

EFFECT OF NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED HOST COMMUNITIES IN CROSS RIVER STATE, 2010-2023

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Abstract

This study sought to examine the extent to which NDDC has contributed to provision of quality roads in the host Communities in Cross River State; To ascertain the extent to which NDDC has created jobs for the teeming unemployed youths Ascertain the extent to which NDDC has improved healthcare facilities for people in the study area; and investigate the extent to which NDDC has improved access to safe drinking water for people in the host communities in Cross River State. Participatory theory propounded by McAdle (1989) was adopted as the theoretical framework of the study. Content analysis method was used to analyze the data generated from secondary sources. The paper found that that NDDC has not made significant impact on socio-economic development of selected communities in Cross River State, especially in the areas of construction of roads, job creation, healthcare facilities and provision of safe source of drinking water for the people. However, factors such as sharp corrupt practices among the officials of NDDC, non-inclusion of the beneficiaries in the formulation and implementation of projects, inadequate funding, poor monitoring and supervision are the impediments to NDDC's programme implementation in Cross River State. The researcher therefore recommended among other things that Contractors who abandoned their projects especially the road projects should be forced to get back to the sites and complete them or face legal actions including black listing of their various companies to serve as deterrence to others; NDDC should increase efforts towards building of skill acquisition centre in order to improve job skills of youths in the area and reduce the level of unemployment; and there is also need to improve healthcare services in the study are; hospitals should adequately be equipped for effective dispensary of drugs to the people especially the vulnerable.

Background of the Study

The establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) by the Obasanjo administration in 2001 was an attempt to address a plethora of problems facing the oil rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. The region is the bedrock of Nigeria's crude oil. With the emergence of oil as a major resource in the country with enormous oil resources whose states include Abia, Akwa Ibom, Delta, Bayelsa, Cross River, Edo, Imo, Ondo and River States (African Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ, 2005).

According to the United Nations Development Project in Nigeria (2006), the Niger Delta Region human development index (HDI) score remains at a low value of 0.564 (with 1 being the highest score). The area rates far below countries or regions with similar oil and gas resources in the world. Comparatively, the HDI for Saudi Arabia in 2000 stood at 0.800, while in 2003 the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Libya, Venezuela and Indonesia achieved scores of 0.849, 0.844, 0.799, 0.772 and 0.697, respectively (UNDP Nigeria 2006). This is not the case in Cross-River State despite intervention programmes of project by the Niger Delta Development Commission Empirical evidence from the level of poverty in the region has

continued to show that the living standard of people in most rural communities in Biase, Akamkpa, Bakassi, Calabar South, Calabar Municipality, Odukpani and Akpabuyo of Cross-River State is deplorable and unsatisfactory. In most of these rural communities, there are no access roads, electricity, pipe bone water, low educational facilities, poor health care facilities as well as high level of unemployment.

Government initiatives on how to develop the Niger Delta communities started before Nigerian Independence. It was in recognition of the poor state of infrastructures and the harsh terrain of the area that successive governments since Independence had established special development agencies for the region (Ibeanu, 2008). The outcome of the Willinks commission in 1958 led to the setting up of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) for the area. Thereafter in the 1970s, the government used the River Basin Development Commission (RBDC) as a major tool of community development. The Niger, Delta River Basin Development Authority was established in 1976 as one of the River Basin Commissions across the country. Subsequent efforts have included the special fund created by the 1981 Revenue Act for Oil Producing Areas and the presidential task force for the development of oil producing areas that was created in 1989.

In the same vein, 1992 saw the establishment of the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) as an intervention strategy. The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) finally came on board in 2000. The commission which derives its fund from 15% of allocations due to member states from the federation account; 3% of total annual budget of any oil producing company operating on shore and off shore in the Niger Delta area; and 50% of monies due to member states from the Ecological Fund started operation in January, 2001 (NDDC Act, 2001).

In Cross River State, most of the population of the host communities in the oil producing areas are farmers and fishermen who depend on farming for survival. Following the oil exploration in the region, the socio-economics lives of the people became adversely affected. Their farmland, water sources have been destroyed as a result of oil spillages and thereby subjected the host communities to hardship (Stanley, 1990). Collaborating the above, Onyekwere and Nafisah (2019) assert that soils, forests and water bodies in oil communities in the Niger Delta have been adversely affected by oil exploration as the farmers and fishermen lost their lands and fishing waters in the area.

According Nwoba and Abah (2017) gas remained the mainstay of Nigeria's economy for more than six decades contributing more than 90% of Nation's foreign exchange earnings and 83% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Record indicated that between 2015 and 2016, Nigeria's budgets were hinged on a crude oil output of 2.2 million barrels per day. In 2017, budget was hinge on 2.2 million barrels per day. Ibe (2017) further posits that oil revenue inflow to the Federal Account as at the first half of 2015 stood at N1.906 trillion and N2.05 trillion in the second half of 2015 and first half of 2016 respectively. Within the period, Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) alone in 2018 paid approximately \$398 million (N120.61 billion) in income tax to the Federation Account (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2019).

However, there are some opinions that most of the community development efforts failed to yield the desired results due to such factors as lack of background studies aimed at understanding the social and demographic characteristics of their target communities and groups, literacy level, pervasive poverty prevalent in those communities, and disease; to mention but a few. This situation has resulted to a situation where there is visible gap between the community structure and the nature of development programmes initiated to the host communities (Udu, 2014).

In view of the above, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was created and inaugurated on

December, 2000 as an intervention agency by president Obasanjo. NDDC rolled out its master plan, which states the development goals and objectives to include: to foster the economy of the Niger Delta Region, increase physical infrastructure such as good road, good health care facilities, boreholes etc, to increase human and institutional resources of the region through job creation, to boost the human and community needs of the region and to develop the natural environment, to create an enabling environment for enterprise in the region; to improve the functioning of key markets-and access to them; to increase agricultural (farming and fisheries) productivity and micro-investment, to develop human capabilities; and to protect natural resources and mitigate harm (NDDC, 2016).

Following the above development, researchers documented that the government has maintained an upward review of the financial allocation to the agency. For instance, Isidiho and Sabran (2023) revealed that above N5t has been committed to Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) between 2011 and 2023 with an average allocation of N300b annual budget to the commission. Also, they noted that the oil companies operating in the region including Cross River State were mandated to pay 3% of their annual budgets to the agency though, subject to upward review. The report also showed that in 2015, N53.89 billion was allocated to NDDC and increased to N71.2billion in 2017, in 2018, it was increased to N87.2billion, also in 2019, the allocation move to N100.9billion (Isidiho and Sabran, 2019). The above backdrop necessitated a focus of the NDDC's socio-economic impact in Cross River State.

Cross River State was created on 27th May 1967 from former Eastern Region by the General Yakubu Gowon regime and is one of the nine oil and gas producing states in the Niger-Delta region. The state is made up of eighteen Local Government Area with about four hundred communities. The local government include: Abi, Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakasi, Bekwara, Biase, Boki, Calabar Municipal, Calabar south, Etung, Ikom, Obanliku, Obubra, Obudu, Odukpani, Ogoja, Yakur and Yala.

In Cross River State, the host communities are characterize by poverty unemployment, more than 70 per cent of the graduates are jobless and Human Capital Development remained low. The school enrollment remained low especially among girls, while 76% of children enrolled in primary school later dropped to 25.35% in the state (UNDP, 2016). Healthcare is inadequate and this has remained one of the serious problems facing the rural people in Cross River State. Health centers and maternities are few in the host communities and where they exists; they are usually located in between communities that are usually far from each other and difficult to access. This on several occasions has frustrated people with serous health issues; especially those that needed urgent medical attention (Ogbeifun, 2014).

In view of the foregoing, many scholars and members of the public have continued to express their displeasure with the seeming poor performance of NDDC, arguing that since the establishment of the agency, the situation seems to be getting worse despite the huge amount of resources committed to the agency to improve on the socio-economic wellbeing of the people. Hence, this study investigated the contribution of NDDC on socio-economic development of host communities in Cross River State.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, oil has sustained Nigeria's economic growth, improved the standard of living of other non-oil producing regions at the expense of the host communities whose natural resources are being exported abroad. "Many Nigerian cities have been developed with the oil wealth while towns and villages in Cross-River State which is part of the Niger Delta Region have become eyesore today". Communities in Cross-River State may be characterized by widespread poverty as statistics has shown that about 70 per cent of

the population in the area may be living below the poverty line. This pervasive poverty may be largely due to the low level of infrastructural development and industrialization (Osuntokun, 2000). This may be made more difficult by the activities of Trans-national Corporations (TNCs), which may have adversely affected the traditional economy of subsistence fishing and farming. In the Niger Delta Region (NDR) or Cross River State, infant mortality and maternal morbidity are estimated to be 20 per cent, which is among the highest in the world. Due to all these upheavals, modern transport infrastructure is often seen to be inadequate and may be hampered by a poor road network and harsh conditions especially in the coastal areas (Frynas, 2001; Emmanuel, Olayiwola & Babatunde, 2009). In the same vein, it is often worrisome on the deplorable state of road in Cross River State amidst the amount of money injected to the commission for road construction, repairs and monies for other infrastructural amenities. These monies may not have yielded any positive impact owing to the poor road network and continuous road accident along Calabar Itu road. Empirical evidence has shown that, the road has been repeatedly awarded to contractors, but none of such contracts by the commission has shown positive result. These projects and road repairs most times may have been abandoned or left uncompleted without proper monitoring.

NDDC was created to address developmental challenges of the Niger Delta region including Cross River State. However, despite the huge financial resources invested in the agency, host communities in the Niger-Delta Region seems to remained poor, characterized by illiteracy, abject poverty, high infant and maternal mortality, low life expectancy. The host communities in Cross River State seem to lack life sustaining amenities such as quality road network, pipe-borne water, and healthcare delivery among others. Some of the available healthcare centers appear inadequately equipped to dispense drugs to the vulnerable. Also, majority of the host communities relied on borehole, water from the creeks, rivers, dug up wells. More than 70% of members of host communities appear to live below poverty line of US\$1.00-US\$1.25 per day. Primary and secondary schools in these communities are very few and even available ones appeared ineffectively equipped; road network seems to be very poor. The number of Public schools in the area are inadequate and ill-equipped, classroom blocks inadequate for students, trained teachers are very few, poor access road network, poor healthcare facilities and inadequate potable water due to the activities of the oil companies operating in the areas, resulted to the pervasive water-borne diseases. The foregoing ugly state of affairs call for urgent attention.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to assess to impact of Niger Delta Development Commission on socio-economic development of host Communities in Cross River State. The specific objectives are:

- (1) To examine the extent to which NDDC has contributed to provision of quality road network in the host Communities in Cross River State.
- (2) To ascertain extent to which NDDC has created jobs for the teeming unemployed youths in the host communities in Cross River State.
- (3) To determine the extent to which NDDC has improved healthcare facilities for people in the host Communities in Cross River State.
- (4) To Investigate the extent to which NDDC has improved access to safe drinking water in the host communities in Cross River State.

Implications of the Study

Basically, this study has both empirical and theoretical policy implications. Empirically, the findings and recommendation of the study will act as framework that can be adopted by the government for the development of host communities in the Niger-Delta Region. The work will have a positive implication for administration of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and other agencies that may be assigned for rural development programmes in Cross River State in particular and Nigeria in general.

Theoretically, the research report has added to the existing body of knowledge in socio-economic development literature as it will also serve as a reference material for students of Public Administration and other scholars who may wish to embark on similar studies.

Conceptual Review

Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

NDDC was established following the enactment of Act, No. 6 200 which repealed the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Commission Decree 1998. NDDC was created in response to the outright confrontations against constituted authorities the 1990s by the Niger Delta militants, road blocking, closing of oil companies gates and vandalism of oil installations, oil bunkering and hostage taking which have been argued to be perpetrated by the Niger Delta youths in response to perceived government neglect of the region over the years.

Part II section 7(1) of the Act provides the functions and powers of the commission to formulate policies and guidelines for the development of the Niger Delta in the following areas:

- (i) Conceive, plan and implement in accordance with set rules and regulations, projects and programmes for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta area in the field of transportation including roads, jetties and waterways, health, education, employment, industrialization, agriculture and fisheries, housing and urban development, water supply, electricity and telecommunications;
- (ii) Cause the Niger Delta area to be surveyed in order to ascertain measures which are necessary to promote its physical and socio-economic development.
- (iii) Prepare master plans and schemes designed to promote physical development of the Niger Delta area and the estimates of the costs of implementing such master plans and schemes;
- (iv) Implement all the measures approved for the development of the Niger Delta Region by the Federal Government and the member states of the commission;
- (v) Identify factors inhibiting the development of the Niger Delta area and assist member states in the formulation and implementation of policies to ensure sound and efficient management of the resources of the Niger Delta area;
- (vi) Assess and report on any project being funded or carried out in the Niger Delta Region by oil and gas producing companies and any other company including non-governmental organizations and ensure that funds released for such projects are properly utilized;

- (vii) Tackle ecological and environmental problems that arise from exploration oil mineral in the Niger Delta area and advise the Federal Government and the member states on the prevention and control of oil spillages, gas flaring and environmental pollution;
- (viii) Liase with the oil mineral and gas prospecting and producing companies on all matters of pollution prevention and control; and
- (ix) Execute such other works and perform such other functions which, in the opinion of the commission, are required for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta area and its people.

Community

The term “Community” has been variously defined by authors. According to Nwizu (2016) a community is a group of people with socio-cultural, political or economic background who live together and do things together. Hornby (2014) defined community as all the people who live in a particular area. Lemu (2016) sees community as a collection of definable groups of people living together in one geographical location bound by a shared set of values, expectations, aspiration, identity and destiny, pursuing common political, social economic and related goals in a context of collaboration, cooperation and team work irrespective of observable differences.

To Alumode (2002) a community refers to a group of people living in a specific geographical setting and who share certain things including social institutions and aspirations in common. The usual common interest of a community include; holding up a sense of oneness, space and unity, security, health care, political and economic activities, education, religious practice, government, social services, etc.

Development

The term :development” as a concept has attracted various scholars thereby leading to various definitions given by different scholars. Also, seers (1969) in Okereke and Ekpe (2004) asked certain questions regarding the concept of development. He says that:

The questions to ask about country's development are therefore, what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these problems has been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development even if per capita income doubled (Seers, 1969).

Thus, Gana (2018) noted that “Development concerns the capacity and creative capability of a people to effectively transform the natural resources within their environment into goods and services through the imaginative and practical application of their creative talent and productive power”. Development reports to progressive change in the entire political and socio-economic life of the people.

Socio-economic Development

Sheikh (2015) defined socio-economic development as a relationship between economic activity and social life. Socio-economic development is measured with indicators such as per capital income, life expectancy, literacy or level of education, poverty and levels of employment. While Rodney (2004)

argued that socio-economic development has many-sided process but defines it in relation to the individual. He noted that, 'at the level of the individual, it implies increase scale and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self discipline, responsibility and material well being'. At the individual level, human beings are seen as the epicenter of development.

Contextual Review

Strategies Adopted for the Development of Niger Delta Region

Right from the colonial administration, the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria has been identified as a region that requires a special development attention (Ekong, 2017). In response to this, a number of agencies have been initiated by the successive government of Nigeria to address developmental challenges in the Niger Delta Region including Cross River State. These include; the Niger Delta Basin Development Board, established in 1965, the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission, established in 1992 Osuoka, (2017). In 1999, Government established a new body called the Nigeria Development Commission (NDDC) to offer a lasting solution to the socio-economic difficulties of the Niger Delta Region (UNDP, 2012). These efforts were made to improve the socio-economic lives of the people in host communities in the Nigeria-Delta Region, unfortunately, the current situation of the living standard of the people has indicated that not much has been achieved.

Factors that Impede Performance of NDDC

Ekpo (2016), Adesina and Ojuroye (2011), Oronsanya's Panel, (2012) revealed that corruption, embezzlement of funds, frequent change of regime, non implementation of laws that guide NDDC programmes, inadequate fund and delaying in releasing of funds meant for project execution, lack of involvement of the beneficiaries in the implementation of programmes and interferences were the factors responsible for poor performance of NDDC.

Collaborating the above Callistus (2014) argued that the fraudulent practices and kickbacks involving the stakeholders in the region constituted an impediment to the development of host communities. Oronsanya's panel (2012) reports also revealed that corrupt tendencies among the official of the agency contributed much of projects abandonment that scatters everywhere in the region. The report further revealed that the contractors connived with the traditional rulers and stakeholders in host communities to embezzle the fund meant for project execution in the communities which is the major cause of projects abandonment everywhere in host communities in the region (Oronsanya, 2013).

In like manner, Ekpo (2016) further pointed that non implementation of the laws that granted the NDDC power to collect equivalent 15 percent of the total monthly statutory allocation due to member states, non remittance of yearly budget of companies including 50 percent of the ecological funds due to member states affected programmes implementation in host communities especially in Imo State. Adesina and Ojuroye (2011) argued that diversion of funds meant for the implementation programmes in host communities in Imo state by the contractors may have been responsible for the increase abandonment of projects in all corners of Imo State.

Empirical Review

Mevayerore (2020) conducted a study titled “Natural-Resource Curse, Niger Delta Crisis and Oil Exploration in Nigeria. Qualitative research design was adopted for the study. Content analytical technique was employed to analyze the data generated from the secondary source. The study investigated the contemporary Niger Delta crisis and its socio-economic problems, as well as the underdevelopment status in the region. The study found that the discovery of oil and its exploration in huge amount throughout the years has produced clashes as opposed to harmony between the host communities, the multinational corporations as well as the government on the other hand, and has generated intra and inter-communal crises among the parties. The study among other things concluded that the Federal Government rather than conniving with the oil companies operating in the country to exploit the people of the region of their resources should instead cooperate with both the oil companies and the host communities to ensure compliance to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) signed by the oil companies and the host communities. This will no doubt encourage the oil companies to perform their corporate social responsibilities to the people.

Onyekwere & Nafisah (2019) studied “Conflict and Development in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. A Panel Co-Integration Approach was adopted for the study”. The paper examined the direction of causality between conflict and development in the Niger Delta region of Niger. The famous panel Granger Causality/Block exogenous test was adopted to analyzed panel data for conflict and development for two Niger Delta states from 2005-2013. The results show a bidirectional relationship (reverse causality) between conflict and development. That is, while underdevelopment is causing conflict in the Niger Delta, conflict is as well causing underdevelopment of the region. The paper among other things recommended that for government to stop the armed conflicts in the Niger Delta, adequate development plans have to be consistently implanted by both the government and oil companies located in the Niger Delta.

Isidiho and Sabran (2019) studied the “Challenges Facing NDDC Projects in Niger-Delta Region”. The broad objective of the study was to identify the factors militating against the projects initiated by the commission in the region. The researcher adopted the ex-post facto design in this study. A sample size of 300 was utilized while data was generated from both primary and secondary sources. Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data generated for the study. The findings revealed that corruption; non participation of the beneficiaries, abandoned projects are the problems facing NDDC projects in the region. Arising from these findings, the study recommended amongst others that the NDDC should strengthen the accountability procedures and ensure prompt payment of contractors as well as check misappropriation and mismanagement of the resources.

Duke (2018) investigated “Contributions of NDDC on Infrastructural Development in Niger-Delta Region”. The broad object of the study was to find out the obstacles against NDDC projects in the Niger-Delta Region. The study adopted descriptive sources design method and sample of 250 was used in the study. Chi-square statistical tool was use to analyze the data generated from the study. The findings revealed that the major problems facing the commission's projects and the region are more managerial than financial. Corruption, use of incompetent contractors, environmental problems, youth militancy and violence, lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation coupled with misappropriation and mismanagement of funds has been prominent. Therefore, the paper recommended that complete overhaul of the Commission should be carried out. People with competent knowledge and good track records of achievements should be appointed.

Furthermore, Dele (2014) conducted a research on “Contributions of Niger-Delta Development Commission on the Development of Rural Communities in Rivers State” A study of Selected Communities. The objective of the study was to determine the contributions of Niger-Delta Development Commission to the development of Rivers State. Methodologically, the study adopted descriptive survey design. A sample of 200 was utilized in the study. Chi-square statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses formulated the study. The Result obtained indicates that the calculated value of 15.364 is greater than the table value of 3.84. This showed that the Niger Delta Development Commission has contributed to the establishment of infrastructure in Rivers States. A number of roads and other socio-economic infrastructure have been built by the commission in the state since its establishment. It was finally recommended amongst others that the NDDC should be strengthened through accountability procedures and ensure prompt payment of contractors as well as check misappropriation and mismanagement of the resources.

NDDC intervention project for road construction

The improvement on the road network in the host communities has really made movements of goods and services easier and faster as explained by various writers on the importance of roads in communities (Oraboune, 2008, Warr 2005 and 2007, Purcell 2005, Worku 2011). The new NDDC roads and the ring roads constructed is a linkage in Adiabo-Esu for all the farming and fishing communities and give access to people that come to buy food materials from the area and also enable them to move some of the farm produce to feed the urban populations of Calabar town. Many of the completed road projects are impacting meaningfully on the socio economic life of the people as supported in the literatures of (Khandker et al 2009, Fouquet and Pearson 2006, Oraboune, 2008, Warr 2005 and 2007, Purcell 2005, Worku 2011). The non-completed and abandoned ones are however creating negative impacts and call for the urgent attention of the commission in ensuring their completion. The impacts were also explained in the type of modern houses, and facilities springing up in the communities. Health centers were now built by the commission in these communities as there are roads for easier movement of facilities. The boreholes supplying water to the communities have reduced water related diseases as they have been found to be of good quality and this is in line with the findings of Akpoborie and Ehwarimo (2012). NDDC road project is an interventionist development programme aimed at the construction of dilapidated roads for the purpose of economic and social development of Niger Delta region. Iloeje (1981) described roads essential equipment for the development of land, tapping resources of agriculture, mining and forestry; linking-up different regions and thus promoting interregional trade; increasing industrial development, linking important cities and facilitating the movement of people, troops and supplies in times of emergencies and carrying on of business of all description. Rural road development did not really start in Nigeria until the Third National Development Plan (1975-1980).

NDDC intervention project on improving health care relief services

David (2017) observed that there are also community and basic health clinics and centers within easy reach of households in the oil- and gas-bearing communities built or renovated and equipped by the NDDC. The NDDC has organized and funded free medical outreaches for the people during which drugs such as anti-malaria drugs and treated mosquito bed nets were given out free of charge to the people. Health is the most important resource needed to improve the socioeconomic lives of a people of any

nation. Jones, Tshimanga, Woelk, Nsubuga, Sunderland and Hader (2010) observed that the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) through the provision of timely information and health care services intervention aimed at combating possible health menace among many other things is an important function of public health. Its effort toward health care services delivery to Citizens of Niger Delta has promoted good health through her free medical services outreaches. (Moe, Pappas & Murray, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

This work was anchored on participatory theory which was propounded by McDrdle (1989). This theory holds that the participation of beneficiaries in any programme or project initiated to better their welfare is one of the surest ways of improving their socio-economic wellbeing. The theorist holds that for such programme to be successful” the beneficiaries must be involved in formulation as well as implementation and actions taken to improve their socio-economic wellbeing. The theorist argued that the decisions relating to the welfare of the people must be a collective decision of the people themselves. He argued that not just to achieve the goals, but to include the beneficiaries in such programme(s) ort project(s). Collaborating with the theory, Human Development Report (UNDP, 2017), asserts that 'development must be woven around people, not people around development, therefore, any project set so empower people, must involve the beneficiaries from its conception to the finishing level. Most of the agencies created to assist in the development of the Niger Delta region have not optimally performed due mainly to lack of participation of the target beneficiaries.

This theory is relevant to the study based on the fact that it offers that programme or project especially such that are undertaken by NDDC in Niger Delta Region should be people-oriented and reflection of the people's basic needs, which must identified through government/agent with the involvement of the beneficiaries. Through this means an informed and timely decision regarding such development projects could be made. The theory seeks to reverse the traditional tendency of development pattern of directing the people at the bottom to comply with orders issued at the top.

Issues

The issue bordering on the deplorable, degradation and dilapidation of the living conditions of the host communities in Niger Delta Region particularly in Cross River State remain a national debate. In Cross River State, a number of abandoned projects have been recorded across the state. The agency has been accused of corrupt practices whereby funds set aside for the development of the area were diverted. Some of the stakeholders connived with contractors to divert the funds meant for the development of the host communities. The issue of accountability has not been accorded its right place in Nigeria public life. This hindered the agency from optimum performance. The decayed infrastructure in the study area is an indication that the agency has not substantially accounted for the huge funds budgeted for the development of the area by the government.

It could be seen that, many projects in the area by the commission such as, the Adim-Abapia rural road construction, the Ekim Junction construction in Odukpani, the Itu Bridge maintenance and repairs which was to cover from Okuruikang Junction to Odukpani Junction and the Odukpani Junction to Tinapa Junction in Calabar are still left uncompleted by the commission. Furthermore, still disappointing is the commission project that was inspected in February 2019 on the 15-kilometre Adiabo-Eseku Road in

Odukpani Local Government Area encountered huge disappointment by the inspecting senator with the performance of the contractor and charged the NDDC to take appropriate action to get the project on track. Evidence showed that, the contractor had collected about N1.56 billion out of the contract sum of N4.3 billion, but could cover only 4.1 kilometres of the road before abandoning it. Though some of the projects such as the NDDC hostel projects at the Cross River University of Technology CRUTECH was successful, others like University of Calabar Hostel projects was disappointing as the Senate Committee on inspection of NDDC projects expressed disappointment over the slow pace of projects completion. Furthermore, there is hardly electricity supply or availability in most rural communities despite the huge amount of money budgeted for these basic amenities, telecommunication facilities are in acute short supply. Healthcare is less than desirable while the schools are ill-equipped hence they serve more as youth restive factories than institutions of learning. In most communities, waste management culture is poor and this is exacerbated by the activities of oil companies.

The record indicated that NDDC has awarded a total 384 different projects in different communities in Cross River State. Some of these projects include: electricity, borehole, and construction of health centres, construction of classroom blocks, renovations and furnishing of schools, drainages, constructions and rehabilitations of rural roads. Unfortunately, out of the said 384 projects awarded by the Agency, 130 of which represented 33.9% was completed and commissioned, 54 projects representing 14.1% ongoing while 200 of the projects representing 52.% has been abandoned and also the issue of politicization that characterized citing of projects.

Gap in the Existing Literature

Previous studies reviewed created research gap which the present study has filled. Some of the reviewed research work included: Isidih and Sabran (2019) who studies the Challenges facing NDDC Projects in the Niger-Delta region. In a related study, Duke (2018) concluded research on the contributions of NDDC in the development of Niger-Delta Region. Similarly, Dele (2014) conducted research titled “Underdevelopment of Nigeria's Niger Delta Region. However, it was observed that those works as reviewed above centered on the assessment of the performance of NDDC on the socio-economic development of the rural communities in Cross River State. Thus, it's this existing vacuum that this study has filled.

Out Come

In the course of the study, four specific objectives were formulated that guided the study. Data were collected from secondary sources and analyzed using content analytical method. In doing that, articles from journals, textbooks, thesis and the compiled results from NDDC were used. This work observed that NDDC was established with a master plan to tackle the developmental challenges that has been facing the rural communities in the Niger Delta Region including Cross River State.

Considering the list of projects handled by NDDC in various communities, the work observed that the outcome in terms of performance has been every low compared to the huge amount of resources invested for the project by the government. The poor performance has manifested in the area of infrastructures. For instance, most of communities in the study area do not have electricity, pipe born water, good healthcare facilities etc. Cross River State has not been linked to the national electric power grid despite the establishment of NDDC and other developmental agencies in the state, most of the rural communities in the state do not have electricity UNDP (2016). Niger-Delta region has the highest dense network of

freshwater distributaries and vast groundwater reserves, yet most of the communities especially in Cross River State depended on rivers, dug up wells and rain water which has caused born diseases like diarrhea, cholera, guinea worm suffered by the people (UNDP, 2016). Hence, access to safe sources of water is still limited.

The site visitation by the researcher showed that Imabana communities were not lucky as they complained and the researcher witness that the major road contracts by the commission were abandoned since 2010 and it is causing a lot of problem and gully erosion is taking over some locations making passage very difficult for cars in that community. The only electrification project in Ekureku and Obubura was also abandoned. These abandoned projects have created a very big negative socioeconomic impact on the host communities. However, the few road projects completed there is having positive impact but impacts on roads are more meaningful and pronounced if the stretch of the road is completed and not where two kilometer of a five kilometer road is done, the uncompleted part of the road offsets the good impact of the completed part.

Education and health also enjoyed a boost as access to them increased as a result of these projects, doctors and other health personnel could now afford to live in such communities since there are basic facilities. The communities under study complained of the nonpayment of compensation for the destruction of their economic crops as a result of these projects. This nonpayment of compensation affected their living pattern seriously as those whose crops and farmland were used for these projects lost their means of livelihood considering the fact that majority of the inhabitants are subsistence farmers. This posed a serious negative effect on economic growth.

There is no doubt that these projects if completed would have great impact on the communities and the list of abandoned and ongoing projects would enhance the socio-economic and environmental life of the people in these communities. The author then concluded that many of the completed projects have really impacted meaningfully on the socio economic life of the people. The non-completed and abandoned ones are however creating negative impacts and call for the urgent attention of the commission in ensuring their completion.

Conclusion

The NDDC as the agency of government charged with the responsibility of fast-tracking the socio-economic development of the Niger Delta Region as well as obviating their livelihood challenges has been active in the provision of infrastructure such as roads and bridges, schools, employment through skill training, environmental protection, hospitals and primary health centres, among others. Moreover, serious and effective practical actions have not been taken to ensure the cessation of gas flaring in most of the oil bearing communities of Bakassi and provision of basic amenities in the area to ensure good and sustainable livelihood for the natives of the area. Nonetheless, the interventionist projects of the Federal Government of Nigeria have contributed significantly to sustainable livelihoods in the oil- and gas-bearing communities of other states like AkwaIbom, Bayelsa, Rivers and Delta State, Nigeria. This palliative comes in areas such as skills acquisition training, job creation and healthcare facilities rehabilitation. These have enabled the people to diversify into other livelihood options since land and the resources on which the people depend to earn a living as farmers and fishermen have been degraded and decimated by oil exploration and production operations.

In this study, efforts have been made to investigate the impact of the Niger-Delta Development

Commission on the socio-economic development of rural communities in Cross River State. This work observed that NDDC has a good plan for the development of the Niger-Delta Region. Therefore, the study concluded that NDDC would have performed better, if an effective implementation strategy was adopted. Non implementation of the laws that granted the NDDC to collect equivalent 15 percent of the total monthly statutory allocation due to member states, non remittance of yearly budget of companies including 50 percent of the ecological fund due to member states have contributed to impede the NDDC performance in the region including Cross River State. Also, the study identified corruption and stealing as the greatest challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the outcome of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- (1) There should be improved provision of health services. This can be achieved by building new health centres, maintaining the existing ones and renovating the dilapidated ones.
- (2) Government through NDDC should build new schools and renovate dilapidated class room blocks in the study area. This would help promote learning among students in the study area.
- (3) Contractors who abandoned their projects especially the road projects should be forced to get back to the sites and complete them or face legal actions including black listing of their various companies to serve as a deterrence to others.
- (4) NDDC should increase efforts towards building of skill acquisition centres in order to improve job skills of youths in the area and reduce the level of unemployment in the area.
- (5) There is need to improve healthcare services in the study area; hospitals should adequately be equipped for effective dispensary of drugs to the people especially the venerable.
- (6) There is the need to improve sources of clean drinking water to the rural communities by the NDDC; this will assist to eradicate water borne disease in the rural communities.

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