

NDDC Developmental Strides and Well-being of Rural Dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examines NDDC developmental strides and the well-being of rural dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. Through the use of questionnaires, a sample of 400 respondents were selected from different wards in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria using a multi-stage sampling technique. The findings reveal a significant relationship between NDDC education intervention programme, NDDC intervention projects for road construction and well-being of rural dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. From findings of the study, it was revealed that projects such as educational programmes, road construction have great impact on the well-being of rural dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. It is imperative that the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) takes proactive steps to bolster the budgetary allocation for road construction within the designated study area. This strategic move holds the potential to revolutionize the economic landscape of the region.

Keywords: NDDC, developmental strides, well-being, rural dwellers, provision of electricity, educational scholarship, Nigeria

Introduction

The deplorable condition of the oil-rich Niger Delta Region, coupled with the escalating security crisis, prompted former President Obasanjo in 2000 to take a significant step by establishing the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). This move was a direct response to the multifaceted challenges plaguing this resource-rich area. The Niger Delta comprises two distinct groups of states: the core states, including Bayelsa, Delta, Akwa Ibom, and Rivers, and the peripheral states, encompassing Abia, Cross River, Edo, Imo, and Ondo (Nkwi, 2004; Barrett, 2008). The need for government intervention in the Niger Delta region dates back to Nigeria's Independence era (Paki et al, 2011; Salako et al, 2012). The region's poor infrastructure and challenging geographical landscape led to the creation of special development agencies by successive governments. The Willinks Commission in 1958 paved the way for the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB), and in the 1970s, the government employed the River Basin Development Commission (RBDC) as a crucial instrument for community development in the area (Uche et al, 2014; Udensi et al, 2012).

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 (Obetta & Charity, 2013;

Nwachukwu & Ekanem, 2016). 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 offshore 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; Vanhoucke, 2012). The NDDC embark on community development projects that enhance the quality of life of the people. The projects include road, agriculture, health, water, education and electricity among others (UNESCO, 2005; Dafinone, 2007). The region accounts for 40% gross domestic product (GDP) and 80% gross revenue for the country.

The neglect of the Niger Delta Region, coupled with the operations of oil mining companies, has led to significant challenges in the area (Kenny, 2018; Luis, 2018). The environmental consequences of oil companies' activities in the region have severely impacted local communities (Coil et al, 2017; Ukwaiyi & Okpa, 2017). The motivation for these projects arose from the need to mitigate the adverse effects of these activities. Pollution resulting from oil operations has harmed crops, vegetation, animals, and human health, leading to violence and other illegal actions (Oyetusi, 2007; Magaji, 2010; Ebingha et al, 2019). The NDDC, in accordance with its strategic plan, has made numerous efforts to address the region's needs by establishing healthcare facilities, generating employment, providing training and skill acquisition programs, offering educational facilities and scholarships in science-related courses, constructing roads, facilitating transportation with the provision of buses, supplying electric cables, transformers, and rural electrification, as well as engaging in environmental protection and bridge construction (Faridi, 2011; Fakhrudin, 2019; Peter et al, 2020). These projects can also be observed in the southern senatorial district of Cross River State, which encompasses seven Local Government Areas: Biase, Akamkpa, Odukpani, Calabar Municipality, Calabar South, Akpabuyo, and Bakassi. These intervention projects effectively promote community development and enhance the socio-economic well-being of rural communities in the Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. The main aim of this study is to investigate the developmental efforts by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and their impact on the well-being of rural dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to examine the impact of NDDC education intervention programme on the well-being of rural dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. Determine the impact of NDDC intervention projects for road construction on the wellbeing of the people of Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

Critical minimum effort theory

The theory of critical minimum effort is associated with Leibenstein (1957). The theory is based on the relationship between the three factors, viz. (i) per capita income, (ii) population growth, and (iii) investment. According to Gulam (2015) the theory identified population as an income-depressing factor (or a 'shock'), whereas investment is an income-generating factor (or a 'stimulant'). Growth in an economy is possible when the income generating factors turnout to be more powerful than the income-depressing factors. A small additional investment may generate a small income. The additional income would be eaten up by the additions to the population which may come in the wake of the additional income, and hence the effort may fail to generate a cumulative process of growth. What is required is an initial substantially large volume of investment that may create conditions which should outweigh the growth of population, i.e., if necessary, it is necessary that the initial effort or the initial series of efforts must be above a certain minimum magnitude. Leibenstein believes that it is not necessary to make critical

minimum effort in a single stroke. It can be split up into a series of smaller efforts provided these are optimally times.

The efforts of NDDC in bringing about development in rural community is strongly in line with the tenet of the critical minimum effort theory. However, scholars do not agree with Leibenstein's assumption that if initial investment is less than the critical minimum size, population will increase. In a low-income country also, population decline can set in, provided the government action is rigorous as in China in recent years. It is not necessary that the economy shall slide back to the low-level equilibrium level if the effort is of less than critical minimum size. Things cannot be exactly the same as before. One cannot come back to the same level or standard, or structure and volume of the income. Alternatively, it is also not necessary that once the critical minimum effort has been made, there will follow a period of uninterrupted and sustained take off and growth. Leibenstein is also not on sure grounds that the fertility decline will be the consequence of growth. It is now increasingly being found that first the fertility increase is to be checked and then only anything like critical minimum is possible. If substantial fertility decline sets in, even less than critical minimum effort may suffice.

Methods

Research design and study area

Cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. This design was used to establish what the research participants know, believe, or their experiences about subject of the research. The cross-sectional design was adopted because it enables the researcher to use the sample drawn to represent the various elements of the population under study (Okpa et al, 2020; Ukwaiyi & Okpa, 2017; Omang et al, 2020). The study was carried out in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State which lies between latitude 6.167 and longitude 8.6601 East of the Greenwich meridian within the tropical rainforest belt of Nigeria estimated at 9° 28'. The area is boarded by Cameroon Republic in the East, to the North by Benue State, to the West by Abia and Ebonyi States to the Southwest by Akwa Ibom State while to the South by the Atlantic Ocean. The area also lies with the Cross River Basin with a total area of 53,855 km² from which about 44,105 km² is in Nigeria and Cameroon. Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, made up of seven (7) local government areas (Akamkpa, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Biase, Odukpani Calabar Municipality and Calabar South Local Government Areas).

Sample size and sampling technique

The sample size for this study is four hundred (400) respondents. Multi-stage sampling procedure with the help of a purposive and simple random sampling procedure was used in selecting the study elements and respondents in the study area.

Instrument of data collection and ethical consideration

The instrument for data for collection was the questionnaire which contained three sections; A, B and C. and consist of closed and opened-ended questions. Section 'A' focuses on respondents' demographic data including their age, sex, marital status, and level of education. Section "B" contains structured closed-ended questions on substantive issues raised in the research objectives. The instrument was designed using four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Section 'C' measured the dependent variable, which is well-being of rural dwellers. Two research assistants were engaged, the reason for this number is for the effective management by the researcher in terms of training, funding and supervision. The research assistants were recruited from the Department of Sociology, University of Calabar and two days training on questionnaire administration and collection was organized for them. All the participants were provided with consent form on which clear explanations were made regarding their participation in the study. The participants were assured of confidentiality and safety with

regard to the study. They were made to know that their participation in the study is voluntary and the need to record their responses was clearly explained to them.

Method of data analysis

Result of the analysis was generated using descriptive and analytical statistics. Data collected from this study was presented and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20 to perform frequency count, percentages, mean, standard deviation and simple linear regression.

Results

From the four hundred copies of administered questionnaire, three hundred and seventy-two questionnaires were retrieved and used for the analysis. Out of the 372 accessible respondents', 146 respondents representing 39.00% are males, while 226 representing 61.00% are females. This implies that the community is likely to be vibrant and may have a large working-age population. As for age distribution, 104 (28.00%) are below 25 years, 211 (57.00%) are between 26 – 35 years, 57 (15.00%) are between 36 – 45 years. This implies that the community is likely to be vibrant and may have a large working-age population. As for religious affiliation, 61 (16.00%) practiced Islamic religion, 285 (77.00%) are Christians and 26 (7.00%) practiced African Traditional religion. This religious distribution can impact the cultural, social, and communal norms and practices.

For educational attainment, 171 (46.00%) had primary school education, 103 (28%), had secondary school education, while 98 (26.3%) had tertiary education. This suggests that there may be challenges related to access to higher education, which may impact employment opportunities and economic prosperity. As for occupation, 104 respondents (28.00%) are traders, 197 (53.00%) are farmers, and 71 (19.00%) are civil servants. This implies that the community is primarily rural and agricultural, with some engagement in trading and formal employment. As for how long they have lived in the community; 133 respondents (36.00%) have lived in the community for 1-5 years, 111 (30.00%) have lived between 6 – 10 years, 70 (19.00%) have lived for between 11 – 15 years, while 58 respondents' (16%) have lived in the community for 16-21 years.

TABLE 1: Respondents' bio-demographic data

Variable	Category	N	Percent (%)
Sex	Male	146	39.00
	Female	226	61.00
	Total	372	100.00
Age	Below 25 years	104	28.00
	26 – 35 years	211	57.00
	36 – 45 years	57	15.00
	Total	372	100.00
Religion	Islam	61	16.00
	Christianity	285	77.00
	African Traditional Religion	26	7.00
	Total	372	100.00
Educational attainment	Primary	171	46.00
	Secondary	103	28.00
	Tertiary	98	26.3
	Total	372	100.00
Occupation	Trader	104	28.00
	Farmer	197	53.00
	Civil servant	71	19.00
	Total	372	100
	1-5 years	133	36.00
	6-10 years	111	30.00

How long you have lived in the community	11-15 years 16-21 Total	70 58 372	19.00 16.00 100.00
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Source: Field survey, 2023

Test of hypotheses

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between NDDC education intervention programme on the well-being of rural dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. The independent variable in this hypothesis is NDDC education intervention programme, while the dependent variable is well-being of rural dwellers. Both variables were measured continuously and inferential statistics involving simple linear regression was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance and the result is presented in Table 2.

The result of analysis as presented in table 2, revealed R-value of 0.214^a. Correlation coefficient is a standardized measure of an observed degree of relationship between variables, it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect, and that values of ± 1 represent a small effect, ± 3 is a medium effect and ± 5 is a large effect. Also, the R^2 -value of .047 imply that 4.7% of total variance is accounted for by predictor variable (NDDC education intervention programme). Furthermore, the regression ANOVA revealed that the $F(1, 370) = 10.462$; $p < .05$, is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant linear association (contribution) of the predictor variable (NDDC education intervention programme) on well-being of rural dwellers in the study area. The adjusted R^2 (.046) shows some shrinkage of the unadjusted value (.047) indicating that the model could be generalized on the population. Based on the result, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between NDDC education intervention programme and the well-being of rural dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria.

TABLE 2: Summary simple linear regression analysis of the relationship between NDDC education intervention programme and well-being of rural dwellers

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
NDDC education intervention programme	10.7903	4.85744
Well-being of rural dwellers	14.3710	5.31710

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig
Regression	70.229	1	70.229	10.462	.214 ^a	.047	.046	.001 ^a
Residual	56214.578	370	151.931					
Total	56284.806	371						

Source: Field survey, 2023

Hypothesis two

NDDC intervention projects on road construction has no significant relationship with the wellbeing of rural dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. The independent variable in this hypothesis is NDDC intervention projects on road construction, while the dependent variable is well-being of rural dwellers. Both variables were measured continuously and inferential statistics involving simple linear regression was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance and the result is presented in table 3.

The result of analysis as presented in table 3, revealed R-value of 0.230^a. Correlation coefficient is a standardized measure of an observed degree of relationship between variables, it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect, and that values of ± 1 represent a small effect, ± 3 is a medium effect and ± 5 is a large effect. Also, the R^2 -value of .049 imply that 49% of total variance is accounted for by predictor variable (NDDC intervention projects on road

construction). Furthermore, the regression ANOVA revealed that the $F(1, 370) = 16.441$; $p < .05$, is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant linear association (contribution) of the predictor variable (NDDC intervention projects on road construction) on wellbeing of rural dwellers in the study area. The adjusted R^2 (.048) shows some shrinkage of the unadjusted value (.049) indicating that the model could be generalized on the population. Based on the result, it was concluded that NDDC intervention projects on road construction significantly affect the wellbeing of rural dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria.

TABLE 3Summary simple linear regression analysis of the relationship between road construction and wellbeing of rural dwellers

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Road construction	11.9301	3.14650
Well-being of rural dwellers	14.3710	5.31710

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Sig
Regression	218.336	1	218.336	16.441	.230 ^a	.049	.048	.001 ^a
Residual	56066.470	370	151.531					
Total	56284.806	371						

Source: Field survey, 2023

Discussion of findings

NDDC education intervention programme and well-being of rural dwellers

The first hypothesis was tested using the simple linear regression to test the relationship or impact of NDDC intervention project on educational scholarship and wellbeing of rural dwellers in the study area. The findings suggest that NDDC (Niger Delta Development Commission) intervention projects have a significant positive impact on the development of educational facilities in the study area. This implies that NDDC projects have contributed to improving the availability and quality of educational resources, such as schools, classrooms, scholarships, and laboratories. The findings suggest that NDDC (Niger Delta Development Commission) intervention projects have a significant positive impact on the development of educational facilities in the study area. Although the result primarily focuses on the impact on educational facilities, it indirectly suggests a potential improvement in the wellbeing of rural dwellers in the study area. Access to education and educational resources is often linked to better socioeconomic opportunities and quality of life (Okoi et al, 2022). This implies that NDDC projects have contributed to improving the availability and quality of educational resources, such as schools, classrooms, scholarships, and laboratories. The findings corroborate Obeta and Charity (2012) who noted that, through NDDC projects, a significant number of schools, classrooms, scholarships and laboratories in primary and secondary school in Cross River state have been built and rehabilitated.

NDDC educational support programmes as noted by Nwachukwu and Ekanem, (2016) opens New Vistas:- The significance of educational support programmes by NDDC, for a great part, lies in its ability to open new vistas for inhabitants of the region. It expands our outlook and teaches us to be tolerant towards other views. An educated person will find it easier to understand a different point of view than the one who is uneducated. Nkwi (2004) observed that NDDC educational support programmes broadens inhabitant's mental landscape and is the way forward to greater enlightenment - the ultimate goal of every human life. It is a promoter of peace and reducer of conflict (Uwadia, 2010; Okpa et al, 2020). Education spreads awareness:- Awareness is a virtue in itself, given that the lack of awareness is lamented everywhere. Increasing spending on education balances economic inequalities and reduces poverty. Through NDDC educational support programmes in Cross River State Nkwi (2004) observed spreads awareness, informing us about our rights and the services that we can access. On the most basic notes, it teaches us to

differentiate between right and wrong. For most part of our lives, we falter in dichotomizing right and wrong, but the right education gives us the right answers (Uwadia, 2010; Eshiotse et al, 2022).

NDDC intervention projects on road construction and wellbeing of rural dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria

The **second** hypothesis was tested using the linear regression to determine the extent to which NDDC intervention projects on road construction/rehabilitation affect the well-being of rural dwellers in Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. Good road infrastructure can enhance the quality of life for rural dwellers. It can lead to quicker response times for emergency services, better access to healthcare facilities, and improved access to education, which can positively impact the overall well-being of the community. Furthermore, improved road infrastructure can stimulate economic activities in the region. Better roads can reduce transportation costs, making it more feasible for businesses to operate and transport goods. This, in turn, can lead to increased income and job opportunities for local residents (Okpa, 2022; Anam et al, 2022). The findings agree with Osadebe et al. (2013) who noted that 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. According to Ahon (2008), a road is specially prepared way linking places and made for the use of pedestrians, riders and vehicles.

Conclusion and recommendations

From the finding of this study, it has been seen that, the NDDC as an 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 infrastructural development in areas such as roads constructions and bridges, schools, employment generation through skill training, environmental protection, hospitals and primary health centres rehabilitation among others. This agency from the findings, has contributed to the alleviation of the sufferings of the people in the communities of Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria. From the list of projects reviewed in the various communities, one would no doubt agree that these projects completed are having 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. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

It is imperative that the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) takes proactive steps to bolster the budgetary allocation for road construction within the designated study area. This strategic move holds the potential to revolutionize the economic landscape of the region. With enhanced investment in road infrastructure, a myriad of benefits will accrue, particularly for the local agricultural sector. The infusion of additional funds into road construction would catalyse a transformative effect on the livelihoods of farmers in the area. It would facilitate seamless transportation of farm produce to markets, enabling farmers to bring out their harvests for sale promptly and efficiently. This, in turn, would mitigate post-harvest losses and significantly augment the income of agricultural practitioners.

The NDDC should prioritize the construction of modern, state-of-the-art schools. These institutions should be designed not only to meet contemporary educational standards but also to inspire a love for learning. Spacious classrooms, advanced laboratories, well-equipped libraries, and recreational facilities should be integrated to create an environment that nurtures holistic development. Furthermore, the commission should turn its attention towards the rehabilitation of existing classroom blocks. This involves conducting thorough assessments to identify structural weaknesses, upgrading facilities to meet safety standards, and ensuring that the learning spaces are conducive to effective teaching and learning. Renovations should extend beyond mere

cosmetic improvements, addressing fundamental issues to guarantee a secure and comfortable educational experience for students and teachers alike.

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