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## YOUTH RESTIVENESS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A SITUATION STUDY OF NIGER DELTA EXPANSE

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### ABSTRACT

Youth restiveness has caused a lot of setbacks in the socio-economic development of the Niger Delta region and Nigeria at large. Multi-National Oil Companies' activities were disrupted thereby resulting in a loss of revenue accruing to the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and by extension the oil-producing states through the 13% derivation. Other problems generated by youth restiveness include land degradation through oil spillage, loss of lives and property, and in most cases human displacement.

This study set out to understand the effects of youth restiveness on the socioeconomic development of Nigeria and the oil-rich Niger Delta region. It adopted a research design, using a questionnaire to generate empirical data in order to outline the nature of youth restiveness in the Niger Delta Region, identify the causes of this youth restiveness, evaluate the effect of this youth restiveness on the socio-economic development in the Niger Delta Region, appraise the actions taken by governments at solving the problem and suggest further measures for solving the conflict situation beyond current government efforts. The study found, among other things, that youth vandalism and kidnapping were targeted mostly at Public and Private (Corporate) facilities; that their restiveness is mostly attributed to lack of employment; and that the declaration of amnesty by the government has gone a long way in addressing youth restiveness. The need for government to allow the federating units to control their resources showed up strongly as well.

Further, the study highlighted the need for different and innovative approaches in promoting youth's survival and growth by the government through enhanced security, and social and economic policies that will engineer development in the region. More has to be put in place to foster youth inclusion in the scheme of things.



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## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Human society, and in fact, the entire universe is simply and squarely a complex entity. To that extent, individuals and groups have their own complexities, needs, aspirations, hopes, goals, opinions, views and values which could be social, economic, religious, psychological or political (Anioke, 2002). Consequently, restiveness is bound to occur. It therefore presupposes that since conflict is a situation that is natural to man, our social life revolves and grows in conflict and restiveness.

Youth restiveness in Nigeria has been a prominent issue. Elegbeleye (2005) defined youth restiveness as “a sustained protestation embarked upon to enforce desired outcome from a constituted authority by an organized body of youths.” It is marked by violence and disruption of lawful activities. According to Peter Osalor in an article published in December 24, 2012 edition of the Vanguard Newspaper, “a sustained protestation embarked upon to enforce a desired outcome from a constituted authority” fits the label of youth restiveness. It could also be a combination of any action or conduct that constitutes unwholesome, unacceptable activities engaged in by the youths in any community.

Nigeria, after several decades of oil production, had by 2008 become almost significantly dependent economically on petroleum extraction which at the time generated 60% of its GDP<sup>1</sup>. In recent times, the percentage has risen to 75%.

Oil and natural gas generate about 97% of the Nigerian foreign exchange revenue as of today. Despite the vast wealth created by petroleum, the benefits have been slow to trickle down to the majority of the population, who since the 1960s have increasingly been forced to abandon their traditional agricultural practices. For instance, annual production of both cash and food crops dropped significantly in the later decades of 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Cocoa production dropped by 43% for example; Nigeria was the world’s largest cocoa exporter in 1960. Rubber production dropped by 29%, cotton by 65%, and groundnuts by 64%.

While many skilled, well-paid Nigerians have been employed by oil corporations, the majority of Nigerians and most especially the people of the Niger Delta States and the far North have become poorer since the 1960s. The Delta region has a steadily growing population estimated at more than 30 million people in 2005, and accounts for more than 23% of Nigeria’s total population with an annual growth rate of 6.5% as revealed by the 2010 Human Mobility Survey Report. The population density is also among the highest in the world, with 265 people per square kilometer, according to the Niger Delta Development Commission. This population is expanding at a rapid 3% per year and the oil capital, Port Harcourt, and other large towns are also growing quickly.

Poverty and urbanization in Nigeria are growing, and official corruption is a considered fact of life. The resulting scenario is one in which urbanization does not bring accompanying economic growth to provide jobs. These factors have led to agitations predominantly by the youths of the Niger Delta Region who are complaining about lack of social amenities such as lack of portable water, degradation of land and eco system, lack of hospitals, lack of good roads, lack of jobs for the indigenes of the region etc.

## Statement of the Problem

As stated in the background of the study, we all know that conflict as a phenomenon is inherent within people in any society, community, individuals, and even among Nations of the World. Whether we view conflict as normal or abnormal, it is a recurring natural or even pathological fact, depending on the perspective of the analyst. It is in all aspect of life characterized by social, economic, political, ethnic, religious and other forms of pluralism.

Notwithstanding all these facts, it is basic that the society and individuals need peace to reign in order to achieve their aims and objectives.

There is a high level of restiveness among youths in Nigeria. This is demonstrated by their involvement in cultism, gangsterism, drug addiction, vandalism and other vices. Its effects on the socio-economic wellbeing of the Niger Delta region, serving as the nerve centre of the nation's economy, needs to be researched. This is what this study set out to do.

## Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to understand the effects of youth restiveness on the socio-economic development of the Nigerian Oil rich Niger Delta Region. To this end, the study pursues the following specific objectives:

- (i) To outline the nature of youth restiveness in the Niger Delta Region.
- (ii) To identify the causes of this youth restiveness.
- (iii) To evaluate the effect of this youth restiveness on the socio-economic development in the Niger Delta Region.
- (iv) To appraise the actions taken by governments at solving the problem.
- (v) To suggest further measures for solving the conflict situation beyond current government efforts.

## Research Questions

The following research questions were developed for this study:

- (i) How has youth restiveness manifested in the Niger Delta Region?
- (ii) What is responsible for youth restiveness in the Region?
- (iii) How has youth restiveness affected the socio-economic development of the Region?
- (iv) What has the government done or is doing to address the restiveness?
- (v) What further measures should be adopted to address this challenge?

## Research Hypothesis

H1: Youth restiveness has significant relationship with Socio Economic Development.

HO: Youth restiveness has no significant relationship with Socio Economic Development.

## Significance of the Study

Youth restiveness in the Niger Delta Region, more often than not, metamorphosed into militancy which has a lot of negative impact on the socio-economic development of the region and the nation at large. In the light of the above, the importance of this study is to find out the causes of youth restiveness and its findings will be of benefit to the concerns of this Region and the nation at large. Having demonstrated the role of this Region in terms of revenue generation, the findings will urge the government to proffer solutions to youth restiveness in the Niger Delta Region.

Significantly, it will urge the “problem-solving” approach in conflict resolution, as opposed to “avoidance” or “confrontation.” Other researchers can draw on the findings of this study for their own works.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study focused on the effect of youth restiveness on the socio-economic development of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria which includes: AkwaIbom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta and Rivers States, whose livelihood has greatly been affected by the oil exploring activities. The period covered by the study is 2009 to date.

Youth restiveness is a broad phenomenon, but this study concentrated on militancy in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

### **Research Method**

The method adopted in this study was based on quantitative approach. This enabled the asking of specific questions and collection of data from participants. Quantitative method generally aims at getting reports for one or more variables on the subject of study and attempts to determine whether and to what extent a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In the course of the research, certain challenges were faced which almost caused hindrances to the completion of the research but were overcome by persistence. These hindrances or challenges included:

- Gaining access to the area of study: Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic as it is youth based, it was almost impossible to gain access to the said youth group to acquire information on the subject matter as the resource persons sometimes declined every attempt for interview.
- Considering the vast nature of the research area involving the States of the Niger Delta, getting across to respondents to acquire the required responses to the questionnaire was another challenge, hence the need for the introduction and training of research assistants to assist in this direction.
- Insecurity in every area of the study posed another challenge as certain areas were not penetrable for fear of attack.

Finally, finance was another major challenge as it was cost-intensive in managing the distribution and collation of the data.

### **Methodology**

Research methodology refers to the overall strategy that a researcher adopts to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring that the research problems are effectively addressed. This action constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. In this instance, the research problem goes a long way to determine the type of design that can be used by the researcher.

In a social science research like the one being presently handled, obtaining information relevant to the research problem generally entails specifying the type of evidence needed to test a theory, to evaluate a program, or to accurately describe and assess meaning related to observable phenomena. Without

attending to the design issues beforehand, the overall research problem will not be adequately addressed and any conclusions drawn would risk being weak and unconvincing. They would consequently undermine the overall validity of the study.

### Research Design

It is important to start by saying that questions of research must address something that can ultimately be measured. This means that the question has to be answerable, that is, one that can be tested and a set of predictions against which one can compare the results from the study.

Against this backdrop, questions in this research were framed in such a way to address or answer the specific objectives of the project work. The research intended to achieve five (5) specific objectives which were clearly laid out. Fifteen (15) objective questions were drawn to provide solution to the five specific objectives.

### Population of the Study

A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. All research questions address issues that are of great relevance to important groups of individuals known as a research population, researches are carried out for the benefit of the population. However, due to the large sizes of the population, researchers often cannot test every individual in the population because it is time consuming and it could also be too expensive to carry out. This is the reason researchers rely on sampling techniques.

A total of one hundred (100) respondents was targeted for this study. This figure comprised of twenty (20) respondents among youths from each of the five (5) States of the Niger Delta Region. The subjects were made up of both sex that is males and females, their ages ranged from 21-40 years. The subjects represented a blend of lower and middle socio-economic class which is typical of the Nigerian setting.

### Sampling and Sample Size

A sample is some part of a larger body specially selected to represent the whole. Sampling is the process by which this part is chosen. Sampling then is taking any portion of a population or Universe. For a sample to be useful, it should reflect the similarities and differences found in the total group. The main objective of drawing a sample is to make inference about the larger population from the same sample.

Whenever a population is too large, it becomes necessary to use statistical measures to determine appropriate sample size for use. For an extremely large population like the one of this study, Watson (2001 p4) recommended an equation for determining final sample size. The expected frequency is derived thus:

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(x_o - x_e)^2}{x_e}$$

Where:  $x^2$  = Sample Size

$\Sigma$  = Summation

$x_o = \text{Observed Frequency}$

$x_e = \text{Expected Frequency}$

In each of the five (5) selected States of the Niger Delta Region twenty (20) youths comprising both male and female were picked. They were administered with the questionnaire and interviewed individually.

### **Data Collection Instrument and Validation**

Data collection instrument is an important aspect of any type of research study. Inaccurate data collection can impact the results of a study and ultimately lead to invalid results. Data collection methods for impact evaluation vary along a continuum. At one end of this continuum are quantitative methods, and at the other end of the continuum are qualitative methods for data collection.

The quantitative data collection methods rely on random sampling and structured data collection instruments that fit diverse experiences in predetermined response categories. They produce results that are easy to summarize, compare and generalize.

Quantitative research is concerned with testing hypothesis derived from theory and / or being able to estimate the size of a phenomenon of interest. Depending on the research question, participants may be randomly assigned to different treatments. If this is not feasible, the researcher may collect data on participant and situational characteristics in order to statistically control for their influence on the dependent, or outcome, variable. If the intent is to generalize from the research participants to a larger population, the researcher will employ probability sampling to select participants.

Paper – pencil – questionnaires can be sent to a large number of people and saves the researcher time and money. People seem to be more truthful while responding to the questionnaires regarding controversial issues in particular due to the fact that their responses are anonymous. But they also have drawbacks. Majority of the people who receive questionnaires don't return them and those who do might not be representative of the originally selected sample (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001).

Interviews were also used in this study. Interviews are generally less structured than the quantitative research. Face to face interviews have a distinct advantage of enabling the researcher to establish rapport with potential respondents and therefore gain their cooperation. Interviews yield highest response rates in survey research. It also provides the opportunity for the researcher to clarify ambiguous answers and when appropriate, seek follow-up information. The disadvantage is however, when large samples are involved, it will be expensive and time consuming.

The data collection instruments used for this study were basically the questionnaire and interviews. A simple random sampling was employed in selecting the sample of the 100 respondents in the study. Each of the groups that made up the population of the study was handled separately.

### Techniques for Data Analysis

Analysis of data is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision-making. Data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques under a variety of names, in different business, science, and social science domains.

Data mining is a particular data analysis technique that focuses on modeling and knowledge discovery for prediction rather than purely descriptive purposes. Business intelligence covers data analysis that relies heavily on aggregation, focusing on business information.

Quantitative techniques were used in analyzing the data. Also, ordinal and nominal scales were applied in the interpretation. Data presentation shall be done using tables, simple percentages, pie charts, bar graphs, and chi-square.

Questionnaires were administered to the 100 size sample through personal delivery and through the sectorial leaders of the respective youth groups in the case study Area. Research Assistants too were used to administer the questionnaires at some locations, while the collection and collation of these data were administered by the researcher to ensure accuracy and integrity of the research work, considering the vast and scattered nature of the study area.

### Validity and Reliability Test

To ensure validity of instruments, a pilot study was conducted using a sub sample of 20 to assist in detecting poorly constructed questions for final correction. The instrument and methodology were subjected to scrutiny by experts and the research supervisor to rid them of any ambiguity that might affect the result. For reliability, test re-test method was employed.

### Introduction, Presentation and Analysis Of Findings

This chapter presents and analyses the findings of this research project. The analysis is based on the responses of 100 respondents sampled out of the population of the research area. The questionnaire collected the demographic attributes of the respondents who were made up of both sexes, i.e. male and female. Their ages ranged from 18 to 35 years; their occupations represented a strata of lower and middle socio-economic class.

**Table 1: Main Forms of Violence or Disruptive Activities by Organized Youths in the last 10 Years.**

<i>Forms</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>
Cultism	10
Vandalism	30
Riot Protest	10
Kidnapping	30
Bombing	20

*Source: Field Survey, 2018*

From the data in Table 1 above, the main forms of violence or disruptive activities by organized youths in the last 10 years are **vandalism** and **kidnapping**. Other forms such as bombing, cultism and

riot protests also contributed.

**Table 2: Targets of Descriptive Activities**

<i>Targets</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>
Public (Govt. Owned) Facilities.	30
Private (cooperate) facilities.	20
Private (individual).	0
Public & Private (corporate) together.	40
Public & Private (Individual) together.	10

*Source: Field Survey, 2018*

As seen in Table 2 above, the activities of these organized youths are targeted mostly at **Public and Private (Corporate) facilities**. The next most targeted is Public (Govt. Owned) facilities.

**Table 3: How often the act of restiveness occurred during the period.**

<i>No of activities</i>	<i>No of Respondents</i>
10 – 15 times a month.	5
7 – 10 times a month.	5
5 – 7 times a month.	25
3 – 5 times a month.	50
1 – 2 times a month.	15

*Source: Field Survey, 2018*

Table 3 above indicates clearly that the largest portion of the respondents believed the act of restiveness occurred between 3 – 5 times a Month.

**Table 4: Factors Responsible for Youth Violence or Disruptive Activities**

<i>Factors</i>	<i>No of respondents</i>	<i>%</i>
(a) Lack of employment	40	40%
(b) Lack of medical facilities	2	2%
(c) Lack of access road	5	5%
(d) Lack of portable water	5	5%
(e) Water pollution	30	30%
(f) Land degradation	15	15%
(g) Insecurity	3	3%
<b>Total</b>	100	100%

*Source: Field Survey, 2018*



Of the 100 respondents, 40% attributed the causes of youth restiveness to lack of employment, while 30% said the act of restiveness is caused by water pollution. The reason for the latter is that this is one of the main agricultural stays in the area and the aquatic nature has been fully destroyed through oil spillage and other forms of pollution activities by the dredging companies. Other factors scored significantly lower than these two.

The view that unemployment is the major cause of youth restiveness in the region is in line with the findings of Zakaria (2006), Ofem and Ajayi (2008) and Ozohu Suleiman (2006). The combined force of water pollution and land degradation is significant in the views expressed about the causes of youth restiveness in this region

**Table 5: The Effect of Youth Restiveness on Socio-Economic Development**

Issue	Good	Bad	Don't Know
What is the current situations concerning fishing activities in the region?	20	80	0
What is the current situation concerning children going to school?	30	60	10
What is the current situation concerning buying and selling (trading) activities?	45	50	5
What is the current situation concerning farming activities?	10	85	5
What is the current situation concerning social activities (ceremonies)?	40	50	10

*Source:* Field survey 2018.

Issue	Yes	No	Don't Know
Has the sense of security improved in the region?	65	25	10
Has the sense of wellbeing improved in the region?	20	75	5
Has the rate of employment improved in the region?	10	85	5

*Source:* Field survey 2018.

It could be seen from the data in Table 5 above, that **farming activities** were the worst hit by Youth Restiveness. This is followed by fishing, educational, commercial and social activities respectively.

As to whether the security situation has improved in the region, majority (65%) said yes. However, employment and wellbeing of the people have **not** improved: 75% and 85% held these views respectively.

**Table 6: Effective Measures taken by Government to Address the Youth Restiveness in the Region**

<i>Measures</i>	<i>No. of respondents</i>	<i>%</i>
Declaration of Amnesty	43	43%
Attack by security forces	10	10%
Youths employment	2	2%
Skill Acquisition programme	15	15%
Youth empowerment	20	20%
Education	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source:* Field Survey, 2018

As presented in Table 6 above, the **declaration of amnesty** by government has gone a long way in addressing youth restiveness – considered the most effective. This is followed by youth empowerment, skill acquisition, intervention of security forces and education in that order.

**Table 7: Further measures to be taken by government in bringing lasting solution to the issue of youth restiveness in the region**

<i>Opinion</i>	<i>%</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the people's living condition.</li> <li>• Involvement in the management of resources.</li> <li>• Further boosting of the existing amnesty programme.</li> <li>• Justice in the utilization of resources.</li> <li>• Resource control policy</li> </ul>	<p>20%</p> <p>20%</p> <p>5%</p> <p>15%</p> <p>40%</p>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source:* Field Survey, 2018

Table 7 above shows that if the Federal Government will allow the federating units to control their resources, it will go a very long way in solving the conflict situation. This is followed by improving the living condition of the people of the Niger Delta region and involving them in the management of these resources.

### **Conclusion:**

The research has explored the issues considered crucial in creating and sustaining an enabling environment for the prevention of youth restiveness in the Niger Delta Region that requires special attention with regards to security. However, given their low survival capacity and the long time negligence of the region by government, there is need for different and innovative approaches in promoting their survival and growth through an enhanced security, social and economic policy that will engineer development in the region. Government has a dominant role in creating and maintaining enabling environment for this all important aspect of live for the people inhabiting the nation's main resources.

In solving the cases of youth restiveness in the Niger Delta Region, more has to be put in place with regards to youth interest and inclusion in the scheme of things. Even though such efforts have been made by past and present administrations, the level of such is still considered as low or insufficient especially in the areas of basic infrastructures such as education, medical facilities, roads, portable water and employment opportunity. Though policies for the youths have been put in place, the implementation of such policies is not effective either due to lack of political will or administrative failure. Examples include implementation of the amnesty programme and the resource distribution and control policies.

Youth restiveness in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria has adversely affected not only the socio-economic development of the region but also the economic growth and development of the nation Nigeria at large. A country which has abundant resources is seen as not an investor's friendly society for fear of the negative activities of the youths in the region which includes all forms of anti-social vices leading to loss of lives and properties. Attacks are sometimes launched against pipelines and other facilities of government and those belonging to the corporate investors within the region. The attacks result in numerous casualties among the civilian population and damage to their objects, which is unacceptable.

## 5.2 Recommendations:

Based on the findings from the study and in order to provide the much needed solutions to the issues of youth restiveness in the Niger Delta Region, the under listed are required to be religiously followed:

1. Enhance more youth based programmes that will involve the youths in the activities of the region as contained in the humanitarian law.
2. Further enhance the powers of the already existing legal instruments meant for the protection of the youths.
3. Draw experience from the existing policies of the past government in addressing conflicts with a view to improving on possible lapses and work towards an absolute conflict-free region.
4. Develop a strong political will that will create room for fairness and justice in dealing with issues of socio-economic policies in the region.
5. Feel the pulse of the people on issues of youth empowerment and development and work towards meeting up to their legitimate demands.
6. Develop and implement laws to discipline erring members of the society with regards to cases of power abuse and anti-government activities.
7. Further strengthen the existing security architecture to forestall further breakdown of law and order within the region
8. Create employment opportunities for the youths to usefully engage them; thus preventing them from going into crime.
9. Implement the cleanup exercise of the Ogoni land to better the status of the environment and to create a friendlier environment for living.
10. Establish more educational institutions of learning to provide the youths with the privilege of developing themselves.

Consider the demands of the Niger Delta region with regards to restructuring in order to give the region the opportunity to control its resources.

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