

ROLES OF TRADITIONAL RULERS OF NEWLY CREATED AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES IN IZZI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EBONYI STATE TOWARD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This research centered on the roles of traditional rulers of newly created autonomous communities in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State toward community development. The study adopted survey research designed guided by four research questions. The population of the study was made up of the study. A structural questionnaire titled Roles Traditional Rulers in Community Development ROTRICD was used for the study. The data collected were analyzed using tables and simple percentage with 50% and above as the yardstick for acceptance or rejection of the items as factors influencing the study. The study revealed that; traditional rulers newly created autonomous community in Izzi council area apart from traditional roles play other roles in community development, but that that some problems face traditional rulers in the performance of their roles toward community development. Therefore, the study among others recommended that government and town union leaders should approve alternative sources of fund for traditional rulers for community development.

Keywords: Roles, Traditional rulers, Community, development.

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans in Nigeria some communities already had traditional rulers who ruled them. The traditional rulers were entrusted with the performance of various functions in their communities which include waging of wars and making of sacrifices to appease the gods. The community also helped through traditional rulers in making of bush paths to adjoining hamlets and construction of road linking one village to another. These were accomplished with voluntary labor by able bodies men in the villages.

The arrival of the colonial masters in Nigeria changed the roles of British administration during the indirect rule system. Lord Lugard in Alaorisade (2005) asserted that the policy of government was that Chiefs should govern their people not as independent but dependent rulers. This system

was adopted in the full application to communities under centralized rule as was evident in the Muslim communities of the north.

During the Colonial era, most of the amenities that made life worth living were established in commercial and urban centers. This was because these centers had largest concentration of Colonial administrators, businessmen, missionaries and some western education elites. This promoted the migration of people from rural to urban areas. Presently, state and council areas in Nigeria are eager to develop rural areas and supply them with modern amenities to control rural-urban drift as well as to bring government closer to the grass roots. Traditional rulers no doubt have great roles to play in the development of their different communities.

Indeed, the roles of traditional rulers in community development motivated the Executive Governor of Ebonyi State Rt. Honourable Francis Ogbonnaya Nwifuru to create nine autonomous communities recently from Izzi local government Area to bring the total number of communities to fifteen. Therefore, this study investigated the roles of traditional rulers of the newly created autonomous communities in community development using Izzi local government Area of Ebonyi State as a case study.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The roles of traditional rulers are expected to play in community development are enormous. There is the fear that traditional rulers do not actually know their roles in community development. This is because most times traditional rulers are engrossed in settling land disputes, police cases, marriage problems etc in their respective communities. This makes traditional rulers to abandon the roles expected of them towards community development. Therefore, the problem of this study investigated the roles of traditional rulers in community development in Nigeria using Izzi local government Area as a case study.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to find out the roles of traditional rulers in communities' development. Specifically, this study was intended to;

1. Identify the roles of traditional rulers in community development.
2. Discover the problems encountered by traditional rulers in community development.

3. Identify the effects of these problems faced by traditional rulers in community development.
4. Suggest solutions to the problems of traditional rulers in community development.

1.4 Significance of the study

- The findings of this study would help traditional rulers to know their roles in community development.
- The citizens at the grass root would benefit from the findings of the study as it will make traditional rulers to play roles for their welfare.
- It would be of great help to government and policy makers as far as traditional rulers and their roles are concerned in community development.
- It would also serve as a reference material to students of community development especially as it affects the roles played by traditional rulers.

1.5 Scope of the study

- This research was interested in the study of the roles of traditional rulers of newly created autonomous communities toward community development. This study is limited to Izzi local government Area of Ebonyi state.

1.6 Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions.

1. What are the roles of traditional rulers of newly created community development?
2. What are the problems encountered by the traditional rulers in community development?
3. What are the effects of these problems faced by traditional rulers of newly created communities on rural development?
4. What are the solutions to the problems of traditional rulers in community development?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following sub headings forms the major items on the methodology; research design, area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, instrument for data collection,

validation of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

3.1 Research design

The study adopted survey research design. This is because the design permits the use of questionnaire, interview or field observation in generating data for the study.

3.2 Area of the study

Izzi local government Area is one of the 13 council areas of Ebonyi State. It is bounded in the north by Benue State, South by Abakaliki local government Area, East and West by Cross River State and Ebonyi local government area respectively. It has 15 autonomous communities with its council Headquarters at Iboko.

It is a host to the proposed ICT University and the country home of the present governor of the State, Rt. Hon. Ogbonnaya Nwifuru. There are many primary and secondary schools including markets. The people are predominantly farmers, civil servants, and tradesmen.

3.3 Population of the study

The population comprised all the Civil Servants, Co-operative societies and town union leaders in the area of the study. Therefore, the total population is 5000.

3.4 Sample and sampling techniques

A sample of 200 respondents was drawn out of the total population using random sampling techniques.

3.5 Instrument for data collection

A questionnaire titled Roles of Traditional Rulers in Community Development (ROTRICD) was developed by the researcher. The instrument contained 16 items arranged in four sections seeking information on the roles of traditional rulers, problems of traditional rulers in community development, effects and solutions to the problems faced by traditional rulers in community development.

3.6 Validation of the instrument

The validation of the instrument was done by experts and colleagues in Measurement and Evaluation of the school of Education in Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo. Through the process, the face and content validity was established before the researcher will adopt the instrument.

3.7 Reliability of the instrument

The researcher adopted a test-re-test method. Consequently 20 copies of the questionnaire will be administered to 20 respondents in Ebonyi local government area outside the area of research. The Same instrument was re-administered to the same group at an interval of two weeks and scores was collated. The two set of scores was correlated using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistics.

3.8 Method of data collection

The researcher personally travelled, administered and collected the completed questionnaire on the spot to promote maximum return. The completed questionnaires were used for the data analysis.

3.9 Method of data analysis

The data collected in the course of this study was analyzed by percentage computations. It is the researcher's belief that percentage analysis will clarify the result of the study. The decision rule is that any item that scored 50% and above will be regarded as a factor influencing the item of the study while those that score 50%, and below will be regarded as insignificant to the result of the study.

PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF DATA

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and summary of data and the result of the study. They are presented according to the research questions in table I-V.

Research question I.

What are the roles of traditional rulers of newly created communities in Izzi Local Government Area toward community development?

Table 1: Roles of traditional rulers in community development.

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	DECISION
1	The maintenance of Schools	70	90	30	10	200	Accepted
		35%	45%	15%	5%	100%	
2	The construction of village markets	50	80	40	30	200	Accepted
		25%	40%	20%	15%	100%	
3	The construction and maintenance of rural roads	70	90	30	10	200	Accepted
		35%	45%	15%	5%	100%	
4	The mobilization of the masses in support of government policies and programme	70	80	30	20	200	Accepted
		35%	40%	15%	10%	100%	

The above table showed that 80% of the respondents agreed that traditional rulers help in school maintenance while 20% disagreed. On the roles of traditional rulers or village markets 65% of the respondents accepted that traditional rulers in Izzi local government play roles in construction of markets while 35% of the respondents held contrary opinion. Still on table 1, 80% of the respondents supported that traditional rulers in the council area play roles in the construction and maintenance of rural roads while 20% of the respondent disagreed. Finally, on the table, 75% of the respondents agreed that traditional rulers play great roles in the mobilization of the masses in support of government policies and programme while 25% of the respondents disagreed. The result from this table showed that traditional rulers played roles in community development in autonomous communities in Izzi local government Area?

Table II:

Problems encountered by traditional rulers in community development in Izzi local government Area?

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	DECISION
5	Lack of finance	80	60	40	20	200	Accepted
		40%	30%	20%	10%	100%	
6	Land dispute and communal clash	90	80	20	10	200	Accepted
		45%	40%	10%	5%	100%	
7	Lack of co-operation among people	60	90	30	20	200	Accepted
		30%	45%	15%	10%	100%	
8	Insecurity in autonomous communities	90	80	20	10	200	Accepted
		45%	40%	10%	5%	100%	

Table II above indicated that 70% of the respondents agreed that lack of finance for community development is a problem facing traditional rulers in Izzi Council area while 30% of the respondents disagreed. On land dispute and communal clash 85% of the respondents accepted that there are also problems encountered by traditional rulers in autonomous communities in Izzi Local government area while 15% of the respondent rejected it. Still on table II, 75% of the respondents accepted that one of the problems facing traditional rulers in Izzi local government area is lack of co-operation among the people of the autonomous communities while 25% of the respondents held contrary opinion.

On the issue of insecurity leading to loss of lives and property, 85% of the respondents agreed that it was one of the challenges facing the traditional rulers of the autonomous communities in Izzi local government Area while 15% of the respondents disagreed. The interpretation of this table showed that traditional rulers faced some problems in community development.

Research question III:

What are the effects of the problems faced by traditional rulers of newly created autonomous communities on rural development?

Table III: Effects of the problems faced by traditional rulers on rural development

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	DECISION
9	Lack of fund for community development	70	60	20	10	200	Accepted
		35%	30%	15%	10%	100%	
10	Destruction of lives and property	80	90	20	10	200	Accepted
		40%	45%	10%	5%	100%	
11	Disunity and agitations for more autonomous communities by the community members	30	40	70	60	200	Rejected
		15%	20%	35%	30%	100%	
12	Strained relationship, suspicion and social instability	90	70	30	10	200	Accepted
		45%	35%	15%	5%	100%	

Table III above indicated that 65% of the respondents agreed that one of the effects of lack of finance for community development by traditional rulers was lack of enough fund for community development while 35% of the respondents disagreed. Also in Table III, 85% of the respondents agreed that the effects of the problems facing traditional rulers in community development with

reference to land dispute and communal clash in autonomous communities of Izzi local government Area is the destruction of lives and property while 15% of the respondents held contrary opinion. Still on table III 35% of the respondents agreed that the effect of lack of co-operation among the people towards community development was disunity and endless agitations for more autonomous communities by individuals while 65% of the respondents rejected this opinion. Finally, on this table 80% of the respondents accepted that one of the effects of the insecurity in autonomous communities facing traditional rulers was loss of lives and property of community members while 20% of the respondents rejected this view. The analysis of this table showed that items 9, 10, and 12 were accepted because they scored above the 50% acceptance decision rule while item 11 which scored 35% below the decision rule of 50% was rejected.

Research question IV

What are the solutions to the problems of traditional rulers of autonomous communities of Izzi council area in community development?

Table IV: Solutions to the problems of traditional rulers in community development.

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	DECISION
13	Alternative sources of raising fund by traditional rulers	70	80	30	20	200	Accepted
		35%	40%	15%	10%	100%	
14	Proper boundary demarcation and adjustment between warring communities	70	90	20	20	200	Accepted
		35%	45%	10%	10%	100%	
15	Inclusive administration and equity in the distribution of resources by traditional rulers among individuals and groups within the communities	80	70	20	10	200	Accepted
		40%	45%	10%	5%	100%	
16	Effective deployment of security personnel by government to patrol and occupy the disputed territories in the communities	30	40	70	60	200	Rejected
		15%	20%	35%	30%	100%	

Table IV above showed that 75% of the respondents agreed that the solution to the problems of traditional rulers in community development with respect to problem of finance was provision of alternative sources of raising fund by traditional rulers in the community while 25% of the respondents disagreed. Still on the table IV, 80% of the respondents agreed that proper boundary

demarcation and adjustment between warring communities was a solution to land disputes and communal clashes but 20% of the respondents disagreed. On the issue of lack of co-operation among the people as on the problems facing traditional rulers in community development, 85% of the respondents accepted that the solution to it was inclusive administration and equity in the distribution of resources by traditional rulers among individuals and groups in the communities while 15% of the respondents rejected it. Finally, 35% of the respondents the view that the solution to insecurity in the communities was effective deployment of security personnel by government to patrol and occupy disputed areas in the communities while 65% of the respondents opposed this view.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND SUMMARY

Discussion of finding

The findings of the study were discussed based on the four research questions that guided the study.

Research question 1 asked about the roles of traditional rulers of the autonomous communities in Izzi local government toward community development. From table one, the researcher discovered that greatest percentage of the respondents agreed that roles of traditional rulers include the maintenance of schools, construction of village markets, construction of rural roads, and the mobilization of the masses in support of government programme.

Research question two investigated the problems faced by the traditional rulers in community development. From table two, all the respondents accepted that autonomous communities of Izzi local Government Area that traditional rulers face problem of lack of fund for community development, land dispute and communal clashes, lack of co-operation among the people and problem of insecurity in the autonomous communities.

Researches question three illicit responses on the effects of the problems faced by traditional rulers on rural development. Table three showed that the effects of the problem faced by traditional rulers included the lack of fund for community development, destruction of lives and property of community members and strained relationship, suspicion and social instability among the people. However, the respondents rejected item 11 which was the effects of the problems faced by traditional rulers in community development was disunity and agitations for more autonomous

communities. This was because this item scored 35% which was lower than the accepted decision rule of 50%. The analysis from this research question was that the problems faced by the traditional rulers have some effects in community development.

Research question four investigated the solutions to the problems of traditional rulers in community development. The analysis showed that greatest percentage of the respondents agreed that solutions to the problems faced by traditional rulers in community development included; provision of alternative sources of raising fund by traditional rulers, proper boundary demarcation and adjustment between warring communities. However, the respondents rejected the opinion that the solution to insecurity in the communities was effective deployment of security personnel by government to patrol and occupy the disputed areas in the communities. This rejection by the respondents was based on the previous experiences where occupation of disputed territories by security personnel leads to extortion, harassment including rape of girls and women by the occupying security personnel.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of data for this study, the researcher concluded that apart from their traditional roles that traditional rulers of newly created autonomous communities in Izzi local government area of Ebonyi State also play great roles in community development. It was also found that traditional rulers while playing roles toward community development were faced with problems of lack of finance, insecurity, lack of co-operation amongst their subjects and land dispute. Therefore, for the traditional rulers Izzi local government area to play active roles in community development, these identified problems need to be properly handled.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher made the following recommendations.

1. Traditional rulers and town union leaders should work together for effective community development.
2. The government and town union leaders should approve sources of fund for traditional rulers to enable them play active role in community development.
3. Individuals and groups should co-operate with the traditional rulers in order to promote meaningful community development.

4. The government should ensure that all disputed boundaries are properly demarcated to promote security of lives and property of the community members.

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