

Intervention Agencies and Rural Electrification in Akwa Ibom State: A Case of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

U. D. Etuk

Department of Political Science & Public Administration

University of Uyo, Nigeria

Email: syztar08@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.61090/aksujacog.2024.059>

Abstract

This article evaluated the performance of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), an intervention agency designed to implement infrastructure development projects in the Niger Delta area, with a focus on the impact of the Commission's rural electrification intervention programs on the socio-economic circumstances of rural communities in Akwa Ibom State, more than two decades after it was created. The Stakeholders Theory of Freeman, which emphasises the need to maximise the interest of all parties involved, especially the beneficiaries, was used to explain this activity. Both primary and secondary sources were employed to gather pertinent data. The findings demonstrated that the NDDC has not been able to considerably enhance the socio-economic status of rural inhabitants via its assistance in implementing rural power projects in rural areas. Given these findings, it was recommended, among other things, that the NDDC update the present management and administrative structure to include fresh ideas into the management and operation of the Commission's activities.

Keywords: Development, economy, infrastructure, project, rural electrification

Introduction

The main goal of the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was to support the region's quick, equitable, and sustainable development. Addressing developmental issues, especially the region's long-standing infrastructural deficiencies, is part of this duty. The NDDC has focused its efforts on Akwa Ibom State, a crucial part of the Niger Delta. As has been seen in other Niger Delta states, Akwa Ibom State has undoubtedly faced serious difficulties as a result of the Niger Delta Region's neglect and the activities of oil mining firms. This is because throughout the many decades that the oil firms have operated, their actions have had a negative influence on the environment and the local population. There are still large infrastructure gaps in the state, particularly in the areas of transport infrastructure, even though previous administrations have made efforts to improve the situation, through large funding and various projects started by the NDDC. Roads, bridges, and other transport infrastructure are essential for the flow of people and products, economic activity, and general growth in any civilisation today. Many of the roads and bridges in Akwa Ibom State are in appalling condition, which has been a major cause for worry.

To increase accessibility and connectivity, the NDDC has built some roads and bridges. However, these attempts have been beset by problems including poor project execution, delays, corruption, and lack of upkeep. According to reports, many of the roads and bridges built or refurbished by the NDDC are of low quality, which causes them to deteriorate quickly and sometimes collapse completely (Akinwale, 2010). In addition to putting lives at risk, this circumstance impedes the state's economic growth.

However, considering that the NDDC has been engaged in the implementation of several infrastructure and development projects in Akwa Ibom State, there have been questions raised in recent years over the agency's ability to propel the state's infrastructure development.

Recall that the necessity to lessen the negative impacts of these activities served as the impetus for these programs. According to Ebingha et al. (2019), oil activities have caused environmental degradation that has negatively impacted agriculture, flora, animals, and human health, which has resulted in violence and other criminal activity. In line with its strategic plan, the NDDC has undertaken several initiatives to meet the needs of the area, including the construction of healthcare facilities, jobs, training and skill-acquisition programs, educational facilities and scholarships in science-related courses, roads, transport facilitation through the provision of buses, electric cables, transformers and rural electrification, environmental protection and bridge building (Peter et al., 2020).

It is well known that, despite the state's oil riches, the majority of its rural communities still struggle with serious infrastructure issues, such as inadequate road systems, restricted access to potable water, and subpar educational facilities. Concerns over the real results of NDDC initiatives on the ground have been raised by reports of inadequate monitoring, corruption, mismanagement, and project delays. Additionally, there aren't many thorough studies that evaluate the precise effect of the NDDC on Akwa Ibom State's degree of infrastructure development. Because of this, this article aims to analyse how the socioeconomic circumstances of rural communities in Akwa Ibom State are affected by the rural electrification initiatives of the Niger Delta Development Commission.

Research Objective

The main objective of this study is to analyze the effects of the Niger Delta Development Commission's rural electrification projects on the socio-economic conditions of rural communities in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypothesis

The rural electrification projects by the Niger Delta Development Commission have tended to significantly improve the socio-economic conditions of rural communities in Akwa Ibom State.

Theoretical Framework

The Stakeholders Theory is the best theoretical framework for examining the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Akwa Ibom State's infrastructure development. R. Edward Freeman, the main proponent of stakeholder theory first presented it in his book 'Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach' in 1984. Freeman (1984) argued that companies and organisations should consider the interests of all parties impacted by their decisions, challenging the conventional wisdom that states that corporations alone have the obligation to maximise shareholder profit. Since then, this theory has been used in public policy, development, and business, including the assessment of development initiatives like those run by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

Stakeholder theory is predicated on the idea that organisations, like the NDDC, function in intricate settings where a variety of stakeholders are impacted by their choices and actions (e.g., communities, governments, contractors, and civil society). The theory also assumes that the interests of all parties involved are equally significant and need to be fairly taken into account. Decision-making shouldn't be dominated by one stakeholder group (like the government or contractors) at the detriment of others, particularly weaker groups like local communities. According to the principle, companies need to interact with their stakeholders in order to comprehend their requirements, values, and concerns. According to the thesis, companies have moral obligations to their stakeholders that go beyond what is required by law or regulation. Stakeholder theory also presumes that organisations are part of larger economic, environmental, and sociopolitical systems. Beyond their immediate operational objectives, their actions may have far-reaching effects. Infrastructure development in the NDDC has an impact on the social and economic dynamics of the communities in addition to their physical surroundings.

Stakeholder theory presumptions provide a framework for a thorough and moral assessment of the NDDC's infrastructure development initiatives in Akwa Ibom State between 2015 and 2022. The

assessment may provide insights into how successfully the NDDC has carried out its developmental function by emphasising numerous stakeholders, equal treatment of interests, the significance of involvement, ethical obligations, and linked systems. By using this theoretical lens, the emphasis is shifted from just evaluating finished projects to comprehending the calibre of stakeholder relationships and the long-term effects on the stability and growth of the area.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) is one of the administrative bodies in Nigeria. The only duty of this organisation is to supervise development projects in the rural south-south/south-east areas of Nigeria. Queen Elizabeth II's administration first established a similar organisation in 1958 under the name of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB) on the recommendation of Sir Henry Willink's committee. This board gradually changed its name from Niger Delta Development Board to River Basin Development Authority (RBDA) following the civil war in 1970. It then changed its name again to Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1993, and finally to Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) on December 2, 2000 (Ejiogu, 2004).

The Niger Delta region is made up of nine states in the Federal Republic of Nigeria: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Abia, Imo, and Ondo. This region is a distinct ecosystem due to its size, location, and physical composition. It is situated in southern Nigeria and covers an area of 70,000 km², making it one of the largest wetlands in the world (Ekpo 2004). It begins a few miles below Delta State's Ndokwa area and extends southward into the Western Atlantic Ocean. According to Akpan (2000), it extends from the Benin River in the west to the Bonny River in the east.

According to Akpan (2000), the NDDC is expected to take advantage of the Niger Delta's developmental activities because of the many international companies' varied interests in oil exploration that are involved in the exploratory bids. Environmental issues associated with natural mineral exploration of any sort include the loss of marine and terrestrial biodiversity, the polluting of land and water bodies, and the forced displacement of inhabitants to unexplored areas (Bassey, 2002). In addition, oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta region have caused unfathomable suffering for rural communities, including the loss of farmlands, eutrophication of water bodies, and damage to fishing ponds due to oil leaks.

Importance of Infrastructural Development in the Niger Delta Region

The significance of infrastructure to the growth of any country cannot be overemphasized. Every country that aspires to true progress both economically and socially must invest in infrastructure. Investment, specifically in infrastructure is capital-intensive and demands tremendous investment because of its role in turning economic growth and development. A lack of investment in infrastructure would lead to an infrastructural gap with major ramifications for human welfare and national development (Asaju, 2023).

The understanding of the significance of infrastructure was recognised in the global circle as it comprises one of the cardinal objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations (UN) has defined 17 cardinal objectives to be fulfilled within a certain time range by developing states. They include poverty eradication, effective health care and wellness, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, inexpensive and clean energy, decent job and economic development, industry, innovation and infrastructure, and decrease of inequality. The SDGs have been centred around the attainment of human welfare and rapid development in all countries. It could be impossible and unsustainable to attain all these objectives without robust and continuous infrastructure development in all the nations around the globe, particularly in poor countries where the endeavour to achieve national development has been a mirage (Asaju, 2023).

The Nigerian government throughout the years has spent considerably on infrastructure development without a correlative output. Infrastructure shortage is a big challenge in Nigeria (Atakpa,

2016). Statistics suggest that Nigeria's infrastructure deficit is expected to be around \$100 billion a year. This amounts to 189.77%, which is over the federal budget (Proshare, 2020). The government has bemoaned that the nation requires a staggering amount of \$1.5 trillion to solve the issue of infrastructure deficit within 10 years and \$3.0 trillion in 30 years (Ukpe, 2021).

The socio-economic progress of every area depends on the development of its infrastructure, but this is especially true for the resource-rich but underdeveloped Niger Delta. Because of its enormous oil and gas deposits, the Niger Delta, which consists of nine states, including Akwa Ibom, has traditionally made substantial economic contributions to Nigeria. The region's general quality of life and economic prospects have been negatively impacted by its lack of infrastructure, despite its economic significance.

i. Economic Development

In the Niger Delta, infrastructure development is essential for promoting economic expansion. Better connection and accessibility are made possible by improved infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and electricity. These factors are crucial for trade and business. Improved transport networks support local companies and draw in investment by cutting down on the time and cost of transferring products and services. Effective infrastructure is a key factor in determining economic performance and competitiveness, especially in areas with a wealth of natural resources (Adewuyi & Oyejide, 2012).

ii. Employment Generation

From the start of the implementation of a project to its completion, infrastructure projects are important sources of employment. For example, the construction of schools, healthcare facilities, and industrial zones reduces unemployment rates in the area by creating a large number of jobs. This is particularly important in the Niger Delta, where social upheaval and youth restlessness have been connected to unemployment. When carried out well, the NDDC's infrastructure projects have the potential to reduce poverty and create jobs (Ibaba & Ukaga, 2012).

iii. Health and Education

An essential part of developing human capital is having access to high-quality healthcare and educational facilities. The availability of contemporary healthcare facilities in the Niger Delta aids in addressing the health issues facing the area, particularly those made worse by environmental contamination brought about by oil operations. In a similar vein, spending on educational infrastructure raises literacy rates, improves learning conditions, and gives young people the skills they need for sustainable growth. A population that has better access to healthcare and education is more empowered and productive (Asuquo et al., 2024).

iv. Social Stability

In order to achieve social stability and peace in the Niger Delta, infrastructure development is essential. Conflicts and militancy have afflicted the area, often sparked by sentiments of marginalisation and mistreatment. The government may show its dedication to raising the quality of life for the local populace by making infrastructure investments. This may promote a feeling of inclusion and belonging among the groups and assist in reducing conflicts. According to Ukeje (2001), resolving infrastructure deficiencies is essential to the larger plan to guarantee long-term peace and progress in the Niger Delta.

v. Environmental Management

The local ecology and inhabitants in the Niger Delta have suffered greatly as a result of environmental deterioration brought on by oil extraction operations. Remediation and environmental management may benefit from infrastructure development. The negative consequences of environmental pollution may be lessened, for example, by building appropriate drainage systems, waste disposal systems, and pollution control measures. Furthermore, green and sustainable technology-focused infrastructure

projects may lessen the ecological imprint of development activities and encourage environmental conservation (Ibanga, 2018).

vi. Rural Development

In the past, the Niger Delta's rural sections have received the least attention when it comes to infrastructure. To improve the quality of life in these places, road building, rural electrification, and the supply of clean water and sanitary facilities are essential. By making it easier to reach markets, improved rural infrastructure boosts agricultural output and raises rural farmers' standard of living. Akinwale (2010) asserts that the construction of rural infrastructure may aid in bridging the gap between urban and rural areas and is necessary for balanced regional development.

Infrastructure development may increase the potential and chances for economic links, according to Hassen (2000) and Bertoldi (2010). This is made possible by public investments, which foster an environment that encourages innovation, adaptation, and response to emerging markets and demand from the private sector, people, and the government (Srinivasu & Srinivasa-Rao, 2013). Ondiege et al. (2013) argued that public investment in transmission lines and road construction that connect rural towns to the national networks enables people and businesses to engage in revenue-generating enterprises. For the majority of emerging countries, the problem of inadequate infrastructure is a significant disadvantage. It has been shown by Heymans & Thome-Erasmus (1998), Hassen (2000), and Gjini & Kukeli (2012) that the provision of infrastructure services will greatly enhance employment conditions, boost development, and increase the productive potential of developing nations.

According to records, the NDDC has completed approximately 8000 projects across the nine states in the area since its founding in 2001; many of these projects are either unfinished or abandoned. There have been around 2,506 of these projects completed by the Buhari administration alone. For one government in less than seven years, this is undoubtedly an accomplishment (Nwosu, 2022; see Table 1). The Buhari government launched a forensic audit inquiry of the agency's operations to solve the many issues plaguing it. The resulting investigation revealed financial malfeasance by its senior leadership as well as widespread non-compliance with the Procurement Act. The government not only identified the many issues preventing the agency from achieving its goals, but it also provided funds for the agency to start several development initiatives. The Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, which was in charge of the NDDC's operations was allocated N178 billion between 2015 and 2022 under President Buhari's government (Morgan, 2022). This made it possible for the ministry and agency to start several projects, including building roads, electrifying areas, providing portable water facilities, supplying 288 transformers, installing thousands of solar-powered street lamp posts, and setting up a multi-skills acquisition centre that can accommodate 500 students across the nine Niger Delta states.

Nonetheless, corruption concerns have persisted in undermining the ministry's and the agency's operations. For example, Umana Okon Umana, appointed Minister of Niger Delta Affairs, was accused of 480 billion frauds, despite the National Assembly clearing him of the charge (Oyeyemi, 2022). The residents in the area see NDDC as a vehicle for politics and corruption and have not been impressed by the turn of things. In any event, empirical data indicates that their efforts have not improved public health, reduced unemployment, or decreased poverty.

Table 1: Projects by State (2001-2022) Projects by Category (2001-2022)

States/Categories	No. of projects
Abia	943
Akwa Ibom	1983
Bayelsa	1440
Cross River	643
Delta	3149
Edo	1106
Imo	1313
Ondo	1144
Rivers	3750
Building	2471
Canalization	96
Consultancy	555
Design	6
Desilting	290
Dredging	29
Electricity	3238
Equipment	70
Furnishing	33
ICT	14
Jetty	186
NGO	0
Programme	8
Reclamation/Shore Protection	336
Roads/Bridges	6501
Supply	72
Vendor	0
Water supply	1636

Source: NDDC, 2024

The organisation has also determined that a significant obstacle to the implementation of sustainable development initiatives in the area is a lack of funding. For instance, the Nigerian federal government established a committee in late 2021 to assist in the collection of N649 billion and \$5.6 billion that the commission said oil multinational corporations owed the country. In the words of the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs:

According to the most recent figure, oil firms owe the NDDC between \$5.6 billion and N649 billion. People are unaware that the NDDC is on life support since the monthly funding they get barely covers wages and office maintenance (Ogune, 2021).

Similar to its predecessors, NDDC has served as a platform for corruption, which benefits individuals with influence over the national government. Ekeke & Ukachikara (2018) argue in their examination of the NDDC's developmental profile, that the organisation has not really fulfilled the requirements that led to its creation.

Table 2: Rural Electrification Projects

S/N	Projects/Local Government
1.	Award of Contract for the Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Youth Avenue-Bassey Evaries - Okon Akpan Street & Environs Shelter Afrique Estate Uyo LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 927)
2.	Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Nto Etukidem Street, Uruk Uso Community, Ikot Ekpene LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 208)
3.	Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Ikot Nyah Community Etim Ekpo LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 884)
4.	Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Ikot Udom Community Ika LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 882)
5.	Instruction for Emergency Repairs of Failed & Unmotorable Sections of Ibiatuk Road & Environs
6.	Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Streer lights in Asanting, Ibiono LGA, Akwa Ibom
7.	Award Of Contract for the Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Anwana Esin Road & Environs, Oron LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 930)
8.	Award of Contract for the Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Etim Inyang Street & Environs Oron LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 929)
9.	Emergency Installation of Solar Powered Street Light at Nto Nsek Community, Covering Essien Udim Burnt Police Headquarters, Essien Udim LGA, Akwa Ibom State
10.	Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Lights at Ukana Offot Street and Environs, Uyo LGA, Akwa Ibom
11.	Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Ebughu Community & Environs, Oron LGA, Akwa Ibom (LOT 933)
12.	Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Udung Uko Community & Environs Udung Uko LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 934)
13.	Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Market Square- Aba Road-Ekpeyong Abasi Street & Environs Oron LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 925)
14.	Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Anamfa Street & Environs Oron LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 932)
15.	Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Nduonyi Street & Environs Oron LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 928)
16.	Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Marina Road & Environs Oron LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 931)
17.	Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Ibaka Primary School - Beach & Environs Mbo LGA, Akwa Ibom State
18.	Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Lights in Ikot Ediom Community, Ibesikpo Asutan LGA, Akwa Ibom State
19.	Award of Contract for The Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Lights at Ette Dan Cresent, Ikot Udoma Village, Inyang Udofa and Akpembang Streets, Eket L.G.A, Akwa Ibom State
20.	Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Lights at Esit Urua Community, Eket LGA, Akwa Ibom State
21.	Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Esteem Schools Road & Environs Abak LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 813)
22.	Award of Contract for the Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Light at Nung Efa Street and Environs, Off Abak Road in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

23. Award of Contract for the Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Idung Imo Akpan Village Eket LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 303)
24. Award Of Contract for the Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Mbikoong Ikot Atang Estate Ibesikpo Asutan, Uyo LGA., Akwa Ibom State (LOT 301)
25. Award of Contract for the Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at New Mbikoong Street, Eket LGA., Akwa Ibom State (LOT 300)
26. Award of Contract for the Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Usung Inyang Village Eket LGA., Akwa Ibom State (LOT 302)
27. Award of Contract for the Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Ikot Uso Ekon Community, Eket LGA., Akwa Ibom State (LOT 299)
28. Award of Contract for the Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Akwa Efiak/Abasi, Umoh/Inyang Crescent, Ikot Obiodongo Nung Udoe, Ibesikpo LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 496)
29. award of contract for the emergency provision of solar streetlight in Esa Obong community, Etim Ekpo L.G.A Akwa Ibom State (LOT 144)
30. Award of Contract for the Emergency Provision of Solar Streetlight at Asang Street & Environs, Eket Town L.G.A, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 430)
31. Award of Contract for the Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Mkpohoeto Market Square - Health Center Ikot Udom Community Ika LGA., Akwa Ibom State (LOT 883)
32. Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Street Light at Ndon Idung Adiakod, Eket LGA, Akwa Ibom State
33. Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Light at Akpayak Ikpe and Environs, Ini LGA., Akwa Ibom State
34. Emergency Provision of Solar Streetlights at Udung Oyoforo Road and Environs, Oduo-Ebughu, Mbo LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 189)
35. Emergency Provision of Solar Streetlight at Udung Oyoforo Road and Environs, Oduo-Ebughu, Mbo LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 198)
36. Emergency Provision of Solar Street Light at Utu Etim Ekpo Roundabout LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 498)
37. Provision of Solar Powered Street Lights at Enen Atai, Ikot Annie, Ema Itam and Ikot Ayan Communities, Ini LGA, Akwa Ibom State (LOT 4)
38. Award Of Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Light at Ibagwa, Ikot Ekpene Road and Environs (LOT 3) Akwa Ibom State
39. Award of Contract for the Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Light at Various Communities in Abak L.G.A (LOT 1) Akwa Ibom State
40. Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Lights at Dove Int'l Hight School Kappella Drive and Environs in Uyo/Uruan LGA, Akwa Ibom State
41. Contract for Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Lights at Ikot Eso/Ikot Etan/Ikot Offok/Nsiak Road, Essien Udim LGA, Akwa Ibom State
42. Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Lights at Iko Ekwa Road, & Ibibom Street, Off Calabar Street, Idua, Eket, Akwa Ibom State
43. Emergency Contract for the Provision and Installation of Solar Power Street Light at Comprehensive Secondary School, Okobo and Environs, Okobo LGA, Akwa Ibom State
44. Contract for the Construction/Rehabilitation of Solar Powered Water Project at Uquo, Esit Eket LGA, Akwa Ibom State
45. Award of contract for the emergency provision and installation of solar powered street light at Atlantic Road, off Mission Road. Eket L.G.A, Akwa Ibom State

46. Award of Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Light at Ibagwa, Ikot Ekpene Road and Environs (LOT 2), Akwa Ibom State
 47. Award of Contract for the Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Light at Ikot Akpa Edet Ndiya and Environs, Ikono L.G.A, Akwa Ibom State
 48. Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Light at Okon-Eket (Ikot Nsidebe/Ikot Inyang/Ikot Okudom/Ikot Ataku Link Roads), Eket LGA, (LOT 3) Akwa Ibom State
 49. Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Powered Street Light at Ikpe Ikot Nkon and Environs, Ini LGA, Akwa Ibom State
 50. Emergency Provision and Installation of Solar Streets Lights at Ikot Obio Anana and Environs, Okon, Eket LGA, Akwa Ibom State
-

Source: NDDC, 2024

Empirical Literature

Ubiebi & Ogbonna (2020) examined the Niger Delta region's growth, including the role of NDDC, its achievements, and its difficulties. The theoretical framework of analysis was the instrumentalist theory of Marxism. A documentary approach was used to gather the data, and content analysis was used to analyse the data. This research concluded that much more needs to be done since the area is rapidly regressing rather than making progress in terms of the fundamental development indicators. This study also discovered that corruption has permeated every aspect of the NDDC's operations.

Epebinu (2021) studied the impact of the Niger Delta Development Commission's infrastructure program on the livelihood activities of recipients in Nigeria's Niger Delta states. Using a standardised questionnaire and interview schedule, 300 respondents were chosen for this research using a multistage selection technique. Frequency, percentages, charts, mean statistics, chi-square, correlation coefficient, and t-test were used to examine the data. The findings showed that most of the respondents (61%) were married (78%). The respondents' average household size was five persons, and their average age was forty-one. The results showed that although power and water schemes had little impact on livelihood activities, NDDC roads and canals, as well as educational and health facilities, had a significant impact. The results also showed that effective monitoring and supervision, together with a coordinated maintenance culture, were the key ways to improve project execution. There was no connection between the respondents' socioeconomic traits and the barriers to NDDC implementation. It was determined that some NDDC-provided facilities had a significant impact on a few recipients' livelihood activities. Therefore, to increase sustainability and the level of life, the research suggested that the NDDC administration should oversee and monitor the projects more closely.

Onoyemeakpo (2023) conducted an assessment of the Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and its challenges towards development administration in the Niger Delta region. The historical and documentary methods were used for this study hence, the major sources of data were newspapers, magazines, textbooks, monographs and journals. For this paper, the Integrated Rural Development Model was used. It was propounded by Abasiokong (1981) and redesigned and developed by Hallet (1996). These scholars' perspectives were regarded as a novel approach to the study of rural residents' socioeconomic well-being. The approach prioritised local participation and project ownership. The findings revealed that efforts to develop the Niger Delta region through NDDC's intervention programmes and projects for 23 years of its existence have had little impact on people's lives. Amongst the recommendations advanced by the paper included that the benefiting communities should be involved in all aspects of the NDDC projects.

Methodology

A cross-sectional survey research design was used in this study. The term "survey" is often used to refer to a research methodology that collects information from a sample or a specific population. A closed-ended questionnaire was used as the data collection method for this investigation. According to

the country's most recent national census, which was conducted in 2006, Akwa Ibom state has 3,902,051 residents (National Population Commission, 2006). However, the study's population was selected from the 2023 registered voters from six local governments of Ibeno, Eastern Obolo, Mbo, Esit Eket, Oron, and Ikot Abasi, which is 650,341 (Independent National Electoral Commission, 2023). This number was chosen to serve as the study's population. The Krejcie & Morgan (1970) method for calculating sample size was used to estimate the sample size of 384.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected from the field were analysed with simple percentages, while simple linear regression was utilised to test the hypotheses and ascertain the level of impact of rural electrification projects by NDDC on the various socio-economic lives of rural people.

Table 3: Responses on Rural Electrification and Transportation Infrastructure in Akwa Ibom State

S/N	Statements on Rural Electrification in Akwa Ibom State	SA	A	D	SD
1.	The NDDC has been effective in providing electricity to rural communities in Akwa Ibom State	20	40	109	174
2.	NDDC's rural electrification projects has improved the quality of life in rural areas	20	34	141	148
3.	The NDDC's rural electrification efforts have significantly boosted economic activities in rural communities	13	48	135	147
4.	The maintenance and sustainability of NDDC's rural electrification projects is satisfying	13	46	186	98
5.	NDDC's rural electrification projects have effectively reduced the frequency of power outages in rural areas	20	62	100	161
6.	The NDDC has prioritized rural electrification projects in Akwa Ibom State	7	32	169	135

Source: Fieldwork, 2024.

Analysis of Responses on Rural Electrification

The responses on the level of rural electrification (Table 3) in Akwa Ibom State by those whose views were sampled revealed that 50.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the NDDC has been effective in providing electricity to rural communities in Akwa Ibom State; 31.8% disagreed, while 11.8% agreed, and 5.8% strongly agreed with this statement. The responses also revealed that 43.1% of the respondents strongly disagreed that NDDC's rural electrification projects have improved the quality of life in rural areas; accordingly, 41.1% disagreed, 9.9% agreed, and 5.8% strongly agreed with this statement. The responses further revealed that 42.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the NDDC's rural electrification efforts have significantly boosted economic activities in rural communities; accordingly, 39.4% disagreed, 14.0% agreed, and 3.8% strongly agreed with this statement. The responses also revealed that 28.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the maintenance and sustainability of NDDC's rural electrification projects are satisfying; accordingly, 54.2% disagreed, 13.4% agreed, and 3.8% strongly agreed with this statement. The responses on whether NDDC's rural electrification projects have effectively reduced the frequency of power outages in rural areas revealed that 46.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed that most persons in the state could afford two to three square meals in a day. Accordingly, 29.2% of them disagreed, while 18.1% and 5.8% agreed and strongly agreed, respectively. For the last statement, 39.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed; 49.3% disagreed; 9.3% agreed; and 2.0% strongly agreed that the NDDC has prioritised rural electrification projects in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4: Responses on the Economy

S/N	Statements on Economy	SA	A	D	SD
7.	The NDDC’s interventions have significantly improved employment opportunities in Akwa Ibom State	51	21	137	134
8.	The NDDC’s projects have contributed to reducing poverty levels in Akwa Ibom State	68	26	104	145
9.	NDDC’s interventions have improved the standard of living for residents in the state	54	14	136	139
10.	The NDDC has succeeded in promoting economic activities through its various development projects in the state	26	21	152	144

Source: Fieldwork, 2024.

Analysis of Responses on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the People

The data presented in Table 4 revealed that 14.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed that NDDC’s interventions have significantly improved employment opportunities in Akwa Ibom State; accordingly, 6.1% disagreed, 39.9% agreed, and 39.1% strongly agreed with this statement. The responses further revealed that 19.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that NDDC’s projects have contributed to reducing poverty levels in Akwa Ibom State; accordingly, 7.6% agreed, 30.3% disagreed, and 42.3% strongly disagreed with this statement. The responses also revealed that 39.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that NDDC’s interventions have improved the standard of living for residents in the state; accordingly, 4.1% agreed, 15.7% disagreed, and 40.5% strongly disagreed with this statement. Finally, it was also revealed that 6.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that the NDDC has succeeded in promoting economic activities through its various development projects in the state; accordingly, 7.6% agreed, 42.0% disagreed, and 44.3% strongly disagreed with this statement.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀: The rural electrification projects by the Niger Delta Development Commission have not tended to significantly improve the socio-economic conditions of rural communities in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 5: Regression Analysis for the Impact of Rural Electrification Projects on the Quality of Socio-Economic Conditions in Akwa Ibom State.

Groups	N	β	R Square	df	t calculated	t critical	P value	Decision
Rural electrification	343	0.488	.229	340	1.622	1.96	.065	H ₀ : not rejected
Socio-economic conditions				341				

β = regression coefficient

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Decision Rule: Reject the null hypothesis if t calculated is greater than (>) t critical. Accordingly, if the p-value is greater than (>) 0.05, then there is no significant contribution, but when the p-value is less than (<) 0.05, there is a significant contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable.

Interpretation: Based on the coefficient of determination (r-square), only 22.9% of the total variation in the socio-economic conditions of rural communities in Akwa Ibom State was accounted for and therefore contributed by rural electrification projects by the Niger Delta Development Commission. In other words, 77.1% of the socio-economic conditions of rural communities in Akwa Ibom State are affected by variables not included in the model.

Given that the t-calculated value of 1.622 was obtained for the contribution of rural electrification projects by the Niger Delta Development Commission to the socio-economic conditions of rural communities in Akwa Ibom State as against the t-tabulated value of 1.96 ($t_{cal} < t_{tab}$), the null hypothesis is not rejected. This decision is further affirmed by the obtained p-value of 0.065 which is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$).

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the test of hypothesis showed that the intervention of the Niger Delta Development Commission through rural electrification has not been able to improve the quality of the socio-economic conditions of rural communities in Akwa Ibom State. This finding enjoys the support of Ubiebi & Ogbonna (2020) whose study observed that despite the huge mineral resources that the region generates and the driving force to the national economy, the region remains in abject poverty, youth unemployment, poor infrastructure, and high-level insecurity. This conclusion is further supported by Onoyemeakpo (2023) whose work found that efforts to develop the Niger Delta region through NDDC's intervention programmes and projects for 23 years of existence have had little impact on people's lives.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper evaluated the Niger Delta Development Commission's activities concerning rural electrification interventions and their impact on the socio-economic conditions of the population. The rural areas encompassed Ibeno, Eastern Obolo, Mbo, Esit Eket, Oron, and Ikot Abasi local government areas. The research observed that after decades of oil exploration in Akwa Ibom State, recognised as one of the country's oil-producing states, the state is entitled to the benefits from the financial resources allocated to the NDDC and similar intervention agencies established for developmental purposes by the national government. Corruption has been the primary constraint in the achievement of the NDDC, manifesting in various forms such as nepotism, favouritism, inadequate supervision, poor maintenance culture, and insufficient oversight of projects, all of which have hindered the Commission's success. This study, grounded in stakeholder theory, revealed inadequate engagement of community members during the implementation of these projects. This has resulted in a significant impediment to the intervention process, as it has hindered community ownership of the project, leading to feelings of alienation regarding matters intended to positively impact their lives.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. There is a need for all the benefitting states in the Niger Delta to set up a special supervisory team with the mandate to ensure that all projects executed in their respective states are in line with internationally acceptable standards and to report the same to the state's Chief Executive, who is constantly in contact with intervening agencies and the supervising ministry. This will assist governments in identifying the areas of need, thereby avoiding project duplication and conflicts of interest.
- ii. There is a need to deconstruct the current management and administrative framework via a reform that will facilitate the introduction of innovative concepts aimed at fulfilling the Commission's mandate as outlined in the Act that established it. This is because the 'informal' mandate of the Commission seems to be that of a conduit pipe for politicians that needs to be settled by their godfathers. It is therefore necessary for the federal government to ensure that a standard is put in place as a threshold for the acceptability of any executed job.

- iii. It is imperative that the Commission reevaluate its contracts with all of its contractors. This is due to the fact that almost all of the rural electrification projects that NDDC contractors have completed fall short of expectations. According to the Stakeholders Theory, each contractor was expected to be held morally responsible for the services they provided to the project's beneficiaries. The Commission's role as an interventionist body is undermined when the value of such programs is diminished.

References

- Adewuyi, A., & Oyejide, T. (2012). Determinants of backward linkages of oil and gas industry in the Nigerian economy. *Resources Policy*, 37(4), 452-460. 10.1016/j.resourpol.2012.06.007.
- Akinwale, A. A. (2010). The menace of inadequate infrastructure in Nigeria. *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, 2(3), 207-228.
- Asuquo, E. E., Akpan, E. D., & Ntuen, D. D. (2024). Economic Development and Sustainable Poverty Alleviation Policies in Nigeria. *AKSU Annals of Sustainable Development*, 2(1), 129-138.
- Akpan, S. M. (2000). *Towards lasting peace and development of the Niger Delta*. Executive Publishers, Lagos.
- Asaju, K. (2023). Infrastructural development and development administration: A retrospective. *Journal of Foresight and Thought Leadership*, 2(1), 1-13.
- Atakpa, O. E. (2016). *The subsidy re-investment and empowerment programme (sure-p) as a palliative policy in Nigeria: An impact assessment*. A Thesis in the Department of Political Science/Public Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Uyo. https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=RwhArD0AAAAJ&pagesize=80&citation_for_view=RwhArD0AAAAJ:mVmsd5A6BfQC.
- Bassey, C. O. (2002) Local Governance, resources control and development in the Niger Delta. In Uya, O. E. & Okoro, J. (eds) *Local Government Administration and Grassroots Democracy in Nigeria*. University of Calabar Press. pp. 634-641.
- Bertoldi, A. (2010). *Infrastructure Stimulus Package: Development Outcomes Setting the Scene*. Presentation to the Infrastructure Dialogue. Rhizome Management Services.
- Ebingha, E. E., Eni, J. S., & Okpa, J. T. (2019). Population growth and socio-economic development of Cross River State, Nigeria. *European Journal of Economic and Financial Research*, 3(3), 20-35.
- Ejiogu, E. (2004). What the NDDC is doing in Niger Delta region. *The Sun Newspaper*, 1-3.
- Ekekwe, E. N & Ukachikara, U. O. (2018). Nigerian State and Development in the Niger Delta: A Critique of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, II(XI), 4-13.
- Ekpo, U. (2004). *The Niger Delta and Oil Politics*. International energy communications, Lagos.
- Epebinu, O. O. (2021). Effects of Niger Delta Development Commission infrastructural programme on the livelihood activities of beneficiaries in Niger Delta states, Nigeria. A thesis in the department of agricultural extension and communication technology, school of agriculture and agricultural technology, submitted to the school of post graduate studies, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of doctor of philosophy in agricultural extension and communication of the federal university of technology, Akure, Nigeria.
- Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gjini, A., & Kukeli, A. (2012). Crowding-Out effect of public investment on private investment: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Business & Economics Research (JBER)*. 10(5), 269-276. 10.19030/jber.v10i5.6978.
- Hassen, E. (2000). Infrastructure Delivery and Employment Creation in South Africa. Paper presented at the Annual Forum the Trade and Industrial Policy Secretariat at Glenburn Lodge Muldersdrift, South Africa. 18-21 September 2000
- Heymans, C., & Thome-Erasmus, J. (1998). Infrastructure: A foundation for development - Key Points from the DBSA Development Report 1998. *Development Southern Africa*, 15(4), 661- 668.
- Ibaba, I. S., Ukaga, O., & Ukiwo, U. O. (2012). Introduction: Natural resource, conflict, and sustainable development in the Niger Delta. In: O. Ukaga, U. O. Ukiwo & I. S. Ibaba (Eds), *Natural Resources, Conflict, and Sustainable Development* (pp. 1-21). Routledge.
- Ibanga, D. A. (2018). Renewable energy issues in Africa contexts. *Relations Beyond Anthropocentrism*, 6(1), 117-134.

- Morgan, O. (2022). Niger Delta ministry received N178 billion under Buhari-Report. Retrieved from: www.punchng.com/niger-delta-ministry-recvied-n178bn-under-buhari-report/%3famp.
- Niger-Delta Development Commission PMIS (2024). Public Portal, Health Safety Environment/Environmental Management Plan (Hse/Emp) Monitoring of Reclamations and Shore Protection at Opuoma, Imo State. <pmis.nddc.gov.ng>
- Nwosu, A. (2022). NDDC reforms: why resources should be invested in high impact projects. Retrieved from: www.thecable.ng/nddc-reforms-why-resources-should-be-invested-in-high-impact-projects/amp.
- Ogune, M. (2021). FG moves to recover \$5.6 billion and N649 billion debts oil firms owe NDDC. *The Guardian*, December 18. [FG-moves-to-recover-\\$5.6b-N649b-debts-oil-firms-owe-NDDC-The-Guardian-Nigeria-News-Nigeria-and-World-News-Nigeria-The-Guardian-Nigeria-News-Nigeria-and-World-News](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/18/fg-moves-to-recover-5.6-billion-n649-billion-debts-oil-firms-owe-nddc).
- Ondiege, P., Moyo, J. M. and Verdier-Chouchane, A. (2013). Developing Africa's infrastructure for enhanced competitiveness. *The Africa Competitiveness Report*, 69-91.
- Onoyemeakpo, A. J. P. (2023). Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and its challenges towards development administration in the Niger Delta region: An assessment. *International Journal of Social Science Research and Anthropology*, 2(2), 1-25.
- Oyeyemi, B. (2017). Road safety in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. Retrieved from <https://frsc.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Road-safety-in-NigeriaChallenges-and-Prospect.pdf>.
- Peter, E. O., Okpa, J. T., & Okoi, O. N. (2020). Educational Support Services and Teachers' Job Performance in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *Journal of Educational System*, 4(1), 22-29.
- Proshare. (2020). Infrastructure development in Nigeria: The PPP approach. Retrieved from: <https://www.proshareng.com/news/Nigeria%20Economy/infrastructure-Development-in-Nigeri-The-PPP-Approach/54712>.
- Srinivasu, B., & Rao, P. (2013). Infrastructure development and economic growth: Prospects and perspective. *Journal of Business Management and Social Sciences Research*, 2(1), 81-91.
- Ubiebi, K., & Ogbonna, I. S. (2020). Restructuring NDDC: Pathway to Development in the Niger Delta Region. *UJAH: Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 21(4), 269-293.
- Ukeje, C. (2001). Youths, violence and the collapse of public order in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. *Africa Development/Afrique et Développement*, 26(1/2), 337-366.
- Ukpe, W. (2021). Nigeria needs \$1.5 trillion to close infrastructure deficit in ten years' time-Buhari. Nairametrics. Retrieved from: [https://nairametrics.com/2021/11/03/nigeria-needs-\\$-1-5-trillion-to-close-infrastructure-deficit-in-ten-years-buhari/](https://nairametrics.com/2021/11/03/nigeria-needs-$-1-5-trillion-to-close-infrastructure-deficit-in-ten-years-buhari/).