

THE ROLE OF NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION IN SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN BAYELSA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Niger Delta Development Commission is an establishment meant to develop the region. One hypothesis was used in the study. The researchers used the ex-post-facto research design. The design is chosen on the premise that the manifestation of the variables under study has already taken place before the researchers embarked on the study. The research study covers only one state which is Bayelsa State. The target population for this study is Yenagoa Local Government, Bayelsa state. It includes men, women and youths within the age bracket 20 and above, whom the researchers believe can give a valid opinion of the impact of NDDC on their community. The stratification is to ensure diversification of opinion. Households were stratified according to size and a sample of 45 households per stratum (per area) was randomly selected. In all, a total of 170 households were selected from the four areas. Data analysis will be undertaken using qualitative as well as quantitative techniques. From the test statistic, the calculated value of 7.364, with probability value of 0.007, when compared to the table value of 3.84 at 5% significant level, show that NDDC has contributed significantly in solving the problem of job creation in Bayelsa state. A whopping 64 percent of the respondents agree to the fact that the establishment of NDDC had made people gain meaningful employment in the state and small businesses have sprung up as a result of NDDC's contributions to human capital building. Finally, it was recommended that more indigenous firms and local contractors should be used in the execution of projects; this will lessen the burden and pressure mounting from communities. As they will feel carried along, this will make the execution of projects easier and economical.

Keywords: Niger Delta Development Commission and Unemployment

Introduction

The Niger Delta region is situated at the south-south region of the geographical entity called Nigeria. The area is endowed with natural resources among which is the highly priced precious crude oil which contributes over 90% of the nation's revenue, making the region the highest contributor to the nation's wealth.

Despite this huge contribution to the nation's wealth, the region is being deprived of a fair share of the wealth, leaving the area in a state of neglect and high level of poverty. The people have continued to pay terrible prices in terms of environmental degradation for the oil and gas resources mined from the region due to neglect and abandonment by the Federal Government and the multinational oil companies.

In view of this unpalatable circumstances, some patriotic citizens of the region, notably the Ijaw and Ogoni in the likes of Kenule Saro Wiwa and others established organizations and groups among which were the Niger Delta Justice Movement (NDJM), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Frontier Force (NDFF), Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) etc. to confront the Nigerian Government and the multinational oil companies operating in the area either with violence or diplomacy. The groups continued to agitate and articulate demands for greater autonomy and control of the area's petroleum resources. They justified their grievances by making reference to the extensive environmental degradation and pollution from oil activities that have occurred in the region since the late 1950s without commensurate compensation from the oil industries coupled with limitation and negligible environmental remediation measures, which have made the region vulnerable to natural disaster and highly underdeveloped.

Sometime, the agitations and confrontations especially with the oil companies could be violent such that constrained oil production as these affected youths or organizations disrupt oil operations in attempt to forcefully effect change. These disruptions were sometimes costly to the Nigerian oil industry, the multinational companies and the federal government.

As intervention measure to address the development crisis in the region, various agencies and commissions were set up by the federal government at different times to address these problems of neglect and underdevelopment of the region among which were Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB), Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA), and the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC). These agencies and Commissions failed to adequately tackle the development problems of the Niger Delta area due to poor funding from the Federal Government and other problems.

As a result of the failure of these agencies and the desire of the federal government to address the problems of the Niger Delta region following increasing agitation and continuous disruption of oil production activities, the federal government under the Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's administration established the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The Niger Delta Development Commission therefore, is a federal government intervention agency established as response to the demands of the people of the Niger Delta with the view

to improving the social, economic and environmental conditions of the people through the provision of social, and physical infrastructure, technology, economic revival and prosperity programs, ecological and environmental remediation and sustained human development.

The mission statement of the NDDC summarizes what it intends to achieve. It states that NDDC is established to facilitate the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful; after 17 years of existence of the commission, can we say it has walked close to its mission? The study is therefore set to examine the role NDDC has played in the development of Bayelsa state.

Statement of the Problem

The Niger Delta Region has become an ecological wasteland. Several rivers have been polluted, farmlands are under acid rain and oil spills, carbon dioxide emission in the region are among the highest in the world. About 45.8 billion kilowatts of air are discharged into the atmosphere of the region from gas flaring (Agbola and Olorun, 2003). This has caused serious effects on the environment ranging from loss of bio-diversities to health problems, yet not much has been received by the region from the ecological fund of the Federal Government to address these environmental challenges.

These challenges have caused a lot of unemployment as many fishermen and farmers could no longer survive with their occupation due to environmental pollution caused by oil spillage in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The problem of the study is that youths restiveness is of the increase in Niger Delta Region and there is a need for governmental agencies like NDDC to create opportunities for the youths in the region.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the role of NDDC in unemployment alleviation in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Ascertain if the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission has contributed significantly to solving the problem of unemployment in Bayelsa State.

Hypothesis

The study shall be guided by the following hypothesis:

- The establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission has not contributed significantly to solving the problem of unemployment in Bayelsa State.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

For the purpose of this research work, we shall be focusing on the impact of NDDC in the development of the Niger Delta using Delta State as a case study.

The socio-economic activities of the people are essentially: farming, fishing and trading. However, due to the exploration and exploitation of oil in the communities, in recent times, these activities have been hampered owing to the neglect by the government and compounded by the activities of oil corporations operating in the area. We shall therefore try to highlight the problem of the people and how the NDDC which is on board now can offer reparation.

Methodology

The researchers used the ex-post-facto research design. The design is chosen on the premise that the manifestation of the variables under study has already taken place before the researchers embarked on the study. The study is a measure of what has already taken place. It is on this basis that the ex-post facto research design was adopted.

The research study covers only one of the states which is Bayelsa State. In Bayelsa state, the study further chooses Yenagoa Local Government as a representative of the whole population. This area is made up of the Epie-Attissa Clan, Agudama, Edepie, Biogbolo and Ekeki which will constitute our sample population. The target population for this study is Yenagoa Local Government, Bayelsa state. It includes men, women and youths within the age bracket 20 and above, whom the researchers believe can give a valid opinion of the impact of NDDC on their community. In determining the sampling technique to use for this study, we take into consideration the fact that the technical nature of the investigation requires the responses of the people with good and related knowledge of the subject matter. To achieve this, simple random sampling method is used for the study. The local government was stratified into four, according to the four areas. The stratification is to ensure diversification of opinion. Households were stratified according to size and a sample of 45 households per stratum (per area) was randomly selected. In all, a total of 170 households were selected from the four areas.

To collect the primary data, a carefully structured questionnaire was designed and administered to persons with good and related knowledge of the subject matter. The questionnaire was divided into two sections; section A describes the bio data of respondents of host community. Section B is designed in such a way for a respondent to give his/her own personal view of the subject matter by ticking either Yes, No or data that suits his/her knowledge of the subject matter.

Data analysis will be undertaken using qualitative as well as quantitative techniques. It is expected that the major segment of the information to be collected during the survey will be qualitative and may not be easily quantified. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, etc. will be employed in most of the analysis in summarizing trends, change and comparisons across certain features. The data collected would be analyzed with relevant statistical tool such as Chi-Square test. Final presentations will take the form of descriptions, tabulations and illustrations. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) will be adopted to run the Chi-Square test.

Data Analysis

Table: Response According to Age Range

A g e B r a c k e t	R e s p o n s e	P e r c e n t a g e
2 0 - 3 0	2 0	2 0 . 2
3 1 - 4 0	4 6	4 6 . 5
4 1 - 5 0	2 8	2 8 . 3
5 1 a n d a b o v e	5	5 . 1
T o t a l	9 9	1 0 0

Source: Field survey, 2014.

From table 1, we see the age grouping of the respondents, 20 (20.2 percent) of the respondents are within the age bracket 20-30, 46 (46.5 percent) of the respondent are within the age bracket 31-40, 28 or 28.3 percent of the respondents are in the age range of 41-50 and the remaining 5 or 5.1 percent are 51 years old and above. The spread in the age bracket shows that all age group opinion is adequately covered.

Test of Hypothesis

The hypothesis that guided the study is tested using chi-square, facilitated with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Hypothesis 1

The establishment of Niger Delta Development Commission has not contributed significantly to solving the problem of unemployment in Bayelsa State.

Using question 1 from the research questionnaire, the frequencies and test statistic is presented below.

Chi-Square Test

Frequencies

Response	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
N o	3	6	- 3
Y e s	6	3	3
T o t a l	9	9	

Test Statistics

Chi-Square	7 . 3 6 4
D f	1
Asymp. Sig.	. 0 0 7

Author's Computation Using SPSS

From the test statistics, the calculated value of 7.364, with probability value of 0.007, when compared to the table value of 3.84 at 5% significant level, show that NDDC has contributed significantly in solving the problem of job creation in Bayelsa state.

A whopping 64 percent of the respondents agree to the fact that the establishment of NDDC had made people gain meaningful employment in the state and small businesses have sprung up as a result of NDDC's contributions to human capital building.

Decision: Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, we rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative.

Summary of the Study

The study examined the role of NDDC in the development of Bayelsa state. NDDC is a commission saddled with the responsibility of ensuring the much needed and agitated development in the Niger Delta region is achieved. Bayelsa state which is one of the Niger Delta states has felt the impact of the establishment of the commission in several ways.

Conclusion

In all, NDDC has improved the level of development in Bayelsa state and it has contributed greatly in the creation of job opportunities for Bayelsans.

Recommendations

It would be recommended that more indigenous firms and local contractors be used in the execution of projects; this will lessen the burden and pressure mounting from communities, as they will feel carried along. This will make the execution of projects easier and economical.

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