

# The Dynamics of Leadership and Governance in Rivers State: The Case Study of Okrika Local Government 1999-2015

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| Received: 15.03.2019 | Accepted: 24.03.2019 | Published: 31.03.2019

DOI: [10.21276/sjhss.2019.4.3.8](https://doi.org/10.21276/sjhss.2019.4.3.8)

## Abstract

This work is focused on Leadership and Governance in Rivers State: The case study of Okrika Local Government Area 1999-2015. It intends to examine the attitude and character of a true leader in Okrika Local Government Area and to interrogate the Leadership style towards achieving some levels of development. It also provides to conceptual framework for proper understanding of the dynamics of a Leader and the synergy between the followers and the Leadership. The work intends to reinvigorate the dynamism interest in good Leadership to actualize the benefits derivable from good Leadership styles. This is because bad Leadership breeds poor followership and retards development whereas good Leadership ushers in sustained economic development. The work will involve the application of various theories of development to bring to fore the needed areas of proper infusion of good ideas to the good of the Local Government.

**Keywords:** Development, Leader, Followers, Government.

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## INTRODUCTION

There is great need for leadership who will mute conflict with motivation of character that will turn the roundtable conference to lasting peace and decorum. Leadership void of authority and laissez-faire, that is monumental in style and sets the pace for others to follow. Although, the basic nature of man is not of a democrat but anarchist, that is to control everyone else. Man's nature loves dictatorship and that is weakness of man. The attitude of man must be checked by him in order to give or portray the potential that all requires leading as did Nelson Mandela of South Africa. After years of suffering and incasteration and hardship, deemed it fit to humble himself to serve his people – South Africa. I am convinced that this is what every good human heart desires to achieve because any community, hamlet, town, village or urban area that had no peace nor decorum has plunged itself in the quirk mire of lacking government and good leadership.

## LOCATION OF OKRIKA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Okrika Local Government is one of the twenty-three local government areas in modern Rivers State. It is one of the South South kingdom found in Rivers State of Nigeria. Okrika Local Government Area is one of the local governments in Rivers State.

It is bounded by herneighbours in the North by Port Harcourt Local Government and in the east by Eleme, Tai and Gokana Local Government Areas and in the West by Degema Local Government Area and in the South by Bonny Local Government Area.

## CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

Before one delves into leadership and Governance, it is salient that a clearer understanding of the word be made apparent. The qualities and characters that mould such a person and what it takes to be a leader.

According to Merrian Webster Dictionary, leader is one who conducts or goes before others. Something guiding and making sure everyone keeps busy at their assigned task.

## NATURE OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a position, either as a leader of a group, organization and one who has the power and ability to lead other people and as well possess the capacity of guidance. The Antonyms of a leader is a follower and imitator.

## MEANING OF GOVERNANCE

Govern means to control or direct affairs. And Governance – the authority to control. The two words then being Leadership and Governance give us a

conductor and director of affairs. Leadership and Governance then is one who has the ability and capacity to direct and conducts the affairs of other people. The point saliently being made here is that, there will be a charisma and aura such person exhumes that willingly compels people to follow and emulate.

God in his creation had order in which He created the world. The point being made here is that, in Leadership and Governance prerequisite character to be demonstrated is Justice and Social Peace.

## PRINCIPLE OF GOVERNANCE

A just and social order exhibited compels the followers to follow the footsteps of their leader, the leader can then control, direct and conduct them in the way he dreamt. The qualities of a leader should have comprises of Honesty and Integrity, ability to inspire others, trust, commitment and passion. A good leader ought to be a good communicator and have good decision making ability.

The leader should be accountable for his people. The accountability nature in him should be pronounced. The Leader has ability to delegate, and empower his people or followers as well as the ability to be creative and ability to be innovative enough for development [1].

## LEADERSHIP ISSUES

According to Achebe [2] Things Fall Apart indeed things did fall apart. As leadership took a new dimension and centre cannot hold anymore. The reason for the change in time, was the erosion of desirable qualities that marked a leader in governance and development of his domain.

Honestly, is the watch word that guides the leader. In governance honesty marked the leader, with this quality he possesses, he can lead and win the admiration of his followers. Honesty is the pivot of leadership and governance which without any ship is bound to wreck. When follower found the words of truth in their leader, the followership becomes more stronger and bounding. When a leader has two tongues in one mouth, the words spoken to his followers are taken lightly as a guiding word. Lack of honesty in leadership and governance erodes and does not inspire others to make a good followership. Leadership by example is the only quality that illuminates the paths to be trodden [3].

The true leaders inspire others to follow not by carrying arms or by agitation but by character and example which motivates them. This exhibited character draws and magnates the followers to the desire goal. The youths are sharpened by a good model. The society always learns by examples. When a leader is successful in his pattern of leadership, the youths tend to learn that, that governs them. All these are done in

order to be in that shape and status. Such a great aura does a leader carry [3]. According to Ake [4] Political Stability is the key that governs and guides and that preoccupies and characterized the leadership that structures the society. What is required now from the emancipation of the subterfuge is the synthetic movement that forges ahead to replace the vices which seemingly now become virtues. Accordingly, failure of economic development creates anarchical political conditions. This stifles and impedes favourable atmosphere for leadership.

The desire for development apparently depicts the change that is needed for cohesion and mutual togetherness, which is a laid down commitment to achieve through leadership in development. Development is an ideology since the leadership tends to visualize progress for a better society. Leadership and Governance does not call for exploitation of his domain. In recent time, there are negations of this view, thereby youths restiveness, cultism and other vices has spring up as a way for survival. Education of the citizenry is of paramount importance to enlighten the followers. This should be the ultimate quest for the leaders when they are in office.

Leadership is the ability to bring people together to dedicate themselves to the pursuit of a common goal. Governance is the tradition and an institution which exhumes authority, leadership itself is the act of exercising that authority [3].

Furthermore, it is apparent that diplomacy is the means and ability or skill to negotiate between groups and also describes one of the dimensions of the use of influence internationally. But where such lacks in acclaim leaders, the path way for greatness is blunt for there is no future in focus.

Negotiation is the art of forging relationships and strengthening existing relations which apprehensively is in doubt in the domain of governance now and it is a major concern for the present and future. The agitations from the youth quarters aggravated and took a different dimension that the centre cannot hold. These agitations turn the area to be a home of different kinds of cultism, and erosion of the true traditional manner of ascendancy to the throne of being a potent. Leadership and Governance in this region of Nigeria is vague in the sense that destruction is the right way to follow and achieve your aim.

Aim is something one wants to accomplish but destruction has turn out to be the request that parades the faces of the citizenry. According to Igwe [5] it is Africans that underdeveloped Africa. The legacies the white man left behind for us to follow are neglected. The African bedeviled himself with massive corruption, avarices, jealousy and so many other vices and shift's the blame to the European without looking inwards on

what had happened and the way they trod. The diplomacy which traditionally is the employment of tact to gain strategic advantage or to find mutually acceptable solutions to common challenges is hundred miles away from us. Massive corruption in officialdom continues to cause degenerative underdevelopment in the area. The great leaders of these various groups of agitations were made to pay certain some of amount to their followers from the federation purse. But monies released, most times does not get to the followers of these great leaders. Thereby raising up some skirmishes of pockets of disturbances in the area leading to accusations and counter accusations on how the money was spent. Corruption by the men concerned in this settlement, which is intended for peace and harmonious coexistence siphons these money to establish ventures that only gives them gain and benefits to their immediate family.

### **NATURE OF LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE IN OKRIKA 1999 – 2015**

Leadership from 1999 – 2015 needs proper overhauls and re-overhaul, because children born after this time will take to the examples they see as model. The children from this area have turn to the path of quick money, without much hard work. The male youths from age fourteen and above, look up for quicker ventures of money minting enterprises. They are dropped out from schools only thinking on what will yield money and in some cases venture into that that end up in death as a result of explosions. The alarming thing in all of these is that the death of their colleagues does not deter them from their ventures. Some has taken piracy and kidnapping which denotes that there is a cog in the wheel of progress in this region. Another thing is quantum disobedient to parents and authorities forming their own government that either will run parallel with that of constituted authority or eliminate the constituted authority.

Remember that overhaul and re-overhaul has been advocated, reason being girls are involved in all of these. And they are the ones that cooked for them and most times the ones that go out to gather information for them. From Age Twelve down in the girls categories are to be properly educated and made to seek life in a good and harmonious environment and a source of lively-hood that is descent. As the saying goes when you educate one girl child, you educate a nation. So overhaul and re-overhaul is necessary in this aspect.

Leadership should steer these abnormal attitude that are alien in this region by way of various enlightenment and corrections, that the up coming generation may not degenerate by following the awkward examples of those before them. Up coming generations should be taught that there is dignity in labour. For a better society, the Heads at the helm of affairs in this local government area, should gather various experts in various fields to impact knowledge to

the younger ones. And any existing one on the ground should be doubled for better tomorrow of these youths and the LGA When serious anarchy has not set in [6].

When there are resources to ameliorate situations, they are depleted by their official corruption and genuflected to wrong policies by their leaders. Thereby, building empires for themselves, outside the shores of Nigeria and leaving their followers in the hands of perpetual servitude. Leadership that is charismatic in nature checks all the lapses in his or her domain to put things in proper perspective. It is ideal that leadership in this region should beam their search light of governance towards the decadence in moral and way of life currently seen to a better one that will tell well of the future of their wards. In deed in an atmosphere of rancour and acrimony, there will be no development. But development only comes where there is tranquility. And until kings become philosopher and philosophers becomes kings there will be no justice. There have been incessant actions of these youths in order to maintain their course. Their course being having free access to the mineral or oil from their soil. These actions have led to deaths of so many youths. Youths' restiveness is synonymous with the region. Leadership lacks firm control of daily activities of these youths as they thrive in their enterprise.

Their enterprise has led to so many destructive agents. That so much destruction has occurred in this region as: Soot, deaths and unexpected burst of fires and illegal sales of products that are not properly refined which goes by the name in their local palace 'KPO-FIRE'. This means sudden out burst of fire from the illegally refined products. There have been so many families rendered homeless as a result of this. And so many deaths in a home where this sudden outburst of fire occurred.

In addition to this, is the burning of these products by various authorities put in place to check this menace as these burning are carried out either on the sea, or at the refining depots made by these youths or in some cases the tanker lorries which convey the products, burning of these products sends the thick smoke into the atmosphere which later descends as soot's that everybody in Port Harcourt and environs shouts for helps. This is so because the air is contaminated with the black soot which people daily inhale.

Early in the mornings, the soot's are seen as the harmattan but dark in nature, and in the offices and homes, it is seen on chairs and tables and every other furniture in the house or office. After cleaning, the soot's that is seen, some minute later there are more of these soots to be seen than the first one observed.

Leadership and Governance in Rivers State should think of a better way to dispose these oil rather

than burning it, which later descend as soot that we all inhale into our lungs.

According to Berridge [7] Public diplomacy is now deeply entrenched in the affairs of men especially in bilateral matters. This is expedient now that this matter concerns health and the burning into the atmosphere of these seized substances. This region of the country is inhabited by conglomeration of people from different parts of the country and the larger world.

The department responsible for information dissemination should increasingly devote resources to electronic and online information to appropriate channels to ameliorate this hazard.

The soot menace is capable of driving away investors and the multinational companies out of this region of Nigeria. Then the main stay of Nigeria being oil will be in jeopardy since Nigeria has not diversified properly her economy.

According to Ake [4] 'The failure to achieve a reasonable measure of economic growth is contributing to the development of contradictions and consciousness in Africa socio-economic formations'.

The leaders in Africa clamour much on the disabilities connected with underdevelopment and their desire to liquidate underdevelopment. But as it were, development has been elevated to the level of ideology.

Being that African Nationalist rested much of their mantra on colonial domination. As political independence was won, the leader settled on development.

The development and infrastructural development that is most needed in Nigeria is being destroyed as well as the economy. The seizure of these substances could be returned to the appropriate quarter being Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) for proper use and revitalization of the economy rather than wastage. Leadership and Governance in this region should be proactive to sensitive issues as these. To an extent the failure of Leaders of Spirit, Leaders of Will, Leaders of Muscles brain and power, fit to cope with anything these are wanted every hour.

Conscientious, Leadership is the desire of every man being the pre-requisite of a true leader, Leaders who will be able to decipher between two matters facing them.

The lost of a generation begins with a failure, and this failure leads the people to abandon everything of theirs that marked their identity. Their way of life, culture, dance local industry and social gathering. These could reflect in the inability of a focus leader to pilot

the affairs of his people and introduce an alien culture into his domain [8].

According to Walter [8] Europe underdeveloped Africa, by depriving her from required infrastructure, he argued that the whites created infrastructures to afford themselves leisure and enjoyable lives. And that the southern part of Nigeria was one of the colonial areas that was supposed to have received the most from a benevolent 'Mother Country'.

According to Igwe [5] He argued that Africa's leadership deliberately entangled followership in a cycle of poverty to ensure the people have enough to worry about than pry into the corrupt tendencies of leaders.

The legacies of the founding fathers are betrayed by today's leadership bringing to naught the belief and pride in cultural heritage.

Thieves, criminals, armed robbers and cybercrimes were not in pristine Africa. As events unfold, changes grew from worse to worst. Leaders have digressed a lot from their expected duty. They don't keep to time; leaders in the LGA are not time conscious as to when they are to meet with their subjects. And at any scheduled meetings time are slighted leaders by virtue of their position ought to show leadership example to their subjects. But the trend of leaders has changed from truth to lies. Thus passing lies to their subjects. Their subjects in turn pass the same lie to their subordinates. Truth no longer exist lies has become the bedrock and order of the day of leadership. In any domain that lies predominate, lie erodes their success and they are seen in mire of poverty. Economic activities are at a hold. Everything that will encourage economic growth is diverted.

Leadership lying ushers in their domain, economic bankruptcy, lack of information, lack of infrastructural development, introduces hatred, and misunderstanding in the community.

Another quality leaders ought to have in their dealing with their subjects is respect. Leaders owe a duty to their stool, a great deal of respect and same respect be given to their subjects. Respect gives birth to respect as it brings honour to the region.

And this ushers in progress; progress brings developments and infrastructural development. Respect leader give to their subjects in turn metamorphose into giant strides of development.

In the years before 1999 there was a kind of decorum in the affairs of men in all our Local Governments. It is important that each leader evaluate his qualities and style and experiences of leadership and governance, especially in Okrika Local Government.



Promises kept signify respect and honour to your subject and to the office. In leadership of the local government, the leaders are most times bad examples. Leaders don't tend to keep to the promises made to their subjects. When such promises are demanded to be fulfilled, they either brandish such men as decedents who want the downfall of the region. Sometimes, they instigate youths against such people and their families, and youths bought over by such leaders will either beat up those families or sometimes destroy their property.

In times of money and scholarship meant for the children, those leaders will divert such money and scholarship to their immediate families alone, and those of their friends. Leaders are meant to be transparent in dealing with issues like this, they are not meant to be bias and curry favour that does not last. They sometimes go ahead to take bribes to favour those they deemed fit to be theirs.

This does not mean that you are rigid in your positions as leaders No. but it only bring honour and respect when you are on the right and always say yes. And when you see the wrong maintain your position and say No. no matter who may be involve in the matter.

Leaders in our time don't honour promises but they have disregard to promise but would like people and other leaders to keep promises made to them and their families. As potential leaders it is salient for us to sound it loud and clear that if you are among this group count yourself to be a bad leader to your generation.

Good leaders, Honourable leaders who are in position of leadership and Governance are people with impeccable character, those who honour their words and their names. Igwe [5], argued that the position of Nigeria and Africa in general is the problem of leadership stressing that leaders are the ones who took over from the colonial masters and most leaders have rubbished the word 'leadership'. The attributes of leaders are not in them or ever portray around their buildings.

Such leaders nurture crisis in their domain to be feasting on such crisis. The crises brewed by them are to be faced by other people children. It is time that this generation get up to ask so many important questions, where are your own children in this matter?

Who lead the crisis? Let it be known that who ever ferment crisis should lead it with his families and let other people watch them and their families. Disintegrator of family, village, community and Local Government Area, is no other but crises. Earlier this is said, leaders should know how to tackle the menace when it comes to their domain.

Taking a look at the globe, one should see havoc that crisis has wrecked in all areas of the world, destruction, death, hunger and even many are rendered homeless. Leadership and governance should guide against such occurrence in their domain.

From 1999 in Okrika Local Government Areathere should be huge change of life. Deaths in diverse ways and youths in their numbers had died. And many wasted life's in drugs and bunkering. Parents and guidance should in conjunction with leaders help to direct the future of these youths in a meaningful way. If the world has started this way it would have been filled with anarchy.

Many people in leadership position has digressed a lot leaving their position and calling to chase shadows with the position they occupy.

The ability to handle crisis makes a man a leader. Remember in such a situation there should be no meaningful development from neither the government nor other agencies in that area.

Walter [8], pushed his blames on all that colonial masters did and what they left behind as bad legacy which the leaders who took their positions stepped into. The woes of under development, tribal conflict, corruption etc were left behind to us by the whites. Now, the question is how long these will last with us that we can't look forward and find our bearing as a people and as leaders etc. It is heart warming to know that, Nelson Mandela survived and led his people. Kwameh Nkurumah survived all this and led his people.

Leaders in leadership position should encourage trade to enhance the living standard of their subjects and they in turn should irk a living that is sustainable for themselves and families. Sustainable development in an area is the strength of their economy. When people are meaningfully engaged in one craft or the other it would be meaningless to obey any call out of their job for any war or crisis amongst them or neighbouring community or clan. The first thing, they do, is to think of their family and their job. But one who has no means of lively hood when once called, immediately heeds to the call without any further delay.

There is one cankerworm that is encouraged to be in our environs. And that is tribal sentiment. This, leaders has encouraged being in most quarters as their pet. And they usesuch toinstigate mayhem in their domain. e.g. The xenophobic saga in Southern Africa but in our little creeks much more than that abound. This ugly situation and incidences terminate divine love, development and bond of friendship within and around your neighbour hood. The position of a leader should not encourage such vices because it sets back development and entrench umbrage within fellow beings. Its benefits are high destruction and could

entrench Great War between two or more communities that have been in love and long-term relationship. This attitude led to many having what they call God-father. (That is a man who they have as their leader instead of the right leader).

The local government and region should check this and embrace brotherliness.

Leadership in Okrika should be conscience-stricken for once, for all the delay in development and progress is as a result of their attitude tied to vices. Conscience is the leader itself, but when it is dead, there is no trait of leadership in them that is a life. The dead conscience lead them to leave the youths in the hands of decadence via "KPO-FIRE", sea piracy, brigand on the high sea vessels, raping and kidnapping. It is highly pathetic if the generation from 1999 and up will end up their life and ways in this manner. Leadership in this region should have a penchant for the youths and redirect their foot steps to a better one. When people have conscience that is alive, then they will be able to judge between good and bad. And when there is no opportunity for them to decipher then it becomes obvious that, that generation could be a lost one. People with conscience hardly take the path of partiality in their dealings with their follow men. Lack of conscience breed evil, men of partial judgment, and evil domineering environment. Therefore, conscience stricken local government is advocated for the leaderships in these regions. The youths alike should be conscience-stricken in their affairs with each other.

Leadership, youths and all follower-ship should live responsibly in their dealing with every other member of the local government and their neighbours in other local government areas as well for further development and good infrastructural development that will be beneficial for them.

Liberalism and tolerance is one of the highest qualities a leader should possess should he want to be a better and enduring leader.

One in leadership position who is not humane cannot in any way be exemplary leader to himself and his subjects. A leader should be tolerant because under him are various people with diverse character and attitude. Habits that are obscure to any other person but by the leader's perseverance to tolerate them, and by the endurance of the leader to ameliorate their ailing character, he pushes the local government forward from where it would have fallen. But a careless leader would not mind, and may like to push them to obey wrong orders, where they go wrong thereby incur the wrath of his members who are in the same character trait and such set back of the local government. Then the desire aim and ambition that could be the manifesto to the exalted office could never be realized. A leader ought to be a wise man in the sense that he can read between the

lines. Wise ones know when his subjects are in the ditch and are capable to bring them out with great wisdom.

Leadership that is abounding in wisdom should as well acquire understanding without which to pilot affairs of the society will be pretty difficult. Before 1999 men of integrity and honour has handled and led the affairs of the LGA but the crop of men that came to headship from the years 1999 are people that need adequate training to handle the office. When things are not done in their own way or desire, there would be chaos. Then it becomes necessary that person that will be leader amongst such men should be tolerant, wise and understanding and humane in order to manage their inadequacies. It hovers on such to be proactive to sensitive issues concerning them.

Leadership in all levels should be beneficial to their community, village and LGA. Leaders desire good name, names that will be indelible in sands of time. Therefore, they need progress, remarkable ventures that will set their Local Government Area on different pedestal from others. Bringing home good educational ventures, hospitals, skill acquisition and entrepreneurship that will boost the revenue of the Local Government Area and high standard of living. Then there will be symbiotic relationship that exists among them, peace, progress and understanding and development.

Furthermore, any LGA that establishes her self in such a manner will be a cynosure to others, the centre attraction that magnets others to herself, in the sense that investors would like to seek a place in the LGA for their businesses, and the indigenes will be gainfully employed.

Social foundation is what good leader seeks for his domain. In education, Hospital, Market, Infrastructure development, Cottage industries. A good and wise leader knows that when good things are in place, he and his LGA are in safe hands. But converse to that, one rear up rebellious chant which others will follow. If the upheaval sets in, the LGA will lose its savor and will not remain the same.

Therefore, leaders should have a rethink in their organization. Youths should as well under the leadership of the LGA have a good rethink in their bid to prosper. There is dignity in labour leaders and the society should bear this in mind. And inculcate same to their followers.

Leaders should in totality avoid recycling of pockets problems in their vicinity. This is a form of cog in the wheel of progress. This brings stagnations in their development, progress, and infrastructure. Most leaders take pleasure in problem, to advance their mischievousness. Doing this, they plunge the entire

local government into chaos, and become inhabitable for people to live.

## CONCLUSION

The present leaders should learn the true nature of leadership. Proper training should be given to anybody who aspires to be a leader, special school should be built for such training because this concerns human resources. In such school ethics should be taught as it help them understand the task they face.

Re-orientation should be given to leaders periodically as this will help them in the changing world, and to cope with the advancement of science and ICT world.

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