Conflict Management Strategies and Youth Empowerment: Perception of Eligible Voters on Resolving Political Violence in Ukanafun Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

A survey to evaluate conflict management strategies and youth empowerment as tools for resolving political violence in the Ukanafun Local Government Area was conducted. The population comprises all the eligible voters in the Ukanafun Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. A stratified random sampling technique was applied to select the participants from the eleven (11) political wards in Ukanafun Local Government Area. A structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Five hundred and fifty (550) copies of the questionnaire were distributed, of which four hundred and sixty (460) were well-filled and returned for analysis. Data were analysed using frequency counts and simple percentages. It submits that conflict management leads to dialogue, while youth empowerment represents a credible alternative path toward resolving political violence, which will nurture or provide peace, equity, and development. The study recommends that youth empowerment should be incorporated into the government budgets at different levels to empower them to take an active part in the scheme of things that are meaningful to the environment.

Key words: Youth, Political Violence, Causes of violence, Conflict Management Strategies, Concept of Youth.

INTRODUCTION

Nigerians have experienced violence at full strength. Violence has challenged policymakers and stakeholders over the years. It has created a near state of anarchy in the State and distorted the political culture of the citizens. About 87 percent of youths live in developing countries and face challenges from limited access to resources,

education, training, employment, and broader economic development opportunities (United Nations Programme on Youth, 2011). Conflict Management and Mitigation (2005) considered youth as a time of passage between childhood and adulthood or as biological markers between puberty and parenthood. There is gross lack of consensus on the meaning of youth, and many factors come into play in the search for a working definition. The golden thread here appears to be that dependency and independence are defining extremes for any approach to the meaning of youth. Nweke (2015) viewed youth as victims of social change and an endangered species. Youth refers to a young person between childhood and adulthood. It is a transition period between adolescence and adulthood.

According to Uzochukwu (2014), youth empowerment is grouped into five, financial empowerment, skills acquisition empowerment, academic empowerment, moral empowerment, and agricultural empowerment. This segment of youth empowerment is likely to be the most popular. It is the type in which the youth are offered some cash to start businesses or solve problems. An example of this type of youth empowerment is the Youth Enterprise with Innovative Program (YouWIN) in Nigeria. It is a youth empowerment competition mapped out by the Federal Republic of Nigeria to support the youths financially to achieve their goals in life. It was an innovative business plan competition aimed at job creation by encouraging and supporting aspiring entrepreneurial youths in Nigeria to develop and execute business ideas. It has transformed some of their lives from rags to riches. This program has put a smile on the faces of many Nigerian youths and made things up. Also, individuals from many communities offer financial empowerment to members of their communities. This empowerment may be in terms of the grant to youths who are willing to pursue educational programs. The proportion of educated people in Africa is less because many who are willing to go to school are not empowered. Some crimes committed in many African nations are by the illiterates. Educational youth empowerment involves giving academic support to the youths. These supports are developed by the government and individuals. It can take the form of scholarships for the youths, who are willing to study but lack the capacity.

Conflict Management Strategies

Conflict occurs when two people differ in their values or beliefs. Conflict manifests in fights, struggles, or quarrels over something. It may also be some things in opposition or disagreement with self or other persons or groups. Thus, conflicts are classified into intra-personal or interpersonal. Intrapersonal conflict comes within the individual in the form of indecisions, thoughts, choices, and interests, manifesting in the person's inability to make decisions and choices. Inter-personal conflict involves two or more persons, groups, communities, or nations (Edeghonghon, 2007). According to Ifeanyi and Peters (2006), conflict is a situation in which people, groups, or countries are involved in disagreements or arguments. Conflict is a necessary process of life, if effectively managed, brings a positive change in the situation and lasting peace. Conflicts ensue when someone is not performing well as expected or inability to meet up to a target as expected (Onongha, 2015). It means that inability to measure up to expectations in an agreement between groups of an individual could trigger conflict. According to Uwa (2014), conflict is inevitable; conflict is the commonest, general and wide-spread phenomenon that is synonymous with group activity and interaction. Conflicts on the side of youth happen when parents and the government are not providing the emotional support adolescents want or because parents believe adolescents are not meeting the expectations held for them (Flannery, 2013). It implies that an adolescent always wants to decide what he needs and yet has superiors who have rules and expectations for him to conform to, which could stir conflict. The above problem, therefore, calls for conflict management and resolution.

Management is the organisational process that includes strategic planning, objectives, and managing resources, deploying the human and financial assets needed to achieve the objectives, and measuring results. According to Fayol (2007), management is an act of forecasting, planning, organising, controlling, commanding, and coordinating. Breech (2000) defined management as a social process. Management is an operational process initially best dissected by analysing the managerial functions (Koontz and Donnal 2002). Nwachukwu (2009) perceived management as supervising, controlling, and coordinating activities to attain optimum results with organisational resources. To fully utilise the youths in societal development devoid of violence, there is a need to ensure that youth welfare is well managed and taken care of. Akpan (2004)

defined management as harnessing resources (or society) to achieve a desired result. Central to the definition of management is the idea of achieving desired objectives through the effort of other people. The work of management involves setting the objectives to be accomplished and creating a conducive environment for people committed to those objectives to strive heartily toward accomplishment.

The government can put a machinery of conflict management strategies to harness the actions of the youth towards achieving a desired result. Conflict management is an attempt to control or regulate conflict through several measures. Conflict management strategies refer to the internal mechanisms used by various authorities in resolving conflict (Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012). Constructively, conflict management induces a positive performance, while ineffectively managed conflict heats the environment to bring about 'dislocation of the entire group and polarisation, reduced productivity on job performance, psychological and physical injury, emotional distress and inability to sleep, interference with problem activities, escalation of differences into antagonistic position and malice and increased hostility (Akanji, 2005). Effective conflict management creates a cooperative atmosphere to promote opportunities and movements toward non-violence, reconciliation, or clashing interests (Uchendu, Anijaobi and Odigwe, 2013). Conflict management and youth empowerment scheme are the mediums through which youth exuberance restiveness and agility are harnessed for productivity and usefulness.

Youth Empowerment

Accordingly, youth is defined through an individual's personal experience, especially in terms of his cultural background perspectives and his level of dependency, which is the extent he still relies on his family socially, educationally, emotionally and economically. Based on this experiential perspective, DahI (2004) defined youth as a period of transition from dependence or a person between the ages of learning compulsory education and finding their first job. Kloskowska (2000) viewed youthfulness as an abstract construct of such characteristics as the quality of being young and evincing peculiar traits subject to social evaluation. Youths have long been contentiously designated with the most emphasis in sociology on gene rationalism, ageism, and specificity (Wullf, 2000).

Age classification of youth is often for institutional and policy purposes. Another defining characteristic is models of behaviour. Across several disciplines, there is a growing tendency to view youths as out of control and a threat to societal norms. From the context of moral panic, the youths have often been read as dangerous by media representation and become an object of spectacle and desire for a mass audience (Oswell, 2000). Irrespective of the diverse dimensions, youths have been conceptualized, and the definition central to current discourse take into account the socio-historic and dynamic dimension that affect the experience of being young. Angulu (2000) considered persons within the age range of 6-36 years as a youth. Oluwadare (2004) and Olajire and Olufunke (2013) employed the age bracket of 15-30 to define youth. It is also helpful to add that progressive-mindedness is one of the defining characteristics of youth. Therefore, the current thinking is that people beyond the age of 36 years who share the ideals of a progressive society are also youths (Uhunmwuangho and Oghator, 2013). Whatever the age limit, youths are men and women considered to be young, energetic, vibrant, and resourceful, who are often engaged in social enterprises that require physical strength and mental capacity (Suleiman, 2006). Ejiogu (2001) maintained that a person between 17 and 20 years is a youth.

The Federal Government of Nigeria (2001), Oluwadare (2004), and Olajire and Olufunke (2013) considered youth as a person within the age bracket of 10 to 24 years. According to World Bank (1999 and 2007), a youth is a person between the age of 15 and 29 years. According to United Nations (1995, 2007 and 2010), youth do not constitute a homogeneous group, their socio-economic, demographic, and geographical situations vary widely within and between regions. Notwithstanding these differences, the regional-level analysis provides a general understanding of their development profile. The definition of youth perhaps changes with circumstances, especially with the change in demographic, financial, economic, and socio-cultural settings. However, the 15-24 years cohort as youth serves its statistical purposes for assessing the needs of young people and providing guidelines for youth development. In this study, youth are young people between the age of 18 and 45 years who are full of agility and strength and sometimes more disruptive and violent.

Empowerment is the ability to make and act on a decision without external hindrances (Urom, 2002). Okpoko (2002) reiterated that to empower means to give

power or authority to enable a person to gain confidence and to decide by oneself. Empowerment implies that the person being empowered has hitherto lacked power or authority, either by default or denial. Ugwu (2015) viewed empowerment as the ability to make a decision and act on it without hindrance due to the support gained by an individual. Youth Empowerment is an attitudinal, structural, and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority, and agency to make decisions and implement change in their lives and others (Vairus & Fletcher, 2006). Youths are empowered when they acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of the implications of these choices, make an informed decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of those actions.

According to Fletcher (2005), youth employment is a means of creating and supporting enabling conditions under which young people can act on their behalf and terms rather than at the direction of others. Nweke (2015) posited that youth empowerment assists the youth with the difficulties which might prevent them from achieving their potential. Omotere (2011) explained that youth empowerment may be exercised at homes, and schools, through youth organisations, non-governmental organisations, government policy-making, and community organising campaigns. It ranges from economic to social, ideological, educational, technological, and political empowerment, which leads to manpower development. According to Uzochukwu (2014), it is shameful that when youth empowerment is mentioned, people think it is only the function and responsibility of the government to empower the youth. Youth empowerment is important to individuals, communities, nations, and the empowered. With youth empowerment, the future of a nation is secured, because these are the people who take care of many offices and functions in the country. Youth empowerment also involves a collective, democratic, and social-cultural process of engagement, which implies group interaction (Cargo, Grams, Ottoson, Ward & Green 2003; Jennings, 2006). Consequently, it also exclusively has to do with one-on-one youth development interventions.

Youth empowerment can help reduce the poverty standard of a community. When youths are empowered economically, he or she uses the profit from the business for self-reliance and sustainability. Empowering the youths with skills can go a long way in reducing poverty percentage in communities. When a youth learns skills, he can use the skills to feed and assist others and even invest in the future. Long-lasting

empowerment is skill acquisition empowerment. A youth who is empowered on how to repair automobiles can earn from it till he dies (Uzochukwu, 2014). When the youths are empowered, the spirit of patriotism increases in them and that is the reason that makes them security conscious. Youth empowerment results in State and national protection. Duke (2011) stated that years of deprivation and the failure of the government to address the problems and grievances of youths have culminated in deep-seated suspicion, apathy towards civic responsibility, open hostilities to guest business organisations, and a resort to criminal activities.

Political Violence

Similarly, Earl (2004) defined violence as the use of physical force by an individual, group, or organisation resulting in injury or abuse to others. Apam (2006) opined that violent conflicts generally arise from divergent goals and aspirations by individuals or groups in defined social and physical environments. Violent conflicts are struggles over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the opponents aim to neutralize, conjure or eliminate their rivals. Anih (2014) asserted that violence also is a threatening tactic imposed to destabilize and harm other individuals. Violence in societies is designed to resolve divergent dualism and to achieve some kind of unity even as if it were through the annihilation of one of the conflicting parties and should not, therefore, be regarded only in the negative or dysfunctional, or disjunctive process or a breakdown of communication (Apam (2006). Violence is an act of perpetuating conflict through physical force to brutalize and inflict pain and injuries on individuals and the destruction of properties. Violence may be emotional, psychological, spiritual, cultural, verbal, financial, and political.

Political violence breaches good governance and development. Howell (2004) stated that political violence is synonymous with 'thuggery' activities and means 'brutal' acts or behaviours by ruffians. Karl and Schaefer (2011) averred that violence is a generally abnormal act and disturbance to political equilibrium. According to Denen (2013), political violence is the use of destructive means or methods unlawfully against persons, property, and institutions to publicise grievances and coerce or intimidate a government, opponents, and the civilian population, in furtherance of political, socio-economic, and religious objectives. Tenansi (2000) opined that political

violence has become a regular phenomenon in Nigeria. It is because more youths have been involved in local, national, and international issues. Interestingly, most people agreed that political violence is a socio-cultural problem. Such actions affect social norms (by violating the law). Youth violence, according to Rogers (2001), does not only harm victims but also harms family and friends and disrupts the peace in the community. Political violence is destructive acts perpetuated by some political actors to maim, disturb and disrupt the political activities of a State, thereby breaching the principles of peaceful coexistence among the inhabitants of such a State.

Causes of Political Violence

Several factors influenced Political violence. According to Wyrick (2006), violent youths who have violent parents are more likely to take the mode of their parents' behaviour. Dawes (2007) stated that there are two developmental factors for the onset of youth behaviour; one in which violence begins in childhood (before puberty) and continues into adolescence, and another in which violence begins in youths. Alert (2010) brought up two different approaches to youth violence development. Firstly, one that focuses on the onset of violent behaviour and its frequency, patterns, and continuity over the life course. Secondly, one that focuses on the emergence of risk factors at different stages of life. Other factors are exposure of children to television and film violence. It implies that youths who watch media that display visuals such as war, conflict, and robbery films are liable to learn and become experts in perpetuating violence which metamorphoses into political violence. Accordingly, the majority of violent youth offenders use alcohol and illicit drugs. There can be no political violence among the youths without some related factors predisposing them to it. These factors may be traceable to government administrations, parents, society, and youth. Kayode cited El-Rufai (2012) attributed the violence in Nigeria to the failure of governments at all levels to apply States' revenues in improving the welfare of citizens. Instead, the federal allocation funds and the internally generated revenue (IGR) combined are on running their governments (El-Rufai - Nigerian village square, 25th July 2012). They work with the government in power (dictatorship or democracy), nurture violence as a way of retaining control and enjoying illegitimacy and legitimacy, and undermine socio-cultural structures and images. These practices create resentment and cynicism

that grow into political violence at the slightest provocation (Kayode, 2012). Aminu (2000) argued that the remote cause of violence is the general ills of society. Political violence resulted in damage of diverse magnitude some are irreparable and irreplaceable, which range from loss of lives to damage to properties, industrial establishments, and commercial centres (Aminu, 2000).

WHO (2002) enumerated some factors of youth violence to include individual factors. The principal personality and behavioural factors linked with youth violence are hyperactivity, impulsiveness, poor behavioural control, attention problems, history of early aggression, low educational achievement, and influence by family and peers. The home environments are keys to the development of violent behaviour in young people. The key family factors associated with adolescent violence are poor supervision of children by parents, harsh physical punishment to discipline children, parental conflict in early childhood, low level of attachment between parents and children, and a mother who had her first child at an early age experiencing parental separation or divorce at a young age. The low levels of family cohesion and low socio-economic status of the family. Roger (2009) identified social problems as the causes of political violence. Social problems at different levels of group inequality and youth unemployment have increased the propensity for violence. The dominant discourses in the conflicts refer to political exclusion based on ethnicity and religion. Raul (2004) identified poor economic conditions and a lack of economic opportunities to favour political violence (Raul and Schneider, 2010).

Associating with delinquent peers has also been linked to violence in young people. Social, political, and cultural factors, gangs, and drugs are a potent mixture, increasing the likelihood of youth violence. Low levels of social cohesion within a community have been linked to higher rates of youth violence. The quality of governance, its laws, policies, and the extent to which they are enforced for social protection affect violence. Factors such as income inequality, rapid demographic changes in the youth population, and urbanization have been linked with youth violence. Cultures that do not provide non-violence alternatives for resolving conflicts appear to have higher rates of youth violence. James (2006) stated that violence is an antidote to shame or humiliation. Daly and Margo (2008) indicated that evolutionary psychology offers explanations for human violence in various contexts. Goetz (2010) argued that humans are similar to most mammal species and use violence in specific

situations; conflicts occur when there is a status dispute between men of relative status. If there is an initial status difference, the lower-status individual usually offers no challenge, and the higher-status individual usually ignores the lower-status individual. The same environment of inequalities between people may cause those at the bottom to use more violence to gain status. Dawes (2007) identified youth having access to guns and other weapons like knives, guns, and the use of alcohol and tobacco products as primary causes of youth violence.

Large youth cohorts facing institutional crowding in the labour market or educational system, lack of youth openness, and crowding in urban centres may be aggrieved, paving the way for youth violence (Goldstone, 2001). Nwokoma (2005), in an attempt to understudy the determinants of violence in Nigeria, implicated high unemployment and poverty as the main determinants of violence. Nwokoma stated that the chronic shortage of employment opportunities gave the politicians the leverage or influence to mobilize the unemployed youths for personal and parochial purposes. Such negligence includes non-empowerment and failure of the government to establish skill acquisition centres and entrepreneurship programmes; others include politicians using them to secure political power during elections and dumping them after elections. Poverty also inhibits parents from training their children and wards.

Effect of Political Violence

Political violence has immediate and long-term consequences, which include physical, psychological, and social costs. Oluwagbohunmi (2012) noted that violence has become a problem of great concern because of its socio-cultural consequences. Nigeria is currently facing several socio-cultural and economic problems caused by violent activities. Socio-cultural implications of political violence in Nigeria are viewed from different perspectives. Recently, there has been much concern about Nigeria's survival since the return of democracy in 1999. There has been a drift from one violent conflict to another, often with devastating consequences for human life and society (Ekweremadu in Adeyemi, 2009). Anih (2014) opined that the alarming rate of youth violence, the disaster unleashed on every aspect of society, especially socio-economic development is quite pathetic to every right-thinking Nigerian. Denen (2013) averred that business people suffer losses due to youth violence, which is a devastating blow to

the economy of the affected communities. Anywhere there is a bomb blast or any terrorist attack; people do not feel safe, thereby restricting themselves from moving or traveling to such areas (Tosini, 2009). Counseling Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (COECD) (2012) argued that youth violence not only contributes to the global burden of premature death, imprisonment, injury, and physical disability but also has a lifelong impact on behaviour, psychological and social functioning of victims, families, friends, and communities. The devastating effects of violence on lives and property need the articulation of requisite conflict management strategies in resolving youth violence in society to avert subsequent or future occurrences.

Political violence has eaten deep into the fabric of the cultural structures of Akwa Ibom State due to a fall in standards emanating from the system of governance. Conflict could degenerate into violence, crises, and youth restiveness if not properly managed. Several factors may have been responsible for the rate of political violence among the youths in Akwa Ibom State. Various governments and organizations have made many reasonable efforts to curb political violence, but it has not yielded a permanent solution. The rate of youth violence in many communities in Akwa Ibom State is worrisome and devastating. In Ukanafun Local Government Area, it seems to have brought about depression, anxiety, and many social vices and imposed a threat to the lives of the inhabitants. Political violence among the youths may have a disastrous implication on socio-cultural progress in the Akwa Ibom State. The youths' involvement in political violence in Ukanafun Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State is a result of the negligence of matters concerning their welfare. The conventional methods employed in dealing with violence and conflicts among youths in Ukanafun Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State have no doubt failed to yield the desired results. Based on the background, this study evaluates conflict management strategies and youth empowerment in resolving political violence among the youths in the Ukanafun Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. However, the specific objectives are to establish the following:

i.   Perception of eligible voters on political violence in the Ukanafun Local Government Area.
ii.   Perception of eligible voters on the types of Youth empowerment in the Ukanafun Local Government Area.

iii.   Perception of eligible voters on the causes of political violence in the Ukanafun Local Government Area.

METHOD

The research design is a survey. The population of this study comprises all the eligible voters in the Ukanafun Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select the participants. The Ukanafun Local Government Area has eleven (11) political wards; each represents a stratum. A structured questionnaire was the instrument used to draw data from the respondents. Fifty copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents in each ward. Five hundred and fifty (550) copies of the questionnaire were distributed for the study, of which a total of four hundred and sixty (460) were well-filled and returned for analysis. Data were analysed using frequency count and a simple percentage.

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaire to eligible voters in Ukanafun Local Government Area

S/N	Wards	Number of Questionnaire distributed	Number of Questionnaire Collected & Used
1	Northern Afaha I	50	40
2	Northern Afaha II	50	43
3	Northern Ukanafun I	50	42
4	Northern Ukanafun II	50	40
5	Southern Ukanafun I	50	44
6	Southern Ukanafun II	50	41
7	Southern Afaha, Adat Ifang I	50	44
8	Southern Afaha, Adat Ifang II	50	39
9	Southern Afaha, Adat Ifang III	50	40
10	Southern Afaha, Adat Ifang IV	50	42
11	Ukanafun Urban	50	45
	Total	**550**	**460**

Source: Survey, 2021

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2: Perception of eligible voters on political violence in Ukanafun Local Government Area

S/N	Question Structures	Yes	%	No	%	Not Sure	%	Total
i	There is evidence of political violence in Ukanafun LGA?	350	76.09	107	23.26	3	0.65	460
ii	Political violence violates individuals' human rights?	378	82.17	56	12.17	26	5.65	460
iii	Effective counter violence measures have not been adapted to curtail political violence in Ukanafun?	361	78.48	83	18.04	16	3.48	460
iv	Incidence of violence occurs in Ukanafun before election period	210	45.65	225	48.91	25	5.43	460
v	Incidence of violence occurs in Ukanafun during election period	350	76.09	84	18.26	26	5.65	460
vi	Incidence of violence occurs in Ukanafun after election period	296	64.35	141	30.65	23	5	460
vii	Lack of effective regulatory instruments promotes political violence	367	79.78	91	19.78	2	0.43	460

Source: Survey, 2021

Table 2 indicates that 76.09% of the respondents perceive evidence of political violence in Ukanafun LGA. A majority (82.17%) of the respondents perceive that political violence violates individuals' human rights in Ukanafun. It also shows that 79.78% agree that the lack of active regulatory instruments promotes political violence, and 78.48% identify that effective counter-violence measures have not been adopted to curtail political violence in Ukanafun. On the incidence of violence in Ukanafun, 45.65% of the respondents agree that it occurred before an election period, 76.09%

agree that it happened during an election period, and 64.35% say it occurred after an election period.

Table 3: Perception of eligible voters on the types of Youth empowerment in Ukanafun Local Government Area

S/N	Empowerments	Yes	%	No	%	Not Sure	%	Total
i.	Financial empowerment	402	87.39	52	11.30	6	1.30	460
ii.	Agricultural empowerment	354	76.96	81	17.61	25	5.43	460
iii.	Skills acquisition empowerment	125	27.17	230	50	5	1.09	460
iv.	Academic empowerment	20	4.35	416	90.43	24	5.22	460
v.	Moral empowerment	8	1.74	352	76.52	100	21.74	460

Source: Survey, 2021

Table 3 presents the responses on the types of youth empowerment in Ukanafun. The majority (87.39%) are aware of financial empowerment, while 90.43% are unaware of academic empowerment. As 76.96% of the respondents are aware of agricultural empowerment, 50% are aware of skills acquisition empowerment. As 76.52% of the respondents are unaware of moral empowerment, 21.74% are indifferent to such a concept.

Table 4: Perception of eligible voters on the causes of political violence in Ukanafun Local Government Area

S/N		Yes	%	No	%	Not Sure	%	Total
i.	Violent parents	280	60.87	148	32.17	32	6.96	460
ii.	Use of alcohol and illicit drugs	403	87.61	42	9.13	15	3.26	460
iii.	Exposure to television and film violence	294	63.91	124	26.96	42	9.13	460
iv.	Alleged manipulation of candidates by the party	430	93.48	26	5.65	4	0.87	460
v.	Lack of respect for the constituted authority	358	77.83	83	18.04	19	4.13	460
vi.	Alleged injustice	448	97.39	9	1.96	3	0.65	460
vii.	Lack of tolerance	326	70.87	101	21.96	33	7.17	460

Source: Survey, 2021

Perception of respondents about the causes of political violence in Ukanafun, shown in Table 4, points to alleged injustice and manipulation of candidates by the party with 97.39% and 93.48%, respectively. Other perceived causes of political violence in Ukanafun are the use of alcohol and illicit drugs (87.61%), lack of respect for the

constituted authority (77.83%), lack of tolerance (70.87%), exposure to television and film violence (63.91%) and violent parents (60.87%). The study discovered that inadequate monitoring, supervision, and parental discipline are risk factors for youth violence.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is high time the government changed from militarizing and brutalizing the masses to curbing political violence among young people. The above-mentioned parochial strategies have worsened the situation as insecurity and youth violence continue. Therefore, empowered youth have no time to engage in political violence. Empowerment made young people become veritable tools and formidable assets for community development. Hence, empowerment articulated and exhaustively discussed will salvage the community from violent activities for mutual and peaceful coexistence among community members. No society can thrive in its developmental processes where violence is taking place. Therefore, there is a need to embrace empowerment and conflict management strategies for lasting solutions to youth restiveness, conflict, and violence. It is in line with the above assertion that this study suggests youth empowerment as a veritable tool in political violence in the Ukanafun Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Therefore,

i.   The youth should be incorporated into the system of governance to enable them to take an active part in matters that concern them.
ii.   Governments, donors, and civil society organizations must be guided by a comprehensive national perspective in their efforts to address political violence among young people.
iii.   A network of major stakeholders must be established to ensure coordination of efforts across government departments, agencies, and the community.
iv.   Extensive consultations with young people and their representative associations for the policy development and implementation process are required.

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