

**Effect of accountability and transparency on service delivery of Niger –  
delta development Commission in Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

*Generally, Public Service all over the world, both from developed and developing countries are designed as agents of fruitful change and development. Over the years, most developing countries have been on the vanguard of repositioning their Public Service in such manner that they drive and strengthen the backward economics to be efficient and successful. In Nigeria, scholars have noted that the Nigerian Public Service have failed to measure up within their counterparts across the globe due to lack of transparency and accountability in its Public Service delivery. The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) is an interventionist agency created by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2000 with a mandate 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. Based on the above, NDDC embarked on the initiation and implementation of several projects that would guarantee overall development of the Niger Delta Region. This study examines how transparent and accountable NDDC is in the delivery of its basic services to the people. This can be achieved by determining the level of accommodating the views of the members of the project user communities in deciding the issues that would ameliorate their problems. This study is segmented into: Abstract; Introduction; Literature Review, Research methodology; Research findings and Analysis and Conclusion/ Recommendations. The study found out that electricity sector has not attained desired attention by the NDDC as well as the increase present of tension /conflict in the region. Hence, the study recommends that these two areas should be given the attention it requires. NDDC should provide adequate support for electricity development and to drastically reduce tension and conflict in the Niger Delta region by the programmes initiated by the NDDC.*

**Keywords:** Accountability, Service Delivery, Corruption NDDC

**Introduction**



The Niger Delta Region is popularly referred to as the oil and Gas base of Nigeria. Most communities in this region live in squalor and the inhabitants are predominantly fishermen and subsistent farmers who lack modern technology. Davis (2010), notes that the level of education and income seems to be very low. The harsh terrain of the area accounts for the poor state of the development infrastructure in the region.

The Niger Delta Region consists of the Oil and Gas producing states of Abia, Akwalbom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers respectively. The strategic importance of this region to the economy of the country cannot be ever emphasized. Tende<sup>1</sup> notes that Oil and Gas generate over 90 percent of the Nations total foreign revenue receipts and above 80 percent of the total annual domestic revenue. It was in recognition of the above that every successive government since the independence era establishes special development agencies for the region. The condition of the rural communities where crude Oil or Gas is produced has remained deplorable, with severe environmental degradation and lack of in structure, high unemployment, and poor educational facilities and generally lack of social amenities that make for good living. Ojuka<sup>2</sup> notes that lack of development in the Niger Delta Region and the perceived injustice over the sharing of the revenue from Oil and Gas often triggered conflicts between host communities and Oil extracting companies on the other hand and between the host communities and the Government on the other.

Etekepe<sup>3</sup> notes that the most threatening dimension of agitation/ conflict is the resort to violence, most often where peaceful means have failed, and at times as a response to governmental repression. Some of the people's approaches included outright seizure of the Oil wells, kidnapping and hostage taking, violent demonstration and direct confrontation with the Government and its agents, the Oil multinationals etc. these conflicts /agitations do not only adversely affect the Nigerian economy but also make the Niger Delta area a crises prone region.

In view therefore, the Government initiatives on how to develop the Niger Delta Region and the need to reduce tension in the region dates back to the era of the Nigeria Independence. Ibeanu<sup>4</sup> notes that the outcome of Willinks commission in 1958 gave rise to the creation of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) for the region in 1960. The NDDDB was to manage the developmental needs and challenges of the area with special emphasis on Yenagoa Province, Degema Province, Ogoni Division of Delta province. NDDDB faded away following the outbreak of the civil war in 1966. In 1970s when the government used the River Basin Development Authority (RBDA) as a major tool for the community development, of the Niger Delta River Basin Development Authority (NDRBDA)

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<sup>1</sup>Tende, S.B.A. Advanced Management: Theory and Practice. Kaduna, Nigeria: Yehison Nigeria Ltd, 2017

<sup>2</sup>Ojuka, E. "Lack of Development in the Niger Delta Region and the Perceived Injustice." Daily Newspapers, 2018

<sup>3</sup>Etekepe, A. 2000, The Politics and Conflicts over Oil & Gas in the Niger Delta Region: The Bayelsa State Experience: Port Harcourt: Tower Gate Resources

<sup>4</sup>Ibeanu, A. O. 2008. "The Willinks Commission and the Creation of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB)." Nigerian Journal of Development Studies 12(2): 45-58.

was established in 1976 as one of the River Basin Authorities across the country to take care of the developmental challenges of the Niger Delta Region. Other effort made by Government on the development of the Niger Delta Region included the creation of the Presidential Taskforce in 1981 to tackle the developmental problems of the region. This taskforce was known as the 1.5% of the Federation Account was allocated to this committee for the development of the Niger Delta Region. The committee was inefficient as it managed to execute very few projects with the money released to it. Some of these projects, however, did not impact positively on the people of the region.

The 1995 saw the creation of the Niger Delta Environmental Survey (NDES) to reconcile industry, Environment and community interest in the Niger Delta. The initiative was prompted by increasing pressure from rapid deteriorating ecological and economic conditions, social dislocation and tension in communities which were not addressed by policies and Actions of government. NDES is to undertake an environmental study of the Niger Delta Region and provide the required database.

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), formally came on board on December 21, 2000 with the vision to offer a lasting solution to the socio-economic difficulties of the Niger Delta Region and the mission 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. The commission was initially mandated to review and complete some of the abandoned or unfinished projects of the defunct OMPADEC and embark on some new ones while preparing a comprehensive master plan for the development of the Niger Delta Region. The commission derives its funds from 15% allocations due to member states from the Federation Account; 3% of the total annual budget of any Oil producing company operating on shore and off shore in the Niger Delta Area; 50% of monies due to member states from the Ecological Fund. Davis<sup>5</sup> notes that the NDDC embarked on the provision and delivery of basic services such as primary education, agriculture, post able water supply, Electricity supply, basic healthcare services, feeder road networks etc. these are fundamentally linked basic human needs and by extension, the millennium development goals. They are therefore important not only for their own sake but are critical for households; livelihoods.

The commission was as a panacea for the development of the Niger Delta Region. Barret<sup>6</sup> notes that there were hopes of accelerated community development at the inception of the NDDC in 2000 due to huge financial resources that was made available to it. One of the greatest challenges that Marr the effectiveness of the previous development strategies was their collective omission of the application of the principles of transparency and accountability in their public service delivery. This, they did by deliberately excluding the

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<sup>5</sup>Davis, James. 2010 "Getting it Right: Searching for the Elusive Solution in the Niger Delta." *Camel International Affairs Review* 4, no. 1. Accessed July 19, 2023. [www.inquiriesjournal.com](http://www.inquiriesjournal.com)

<sup>6</sup>Barret, John. "Community Development at the Inception of the NDDC in 2000." *Journal of Urban Development*, vol. 15, no. 3, 2000, pp. 45-60.

members of the user communities in the region from taking part in the decision of how to ameliorate the problems of development of the region. Instead of allowing the people to decide on what project is critical to them, the Government officials / the development practitioners often active involvement in decision making process on issues that affect them.

However, the task of assessing the performance of NDDC in the delivery of basic services in the past ten years using the principles of transparency and accountability to the people of the Niger Delta Region can only be made by the people of that region themselves. Nonetheless, the assessment of the projects us with measurement dilemma. This is because, some of these projects are an eye sore of abandoned projects, others were overgrown by weeds and in some cases, majority of them stopped functioning shortly after completion and commissioning.

This study, however, examines the extent at which NDDC applied the principles of transparency and accountability in the delivery of basic goods and services to the people of Niger Delta Region. The application of the principles of transparency and accountability in the delivery of basic goods and services by NDDC to the people of transparency and accountability in the delivery of basic goods and services is determined by how often did NDDC involved some members of user communities deciding which projects were critical in enhancing the standard of living of the people in the past ten (1) years.

Finally, the extent to which the activities and performance of the NDDC are assessed by the general public in the Niger Delta Region in the past ten (10) years (2007 – 2017), needs to be properly examined.

### **Accountability**

Accountability is all about answerable to those who have invested their trust, faith and resources in attainment of set goals or objectives. Adegbite<sup>7</sup> defined accountability as the obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted in accordance with agreed rules and standard; and the officer reports fairly and accurately on performance result vis-à-vis mandated rules and/or plans. It is one of those evocative political words that be used to patch up a rambling argument, to evoke an image of trustworthiness, fidelity and justice, or to keep critics at a distance.

Historically, the concept of accountability is closely related to accounting. Literally, it came from book keeping. Dubnick<sup>8</sup> noted that the roots of the contemporary concept can be traced to the reign of Williams 1, in the decades after the 1066 Norman. Conquest of England. In 1085, Williams required all the property holders in his realm to render account of what they possessed. These possessions were evaluated and listed by royal agents in the so called Domesday Books. This census was not just for taxing purposes, it established the foundation of the royal governance. The Domesday Books listed what was in the King's realm; moreover, the King had all the land owners swear oaths of

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<sup>7</sup>Adegite, E.O. "Accounting, Accountability and National Development." Nigeria Accountant 43, no. 1 (2010)

<sup>8</sup>Patricia M. Dubnick, Roots of the Contemporary Concept (Chicago: Chicago Press, 2002)

allegiance. In the early twelfth century this evolved into a highly centralized administrative kingship that was ruled through centralised auditing and semi-annual account-giving.

Primarily, accountability is the fundamental prerequisite for preventing the abuse of power and for ensuring that power is directed towards the achievement of efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness and transparency in the business of the government. Okoh and Ohwoyibo<sup>9</sup> opine that accountability reflects the need for government and its agencies to serve the public effectively in accordance with the laws of the land.<sup>10</sup> says that serious consideration is being given to the need to be more accountable for the often vast amounts of investment in resources at the command of governments, which exercise administrative and political authority over the actions and affairs of political units of people. Government spending in the delivery of public services is usually very huge and the public demands to know whether the huge outlays of money are spent wisely for the public interest.

In Nigeria, there are stories of so many wrong practices such as the stories of ghost workers on the pay roll of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government, stories of fraud, embezzlement and setting ablaze of offices housing sensitivity document documents and corruption are found everywhere in the country. Appah and Appiah<sup>11</sup> argues that cases of fraud is prevalent in the public sector that every segment of the public service, could seem to be involved in one way or the other in some of these nasty acts. Bello<sup>12</sup> notes that huge amount of naira is lost through one financial malpractices or the other in Nigeria, which to say the least, drains the nation's meager resources through fraudulent means with far-reaching and attendant consequences on the development or even socio-economic or political programmes of the nation. Peters<sup>13</sup> opines that accountability provides government with the means of understanding how programmes may fail and finding ways that can make programmes perform better. Kaufinan<sup>14</sup> argues that an emphasis on accountability by citizens is one aspect of the growing emphasis on eliminating corruption and promoting transparency in government. However, the issue of accountability in Nigeria is a fundamental problem because of the high level corruption in all levels of government in the country.

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<sup>9</sup>Okoh, R. N and Egbon, Fiscal Federation and Revenue Allocation; The Poverty of the Niger Delta (Selected Papers for the 1999 Annual Conference of the Nigerian Economic Society on Fiscal Federation and Nigerian Economic Development, 1999)

<sup>10</sup>Achua, J.K. "Reinventing Governmental Accounting for Accountability Assurance in Nigeria." Nigeria Research Journal of Accountancy 1, no. 1. Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, Lagos, Nigeria, 2009.

<sup>11</sup>Appah, E and Appiah, K. Z. A. Fraud and Development of sound financial institutions in Nigeria; Nigeria Journal for development Research; Vol. 1 No 1, 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Bello, S. Fraud prevention and control in Nigerian Public Service: The need for a Dimensional Approach, Journal of Business Administration, Vol.1 No 2, 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Peter, G. Performance – Based Accountability and combating corruption, World Bank. 2007. Available from; <http://worldbank.org>

<sup>14</sup>Kaufman, D, Myths and Relatives of Governance, and corruption. World Bank Governance programme, Washington DC. 2005.

According to Musa<sup>15</sup> accountability relates to the obligation of people, organisations, or governments for their actions, decisions, and outcomes. It entails recognising and embracing the existence of implications, positive as well as negative, that result from their activities and decisions. Accountability is a key part of ethics, governance, and social interaction, and it plays a crucial role in sustaining trust, integrity, and transparency in numerous contexts.

Accountability in the public sector throughout the world is being given serious attention because; government is the highest spender of the public fund. Those in authorities assume fiduciary status with the attendant responsibilities requiring them to render their stewardship accounts to those for whom the authority is held in trust. Johnson<sup>16</sup> says that public accountability is an essential component for the functioning of our political system, as accountability means that those who are charged with drafting and/or carrying out policy should be obliged to give an explanation of their actions to their electorates. Ujah<sup>17</sup> operationalised public accountability as a system whereby public officers are made to give account of their stewardship to members of the public. He progressed to explain the term public as referring to the generality of the populace, the people or segment of society particularly touched by the subject matter on which an account is demanded. It is worthy of note that public interest is supposed to be very important in public accountability. Public accountability must underscore prudent and effective public financial management. Sound principles of accountability demand that government at all levels ensure that public funds and resources are judiciously utilised and be backed with adequate and appropriate records. Open, transparent and accountable government is an imperative prerequisite for community – orientated public service delivery because without it covert unethical behaviour will result. Oluwu<sup>18</sup>, canvassed the following as the importance of accountability to public sectors thus:

- a. Accountability is necessary for the efficient functioning of all Organisations, especially the public sector in democratically governed States.
- b. Accountability structures in the public sectors are surrogates for market in non-market situations helping to reflect the preferences of the public as citizens and consumers in public domain.
- c. It also serves as a quality control device by ensuring that those who hold public trust account for the trust to the citizens and it is expected to reinforce the superiority of the public over private interest especially in the provision and delivery of services to the people. Accountability is closely linked to the enjoyment of democratic life and

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<sup>15</sup> Musa, Z. Public Service Ethics and Accountability: Concepts, Theory and Practices. Monograph of Reading in the Department of Public Administration, National Open University of Nigeria. 2022.

<sup>16</sup> Johnson, I. E. Public Sector Accounting and Financial Control; Lagos: financial Institutions Training Centre. 2004.

<sup>17</sup>Ujah, I. 2014. "Public Accountability as a System." Journal of Business and Management 4(3): 45-34

<sup>18</sup>Oluwu, L. 2002. "Accountability to Public Sectors." Journal of Business and Management 4, no. 3: 45-34

- democratic governance supposedly implies the supremacy of citizens in the governing process.
- d. Accountability is one of the five norms of good governance, the rest are efficiency, transparency, rule of law and legitimacy.
  - e. Interest in public sector accountability is motivated by the need to absorb waste occasioned by insufficient use of public resources and collision between the top bureaucratic and political class in rank seeking and sundry corrupt practices.
  - f. The need for efficient management of the meager resources in the face of rising expectations from the populace for service delivery calls for proper accountability in the public sector.

From the above, the researcher can however describe accountability as the process of being liable and answerable to the employment or responsibilities conferred on someone on how effectively the various commitments are being carried out in such a manner that the objectives and goals of the employers or the public enterprises will be attained either presently or in future.

In order to achieve and realize the foregoing, or enforce accountability into both the public and private life of this nation, a number of strategies/ mechanisms are required and they include: internal and external mechanisms. Internal mechanisms are those control strategies used to enforce compliance of workers or conformity with the establishment goals. This include hierarchy reinforced by inspectorate departments, merit system of recruitment linked to educational qualification, training and retraining aimed at improving workers skills. Other internal mechanisms include rules and regulations, code of conduct, other operative functions of human resources (HR) department and procedures for internal reviews and audits.

### **Transparency**

Transparency generates an effective mechanism to deal with conflict of interest situations. It helps to put pressure on the decision makers and all those involved in policy formation and implementation to avoid such situations and to discharge their duties properly. As a principle, public officials, civil servants, managers and directors of both public and private Organisations and Board of Trustees have a duty to act visibly, predictably and understandably to promote participation and accountability. As concepts, citizens rely on transparency to gain access to the means, the resources and opportunities to influence decision making and to affect development outcomes.

By definition, transparency simply means clarity and openness in actions. Tende (2017), Transparency refers to the ability of being easy to understand, and being open, frank and honest in all communications, transactions and operations. It is possible to be accountable by providing a lengthy and technical explanation of every detail, but if this information is not easily understood by the audience and if the faults are hidden by the sheer volume of information, then the information is not presented in a transparent form. It stands to good reasoning that forms of secrecy and shady dealings are made clear and open. There is a general belief that transparency is a means to strengthening governance and ensuring good resource management. Section 40 (1) of the

Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) of 2007, stipulates that the Federal Government shall ensure that its Fiscal and financial affairs are conducted in transparent manner and accordingly to ensure full and timely disclosure and wide publications of all transactions and decisions involving public revenues and expenditures and their implications for its finances. Section 48 (2) demands that the National Assembly shall ensure transparency during the preparation and discussions on the medium –term expenditures frameworks, annual budgets, and the appropriation bills. If the policy frameworks of establishment (be it public or Private) are not made open and if such and establishment fails to provide the necessary information to the relevant parties, such as an establishment is said to be not transparent and is not trusted by the customers/the public.

Ajah<sup>19</sup>, opines that lack of transparency facilitates the cover-up of practice involving favoritism, nepotism, and cronyism. And at the same time provides protection and security to those who misuse the decision-making power and frees them from accountability that can potentially be exercised by those harmed by such conducts. Simply making information available does not in itself guarantee transparency. Large amount of unprocessed information in the public domain may breed capacity other than transparency.

Government is under obligation to promote Transparency and Accountability in all its Fiscal Activities. Transparent actions are most likely to be in the public interest. The provisions of the FRA sated above are all part of our national life that are either completely ignored or partially implemented. Aruwa<sup>20</sup> noted that corrupt practices and dealings, which have eaten deep into every facet of our national life are the result of non-observance and non-implementation of the foretasted FRA provisions. Akuma<sup>21</sup>observed that in Nigeria, our national life (both public and private) are characterised by open, fragrant disregard and brazen display of sharp practices of embezzlement, bribery, extortion, stealing, cheating, inflating prices of goods and services, among others.

Obi<sup>22</sup>, outline the following as the importance of transparency in the public service delivery:-

- (a) Transparency provides the feedback for informed debate on fiscal issues and policies. Indeed, it is a prerequisite for public debate, which can lead to better programmes and more efficient use if state resources by government officials. It facilitates the identification of questionable activities thus facilitating the adoption of good and fit practices in fiscal management.
- (b) Transparent fiscal transactions can help the public hold elected leaders accountable if the public have access to information on public

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<sup>19</sup>Ajah, Desna Steven."Principles of Transparency and Accountability in Public Sector." Lecture delivered at a Workshop Organised for the Principal Staff Officers of Aninri L.G.A., Enugu State, 2014

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, 2017

<sup>21</sup>Akuma, J. Observations on Nigeria: National Life in Public and Private. Lagos: XYZ Publications. 2008.

<sup>22</sup>Ikechi, Kanu Success, H. K. Obi, and H. C. Akuwudike."Impact of public sector financial management on the economic growth of Nigeria." *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration* 7, no. 4 (2021): 45-59.



income and expenditure. Public officials will also be more likely to follow the law if their acts and omissions are open to public scrutiny. Holding public officials accountable can provide a check on corruption.

- (c) Adherence to transparency increases faith in government. Support can come from the public who can better understand what the government is doing and thus have more confidence in the administration.
- (d) Transparency contributes to fiscal and political stability as it prevents the building of a crisis in secret bringing about smaller adjustment sooner. Tende<sup>23</sup> noted that transparency demands that information should be relevant, accessible, timely and accurate and must be made available in sufficient time to permit analysis, evaluation and engagement of the relevant stakeholders. This means that information needs to be provided while planning as well as during and after implementation of policies and programmes. Information should be well managed so that it is up-to-date and accurate and complete.

### Public Service Delivery

Druker<sup>24</sup>, described service delivery as the capability of producing a specified, desired effect, or in other words, getting things done. Walley and Amin<sup>25</sup>, says that service delivery should be able to produce several positive outcomes, ranging from reduced costs, increase availability of efficient operations, improved service quality and optimum customer experience. Lovelock<sup>26</sup>; Armistead<sup>27</sup> have argued that the main purpose of service delivery is to bridge the gap between customers' expectations and customers experience. In a common language, service delivery simply refers to the distribution of basic resources that the citizens need to improve their standard of living and social wellbeing. These resources include water, electricity, sanitation infrastructure, land, housing etc.

Services delivery to the people is a key function of government. The public service plays a vital role in delivering and distributing public services to the citizens of any country. The major function of public service is to provide services; provide enabling environment for economic growth and prosperity for citizens as well as securing and strengthening democratic institutions. Ezeibe (2011) described the public service as consisting of the civil service, the parastatals and the agencies. This tripartite structure is systematically

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 2016

<sup>24</sup>Druke, H. Can E-Governance make Public Governance more Accountable, in Shah, A (ed). Performance Accountability and Combating Corruption: World Bank (2007). Retrieved from: <http://wordbank.org>

<sup>25</sup>Walley, P., & Amin, V. (1994).Automation in a customer contact environment. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 14(5), 86-100.

<sup>26</sup>Lovelock, P. E. R. "A review of the tectonics of the northern Middle East region." *Geological Magazine* 121, no. 6 (1984): 577-587.

<sup>27</sup>Armistead, Colin. "Service operations strategy: framework for matching the service operations task and the service delivery system." *International Journal of Service Industry Management* 1, no. 2 (1990): 0-0.

patterned to serve as a lasting instrument through which the government drives, regulates and manages all aspect of the society.

The Nigerian public service is an organised entity that is entrusted with management of the resources of our country on behalf of the Nigerian public. It is run by elected and appointed officials. Section 318 (1) of the 1999 constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) states that elective as well as appointed public official include: - the president, the Vice president Governors and their Deputes, Ministers and Commissioners, member and staff of legislative houses, Chairmen, Directors of all Corporations and companies in which the government has controlling shares. The public service therefore represents the realm where the government operates for the benefits of the citizenry.

It is the responsibility of every government to provide goods and services to its people through the public services. In pursuant to this objective, the 1999 constitution of Nigeria (as amended) provides that the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government and that the State shall direct its policy towards ensuring.

- (a) The promotion of a planned and balanced economic development
- (b) That the material resources of the nation are harnessed and distributed as best as possible to serve the common good.
- (c) That the economic system is not operated in such a manner as to permit the concentration of wealth or the means of production and exchange in the hands of few individuals or of a group; and
- (d) That suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage old care and pensions, and unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disables are provided for all citizens.
- (e)

Over the years, there has been poor service delivery by the public sector in Nigeria leading to the launch of the Service Delivery Initiative (SDI) by the former President Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR in March, 2014. This was conceptualized as a social contract between the Federal Government and all Nigerians: Service compact with all Nigerians (SERVICOM). SERVICOM gives the Nigerian people the right to demand good service as entitlements as contained in SERVICOM charters reflecting the mission and vision statements of each government department along with goals, objectives, details of services, standard of performance as well as system of redress should there be service failure. Igbuzor<sup>28</sup>, noted that the present state of the public service in Nigeria can neither deliver services to meet the expectations of the public, nor to the standards expected by SERVICOM for several reasons including lack of capacity, poor orientation and attitude, weak incentives, weak monitoring and evaluation system and corruption.

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<sup>28</sup>Igbuzor, O. "Public service quality, Administration reform." *The Guardian* (2015).

### Review of Empirical Studies

UNDP (2014), notes that through the application of transparency and accountability principles in the Arab Region, better decision making and a more rational use of public resources resulting in a better governance and sustainable human development in a long term was achieved. The Arab Region in the context is represented six (6) countries namely: Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemem.

Leenders, and John<sup>29</sup>, published a report on the Middle East and North Africa. The report noted that the absence of institutional reforms to accompany economic liberalization programmes and the prevalence of authoritarian rule constitute an important obstacle to transparency and accountability in both the state and the private sectors. In 2010, a team of researchers from institute of Development studies in the UK, with participation of researchers in the US, South Africa, Brazil and India came out a research on the application of Transparency and accountability in four priority areas: Public service delivery, budget processes, freedom of information and natural resource governance. The outcome of this r3search showed increased efficiency and effectiveness in those priority sectors.

This shows that the field of transparency and accountability is alive with rapidly emerging citizen-led and multi-stakeholder initiatives. Houtzager and Joshi<sup>30</sup>, note the relationship between transparency, accountability and service delivery, shedding light from an empirical perspective on how one contributes to the other. Eyben<sup>31</sup>, states that many transparency and accountability initiatives focus on the delivery of development outcomes, neglecting or articulating only superficially the potential for deepening democracy or empowering citizens, over-emphasising tools to the detriment of analysis of context, of forms of mobilization and action, and of the dynamics behind potential impact.

As Newell and Wheeler<sup>32</sup> point out, it is a myth that accountability is apolitical and technocratic; particularly when there are resources at stake, accountability reform lack of transparency, low levels of institutional responsiveness, and poor protection of citizens' rights. Kim<sup>33</sup>, notes that transparent governance signifies an openness of the governance system through clear processes and procedures and easy access to public information for citizens, stimulating ethical awareness in public service through information sharing which ultimately ensures accountability for the performance of individuals and organizations holding

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<sup>29</sup>Leenders, Reinoud, and John Sfakianakis. "Middle East and North Africa." *Transparency International, Global Corruption Report 2003* (2003): 203-14.

<sup>30</sup>Joshi, Anuradha, and Peter P. Houtzager. "Widgets or watchdogs? Conceptual explorations in social accountability." *Public Management Review* 14, no. 2 (2012): 145-162.

<sup>31</sup>Eyben, Rosalind, and Sarah Ladbury. "Building effective states: Taking a citizen's perspective." *Citizenship DRC Report*, 06. (2006).

<sup>32</sup>Newell, Peter, and Joanna Wheeler, eds. *Rights, resources and the politics of accountability*. Vol. 3. Zed Books, 2006.

<sup>33</sup>Kim, Hye-Shin. "Consumer profiles of apparel product involvement and values." *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal* 9, no. 2 (2005): 207-220.

resources or holding public office. The Malaysian Prime Minister, Mohammed Najib<sup>34</sup> noted that the public sector accountability requires governments to justify the source and utilization of public resources because, governments are largely perceived as inefficient and poorly performing in service delivery. As a multi-racial country, Malaysia faces many obstacles and challenges. Siddiquee<sup>35</sup> noted that the Malaysian public sector has long been criticized for its inefficiency, red tapism, lack of flexibility, ineffective accountability and poor performance. Iver & Arunasalam<sup>36</sup> notes that the poor service delivery in Malaysia is as a result of gaps in accountability and transparency, inequalities in policy planning and inadequate coordination across public agencies, especially at the Ministerial level.

In Nigeria, there is the challenge to strengthen institutional mechanism that would make governments accountable for the extraction, allocation and use of revenues that did not come from taxation, yet were abundant enough to alleviate socio-economic inequalities of citizens if the monies were well invested. Dogo<sup>37</sup> has alleged that the accounting systems of Government owned institutions and companies in Nigeria do not seem to guarantee proper and up-to-date financial records, thus making auditing difficult, if not impossible. On the other hand Williams<sup>38</sup> has documented the positive effect of transparency on alleviating resource causing problems, while the longstanding relationship between resources abundance and reduced economic growth has been confirmed. Williams<sup>39</sup> argues that it is lack of transparency rather than abundant resources revenue parse that may explain delayed economic growth. Obazee<sup>40</sup> observed that general public is increasingly requiring public officers to be accountable by demonstrating effective use of public assets and funds in the delivery of services and pursuit of government objectives; accountability and transparency in the public sector are given a serious attention all over the world because government and its agents are the highest spender of public funds and asset.

Nigeria, as a developing nation, is faced with serious challenges in accelerating development and growth due to lack of proper accountability and transparency by the public officers. This is because, the institutions charged with the responsibilities of enforcing strict compliance and discipline in the management of public funds and assets lack will power to operate accordingly. Therefore,

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<sup>34</sup> Mohammed Najib noted that the public sector accountability requires governments to justify the source and utilization of public resources. 2009

<sup>35</sup>AlamSiddiquee, Noore. "Public management reform in Malaysia: Recent initiatives and experiences." *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 19, no. 4 (2006): 339-358.

<sup>36</sup>Iver, D., & Arunasalam, S. *Work: Poor Service Delivery in Malaysia*. London (2011). 339-358

<sup>37</sup>Dogo, 1. "Management of Cost and prices in Nigerian Public Enterprises" *Nigerian Management Review* Vol. 5 Nos. 1 & 2, (1990): 89-203

<sup>38</sup>Williams, Byron K. "Passive and active adaptive management: approaches and an example." *Journal of environmental management* 92, no. 5 (2011): 1371-1378.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid, 2011

<sup>40</sup>Obazee, J. O. "Development in public sector accounting and reporting." In a paper presented at a workshop organized by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria on *Public Sector Accounting, held at Sharon Ultimate Hotel, Abuja, June*, pp. 14-15. 2006.

policies, regulations common practices, incentives and penalties as well as the prevailing norms and institutional culture and ethical conducts designed to combat corrupt practice and unethical behaviour must undergo serious diagnosis and reform so as to strengthen the institutional environment in which the public employees work. In this regard, managing the various resources of transformed public sector to correspond and provide support to the overall reform efforts. An effective and efficient governance requires the inclusion of the public sector reforms that rest on the overall control and reduction/elimination of corrupt practices in the service delivery by the public sectors.

Karim<sup>41</sup>, classified Nigeria public service as the traditional public administration characterized by paper based long procedures that make the citizens dissatisfied with the services rendered because of several problems such as delay in the service delivery, corruption and offices are centrally located. Working on Karim's assertion, Amukugo & Peters<sup>42</sup> observed that there has been clamour for reform due to the time – consuming nature and quality of public service delivery, which has to do with too many procedures and lack of transparency.

The Nigerian Public Service is known for its poor service delivery, which is mostly due to lack accountability, transparency and commitment in making services work for the poor and the marginalized people in the country. Ahmad<sup>43</sup>, asserts that accountability in service delivery is a major constraining factor in the developing countries. The report went further to state that public service delivery has been inconsistent with citizen's preferences and is considered feeble in the developing countries. Thus, accountability and transparency are not only required for improved public service delivery, but also in all sectors of the Nigerian economy in order to ensure improvement and development of the nation's economy, effective and efficient utilisation of her resources, economic growth and national stability.

### A Theoretical discuss

In this study, the researcher adopts Max Webers<sup>44</sup> view which stress that it is the use of violence that allows for the formation of states. In this context, the four aforementioned elements constitute those other means to preserve its power as mentioned by Weber. Applying Weber's view on failed state to a political entity like Nigeria; it means that "Nigeria has lost her authority over her population and is unable to sustain physical force within her territory".

This is just the case in the Niger Delta region of country before amnesty was offered in 2009. Zartman<sup>45</sup> identified failed states to mean, when the basic

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<sup>41</sup>Karim Abu. Nigeria public service as the traditional public administration. (2015)

<sup>42</sup>Amukugo, Karin, and Anicia Peters. "Citizen-centric e-government services in Namibia: Myth or reality?." In *Proceedings of the First African Conference on Human Computer Interaction*, pp. 193-197. 2016.

<sup>43</sup>Ahmad, Junaid. Decentralization and service delivery. Vol. 3603. World Bank Publications, 2005.

<sup>44</sup>Weber, Max. Economy and society University of California Press. 1978.

<sup>45</sup>Zartman, I. William, ed. Collapsed states: the disintegration and restoration of legitimate authority. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995.

functions of the state are no longer performed. Corroborating Zartmans's view, Robert<sup>46</sup> describes most developing countries, especially in Africa as a world of failed States, since the States can no longer fulfill Weber's criterion of having the monopoly on the legitimate use of force and performance of its social responsibilities, especially maintenance of law and order in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. <sup>47</sup>Willink's commission Report of 1958 defined the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as the third largest wetlands in the world, covering an area of 70,000 square kilometers and is known for its sandy coastal ridge barriers or saline mangrove fresh water.

It has seasonal and permanent swamp forest and lowland in rain forest. The NDDC profile<sup>48</sup> further describes the region as one traversed and crisis-crossed by a large number of rivers, rivulets, streams, canals and creeks. Ekekpe&Okolo<sup>49</sup>, <sup>50</sup>the coastal line of the Niger Delta region is buffered throughout the year by the tides of the Atlantic ocean and the main land is faced with regular flooding, especially River Niger during the raining seasons between June and October of ever year.

The Niger Delta region has been abandoned, neglected and under-developed by government despite the complaints and agitations by the people of the region. In an interview with Chief Edwin Clerk on the backwardness of the Niger Delta region, the Ijaw Chief commented thus; the neglect\abandoning of the region started with the Colonial Masters. In 1956, the Ijaw Nation delegated Chief Harold DappaBiriye to represent the people of the region at the pre-independence constitutional conference in London in 1957 and 1958 respectively. Chief Biriye was asked to present the grievances of the people of the Niger Delta region and to demand for the separate creation of oil Rivers state, (the present River and Bayelsa state) out of the Eastern Nigeria. Chief Biriye's brilliant presentation at the pre-independence constitutional conference in 1957/58 gave rise to the constitution of the Henry Willink's commission of enquiry to investigate the claims and demands of the people of the Niger Delta area. In a bid to do justice to the terms and conditions of the commission o enquiry, Henry Willink led a team of four (4)persons to Nigeria and held public sittings and private meetings and discussions in the then defunct three region of the country namely; the Eastern region, the Northern region and the Western region respectively. Other members of the Willink's team include; Messrs Gordon Hadow, J.B Shearer and Philip Mason. The commission submitted its report to the British parliament on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1958.

From the above comments of Chief Edwin Clerk, the agitations by the people of Niger Delta area is a long -aged issue which dates back to the period of the colonial Administration of the present political entity called "Nigeria". The Willink's commission of Enquiry report of 1958 defined the Niger Delta area to include the present Bayelsa , Delta and River states. However, in 1993, during

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<sup>46</sup>Cooper, Robert. *The post-modern state and the world order*. Demos, 2000.

<sup>47</sup>Willink's commission Report of 1958

<sup>48</sup> The NDDC profile (2001)

<sup>49</sup>Ekekpe, J., and U. Okolo." Niger Delta region." *Petroleum Training Journal* 4, no. 2 (2009): 44-49.

<sup>50</sup>

the creation of Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission(OMPADEC), the post-colonial Nigerian state Actors altered this arrangement and redefined the region to include; Akwa-ibom, cross-River and Edo state. Etekpe & Okoro<sup>51</sup> noted that the Niger Delta Region was further expanded to include other three contiguous oil producing states of Abia, Imo, and Ondo States at the creation of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000.

The NDDC Act 2000 defined NDDC as an interventionist Agency to implement development programme for sustainable prosperity and peace to the Niger Delta region. The questions this study seeks to answer include; what has been the Nigerian experience in containing /managing the agitation coming from the region? To what bringing development and peace to the region? Is the commission doing enough? Does it need to do more? Are results from the development and peace -building of the region adequate? It is in the light of the above that this study examines the various efforts of the government's interventionist agency at bringing development and peace to the door steps of the people of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In this context therefore, this study adopts the "failed state" theoretical framework to analyse the continued agitations by the people of the region and suggest proactive measure in peace building, total submission and confidence in government by the people of the Niger Delta area so as to pave way for establishing a process for sustainable development and return of peace to the region.

### **Methodology**

This study used descriptive survey research design. The Survey used questionnaires to generate data in order to analyze the research proposition. The study also employed documentary design on to obtain data from documented sources and official records relevant to the study. Both primary and secondary methods of data collection shall be employed in this study. The secondary sources of data includes text books, newspapers, library materials, unpublished research works, periodic publications of organization/government, magazine, internet facilities, Journals, Lecture mimeographs, to mention but a few.

The institutions to be chosen as sample frame area: the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Federal Ministry of Niger Delta (FMND). The NDDC has offices in Abuja, FCT and in Port Harcourt, Rivers State whereas the FMND is located at the Federal Secretariat complex, in Abuja-FCT. The categories of staff as used in this study included 25 senior staff, 55 intermediate staff and 70 junior staff respectively. The research however conducted and distributed questioners on the three categories of staff as stated above, making a total of the population of 150 respondents.

In this study, non-probability sampling technique shall be adopted, i.e interview of the staff of the organization shall be conducted using only selected members

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<sup>51</sup>Etekpe, Ambily, Epoweide Isaiah Koko, and Queen Eyikorogha. "Generating fresh vision on federalism for Nigeria: The position of South-south Nigeria on economic and political restructuring." system (2017): 5.

of senior, intermediate and junior staff as all the selected categories of staff have equal opportunity of been chosen. Questionnaires will also be distributed to the same selected staff of the organization. The study adopts regression analysis to establish the relationship between transparency/accountability and objectives of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

**Result and Discussion**

The following results are presented and discussed below:

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.947 <sub>a</sub>	.896	.894	.49440	.202

a. Predictors: (Constant), Reduction of Social Tension/Conflict, Provision of Electricity, Provision of Education

b. Dependent Variable: Transparency & Accountability

The table shows the model summary which describes the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) as it shows how the dependent variable impact the independent variables (predictors). The higher the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) greater than 0.5, the better the likelihood there is a strong relationship between the variables and on the other hand the lower the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) less than 0.5, the likelihood there is a weak relationship between the dependent variable and the predictors. This result shows ( $R^2$ ) at 0.896 (0.89 or 0.9) meaning that there is a strong relationship between the dependent variable (Transparency & Accountability) and the predictors (Reduction of Social Tension/Conflict, Provision of Electricity, Provision of Education).

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.409	.086		-4.734	.000
	Provision of Education	.469	.176	.506	2.669	.008
	Provision of Electricity	-.157	.095	-.152	-1.663	.099
	Reduction of Social Tension/Conflict	-.480	.167	-.510	-2.880	.005



Support Youth Development	.761	.089	.734	8.587	.000
Healthcare Development	.485	.090	.466	5.391	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Transparency & Accountability

This table shows the results for the individual variables as they affect the dependent variable. The a priori expectation is that the standardized coefficient is above 0.5 (50%) else, the dependent variable has no significant effect on the dependent variable. According to the five stated variables, provision of education shows a value at 0.506 which is higher than the expectation of 50% hence transparency & Accountability has significant effect on the provision of education by the NDDC.

Secondly, provision of electricity shows a value at negative 0.152 or -0.2 (-20%), this shows that transparency and accountability has no significant effect on provision of electricity by the NDDC.

Thirdly, Reduction of social tension/conflict shows a value at negative 0.510 or -0.5 (-50%) means that transparency/accountability has no significant effect on the reduction of social tension /conflict by the NDDC.

Fourthly, Support for youth development shows a value at 0.734 or 73%, this means that transparency /accountability in NDDC has a significant effect on support for youth development. Lastly, healthcare development has a value at 0.466 or 0.5, it means that transparency & accountability has significant effect on provision of healthcare development in NDDC.

### Conclusion

The study concludes that Niger Delta Development Commission have been getting the necessary support to meets its set objectives and regular provision of fund have been in place to ensure the reason why it was established is meticulously carried out. The study found out that education sector in the NDDC run states have enjoyed reasonable amount of support by the programme. Secondly, the study found out that provision of electricity as one of NDDC's primary objective of its establishment have not been duely observed by the handlers over the years. The power sector in the NDDC run states have not enjoyed its place as an important aspect of its establishment. Thirdly, the study found out that there has not been any significant improvement or reduction in the aspect of social tension and conflict by the NDDC though its programmes. Fourthly, the study observed that support for youth development has been enjoying huge progress as indicted by the study results and hence NDDC has met its set objectives in that area. Finally, the study observed that healthcare development has also enjoyed considerable amount of support by the NDDC.

### Recommendations

In line with the research findings, the study made the following recommendations:

- i. The study recommends that the education sector in the NDDC run states should continue to benefit from the programme and more should be channeled in the development of the education provision.
- ii. The study recommends that concerted efforts should be geared toward complete and absolute attention given to the electricity provision by the NDDC by establishing a regional electricity generating plant to provide electricity for both the rural and urban dwellers in the NDDC run states.
- iii. The study also recommends that government should provide monitoring mechanism to ensure social tension and conflicts are tackled before they escalate to more problematic phenomena.
- iv. The study also recommends that support for youth development be sustained and improved to redirect youthful excesses into a more productive activities in NDDC run states.
- v. The study also encourage the NDDC to provide more sophisticated healthcare equipment to encourage Niger Deltans and Nigerians at large to take advantage of easy and better healthcare attention.

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