offered suggestions for the efficient organization and accountability of the government to mitigate the escalating incidence of youth restiveness in the city.

**Keywords:** *Causes, Socio-Economic, Implications, Youth, Restiveness.*

## **Introduction**

Youth restlessness around the world, especially in developing countries that are facing the challenges of social and economic development, has evolved into a behaviour pattern that has become an important subject of discourse. Youths are either adolescents or children possessing energy that needs to be exerted, which if not guarded, is channelled into negative tendencies (Igbo and Ikpa, 2013). Youths constitutes the ages below 30 (NYSC) and are people aged between 18 years and 35 years (NYDP, 2009). Restiveness is the inability to be still or quiet or having difficulty in being controlled, especially when one is not satisfied with something (Nduka-Ozo, 2017). Several studies have shown that youth's incapacity to solve issues, carry out their tasks well, and achieve societal goals is a result of their restiveness. For instance, Elegbeleye (2005) named "perceived victimization arising from economic exploitation" as one of the elements that might contribute to restlessness in young people. These days, the lack of control over issues that has caused conflict and protest among young people can be traced back to a few main factors: the scarcity and unequal distribution of natural resources; lack of recognition; marginalization in society; feelings of discontent; unfavourable laws from the government; high unemployment; and poor-quality education. Similarly, Agbaji, et al. (2018) also observed that youth restiveness is caused by high rate of unemployment, poverty, exclusion of the youth from mainstream political participation, corruption, bad governance, inequitable distribution of goods and services among youths.

Youth restiveness has a lot of implications on the socio-economic development. This is usually manifested in the disruption of economic activities with consequential effect to lower productivity, trade, and investment. loss of human capital as a result of substance abuse, school dropouts and criminal gangs. Distortion of investment climate, infrastructure

damage and political instability also flourish as a result of youth restiveness.

In the recent past, youth restiveness in Nigeria is alarming and manifesting in almost all communities (Nsidibe, et al 2017). Negative implications have been documented in literature as a result of youth restiveness such as unequal distribution of natural resources, bad governance, insecurity, corruption, political instability, drug/alcohol abuse, unemployment (Ojobah, 2020; Adegoke, 2023; Chado, 2023). As a way of remediation of youth restiveness, several recommendations were made. These includes job creation through entrepreneurship, entrenchment of good governance, addressing hunger and insecurity, innovation and communication as entrepreneurial skills to combat youth restiveness (Agbaji, et al, 2018; Aloziei, 2017; Ojobah, 2020; Ammani, 2024).

In spite of existing literature on youth restiveness, a contextual gap exists, necessitating deeper insights into some other communities facing similar challenges of youth restiveness. One of such communities is Maiduguri metropolis, the capital of Borno State. Of recent, the city was reported to have witnessed a surge in gatherings of youth in neighbourhood gangs, armed with knives and dangerous weapons. Credited to be the birthplace of the Boko Haram ideology, Maiduguri has no doubt seen barefaced violence that has in the past 12 years altered its socio-economic fabric. This study aimed at exploring the causes and socio-economic implications of youth restiveness in Maiduguri metropolis. An understanding of the causes and implications of youth restiveness on the socio-economic development of the city is important towards addressing these social vices.

## **Conceptual clarifications**

In this section, four main concepts need clarification as they relate to this study. These

are; causes, implications, youth restiveness and socio-economic development.

**Causes:** According to Cambridge English dictionary a cause literally means the reason why something happen. In this study, the causes of youth restiveness include but not limited to environmental degradation, unemployment and corruption (Nlerum, 2014).

**Implications:** An implication is something that is suggested, or happens, indirectly. In this study we refer to what happens as a result of youth restiveness. According to Yajir (2021) the implications of youth restiveness include destruction of life and infrastructure, and ravaging the requisite human capital for producing the nation's economic fortunes.

**Youth restiveness:** Youth restlessness was described as "a sustained protestation embarked upon by an organized body of youths to enforce desired outcome from a constituted authority" (Elegbeleye, 2005). It is characterized by acts of violence and interference with legal activity.

**Socio-economic development:** we define socioeconomic development as a process of changes or improvements in social and economic conditions as they relate to an individual, an organization, or society as a whole (Roztocki & Weistroffer, 2016).

### **Study methodology**

Qualitative content analysis was adopted in this study. This implies that in the course of this study, relevant literatures on Youth Restiveness were utilized to analyze the Causes and socio-economic implications of youth restiveness in Maiduguri metropolis. In addition to analysis of relevant literature on youth restiveness, participant observation was also used in gaining deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

### **Theoretical underpinning**

The issues of poverty, unemployment, marginalization, and unequal resource distribution have encouraged young people to become restless, which has led to instability in the social structure. In order to provide an explanation for youth restiveness in Maiduguri Metropolis, this study used two theories. The theories are relative deprivation and conflict theory.

According to Runciman, (1989) Relative deprivation theory postulates that individuals who believe they are being denied access to resources deemed necessary for their well-being (such as money, rights, political voice, or status) may organize or participate in social movements or armed conflicts with the goal of regaining these resources. Relative deprivation also refers to the perceived discrepancy between an individual's personal status and the status of some relevant others within their society. In simpler terms, it's the feeling of being "worse off" than those you compare yourself to. It is evident that over the past two decades, Borno State has suffered growing security challenges, demonstrated in the declining capacity of its institutions to deliver public goods, including security, transportation, water, medical care, power and education. It is generally assumed that the resultant effect of the prolonged insecurity situation might not be unconnected to the youth restiveness in the state.

The second theory – the Classic strain theory emphasizes on juvenile deprivation. Youths are driven to crime because they are unable to achieve their aspirations (Britannica, 2019). According to the theory of strain, deviant behaviour is the unavoidable result of social pressure from society to find acceptable and suitable ways to accomplish culturally significant objectives. For instance, when a society values economic prosperity and success culturally but only offers a tiny percentage of the populace legally sanctioned ways to reach these goals, people who are left

out may resort to using illegal or unorthodox ways to get what they want (Crossman, 2019).

Based on the foregoing, the imperative for equal treatment is important towards social and economic development especially in communities facing the challenges of youth restiveness. It is important to reduce financial misappropriation, embezzlement, deprivation, and segregation in order to prevent crime and underdevelopment in society. To improve development and progress in societies, the general public's requirements in the areas of economics, politics, education, social services, medicine, and technology are essentially unavoidable.

### The study area



*Figure 1 Map of Maiduguri Source: Maphill*

As depicted in figure 1, Maiduguri the capital city of Borno State is situated between 110N and longitude 130E. Maiduguri is made up of fifteen (15) districts; it has an area of about 53km<sup>2</sup> with a total population of about 621,492 according to 2006 census (NPC, 2006). The climate of Maiduguri is hot and dry for most part of the year. Majority of the inhabitants of the city are farmers, civil servants and businessmen and women

Borno State "has experienced growing security, capacity, and legitimacy gaps over

the past 20 years, demonstrated in the diminishing ability of its institutions to deliver public goods, including security, transportation, water, medical care, power, and education (Sebastine, 2015). Due to threats from Boko Haram insurgency, it is estimated that over 2.1 million people have been displaced in Borno State since 2009; hundreds of thousands of these people have sought safety in Maiduguri the capital city and surrounding camps. At the height of the crisis, Maiduguri was sheltering over 800,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), with over 88% of them living outside of camps (Bell, 2021). Due to the influx of these IDPs, the city had to shoulder the responsibility for providing help to those affected by the violence amidst scarce resources.

Maiduguri's economy is still characterized by a high unemployment rate and limited access to safe and clean water. In addition, the city is faced with challenging issues like service delivery, climate change, violent extremism from armed groups, urban relocation, and enacting governance changes with a number of intricate and interconnected concerns. (Bell, 2021).

### Causes of youth restiveness

There are many different reasons why young people get restless. The majority of young people no longer want to assume responsibilities, which is troubling. They always search for the simplest solution, which is typically unethical and unprofitable. The majority of young people were once thought to be engaged in trade, farm labour, housework assistance, and other respectable jobs. Young people now insist on working for businesses that are based in their communities even if they do not meet the qualifications for a white-collar job because they believe they are superior to such obligations. These days, it's rare to find young people who are trustworthy, honest, good, responsible, and industrious, who also have the appropriate priorities in order. It appears that young people view duty

as too demanding and dwindling. As a result, they decline to carry out such a duty, whether or not it is paid for. They may demand exorbitant compensation for the work they wish to perform. The community has misplaced its values. The issue of not being able to do tasks efficiently or avoiding labor might be brought on by ineffective home instruction, a lack of self-confidence, rebellion, laziness, or a lack of discipline. According to Ofem and Ajayi (2008), among other things, "the reasons for incessant youth restiveness are lack of humanitarian and social welfare, lack of good governance, corrupt practices of government officials, inadequate training programs, unemployment, inadequate recreational facilities, and lack of quality education.

**Unemployment:** There is an alarmingly high rate of unemployment in Nigeria at the moment. Based on the labor statistics report, the number of jobless Nigerians increased from 11.92 million in the first quarter of 2017 to 13.58 million and 15.99 million in the second and third quarters, respectively (Onuba, 2019). According to Ozohu-Suleiman (2006), "unemployment traps Nigerian youth." Nigerians are not succeeding in starting businesses and providing jobs for the masses using their initiative, talents, resources, and expertise. Additionally, the kids do not seem to be serious about the empowerment programs that would enable them to work for themselves. The nation's well-being is being negatively impacted by the high level of agitation caused by the reliance on the government and a small number of firms. Zakaria (2006) is adamant that young restlessness has terrible outcomes and that the lack of employment prospects in developing nations is the cause. The government does not have a sufficiently effective system in place to offer jobs to the majority of people.

The government must become engaged in the production of domestic products and make sure that there are regional businesses nearby

where young people may find work and contribute to national money. This would encourage young engagement and reduce laziness, which would otherwise encourage bad habits.

Because they are unable to find employment or start on their own, young people are more susceptible to irrational politicians, extreme religious beliefs, and avaricious individuals. They are employed to carry out illegal operations in exchange for a stipend. Zakaria (2006) argues that young people in African countries are more susceptible to manipulative tactics by agents provocateurs due to the growing rate of unemployment and their dread of an uncertain future.

**Dwindling educational system:** A nation's capacity to grow, prosper, and maintain stability depends heavily on its educational system. One learns the fundamentals of human growth in an educational setting, both socially and academically. The issue with the current Nigerian educational system is that it lacks equipment, qualified teachers, adequate infrastructure, and adherence to the work schedule, particularly in rural areas..

Due to their inability to pay for their education, the majority of young people in rural regions do not attend school; this even affects some kids in metropolitan areas. The government should provide free elementary and secondary education in order to encourage everyone to attend school. The fees at the university level have to be significantly decreased.

Nonetheless, those that graduate struggle to obtain employment, which is an ironic situation. This also includes the issues that affect their young people and families. To guarantee that investments in education are encouraged throughout the nation to combat this threat, the government and the populace must cooperate to prioritise education. According to Wordpress (2014), "National greatness, cohesion, and prestige are directly



impacted by the quality of education." The skills and information that youth gain is beneficial to the advancement and unity of the country. According to the Population Reference Bureau (2006), around 30% of Nigerian adolescents aged 10 to 24 were not enrolled in secondary school during the years 2000 and 2004. "This can be the outcome of unjustified educational costs. For Nigerians, this is not a good position.

**Declining standard of living:** A low level of life is a contributing factor to restiveness among youth. Those who are unable to provide for their fundamental needs such as food and shelter are considered impoverished. Low living standards are a sign of poverty. According to Aworawo (2000), there is a link between youth violence against the Nigerian government and factors including poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and restlessness. Usually, there is a big disparity between the affluent and the poor. Poor people experience dejection, oppression, dehumanization, and segregation.

Instead of working in respectable employment to earn money, most young people search for ways to get fast money. These encourage young people to engage in illegal activity in order to support themselves and their families, regardless of the repercussions. These days, there are more and more instances of kidnapping, ritual activities, dishonest operations (419), and online scammers known as "yahoo boys." Each of them contributes to the state's vulnerability.

**Unfavourable policies:** The general populace often rebels against government policies that they see as oppressive and unappreciated when they are unfavourable to them. The government must do a thorough analysis of the populace to identify their most pressing requirements and make sure those demands are met. When an adult who is at least eighteen years old does not have a job, they are provided with housing and allowances in industrialized nations such as the United States

of America. Because they will be able to look after themselves till they have something important to accomplish, this will lessen the restlessness of the kids. Growth and progress in the nation are impossible without the creation of the necessary legislation. A poor policy damages society and political institutions, creates division in the country, and encourages restlessness among young people. To prevent instability, a nation's budget must be prepared by the government in order to divide its natural resources fairly.

Ineffective governance is linked to ineffective government policy. In addition to violating the fundamental human rights of the people, bad governance encourages corruption, irresponsibility, and lack of appropriate transparency. A terrible government is typically characterized by a rise in crime, restrictions on free expression, a pattern of government centralization, financial misappropriation, and resource mismanagement, among other things. These characteristics contribute to the overall discontent of the populace as well as that of the youth.

### **Socio-economic implications of youth restiveness**

Communities and the nation as a whole are affected negatively by youth restiveness. The way that young people use agitation to pursue their ambitions has hindered societal advancement and severely damaged the level of productivity in society. They cause additional issues for themselves in the process of trying to defend their interests by taking advantage of young restlessness. Their circumstances get worse as a result of these behaviours, which encourage them to conduct crimes for which they could be arrested.

**Disobedient Social Conduct:** Unrelenting demands for their interests to be satisfied are the root reason of youth's disobedient social conduct. The country has suffered from the activities of youth restlessness, according to

the Advocates for the Advancement of Youth Development Initiatives (2012). Because of disturbances to law and order in the community, such as militancy, and low production of goods and services. a rise in intra ethnic and religious strife, higher crime rates, unsettling investors, marginalization, unemployment, exuberance, poverty, and inadequate educational possibilities are identified as issues linked to disobedient social conduct.

The destructive nature of youth restiveness can be attributed to the potentially severe consequences of being discovered by law enforcement. They may receive a life sentence, a death sentence, or both. In addition to the possibility of jail, these kinds of actions can also result in fights among the youth, which often result in serious injuries. Youth restlessness has a detrimental impact on social and economic activity, which results in difficulties.

**Unemployment:** Unemployment is the greatest economic problem because of its negative effect on the individual and the society (Amerah & Khasawneh, 1993) and a potential source of crime in many countries (Gao, 2017). In Nigeria, the unemployment rate is rising and youth are being so greatly impacted by this that they are voluntarily participating in schemes that are harmful to both themselves and society. It has been reported that unemployment rate in Nigeria is still a big concern for the authorities (Oniore, 2023). Available statistics from The International Labor Organization (ILO) based on 2023 data from National Bureau of Statistics shows that between 2019 to 2023, unemployment rate increased from 4.2%, to 22.7%. this is an indication that unemployment in Nigeria has been steadily increasing with negative consequences to society.

Several instances have indicated the ugly nature of unemployment in Nigeria with job applicants far outweighing the number of existing vacancies. In 2016, it was reported

that nearly a million people applied for ten thousand (10,000) listed positions in the Nigerian police force. Also in November 2016, the Federal Tax agency (FIRS) received 700,000 applications for 500 advertised positions. Majority of Nigerian youths within the median age of 21 are most affected. The situation is not limited to the referenced areas above, in most sectors, the story is always the same.

**Unsafe environment:** Youths engage in illicit activities because they feel uneasy or anxious. Due to incessant illegal activities occasioned by youth restiveness, inhabitants of Maiduguri metropolis appear to be wary of their surroundings because of fear of kidnapping for ransom payment, snatching of mobile phones by disguised tricycle commercial workers, drug abuse, increased theft and other criminal activities. Although, the incessant Boko Haram attacks on the city has considerably reduced, the city is still under vehicular restriction imposed from 10p.m to 6a.m with a view to curtailing the excesses of crime being committed in the city and its environs.

A Human Angle report authored by Haruna (2023) indicated that economic situation in Maiduguri has played a significant role in driving young people into the clutches of criminal gangs like the Marlians. This criminal gang is known for campaign of violent robberies in Maiduguri, and their activities has constituted a worry to the inhabitants of the city and the government. The report further noted that in addition to endangering the people's situation, the recent surge of unchecked armed violence among young people in the city of Maiduguri has the potential, if left unchecked, to surpass Boko Haram's terrorist activities.

Earlier in 2019, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corp (NSCDC) has raised alarm over activities of a gang terrorizing Maiduguri and its environs. The gang "Taka Maza" which literally means (Crush men) specializes in theft and rape in Maiduguri metropolis. The gang

keep up a strong network and recruit youths into their nefarious activities (PM News, 2019).

**Heavy Security Expenditure:** The destructive consequences of youth restiveness do not only result into serious security concerns but also stifle economic growth. As government is refocussing its attention towards stabilizing peace, there is bound to be heavy resource expenditure which invariably, affects the development of other sectors. The youth will suffer as a result and economy may deteriorate and lead to the closure of certain industries, which will result in the unemployment of a large number of workers.

### Recommendations

This study examined the causes and socio-economic implications of youth restiveness in Maiduguri metropolis. Consequently, based on the examination of the literature and in order to bring about peace and socio-economic development of the city, it is necessary to implement the following suggestions in order to reduce young unrest:

1. There is need for the government to provide employment opportunities. Attention should be paid to both public and private sectors with a view to creating the necessary atmosphere for empowerment programs. This will significantly help in absorbing those that cannot be directly employed into government payroll.
2. Government should prioritize technical and vocational education to meet the increasing demand for technological advancement. An investment in this areas holds promise for not only greater employment opportunities but also drive economic growth rapidly.
3. There is also the need for the government to intensify awareness campaigns particularly, on the dangers

of youth engagement in anti-social behaviours like gangsterism, drug abuse and thuggery.

4. In order to prevent financial theft and embezzlement, there is need to vigorously fight corruption to be reduced. One way of achieving this is to strengthen the anti-corruption agencies like the EFCC and ICPC

### Conclusion

This study analysed the causes and socio-economic implications of youth restiveness in Maiduguri Metropolis. The study shows that the main factors contributing to young restiveness in Maiduguri metropolis are poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and the uneven distribution of resources. Significant socio-economic ramifications result in an increase in social vices, the loss of lives and property, and a general feeling of insecurity. This restlessness is a result of discontent with unfulfilled wants and goals, which is frequently made worse by a bad upbringing in childhood and marginalization in mainstream politics. The consequences for sustainable development are profound since restiveness prevents young people from making good contributions, which would otherwise make them assets to a healthy social environment. According to the conflict hypothesis, rivalry for scarce resources is the root cause of these dangerous occurrences. Channelling the youth's energy is crucial to reducing these impacts.

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