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**Niger Delta Development Commission Activities and Infrastructural Development in the  
Rural Communities of Akwa Ibom State**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study strategically assessed the Niger delta development commission activities and infrastructural development in the rural communities of Akwa Ibom State. The study population comprises of adult male and females from the ages of 25 years and above; and are residents of the various rural communities in Akwa Ibom State who are beneficiaries of NDDC programmes, officials of NDDC and opinion leaders in the area. The research design adopted for this study is a survey design. The survey was conducted in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. The main instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire design by the researcher with the help of the supervisor. The major sources of data of this study were from text books, published and unpolished, magazines, news dailies, journals etc. internets sources were also used, all as secondary source. A field survey was carried out where raw data were obtained through a structured questionnaire. To test the hypotheses of the study, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis ( $r$ ); and the chi-square ( $X^2$ ) statistical techniques were employed. The calculated  $r$ -value of  $-0.0425$  was by far, lower than the critical  $r$ -value of  $0.195$ , required for significance at  $.05$  level, with  $498$  degrees of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted while the alternate is rejected hence, NDDC activities have no significant relationship with infrastructural development in Akwa Ibom State. The study recommended that, since most of the activities of NDDC are perceived to wedge various significant influence on the developmental processes in Akwa Ibom State, advisory committee of the NDDC be made to properly advice the commission (which has already raised the hopes and promoted the confidence of the people that government agencies can be trusted) to complete or continue with the projects it has already initiated. It would be added that this zeal to perform should be emulated by other governmental agencies in the country.*

**Key Words: Niger Delta Development Commission, Infrastructural**

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**Introduction**

In Nigeria, close to 80% of the population lives in rural areas, which are the principal sources of food, as well as raw materials for the whole country (Williams 1978)

The essence of this is research is to assess the impact of Niger-Delta Development Commission on rural communities in Akwa Ibom State, which is one of the principal areas known for oil production in Nigeria. According to Ekpo (2004), Akwa Ibom is classified among the rural communities in Nigeria, hence, produces food and raw materials that makes Nigeria a known figure in the world.

At the beginning, the areas referred as the Niger Delta was limited to the geo-political zone occupied mainly by minorities of Southern Nigeria which currently comprises six states of

Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers. But in recent years, the Niger Delta region was re-defined and enlarged to include all the contiguous nine oil-producing states. The new states of Abia, Imo and Ondo were therefore added to the original six.

These peculiarities attracted the attention of the colonial masters. Consequently, her majesty's government (Queen Elizabeth), in 1956 set up the Sir Henry Willink's commission to recommend the best strategies for the development of the region which has the most difficult terrain in the country. In 1958 the commission submitted its report with special recommendation that Niger Delta region deserves special development attention. Based on the report, the federal government established the Niger Delta development board (NDDDB) in 1960 to cater for the unique development needs of the area. It became Moribund due to outbreak of the civil war.

After the civil war, a body called "The River Basin Development Authority" was established, not just for the development of Niger Delta but for the whole country. In fact, this was the negation of the developmental ideas of the Niger Delta as contained in the Willink's commission report.

Unlike its predecessors, OMPADEC which came later, appeared better established to make some impact on the development of the region; but failed due to a number of factors such as lack of master plan that supposed to define its developmental objectives and strategies, inadequate funding, official profligacy (recklessness and extravagant), Unfavorable political climate etc. Though its project spread throughout the region, it suffers untimely demise. The failure of these development intervention agency led to the establishment of a new commission. P T F (Petroleum Trust Fund) which also failed to perform. Then comes the NDDC.

Among the ongoing and some proposed Niger Delta Development Commission projects in Akwa Ibom State are electricity projects in Nsit Ubium Local Government Area; the completion of government abandon road that link Eket through Enen-Nsit to Uyo if this projects are completed the life style of the people in these areas will change for better. With roads and electricity, self-empowerment will be achieved. All goods produced in the area will easily be transported to towns and other nearby markets for disposal and this will boost the self-esteem of the people.

The Niger Delta Development Commission road planned project if constructed, it will connect the entire state, because Akwa Ibom State inter-link other states of the federation. Other proposed projects include the renovation of hospitals, and other health related institutions, schools and infrastructural development. For example, Ikot Ebiere Secondary School in Onnah Local Government Area which was affected by storm, was mapped out for renovation by Niger Delta Development Commission which they did.

In Akwa Ibom State, there are so many communities that have started developing effort in other to be assisted by the government, thus Niger Delta Development Commission came in as a booster to encourage them to continue with self-effort to develop their communities while awaiting mega project by the government.

### **Statement of the problem**

Rural development according to Ihejiamazu (2002) is a strategy designed in the area. He went on to say that, the main issue in rural development is the modernization of the rural society through a transition from traditional isolation to integration with the National economy for equitable and balanced development of the Nations.

Akwa Ibom as one of the state in the Niger Delta region is equally affected by this scenario of underdevelopment, absence of infrastructural amenities, marginalization, exploitation, unfavorable political climate etc.

### **Objective of the study**

Examine whether Niger Delta Development Commission influences rural infrastructural development in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Research Question**

What impact has Niger Delta Development Commission on rural infrastructural development in Akwa Ibom State?

### **Research hypotheses**

There is no significant influence between Niger Delta Development Commission activities and infrastructural development in the rural communities of Akwa Ibom State.

### **Literature Review**

#### **NDDC and rural infrastructural development**

Provision of infra-structural amenities is one of the cardinal points of the NDDC mandate for the NDR (Aquarivivodo, 2004). According to this same source, the infrastructures earmarked for the region range from the provision of pipe-borne water, to rural electrification, schools (primary and secondary) higher and middle-level education, good road, net-work and transportation (water and land). Others are provision of Health-care or hospitals as the case may be.

In the area of health, attention is geared towards primary health care scheme, which aims at providing at least one health centre in every community to one another. Issues involved in the NDR's health policy just as in the country as a whole, include adequate nutrition, health education, safe pre-natal and ante-natal care, safe drinking water and sanitation material and HIV/AIDS campaign, etc. (Uya & Okoro, 2002).

According to Otong (2004), the impact of NDDC in the NDR is already taking root in each state of the region, with the massive road construction/rehabilitation projects in all the capital and semi-urban centers of the region. The only flaw is that in some states like Akwa Ibom, most of the roads are only given face lifts by way of surface-dressing with laterite and then compacted. This leaves the road to the vagaries of rain influence which render them impassable after one or two torrential downpours. For a road to be able to pass the test of time, then, it should be well-constructed, with provision of adequate standard road-side drainage system to take care of the road's surface run-offs (Ayang, 2000). The NDDC is therefore advised to take the projects gradually so as to invest materials and resources in vain.

In Akwa Ibom State, according to Ekpo, (2004) there is also the provision and renovation of health centers in almost all the communities, through the effort of NDDC. Other infrastructural amenities being provided in the entire region include: the construction of jetties at Uquo Ibeno, Eket Ekpo (2004), analysis shows that the gigantic water project at Ukanafun will do much in lessening the suffering of the masses in the communities of these areas. Through partnership with government, the NDDC in collaboration with Sustainable Community

Development (SCD) hopes to build a closer and more supportive relationship with the state governments of the NDR in their primary role of providing basic infrastructure and services for the region. The new strategy also aims at abolishing corrosive practices that currently impede sustainable development in communities. Chief among them are the pressure on cash payments for unjustifiable reasons, such as the payment for “ghost workers” (or stand by labour). The demand for cash payments to youths for access fees and others have sometimes led to disputes within communities and often distort genuine community needs. Accordingly, SPDC’s interaction with communities will henceforth be governed by a set of NDDC and SCD “big rules” which amongst other things outlaws unjustifiable payments (Aquarivivodo, 2004).

According to the UNDP (2004) the defects of some of the previous development strategies not just in the NDR, but in Nigeria as a whole have been studied and taken care of, and would be used as indicators for future execution of poverty alleviation projects in the developing Africa. But with the new set-up and teleguided by the NDDC, the involvement of the rural masses themselves is going to be 25% both in cash and in kind. Already a lot of positive results is being recorded in the aspect of water supply projects (bore-holes) roads construction and secondary/primary school projects.

Furthermore, the NDDC (2003) asserts that the main programmes preceding the creation of the NDDC in Akwa Ibom suffered from lack of clarity of vision, adherence to meaningful, achievable goals and objectives within a framework of guiding systematic action and review and evaluation of progress. This is precisely the framework that the NDDC plans and it is a strategic implementation plan that will offer the guidance and detail action to states and local governments as other development actors in the region. With this strategic plan, there will be no failure of projects this time around, (UNDP, 2004).

## **Method**

### **The Study Area**

The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria.

### **Research Design**

The research design adopted for this study is a survey design. The survey was conducted in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria.

### **The Study Population**

The study population comprises of adult male and females from the ages of 25 years and above; and are residents of the various rural communities in Akwa Ibom State who are beneficiaries of NDDC programmes, officials of NDDC and opinion leaders in the area.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

Data for this study comes from questionnaire administered between April and October 2005 in Akwa Ibom State. The sample of this study is made up to five hundred (500) respondents randomly selected from ten (10) local government areas mostly benefiting from NDDC activities. Ekpo (2004). A community was randomly selected from each local government area using simple random sampling technique. A breakdown of the figure shows that fifty (50) respondents were randomly selected from each of the ten communities chosen for the study. The selection was further done using cluster sampling techniques.

### Instrumentation

The main instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire design by the researcher with the help of the supervisor. The major sources of data of this study were from text books, published and unpublished, magazines, news dailies, journals etc. internet sources were also used, all as secondary source. A field survey was carried out where raw data were obtained through a structured questionnaire. These were actually the primary sources of data for this research work.

### Validation of the Instrument

The items in the questionnaire were drawn in reflection of the hypotheses generated and the variables under study. Before using the instrument, the items development were given to experts in research and statistics for screening and finally to the supervisor who carefully vetted the items and passed its face validity. Those found relevant were retained while the irrelevant items were dropped.

### Reliability of Instrument

To ensure that the instrument measures consistently with what is purported to measure, a pilot study was carried out in the population area. Test retest method of reliability was done.

### Method of Data Analysis

To test the hypotheses of the study, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis (r); and the chi-square ( $X^2$ ) statistical techniques were employed. These statistical techniques were used because of the nature of the variables involved in the hypotheses for the study.

### Results and Discussion of Findings

**TABLE 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient analysis (r) of the influence of NDDC's activities on the infrastructural development of rural communities. n = 500**

Variable (Infrastructures deve.)		$\frac{\sum X}{\sum y}$	$\frac{\sum X^2}{\sum y^2}$	$\sum XY$	df	r-cal
Presence of adequate infrastructures	(X)	1702	52940			
Absence of adequate infrastructures	(Y)	5294	113271	59604	498	*-0.0425

\* Significant at  $P < .05$ ,  $df = 489$ ,  $crit-r = 0.195$

The calculated r-value of -0.0425 was by far, lower than the critical r-value of 0.195, required for significance at .05 level, with 498 degrees of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted while the alternate is rejected hence, NDDC activities have no significant relationship with infrastructural development in Akwa Ibom State.

### Decision of the Finding

#### NDDC activities and infrastructural development in Akwa Ibom State

The result of hypothesis has shown that NDDC activities in the State with respect to providing the much needed infra-structural amenities in the region is nothing to write home about. In other words, these hypotheses showed insignificant result of data analysis. However,

the NDDC has generally perceived as operating on the basis of making positive influences in the state of human need; but in the aspect of provision of physical structures like electricity, good roads network, pipe-borne water and others; is still highly lacking in this regards. This is why occasionally one or two communities would cry out of foul-play by NDDC or by the federal government.

This finding is highly supported by Chinedu (2004), Tell (2004) and Nkom (2000), who separately argue that NDDC has only just arrived, and since the commission is not a magician, it is bound to face some challenges. As it now stands only a very few communities have actually been provided with electricity, and in respect of water supply, only the urban centers (or the state capital and some Local Government Area – Capitals have been provided. Majority of the rural Government are yet benefit, though the commission has assured that each would have it amenities in due course. This is why some communities like Mkpnak, Iwuoyang, and Upenekang in Ibeno Local Government Area, among others, occasionally take to the streets in a bid to press home their needs.

To some extent, one may be caused to conclude that the non-significant of this hypothesis may be due to “chance occurrence”. This is based on the fact that everybody (young and old) is very aware of the existence/activities of the NDDC in the state. Some people are even appreciative of the new-road network and water schemes particularly in the areas devastated by erosion and oil spillages. Accordingly, the apparent agitations by some communities are indicative of the fact that more roads should be constructed to link some isolated communities. In Akwa Ibom State. three communities of Onna Local Government Area, example Okpana, Ikot Abasi and Ikot Akpabom Communities will definitely appreciate NDDC more in the direction of provision of infrastructural amenities. But, on the other hand, the people of Oruk Anam Local Government Area, who are desirous to have their only link road through Ikot Afanga, Ntak Ibesit to Abak-Ikot Abasi, awarded with a bridge at Ekpene Ukpan River, are yet to appreciate the effort of NDDC in the region. This and many other similar cases did wedge significant influence on the non-significance of hypothesis of this study.

On the contrary, one factor that needed to be addressed, and which is highly perceived to wedge significant influence to the fast completion of projects is the delay in the implementation of the 10 percent supporting budgetary allocation of each member states of the NDR to the NDDC. Once this is facilitated, many more projects shall be completed with many communities benefiting.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it was observed that the compromise that was since proposed by each governor of the NDR states (as contained was in the NDDC mandate, 2004) to provide the contribution of 10 percent of their states statutory allocation from the federation account was not honored and should be urgently implemented. This is to enable more projects to be completed and new ones awarded; for the benefit of those communities which are yet to significantly benefit from NDDC developmental activities.

## **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. That, since most of the activities of NDDC are perceived to wedge various significant influence on the developmental processes in Akwa Ibom State, advisory committee of the NDDC be made to properly advice the commission (which has

already raised the hopes and promoted the confidence of the people that government agencies can be trusted) to complete or continue with the projects it has already initiated. It would be added that this zeal to perform should be emulated by other governmental agencies in the country.

2. The delay in completion of certain projects in the study area may not be unconnected with cash-crunch (Ekpo, 2004). It is therefore recommended that Akwa Ibom State government should at all times gear up efforts and implement the agreed 10 percent of its (states) statutory allocation from the federation account so as to boost the financial base of the commission. It is hoped that this would make significant impact on the number of projects completed in each Local Government Area in a year. It will also facilitate development in every rural community.

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