

Perceived Strategies of Curbing Youth Restiveness for Community Development in Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined perceived strategies of curbing youth restiveness for community development in Rivers State. Three (3) objectives, 3 research questions, and 3 hypotheses were formulated for the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprised 3,500 members from selected youth organizations in Rivers State. A sample size of 700 members representing 20% of the population was selected through the purposive sampling technique. A self-designed instrument entitled “Perceived Strategies of Curbing Youth Restiveness for Community Development Questionnaire (PSOCYRCDQ)”, was used for data collection. The instrument was processed for reliability using test-retest method with Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) analysis which yielded an index of 0.84 and was considered reliable. The data was interpreted using mean and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were tested with one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that good governance has significant enhancement for community development. Based on the findings, the study recommended that our leaders should ensure good governance so that the issue of restiveness in Rivers State would be curbed and community development improved.

Keywords: Community Development, Youth Restiveness.

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, there has been an increase in the occurrence of acts of violence and lawlessness, including things like hostage taking of prominent citizens and expatriate oil workers; oil bunkering, arms insurgence, cultism, piracy, pipeline vandalism, kidnapping, political thuggery, as well as militancy as a result of a in Rivers State. The reason for this may not be far from the bounty of oil doled out of the State. Amadi-Eric (2011), states that right from 1950s when the quest for oil in Nigeria began, hundreds of billions of dollars may have been grossly misappropriated by successive government officials. Ololube (2012), states that Nigerian state legislations such as the Land Use Decrees of 1978 and petroleum Decrees of 1969 and 1991 contributed to the changed atmosphere in the region. The principle of Derivation in revenue allocation has been consciously and systematically obliterated by successive leaders of the Nigerian State. One can observe the reduction of the derivation principles from 100% (1953), 50% (1960), 45% (1970), 20% (1975), 2% (1982), 1.5% (1984), 3% (1992) and the later 13%.

Oil is the centre of militancy which may cease to exist when oil wells are dried. Or if the oil that flows brings joy, happiness, laugh and life, affluence and riches to those who sit on the oil deposit but if reverse is the case without hesitation, one can emphatically deduce that militancy and or any other social vices may not be near to an end and may have accounted for the non-violent agitations, dearth of infrastructural development in the area, corrupt practices, unemployment, increase in cyber crime, falling standard of education, amongst others (Researcher's view).

Nevertheless, youth restiveness is not a new phenomenon. There are various forms of youth restiveness that may have existed for a long time that may have economical, political, or religious inducement. Ofuru (2010), opines that youth in this context can be seen as young men and women who are no longer children, but not yet adults. Youth is the quality or state of being young and perhaps immature or inexperienced. This implies that a youth is a dependent either in knowledge, finance, ideas, or for survival who is still under construction, a child not adult whose arrival is still on the process.

Ofuru (2010), describes the youth as a big reservoir of labour and the most vibrant age bracket in human population or the marrow of the human resource of any country. Whether as students or not, youths are always at the forefront in the struggle against injustice, oppression, and exploitation. In any community or society, the youths are the agents of change. Not change to kidnapping or pipe-line vandalization etc., but a structured kind of change that is aimed at promoting peace, happiness, community development and international brotherhood of states, communities, and societies. The youths possess the physical and mental ingredients to bring about that social change. Not social vices. They have the exuberance and are very active, not very lazy. They travel at length, interact widely with people of varying backgrounds and cultures and assimilate easily. The youths by virtue of their vibrancy, generic mannerism and disposition are equipped with the necessary rudiment to usher in a people's culture that is filled with the ideology and local understanding that could usher in a new beginning for a systematic change.

As such, whenever the expectations of these youths are cut short, thwarted, delayed or denied, they have the tendency to be restive. Restiveness could be seen in someone who has excess expendable energy, zeal and drive to forge ahead. Youths by their nature are full of so much vitality, which make them restive. These energies when consciously and positively channeled and curbed in terms of employment generation, good governance, equal distribution of natural resources, e.t.c. receive social acceptance in creative vendors like music and dancing, enrolment in the forces, gainful employment, engagement in economic activities, academic and community development activities, participation in competitive sports amongst others.

Furthermore, there must be justice; the political will to punish criminals accordingly, checking arms running in the area, creation of employment opportunities for the youths and adequate funding of development projects that will result in community development. Community development is a structured intercession that gives communities authority over the circumstances that influence their lives. It involves bringing light and life to the dwellers particularly the rural dwellers. It also involves participation by both professionals and non professionals with the intention of developing community. There are also other community developers who in order to develop community take up different responsibilities and work with the community. However, in all the duties, the workers/developers always respect the autonomy and self-determination of the community members including the youths and do not impose an externally directed agenda upon them. Their work conforms to professional standards and ethics and is comprehensive and systematic in its approach which in all results in qualitative project delivery. In community development literature, the duties commonly ascribed to community development workers are enabler, guide, technical expert and liaison.

They are also involved in having the Knowledge of the community; listening to community members; bringing people together to develop the identified area of interest; helping community members to recognize and articulate areas of concern; assessment of community assets and resources, and so on (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). Community development is inclusive of material development and human development.

In actual sense, development helps to improve the strength of a community and enables such a community to have charge over its own development building around the community, brain storming and strategizing abilities. A good community development should leave a community not just with more immediate products for example housing, roads, hospitals, and schools but also with an increased capacity to meet future needs, renewing hope, restoring vision and progressive planning in our community (Dokubo, 2015).

Community development when adequately harnessed brings a community to the limelight and points of recognition. Most communities, towns, urban, state capitals, and so on, were able to metamorphose into beautiful cities and towns because of the level of community development carried out in them. In the past, places like Abuja, Lafia, Port Harcourt, Ikeja, and other state capitals were bucolic and rural communities but today, these communities are centres of attraction. Some community development projects may include: overhead bridge, bridge, fly-over, mono-rail, market, skill acquisition centres, electricity, good roads, and so on. A community development project/programme is successful when the elements are present in the project/programme. This has a lot of direct interpretation or effects on the people. Professionals believe that when the community members (the youths inclusive) are brought into the picture, their motivation and enthusiasm resonate in a manner that mutually contributes to community development but in Rivers State sometimes the process is foiled or thwarted by restiveness.

The importance of youths in the development of Rivers State cannot be overemphasized. This is so because their restive activities appear to be related to the nature of development accrued to the area. In essence, there seem to be a negative correlation between youths' restiveness and community development levels of the area. For instance, the spate of youth disturbances is particularly serious in Rivers State. The nature of exploitation of the area at the expense of the indigenes has been a major source of worry to the people and has resulted in restive activities. The youths have been at the forefront of restiveness for compensation for the exploitation of the area. This is not very surprising given the fact that they form a great portion of the entire society. According to Okorosaye-Orubite (2008), persons between the ages of 6-30 years, form about 59 percent of the population of Nigeria, while the productive active segment (15-30 years) constitute 47 percent of the productive population of the country. And they are the "brain and brown" of the societies to which they belong.

Rural youths make up a large segment of the total rural population; however, they are often neglected and overlooked by government policy makers and international agency development strategists. This can be attributed in large part to the overwhelming concern for immediate solutions to problems of national development with an accompanying inaccurate perception that youths are not yet productive and contributing members of society. We have to realize that millions of young people living in rural areas are a significant and untapped resource available to assist in community development process. The youths because of their sizeable portion in the entire population are useful engines for community development.

The need to harness and therefore tap their numerous physical and mental resources becomes necessary. Factors such as low level of exposure, poor leadership, lack of cooperation amongst youths, lack of encouragement from elders, and so on are some of the problems affecting youths' involvement in community development. Despite this, the youths have been found to have moderately high participation levels in community development and also favourable attitude towards community development. In addition, Youths are to be involved in community development because they want to help their communities, to be recognized, to interact with peers, and to gain personal benefits. This is a manifestation of their meaningful contribution to the development process.

Statement of the Problem

In recent times, communities in Rivers State have witnessed several acts of violence and lawlessness, such as hostage taking of prominent citizens and expatriate oil workers, oil bunkering, raping, political thuggery, armed robbery, cultism, sea pirating and militancy by the youths in the area causing health and occupational hazards to their victims, with the intention of having an equitable society. Because of this, people of the State no longer sleep with their two eyes closed. In a situation like this, community development is discouraged.

This work is therefore, designed to examine the perceived strategies of curbing youth restiveness for community development in Rivers State, with a view to making passionate recommendations that will ensure a restive free society and attracts community development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine perceived strategies of curbing youth restiveness for community development in Rivers State. The specific Objectives were to:

1. Determine whether good governance enhances community development.
2. Determine whether employment generation enhances community development.
3. Determine whether equal distribution of natural resources enhances community development.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does good governance enhance community development?
2. How does employment generation enhance community development?
3. How does equal distribution of natural resources enhance community development?

Hypotheses

1. Good governance does not significantly enhance community development.
2. Employment generation does not significantly enhance community development.
3. Equal distribution of natural resources does not significantly enhance community development.

METHODOLOGY

The research design employed in this study was the descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprised 3,500 members from selected youth organizations in Rivers State. A sample size of 700 members representing 20% of the population was selected through the purposive sampling technique. A self-designed instrument entitled “Perceived Strategies of Curbing Youth Restiveness for Community Development Questionnaire (PSOCYRCDQ)”, was used for data collection. The instrument was processed for reliability using test-retest method with Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) analysis which yielded an index of 0.84 and was considered reliable. The data was interpreted using mean and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were tested with one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research question 1

How does good governance enhance community development?

Table 1. Mean rating and standard deviation distribution of respondents on good governance and community development in Rivers State

S/N	Item/Variable	Mean	SD	N	Decision
1.	Democratic leadership style enhances community development.	3.21	0.47	700	Accepted
2.	Accountability by the leaders promotes community development.	3.22	0.67	700	Accepted
3.	Obedience to rule of law promotes community development.	3.10	0.50	700	Accepted
4.	Every transparent government contributes to community development.	3.23	0.44	700	Accepted
5.	Equitable and inclusive leadership enhances community development.	3.51	0.52	700	Accepted
Grand Mean		3.25			Accepted

From the data presentation on how good governance enhances community development, Table 1 above, the options that democratic leadership style enhances community development, that accountability by the leaders promotes community development, that obedience to rule of law promotes community development, that every transparent government contributes to community development and that equitable and that inclusive leadership enhances community development were all accepted by the respondents. Each of their means – 3.21, 3.22, 3.10, 3.23, 3.51, and a grand mean of 3.25 respectively are greater than 2.50 – the criterion mean.

Research question 2

How does employment generation enhance community development?

Table 2. Mean rating and standard deviation distribution of respondents on employment generation and community development in Rivers State

S/N	Item/Variable	Mean	SD	N	Decision
6.	Employment opportunity for the teeming youth enhances community development.	3.11	0.67	700	Accepted
7.	Poultry farming can generate employment for the youth thereby promoting community development.	2.82	0.80	700	Accepted
8.	Fish farming can generate employment for the youth thereby promoting community development.	2.94	0.72	700	Accepted
9.	Creating enabling environment for business to thrive contributes to community development.	3.21	0.66	700	Accepted
10.	Employing teachers enhances community development.	3.13	0.67	700	Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.04			Accepted

From the data presentation on how employment generation enhances community development, Table 2 above, the options that employment opportunity for the teeming youth enhances community development, that poultry farming can generate employment for the youth thereby promoting community development, that fish farming can generate employment for the youth thereby promoting community development, that creating enabling environment for business to thrive contributes to community development and that employing teachers enhances community development were all accepted by the respondents. Each of their means – 3.11, 2.82, 2.94, 3.21, 3.13, and a grand mean of 3.04 respectively are greater than 2.50 – the criterion mean.

Research question 3

How does equal distribution of natural resources enhance community development?

Table 3. Mean rating and standard deviation distribution of respondents on equal distribution of natural resources and community development in Rivers State

S/N	Item/Variable	Mean	SD	N	Decision
11.	Oil extracted and explored in Rivers State if well utilized in the area will curb restiveness thereby enhancing community development.	3.20	0.81	700	Accepted
12.	Gas produced in Rivers State can be used as a source of income for youth empowerment and development.	3.10	0.64	700	Accepted
13.	If oil companies in Rivers State employ the youth, it will give them hope and enhance community development.	3.12	0.73	700	Accepted
14.	Provision of farm land for farming for those whose environment has been degraded by oil spill, will curb restiveness and enhance community development.	2.90	0.83	700	Accepted
15.	Provision of portable water for those whose environment has been degraded by oil spill, will curb restiveness and enhance community development.	3.14	0.51	700	Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.09			Accepted

From the data presentation on how equal distribution of natural resources enhances community development, Table 3 above, the options that oil extracted and explored in Rivers State if well utilized in the area will curb restiveness thereby enhancing community development, that gas produced in Rivers State can be used as a source of income for youth empowerment and development, that if oil companies in Rivers State employ the youth, it will give them hope and enhance community development, that provision of farm land for farming for those whose environment has been degraded by oil spill, will curb restiveness and enhance community development and that Provision of portable water for those whose environment has been degraded by oil spill, will curb restiveness and enhance community development were all accepted by the respondents. Each of their means – 3.20, 3.10, 3.12, 2.90, 3.14, and a grand mean of 3.09 respectively are greater than 2.50 – the criterion mean.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Good governance does not significantly enhance community development.

Table 4: ANOVA Analysis of Good Governance and Community Development in Rivers State.

ANOVA						
		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Good governance and community development in Rivers State.	Between groups	44.090	3	14.697	20.24	.000
	Within groups	505.487	696	.726		
	Total	549.577	699			

The results of table 4 above revealed that the hypothesis which states that good governance does not significantly enhance community development is significant. As shown in F-ratio of 20.24; $p > .000$, tested at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, hypothesis one was rejected.

Hypothesis 2

Employment generation does not significantly enhance community development.

Table 5: ANOVA Analysis of Employment Generation and Community Development in Rivers State

ANOVA						
		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Employment generation and community development in Rivers State.	Between groups	8.124	3	2.708	2.69	.046
	Within groups	701.510	696	1.008		
	Total	709.634	699			

The results of table 5 above revealed that the hypothesis which states that employment generation does not significantly enhance community development is significant. As shown in F-ratio of 2.69; $p > .046$, tested at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, hypothesis two was rejected.

Hypothesis 3

Equal distribution of natural resources does not significantly enhance community development.

Table 6: ANOVA Analysis of Equal distribution of Natural Resources and Community Development in Rivers State

ANOVA						
		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Equal distribution of natural resources and community development in Rivers State.	Between groups	41.662	3	13.887	19.18	.000
	Within groups	503.965	696	.724		
	Total	545.627	699			

The results of table 6 above revealed that the hypothesis which states that equal distribution of natural resources does not significantly enhance community development is significant. As shown in F-ratio of 19.18; $p > .000$, tested at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, hypothesis three was rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that democratic leadership style enhances community development, accountability by the leaders promotes community development, obedience to rule of law promotes community development, every transparent government contributes to community development, and that equitable and inclusive leadership enhances community development. In a nut shell, the study averred that good governance curbs restiveness which in turn enhances community development. The findings of this study agreed with the findings of Enahoro (2019), who held that good governance affect the performance of citizens in the community.

It was also revealed in the study that employment opportunity for the teeming youth enhances community development, poultry farming can generate employment for the youth thereby promoting community development, fish farming can generate employment for the youth thereby promoting community development, creating enabling environment for business to thrive contributes to community development, and that employing teachers enhances community development. By implication, the study showed that employment generation is significant to community development. The findings of this study agreed with that of International Labour Organization (2007), who held that empowering people and communities through income generating activities promotes community development (www.ilo.org).

The study also held that oil extracted and explored in Rivers State if well utilized in the area will curb restiveness thereby enhancing community development, gas produced in Rivers State can be used as a source of income for youth empowerment and development, if oil companies in Rivers State employ the youth, it will give them hope and enhance community development, provision of farm land for farming for those whose environment has been degraded by oil spill, will curb restiveness and enhance community development, and that provision of portable water for those whose environment has been degraded by oil spill, will curb restiveness and enhance community development. Meaning that equal distribution of natural resources community development is a significant and effective strategy of curbing youth restiveness for enhancement of community development.

CONCLUSION

Curbing youth restiveness and promoting community development in Rivers State is not just important to the people of Rivers State but Nigerians at large. From the results obtained, good governance, employment generation, and equal distribution of natural resources were identified as some of the strategies that curb youth restiveness and having significant enhancement for community development in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made, that:

1. Our leaders should ensure good governance so that the issue of restiveness in Rivers State would be curbed and community development improved.
2. Government should create jobs for the teeming youths of Rivers State so that they (the youths) would be engaged meaningfully.
3. Government should evenly distribute the natural resources found in Rivers State among the people of the State because it will enhance community development and put youth restiveness to check.

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