

# Fishing as a Source of Livelihood and Sustainable Growth in a Resettlement Scheme: The Case of Bakassi Resettlement Programme in Cross River State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigates fishing business as a source of livelihood and sustainable growth in Bakassi resettlement programme in Cross River State, Nigeria. The major aim is to ascertain whether fishing business promotes sustainable growth in the study area.. A structured interview schedule was designed and administered on 600 household heads and further confirmed with Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The research adopted a descriptive survey design while the stratified and systematic random sampling techniques were applied at appropriate stages to select the sample. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was used to test the only hypothesis formulated for the study. The results show among others that fishing business is the major productive base that promotes sustainable growth in the resettlement. Consequently, the study stresses the need for government to create the right environment for settlers to continue with their fishing business through the provision of incentives, grants, loans and subsidies. Beside, new methods of fish farming such as artificial fishing ponds should be introduced to the settlers as this will help boost their fishing business.*

**Keywords:** *Fishing, livelihood, sustainability, growth, business, settlers.*

## INTRODUCTION

A major strategy towards providing productive bases for resettled groups is to make available sufficient means of livelihood such as land, housing, occupations, and so on for their welfare. According to Okiddi (2002), this strategy would enable the settlers to tap their productive potential at the new sites. He added that availability of jobs, cultivable land, technical skills and other opportunities are means by which settlers can successfully reconstruct their livelihood. So, sources of livelihood such as income, occupation and land among others are counted as productive bases which are essential for the success of any resettlement programme. Okpara (2005) asserts that Africa with a population density which is lower than those of South Asia, East Asia or Latin America, should have made it comparatively easier to embark on resettlement. This is because lands are readily available which could help settlers to re-establish themselves productively, socially and economically

in a relatively shorter period. But this is not the case as land, a means of livelihood, is not efficiently utilized by the settlers or allocated by the planners of these programmes. This is corroborated by studies carried out by Hodder (2000) in Ethiopia and Mozambique. Peterpam (2000) also reports that in one of the resettlement areas in Ethiopia, cultivable land per family had decreased to about half the amount before their allocation. Some of the resettlements were cited on uneven platforms with poor drainage and the core housing units were poorly constructed.

According to Adu-aryee (2001), human resources are major means of livelihood in a resettlement operation. He observed that resettlement organizations staffed with people who have social and technical skills alongside technical and financial resources as well as the autonomy needed to carry out their mission would experience growth and development. Moreover, resettlements that involve local organizations and settlers in decision making and implementation processes of the resettlement programmes will succeed (Michael and Tom, 2004). Roder (2004) asserts that resettlements should be kept in places where there are sufficient resources like water, rivers, lakes, oceans or atmospheric moisture and fertile soil which are indispensable to life, especially for settlers who are agrarians.

Westing (2005) points out that most resettlements sites in Africa are endowed with great natural wealth and some were fortunate to have variety of resources. For example, the Kainji resettlement site has great economic advantage because of its varied physical and enormous potentially cultivable land. Over 80 per cent of the settlers depend on agriculture for their livelihood. George (2013) states that the choice of a resettlement site in Akpabuyo Local Government Area for the displaced Bakassi indigenes was a good one. According to him Akpabuyo Local Government Area is replete with economic potentials and is rich with ore, columbite, limestone, coal, lignite, iron, lead, zinc, uranium and large quantities of salt. Marble and gold are also mined but in small quantities. He added that the timber that comes from the forest in Akpabuyo includes Mahogany, Iroko, Sapele wood and Obeche and the fruits produced there include banana, plantain, mango, pawpaw, avocado pear, citrus fruits, dates, cocoa and palm fruits.

The saps produced such things like rubber and palm wine and the fibers and leaves from these trees and bushes are used for thatching and matting. Above all, it has many rivers on which the settlers can continue with their fishing business. Thus the importance of these means of livelihood must be evaluated in relation to the ability of the new settlers to process them and to distribute the products economically. One of the most fundamental and contentious issues that has attracted global attention in the last decade has been the forceful displacement of people from their ancestral homes and resettling them where there are no means of livelihood to support them. It has become a global concern due to its spread and negative consequences, which include poverty and misery, inhuman treatment, destitution, debasement, and abuse of fundamental human rights of the displaced persons. Most national or international policy initiatives put in place to run resettlement programmes fail to achieve the desired result. This is mostly evident in Africa where almost all the resettlement programmes were characterized by great deal of controversy, high level protest and negative social reactions from the displaced persons and other sectors of society

(Mount-joy, 2007). This has raised core questions revolving around the future and security of displaced people, the role of government and the international community in the resettlement plan in the aspects of development and benefits of resettlement operations (Cernea, 1997). In most resettlement schemes, especially in Africa, the settlers were excluded from functional participation in the system, which made them feel a deep sense of neglect, abandonment or alienation. According to Ellis (2011), whenever people were forced to abandon their homes, they would first be treated as refugees, deprived of normal livelihood and pushed to the limits of poverty and starvation.

To address some of the challenges experienced in resettlement schemes, the United Nations Organization (UNO, 1980) formulated a policy on resettlement programmes which clearly spelt out the need to preserve the identity, culture, values, and ethos of a displaced people, restore the income of displaced persons to the pre-displacement level, protect the livelihood of displaced people and ensure that the people cope in their new homes with their living standard improved (Pam, 2011). In spite of these measures, many studies have shown that most resettlement programmes, especially in Africa had either become wasteful or had collapsed (Bathomine, 2009; Mount-joy, 2007; Colson, 2001 and Cernea, 1996).

Because the Bakassi displacement was not induced by any developmental project for which the settlers could benefit from, the only option open to them was to continue with their age long fishing business in the resettlement. As a riverine people who are predominantly fishermen depending on the sea for their fishing business, they were by their displacement to the land excised from their primary occupation. By their circumstances, they now fish in a completely new environment devoid of sea life. It is on this premise that this study was designed to examine fishing as a source of livelihood and sustainable growth in a resettlement programme, using the Bakassi resettlement scheme in Cross River State, Nigeria as a case study. As a guide for the study, it is presumed that there is no significant relationship between fishing business as a source of livelihood and sustainable growth in Bakassi resettlement in Cross River State, Nigeria.

## METHOD

The research adopted a descriptive survey design, utilizing both cross-sectional and correlation survey analysis, carried out on a randomly selected sample. The study population comprises the entire Bakassi Indigenes who resettled at Akwa-obutong in the new Bakassi Local Government Area. The sample for the study consisted of six hundred (600) household heads selected through stratified and systematic random sampling techniques. First, the resettlement camp was divided into three strata according to the existing resettlement units. To select the sample, the systematic random sampling method was adopted. The researcher went through a register of each resettlement unit containing the names of household heads. From each of the registers, every tenth (10th) name was picked and the individual household head was then located and interviewed. Two types of research instruments were used to collect data for this study. These were the structured interview schedule and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Their use was necessary because the settlers were virtually non literate. All the interviews were carried out in (the local dialect). The data was collated and then extracted and arranged in Means, Standard deviations and

Percentages. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was adopted to analyze the data generated and it gave a correlation coefficient of .75. Following this the instrument was adopted for the study. The sample-by-sample distribution of respondents by their strata and selection is shown on table 1.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the analysis of respondents' responses in regards to settlers fishing business and sustainable growth in the Bakassi resettlement. The analysis of data as to whether fishing is the major occupation and source of livelihood of settlers shows that 514 or 85.67 per cent respondents strongly agreed, 86 or 14.33 per cent agreed and no respondent strongly disagreed or disagreed. From the response pattern, it implies that fishing is the main source of livelihood of the Bakassi people. In other words, it is fishing business that sustains the settlers. Responses to item 2 which states that "The fishing business in the peninsula is better when compared with what you have in the resettlement" shows that 318 or 53 per cent respondents strongly agreed, 155 or 25.83 per cent agreed, 69 or 11.5 per cent strongly disagreed, and 58 or 9.67 per cent disagreed.

From the responses it can be assumed that the settlers would find it extremely difficult to forget their fishing experiences in the Bakassi peninsula. The nostalgic feelings about the peninsula may continue to hunt them for as long as they live. With regard to item 3 which states that the estimate of their fishing turn-over per year in the settlement is above ₦100,000, analysis of data indicates that 35.5 per cent respondents strongly agreed, 27.83 per cent agreed, 18.17 per cent respondents strongly disagreed, and 18.5 per cent disagreed. The response pattern further highlights the substantive business of the settlers to be fishing. Responses to item 4 which states that fishing in the resettlement is characterized by rivalry and opposition from the host communities shows that 9.17 per cent respondents strongly agreed, 10.17 per cent agreed, 35.83 per cent strongly disagreed and 44.83 per cent disagreed. The response pattern indicates that the settlers are confronted with some challenges in their fishing business. Some of these include the rivalry from the host communities and the fact that there are sometimes barricaded from fishing in some rivers.

The responses to item 5 which states that "Fishing played a vital role in the relationship existing between the settlers and the host communities" shows that 23.5 per cent respondents strongly agreed, 31.33 per cent agreed, 28.67 per cent strongly disagreed while 16.5 per cent disagreed. From the response pattern, it is deduced that fishing business serves as strong link between the settlers and the host communities. This is reinforced by the fact that fishing is the main source of the rivalry and competition between the settlers and the host communities. With regard to item 6 which states that "The settlers require new methods of fish farming such as artificial fishing ponds and so on in the resettlement area" data shows that 215 or 35.83 per cent respondents strongly agreed, 199 or 33.17 per cent agreed, 83 or 13.83 per cent strongly disagreed and 103 or 17.17 per cent disagreed. The pattern of responses implies that settlers desire new methods of fish farming to be introduced to them in order to boost their fishing business in the resettlement.

Responses to item 7 which states that “So many settlers have abandoned fish farming and taken to other businesses due to non availability of waters to fish in” shows that 42 or 7 per cent respondents strongly agreed, 188 or 31.33 per cent agreed, 168 or 28 per cent strongly disagreed, while 202 or 33.67 per cent disagreed. The pattern of responses indicates that despite the challenges, the settlers are facing, fishing still remain their major income earning activity. Nothing seems to show that they would like to forsake fishing for something else either now or in the future. Analysis of responses to item 8 which states that “Fishing potentials abound in the resettlement area and that is what has informed the choice of the resettlement site” shows that 295 or 49.17 per cent respondents strongly agreed, 181 or 30.17 per cent agreed, 80 or 13.33 per cent strongly disagreed, while 44 or 7.33 per cent disagreed. From the response pattern, it implies that although the settlers were not part of the decision when the site was selected, they may have an insight as to why the site was selected and which is important to the study.

Responses to item 9 which states that “Without fishing business, the resettlement will collapse” shows that 281 or 46.83 per cent respondents strongly agreed, 213 or 35.5 per cent agreed, 55 or 9.17 per cent strongly disagreed, while 51 or 8.5 per cent disagreed. The response pattern reflects the importance the settlers attaches to fishing business and as something that will sustain the resettlement. Analysis of responses to item 10 which states that “The resettlement area is landlocked and not good enough for fishermen like the Bakassi people” reveal that 141 or 23.5 per cent respondents strongly agreed, 276 or 46 per cent agreed, 88 or 14.67 per cent strongly disagreed and 95 or 15.83 per cent disagreed. The response pattern in which majority of respondents reflects the perception the settlers have about their present location in relation to the peninsula which is surrounded by the sea.

The result of the analysis reveals that the calculated r-value of 0.78 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.194 at 0.05 levels of significance with 598 degrees of freedom. With the result of this analysis the alternate hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected. This result therefore shows that there is a significant relationship between fishing business as a source of livelihood and sustainable growth in Bakassi resettlement in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study agrees with Okiddi (2002) who reports that the success of most resettlement operations in China and India is attributable to the availability of major productive occupations upon which resettled groups make their living. From Table 2 (Item 1) in which the ratio of respondents who agreed to this was found to be 100 per cent; that is, majority of the population were primarily engaged in fishing business, although some were engaged in other businesses such as hunting, farming, craft work and livestock rearing. The finding also support the study of Westing (2005) who reports that most resettlement sites in Africa are endowed with great natural wealth and some were fortunate to have a variety of resources. The choice of Akwa-obutong in Cross River State as the resettlement camp for the Bakassi settlers was based on the fact that it was not only nearer to the sea at Iking but also surrounded by many rivers where the settlers can continue with their fishing business.

Evidences from the study increasingly suggest that although the settlers believe that fishing in the peninsula was far better than it is in the resettlement, fishing business still forms the expectations of their existence and survival in the settlement. It is expedient to mention that although there were no records to indicate the income level derived from fishing before and after their resettlement (if these records were available, there would have been the most evaluative measure), data analysis in table 2 (Item 3) shows that the estimate of their fishing turn-over per month in the settlement was above ₦100,000.00. The study also shows that fishing played a vital role in the relationship existing between the settlers and the host communities. This is indicated on table 2 (item5) in which the ratio of respondents that accepted this was found to be 74.8 per cent as against 25.2 per cent who disagreed. Fishing in the resettlement has a cultural value as it brings about cultural ties among the different communities around the resettlement. However, it was observed that the location of the resettlement makes it difficult for them to conveniently exploit the sea or rivers without traversing the interest of the host communities.

In other words, settlers were not allowed to have a strong claim or economic control of the rivers, ports and beaches as any fishing business undertaken by them was on hire or by permission from the host communities. Despite this challenge, the Bakassi settlers were not deterred, seeing fishing as one of the elements of power that would make the settlement to succeed. This supports the work of George (2013) who notes that the whole of the Bakassi economy and that of neighboring Akpabuyo local Government Area is primarily fishing with over seventy five per cent of the population employed in this sector and provides about sixty per cent of the food and financial needs of the people.

**Table 1:** Sample-by-sample distribution of respondents by their strata and selection

Strata	Number of households	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Archibong town	2,632	263	43.8
Abana town	1,810	180	30.0
Atabong town	1,575	157	26.2
Total	6,017	600	100

**Source:** Field survey, 2014

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents according to their opinion about fishing business in the resettlement

Items	SA	A	SD	D
Fishing is the productive base and major occupation of the settlers.	514 (85.7%)	86 (14.3%)	-	-
Fishing in the peninsula is better than fishing in the resettlement.	318 (53%)	155 (25.8%)	69 (11.5%)	58 (9.7%)
Estimate of my fishing turn-over in the settlement per year is above ₦ 100,000	213 (35.5%)	167 (27.8%)	109 (18.2%)	111 (18.5%)
Fishing in the resettlement is characterized by rivalry and oppositions from the host communities.	55 (9.2%)	61 (10.2%)	215 (35.8%)	269 (44.8%)
Fishing played a vital role in the relationship between settlers and the host communities	141 (23.5%)	188 (31.3%)	172 (28.7%)	99 (16.5%)
Settlers require new methods of fish farming in the resettlement	215 (35.8%)	199 (33.2%)	83 (13.8%)	103 (17.2%)
Some settlers have abandoned fish farming for other businesses	42 (7%)	188 (31.3%)	168 (28%)	202 (33.6%)
The choice of the resettlement site is informed by the fishing potentials there	295 (49.2%)	181 (30.2%)	80 (13.3%)	44 (7.3%)
Without fishing business the resettlement will collapse.	281 (46.8%)	213 (35.5%)	55 (9.2%)	51 (8.5%)
The resettlement area is landlocked and not good enough for fishermen	141 (23.5%)	276 (46%)	88 (14.7%)	95 (15.8%)

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2013.

**Table 3:** Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis of the relationship between fishing business as a source of livelihood and sustainable growth in Bakassi resettlement in Cross River State, Nigeria (N=600)

Variable	$\bar{X}$	$\frac{\sum Y}{\sum X}$	$\frac{\sum Y^2}{\sum X^2}$	$\sum XY$	r-cal
Sustainable growth (Y)	20.43	4.83	129,060	7,180	
Settlers' fishing business (X)	9.57	3.56	186,700	9,710	144,227 *0.78

## CONCLUSION

This research has identified some issues in resettlement processes that could be relevant to resettlement planners and policy makers. First, it identified the uniqueness of availability of sources of livelihood in a resettlement scheme: it reveals that the success of Bakassi resettlement is wholly dependent on fishing business. Fishing business has helped to foster interpersonal contact, facilitate economic growth, adoption of innovations, cultural and attitudinal modifications and change, all of which are essential to the success of the Bakassi resettlement programme. It is also positively affecting the Bakassi indigenes politically, economically, religiously and socially. Based on the findings of this study the researchers observed that any improvement in the standard of living, as well as any other substantial progress to be made, will depend on creating the right environment for the people to continue with their fishing business. Thus, they recommend that government should invest in this area by way of incentives, grants, among others. Furthermore, new methods of fish farming, such as artificial fishing ponds, should be introduced to the settlers as this will help to boost their fishing business in the resettlement. This is so because the settlers have discovered that the rivers in the resettlement area were not rich in fish compared to what they had in the peninsula. It is a fact that fishing which is the resource base of the settlers can best be enhanced, improved or developed through the introduction of modern means of fish farming in the area.

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