# Impact of Community Development Programmes on Leadership Capacity Building of Community Leaders in Bayelsa State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

This Study examined Community Development Programmes and Leadership Capacity Building of Community Leaders in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprises the 1,294 Paramount Rulers and Community Development Committee (CDC) Chairmen in the state. The simple random sampling technique was applied to select 200 respondents from each of the senatorial districts that make up Bayelsa State (Bayelsa Central, Bayelsa East and Bayelsa West) to realize a sample size of 600. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. The reliability coefficient index of the instrument was 0.85. Three research questions were posed. They were analyzed using frequencies and weighted mean. The findings revealed amongst others that: cultural education programmes, environment/sanitation education programmes and peace/conflict resolution education programmes build the capacity of Community Leaders on cultural values for peaceful coexistence amongst others. Based on the findings, the Researcher recommended amongst others that: Paramount Rulers and Community Development Committee (CDC) Chairmen should recommend to the state government on adding peace education to the primary and secondary school curriculum as this would bring lasting peace to the various local government areas of Bayelsa State and Nigeria at large.

## 1. Introduction

Community development has generated much concern in many quarters; Bayelsa State of Nigeria not an exception. This is due to the fact that people, especially in the developing world are perceived as backward looking, conservative and village centered. Community development is seen as the route to transform these people. Community development, therefore became a process where these local people can not only create more jobs, income and infrastructure, but also help their community become fundamentally better and able to manage change.

Odokara in Kobani and Alozie (2019) stresses the complementary roles of adult education and community development in effecting social change by bringing together the processes of adult education and community development to bear on social issues. The integrated

approach involves the people, target agents and providers of services (change agents) and helps to facilitate sensitive innovation by providing a more reliable and comfortable means for the implementation of change. Adult education is sensitive to changing needs and flexibility of organization associated with community development. The community development process is also geared towards mobilizing people to change and control their environments by recognizing the need to come together to analyze identified local problems so as to find solutions to the problems. They also mobilize their resources or by external help take actions to solve the problems. To achieve this objective, organizational skills and knowledge are required. The possession of these requirements by members of a given people depends on their personal, social and educational experiences. Adult education has the traditional goal of assisting its recipients to develop their creative potential more effectively in a democratic society. Furthermore, Akinpelu as cited in Adetuji (2016) lists adult education programmes as literacy education, continuing education, community development, rural development or transformation, agricultural extension education, health extension education, mass education, population education or family planning education, workers education, nomadic/migrant education, social welfare and social work education, environment educational, leadership education, vocational education, political education and political action programs, cultural, aesthetics and recreational education, industrial and labour education, public enlightenment/ mass mobilization, women education, civic education, among others.

Barikor as cited in Kobani and Alozie (2019) observed that community development by contemporary standard is a polymorphous product, an amalgam of many dynamic and complementary factors including educational, economic, social, political and cultural transformation of the community and subsequent emancipation. He listed the scope of community development as follows: Agricultural extension, health, home economics, cooperatives, rural industries, housing public amenities, recreation and use of leisure, amongst others.

It is against this backdrop that government, NGOs and others have designed and implemented various community development programmes in Bayelsa State. These programmes include, but not limited to, cultural education programmes, environment/sanitation education and peace/sanitation education programmes.

These programs are expected to bring about attitudinal change among the people, improve interactions, enable them think differently about problems and use community assets in new ways.

Kobani and Alozie (2019) agree to the above when they stated that the aim of community development programmes is the participation of rural people and local leaders in Community initiatives in order to resolve felt-needs and improve living conditions of the people.

Similarly, Cabal and Weaver (2016) noted that community development occurs when people strengthen the bonds within their neighborhoods, build social networks and form their

organizations to provide a long-term capacity for problem-solving and give individuals and group of people the opportunity to take action and address issues within their community.

Contributing, Alozie (2012) stressed that community development programmes are effective when community members are simulated, encouraged, aided and assisted to take actions towards improving their standards of living.

From the foregoing, it is convenient to conclude that these Community Development programs are aimed at the development and reconstruction of rural communities; and enhancement of the capacity of community leaders to take the initiative in community transformation. It enhances their ability to think, to decide, to plan and to take action in determining their lives.

**Leadership and Community Development Programmes**

Leadership according to Wikipedia (2014) is a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the support of others in the accomplishment of a common task. The leader being simply somebody whom people follow or somebody who guides or directs others.

Community development relies heavily on local leadership to elicit the enthusiasm of the people. Local leadership enhances participation and ensures that it is not only the change agents but also local leaders who act as the agents of development in their communities.

Amirize (1998) noted that a vital elements in community development is an effective local leadership which must be established at the earliest stage and based on ability of the individual(s).

Shaffer in Kobani and Alozie (2019) also listed local leadership with includes committed, formal and informal leaders who can enthuse and support others, foster shared leadership; accept criticism and act as local champions for community development efforts amongst others as key elements for successful community development.

Leadership for the success of community development programs, like in other spheres of life, needs to possess certain qualities for it to be successful. A leader with the requisite knowledge and competence will definitely achieve more in community development than an ignorant or not too knowledgeable one.

Ume in Kobani (2022) therefore listed some characteristics that good community leaders would be identified: They include:

- Acceptance by the group
- Spirit and desire to lead.
- Readiness to make certain sacrifices
- Personality suited to do the job
- Expert knowledge

- Skilled in working with others.

Nwakaire in Kobani (2022) experientially and empirically came to include: openness to constructive criticisms, fear of God, modesty and humility, non-tribalistic approach to matters and visionary as part of the characteristics of a good community leader.

The above underscores the importance of leadership to any successful community development program; and clearly justifies the efforts to enhance the capacity of community leaders.

## Community Development Programmes for the Capacity Building of Community Leaders

Community development programmes encourage people to welcome new means of development in the Community.  As earlier noted, several Community development programmes have been carried out by government, NGOS and other stakeholders, including faith based organizations to enhance the leadership capacity of community leaders in Bayelsa State. In what follows, the programmes that formed the basis for this work are briefly discussed.

## Cultural Education

Igbafe in Ihejirika (2015) states that cultural education programmes involve the provision of information, knowledge and skills that permits the preservation and propagation of the cultural values of the people in a particular society. The culture of a society is not static but dynamic and always evolving and changing as the people in the community interact with themselves and people from other societies. There is need for cultural education to enable the people move with time and trend of change. This becomes even more important when such change is in the area of security where lives of humans and loss of properties is involved. Culture consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, work of art, rituals, ceremonies and other related component. It is apparent that all individuals aspire to achieve their goals and objectives, which are personal and professional. Apart from focusing upon the achievement of one's goals and promoting better livelihood opportunities, the individuals need to work towards promoting well-being of their cultural education will also enable community people to evaluate their cultures and practices in line with modern realities, with a view to upholding and perhaps strengthening progressive cultures and also abrogate non-progressive ones.

It needs to be stressed that there exist some obnoxious cultural practices in many of these communities; some of which impact on the health and socio-economic well -being of women and children.

Kobani and Alozie (2015) stressed that practices such as: early marriages, polygamy, and widowhood practices including disinheritance are deeply rooted in the culture of the people.

Obilade (1998) sees early marriage as marriage contracted before the full or average development of the economic, social, educational and political potentials of the couple. Early marriage is regarded as violation of human rights.

Similarly, Obianyo (2000) contends that the aim of marriage should be harmony and happiness but most women in polygamous homes, even though they are blessed with both male and female children, are never loved, free, healthy or happy.

Obianyo (2000) also observed that the phenomenon of widowhood practices had refused to be dealt with in spite of efforts at national, local and International conferences and seminars on plight of widows and how best to address the situation. Ahonsi (2017) remarked that it is unfortunate that widowhood marks the beginning of extreme life crises and a woman's dilemma, the discrimination, the wickedness, hatred and violence even by close relations; particularly to those without children and those who had only female children and those who had very little children.

Cultural education is designed for community leaders to increase their capacity to change these obnoxious practices. Community leaders as custodians of the people's cultural heritage need empowerment through education to become not just stewards of the culture but also agents of change towards a better society by the elimination of cultural practices that violate the rights of fellow humans and impact negatively on their social and economic well- being.

**Environmental/Sanitation Education**

Environmental awareness is to understand the fragility of our environment and the importance of its protection. Promoting environmental awareness is an easy way to prevent certain diseases plaguing community members and also participate in creating a brighter future for our children.

Adelagan in Kobani and Alozie (2015) stated that the basic objective of environmental education is to promote environmental awareness among all sections of the society and to mobilize peoples' participation for preservation and conservation of the environment.

Saka et al (2017) identified the following as objectives of environmental education:
- To spread environment education, especially in non-formal system among different sections of the society;
- To ensure training and manpower development for environment education, awareness and training; and
- To mobilize people's participation for preservation and conservation of environment.

In most of our communities, there has been the increasing need for the right attitude of the people towards such issues as illegal oil refining, deforestation, production and disposal of plastic goods and domestic waste disposal. These actions constitute environmental hazard and one of the core areas where community people need conscientization.

Community leaders are expected to be at the forefront of this initiative. To be able to effectively undertake this task, community leaders must first be able to understand

environmental issues. They need to be abreast of the current trends on environment issues; and conscious of the fact that environmental destruction is the result of a flaw in the modern world's belief system. They need to understand, for instance, that in order to keep our rain forest pristine we need to stop our dependence on fossil fuel and begin using environmentally sustainable resources. It is this awareness that will imbue the community leaders with the knowledge to function as environmental stewards.

**Peace Education/Conflict Resolution Skills**

The achievement of peace represents a humanizing process whereby individuals manage their violent tendencies. Peace educators contribute to this process by conscientizing the people about peace – what it is, why it does not exist and how to achieve it. They use their educational skills to teach about how to create peaceful conditions. In community settings, peace educators impart the values of stewardship, global citizenship and human relations. Boulding (2000) noted that peace educators teach about how conflicts start, the effects of violent solutions to conflict, and alternatives to violent behaviour. Through peace education, communities learn how to resolve disputes non-violently. They also learn peace strategies that may be used at both micro and macro levels to reduce suffering caused by different forms of violence – wars, ethnic conflicts, structural domestic and civil violence.

According to Bok (2006) peace education has both short and long term goals. Peace educators address the sources of immediate conflicts and give community members knowledge they can use to stop the violence.

Akpuru-Aja (2009) is equally in agreement. He sees peace education as a process of proactive enlightenment on the knowledge and skills of observing and responding to early warning indicators. It helps people appreciate how appealing cooperation or peaceful coexistence is: how to analyze conflict situations; the relationship between all the processes involved in promotion of peace and security in a community or nation at large.
This proactive nature of peace education makes it a suitable type of education for leaders who stand as guides in their communities and are expected to foresee potential threats to the peace of their communities. Through peace education, leaders will sharpen their knowledge and skills on how to preempt possible threat to security and deal with them before they manifest.
Conflicts, arguments and change are natural parts of our lives, as well as the lives of every community, agency, organization and nation. Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to disagreement. The disagreement may be personal, financial, political or emotional.

When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is negotiation to resolve the disagreement. Conflict resolution awareness campaign is therefore intended to imbue the people with the skills to produce a solution that all parties can agree to; to work as quickly as possible to find this solution; and to improve, not hurt, the relationship between the groups in conflict.

Bison (2008) stated that the main goal of negotiation with the opposition is to come to an agreement that benefits all parties. He listed the following as further benefits of negotiation:

- To understand more about those whose ideas, beliefs, and, backgrounds that may be different from your own. In order to resolve a conflict, you'll need to look at the conflict from your opponent's point of view and learn more about his person or group's perspective and motivations.

- To ensure your relationships with opponents continue and grow. If you make peace with your opponents, you increase your own allies in the community. Successful negotiations pave the way for smooth relationships in the future.

- To find peaceful solutions to difficult situations. Full-blown battles use up resources – time, energy, good reputation, motivation. By negotiating, you avoid wasting these resources, and you may actually make new allies and find new resources.

It is in realization of the many benefits of peace education that several government and non-governmental organizations have embarked in what could be termed aggressive peace education in many of the communities in Bayelsa. This is because the disposition of the community leaders is critical if the objectives of peace in the communities can be achieved.

The concepts of Community development and adult education both thrive on leadership. Leadership provides enlightenment, cooperation, and showing the relevance of programme content to the immediate and long-term needs of the society. They are joint or complementary mechanisms for mobilization and development. This makes them similar tools for the achievement of the same change in the lives of the people. There is no gainsaying the fact that capacity building of community leaders is pivotal to any meaningful development in communities.

The availability of other factors in community development in the absence of effective leadership may not achieve the desired result as leadership remains the key to community development.

**The Problem**

It has already been stressed that community development programes aim at people involvement in development process making them to be self- reliant and co- operative in developing their community. It is a movement, a process, a method and a programme. Community development can only be effective if community leaders develop not just their personal and educational skills but also their leadership skills. It is for this reason, as earlier noted, that various programs such as cultural education, environment/sanitation education and peace/conflict resolution education were undertaken to build the capacity of community leadership to become vanguards to the enlightenment of the people towards attitudinal change in these areas.

It is in the light of the above that the researchers saw the need to investigate the impact of these community development programmes (cultural education programmes, environmental/ sanitation education programmes and peace and conflict resolution education programmes) on the leadership capacity building of community leaders in Bayelsa State.

Therefore, the provision of adequate information, based on empirical evidence, on the impact of community development programmes on capacity building of community leaders in Bayelsa State is the problem of this study.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Have cultural education programmes impacted on leadership capacity building of community leaders in Bayelsa State?
2. Have environmental/sanitation education programmes impacted on leadership capacity building of community leaders in Bayelsa State?
3. Have peace and conflict resolution education programmes impacted on capacity building of community leaders in Bayelsa State?

## 2. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised one thousand, two hundred and ninety-four (1,294) Paramount Leaders and Community development Committee (CDC) Chairmen of Bayelsa State (Ministry of Community Development and Chieftaincy Affairs, Bayelsa State, 2021). 200 respondents were randomly sampled from each of the three senatorial districts of Bayelsa State (Bayelsa Central, Bayelsa East and Bayelsa West). This was applied to realize a sample size of 600 respondents. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire. The reliability coefficient is 0.85. Data collected were analyzed using frequencies and weighted mean.

## 3. Results

**Research Question 1:**

Have cultural education programmes impacted on leadership capacity building of community leaders in Bayelsa State?

**Table 1: Showing the Impact of Cultural Education Programmes on Leadership Capacity of Community Leaders**

| ITEMS | SA | A | D | SD | TOTAL | MEAN | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cultural education programmes have impacted on the capacity of community leaders on cultural values for peaceful co-existence. | 211 (844) | 198 (594) | 101 (202) | 90 (90) | 1,730 | 2.88 | Accepted |
| Cultural education programmes have imbued | 232 (928) | 201 (603) | 98 (196) | 69 (69) | 1,796 | 2.99 | Accepted |

| | SA | A | D | SD | TOTAL | MEAN | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| community leaders with knowledge on the dangers of early marriages. | | | | | | | |
| Cultural education programmes have imbued community leaders with skills to combat widowhood practices. | 248 (992) | 199 (597) | 84 (168) | 69 (69) | 1,826 | 3.04 | Accepted |
| Cultural education programmes have impacted community leaders with knowledge to serve as tools for the proper orientation of youths against societal vices. | 236 (944) | 201 (603) | 128 (256) | 35 (35) | 1,838 | 3.06 | Accepted |
| Cultural education programmes have equipped community leaders with knowledge to stop all forms of harmful cultural practices. | 232 (928) | 201 (603) | 98 (196) | 69 (69) | 1,796 | 2.99 | Accepted |

Table 1 presents the analysis of the impact of cultural education programmes on leadership capacity of community leaders. The options on the impact of cultural education on leadership capacity that: Cultural education programs have impacted on the capacity of community leaders on cultural values for peaceful co-existence; cultural education programmes have imbued community leaders with knowledge on the dangers of early marriages; cultural education programs have imbued community leaders with skills to combat widowhood practices; cultural education programmes have impacted community leaders with knowledge to serve as tools for the proper orientation of youths against societal vices; and that cultural education programmes have equipped community leaders with knowledge to stop all forms of harmful cultural practices were accepted by the respondents. Each of these items (2.88, 2.99, 3.04, 3.06 and 2.99 respectively) has a mean that is greater than 2.50 – the criterion mean.

**Research Question 2:** Have environment/sanitation education programmes impacted on leadership capacity building of community leaders in Bayelsa State?

**Table 2: Showing the Impact of Environment/ Sanitation Education Programmes on Leadership Capacity building of Community Leaders**

| ITEMS | SA | A | D | SD | TOTAL | MEAN | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Environment/sanitation education programmes have provided community leaders with understanding of the fragility of the environment | 246 (984) | 215 (645) | 124 (248) | 15 (15) | 1,892 | 3.15 | Accepted |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and the importance of its preservation. | | | | | | | |
| Environment/sanitation education programmes have impacted skills for community leaders to mobilize peoples' participation in efforts to preserve and conserve the environment. | 232 (928) | 210 (630) | 124 (248) | 26 (26) | 1,840 | 3.06 | Accepted |
| Environment/sanitation education programmes have provided community leaders with understanding of the harmful consequences of illegal petroleum refining. | 238 (952) | 208 (624) | 132 (264) | 26 (26) | 1,866 | 3.11 | Accepted |
| Environment/sanitation education programmes have provided community leaders with knowledge of the dangers of deforestation and the need to preserve our rain forest. | 248 (992) | 201 (603) | 102 (204) | 49 (49) | 1,848 | 3.08 | Accepted |
| Environment/sanitation education programmes have provided community leaders with skills to conscientize the people on the disposal of domestic wastes. | 211 (844) | 198 (594) | 101 (202) | 90 (90) | 1,730 | 2.88 | Accepted |

Table 2 presents the analysis of the impact of environment/sanitation education programmes on leadership capacity of community leaders. The options that: Environment/sanitation education programmes have provided community leaders with understanding of the fragility of the environment and the importance of its preservation; environment/sanitation education programmes have impacted skills for community leaders to mobilize peoples' participation in efforts to preserve and conserve the environment; environment/sanitation education programmes have provided community leaders with understanding of the harmful consequences of illegal petroleum refining; environment/sanitation education programmes have provided community leaders with knowledge of the dangers of deforestation and the need to preserve our rain forest; and that environment/sanitation education programmes have provided community leaders with skills to conscientize the people on the disposal of domestic wastes were accepted by the respondents. Each of these items (3.15, 3.06, 3.11, 3.08 and 2.88 respectively) has a mean that is greater than 2.50 – the criterion mean.

**Research Question 3:** Have peace and conflict resolution education programmes impacted on capacity building of community leadership of community leaders in Bayelsa State?

**Table 3: Showing the Impact of Peace and Conflict Resolution Education Programmes on Leadership Capacity of Community Leaders**

| ITEMS | SA | A | D | SD | TOTAL | MEAN | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Peace/conflict resolution education programmes have impacted positively on the capacity of community leaders to resolve disputes non- violently. | 238 (952) | 208 (624) | 132 (264) | 26 (26) | 1866 | 3.11 | Accepted |
| Peace/conflict resolution education programmes have imbued community leaders with knowledge on how to stop violence before it escalates. | 211 (844) | 198 (594) | 101 (202) | 90 (90) | 1730 | 2.88 | Accepted |
| Peace/conflict resolution education programmes have provided knowledge to the community leaders with the right communication skills to manage conflicts. | 236 (944) | 201 (603) | 128 (256) | 35 (35) | 1838 | 3.06 | Accepted |
| Peace/conflict resolution education programmes have enhanced the capacity of community leaders to effectively engage in negotiations. | 248 (992) | 201 (630) | 102 (204) | 49 (49) | 1848 | 3.08 | Accepted |
| Peace/conflict resolution education programmes have impacted positively on the capacity of community leaders to become vanguards of peace and peaceful co-existence in their various communities. | 246 (984) | 215 (645) | 124 (248) | 15 (15) | 1892 | 3.15 | Accepted |

Table 3 presents the analysis of the impact of peace/conflict resolution education programmes on the capacity building of community leaders. All the options which include that: Peace/conflict resolution education programmes have impacted positively on the capacity of community leaders to resolve disputes non- violently; Peace/conflict resolution education programmes have imbued community leaders with knowledge on how to stop violence before it escalates; Peace/conflict resolution education programmes have provided knowledge to the community leaders on the importance of living in peace with other people or communities; Peace/conflict resolution education programmes have enhanced the capacity of community leaders to effectively engage in negotiations; and that Peace/conflict resolution education programmes have impacted positively on the capacity of community leaders to become vanguards of peace and peaceful co-existence in their various communities were accepted by

the respondents. Each of the items (3.11, 2.88, 3.06, 3.08 and 3.15 respectively) has a mean that is greater than 2.50 – the criterion mean.

## 4. Discussion of Findings

The respondents used for the study were mainly Paramount rulers and Community Development Council (CDC) Chairmen of the communities; who are also sufficiently educated to respond to the questionnaire. Analysis of the result from Table 1 which showed that the respondents were of the opinion that cultural education programs had impacted positively on the leadership capacity building of community leaders in Bayelsa State. They agreed that the programmes have provided the community leaders with information to combat against issues such as early marriages, widowhood practices and other obnoxious cultures. This agrees with the findings of Igbafe in Ihejirika (2015) that cultural education programmes involve the provision of information, knowledge and skills that permit the preservation and propagation of the cultural values of the people in a particular society. The culture of a society is not static but dynamic and always evolving and changing as the people in the community interact with themselves and people from other societies. There is need for cultural education to enable the people move with time and trend of change. This becomes even more important when such change is in the area of security where lives of humans and loss of properties is involved. Culture consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, work of art, rituals, ceremonies and other related component. It is apparent that all individuals aspire to achieve their goals and objectives, which are personal and professional. Apart from focusing upon the achievement of one's goals and promoting better livelihood opportunities, the individuals need to work towards promoting well-being of their communities.

Analysis of findings in Table 2 showed that the respondents agreed that environment/ sanitation education has impacted positively on the leadership capacity building of community leaders in Bayelsa State. The programmes have provided community leaders with understanding of the fragility of the environment and the importance of its preservation. They have also impacted them with the requisite skills to mobilize peoples' participation in efforts to preserve and conserve the environment; especially in the areas of illegal petroleum mining, deforestation and disposal of domestic wastes. These findings corroborate the views of Adelagan in Kobani and Alozie (2015) that the basic objective of environmental education is to promote environmental awareness among all sections of the society and to mobilize peoples' participation for preservation and conservation of the environment. It agrees also to

Saka et al (2017) who identified the following as objectives of environmental education:
- To spread environment education, especially in non-formal system among different sections of the society;
- To ensure training and manpower development for environment education, awareness and training; and
- To mobilize people's participation for preservation and conservation of environment.

Community leaders are expected to be at the forefront of this initiative. To be able to effectively undertake this task, community leaders must first be able to understand

environmental issues. They need to be abreast of the current trends on environment issues; and conscious of the fact that environmental destruction is the result of a flaw in the modern world's belief system. They need to understand, for instance, that in order to keep our rain forest pristine we need to stop our dependence on fossil fuel and begin using environmentally sustainable resources. It is this awareness that will imbue the community leaders with the knowledge to function as environmental stewards.

Findings in Table 3 also showed that the peace/ conflict resolution education programmes had a positive impact on the leadership capacity building of community leaders in Bayelsa State. The respondents were of the opinion that it has equipped the community leaders with knowledge on how to stop violence before it escalates; and also enhanced their communication skills. These findings agree with Bok (2006) that peace education has both short and long term goals. Peace educators address the sources of immediate conflicts and give community members knowledge they can use to stop the violence. They also agree with Loreta and Jasmin in Alachi and Michael (2014) that peace education is an education that promotes a culture of peace, which is essentially transformative. It cultivates the knowledge base, skills, values and attitudes that seek to change people's mindset, behavior and attitude that in the first place have created or fueled insecurity or violence. This definition sees peace education as a ready tool for attitudinal change on the part of all stakeholders in the security framework of a society or nation; looking at peace education as a more proactive measure to dealing with insecurity, Akpuru-Aje (2007) is equally in agreement as peace education as a process of proactive enlightenment on the knowledge and skills of observing and responding to early warning indicators. It helps people appreciate how appealing cooperation or peaceful coexistence is: how to analyze conflict situations; the relationship between all the processes involved in promotion of peace and security in a community or nation at large. This proactive nature of peace education makes it a suitable type of education for leaders who stand as guides in their communities and are expected to foresee potential threats to the peace of their communities. Through peace education, leaders will sharpen their knowledge and skills on how to preempt possible threat to security and deal with them before they manifest.

The respondents also agreed that the peace/conflict resolution education programmes have enhanced the capacity of community leaders to effectively engage in negotiations during conflict situations. This finding agrees with Bison (2008) who stated that the main goal of negotiation with the opposition is to come to an agreement that benefits all parties. Negotiation enables a person to understand more about those whose ideas, beliefs, and, backgrounds that may be different from his/her own in order to resolve a conflict. It ensures relationships with opponents continue and grow; as successful negotiations pave the way for smooth relationships in the future.

### 5. Recommendations

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

1. Community leaders should ensure that some progressive cultural festivals are celebrated annually to pass it on effectively to the next generation.
2. Scholars of Bayelsa State descent can write books discussing the various cultures and offering informed views on them.
3. Government should include Peace and Environment education in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools in Bayelsa State; and also encourage pupils and students to set up Peace and Environment clubs to sensitive the young ones on the values of peaceful living and environmental sustainability.
4. Paramount Rulers and Community Development Committee (CDC) Chairmen should recommend to the local government legislative assembly or the state assembly to give legal impetus to the abrogation of certain harmful cultural practices or those that infringe on the rights of individuals irrespective of gender or age.
5. Community leaders should set up a machinery to monitor and enforce compliance to the laws banning illegal refining of petroleum products, deforestation and indiscriminate dumping of domestic wastes.
6. Community leaders in collaboration with government and other stake holders should embark on regular sensitization of the people on the values of peaceful co-existence and conservation and preservation of the environment.
7. Oil companies operating in the communities should include awareness campaigns on peace and environment sustainability as part of their corporate social responsibility.
8. Government at both the local and state levels should enact laws to give constitutional backing to community leaders as vanguards of peace and environment stewards.

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