

THE MENACE OF MILITANCY AND YOUTH RESTIVENESS ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE NIGER DELTA: THE CASE OF DELTA STATE

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Abstract

The economic potential of the tourism industry in Nigeria is enormous. Tourism is an increasingly important source of income, employment and wealth in many countries and its rapid expansion has been considered as an interesting possibility for sustainable development and poverty reduction in Nigeria. However, the industry faces numerous challenges such as civil unrest, kidnapping for ransom and, recently, terrorism. This paper examines the consequences of militancy and youth restiveness on tourism development in the Niger delta area with particular reference to its adverse effect on the Nigerian economy. It equally attempts to proffer measures aimed at eliminating the negative influences of insecurity in Nigeria so as to increase the possibilities of improved international tourist arrivals. Analytical research method was employed, secondary and primary sources were put to use whereby questionnaires formed the source of primary data collection. A total of 72 questionnaires were administered to respondents out of which 50 were retrieved. It was found that 50% of the respondents agreed that government policies on terrorist attack have very little effect in mitigating the impact of the attacks on the tourism industry in the area, however 54% of the respondents were of the view that the incessant menace of kidnapping, youth Restiveness and social unrest have greatly affected the development of tourism in Delta State. On the issue of government collaboration with necessary security and tourism agencies, 90% of respondents disagreed that the government is doing enough to curtail the menace of youth restiveness and social unrest in the state. Tourism development depends totally on the circumstances of lasting peace and security. Therefore, it was recommended that stakeholders in the tourism industry should adopt every available rational means to tackle these security risks in order to guarantee sustainable tourism in Nigeria.

Keywords: Militancy, corruption, frustration-aggression theory, terrorism, Niger-delta, security threat, youth restiveness

Introduction

The economic potential of the tourism industry in Nigeria is enormous. Tourism is an increasingly important source of income, employment and wealth in many countries and its rapid expansion has been considered as an interesting possibility for sustainable development, including poverty reduction, in Nigeria. However, the industry faces numerous challenges such as civil unrest, kidnapping for ransom and, recently, terrorism.

Tourism in recent times has developed significantly to become one of most rapidly growing industries in the world. According W.T.O (2002), 'global economy is presently driven by three major industries and these are technology, telecommunication and tourism'. This assertion clearly corroborated the view of Poirier (2000) who opined that 'tourism today is second only to oil as the world's leading export commodity, accounting for global earning of more than \$300 billion dollars or nearly 25% of total world gross national product (GNP) in the last decade' Obviously tourism growth and its resultant effect on economic fortunes of nations globally are not uniform. It is a truism that irrespective of how naturally endowed a location can be, or well developed the physical infrastructure are, without peaceable environment such resources may never yield their full tourism potentials. It has been established that the global tourism industry is quite sensitive. Thus, the driving force for tourism demand and supply can be susceptible to extreme events such as terrorism, political violence and natural disaster (Arana and Leon 2007; Ryan 1993; Page and Connell 2003; Glenn 2001).

Youth restiveness and militancy, however, is a more challenging concept to define. For decades, scholars have debated the "terrorist vs. freedom fighter" dilemma. Enders and Saddler(2002) may offer the best definition, regarding it as '...the premeditated use or threat of use of extra normal violence or brutality by sub national groups to obtain a political, religious, or ideological objective through intimidation of a huge audience, usually not directly

involved with the policy making that the terrorist seek to influence' Furthermore, as terrorism against tourists often involves international citizens, international terrorism is defined as "terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country." (Essner,2003).

The Concept of Tourism and Youth Development

Tourism is an example of a straight-forward concept and is defined by Essner (2003) as 'a service based industry which is made up of several elements including transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, tours and merchandising.

Tourism is an increasingly widespread and complex activity, which requires sophisticated management to realize its full potential as a positive and sustainable economic, environmental, social and cultural force. The economic impact of tourism places tourism roughly at the same global order of magnitude as agriculture or mining. According to World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC) the major organization representing the global tourism industry, 215 million jobs were dependent on the 'Tourism economy' in 2004. The United Nations in 1994 defined tourism as "the activities of personstraveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated within the place visited".

Youths are principal actors in the transition from contentious politics to violence because they are most affected by situation of powerlessness, which state oppression aggravates. Despite the enormous contributions of the state to the wealth of Nigeria, the people of the Niger Delta have remained impoverished and underdeveloped. Paradoxically, the oil producing states have benefited least from the oil wealth. Devastated by the ecological costs of oil spillage and the high gas flaring rates in the Region, Poverty, unemployment, decayed infrastructure, corruption at high level, misery, and lack of basic human needs, seem to be a major problem to the people. For the youths, violence becomes a bargaining weapon for negotiating, legitimizing or violating (oppressive) public order. The poor and unemployed youths therefore formed militia groups to seek redress against the government and the multinational corporations operating in the area. It has been argued that most of the circumstances that generate the frustration and anger that degenerate into murderous militancy and youth restiveness in the region is founded on the sense of injustice, unemployment and such other factors as environmental security and infrastructural developmental issues that sparked the conflict in the region.

Safety and Security Issues in Focus

Safety and security have always been indispensable conditions for travel and tourism. But it is an incontestable fact that safety and security issues gained a much bigger importance in the last two decades in tourism. Changes in the world during the last two decades were enormous. István and Krisztina (2010) observed that due to terrorist acts, local wars, natural disasters, epidemics and pandemics, security has significantly decreased. The travel and tourism industry could not avoid the negative impacts and consequences of these events. Moreover, some of these events manifested the vulnerability of tourism both on global and regional levels (István and Krisztina). Safety and security issues in travel and tourism came to the fore-front by the evolution of the mass tourism from the beginning of the 1950s. The evolutionary process of mass tourism development, according to István and Krisztina (2010), include;

1. Travel and tourism is not any more an activity of a narrow social class but the whole widening middle class is getting progressively involved into it.
2. Tourism scope covers more and more countries and regions in the world. Not only highly developed countries enabled to generate out-going tourism flows are getting involved in tourism but also countries from the so called third world. For them, tourism is part of their economic development strategy.
3. The rapid and scenic development of transport (aviation, automotive industry) contributed to the rise in (geographical) mobility. Due to these reasons, the safety and security issues gained a bigger importance as tourism itself became one of the largest industries in the world economy (contributing to the GDP, number of people employed in the sector, extent of investments into the tourism industry, etc).

Security Hazards in Nigeria: Effect on Tourism

Security has been a major problem for the growth of tourism for a number of years. Terrorist attacks or political unrest in different parts of the country have adversely affected the sentiments of foreign tourists. Crime, violent acts and civil unrests that impede national security and socio-political and economic progress are common features of Nigeria societies. However, the statistics of crime in Nigeria is far from being a reliable index. This is because many crimes occur in Nigeria but are either not reported or are unknown to the police and other security agencies.

Therefore, they are not on the official crime statistics. Dambazau (2007) acknowledges the manifestation of crime in Nigeria. He argues that in addition to the conventional crimes of armed robbery, murder, assault and so on, Nigeria has been on the global crime map since the 1980s. Kidnapping, drug trafficking, advance fee fraud (419), human trafficking and money laundry, have been particularly identified with Nigerian transnational criminal syndicates. Crime is a threat to Nigerian national security because its impact is felt on all aspect of human activity such as food, health, environmental, personal, political and social activities. According to the Economists Intelligent Unit (EIU), out of 59 countries evaluated, Nigeria is rated the riskiest country for business in the world (Dambazau, 2010). The author further reported that: “Nigeria is an insecure environment for commercial operations.

Security risk arises at three levels. The first comes from rising violent crime, from simple armed robbery to carjacking and violent attacks, second, companies can be subjected to direct attack or blackmail, facilities can be vandalized and staff kidnapped. Third, incidence of inter-communal violence has risen. Nigeria’s ill equipped police force has been ineffective in stemming crime wave.” Several ethnic and ethno-religious conflicts have occurred in Nigeria between 2001 to date. Adora (2010) observed the Oyadama and Nko (Cross River) war in 2009. In Maiduguri, the Boko Haram crisis has lingered since 2009, while the Jos ethno-religious crisis has also persisted since 2010. It is pertinent to note that reasonable numbers of our tourist products are found in these states and communities. Jos, the capital of Plateau State has tourist attractions ranging from beautiful sceneries, spectacular rock formations, waterfalls, lakes, game reserves, exquisite hotels, zoological gardens, Wildlife Park, museum and so on. Unfortunately, the recurrent ethnic and ethno-religious crisis has turned Plateau State, Nigeria’s foremost tourists’ haven, into the home of unrest, hate and a deadly sanctuary – this makes tourists jettison the city. The implication is that the pace of tourism development will nose dive unless the ethnic and ethno-religious crises and tribal wars are stopped.

As a result of these social unrests, international tourism receipts have fluctuated negatively. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) Yearbook of Tourism Statistics, Compendium of Tourism Statistics and data files (2006 – 2010), and IMF and World Bank export estimates for year 2011, international tourism receipt in Nigeria went down to 0.96% (\$738,000,000) in 2010. This was against 1.36% (\$791,000,000) in 2009, 1.09% (\$959,000,000) in 2008, and 1.41% as at 2002 (WTO, 2012). Henderson et al (2010) confirmed that safety and security issues, as well as civil unrests are factors that discourage both local and international tourists from visiting tourist destinations and patronizing hotels. The fluctuation in Nigeria’s international tourist receipts is surely as a result of the local security challenges over the years.

Vulnerability of the Hospitality Sub-Sector Stafford, Yu and Armoo (2002) warned that terrorist incidents at tourist destinations can have very harmful impacts on the hospitality sector as a whole, if there are dramatic falls in arrivals, financial and less tangible costs to individual properties are acute when they are the scene of the outrage. Hotels and relaxation centers have a history of being targeted; some in popular holiday centers and others in troubled states where guests are mainly citizens and foreigners travelling for business or official purposes. Notable examples are the coordinated bomb explosions at a Military Relaxation Centre and the twin bomb blast at the Eagle Square in Abuja Nigeria during the 2011 (50 years) Independence Day celebration. The susceptibility of the hospitality sub-sector was made apparent following the Boko Haram attacks in Borno and Yobe States in October, 2011.

The US Embassy had received information that the Boko Haram may plan to attack several locations and hotels in Abuja during the Sallah holiday. All US government personnel were instructed to avoid these locations and previously scheduled events were cancelled. The locations, according to Nze (2011) include; the Nicon Luxury, Sheraton Hotels Abuja and the Transcorp Hilton Hotel. Fear of the immediate impact of the security situation on the tourism industry in Abuja, in particular, came during the Muslim Sallah holiday when the media was awash of reports of low patronage recorded by most, if not all hotels in Abuja and other parts of the Federal Capital Territory. The insistence by the United States Embassy on the earlier warning threw the seeming recovering Nigeria’s tourism sector into relapse!

Reasons for targeting hotels are that they offer a high degree of access, usually 24 hours a day (Henderson et al, 2010). Larger hotels have many public spaces, entrances and exits and foreigners may gather there (Horner and Swarbrooke, 2004). Meetings and conferences are hosted and there are restaurants which might be frequented by prominent businessmen and government officials. Properties which are part of large international chains are symbols of their country and government, hence the envy of terrorist groups.

Root Cause of Youth Restiveness and Militancy in the Niger Delta

Youth Restiveness, one of the many-sided effects of the seemingly unending Niger Delta crisis, relates to matters of agitation by youths over issues of deprivation, neglect, marginalization, and feelings of dissatisfaction. The engagement by youths in agitation for the restoration of their rights and dignity or self-seeking and criminal activities, that can be either constructive (positive) or destructive (negative), is undoubtedly a hydra-headed socio-economic problem in the Niger Delta area. The root cause of the youth restiveness in the region is the broad spectrum of laws that have both colonial inspiration and feudal inclination and the accompanying actions of the Nigerian state on the country's oil industry and the age-long regime of environmental degradation due to the mindless operational threats arising from the oil exploration and production activities of the oil conglomerates. The legal/environmental laws that provided the constitutional foundation did not only create the environment which is up till today plaguing the Niger Delta region but also set the stage for the operational menace in which the region has been engulfed. A deeper insight into the nature of the collaboration by the three partners in the unholy alliance can largely be provided, taking cognizance of the fact that the Nigerian state (pre- and post-colonial) formulates the policies that create and determine the political and business environment that are clement for the capitalist development of the oil industry and the exploitation and underdevelopment of the Niger Delta region. In the face of the far from legal/environmentally benign laws and the devastating operational activities of the oil majors and minors, the cosmetic institutional interventionist efforts of the Nigerian state supposedly meant to close the developmental gaps in the paradoxically rich-oil treasure-based, but poverty-ridden and underdeveloped, region failed to achieve any tangible results.

The patently stark environmental injustice that has been the lot of the Niger Delta region has provided a fertile ground for the deep-seated youth restiveness that had assumed frightening militant and anti-developmental dimensions. This study therefore critically examines the problem of youth restiveness in Niger Delta area of Nigeria.

Youth restiveness, however, is a situation of the inability of youths to be still or quiet and difficult to control, especially when they are unsatisfied with something. It relates to matters of agitation by youths over issues of deprivation, neglect, marginalization, and other feelings of dissatisfaction. It can also be viewed as the engagement by youths in agitation for the restoration of their rights and dignity or self-seeking and criminal activities. In a similar vein, youth restiveness refers to the reactions by youths, both constructive (positive) and destructive (negative) to the “use and dump” mentality and attitude of those considered to be involved in acts of oppression and repression against their interests. It is a deliberate instrument of organized response to perceived grievances that has an increasing potency and capability for destruction. Essentially too, youth restiveness is a manifestation of anxiety that encompasses the dysfunctional effects of anxiety on human body and the description of the psychological activities of the body that give vent to anxiety. It is, in fact, a sustained protestation embarked upon with an eye to enforcing a desired outcome from a constituted authority by an organized body of youths. It is thus an excess behavior attribute that is commonly marked by violence and disruption of lawful activities.

The usage of the word “youth restiveness” became ubiquitous in Nigeria since the wake of the activities of youths in the oil-bearing communities of the Niger Delta. The phenomenon is usually associated with adolescents because of the fact that they confront a host of new, varied, and difficult problems of adjustment that make the search for identity and a place in society imperative. Ogbeifun (2007) categorized youth restiveness into three categories—namely, genuine agitation, self-seeking and criminal activities, and youth on vengeance mission. Although the term has gained notoriety in usage, particularly in the Nigerian parlance, it has gradually assumed a global configuration, despite the fact that a standard and generally acceptable definition is yet to evolve.

This paper examines the consequences of youth restiveness and militancy on tourism development with particular reference to its adverse effect on the Nigerian economy. It equally attempts to proffer measures aimed at eliminating the negative influences of insecurity in Nigeria so as to increase the possibilities of increased international tourist arrivals.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

The research was carried out in Delta State which is an oil and agricultural producing state in Nigeria. It is situated in the region known as the South-South geo-political zone with a population of 4,112,445 (males: 2,069,309;

females: 2,043,136). The capital city is Asaba, located at the northern end of the state, with an estimated area of 762 square kilometers (294 sq mi), while Warri is the economic nerve center of the state and also the most populated. It is located in the southern end of the state. The state has a total land area of 16,842 square kilometers (6,503 sq mi).

The state covers a landmass of about 18,050 km², of which more than 60% is land. The state lies approximately between Longitude 5°00 and 6°.45' East and Latitude 5°00 and 6°.30' North. It is geographically located in Nigeria's Midwest, bounded in the north and west by Edo State, the east by Anambra, Imo, and Rivers States, southeast by Bayelsa State, and on the southern extreme is the Bight of Benin which covers about 160 kilometers of the state's coastline. Delta State is generally low-lying without remarkable hills. The state has a wide coastal belt inter-lace with rivulets and streams, which form part of the Niger River Delta.



Figure; Map showing Delta State
Source;Google Map

Data collection

The study was carried out in the oil rich region of DeltaState, Nigeria. Analytical research method was put to use during the research work. Data was collected from respondents through the use of well structured questionnaires. The sample size included the residents of the area, governmental and the organized private sectors including potential tourists within the study area. Questionnaires were structured in a simple way to avoid complicated questions whereby the respondents wereallowed to choose from options.72 questionnaires were distributed out of which 50were retrieved. Simple table and percentage was use in the analysis of data collected from the field work.

Result and discussion

The research work showed that 62% of the respondents strongly agreed that frequency of militancy and youth unrest have a high negative impact on the hospitality and tourism industry in Delta State. Also 50% of the respondents were of the view that government policies and procedures put in place following a terrorist attack have very little effect in minimizing the impact on the tourism industry in the event of another potential tourist attack in Delta State. However, 54% of the respondents agree that the incessant menace of kidnapping, youth Restiveness and social unrest have greatly affected the development of tourism negatively in the State.

On the issue of governmental collaboration with necessary security and tourism agencies, 90% of respondents disagreed that the government is doing enough to curtail the menace of youth restiveness and social unrest in the state. Concerning the effectiveness of various empowerment schemes put in place by the government in order to curb the issue of youth restiveness and kidnapping in the state, a large section of respondents 70% disagreed that these schemes and other governmental incentive are attractive and effective enough to minimize youth restiveness and thereby promote Tourism in Delta state.

TABLE 1

Does the severity or frequency of militancy and youth unrest have a negative impact on hospitality and tourism industry in Delta State?

Reponses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	4	8%
Disagree	3	6%

Neutral	6	12%
Agree	6	12%
Strongly Agree	31	62%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field work,

From the above table, it is deduced that 4 (8%) of the respondent strongly disagree that the severity or frequency of militancy and youth unrest have a negative impact on hospitality and tourism industry in Delta State. About 3 (6%) disagree, 6(12%) of the respondents were neutral while 6(12%) agree and 31(62%) of the respondents strongly agree that the severity or frequency of militancy and youth unrest have a higher impact on hospitality and tourism industry in Delta State. This findings is supported by the study of Oromareghake & Osah (2013) which reveals that youth restiveness and the high spate of insecurity in the Niger- Delta states and Delta State in particular has a very negative impact on the tourism industry in Niger Delta states, the economy and the Nigerian society in general.

TABLE 2

Are government policies and procedures put in place following a terrorist attack effective in minimizing the impact on the tourism industry in the event of another potential tourist attack in Delta State?

Reponses	Frequency	Percentage %
A Great Extent	5	10%
Somehow	5	10%
Very Little	25	50%
Not at All	15	30%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field work:

The table shows the response of respondents to effectiveness of government policies and procedures put in place following a terrorist attack in minimizing the impact on the tourism industry in the event of another potential tourist attack in Delta State. About 5 (10%) respondents agreed to a great extent that government policies and procedures put in place following a terrorist attack are effective in minimizing the impact on the tourism industry in the event of another potential tourist attack in Delta State, while 25(50%) agreed to a very little extent that the policies and procedures are effective in minimizing the impact on the tourism industry. About 5(10%) respondents agree that the policies and procedures put in place somehow have effect in minimizing the impact on the tourism industry in the event of another potential tourist attack in Delta State, while a fraction of 15(30%) respondent totally disagreed that government policies and procedures put in place following a terrorist attack are effective in diminishing the impact on the tourism industry in the event of another potential tourist attack in Delta State.

Table 3

What impact has the incessant menace of kidnapping, youth Restiveness and social unrest had on the development of tourism in Delta State?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Greatly	27	54%
Moderately	13	26%
Low	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Work

The data above shows that 27 (54%) of the respondents greatly agree that the incessant menace of kidnapping, youth Restiveness and social unrest has greatly affected the development of tourism in Delta State, about 13 respondents representing 26% moderately agreed, and 10(20%) respondents said that the incessant menace of kidnapping, youth Restiveness and social unrest is low on the development of tourism in Delta State. This is not farfetched from the work of Janet Monisola (2012) where she opined that militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta are major factors that affect sustainable tourism development in the region and also affects the image of Nigeria negatively.

Table 4

Is the Delta State government in collaboration with the necessary security and tourism agencies doing anything positive to arrest the issue of militancy and youth unrest?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	10%
No	45	90%
No idea	0	00%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field work: July

The above table show 5 (10%) respondents agreed that Delta State government in collaboration with the necessary security and tourism agencies are doing something to arrest the issue of militancy and youth unrest. 45 (90%) respondents disagreed that the Delta State government in collaboration with the necessary security and tourism agencies is doing something to arrest the issue of militancy and youth unrest. This correlates with the study of Kelly Ejumudo (2014) where he critically examines youth restiveness in the Niger Delta and contended that the root cause is the legal environmental laws that provided the basis for the operational hazards of the oil conglomerates that have collaborated with the Nigerian state whose intervention agencies have largely failed to close the developmental gaps in the region.

Table 5

Are the various programmes such as Amnesty, Youth empowerment which includes N-Power and other governmental incentive attractive and effective enough to minimize youth restiveness and thereby promote Tourism in Delta state?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	10%
No	35	70%
No idea	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field work

The above table shows how various programmes such as Amnesty, Youth empowerment like N-Power and other governmental incentive are attractive and effective enough to minimize youth restiveness and thereby promote Tourism in Delta state. 5(10%) agree that the various programmes such as Amnesty, Youth empowerment like N-Power and other governmental incentive are attractive and effective enough to minimize youth restiveness and thereby promote Tourism in Delta state. A large section of 35(70%) respondents disagree that the various programmes such as Amnesty, Youth empowerment like N-Power and other governmental incentive are attractive and effective enough to minimize youth restiveness and thereby promote Tourism in Delta state. While 10(20%) have no idea concerning that issue of discussion. This is similar to the study of Chukwuemeka and Aghara (2010) who stated that dissatisfaction of the people of Niger Delta especially the youths on the level of attention given to the development of their region and the damages to their ecology by oil spillage are the major causes of the alarming youth restiveness.

Conclusion & Recommendation

Every environment is endowed with opportunities and confronted with threats. While the opportunities may be potential (dormant) or actualized (activated), the threats are more often than not man-made. This position derives from the fact that environmental resources in their natural state do not pose any threats to man; rather, it is the utilization of the resources through their use or misuse that generates threats. In the case of the Delta state environment, it is one of the few treasure bases of the entity of Nigeria. This is because the Nigerian economy is largely dependent on the petroleum sector that accounts for approximately 80% of government revenues, 90% of foreign exchange earnings, and 95% of export receipts.

Based on the above findings of the study made by the researchers, the result of the research showed that there is a high level of youth restiveness in the land, especially in Delta State, with its huge tourism relics which has hindered the activities of tourism in the area. The root of this menace can be eradicated if government in conjunction with host communities brings out lasting solutions by empowering the youths, providing basic amenity and welfare to the populace.

Youth restiveness and militancy crisis is not only a local problem; it is a global problem that deserves serious attention. The world has long seen Delta state and Nigeria in general as a non-stable economy and a sinkhole that could swallow their investment. Therefore, recommendations were based on the summary of finding and conclusion

1. Holistic efforts should be made by government to analyze and overcome the power structures that thwart and militate against the principles of fairness and equity and seek to redress the imbalances in the distribution of environmental benefits and costs in the form of skill acquisition, job creation, health care, and educational assistance schemes and other pro-poor life-enhancing programs as desirable and appropriate.
2. There should be genuine massive compensational infrastructural development of the devastated and neglected region, and the socio-economic empowerment of the pauperized, unproductive, and agitated youth such that they can contribute to the national development process.
3. The political leaders and tribal leaders should work harder for peace in the Delta region, because peace brings about to growth.
4. The contention that leads to the crisis such as poverty, unemployment, insecurity and emigration, social deprivation, abuse of cultural values and norms, should be resolved, so that such crisis would not hinder sustainable tourism development in Delta state.
5. The state government should take every step necessary to consolidate the gains of amnesty in the Niger Delta and execute the post amnesty programme. There should be equitable distribution of revenue derived from the region, a determined effort towards massive infrastructure development, job creation and confidence building measures.

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