Nigeria Niger Delta: Innovation for Sustainable Development

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Abstract - *Niger Delta crisis is one of the issues confronting the government over the years in Nigeria. The Region significantly contributes to the development of the country through her oil-rich environment yet it remains underdeveloped. Quite a number of attempts have been taken by various succeeding government to address the Niger Delta issue through strategies such as the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Niger Delta Ministry but the region is still faced with challenges of underdevelopment. Most of these steps failed due to lack of community's participation and involvement. It is strongly believed that adequate community involvement and participation in NDDC community developmental projects in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria would yield fruitful and meaningful people's oriented result. For this, a qualitative research method was conducted on both the community and NDDC staff .The overall findings revealed that the NDDC has woefully failed to implement the indigenous innovative development strategy in the Niger Delta, particularly in the rural areas. Additionally, the finding revealed the absence of adequate consultation with host communities in developing the region. Therefore, the study recommends innovative indigenous approach, an involvement of host communities in the planning of pre and post-implementation process of development project.*

Keywords: *Development Sustainability, Indigenous, Consultation, Niger Delta, Innovation and NDDC.*

INTRODUCTION

Niger Delta crisis is one of the issues confronting the government over the years in Nigeria. The region issue has been on the forefront even before the advent of civilian administration as a result of its contribution to the Nigerian economy. The Region significantly contributes to the development of the country through her oil-rich environment. According to Watt [1] the Niger Delta region contributes over 90% to the Nigerian national revenue through its rich oil resources yet it remains underdeveloped. Quite a number of attempts have been taken by various succeeding government to address the Niger Delta issue through strategies such as the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Niger Delta Ministry but still the region is still faced with challenges of underdevelopment. Most of these steps failed due to lack of community's participation and involvement. It is strongly believed that adequate community involvement and participation in NDDC community developmental projects in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria would yield fruitful and meaningful people's oriented result. Before the era or advent of petroleum, the principal occupation of the people were fishing and farming. With the discovery of petroleum in the region, attendant problems of desertification, oil spillage, environmental degradation and water pollution, live became precarious for the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region [2]. For this region, one expects that they should witness innovative infrastructure and human development. In line with this, Babatunde [3] is of the view that despite that notwithstanding the contribution of the area to the Nigerian economy, it worrisome to see that the living condition in the region is far below expectation. Similarly, Eweje [4] and Adegbite & Nakajima [5] argued that most of the developmental initiatives and strategies employed by government have no notable impact on the lives of the host communities.

Furthermore, evidence from various sources led credence to the fact that environmental degradation accompanied by oil spillages has made life extremely unbearable for the local people [6]. The destruction of farmland, fish pond and rivers had completely altered the economic life of the once dependent and

productive region for the worst [7, 8, 9]. Since the transition to the civilian administration, the Nigerian government has made a concerted effort in developing the Niger Delta region due to its tremendous contribution to national revenue. Mähler [10], classified the efforts into three dimensions namely, derivation principle (regulation of distribution of generated oil revenue), establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Niger Delta Ministry which inaugurated the Niger Delta Committee and Amnesty programme. All these initiatives are meant to address the deplorable state of underdevelopment and poverty in the region especially with the establishment of the NDDC which is borne with the responsibilities of infrastructural and human development, community needs, environmental remediation and stability, technological advancement and so on [11, 12].

In Nigeria, government commitment to the development of the Niger Delta region is very visible. For example, the establishment of the NDDC in the year 2000 and the commission of its master plan in 2005 confirm the commitment of political drives in the region. However, it seems that NDDC with all the fantastic programmes initiated by the government in the area is not adequate in resolving the underdevelopment challenges of the region [13]. The ineffectiveness of NDDC progammes and activities with its robust master plan have been associated with the fact that the host communities have not been adequately involved and integrated in developmental projects and initiatives [14, 15]. More recently, Okolo [15] suggest that there is a need for NDDC to re-strategize their approach on its developmental initiatives to achieve its goals and obligations. In the light of the above, the major objective of this study therefore is to explore how indigenous development approach can be used to foster sustainable community development through the activities of NDDC.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
Innovation Sustainability

Over the preceding decades, there has been a global demand for the need to explore the environment through innovative initiated due to environmental challenges posed by climatic change, dwindling ecosystem and natural habitat and increasing the human population. Scholars and development planners have argued that this current demand offers tremendous opportunities for sustainable environmental transformation, and innovation is one of the major ways through which this can be attained [16, 17, 18].The idea is to generate new innovative technology that will significantly transform the social, economic and cultural environment while protecting the ecosystem. Innovation which is the implementation of new ideas and development is more than inventing new technology [19]. The use of technical skills and social reorganization of an old institutional system can transcend into new innovative developments. Nevertheless, technological creativity has resulted in significant social, economic and environmental benefits that have helped to facilitate economic and social activities therefore improving the quality of life [20]. Recognizing the need to encourage the use of innovative technology to achieve better quality of life, government, policy makers and agencies have devoted significant resources to research and best practices of promoting innovative technological ideas and prospects to meet up with the demands and prerequisite emanating from the existing global challenges as well as achieving sustainability goals Lang, Wiek, Bergmann, Stauffacher, Martens, Moll & Thomas[21].There is, therefore, need to incorporate sustainable initiatives in innovative development. However, studies have indicated that incorporating innovation into sustainable development is a challenge due to the uncertainty of future outcomes, adaptability and acceptability of new ideas [22]. Such challenges stem from both the environment and at community [23].Ross, Bowen and Lincoln [24] in their study conducted in South Africa on sustainable housing for poor communities identified unacceptability and low-Level Corporation from local communities as an impediment to implementation of sustainable development. They further suggested that acceptability, the corporation from the community and adequate funding is vital to the attainment and sustainability of innovative development. Similarly, Dale, Ling and Newman [25] noted that community acceptance is essential in creative initiates and drives; however, the level of acceptability depends on the degree of vibrancy of community that they identified as a catalyst for community participation in innovative sustainable, creative development acceptance of community to innovative sustainable development though is a vital for enhancing community involvement but its effectiveness is subject to the quality of internal structures and organization of the community.

Additionally Maon, Lindgreen and Swaen [26], noted that communities will only be involved and participate in innovative development when their environment and traditional cultural practices are put into consideration. This finding is in line with the study of Tencati, & Pogutz, [27].that stressed the need for innovative development to as a means of transforming the socioeconomic and cultural environment that will benefit community but at the same time putting into cognizance the protection the natural habitat. Recent studies conducted are seen to have shown much interest in community sustainability and development. The need for community survival without depending on extraneous intervention while ensuring that their local resources are well managed is dependent on how they can meet their present requirements at the same time future needs Seidel [28] and Pharr, Coughenour & Gerstenberger [29].

Communities are interested in how development can be sustained and maintained for continuous flourishing of the socio-economic activities, safe and healthy environment and good infrastructural development. Nevertheless, the commitment and regulation associated with sustainable community development are not always understood by other stakeholders in development initiatives [30]. This is because, the interest of local communities always contradicts with the government agencies and organizations saddle with the responsibility of change. African communities depict a very good example of this phenomenon where governments do not take into cognizance in formulation and implementation of development programmes and activities that can sustain its citizens [31].Although, Africa countries is blessed with lots of natural resources, however, the continent remain among the underdeveloped countries of the world [32]. Hence, it is argued that Africa countries can only improve the welfare of its citizens through the sustainable development that is backed up with the use of indigenous innovation initiates and drives Claxton [33] and [34]. Nigeria is a good example of Africa countries having issues in integrating indigenous innovation drives in the sustainable development of her citizens [35].

Innovation Sustainability In The Niger Delta

The Niger Delta is undoubtedly the oil spring of Nigeria. This region comprises of nine oil-rich states of Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo Ondo and Rivers. The need to harness this valuable resource in the development of Nigeria and the Niger Delta in a particular became a concern for the Nigeria government. The region accounts for over 90% of the Nigeria foreign exchange, 85% of the country's annual revenues and roughly 40% of the gross domestic product [3]. This ranks Nigeria as the largest oil producing Nation in Africa and the 11th in the world [36, 37, 38]. The discovery of oil in the Niger Delta accompanied with explorative operations of oil multinationals altered the traditional occupation of the local communities therefore depriving them of their means of livelihood [39, 40]. One would have expected that the oil multinationals made prepared a ground for alternative means of sustenance instead of their operations undermining the existence and sustainability of host communities.

The Niger Delta is faced with problems of desertification, oil spillage, water pollution and environmental degradation that has made life difficult for the inhabitants of the Niger Delta [41]. The most challenging is environmental degradation caused by oil spillage resulting into destruction of farmlands and rivers which has drastically altered the economic life of the once reliant and reproductive region for the worst [7, 8]. Oviasuyi and Uwadiae [42] are of the view that despite the tremendous contribution of the Niger Delta Region to the Nigeria economy, it is worrisome to see that the living standard of most people in the region is below expectation. It is a paradox for a region despite its enormous contribution to the Nigeria economy still experiences underdevelopment in human and infrastructural development.

The neglect, inadequate infrastructure, and human development of the Niger Delta have not gone unnoticed by successive governments in Nigeria. Thus from 1957 when oil exploration started till 1999 many agencies and ad-hoc commissions set up by the government to address development issues in the Niger Delta have continued to perform below expectations. Jack-Akhigbe and Okuowa [43] noted that all these agencies were not sustainable enough to impact on the lives of the people due to mismanagement, lack of funds and the use of wrong approach in solving the problem of development sustainability in the region. This phenomenon relates to "Actor-Network-Theory" entailing the involvement of individual and other principal forms of capitals to overcome developmental community issues [44].

Thus, the civilian administration which started in 1999 under President Olusegun Obasanjo established the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to

address the developmental challenges of the Niger Delta region that have not been adequately resolved by previous by previous agencies [45]. To achieve its mandate, the primary agenda of the NDDC is basically on Sustainable development with focus on

NDDC And Sustainability Development In The Niger Delta

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was instituted in December 2000 following the federal government initiative of a master plan process to achieve rapid and global transformation of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous and regenerative [47, 48]. The rationale behind the establishment of NDDC is to tackle the developmental deficiency that has permeated the socio-political landscape of the Niger Delta since the discovery of oil. The NDDC has a working master plan for implementation of development programmes. To achieve their mandate in all the states, projects are conceptualized and implemented based on expert opinion, community suggestions and other stakeholders [49]. Despite the massive efforts of NDDC to ensure a robust master plan, however, the implementation has not achieved the expected result due to non-involvement of communities in the implementation and post-implementation process of the project [15, 47, 50]. The work of Wilson [51] affirms that NDDC master plan is not adequate to meet the socioeconomic development of the region, therefore, advocates for an all-inclusive systematic approach. More recently, Okolo [15] concludes that NDDC strategic master plan is capable of resolving the challenges of sustainable development of the region only if the commission can re-strategize her approach on community development. This study, therefore, is aim at exploring how NDDC has employed the use of the indigenous innovative approach in their developmental initiatives and drives.

Theoretical Underpinning

Over the years there have been several efforts to enhance and develop communities using different approaches nevertheless; there is no explicit method that is universally applicable to all circumstances. Basically, community developers are more anxious with the improvement at the community level can be achieved in collaboration with government agencies, institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) towards sustainable community development [52, 53]. They are more focused on personal

physical and infrastructural development, the economy development and institutional resources, human and community needs and environmental remediation and stability and technological development [46].

experience and social phenomenon as strategies or approaches for the sustainable development of communities. This is because community development work is dynamic and muddled due to constant changes in the social phenomenon in different communities Dodge [54].

Thus, community development theories are broad and cover a range of disciplines which is why community developers depend on other inter-disciplinary theories as theoretical underpinning for their work Trickett, Beehler, Deutsch, Green, Hawe, McLeroy, and Trimble [55]. This study, therefore, made use of the 6 I's of community Development [56] Although, in the domain of community development there are various theories and models that can be used to study development in a community however, this theory was adopted for this study to better understanding into the phenomenon of community dynamism and marginalization that is characterize with Nigeria communities especially the Niger Delta communities .

The 6 I's of Community Development (Eckel, 1994)

This theory shows that community development can fully be attained when community members collaborate and are committed to the process of designing and implementation of developmental plans. The theory defined genuine community as an authentic and healthy community where features like joint purpose, interest, self-determination, social interaction and social influence are attainable. The theory highlights six stages community that can influence developmental projects that will bring about sustainability. The six phases are the introduction, interaction, involvement, investment, influence, and identity. These six phases to ensure that community members are having a sense of belonging and control to enable them contributes positively to sustainable development in their community [56]. Community members, therefore, are expected to be more open to embracing changes that will influence their lives positively. The need for adequate and trustworthy communication with benefits attached becomes crucial in assuring sustainable development in the community.

The study of Cavaye [57] noted that the 6 I's of community development is centered on strategic planning of the community. The author concluded that communities are usually more committed to developmental plans that are strategically organized and will positively affect their lives. This conforms to the findings of Eddy [58] in addressing leadership transition in America community college where it was concluded that strategic planning enhances the development of a community.

Also, Hawkins and Wang [59] applied this principle through a survey in the U.S in addressing local government purposively efforts towards sustainable development policies and goals. They stressed that strategic planning with collaboration and participation of the community in developmental plans and implementation as a vital key for attaining sustainable policies and development. Similarly, Leach et al. [18] investigated agricultural transition in East Africa and Latin America emphasized the need for grass root participation and involvement in the process of planning and implementation of innovative initiated to facilitate transformative sustainable transitions. Furthermore, Idemudia [60] in a study, carried out in Nigeria noted that Nigerian policy makers lack strategic planning in executing community development initiatives to enhance sustainable community development particularly in the Niger Delta. This argument collaborates with the studies of Idemudia [61] and Akinola [62] that NDDC master plan failed due to lack of strategic planning and implementation as a result of non-involvement and participation of communities. Likewise Nweke [63] argued that lack of understanding and strategic planning in the implementation of development drives are the reasons for the underdevelopment and crisis in the Niger Delta. These studies, therefore, justify the relevance of the application of this theory to sustainable community development.

METHODS

The qualitative research method with in-depth interview approach was utilized in this study so as to examine the developmental strategies adopted by NDDC in the Niger Delta region adequately. The respondents were purposively selected using the purposively/convenience sampling method .This study was conducted in six (6) selected oil producing communities in the Niger Delta region namely; Akassa and Oloibiri, Afiesere and Koko, Omoku and Bonny from Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states

respectively. The criteria for selecting these communities are based on geographical terrain and deposit of oil. Nineteen (19) community members consisting community opinion leaders, community development committee chairman (CDC), youth leaders and women leaders were selected from the six communities in the Niger Delta region in Nigeria. Also, three key officers from NDDC were interviewed. Data was analyzed thematically using Nvivo 10 software. Earlier, all the interviewees were informed of the study's objectives as well as the assurance of confidentiality in line with Cooper and Schinler [64] to ensure clarity of ethic in research and prevent adverse result from the research study. The results from the interviews were generated from the coding frames consisting of conceptualized features that explained the NDDC activities in the Niger Delta. Furthermore, the subgroups were developed to have an in-depth understanding and consistent findings to the research question on the how NDDC has utilized local resources in developing the Oil producing communities in the Niger Delta region.

Research Setting

The study covers three most affected oil-producing states in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as a result of the explorative activities of oil multi-national companies operating in the region. The Niger Delta region is located in the south-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria with the area of about 70,000 square kilometers. It covers the 560km coastline of Nigeria which is about two-third of the entire coastline with a population of over 10 million people Ebegbulem, Ekpe & Adejumo [65].The Niger Delta topography is characterized by wetlands and drylands with distinctive ecological zones, mangrove swamps, freshwater swamps and lowland forest occupied by mostly rural communities whose primary source of livelihood is dependent on the environment. The area is enriched with natural resources with a high deposit of oil. Before the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta, because of its topographic nature, the main profession of the inhabitant there was fishing and farming that was their primary source of economic sustainability. However, the activities of oil exploration resulted to displacement and disorganization of the people and their natural environment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the interview analysis, the major issues with human development and capability building in the community were identified.
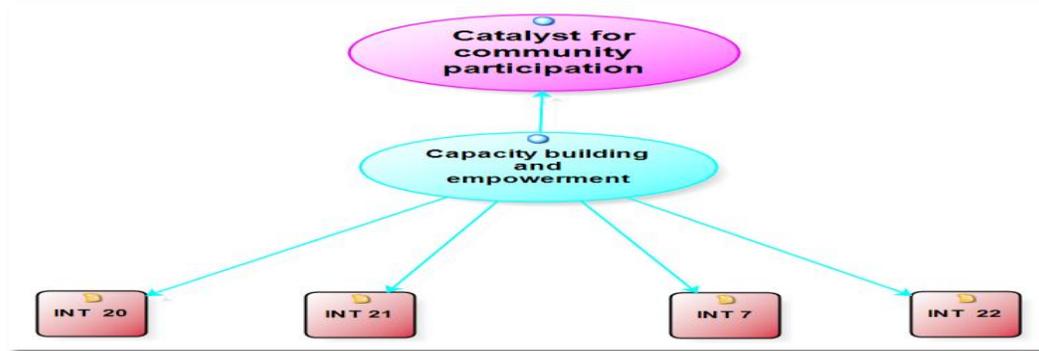
Figure 1: Thematic mapping of how capacity building and empowerment enhances community participation

The main purpose of this is to investigate how community sustainability and transformation can be achieved within the members of the community. The key informants identified some factors that are causing underdevelopment and poverty in their communities. The factors were categorized into five themes namely lack of empowerment, lack of assessment of community needs, lack of enlightenment and lack of adequate consultation and collaboration.

Empowerment and capacity building
Lack of empowerment has been identified as one of the key factors that hinder sustainable community development. Studies have revealed that empowerment and capacity building stimulates community members to collectively contribute to development and sustainability of their environment [66] .This was view was expressed by the majority of the respondents in the community, there is no economic empowerment, self -actualization and capacity building in NDDC programmes. These findings corroborates with interviewee 4, a community opinion leader view that:

NDDC has not come to Oloibiri to train the youths on any skill acquisition. No jobs for the youths, the people are suffering. Most of our youths cannot sustain themselves after school. NDDC should come to the community, train the youths, and establish them. NDDC can even set up a small industry where the youths can work using the knowledge they have acquired. This will help reduce the suffering of the people and also make them useful to themselves and they are not developing the Community (Int.4).

Similarly, a CDC chairman interviewee 1, lamented that:

NDDC has tried when you talk of roads and also transformer though not sufficient for us while some are abandoned. Most of their projects has not empowered us at all. Most people here are suffering, Government is making money through our oil and they are not developing the community (Int.1).

While interviewee 7, community opinion leader suggested that:

NDDC should come to the community to know what we want before embarking on any projects. We can even suggest to them what to do and how to go about it. We have a lot of local resources that NDDC can use to develop the community through community members (Int.7).

Also interviewee 9 CDC chairman reiterated that:

NDDC can develop this community like building small industries that we can use to process cassava, timber wood and also palm fruits, we have all these resources but they are not properly utilized because the right machines to process them are not there. By doing this, most of the youths who are idle will be engaged (Int.9).

Meanwhile, interviewees 20 and 22 NDDC officers acknowledge communities views on the lack of empowerment of NDDC projects. However, they revealed thus:
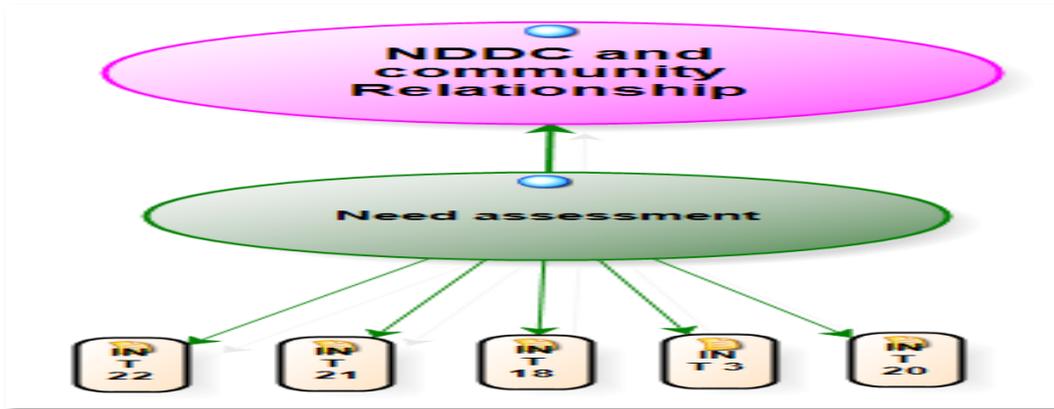
Figure 2: Assessment of community needs as a catalyst for sustainable development

NDDC has executed a lot a lot of programmes and projects across the state both in human development and infrastructure but you see we cannot do it all especially in the area of empowerment due to lack of adequate funding. Although, we do distribute starter packs to communities after training sometimes some of them sell them instead of using them (Int.20&22).

Assessment of community needs

In line with the views of majority of the interviewees, sustainability of development is achievable when they needs and demands of community are adequately clarified and acknowledged through consultative forum with the members of the community [67]. This view was expressed by interviewee 19 a woman leader that:

NDDC should also ask us what we want, not just sending contractors down to the community without even informing us and even asking us if that's what the community need. Not just coming to impose anything on us. It is not good at all (Int.19).

Yet interviewee 11 a youth leader emphasized the need to consult with community members in identifying their needs. He noted that, "NDDC do not consult with us before bringing any project, If NDDC want us to value what they are doing they should ask us what we want, that is only when their programmes will be useful to us". Also reiterating the implication of the practice of NDDC in implementation of

projects, interviewee 4 one of the opinion leaders lamented that: "how can we feel the impact of NDDC when they don't ask us what we want before doing their thing? In the same way, interviewee 14, the women leader disclosed that:

Here in Omoku community, NDDC has never come to ask us what we need before doing anything. The only time we see them, not even NDDC staff but contractors' when they want to do any project which we are not even aware of before they come. So how can they know is what we want? I don't understand (Int.14).

Emphasizing the implication of NDDC behavior, Interviewee 18, a CDC chairman stressed that: "We are not interested when it comes to NDDC activities because they are not in line with what we really need at the moment"

This assertion was confirmed by interviewee 21 NDDC officer thus:

...their pressing needs are not the things we are going into and once you are not useful to somebody, the person will not take you seriously (Int.21). He further suggested that, "So what we should do is to prioritize the needs of these people sit with them, when we get with the priority from them, we now work with the priority list. That is the need assessment of the people (Int.21).
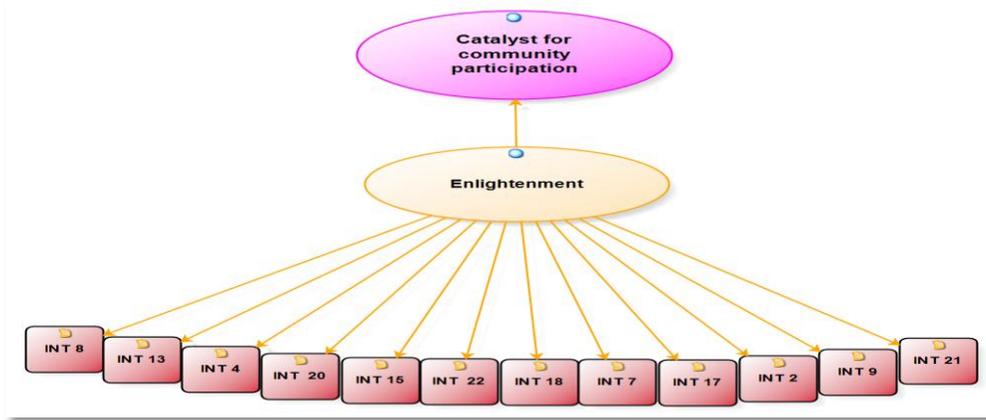
Figure 3: Enlightenment of community as a means for sustainability

Furthermore, lack of enlightenment was also identified as a one of the key factors hindering innovative development sustainability. There is the lack of awareness of activities of NDDC amongst community members. Community members are not adequately informed about the activities of NDDC in the area of identification of projects. For instance interviewee 16, a Community youth leader pointed out that: 'Most of us don't know about NDDC activities, we hardly see them in this community, they don't inform us before coming."

While interviewee 17, opinion leader from community asserted that:

Community members are ignorant of NDDC activities because they are not adequately informed that is why most times when NDDC send the contractors down here to work, some of the angry youths who are idle tend to disturb the work, most times we the elders and leaders try to pacify them and also enlighten on NDDC activities even though NDDC do not recognize us (Int.17).

Consequently, interviewees 2 youth leader, 18 CDC chairman and 14 women leader from community summarized the need for enlightenment as a catalyst for rapid and sustained development. They maintained that:

Enlightenment is very important in gaining Community Corporation in any developmental project. It will make the community members appreciate and accept whatever form of change that is coming into the community but when

they are not enlightened, it might lead to disagreement between NDDC and even rejection. Although, it is not a right thing (Int.2, 18& 14).

Furthermore, another respondent from community suggested that: "There is need for reorientation of the community especially the youths in embracing change because most of them do not know what real change is all about, all they want is immediate benefit"

A similar view was also echoed by interviewee 21, NDDC officer that:

Most of the youths do not have a clear understanding on the importance of self - development. They believe in quick money not sitting down in one place to learn how to do a particular thing, they are not patient to learn at all. So NDDC is trying to see how they can be adequately informed to change their orientation (Int.21).

In the same vain, interviewee 20, NDDC officer reiterated that:

...the first is awareness, then the local government should inform the people of the community about NDDC through seminars and training. They should reach out to the people. If you don't tell people what your intentions are how can they know what you want to do? NDDC do not reach out to us at all (Int.20).
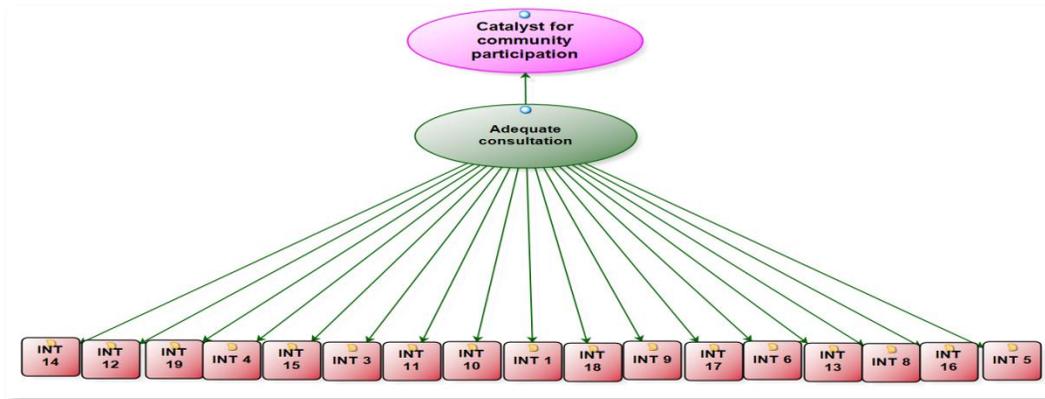
Figure 4: Adequate consultation as a factor for sustainable development

Still stressing on the need for enlightenment, interviewee 21, NDDC officer revealed that:

One of our major constraints is the response of community towards development initiatives. Most times we organize a workshop to sensitize the community on the need to embrace development, but you see, most of them especially the youths don't seem to be interested. They do not even like to attend those workshop except you promise to give them something, and we cannot always do this because it is capital intensive. So community needs continuous sensitization to enable them to appreciate the essence of development (Int.21).

Adequate consultation with community members

This study discovered that the ability to sustainable innovation is dependent on the understanding of the community goals and needs. This can be achieved through various means whereas community consultation is one of such ways. Community meeting gives voice to community members to identify their area of needs and desire on the community that will directly transform to sustainable community development. Additionally, lack of adequate consultation was revealed by respondents as a major factor hindering community innovative sustainable development. The majority of the respondents revealed that NDDC do not consult with them in the planning and execution of development projects.

According to interviewee 3, community women leader lamented thus:

We especially the women are been neglected. We are not part of what NDDC is doing. They don't come to inform us before coming to the community to execute any project. NDDC should try and carry community along in what they are doing. This will make us happy and be interested in what they are doing (Int.3).

This claim was further reinforced by interviewee 7, community opinion leader that:

NDDC should try and come to the community so that we can know them. They should gather community, inform then and make them aside of the job they are doing, they should get in touch with the community chiefs, CDC chairman and set up a committee to look into the plans and projects they (NDDC) want to do. That is the only way community members can fully accept whatever they are doing. But they don't come (Int.7).

In a similar way, interviewee 16, a youth leader from community emphatically reiterated that:

Before any project is carried out, they should first of all come and seek the opinion of the community, let them come and see the place, you cannot just and do something without asking us. For example, NDDC coming to build a mini estate for Koko and that is not what the community want maybe our major problem is the drainage or concrete jetty. But if they come before they execute any project, to seek our opinion, if is from there, we will now tell them what we want and what we don't want, in-short we need everything but the major one is what we will tell them to do (Int.16).
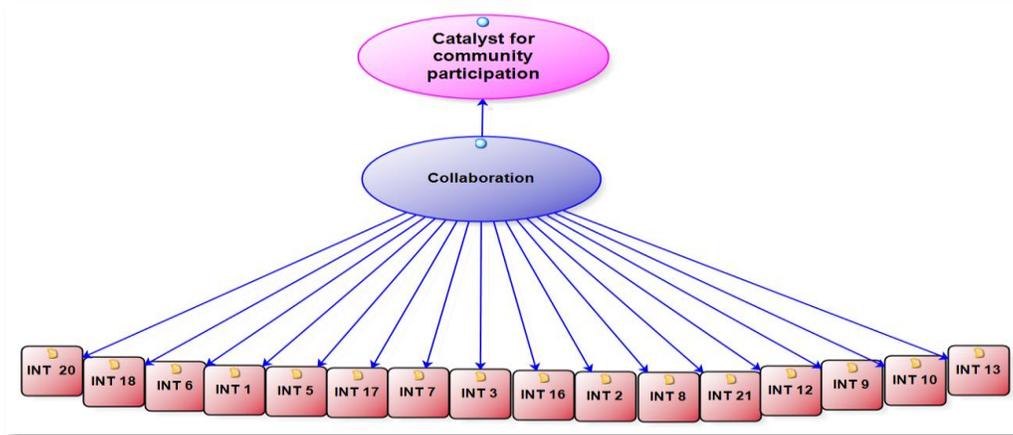
Figure 5: Collaboration as a facilitator for sustainable innovative development

Meanwhile, interviewees 20, 21 and 22 NDDC officers established that consultation with community members is the top priority for NDDC that is why this office for community relations was established in NDCC. Nevertheless, they are faced with a lot of challenges in trying to carry communities along. Interviewee 21 one of the NDDC officers revealed thus:

Before executing any project, NDDC usually goes to community to inform them that some contractors will be coming to do some projects in their community, and we need their corporation. In some cases, they corporate while sometimes we get report that some of the youths are disturbing the work (Int.21).

Collaboration with community members

Community collaboration depicts the level of involvement of different groups in working together to achieve a specific goal for the advancement of the community. This gives values to community efforts in building a strong and reliant community. It especially shows that community members are the most valuable entities who can unleash creative ideas which are a primary catalyst in sustainable development. This was echoed interviewee 18, CDC chairman that:

NDDC do not plan with community members before doing any project. If they plan with community, we can even suggest to them where to site any project they want to do. Community can only do this if they are part of that project. Often times they just come to community to execute a project without involving us in the

planning of the project. So for development to be faster and well done, it becomes the effort of both the community and the agency (Int.18).

This view was further buttressed by interviewee 4, opinion leader in community that:

Community must be given the opportunity to make their inputs. All these are the bottom-up approach you don't build it up and throw it on the people. Development is a common language but the workability of development is unknown to both Practitioners and users of development" Likewise officer from NDDC claim that: "As the management (NDDC) thought it wise to work together with the different ethnic groups to develop a structure that we operate on today(Int.4).

However, interviewee 20, NDDC officer revealed that:

...that is why I am saying one of the reasons how we can achieve the mandate is to carry the community on our side, plan with them because if we plan with them, they will all accept us more but if we plan for them most of the things we plan for them might not be important to them but to us it might be important but to them they don't need it at that time

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The present study explores how indigenous development approach can be used to foster sustainable community development through the

activities of NDDC. It specifically examined how a sustainable community development can be achieved through the NDDC with community participation and involvement. Thus, providing key solutions that can enhance sustainable community development unique to both government and non-government agencies concern with the development of Niger Delta region of Nigeria is of importance to this study. The study overall findings revealed that opinions, consultations, participations and involvement of the community people in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria are very crucial and indispensable in any fruitful and meaningful sustainable community development. Additionally, the findings also revealed that the NDDC has failed woefully to implement the indigenous innovative development strategy in the Niger Delta, particularly in the rural areas. More so, there is absence of adequate consultation with the host communities in developing the region.

In conclusion, the study through the qualitative investigation has provided great insight on how community participation in NDDC project can be useful and produce a meaning and fruitful result for the communities and its people. Insight from the qualitative investigation for this study point out that a sustainable community development for the Niger Delta Region through the activities of NDDC requires a holistic approach called an *innovative indigenous approach* which is aided by a number of factors such as People's awareness, Prioritization of projects, Needs Assessment of the community, People's empowerment of NDDC projects and people's participation and involvement. This *innovative indigenous approach would* allow the peoples' ideas, opinions and collaboration with NDDC and that would then produce an effective innovative sustainable development for the Niger Delta Region.

Furthermore, study indicates that lack of enlightenment as well as lack of empowerment is critical factors hindering fruitful and meaningful sustainable community development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. As observed, there is no economic empowerment, self -actualization and capacity building in NDDC programmes for the communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Apart from that, the community lack proper and adequate awareness of activities of NDDC amongst community members. In other words, the community people are not adequately informed about the activities of NDDC particularly in the area of identification of projects. For example, we understood

that enlightenment is indispensable in gaining Community Corporation in any developmental project because it would make the community people appreciate and accept whatever form of change initiated for the community by the NDDC and vice versa. In this view, the study further recommends that community enlightenment and empowerment are crucial for the community development of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Finally, the study has several implications for the government, government agencies, NDDC, non-governmental agencies and the communities in Niger Delta region of Nigeria. First and foremost, the findings obtained in this study would provide a guideline for designing and formulating effective, fruitful and meaningful sustainable community development policies and programs for the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Secondly, it would also provide an effective community developmental framework for the government and NDDC for the developing the Niger Delta communities. In other words, it would serve as a guide on the activities of NDDC in achieving sustainable development in the Niger Delta Region. Equally, the finding would also serve as a hinge for efficient and successful implementation of development projects to achieve sustainable community development. Accordingly, the finding would informed and create more awareness of the NDDC developmental plans and projects to the communities in the Niger Delta region.

The study's sample size is considered very small due to its qualitative nature, and this may affect the generalization of the findings. The study therefore, recommends that future study with similar objective should endeavor to increase the sample size through quantitative approach and this may provide a different direction on the finding.

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