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EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE OIL PRODUCING AREAS OF NIGERIA, 2009-2017

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ABSTRACT
The study explores the development of infrastructure in the oil producing areas of Nigeria, 2009-2017. The documentary and survey methods were used to generate the relevant data. Data analysis was presented using content analysis and tables. Findings revealed that in spite of its clear mandate and fairly reasonable funding, NDDC has failed to resolve the perennial conflicts in the region through its programmes and projects that are not sustainable. Among others, the study recommends that the NNDC management should ensure prompt completion of audited accounts of the Commission for outstanding years. This will ensure transparency, probity, and accountability with intent to ensure strict adherence to the enabling law. The study equally calls for periodic reconciliations should be routinely undertaken on project master schedule in the Directorate of Finance and the Projects Monitoring Unit in order to ensure that the lists of projects are correctly recorded by the different departments.
KEYWORDS: *Economic development, Government interventions programmes, Human Development, Niger Delta Development Commission, infrastructure.*

INTRODUCTION

There are no fewer than 600 oil fields, 5,284 onshore and offshore oil wells, 10 export terminals, 275 flow stations in the Niger Delta (Lubeck, Watts & Lipschits, 2007). Furthermore, statistics show that about 23,183.9 billion barrels of crude oil were produced in the Niger Delta in 2007, which amounts to staggering national revenue of 29.8 trillion naira (*TELL*, February 18, 2008). Despite the foregoing, the region epitomized one of the extreme situations of poverty and underdevelopment in the midst of plenty. Infrastructural development was very low, while poverty and unemployment levels were extremely high. The poverty and unemployment levels were estimated at 80 and 70 percent respectively. Access to basic social amenities was very limited. Indeed, the region fell below the national average in all measures or indicators of development (UNDP, 1996).

Juxtaposing the state of social, human and economic development of the Niger Delta with the above serial developmental efforts, and her wealth, in terms of accounting for about 80% of total government revenue, 95% of foreign exchange and over 80% of national wealth, United Nations Development Programme (1996) described the region as suffering from administrative neglect, crumbling social infrastructure and services, high unemployment, social deprivation, abject poverty, filth and squalor, and endemic conflict.

The Nigerian government had variously taken steps to tackle the developmental challenges of the Niger Delta. From the setting up of the Niger Delta Development Board in 1960 to the establishment of the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission in 1992, it is clear that the Federal Government never shielded away from the development of the Niger Delta. One of the latest in the series of attempts by government to address the injustice in the Niger Delta is the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

The NDDC was officially inaugurated on December 21, 2000 to hasten the overall development of the Niger Delta. The primary aim of the Commission is to ‘conceive plans and implement programmes for the sustainable development’ of the region (NDDC Act, 2000). The Nigerian government has demonstrated commitment to the NDDC through financial allocation which amounted to over ₦241.5 billion and ₦593.961 billion from 2000 to 2006 and 2007 to 2011 respectively (Ero, 2007; NEITI, 2013).

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All these, it must be admitted, were done to remedy the Niger Delta situation with a view to giving the oil producing communities the special attention that they deserve because of their contributions to the national economy. The extent to which the NDDC has utilized the huge outlay of funds to address decades of social and infrastructural underdevelopment in the Niger Delta has been variously analyzed.

Studies such as Ero (2007), Ashiomanedu (2008), Oparah (2008), Obagbinoko (2009), Mboho and Inyang (2011) Luqman (2011), Okolo (2014) among others have alluded to some variables such as corruption, patronage networking and shoddy execution of projects, fire-brigade approach, political exclusion, award of contracts without due process; non-implementation of the Board's decisions; undue interference and poor funding of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) which had limited its ability to execute critical infrastructure, such as regional rail line, major roads and bridges that would impact on the wellbeing of the people. Others focus on what is called the “infrastructure-funding gap” theses (Omoweh, 2007; Ekuerhareye, 2004; Paki & Ebienfa, 2011; Yusuf, 2008; Etekpe, 2007; Ibaba, 2005; Jack-Akhigbe, 2013; Agbo, 2007; Akinkuotu, 2008; Ajakaye, 2007). This segment of literature either praised or condemned the NDDC for the much or little it achieved in the provision of infrastructure, despite its financial constraints

Apart from these, others such as Uyigue and Agho (2007), Agekameh (2010), Akpomuvie (2011), Ajugwo (2013), Iwejingi (2013), Ihayere *et al.* (2014) have often rationalized the general neglect of infrastructure by the difficulty of the delta’s terrain, which has worsened people’s access to fundamental services such as electricity, safe drinking water, roads and health facilities that are taken for granted in many other parts of Nigeria. Other elements include the negative impacts of the oil industry, a constricted land area, a delicately balanced environment and extreme economic deprivation.

Altogether, this body of literature has suffered from important shortcomings because in spite of its profundity and logical elegance, how award and execution of contracts by the NDDC affected the development of infrastructure in the Niger Delta, as well as the link between the projects of the NDDC and the incidence of inadequate infrastructure in the oil producing areas of Nigeria have not been systematically examined. Hence the need for the present study.

THE CONCEPT OF INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES

The definition of infrastructure has been shifting from one which focuses on physical fixed assets such as roads, airports, sea ports, telecommunications systems, energy, water distribution systems and sanitation (public utilities), to one which embodies notions of ‘softer’ types of facilities such as information systems and knowledge bases (Button, 2002). Thus, there are two types of infrastructure, “Hard and Soft" infrastructure. Hard refers to the large physical networks necessary for the functioning of a modern industrial nation, whereas "soft" infrastructure refers to all the institutions which are required to maintain the economic, health, and cultural and social standards of a country, such as the financial system, the education system, the health system, the governance system, and judiciary system, as well as security (Kumar, 2005). The World Bank landmark study on infrastructure highlights the critical role of infrastructure in the development process (World Bank, 2004). The importance of delivering quality infrastructure has also been underlined by the United Nations declaration of the Millennium Development Goals. For many years, the public sector has traditionally financed and operated infrastructure projects using resources from taxes and various levies (e.g. fuel taxes, road user charges). However, the recent disparity between the capacity to generate resources and the demand for new facilities seem to have forced governments worldwide to look for new funding methods and sources.

Prud’homme, (2004) noted that infrastructure as a concept has largely been absent from economic discourses for about two centuries. This notwithstanding, Estache, (2006) noted that by the 1990s after many years of neglect, infrastructure featured prominently on the development agenda, with renewed emphasis on the role of infrastructure in economic growth and poverty reduction. The World Development Report (1994) defined infrastructure as long-life engineering structures, equipment and facilities, and also the services that are derived from and utilised in production and in final household consumption. Other authors like Ahmed and Donovan (1992), refute this definition, indicating that the concept has evolved earlier, towards a more comprehensive definition that includes a wider range of public services that facilitate production and trade. Since infrastructure services tend to raise the productivity of other factors, it is often termed the “unpaid factor of production”.

Evidently, investment in infrastructure leads to the growth of a countries economy and the improved wellbeing of its people. Around the world investment in infrastructure has always played a leading role in economic development. Basic infrastructure – roads, railways, airports, for energy generation and supply, water supply, sanitation, etc. underpins sustainable development and economic transformation of emerging economies (Gavin, 2015). Infrastructure investments can also help improve peace and security by enabling, sustaining and enhancing societal living conditions and the welfare of people in developing countries. Infrastructure connects communities and countries with market, health and education facilities, gives access to clean water, sanitation and power, and improves livelihoods and generates employment creating the conditions for lasting peace.

Infrastructure development is a key driver for progress across the African continent and a critical enabler for productivity and sustainable economic growth. It contributes significantly to human development and poverty reduction. Investment in infrastructure

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accounts for over half of the recent improvement in economic growth in Africa and has the potential to achieve even more (African Development Bank report, nd).

Jochimsen (1966), who defined infrastructure as "the sum of all basic material structures, institutional conditions and human resources available to society, needed for the proper functioning of the economic sector, further distinguished between three components of infrastructure that are inter-related- institutional, social and physical infrastructure. The understanding of the relationship between these components is crucial in policy making and the delivery of infrastructure services. Similarly, Idachaba (1978) who posited that infrastructure consists of the essential capital, which aid rural residents in their production, distribution and consumption activities as well as enhance the quality of rural life, classified infrastructure into three broad classes. These are physical, institutional and social infrastructure.

Social infrastructure refers to the core elements of social change (like schools, colleges, hospitals and nursing homes) which serve as a foundation for the process of social development of a country. Social development focuses on human resource development, implying the development of skilled personnel as well as healthy and efficient human beings. In fact, it accelerates the process of human development *(http://www.ghd.com/global/markets/property_ buildings/social-infrastructure/).*

Social Infrastructure is a subset of the infrastructure sector and typically includes assets that accommodate social services. The provision of adequate social infrastructure is fundamental to ensuring people are safe, healthy and productive in the community. As set out in the table 4, examples of social infrastructure include schools, universities, hospitals, prisons and community housing. Social infrastructure does not typically extend to the provision of social services, such as the provision of teachers at a school or custodial services at a prison.

The social infrastructure of a country is very important as it not only presents the human face of economic growth process but represents the very essence of it. Universal access to education, health and safe drinking water is a must for any society to progress. But even after decades of government intervention in form of development planning, Niger Delta still grapples with a decent living for a large number of people. Despite various development plans, lack of or inadequate social infrastructure appear to have remained a major constraint to progress in the region. Against this backdrop, we proceed now to examine the efforts of the NDDC in the provision of social infrastructure in the Niger Delta.

Inadequate infrastructure has been reported to be holding back the productivity of sub-Saharan Africa entrepreneurs, and imposing major costs on business in terms of lost output and additional costs incurred to compensate for inadequate public services. It is widely acknowledged that infrastructure deficit is one of the key factors that prevent the sub-Saharan Africa region from realizing its full potential for economic growth, international trade and poverty reduction (World Bank, 2010; 2008; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2006). Therefore, many countries are now contemplating Public-Private collaboration as an arrangement between public and private sectors to finance, design, build, operate and maintain public infrastructure, community facilities and related services (Akintoye & Beck, 2009).

Sulivan and Sheffrin (2003) noted that infrastructure is the basic physical and organizational structures needed for the operation of a society like industries, buildings, roads, bridges, health services, governance and so on. It is the enterprise or the products, services and facilities necessary for an economy to function. According to them, infrastructure can be described generally as the set of interconnected structural elements that provide framework supporting an entire structure of development, as well as an important term for judging a country, region or state's and individual's developments/status.

Fulmer (2009) refers it to the technical structures that support a society, such as roads, water supply, sewers, electrical national grids, telecommunications, and so forth, and can be defined as "the physical components of interrelated systems providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance societal living conditions"

Viewed functionally, American Heritage Dictionary (2009) noted that infrastructure facilitates the production of goods and services, and also the distribution of finished products to end-users (markets), as well as basic social services such as schools and hospitals; for example, roads enable the transport of raw materials to a factory. Infrastructure is the basic physical and organizational structures needed for the operation of a society like industries, buildings, roads, bridges, health services, governance and so on. It is the enterprise or the products, services and facilities necessary for an economy to function (Sulivan & Sheffrin, 2003). Infrastructure can be described generally as the set of interconnected structural elements that provide framework supporting an entire structure of development. The state of infrastructure of any state is directly related with the quality of life (Eregha, 2007). According to Kathmandu Final Workshop Report (2009), infrastructure can help solve four problems: social; health and environment; development; and, economics. The distribution, operation and maintenance of infrastructures are other fundamental prerequisites for a successful rural development. Therefore rural infrastructures constitute the necessary components or ingredients for motivating rural residents to be more productive and achieve relative self-reliance. They also aid and enhance the realization of improved rural life. It is quite noticeable that the distribution of rural infrastructures, over time, has not been equitable and spectacular.

The African Development Bank (ADB) has made infrastructure development a cornerstone in its development agenda with regional member countries (TMSA, 2012). The Bank recognizes that lack of adequate social and economic infrastructure is one of the

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key constraints to short- and medium term poverty reduction in Africa, and has thus been a major force in private and public sector infrastructure development through the provision of financial and technical resources. At the same time, the Bank recognizes the increasing importance of governance for infrastructure development and has made good governance an imperative in its lending and non-lending operations.

There have been considerable changes in the delivery of national infrastructure services across Africa. While Nigeria has improved its telecommunication infrastructural situation, it has not improved in other areas like health, education, airport infrastructures, electricity, housing and transportation. However, performance in terms of infrastructure service delivery and quality continue to vary across countries. Infrastructure is the medium of production of goods and services and forms the national asset of any nation.

According to Hirschman (1958) (in Olayiwola & Adeleye, 2005), infrastructural facilities refer to those basic services without which primary, secondary and tertiary productive activities cannot function. Broadly, this includes all public services like education, public health, transportation, communications and water supply. Likewise, Kahn (1979) classified rural infrastructural facilities into three main types: namely, physical infrastructure – such as roads, water, rural electrification, storage and processing facilities; social infrastructure namely, health and educational facilities, community centres, fire and security services; institutional infrastructure which includes credit and financial institutions, and agricultural research facilities.

Kessides (1993) and Alaba (2001) pointed out that these individuals are poor because they do not have access to infrastructure services of necessary quality. Olayiwola and Adeleye (2005) noted that improvement in rural infrastructural facilities through a community based development strategy can be utilized to confront rural poverty and subsequently low quality of human life. According to Kathmandu Final Workshop Report (2009), infrastructure can help solve four problems: social; health and environment; development; and, economics. A region's infrastructure network, broadly speaking, is the very socio-economic climate created by the institutions that serve as conduits of trade and investment. Some of these institutions are public, others private. In either case, their roles in the context of integration are transformative; helping to change resources into outputs or to enhance trade by removing barriers. Therefore, an improvement in regional infrastructure is one of the key factors affecting the long-term economic growth of a region. The linkages between infrastructure and economic growth are multiple and complex. Not only does infrastructure affect production and consumption directly, it also creates many direct and indirect externalities. It also involves large flows of expenditure, thereby creating additional employment. Studies have shown that infrastructure can have a significant impact on output, income, employment, international trade, and quality of life. Infrastructure development can reduce stress and promote good health. It will also reduce crime level. Infrastructure has always played a key role in integrating economies within a region. Well developed and efficient infrastructure is essential for a region's economic development and growth. In a dynamic concept, infrastructure is seen as a regional public good that moves factors of production within and across countries, thus helping the region attain higher productivity and growth.

NDDC'S CONTRACTS AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Niger Delta Development Commission was established in 2000 by the NDDC Establishment Act which repealed the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Commission Decree 1998, with a re-organized administrative structure for increased effectiveness. According to the *Vision* and *Mission Statement* of the Establishment Act of the Niger Delta Development Commission, its Vision was to provide "lasting solution to the socio economic challenges of the Niger Delta Region" while its Mission was "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"(Report on Revenues, Deductions, and Disbursement and Utilization of Funds of the Federal Beneficiary Agencies, 2007 – 2011). Among others, the Commission's core functions, according to the *Vision* and *Mission Statement* of the Establishment Act of the Niger Delta Development Commission, included:

> Formulation of policies and guidelines for the development of the Niger Delta area; conception, planning and implementation, in accordance with set rules and regulations, of projects and programs for sustainable development of the Niger Delta area in the field of transportation including roads, jetties and waterways, health, employment, industrialization, agriculture and fisheries, housing and urban development, water supply, electricity and telecommunications; surveying the Niger Delta in order to ascertain measures necessary to promote its physical and socio-economic development; identify factors inhibiting the development of the Niger Delta region and assisting the member states in the formulation and implementation of policies to ensure sound and efficient management of the resources of the Niger Delta region; tackling ecological and environmental problems that arise from the exploration of oil mineral in the Niger Delta region and advising the Federal Government and the member states on the prevention and control of oil spillages, gas flaring, and environmental pollution; liaising with the various oil mineral and gas prospecting and producing companies on all matters of pollution, prevention, and control, and executing such other works and performing such other functions, which in the option of the Commission are required for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta region and its people(The Niger Delta Development Commission, 2000).

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Agekameh (2010) posits the Niger Delta, socio-economic injustices walks on four legs; leading to violent agitations by the people and it is these injustices that the projects of NDDC strives to eradicate. The highlighting of the socio-economic problems of the region, the NDDC projects which strives to cushion their effect on the host communities as well as the urgent need for governmental intervention have been variously discussed in the literature (Uyigue & Agho, 2007; Akpomuvie, 2011; Ihayere *et al.* 2014; Ajugwo, 2013). Iwejingi (2013) emphasized that oil spillage could result in massive extermination of fishes and thereby threaten the social and economic life of the communities whose livelihood depends on the contaminated water and polluted farm lands as crops and vegetation weather away and other animals in the soil like earthworms that help in soil manure die off. Inoni *et al.* (2006) found in their study that oil spill reduced crop yield, land productivity and greatly depressed farm income. All these socio-economic problems are what the NDDC projects strives to remedy their effect on the host communities.

Luqman (2011) avers that the Niger Delta Development Commission by far remains the greatest and most significant attempt to grapple with the environmental and development challenges facing the Niger Delta in this present fourth republic. Though faced with stringent criticisms especially on the lack of consultation with the people of the region before the submission of the Bill to the legislature by advocacy groups from the region, the bill was finally passed into law in 2000. The Commission is to conceive, plan and implement projects that are capable of fostering the sustainable development of the oil region in line with set rules and regulations. To aid it in the effective performance of it functions, the act establishing the commission stipulate in clear term the financial obligations of stakeholders. Given the comprehensive and detailed nature of the Act, that establishes that the NDDC hope was high, particularly within the region, that unlike past development commissions, the NDDC will perform credibly well. Notwithstanding, the impressive statistics of projects executed by the Commission so far, it is still glaringly clear that the environmental challenges facing the region are by no means fully address. Criticisms against the commissions were indeed varied. It ranges from accusation of corruption, patronage networking and shoddy execution of projects among others.

Mboho and Inyang (2011) posit that the NDDC, by producing a comprehensive regional development master plan which involves 24 sector studies expected to enhance long term planning and development of the Niger Delta, is a major break from past development institutions in the region. However, the stride of the Commission appears that all is well. The Commission is to be threatened by a number challenges which include inadequate funding which is fuelled by the fact that it had become impossible to earn revenue from some expected sources, award of contracts without due process; non-implementation of the Board's decisions; and undue interference with the statutory function of stale representatives to creating due process unit, which is used as an excuse to perpetuate huge financial crimes in the Commission. Another major challenge, which affects the commission, is communal and other crises. Incessant crisis, occasioned by political and other reasons has to some extent affected the work of NDDC.

Oparah (2008) reveals that much of what have happened in government intervention agencies like the NDDC has been the fertilizing of a huge corruption complex that have targeted party roughnecks, space-fillers at party rallies and briefcase-wielding accomplices of those in power for stupendous enrichment. Overinflated contracts and those that were never executed have become the ready avenue employed by the NDDC to enrich these fringe elements that bear no direct impact on the resolution of intractable challenges in the Niger Delta. Perhaps one reason why interventionist policies have failed to achieve their objectives in the Niger Delta is due to the fact they have suffered acceptability problem in the hands of the people who are suppose to benefit from such policies. With the diverse nature of the problems in the region, the various antidotes being sought do not go down well with the entire people of the region. This is why some would hail the establishment of separate Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, while some would condemn it as another conduit pipe to siphon resources. This feeling understandably, is derived from past experience where such bureaucracies are often perceived as political agencies rather than interventionist agencies.

In an examination of the forces that have made state interventions improbable in tackling the deepening development crisis in the region of Nigeria Jack-Akhigbe (2013, pp. 255-265) argued that:

> The Niger Delta region of Nigeria presents a typical case of the juxtaposition of enormous wealth and acute underdevelopment. Several attempts have been made by successive administrations in Nigeria to stimulate development through direct state interventions in the region.

He further noted that, there has been a tendency for an inverse relationship between development and natural resource abundance in the region and that the search for strategies that would utter this relationship and stimulate patterns and processes of development in the region has led the Nigerian State to frame special development programmes, since the 1960s.

Examining Poverty and Sustainable Development in Nigeria's Niger Delta, Ashiomanedu (2008) reveals that local people view the NDDC with suspicion and see the Commission as an imposition from the Federal Government. The author further states that all the members of the Commission are political appointees of the Federal Government. The fact that the local people had no say in determining its composition is seen as a glaring example of political exclusion. As far as ordinary people are concerned, the loyalty of the NDDC is not to the Niger Delta but to the Federal Government and the oil companies that provide the bulk of its budget. This has led to a heightened level of tension and conflicts between the indigenous communities, the state, and the multinational corporations.

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Okolo (2014) examines the efforts of the Federal Government's interventionist agencies over the years with specific emphasis on the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) between 2001 and 2010. The author posits that in spite of its clear mandate and fairly reasonable funding, NDDC has failed to resolve the perennial conflicts in the region through its programmes and projects that are not sustainable. The author further contends that although NDDC has created the Directorate of Community and Rural Development (DC&RD), it is more of a service, instead of line function in the Commission. Thus, the supposedly sustainable projects, such as supply of dustbins, and exercise books to primary school pupils, provision of inter-state transport buses, and rehabilitation of roads, among others had little or no positive impact on the oil producing communities. It was also indicated that, like the Nigerian State, NDDC's effort to manage conflicts, build peace and community development efforts have largely been based on fire-brigade approach. This has often led to stop-gap and ad-hoc remedial measures. The study also revealed that NDDC does not have proactive mechanism to detect threats to security arising from internal and external sources in the Niger Delta. In view of this, the Commission does not have timely and accurate security intelligence monitoring/gathering to enable her take appropriate counter-insurgence measures to neutralise or contain conflicts in the region. It was equally revealed that NDDC does not equally have the capacity for Early Warning System to uncover gradual build-up of crisis that would culminate into civil disturbances.

DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE OIL PRODUCING AREAS OF NIGERIA, 2009-2017

The NDDC sees to the implementation of its mandate by executing relevant projects in the entire oil producing areas of Nigeria. The projects are conceptualized, designed, and executed based on extensive consultation with locals, input from interested parties and critical analysis by experts. The NDDC's projects are in the following areas: education, health, transportation, road infrastructures, electrification projections, skill acquisition and youth development, agricultural development programmes, security and logistics projects, environment and waste management, among others.

However, like the intervention agencies preceding it, one of the common features of the NDDC is "top-bottom" development initiative, which is quite obvious in the Act. Section 14 of the Act provides that all stakeholders in the oil producing areas and oil companies should help finance the NDDC. The Act mandates Federal Government to contribute to NDDC, 15% of the total monthly statutory allocations due to the Niger Delta states from the federation account. The Act also mandates MOC, including gas-processing companies, operating onshore and offshore in the oil producing states to pay 3% of their total annual budget to the commission (NDDC Act, 2000). These sources of fund give NDDC a potentially huge capital base. However, in the light of no effective and efficient regulatory mechanisms, this outlay of resources has not translated into improved and adequate infrastructure in the oil producing areas. In fact, the resources have been grossly mismanaged.

Hence, despite its immense fiscal potentials, the NDDC has been known more for crisis and corruption than for initiating developmental projects. In more than 15 years of its existence, The Commission appear to have failed to make any meaningful impact on the lives of the people of oil producing areas, and has performed dismally in realizing the purpose for which it was founded and funded. For instance, the performance of the NDDC in the provision of infrastructure/projects in the last five years is below an average of 19% in terms of the number of projects completed. The number of projects awarded during the period under review was 1,475 of which 280 was completed while 1,195 projects were yet to be completed. The NDDC's poor performance cut across the five years under review. In the year 2010, of 242 projects awarded, 70 were completed while 172 projects were on-going. In the year 2011, the projects awarded were 114 out of which 62 projects were completed whereas 52 were tagged on-going. More so, in the year 2012 the projects awarded were 188 out of which 44 were completed while 144 were not completed. In the year 2013, projects awarded were 538 out of which 60 projects were certified completed while 478 projects were not completed. In the year 2014, projects awarded were 393 out of which 44 were recorded as completed whereas 349 projects were yet to be completed (NEITI, 2017).

The foregoing information is in line with the report of the Nigerian Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI). According to the Report, twenty-two projects of the NDDC were duplicated in the project's schedule with a total contract sum of ₦1.18 billion, with mobilization payments of ₦370.70 million. It further highlighted that most of the projects were neither identifiable nor scheduled for monitoring and proper management. The report also observed that substantial work has not been carried out in a significant number of projects even though mobilization has been paid. For instance projects with a total contract sum of ₦284.884 billion and mobilization or advance payment of ₦63.558 billion made were not certified for any work done through the established milestones (NEITI, 2017).

Buttressing the foregoing is the information on **Table 1** which shows the NDDC's project performance analysis since inception up to September, 2016. Of the entire 8,558 projects awarded, 2,290, representing 26.8% were still ongoing; 3,530, representing 41.2% were completed; 293, representing 3.4% were stalled or abandoned; 2,366, representing 27.6% were awarded projects yet to mobilize to sites; 49, representing 0.6% were terminated projects, while 30, representing 0.4% were taken over by State Governments or other agencies.

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Table 1: NDDC's Project Performance Statistics from Inception up to September 2016

S/NO	ITEM	QTY	%
1	Number of awarded projects since inception as at September 2016.	8,558	100
2	Number of ongoing projects as at September 2016 since inception.	2,290	26.8
3	Number of completed projects as at September, 2016	3,530	41.2
4	Number of stalled/abandoned projects as at September 2016	293	3.4
5	Number of awarded projects yet to mobilize to sites as at September 2016	2,366	27.6
6	Number of projects terminated as at September 2016	49	0.6
7	Number of projects taken over by State Governments/other Agencies as at September 2016	30	0.4

Source: NDDC (2016), p.16.

It is quite evident that the NDDC has not fared well as regards provision and development of infrastructure/projects in the oil producing areas of Nigeria. This is so because the number of ongoing projects and the number of awarded projects yet to mobilize to sites since inception up to September 2016 put together, that is, 26.8% + 27.6% = 54.4% are more than the number of completed projects within the same period, that is 41.2%. This reinforces the earlier assertion that the NDDC has not fared well in realizing the purpose for which it was founded and funded.

The assessment of contract sum in comparison to the level of work certified between 2011 and 2015, also betrays the weak performance of the Commission in the provision and development of infrastructure/projects in the oil producing areas of Nigeria. Within the afore-stated period, the Commission awarded contracts to the value of ₦497.028 billion. However, the aggregate value of work certified was stated at ₦119.73 billion which indicated 24% performance rate. The lower rate of projects' performance cuts across the various classifications of programmes and projects. On the other hand, a high performance rate of 86% and 50% was recorded in respect of hospital and other medical equipment and security and logistics programmes respectively. The skill acquisition and youth development recorded a 35% completion rate. The annual completion rate of 52% was recorded in the year 2012 being the highest between 2011 and 2015, while the least outturn was recorded in the year 2015 at the rate of 16% completion (NDDC, 2016).

In further demonstration of the poor performance of the NDDC in the provision and development of infrastructure in the oil producing areas, **Table 2** clearly presents the percentage share of the Commission's projects on state basis.

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Table 2: Percentage Share of the NDDC's Projects on State Basis, 2010–2015

State	Contract awarded (₦)	Work certified	Percentage%	Ranking
Abia	11,380,975	2,541,506	29%	3rd
Akwa - Ibom	50,395,953	9,393,413	19%	6th
Bayelsa	88,486,017	31,526,552	36%	1st
Cross-River	8,179,882	1,555,000	19%	6th
Delta	59,821,583	7,546,762	13%	7th
Edo	19,796,823	3,943,123	20%	5th
Imo	36,271,106	5,092,441	14%	6t
Ondo	27,154,765	1,902,055	7%	8th
Rivers	109,518,475	27,249,357	25%	4th
Regional	86,023,200	28,980,399	34%	2nd

Source: NDDC (2016), p.19.

It is seen that Bayelsa State outturns with 36% performance rate while the headquarters recorded 34% completion and least performance rate was recorded in Ondo State with 7% outturns.

In sum, the challenges of uncompleted projects, on account of corruption and mismanagement, manifesting in awards of contracts without due process seem to have cast a long shadow on the image of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). Unfortunately, the Commission should not be given pass mark for the erection of sign boards including projects that were neither started nor half completed? Sadly, this seems to have been a recurring decimal as one board hands over to another over the years since the Commission was established by the Olusegun Obasanjo administration in December 2000. This hangover, which has remained a big drag on the Commission's performance, runs counter to the main objective of setting up the agency as a veritable change agent. The effects of the unfortunate phenomenon have impacted negatively on its mandate to transform the Niger Delta region that produces over 90 per cent of the country's oil wealth.

CONCLUSION

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) as packaged by the Federal Government was supposed to be a development intervention agency instituted to execute projects and programmes to alleviate the plight of the neglected and terribly battered peoples of the oil producing areas of Nigeria. But today, the supposed intervention agency is in dire need of an intervention to save it from self-destruction. Most importantly, state efforts at initiating development in the region have been subverted by the forces of corruption, manifesting in award of contracts without due process, the exploitative relationship between the state/oil companies and the oil communities, violent socio-political crises and alienation. The benefitting communities are not involved in the project process. The critical elements of the project are not disclosed to them. The contractors merely visit the concerned community; give marching grant to the chieftain and sometimes to the town union leaders who most times never bother to inform the members of the community. In connivance with the chiefs, the contractor mounts his sign post indicating the name of the contract, the consultant, and the project awarder. Therefore, development projects are primarily designed to ensure that the spoils of electoral contest go round. They are mainly handled by urban elites who have completely lost touch with the people in the local communities and whose interests are completely at variance with the actual needs of the people. This is why the feeling of alienation and powerlessness is pervasive among the people. The study, therefore, recommends that the NNDC management should ensure prompt completion of audited accounts of the Commission for outstanding years. This will ensure transparency, probity, and accountability with intent to ensure strict adherence to the enabling law. The study equally calls for periodic reconciliations should be routinely undertaken on project master schedule in the Directorate of Finance and the Projects Monitoring Unit in order to ensure that the lists of projects are correctly recorded by the different departments.

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