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Original Research Article

Traditional Welfare Institutions and Services Delivery Challenges in Rivers State

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Abstract

This Research investigated Traditional Institutions and Welfare Systems in Rivers State, anchored on the Political Economy, and the Structural Functionalism Approaches respectively. The work is a descriptive study and adopted the mixed methods of research which is the qualitative and quantitative research methods. Data was collected through the means of Focus Group Discussion (FGDs), key Informant Interview (KII) and the questionnaire. The researcher utilized the Taro Yamane formula to arrive at a sample size of four hundred (400) Respondents. The study was conducted in six randomly selected local government areas, and the accidental sampling technique was used to access the respondents. The quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistic such as Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation, whereas, the qualitative data was analyzed with the content analysis technique. Findings from this Study revealed that traditional institutions have structures such as family, age grades and other groups Which perform welfare role to their members.

And they are sources of mutual supports to their members in times of socio-economic needs. But there are challenges which distort collective efforts.

Keywords: *Traditional Institutions; Welfare Systems; Rivers State; Political Economy; Structural Functionalism; Social Support; Community Development.*

INTRODUCTION

Every Society had people who were involved in organizing, directing and influencing human and natural resources in order to engender a congenial environment for group members to thrive and achieve their goals. During the pre-colonial era in Africa, traditional institutions were the final arbiter that organized and directed day to day activities in their domains. Such institutions are found in traditional societies due to leadership role. No doubt max Weber categorized all types of authority into three namely; traditional (a leadership that is based on feudal laws), rational-legal (the type of authority a modern state exercises e.g. bureaucratic authority) and charismatic (leadership that is based on traceable track records).

The likes of Comte believed that society has undergone different stages of development ranging from the Theological stage, Metaphysical stage and Positive stage respectively. The Theological stage was the first stage in which its system of belief was that activities of humankind, especially in the social and physical environments were modeled after spiritual and religious powers. A second stage was the Metaphysical stage that was characterized by belief that nature or abstract forces explained virtually everything in society rather than existence of gods and deities. Finally, he also identified the positive stage which was characterized with belief in scientific innovations. People at this era focused more on observation of the social and physical world in the search for the laws governing social them.

Rostow in Nmom (2002) identified five stages in the historical development of societies. He explained that the traditional society(a society in which family and hierarchy traditional leadership play vital roles)was the first stage of society every nations of the world passed through before attaining pre-conditions for take-off (a time known for formation of modern ideas), take-off (the era societies make progress by using modern tools), and drive to maturity(this period is

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characterized with effective utility of modern tools) including high production or high consumption. In the traditional Nigerian society, the set of people who control direct, and superintend over traditional institutions are called traditional rulers. Traditional institutions are mechineries through which cultural groups are organised for achievement of their collective wellbeing.

In Nigeria as a multi-ethnic nation, name of such institutions is based on the people and their culture because custodians of traditional institutions are regarded as the central point of social interactions of the indigenes of the land as their leadership, power, authority, legitimacy were derived from the traditions and culture of their people. This has a direct connection to Comtes' Theological stage and Rostows traditional stage of societal development which was characterized with feudal lords, serfs and slaves forms of social relationship. In every town or city in Nigeria, there is tradition; hence traditional institutions. Examples of traditional stools in Nigeria include Emirs in Hausa land, the Oba in Yoruba land, the Eze and Obi in Igbo land, the Amayanaowe in Nembe Ijaw Kingdom, the Nana of Itsekiri, the Ooni of Ife, the Attar of Igala land, the Obong of Calabar, the Etsu of Nupe, including their subordinates such as provincial chiefs, princes, title chiefs, village heads, respectively. Today most of these traditional institutions are becoming attractive because of government recognition, unlike in the past when they were mere ceremonial Heads and final arbiters of their people. This confirms Comtes' idea that society progresses through different stages, even if some element of one stage are present in another stage of its development.

Some of the traditional institutions in Nigerian have become so mature on traditional matters that they serve as reference point when it comes to handling such issues meanwhile some ethnic groups are crystallizing. The majority ethnic groups in Nigeria are the Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo, popularly known as Northern, Western and South Eastern Nigeria, whereas, South-South Nigeria in its numerous ethnic nations are in minority.

Traditions, customs and rules for regulating human conduct and social relationship vary from one society to another. As with other societies of Africa, traditional institutions were not always obeyed nor are expectations all the time fulfilled. As a result, some sanctions were put in place to prevent social disorder.

Despite that each ethnic group occupies a distinct territory; there had been a considerable culture contact among ethnic groups in Nigeria. These contacts were due to trade, agriculture, tourism, war which subsequently resulted into social insecurity and domination of some minority ethnic groups like the Sokoto caliphate of Uthman Dan Fodio.

Nmom (2002) opined that as days rolled by, traditional ways of organizing and managing human and natural resources became customary and necessary for the welfare of groups to the extent that non conformity became socially punishable by incarceration or ostracism. This eventually became social institutionalized now referred to as traditional institutions. Traditional Institutions are informal socio-economic and political organizations involved in controlling and managing people and resources belonging to the same ethnic group that derive their power, authority and legitimacy from the tradition of the people. Rodney (2004) asserts that under the auspices of traditional institutions in Nigeria, many of the various ethnic groups have shown capacity for independently increasing their ability to live more satisfactorily as they explored their environment for survival. Through the application of indigenous mutual obligations of various traditional institutions enabled the people to cope with their personal and group challenges.

Traditional institutions as traditionally based Organizations (T.B.O) have their social structures and elaborate system of guides and sanctions of which if observed promotes wellbeing of the group and enhance social order in their community. As it were in other African societies, Nigeria traditional institutions were ruled by narrative and descriptive ethics of conduct, legal sanctions, and social customs and in submitting to the plights of the community, individuals find social security and peace. Although some scholars are the of view that such submission cannot guarantee welfare of members but would rather impose the group on the individuals, but they failed to take into cognizance that nobody can successfully live in isolation because life is better lived in a group of good people and loved ones. To ensure welfare for all, it was the responsibility of the elders to maintain social norms and values relating to the well-being of the community. Within the traditional setting, young people were regarded as novice who were yet to be acquainted with skills of meeting welfare expectations of other members of society, and as such, the elders were aware that they owe their positions to ensuring the collective good of their members through their roles because they have ideas of the norms of right or wrong which are underpinning factors wellbeing of their group.

The good was usually that which received community's approval and rewards while bad referred to that which community prohibits, frowns at as unacceptable and punishes as a result. While good behavior builds a community and enhance general well-being of community members, bad behaviors tears it down. The initial is social and the later anti-social. Traditional institutions as part of Nigeria's identity and cultural heritage utilized norms or social customs as the means by which they enforce conformity to its rules. It served as the measuring tool for determining the values of society. It is also a means of regulating and controlling group members from one generation to another through socialization in which the role learning of young ones are facilitated.

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Community's enforcement mechanism includes public shame and taunting improvised songs. Others include disciplinary measures such as fine, and banishment etc. The indigenous social relationship in Nigeria was tremendously harmonious much more so that one who travelled to pay visit to his kinsmen in another community was well received, offered food, drink, accommodation and shown hospitality to engender his or her comfort and happiness as a person. Traditional welfare Services refer to those obligations of helping individuals and group of people in ones setting which enable them cope with their personal or group challenges. Societies in Africa possessed one form of welfare service to another at one point or another in their history to the extent Walter Rodney noted that our societies were developing at their pace.

Traditional institutions have been known to be part and parcel of indigenous Societies in Nigeria. Okoli (2005) and Ogunuiyi & Obli(2005), confirmed that there were Emire, Oba, Eze,etc, who served as district, and village head to ensure administrative convenience within the traditional settings in Nigeria.

According to Achebe (1980), when Okonkwo was banished due to the murder of Ezeudu's sixteen years old son, his maternal uncles received and helped him to resettle among his mother's kinsmen to ensure that he was re-habilitated, reformed and re-integrated into society for his survival and welfare. If a man visited his bosom friend in a nearby community, he was well received and without delay offered gourd of palm wine or local gin as appetizer. Thereon the host invites his neighbors for merriments and makes his stay memorable. As soon as the neighbors' wife finished cooking, her husband usually requests her to set the meal at the table before their guest. And they would begin to eat together and drink to their satisfaction. So, life was easy going and people's immediate needs were satisfied when they had eaten, they talked about many things of prime important to them. In such a time they laugh out loud and long till tears may role down their eyes.

So, at night the friends sleep together on the same bed except for a cogent reason, the visitor sleeps in the visitor's room until the next morning before he may go back home. Such drinks were produced traditionally, using traditional technological system. Among others, Palm wine was gotten from raffia, and it is a raw material for production of local gin. A similar palm wine is also gotten from palm tree, etc.

Achebe (1980), posits that on the moonlight night, the happy voices of children playing in the open fields would be heard. But every leadership setting has its challenges. Dore in Osakede (2015), observed that traditional institutions are faced with internal and external challenges such as internal wranglings and neglect of the traditional institutions recently.

Over a decade, there had been rumors that traditional institutions are complacent towards ensuring service delivery for their people as if they were sources of social problems themselves in society. From the foregoing, it is conspicuously identified that previous Researches on Traditional Institutions in Nigeria have left a major research gap our area of coverage and research methods, suggesting insufficient Knowledge within the context of traditional institutions in Rivers State.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to examine traditional institutions that provide welfare services in Rivers State. To this extent, the paperwork seeks to identify welfare services orientated traditional institutions in Rivers State, and as well as Service delivery Challenges mitigating against effective welfare services in the State.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The political Economy approach was adopted for this work Adam Smith was the earliest proponent of the political Economy Theory of (1776). It emphasised on the regulations of production, distribution and consumption of those articles that are useful for human survival and welfare in relation to Customs, and Government. For him, this process enshrined in division of labour ought not to be impeded by Capitalism and it's concumitant challenges or other antisocial behaviour exhibited by human beings. Unfortunately, man attached much importance to wealth for their comfort, security and the power it offers. It placed premium on social values as prerequisites for management of human and natural resources that in turn result in welfare services delivery to the people (Jaja,2011). This brings to the fore the fact that Man is the custodian of culture, as it does not exist in a vacuum, thereby making man the epicenter of influence in society. For anyone to continue to engage in economically productive activities, and manage people and other natural resources, he needs to be alive, healthy, comfortable and safe in the society. Therefore, welfare of man everywhere is essential for survival and integrity of services in the group he belongs. when welfare of a people is carefully pursued, it motivates the majority to obey authority willingly and are better equipped to participate in group activities. Political Economy approach explained the external components and the coercive nature of social relationships that set people and communities against themselves.

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METHODS

The earthnographic study was conducted in Rivers State using the mixed methods, to identify traditional institutions in River State that provide welfare services and as examine challenges that mitigate against effective welfare services of traditional institutions. The simple random techniques were used to select six local government areas across the three senatorial districts in River State, two each respectively. Population studied are family heads/chiefs, age grades, council of elders, council of chief, and stakeholders and were reached using availability sampling. Through the Taro Yamane Formula, a sample size of (400) four hundred respondents were selected. Data were collected using the questionnaire which was disproportionately distributed based on the size of local government, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and Key Informant Interview (KII). The local government visited were Degema and Ahoada East in Rivers West senatorial district, Andoni and Kana in Rivers South senatorial district including OboiAkpor and Ikwerre local government in Rivers East senatorial district. The embedded thematic analysis and standards deviation, percentage and mean were used to analyse the work.

RESULTS

The results indicated that Rivers State as a multi-ethnic state has several traditional institutions recognized and unrecognized. There are thirty two (32) recognized first class, thirty two (32) recognized second class and twenty two (22) third class traditional stools across the state respectively. The first class chiefs are Amanyanabo of Opobo, Gbenemene Tai, Gbenemene Nyor Khana, Onye-Isi Etche, Amanyanabo of Grand Bonny Kingdom, Nye-New-Eli Ancient Isiokpo Kingdom, Oda-Abuan of Abua Kingdom, Umuihueze of Oyigbo, Gbenemene Babe Kingdom, Onye-Isi Aguru Igbo Kingdom, Nye-New-Eli Emohua, Eze Oha Apara 4th, Apara Kingdom, Eze Gbakagbaka, Eze Oha Evo 3rd of Evo Kingdom, Nye New-Eli Elele-Okinali Ni Elele-Alimini, Eze Egi 3rd (Eze Ogba-Ukwu of Ogbaland), Ikwut 12th, Okaan-Ama, Ikru Town, Okaan-Ama Ngo, Amanyanabo of Abonnema, Eze Eberiugo 9th of Ancient Eberi-Omuma, Eze Igbu Upata 3rd, Eze-Igbu-Ehuda, Okilomu Ibe 3rd of Engenni Kingdom, Ikwo 4th, Amanyanabo of Ogoloma, Eze Igbu Igbuduya, Gberesaakoo 13th, Gberemene Gokana, Eze Igbu Ubie 4th, of Ubie Kingdom, Amanyanabo of Wakirike Kingdom,Okrika, One-Eh-Eleme 11th, Nze Obi of Egbema, Eze Chitusurugo3rd, Nye-New-Ali Ubima, Apiti of Rumueme Kingdom, Eze Igbu Akoh. As at time this data was collected, eighty six (86) traditional stools were recognized by the state government.

The recognized second class traditional stools are; Nye-New-Ali Omademe, Ozuaha and Ipo, Gbenemene Bua Banga and Kasimene Banga, Gbenemene Tua Tua Tai, Okaan-Ama of Onyeada, Eze Ali Usomini of Ogbaland, Eze Igburu of Ogbaland, Nye New Ali Iguruta, o'Lema Odual of Odual Kingdom, Mene Eedee 1st, and Mene Bua Baa 2nd, Nye New Ali Oginigba Igwu-Gwu-Oha of Oro-Evo Clan, Mene Bua Kenwigbara, Nye-New-Eli Egbeda and Ubimini, Eze Oha Oporo of Okwurushi Kingdom, Bebe-Okpabi, Oneh-Eh Ogale, Eze Oha Oyigbo, Nyeerisi Mbam Oro Esara Kingdom, Nye New Eli Rumuepirikom, Eze OhaApani, Nye New Eli Omerelu, Nye New Ali Choba, Nye Nwe Ali Omagwa, Eze Ogba Iji Nu Ede Rumuogba, Onye Isi Agwuru Ulakwo and Umuselem, Nye New Eli Rumuokoro clan, Eze Risi Ohia Rebisi, Oneh-Eh Onne, Amanyanabo of Kirike Kingdom, Amanyanabo of Okochiri Kingdom, Amanyanabo of Bolo Kingdom, Oruk 17th, Okaan-Ama Ataba, Nye New Eli Ezeolu, Amangada 11th of Rebisi Kingdom.

The recognized third class traditional stools in Rivers State are as follows; Onu-Onyam Ekein of Udekema, Nwamoema of Bukuma, Mene Bua Lueku, Uwema Emughan, Mene Bua Yayor, Mene Bo-ue, Mene Bua Bokpo, Mene Bua Yeghe, Mene Bua Yaasere, Mene Bua Baen, Abalama Stool, Mene Bua Sogho, Amanyanabo of Minama, Oneh-Eh Alesa, Nye New Ali Akpabu and Itu, Nye New Ali Orlumeni, Nye New Ali Elelenwo, Nye New Ali Ezimgbu Kingdom, Eze Ali of Aggah-Egbema Kingdom, Eze Ali Ogbagu of Mgbede Kingdom, Eze Ali Oruanmara of Okwuzi Kingdom, and Amanyanabo of Opu Kula and Singi-Ama (Rivers State Council of Traditional Rulers, 2021).

First class Chief are addressed as His Majesty (HM), whereas, second class and third class Chief are addressed as His Royal Highness (HRH). However, there are other traditional institutions yet to be recognized in Rivers State by the state government.

> *'Traditional institutions such as family chief, title chief, community chief, age grade, council of elders have not gained recognition compared to Bayelsa State where family chiefs and community chiefs are recognized by their state government'(KII,M,Chief,Edeoha).*

These titles vary from one ethnic group to another, as similar set of people are known by different titles elsewhere.

> *'In Tombia, we have some Polodabo, Waridabo that are not recognized by the state government' (KII,M,Chief, Tombia).*

The processes through which they emerge as Chiefs differ from one community to the other.

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'In my community chiefs are selected through the help of a notable Oracle who help to say the mind of the gods of the land as well as the mind of the Ancestors' (KII,M, Chief, Ozuoba).

'In a fish pot, the founder becomes the chief, but if it is discovered by a fishing crew, they will select who becomes their chief among the group'(FGD, M, Chief, Tombia).

'Election is the method we use in getting a chief, the men and their wife will stand accordingly, and those who want him in that post will cue behind the one of their choice, the person who has the highest number of people will emerge thewinner' (FGD,M, Chief, Edeoha).

As for recognition of custodian of traditional institutions, it is the Governor or Government that determines who is due for recognition, haven made their investigations according to the set standards as mentioned above.

What are the challenges affecting the welfare service delivery of the traditional institutions?

Title: Challenges of Traditional Institutions in Welfare Service delivery
The criterion mean used here = 3.0

Table 4.2.2: Challenges of Traditional Institutions in Welfare Service Delivery

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	N	D	SD	n = 400		Decision
							$\bar{\chi}$	Sd	
1	Cultism make traditional welfare difficult	180	104	6	76	34	3.80	2.10	Accepted
2	Unregulated small arm proliferation is a threat to traditional welfare	230	168	2	0	0	4.57	2.45	Accepted
3	Communal conflict disrupts traditional welfare	180	110	4	52	54	3.78	2.10	Accepted
4	Involvement of rulers in politics affect welfare service	160	120	10	80	30	3.75	2.05	Accepted
5	Government interest affect traditional institutions	170	114	12	71	33	3.79	2.08	Accepted
6	Greed and wrangling affect traditional welfare	165	123	3	39	70	3.69	2.06	Accepted
7	Unwillingness of ruler to use personal wealth to serve subjects makes him good	46	80	6	118	150	2.39	1.22	Rejected
8	Absence of traditional ruler hinders welfare	52	78	10	120	140	2.46	1.27	Rejected
9	Campaign and election pose problem on traditional stool	137	113	8	72	70	3.44	1.91	Accepted
10	Lack of synergy between rulers and government limit welfare	210	100	6	70	14	4.06	2.22	Accepted
11	External and internal challenges have same impact on traditional welfare	174	120	6	61	39	3.82	2.11	Accepted
	Aggregate $\bar{\chi}$ and Sd						**3.59**	**1.96**	

Source: Field Work Survey (2021).

Table 3, item 1, on whether cult activities make traditional welfare services difficult, the results show that180 respondents strongly agreed (SA), 104 respondents agreed (A), 6 respondents were neutral(N),76 respondents disagreed (D), 34 respondents strongly disagreed (SD),respectively.Calculating based on the mean and standard deviation of 3.80, and 2.10, (Mean =3.80, Sd= 2.10). Since the value of the mean is greater than the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is therefore accepted as indicating the responses that cultism make provision of welfare service difficult.

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Table 3, item 2, on whether proliferation of small arm threatens traditional institution in welfare service delivery, the result show that 230 respondents strongly agreed (SA), 168 respondents agreed (A), 2 respondents were neutral (N), 0 respondents disagreed (D), 0 respondents strongly disagreed (SD), accordingly. given the mean and standard deviation of 4.57, and 2.45, (Mean =4.57, Sd =2.45). Since the value of the mean is greater than the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is accepted, indicating that unregulated arm proliferation hinders traditional institution from rendering welfare services to their people.

Table 3, item 3, on whether communal conflict disrupts traditional institution from providing welfare services, the results show that 180 respondents strongly agreed (SA), 110 respondents agreed (A), 4 respondents were neutral (N), 52 respondents disagreed (D), 54 respondents strongly disagreed (SD), accordingly. Considering that the mean and standard deviation of 3.78, and 2.10, (Mean =3.78, and Sd =2.10). Since the value of the mean is greater than the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is therefore accepted that communal crisis disrupts traditionally arranged welfare services.

Table 3, item 4, on whether partisan politics affect traditional institution capacity to provide welfare services to their people, the results show that 160 respondents strongly agreed (SA), 120 respondents agreed (A), 10 respondents were neutral (N), 30 respondents disagreed (D), 10 respondents strongly disagreed (SD), respectively. Given the mean and standard deviation of 3.73, and 2.03, (Mean =3.73, Sd =2.03). Since the value of the mean is greater than the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is accepted, as indicating that partisan politics can affect traditional institution capacity to providing welfare services to their people.

Influence of western education

Assimilation of western norms and values to a large extent has influenced our traditional values, the more members of our society conform to it for acquisition of higher certificate and appointment, the more social changes society would experience, which is capable to pose some challenges on rational way of life. The curriculum educated the African child away from their custom, norms and values without Nigeria cultural content. Though the local language was used in elementary school, but not much effort is made to ensure their development. English language has become an official language required to pass all examination. So, the educated Rivers man seem to suffer from a cultural mix since they have to satisfy both the western values they have acquired under the auspices of the school and the traditional values in which they belong.

> *'Lack of knowledge about ones culture makes it difficult to have a collective homogenous identify, which can be used by well meaning people to foster welfare service delivery and cohesiveness' (FGD, M, Chief, Ozuoba).*

Rural urban migration detribalizes family bond. Although people say out of sight is not out of mind, but on the contrary, out of sight reduces the bond and consciousness of the things that keep them as a group. While it is true of family members who live in different environment, those migrants from the same village that live in the same city enjoy stronger bond and intense relationship if they do not have a fall out between or among themselves. So it explains the reasons nuclear families tend to be flourishing, becoming more dominant and common thereby paving way for urban life styles prevalence.

Responses bothering on Christianity attracted a lot of negative criticisms.

> *'People who were approached to occupy traditional stools declined due to the fact that they are Christians. They are afraid of being co-opted into a practice that is antithetical to their Christian faith, meanwhile bold Christians who have accepted such leadership positions, do it the Christian way. This could account for the weak traditional institutions in Obio-Akpor' (FGD, M, Chief, Ozuoba).*
>
> *'The overconcentration on destroying shrines by Christians in Nigeria as if that is the the most challenging problem of society and paying less attention on other aspect of religion that teaches people how to live peaceably with other members of society has portrayed traditional institutions on a negative light' (KII, M, Chief, Edeoha).*

Warrant Chiefs

The warrant chiefs were used by colonial officers to perpetrate indirect rule in the Area, as well as fetch gifted people who were taken captive through Orashi River and the Atlantic Ocean at Bayelsa where slave masters ship were usually Anchored to Europe.

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> *'Some of the strong traditional rulers were sold to slave buyers, leaving those mongrels who could hardly fashion out strategies to develop the Area' (KII, M, Chief, Edeoha).*

At the emergence of the warrant chiefs, traditional institutions status became threatened, as most traditional stools and their occupants hardly recuperate from the trauma of de-recognition. Its aftermath is disruption of the traditional welfare system because it has made some traditional stools became dormant and ceremonial till today.

> *'There is increasing wave of greed among cudtodians traditional institutions which reflected in poor service delivery to their people during representation in government, and multi-nationals. Such attitudes have been identified as causing disrespect for traditional stools, internal wrangling and hinder welfare services in traditional settings' (KII, M, Chief, Ataba).*

Politicization of Traditional Stools

The interest of the government in the upgrading, de-recognition, and total removal of traditional rulers from office even without a prior notice to the clan or ethnic group most often does not serve the interest of the people in promoting their wellbeing. There are instances where traditional institutions of the town of origin of a people are not recognized whereas, similar institutions in newly developed communities have been recognized by the government.

> *'An example is where a person has been selected as custodian of the traditional institution but the government has interest on a different individual to the extent that recognition of the people's choice must be delayed until the government choice finally emerges ruler in such ethnic group'(FGD, M, Chief, Edeoha).*

The general notion here is that recognition of traditional institutions can increase the capacity of traditional institutions in providing welfare service to their people.

Government Involvement in the Ownership of Land and its Resources

Traditionally lands are owned by families or Communities from which production of food is ensured, but the involvement of Government on the ownership of farm land within the country and its resources has reduced the quantity and quality of livelihood support alongside welfare of people as access into their land was restricted due to the Government and oil multinationals activities of setting up of projects and searching and exploitation of natural resources.

> *'That to a large extent had destroyed their life support system as well as traditional welfare system, and as such paving away for abject poverty, frustration and suffering' (KII, M, Chief, Nama).*

Federal Government has collected the large portions of land from them without commensurate compensation. Examples include the National Television Authority site, (NTA) and the National Park.

> *'Since land is our source of traditional welfare system, both for farming activities and building of houses to let, government forceful involvement in land ownership reduces our chances of enhancing the people's welfare' (FGD, M, Chief, Ozuoba).*

This to an extent tends to encourage individualism and private ownership of means of production which in turn create a divide in the bond members of the society enjoyed in the past. Instead of people being their brother's keepers, they are pre-occupied with the onus task of servicing their source of income at the expense of collective life, has affected the pursuit of traditional institutions for welfare service delivery pursuit to their subject's welfare were ensured.

However, problems arise when human freedom is restricted by the existence of private property. Some human start to accumulate large amounts of private property, at the expense of others, and the people begins to lose their freedom Marx Cited in Haralambos & Holburn (2007).

Cultism:

> *Most communities were deserted due to cult activities.*
> *Many community leaders have also been killed by cultists to the extent that some custodians of traditional institutions relocated to nearby cities for safety; others relinquished power to kingpin and kidnappers, especially among the unrecognized chiefs, family heads and community elders' (KII, M, Chief, Edeoha).*

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Lack of synergy between traditional institutions and government establishment through ministry of social welfare makes it difficult for traditional institutions to be better equipped to assist their people, (fieldwork, 2021).

Upata had once become a flashpoint on the media on issues of insecurity emanating from cultism, kidnapping and hostage taking, broad day light murder, armed robbery activities to mention a few, most traditional institutions saddle with responsibilities of ensuring welfare delivery to the people are force out of their domain for fear of being kidnapped or murdered. And while such people ran away for their safety, the rest people who could not afford for themselves a safe haven to live suffered tremendously beyond what media reported.

> *'It got to the level Upata central Palace was attacked by hoodlums, although it has been renovated' (FGD, M, Chief, Edeoha).*
>
> *'Recently, Piracy has become a common phenomenon in the riverine areas so that migrant fishermen who live with their children at fishing ports as a source of survival do so at their own risk, and now rent apartment for their children in township for fear of piracy' (KII, M, Chief, Tombia).*

Some who manage to move their household away find life difficult to cope in that new condition, as they have lost grip with their traditional means of livelihood support system (fieldwork, 2021). The aftermath is destitution, street begging, increase in criminality, serious economic hardship (fieldwork,2021).

Most people lost contacts with those who contributed to their survival as they became scared to return home due to the insecurity. Majority of the traditional institutions were under pressure unlike before from men of underworld to send money and other material to them or face kidnap or death.

> *'Because of some external challenges some traditional stools were not effective and traditional rulers either ran way or cried to resign their position as custodian of traditional institutions'(KII, M, Chief, Edeoha).*

So, it is clare at this juncture that instead of traditional stools to start thinking about the welfare delivery of the majority some of them meet community members to contribute for the kidnappers in their domain for fear of being killed (fieldwork, 2021).

Inability to develop our traditional technology: Most traditional societies have lost of their traditional technological knowhow to modernization meanwhile they are not also rooted in modern technology. For example, the local skill of tapping palm wins and processing it into hot gin is gradually going to extinction. And the Ethanol most people claim they know how to produce has turned a silent killer in society' (fieldwork,2021).

(Mezeiobi, 1992), lend weight to this claim by positing that: "the history of Nigeria indigenous science and technology, no matter how it is viewed crude or primitive can be said to be synonymous with the birth of the geo political location known today as Nigeria. This may have given rise to some measures of science and technology no matter how crude they may be seen now in terms of sophistication". But today those ancient technological tools have become extinct with no hope of return.

> *'Unlike those days when there are palm wine tappers in every community, but they are very scarce in this era. It took me three months to find someone with palm wine tapping skill to help me tap my palm wine trees within my compound and used the income to provide for my family'(KII, M, Chief, Edeoha).*

Table 3, item 5, on if emergence of state government affects welfare system of the traditional institution, the results show that1 70 respondents strongly agreed (SA), 114 respondents agreed (A), 12 respondents were neutral (N), 71 respondents disagreed (D), 33 respondents strongly disagreed (SD), accordingly. Having the mean and standard deviation of 3.79, and 2.08, (Mean =3.79, Sd =2.08). In that, the value of the mean as shown above is greater than the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is accepted as indicating that presence of modern government affect the welfare system of traditional institution.

Table 3, item 6, on if greed and wrangling welfare services of traditional institution, the results show that 165 respondents strongly agreed (SA), 123 respondents agreed (A), 3 respondents were neutral (N), 39 respondents disagreed (D), 70 respondents strongly disagreed (SD), accordingly. Following the mean and standard deviation of 3.69, and 2.06, (Mean =3.59, Sd = 1.96). Bearing in mind that the mean is greater than the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is accepted as indicating that greed and wrangling among custodians of traditional institution inhibit welfare service to the people.

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Table 3, item 7, on whether unwillingness of rulers to utilize his resource to enhance welfare of his people earn him a good name, the results show that 46 respondents strongly agreed (SA), 80 respondents agreed (A), 6 respondents were neutral (N),118 respondents disagreed (D), 150 respondents strongly disagreed (SD), respectively. Having the mean and standard deviation of 2.39, and 1.22, (Mean =2.39, Sd =1.22). In that, the value of the mean as shown above is lesser than the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is rejected as indicating that some traditional institutions are not regarded by their people is due to their selfishness.

Table 3, item 8, on if absence of traditional institutions affects traditional welfare system, the results show that 52 respondents strongly agreed (SA), 78 respondents agreed (A), 10 respondents were neutral (N), 120 respondents disagreed (D), 140 respondents strongly agreed (SD), respectively. Following the mean and standard deviation of 2.46, and 1.27, (Mean =2.46, Sd = 1.27). Although, there are more positive responses, but bearing in mind that the mean is lesser than the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is rejected as absence of traditional rulers do not reduce welfare of subjects.

Table 3, item 9, on whether campaign and election of custodians of traditional institution pose problem that undermine welfare services of subjects, the results show that137 respondents strongly agreed (SA), 113 respondents agreed (A), 8 respondents were neutral (N), 72 respondents disagreed (D), 70 respondents strongly disagreed (SD), respectively. Having the mean and standard deviation of 3.44, and 1.91, (Mean =3.44, Sd =1.91). In that, the value of the mean as shown above is greater than the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is accepted as indicating that the adoption of campaign and election as process of emerging as a traditional ruler is problematic to traditional welfare system.

Table 3, item 10, on if lack of synergy traditional institutions and government limit available welfare services in the Area, the results show that 210 respondents strongly agreed (SA), 100 respondents agreed (A), 6 respondents were neutral (N), 70 respondents disagreed (D), 14 respondents strongly disagreed (SD), respectively. Having the mean and standard deviation of 4.06, and 2.22, (Mean =4.06, Sd =2.22). In that, the value of the mean as shown above is greater than the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is accepted as indicating that indeed, lack of synergy between traditional institutions and government limit available welfare services.

Table 3, item 11, on whether internally generated challenges like greed, wrangling is as problematic as externally generated challenges such as cultism, arm proliferation, the results show that 174 respondents strongly agreed (SA), 120 respondents agreed (A), 6 respondents were neutral (N), 61 respondents disagreed (D), 39 respondents strongly disagreed (SD), respectively. Having the mean and standard deviation of 3.82, and 2.11, (Mean =3.82, Sd =2.11). In that, the value of the mean as shown above is greater than the criterion mean of 3.0, the result is accepted as indicating that internal and external challenges have the same weight on welfare system of traditional institution. A part of the external challenges of traditional institutions is climate cum environmental change.

> *'Most farm produce have become extinct resulting from environmental degradation and climate change (FGD, M, Chief, Edeoha).*
>
> *'The problem of the cudtodians of culture is that they are not transparent in times of sharing of benefits like scholarship, because they allot only to their children, but when it comes to community contributions they usually involve everybody, those at home and in Diaspora'(KII, M, family head, Tombia).*

Cumulatively, the results of the grand mean and standard deviation is (mean =3.59, Sd = 1.96) on challenges of traditional institution on welfare service delivery. Since the value of the grand mean is greater than the criterion mean of 3.0, the result indicate that more respondents accepted that traditional institutions in trying to promote welfare of their group, face some challenges, either internally like wrangling, greed, or externally generated challenges such as cultism, small arm proliferation of which in some ways make welfare service from traditional institutions near impossible.

One possible explanation to the findings is the fact that traditional welfare services delivery is difficult to achieve in a state of anarchy resulting from failure in the social institution of society such as family, religion, education, and polity to provide integrity services as bases for good citizenship. This work differs from other research papers because it tells us the traditional institutions in Rivers State and effects of their challenges especially on the welfare services delivery to the people. The implications here are that: peace, security and integrity services are essential for welfare services delivery in Communities in the area, and by extension Nigeria stated. Traditional institutions need a congenial atmosphere of tranquility and orderliness for smooth administration of welfare services in their domains. Those who utilise trouble making as a means of amassing wealth illegally or their positions as tool of oppression, should realise that they have undermined the welfare of the society.

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CONCLUSIONS

The research pointed out the fact that there are recognised and unrecognised traditional institutions that are sources of welfare services delivery in Rivers State, but despite they are faced with challenges which made it near impossible for them to engage or provide welfare services for their people. a synergy with a more scientific social work approach can accommodate the teaming demands for welfare service delivery to the people.

However, it has been observed that available welfare service is inadequate in meeting welfare needs of the people. Meanwhile using politicians as was the case during the distribution of covid-19 pandemic to provide welfare services as a modern social welfare services in Nigeria is not in tandem with traditional values and norms of the people and has never been successful. This study therefore proposes that traditional institutions of a people been a major factor in determining social values of the people is a veritable tools in reaching indigenous groups for the distribution of welfare provisions. It suggests a triad welfare system consisting of traditional institutions, government and International Non-governmental Organizations furthermore, if the modernization of such institution was successful in bringing about the well-being of citizens promoting traditional values such as hard work, dignity of labour, generosity, discipline, selfless service, equity and reward for hard work, etc may reverse the trend of getting wealth from illegitimate activities, which in turn may help mitigate social deviance in society

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