

**The Challenges of Youths Development in the Niger Delta: The Case of the Niger Delta
Youths and Lenitive Programmes of the Federal Government of Nigeria
(National Directorate of Employment)**

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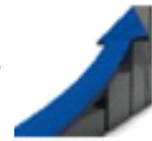
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Abstract

Development is said to be a process which allows and encourages people to earn their aspirations. The processes anchor on changes such as advancement, improvement and progress of all human endeavours. Armed with this, it is absolutely necessary and imperative for everybody to key into process that will transform our well beings. The Niger Delta Youths are no exception from the transformation mantra if they must be responsive in their respective domains. The Federal Government in its wisdom has put in place some lenitive measures to cushion the effect of unemployment, but instead of the youths of the region to take advantage of the several enunciated developmental programmes, they are rather indulged in undignified ventures such as cybercrime, kidnapping, illicit bunkering activities, thugs to politicians etc... without the consciousness of self-development as against preparing for the future. The challenges of youths' development in the Niger Delta and National Development was therefore carried out to investigate to evaluate the participating level of the youths from the region on the Federal Government intervention programmes, using the National Directorate of Employment as a yardstick. The choice and developmental theories were espoused. The study employed the content and the survey approach. Objectives and research questions were framed. Primary and secondary source of data collection were used. The Pie and Bar charts were also used to show the level of participation in skill learning under the National Directorate of Employment covering eight years period. The study identified inter-lia youths' inability to utilize the opportunities provided by the Federal Government. The study recommend thus: Government should introduce skills acquisitions in a curriculum of primary and secondary education. They should introduce a Business Contributory Fund (BCF) for young school leavers and the youths on their part should break their camps and embrace the peace gesture of the government.



Keywords: Niger Delta Youths, National Development and Challenges.

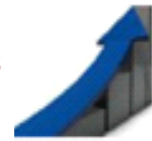
Introduction

Most countries seem to be in a hurry to scale through the hurdles of under-development without commensurate and adequate plans for the strata that constitute development processes. The processes of development do not lie on infrastructures alone, but must also give considerations to the human elements that will stir up and pilot the wheel of progress of development. That means the transition must affect everybody (young and old) and the sustainability must be a continuum. In trying to achieve this, every hand must be on deck and the preparation must start early.

The national development plan whenever visited must provide a place for the upcoming ones (youths). On the other hand, the recipient of the proceeds of planning must be willing to make some sacrifices on the altar of seriousness, willingness and preparation to harness and key into the nation's developmental agenda.

However, it has been observed that some youths from the Niger Delta extraction have deliberately or unconsciously drifted from societal cleavages of development, and have rather taken to activities that are not dignifying (such as kidnapping, robbery, cultism, etc...) which has rather portrayed them as lazy and unscrupulous elements who does not want to work so as to be great tomorrow, but want to achieve greatness at all cost. Challenges in life, for real are inevitable, and no doubt the youths of Niger Delta may have been shrouded with so many of them, but above can be spur to changes through development processes. This can only be by learning a skill which will make them independent

Contrary to this, it is most chagrin to note that the youths of the region doesn't want to work, learn a trade or have an entrepreneurial skill to prepare for tomorrow's greatness. Unlike the proverbial ants who work to prepare for the rainy days; they have taken to the life style of the praying mantises that goes hunting whenever it is hungry, capture a prey, and devour it without recourse for tomorrow, Sophie, (2012). The youth of the Niger Delta are likened to this situation. Yes, they have fought, become restive and have expressed their grievances induced by the activities of both the Multinational Oil Companies (MNO) and marginalized by the government of Nigeria. It is crystal clear that the region has been deprived, treated very unfriendly, with unfavourable policies of imbalanced political appointments, and also short changed in appointments under the shelves of the so called Federal character principles as observed by Ibaba. (2017, p. 6 and Taribo, 2014, p. xxiv). It is time they sheathed their swords and have a rethink of how to prepare themselves in readiness to take over from the aging and retiring leaders. But instead of a rethink on how to reposition, they are seen in the creeks as pirates, others as motor park touts, thugs to politicians, pledging insincere loyalty, indulged in illicit bunkering, drug peddling, robbery, cultism, gangsters, casual sex labour and other non-dignifying activities. The reason for indulging in these nefarious activities is just to raise immediate fund for momentary enjoyment, and have no plans for the future. This is a typical life style of the praying mantises. Many who are



drop outs from school have not thought of pushing further by giving it another try, instead they choose and resign to fate on the scale of menial jobs and labours without recourse to what they will become tomorrow (Alamiesyeseigha, 2005, p. 169).

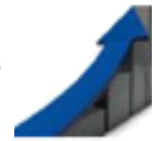
The truth is that, the governments and the oil companies over the years have not helped matters in the areas of creating jobs for the teeming unemployed youths, but the youth on their part had shown negative, bitter feelings and hatred on themselves, chosen to be aggressive and having the belief that the businesses they found doing is better than the white collar jobs which their contemporaries are into, is a waste of time, mere falsehood and a mirage to greatness as observed by Alamiesyeseigha, (2005, p. 165, Okodudu, 2008).

Looking at the activities of the youth of the Niger Delta and the undignified works they have chosen as career paths and the spate of insecurity, the study poses the following questions: who takes over from the aging and retiring elites, bureaucrats, businessmen and women, parliamentarians, politicians, lawyers, teachers and senior military officers? And if really they want to replace the retiring ones, how prepared are they? Would they jump out from the jungles with the illicit businesses they do to replace the retirees? If their godfathers can fix them in lofty positions, would they have the technical ability, academic qualifications to manage and solve the social-economic cum political challenges, steering at the face of the nation? This study seeks to address these myriads of questions which have requested several answers.

Statement of the problem

There has been endless complains from the Niger Delta region over marginalization, neglect, deprivation, unequal distribution of social amenities and federal government placements to compensate for the rape on the region despite the huge amount of wealth that is coming out of the area into the nation`s coffer. This coupled with issues such as poverty, degradation of the soil and ecosystem of the area, and political imbalances have induced the youths from the region to be restive, Ibaba, (2005,2009 a and b) and (2017, p. 6).

The restiveness which has played out in several phases was spearheaded by various agitating groups that turned to insurgency, (Osaghae, e'tal, 2007; Watts 2007, Ibaba & Ikelegbe, 2009, Ibaba, (2017, p. 55). Somehow, these spate of conflicts have triggered the Federal Government to establishing some interventions and development policies which led to the establishment of the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000, the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs and of course, the Amnesty programme of 2009. But the youths on their part have not given peace a chance by keying into the lenitive gesture of the federal government programmes to learn trades that can transform them to leadership positions tomorrow, like the ants who prepare themselves for the rainy days, instead they are found in kidnapping and robbing businesses which



is not dignifying. And their inability to prepare for tomorrow has portrayed them like the typical praying mantis, who only think of the moment and forget tomorrow, Sophie, (2012).

In the words of Bishop Yomi Isijola: “when preparation meets with opportunity, the results are always positive”.

If the youths in the Niger Delta region can prepare themselves today, they will certainly meet with greater opportunities in the future. But the inability of the youth in the region to prepare themselves in readiness to take over the positions of the leaders who will be retiring tomorrow will earn the region a no place, with endless agitations and a no people to speak when the nation’s resources will be placed on the table of national assembly to decide who get what and how, (Alamieyeseigha, 2005: p.167). The question is how will the region be represented when true federalism is practiced? There will certainly be no replacement for the retiring leaders if our youths will still remain in the jungle and do illicit businesses.

More importantly, they have been observed and adjudged lazy, since they do not want to work rather they prefer following motorcades of top politicians, moving from one political office to another, begging for arms. Apart from these, it is also observed that the female expose themselves to casual sex labour, alcohol, cultism and drug addiction. These acts are already dehumanizing feats capable of lowering ones estimable position and dignity in life. While the cry for those in the cities, villages and their activities are high, there are those of them in the creeks and rivers, indulged in piracy, hijacking of boats, raping local female traders. Others are involved in illicit modular refining business where some of them meet untimely death; whereas there are so many areas in the sectors of our economy that is begging for people to exploit (Watts & Ibaba, 2011). These problems and many more seem to be the very key area postures of the youth of the Niger Delta and their activities which are clear indications that they are ill-prepared for the challenges of National Development in Nigeria.

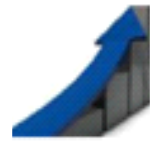
Research questions

- a. How prepared are the Niger Delta youths with regards to self-development?
- b. What are the consequences of youth’s rate of unpreparedness in the Niger Delta in the development of Nigeria?
- c. What can be done to improve the situation?

Objectives the study

It is general objective of the study to ascertain the challenges facing the youth in the Niger Delta and their level of preparedness to take over leadership and to solve the problems of the region tomorrow. However, the specific objectives of the study include the under-listed.

- a. To examine the rate of preparedness of the youth of the Niger Delta with regards to self-development.



- b. To further access the consequence of youth`s rates of unpreparedness in the Niger Delta as regards the development of Nigeria.
- c. To proffer possible recommendations or suggestions to improve the situation.

Significance of the study

This study will be very useful and relevant to the policy makers or government and the entire youths of the country. If the recommendations of this study are adopted; it will enable government and policy makers re-plan, reassess and reorganize her policies toward the youths by making sure a feedback mechanism is put in place. This will make government to ascertain the level of optimal utilization of any intervention programme enunciated by government and how it is embraced by the youths of any region of the country.

This study will also serves as a reminder to government that most funds voted out are not properly managed rather they are misused (for instance starter packs that are meant for those who have been trained by government agencies like National Directorate of Employment are sold out by the recipients).

The study will also help to awaken the consciousness of the youths of the country particularly those from Niger Delta, for the need to prepare for tomorrow.

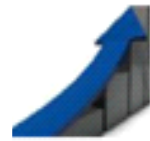
Review of Literature.

Development

The concept of development from all indication is very vital to man`s growth as it is very complex and have different dimensions, clarifications and definitions perceived by different scholars. In the view of the UN, it is a process which allows and encourages people to earn their aspirations. To some scholars, the process hinges on changes such as advancement, improvement and progress of all human endeavours.

Rodney, (1972) in his claim sees development as a venture with many sides. This may cover a nation and individuals. At the country`s level, the concept deals with indices which range from economy, freedom of the press and individual`s association to infrastructural growth. At the individual level, development encompasses the following: increase in skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity and initiatives, self-discipline, responsiveness and material well-being of the people. At the individual level, if the youths of the Niger Delta acquires a skill and utilize the opportunity of being trained, he/she might become the Dantatas, Otedolas and the Dangotes of tomorrow.

Seers (1997, p.37) in trying to guide contemporary scholars, warned that discussion of development should not be confused with economic development. That attempts to do this will slipshod to confusing development with economic development and economic growth. He pointed out that in discussing the challenges, those who want to tackle the issue most put aside the illusions



and fantasies shrouded around development rather they should think more precisely and digest the meaning before making a categorical statement.

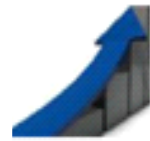
To this end, Ogbuagu (2012,p.2) sees development as a term that is normative. He concluded by stating the difference between economic development and economic growth, that there is need for policy makers or whoever that is discussing the concept to operationalize the policy directions and interventions. And for the purpose of clarity, he stated that economic growth is limited in scope and result, and it is difficult to restoring the dignity and personality of human beings living in any given state. This is because economic growth deals with productions and distributions, while development encompasses both economic growth and general wellbeing of humans. Here the argument borders on human development, and anything short of enhancing the restoration of human`s dignity and personality, will not be conveying the meaning of development. On this note, government and other agencies trying to address the problems of youths must bring to fore programmes that will promote or enhance their welfare, dignity and personality.

In furtherance to this, Adelman& Morris (2009) in Ogbuagu (2012,p.2) summed up their argument as:

Economic growth is narrowly based; dualistic in production and distribution; cynical and grounded in the exploitation of natural resources, and unaccompanied by systematic changed in production structure, institutional development or improvement in the living standards of the poor.

Of course, this point has long been established, that development does not only concerns man`s material needs, but also the improvement of social conditions of his life and other of his aspirations. Therefore, it suffices to state that development is not just economic growth, but a blend of growth plus changes which takes place in human.

On this note, it could be said that if the lots and fortunes of the youths in the Niger Delta are not improved upon, there is no way they can contribute to the development of Nigeria as a country. This can only be achieved by harnessing the country`s level of development in area of high and positive attainment of employment, high significant reduction of poverty and inequality in the society. If these factors (employment, poverty and inequality) in Niger Delta are taken care of, then development in the area will be compatible and complimentary with other regions of the country; even if there is waving in income per capital. Apart from the above, there are other indices of development such as health care provisions, adequate educational opportunities, citizen inalienable rights, other infrastructural development which are relevant factors in determining the achievement of human potentials in the society. These if missing can keep an area perpetually underdeveloped, (Ogbuagu, 2012,p. 3).



Various Tenets of Development and Development Theories

The themes, subject, issues and debates about development have gone through many surgical moments concerning the evolvement since World War II in 1945. This means, there had been so many postulations, viewpoints and schools of thought which have emerged from social scientists, development economists, to mention a few, with varied explanations of the concepts (multidisciplinary approaches). And according to Ogbuagu (2012,p.5), this may be the reason why Jefferson argued that, in so complicated a scientist as political economy, no one axiom can laid down as wise and expedient for all times and circumstances, and for their contraries.

Seers, (1997,p.39) in trying to proffer his explanations stated thus, the challenges of any period depend on the tasks that face those living in it. Various schools of thought came up with their views about economic development which is a tenet of development immediately after the second World War. The views spread into two divergent contexts namely: the developed (wealthy) and the underdeveloped (poor) countries.

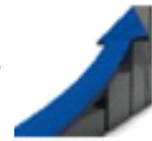
According to Oguagu (2012,p.5), the wealthy countries accounted for about 25 percent of the World`s population and were often referred and seen as exclusive club which comprises of Western European Countries and North America, United States of America and Canada): a part of the globe which dominates the world interms of economic and technological power. The others which account for about 75 percent of the population of the world were grouped as poor and underdeveloped. Regions under these categories were Africa, Latin America and Asia, although in recent times some nations mainly China and Asian Tigers have evolved into important economic giants and are major players in the world economic and power. The common features which differentiate the two societies are the fact that the developed countries have improved the social conditions wellbeing institutions aspirations of her people, and the underdeveloped have not. These assertions sounded very saucy to the plethora of nations whose living standard falls within the underdeveloped concept. This is not just a mere axiom because the standard of living and institutions in those continents are in very sorry states.

In a bid to expand the views about economic development, Ogbuagu, (2012,p.2)gave five major schools of thought and their subsidiaries namely:

- a. Classical schools of thought
- b. Linear stage growth model and social development stage theory
- c. Neo-Marxist and dependency approach
- d. Neo-classical theory

Classical schools of thought and its view about development

The school of thought on economic development came up in the 1930s and early 1950s with the primary focus on economic growth and capital formation gotten through production and cost-effective allocation of resources and through the market. This view point as stated by



Ogbuagu (2012,p.9) dominated the debate on how the developing countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia should proceed with their search for economic development. This according to the theory as presented is to harness areas of production of primary goods for export, and secondly the theory prescribed the importance and prominence to be given to the modernization and expansion of the agricultural sector, where they could have comparative advantage.

Ruminating on this theory, policy makers and governance in trying to plan for Niger Delta Youths must not lose sight of harnessing the agricultural sector, since it is the starting or departure point from underdevelopment to development. But the issue of development goes beyond economic growth according to Adelman and Morris in Ogbuagu (2012, p.2). But as a take point, if the youths from the Niger Delta Area learn skills and their products are patronized heavily, there will be economy of scale and they will have a change of status.

Linear stage of growth model and social development stage theory

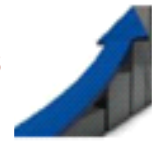
This is the extension of the conventional school theory which narrowly equate development with growth, capital formation and industrialization; a change from which Africa, Latin America and Asia are not part of. Scholars who postulated this theory are Walt Whitman Rostow, S.w Lewis, Timbergen, M.H Dobb, H.W. Singer, Gunnar Myrdal, Kyman Adelman and others.

According to Rostow in Ogbuagu (2012, pp. 12-13) developed countries have sequentially passed through the following stages: Traditional society, preconditions far from take-off, to take off, drive to maturity and the age of mass consumption. The implication of these stages is that countries trying to develop have to pass through these stages their European counter parts went through. According to Contreras, (2009, p. 11) quoting Rostow, take-off stage is when the degree of productive economic activity reaches a critical level and produce changes which lead to a massive and progressive structural transformation of the economy and society. By this, it means, if all the structures experience transformation then development would have taken place and this also includes the youths.

The development of Nigeria as a country is not tied to the hands of few individuals alone. For the country to experience the Linear-stage and Structural development, everybody, irrespective of their region must be affected. But this principle (Linea-stage of growth) must first be government before youths can key into the developmental process; that is, from small scale to a large one (capital formation to industrialization).

Neo-Marxist and Dependence Approach

The quest for an alternative approach to development led many liberal scholars disappointed with ideologies of classical and neo-classical theories which had little or nothing to address the problems of the developing economies.



This argument led them to embrace the neo-Marxist alternative and the development of the dependence school of thought. According to Han Singer in Ogbuagu, (2012, pp. 16-17) liberal scholars raised the doubts as to the possibility of conventional ideas engendering a small economic gap between the centre and periphery nations.

Firstly, Ogbuagu, (2012) questioned the accuracy of the classical notion and that free and unrestricted international trade will lead to economic development breakthrough of “periphery” countries, and secondly, he stresses that the idea of specialization of the developing countries on production and export of raw materials to the north was not a good and acceptable option. Singer pointed out that since in the (1850s) the trend of prices has been heavily against sellers of food and raw materials and favour of sellers of manufactured articles (goods).

To this end, Adelman and Morris in Ogbuagu (2012, p.12) aligned their argument with that of the Neo-Marxists and dependencies approach, which sees the production, sells and distribution of goods as economic development goes beyond production as development to them, issues of economic development goes beyond production of goods and services, which has to do with the upgrading of the institutions which will at different ends assist the building of human capacity and aspirations.

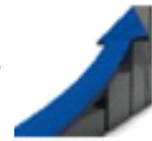
Neo-classical Theory

The neo-classical school resurfaced in the 1980s with an apparent uncontrolled or unrestricted influence; especially as many of the leading Northern governments were largely controlled and dominated by powerful followers of this economic theory. The most important part of the theory is that government should not interfere with the country's economy. This position was applied particularly to the developing economies (Ogbuagu 2012, pp. 24-25).

According to Contreras (2009, p.15), the government of these countries should have limited intervention in other economies, and less central in the market place in order to stimulate domestic development. The school argued that the economic difficulties are been experienced in developing countries because of poorly designed policies and excessive interference in the economy by government.

Here again, the issue of “Market” which solely promote production, buying and selling came up. The position of economic growth by some scholars of the theory that deals with production and distribution had never been equated with economic development. This is because according to Adelman and Morris in Ogbuagu (2012, p.12) development has to do with both economic growths plus human capacity, and institutional building and other human aspirations.

According to Amos & Nein, (2018, p.87) it is a process which seeks to bridge the gap between the poverty line of the poor and the rich; by way of transforming the entire area and institutions of the society which will in turn improve the quality and standard of living, creating employment opportunities and eliminating every impediments of development. The views of



Amos and Nein tallies with the conceptual explanation of the Seers, (1969, p.203). According to him, development goes beyond capital accumulation and economic growth, but also as a condition to which the citizens of a country have access to adequate food, job opportunities and non-wider income gap.

According to Ibaba, (2005) development is a process of growth which overlaps to self-reliance and contentment. That it is a process of which individuals, groups and communities obtains the ability to be responsible for their own lives welfare and future. In all the various definitions presented, the one of Ibaba (2005) has direct bearing with this study; which shows how youths could be self-reliant. On this note, the question most people will ask, is, what behooves the youths of Nigeria, particularly those from the Niger Delta? The expectation is great!

Unemployment Problem

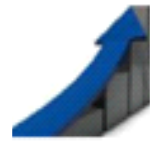
The Nigeria Observer, 22 March, 2018 edition estimated over 300,000 graduates churned out from the nation's tertiary institutions yearly. This number increased geometrically; the consequences translate to more unemployed people (youths) littering the streets of Nigeria. Data of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2018) put the possible rate at about 4 million youths entering the workforce every year with a fraction of them finding formal employment.

The spiral unemployment rate could manifest in mental health challenges, political instability, insecurity and other forms of clan destine and anti-social activities; Makbere, (2018, p. 165). This may have prompted subsequent governments in establishing intervention programmes such as, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Amnesty Programme, You-Win, Sovereign Fund Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P), Industrial Training Fund (ITF), National Empowerment (N-POWER), etc... to cushion the pinch –plights of the youths of the country, with a view to diverting their minds from nefarious activities, but to be meaningfully engaged so that they will be responsible in the future.

Unemployment and Poverty line

According to Sam Nda-Isaiah in his article published in Vaguard Newspaper of 23rd March, 2017 on the assessment of the Niger Delta Youths, says the population of the Niger Delta region is more of the young ones with nearly two-thirds of its population-estimated at 29 million – below 30 years of age.

According to him, of the 148 million people in Nigeria (Census 2006), 60 per cent are youths under 25 years and out of this number, only a small per cent finds stable employment after graduation. He maintains further that there is a likelihood of population surge of the youth out of the estimated 60 per cent of the population which is said to be youths. The NYSC Director-General, Brigadier General Suleiman Kazaure says not fewer than 300,000 graduates are mobilized



annually from the youth scheme in fair distribution and representation, it means 50,000 may be expected from each of the six (6) geopolitical zones (researcher's assumption)

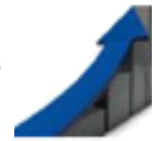
Out of this figure, Ndah-Isaiah, (2017) observed that the cases of unemployment are exacerbated in the Niger Delta region. He further noted that in spite of the vast oil resources, the Delta region is characterized by extremely high poverty levels. This claim is supported by the profiling poverty status of states published by National Bureau for statistics (NBS), (2004 and 2010) and also buttressed by Ibaba, (2005 & 2009 a & b) in Ibaba, (2017, p.18). And that over 70 per cent of the youths in the region lived below the poverty line. Ndah Isaiah's further assertion indicates that youths (15-24 years) unemployment rate is 40 per cent. The result of this assessment is saddened and disturbing that the youth in the region are still unemployed considering the opportunities provided by the federal government under NDE programmes and other relevant agencies to at least alleviate poverty level in the country and the region.

The figure given by National Bureau of statistics (NBS, 2004 and 2010), shows that states in the south-south region of the Niger Delta have more poverty index as compared to those in the south-east because it is a common knowledge that the Igbos are very enterprising based on the high commercial activities of buying and selling. But of course the willingness to engage in a business and not becoming idle lies on the person. It is a common knowledge that the average Igbo family generates funds through the sale of family landed properties to establish a trade for their wards. But the case is not so for people in the Niger Delta region. Everyone in the Niger Delta seems to be waiting for the government and to feed from whatever crumbs that drops from either the government or politicians. This attitude of 'seat don and look' has portrayed the youth from the region as sluggards and lazy, who prefer to sleep rather than to work. And the result is poverty as the Bible says in Proverbs (6:10-11).

National Development Plans and Youths Empowerment Programme

Most undeveloped countries have made development planning part of their major ingredients in the development administration process. And this activity has been a necessity for the framework to follow as a road-map to growth (if achievable) (Okereke, 2003, p. 35). Development plan or planning according to Okereke, (2003, p. 35) is an art of setting development objectives over a specific time frame, noting possible areas of programmes and strategies in attaining the objectives. The concept development and planning affects every individual and sector of the economy of any nation; Amos & Nein, (2018: p. 87). This means in planning, every country must involve and take into account her youth; and create a place for them to grow. The inability of any country to involve youths in her planning will create vacuum to the nation in the future.

Nigeria from independence has witness six (6) development plans with the last one tagged "Vision 2020". All the plans have their perspectives covering agriculture, commerce, education, industrial matters etc... but without clear definitions and terms on how to solve youth problems or



integrating them into the blue prints of the country's developmental quest for growth. Although government has in recent times come out with programmes to engage the youths; but that seems not enough.

In his account, Okereke, 2005, p. 36) lamented the poor implementation processes of the nation's development plans which was more or less centered on selected projects without due consideration on the participation of the population being planned for. And deferring the roles of the youths without including them at the inception of planning according to Alamiyeseigha, (2005, p. 163) is inimical to the growth and development of the youth in particular and the nation in general.

Challenges Facing the Youth

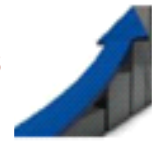
The United Nations defines youth as a person between the ages of 15 –24, while in some countries like Nigeria; there is an extension of the age from 25-40. All over the world, there are great expectations of our youths – ‘youths as our future’, youths as leaders of tomorrow’, ‘youths as catalysts for national growth and development’, youths as the architect of tomorrow’, ‘youths as the unquantifiable assets of a greater tomorrow’, the adjectives to qualify what youths are, are too numerous. If the youths of today are to be leader of Nigeria tomorrow, then how great they become tomorrow must depend on how well they are harnessed in the present day observed Alamiyeseigha, (2005, p. 168).

According to the radical Caribbean writer Frantz Fanon quoted in Alamiyeseigha, (2005):

“Described the African youths as the clay of anti-colonial revolution, that they are the trustees of the nation and the hope of the future. The recognition of this has made most governments to design clear-cut policies on youth development. In acknowledgement of this, successive Nigerian governments have set up various programmes for her youths, for instance, the establishment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme which took off in 1973 and many others. But unfortunately, this has not better the lots of the youths”. (p. 164)

In furtherance to this, Alamiyeseigha (2005) also noted that:

“It is felt that the inability and inadequacy of the government to improve on the established ones had led to the youth being used by political profiteers who have given them shattered hopes, dreams and false expectations. This has made many of them become beggarly and so cheap in the eyes of their masters and the general public because of governments’ inability to provide enabling training ground in entrepreneurial skills and putting what they have learnt in working prospects. The youth without any sense of direction have rather taken to drug addiction, casual sex labour and other types of anti-social vices thereby making them loss the sense of leadership” (p. 165).



The overall result is, the shutting of the doors of leadership against the youth noted Hamzat, (2013). He further opined that youth's inclusion into governance is imperative as no nation can prosper with its youth lacking key decisions and making insignificant contributions in government.

Another trend of challenges facing the youth is poverty which in a long term has led to the increasing disparity between the wealthiest and the poorest. This according to Darmini, (1999), Adedokun & Oluwagbohunnim (2014) the polarization increases, those who have lots of problems and limited skills remains at the bottom of the society, whereas those who have opportunity of achieving high skills can easily climb to the top in life. That means, in hard times, people with potentials and prospects are the likely ones to be accommodated than those who do not have any prospect. And if those who have prospects are helped, it means those without can't be helped.

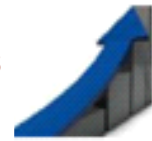
There is no doubt, problems and life challenges are inevitable, the storms must be there, but it can never remain forever, the most important thing is for one to start preparation and plan towards achievement in the future. Hamzat further identified other areas working against youths as peer group negative influence, poor family upbringing, etc... These and many more if faced with the youths of any country can make it impossible for them to strive. That is why Hamzat (2013) charged and urged the youth of Nigeria to take a stand in the 2015 general elections. This must preclude stages of preparations.

The Niger Delta Conflicts: The need for the youth to embrace peace now

The description of the Niger Delta according to Ibaba, (2017, p. 6) and Etekpe, (2009, pp. 29-31) has elicited two broad definitions: one, that it is described as a geographical entity and the other that which sees it as an oil producing region. Despite these descriptions, it will be worthwhile to state that the Niger Delta is in the southern part of Nigeria and has a land mass of about 112, 110 kilo meters. The vast land is spread across five ecological zones namely: low land rain forest zone, the montane zone, derived savannah zone, fresh water swamp zone and the mangrove forest/vegetation zone (NDDC, Act of 2006). According to Singh & Lindel (1995) and Ibaba (2017), the Nigeria Delta topography is just two metres above the sea level. Other characteristics are the flatness; high rain falls, with creeks and rivers, (Ibaba, 2017, p.7).

From the geographical description, the definition accommodates 6 states namely, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers as component states of the region, while the inclusion of Abia, Imo and Ondo states is based on the premise of oil producing region. The later consideration of the definition according to Etekpe (2009, pp. 29-31), Tamuno, (2008, pp. xxi-3), Omotola, (2010), & Ibaba (2017, p. 6), is in the policy circle. But the six states structure of the region in view of Etekpe, (2007, p. 122) was derived from Niger Delta Development Board Act of 2007 which graciously extended the number of states to nine. This is deliberate!

Over the years, the region has been the main economic source of the nation called Nigeria, but the area has not been properly developed. This according to the stand point of Collier & Hoeffler



in Ibaba (2017, p. 8) has led to conflicts due to what they described as greed and grievance. The greed explanation according to them is blamed on conflict entrepreneurs who are driven by economic gains, in the face of available captured natural resources. And the second is grievance perspective blamed violence on grievance resulting from deprivation. These and many more are the perceived causes of conflicts in the region that has instigated agitations by the youth of the region to seek redress on the area over the years, Alamieyeseigha (2005). The height and the heat of these strong agitations by various groups like the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDVF) among many others led to the formulation of some developmental interventionist policies as a means of response to alleviate the plights and problems of the region and to bring peace.

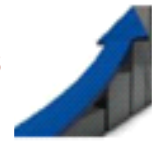
First among these was the enunciation of the presidential committee set up and established in 1982 to manage the 135 percent mineral producing areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) created in 1992 and the subsequent establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in (2001), Etekpe, (2009, pp. 29-33) and the further creation of the Ministry for Niger Delta Affairs. These were all created to bring succor, to cushion the poverty effect and the under development problems of the region. The mandates of these agencies and ministry include rendering services, the provision of social infrastructure and, environmental management, particularly in the remediation of the oil spill and gas flare impacted areas, (Okoko, e'tal (2017, p. 34).

The point that is made here is, if the government in its magnanimity, albeit not commensurate with what they make from the region and considering the damage they have caused, the youths on their part should break camp, give peace a chance, embrace the gestures and move ahead in life. Let them come out from the creeks, rivers and integrate themselves into the society, pick up their shattered lives and start up something new so that they can be meaningful (useful) tomorrow. If the likes of former military ruler, General Yakubu Gowon and former President Olusengun Obasanjo could think of going back to school despite their positions as former leaders and went in pursuit of a doctorate degree in their various fields, the youths who are still young can also make it.

The argument posited here is that it is not too late for them to start something for the sake of tomorrow especially now that the bill for 'Not Too Young to Run' has just been signed to law by President Buhari in 2018 to allow some level of youths within the age of 25 – 35 to contest and vie for any elective position of their choice in the country. Youths of Niger Delta extraction must wake up now and prepare to take up the leadership roles tomorrow, but this must precede serious preparatory and assiduous home work in readiness to fill the gaps.

The Need for Acquisition of Skills

One of the direct results of our poor educational system is that our university graduates depend solely on the government and the oil companies for employment. The reason is that they



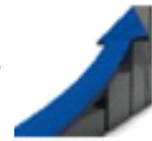
have not been trained to be self-dependent, hence they find it difficult to improve their prospects (Alamieseigha, 2005, p. 168). According to him, the 6-3-3-4 education system introduced in 1980s was meant to help the youth identify their areas of interest and where they can possibly do well. The 6-3-3-4 programme was designed to accommodate those at the junior secondary level who do not perform well academically to have paintings among others as a trade to learn. Contrary to this, the young ones leave school without a trade. Many who drop-out of the primary or secondary school is due to parent's inability.

It is perhaps for this reason that the government with the support of the private sectors, international bodies, non-governmental organizations and other humanitarian bodies thought of setting up skill acquisition centres; with the expectation of equipping it with both human and material resources capable of helping to transform the young people to integrate into the society to contribute and not to be destructive elements. These development agencies include the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Empowerment (N-Power), Sovereign Fund Reinvestment Programme (Sure-p), Industrial Training Fund (ITF) at the federal level, and the various Skills Acquisition Programmes enunciated by the various state governments. The essence is to assist in building up human capacity for the youth so that they will be self-reliant, but these gestures have not been fully utilized or maximized. It is expected that these programmes if properly embraced by the youth particularly those from the Niger Delta region, will create and enlarge opportunities for them to be motivated to becoming responsible adults. But it seems the youths are not ready to change their status, rather they still want to remain resolute with the view and perception that the government is actually not doing anything to cushion the effect of unemployment problems in the society. In view of this, the researcher made a visit to the Bayelsa State Office of the (NDE) to understudy the types of trainings and programmes they have designed for all categories of persons.

The establishment of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) came up on the 20th March, 1986 following the compelling needs for the country to have a permanent institutional mechanism to tackle the issue of unemployment in the country. The establishment is in accordance with the Directorate's enabling Acts, CAP 250 Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), formerly known as Decree No 29 of 1989 which gave it the legal backing as an employment agency charged with the responsibility to design and implement programme capable of combating unemployment, (NDE, 2006, p. 2).

It was also given the mandate to articulate policies aimed at developing programmes with labour intensive potentials as well as to obtain and maintain a data bank on employment and vacancies in the country, with a view to acting as a clearing house to link job seekers with vacancies (NDE, 2006, p. 2)

According to its report, the means to actualize the mandate of creating employment, the NDE developed four (4) well-articulated employment creating programmes namely: Vocational



Skills Development (VSD), Small Scale Enterprises (SSE), Rural Employment Promotion (REP) and Special Public Works (SPW). The objectives of these programmes were said to be achievable through the delivery of the following training strategies. Vocational Skills Acquisition, Entrepreneurship, Shop/Employment Training, Rural Employment Promotion, Labour based works, Employment counseling and linkages as well as Enterprise Creation through resettlement of those trained to set up their own small business (NDE, 2006, p. 2)

The report also explained the Vocational Skills Development (VSD) as a programme designed for Vocational Skill acquisition training for unemployed school leavers and drop-outs in over 8 trades across the country. Such school leavers are attached to master craftsmen and women as apprentices under what is categorized as National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS). The scheme is to make school leavers acquire skills between 3 and 24 months. This was further upgraded in 2018 from B-NOAS (those without basic education qualification but have been trained by NDE to A-NOAS (those who have been trained (Advanced training from the NDE).

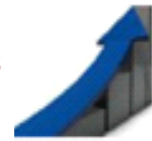
In areas where there are no craftsmen and women, a well-equipped mobile training workshop are deployed to train the target youth for 3 months under what is called the School-on-Wheels (SOW), scheme. The NDE do not create jobs for only school drop-outs, but also provide jobs for unemployed graduates of tertiary institutions as well as retired public and private sector workers under the aegis of the Small Scale Enterprises (SSE). Those on target here are to be exposed to Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) and Start – Your – Business (SYOB). As part of the gesture from the federal government, graduates are given soft loans, to set up micro enterprises while many others are linked up to credit institutions for loan.

The NDE from its inception according to her report (2019, p. 6) has made concerted effort to collaborate with both local and international organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), World Bank, UNDP and the German Technical Assistance Agency (GTZ). And back home it has also collaborated with agencies such as National Youth Service Corps, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Federal Ministry of Finance and National Planning (FMFNP), N-Power, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) National Commission for Refuges Migrants and Displaced Persons (NCRMDP), State and Local Governments, National Assembly Members, some federal universities and so on, to make the programme built into curriculum of higher institutions in order for the exercise to gain credibility.

From these underpinnings, it could be said that any youth who really wants to be relevant to himself, family and the society at large can key into any of these areas to start-up something today, so that there will be food on his/her table tomorrow; after all its often said “no food for a lazy man,” and “the future is pregnant”.

Methodology

This research uses both the primary and secondary data. The content analysis of various government publications especially reports of the National Directorate of Employment (which



covers a period of eight (8) years), textbooks and other documents pertaining to this work were adopted. Pie and bar charts was used since the researcher basically relied on the NDE reports.

Theoretical framework

This study adopted the choice and developmental theories. The choice theory is the first theoretical model. It posits that individuals have a choice, (decision), and have a free will to control their actions. The theory further asserts that crime and delinquency are the outcomes or results of the gains individuals believe they would get after evaluating the risks involved, (Iwarimie-Jaja, 2010,pp. 66-67).

The other considered theory is the development theory which believes that delinquent youths (young offenders) do not choose to commit crime or do not become an offenders) do not choose to influenced by factors in the environment which serves as forces beyond their control. In fact, according to Lombroso in Iwarimie – Jaja (2010, pp.66-67), crime and criminal tendencies are inborn or inherited traits including genetic inheritance and morphological makeup or body type which triggers a person to commit crime.

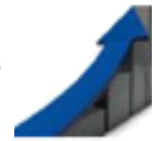
These theories seem to be contradictory or standing opposite each other, but the first says delinquent youths can be actions borne out of choice and free will control; while the second theory is positing that crimes committers do not have to choose to commit crime, rather, the offender carries out the crime based on environmental influence or factors, which are forces beyond the offenders control.

The crux of the matters is that crime is evil, and everybody knows what is good and bad. The point here is whether the offenders is able to evaluate or control their actions or not, evil and its consequences are known to everybody, and if one has the penchant to committing crimes(s) having known that crime offenders can be punished if caught, it then implies that those who give themselves to criminal and delinquencies equally have the choice of saying no to such acts.

Secondly, people who are compelled to committing crime based on environmental influence, born out of biological traits indicate that neurological and genetic factors or disorders are responsible for certain abnormal behaviours (e.g aggressive and violent behavior) and that as they continue in the crime (whether by choice or under influence of certain factors) are tending toward negative ego development and faulty personality build up Freud, in Iwarimi-Jaja, (2010, pp.66-67). This means that whatsoever choice of character one makes and keeps overtime develops to become one's pattern of life.

Applying the Theories

The two theories are looking at crimes and delinquencies propelled either by choice or influence of some environmental factors. Youths who are indulged in violence and other criminal acts which are adjudged evil to both human and the society also have the choice of controlling and resisting to commit crime against humanity or the state. Instead of choosing to, or allowing one to commit crime, one should choose to learn a trade and to keep one's self busy to avoid being lured



into criminal acts. Again, instead of living in the bush and committing one heinous crime upon another, against humanity and the state, they should make the choice of enrolling in the Federal Government enunciated programmes and be trained so that they can come out to be integrated and be useful to themselves, family, state and the society at large. This is because what one does continuously becomes a habit which later becomes one’s character overtime, Freud in Iwarimie – Jaja (2010, pp.66-67).

Data Presentation and Analysis

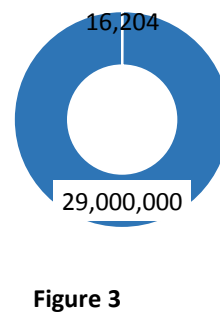
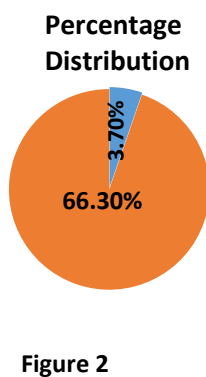
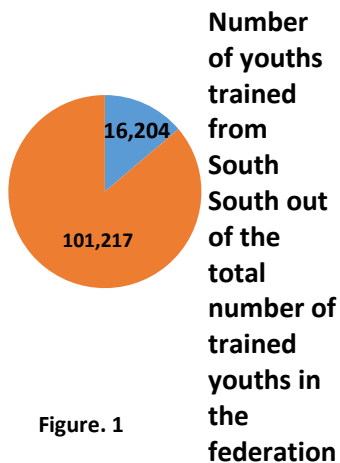
The aim of this study is to ascertain the level of preparedness of the youths of the Niger Delta using the National Directorate of Employment (NDEs) reports covering an eight-year periods as a measure. The essence is to know how many youths from the region keyed into the various lenitive programs of the directorate to better their lives.

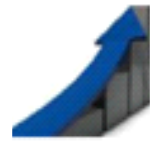
For clear presentation the summary of the NDEs jobs generation activities of 2006, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019 respectively are presented for analysis to aid the findings of this study.

Table 1: Below is the summary of NDE’s job generation activities in 2006

S/N	STATE	VSD				SSE		REP		SPW	TOTAL
		NOAS	SOW	RS	SYOB	EDP	ECR	PPP	RHS	54	
1	A/Ibom	1.198	-	27	100	2216	4	200	100	54	3,952
2	Bayelsa	1,426	-	13	92	980	-	200	87	54	2,951
3	C/River	912	26	40	200	1346	-	200	-	54	2,816
4	Delta	1,491	120	35	-	-	-	200	100	54	2,168,
5	Edo	1,222	-	0	71	478	-	200	240	54	2,323
6	Rivers	1,671	-	26	-	-	-	200	93	54	1,994
Total											16,204

Source: NDE (2006:1) Annual Report.





Charts in figure 1,2,&3 showed the distributions earned by states in the Niger Delta Region.

Source: field survey, 2022 with the aid of NDE's report for (2006)

The NDE's job generation profile of (2006, p.1) indicates that, states in the Niger Delta had a total of 16,202 beneficiaries from all the trades out of 117,421 job opportunities that were created, only 13.7% came from the region. This figure is very infinitesimal compared to the population of youths (29 million) from the region. See charts below:

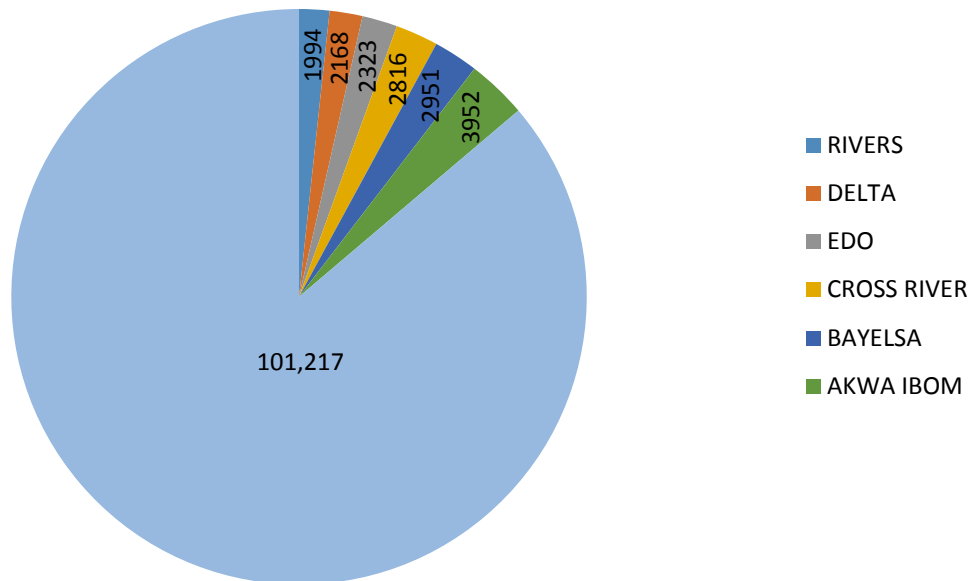


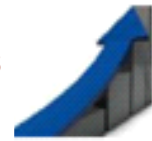
Figure 4: pie chart showing the distribution.

Table 2: National Directorates of employment Table showing summary of NDE Beneficiaries for south-south, Jan-Dec. 2010

S/N	STATE	TOTAL
1	Akwa Ibom	7,237
2	Bayelsa	5,565
3	Cross River	4,807
4	Delta	8,808
5	Edo	3,600
6	Rivers	3,773
		33,790

Source: NDE (2010: VI) Annual Report.

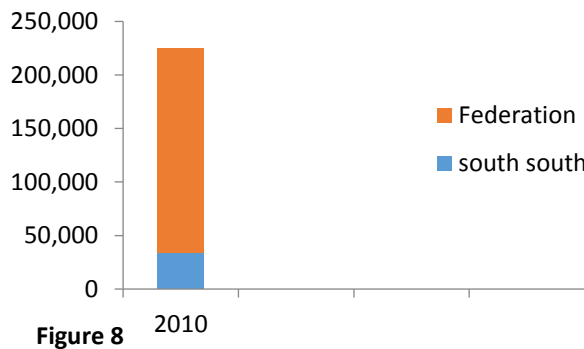
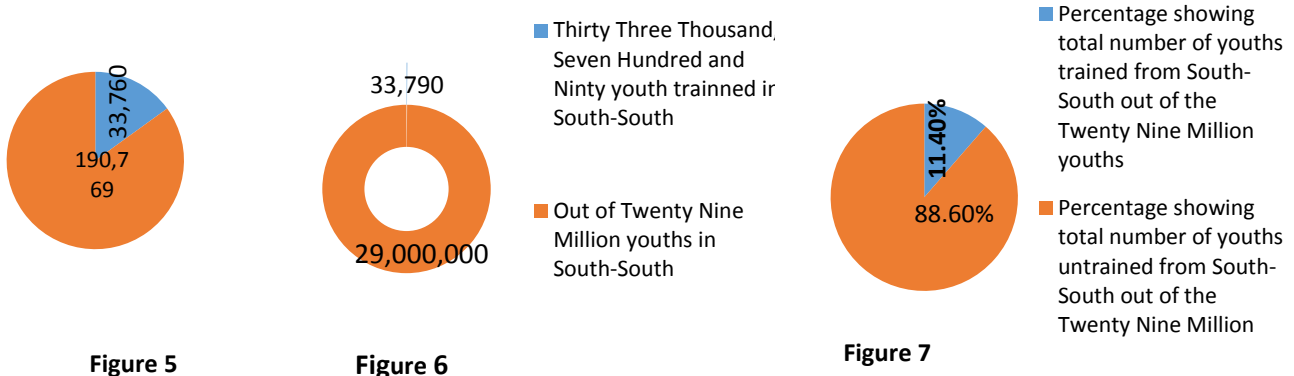
Table 2 indicated the total number of youths who availed themselves in the 2010 NDE development programmes under different schemes from the six states that make up the Niger Delta



region. The number stood at 33,790 out of 224,559 in the whole federation. Here again, it is worrisome that only a pocket of youths made use of the opportunities provided by the federal government.

The vision of the NDE is to create jobs for all (ie. those who want to be trained) and its mission statement has remained to design and implement job creation programmes that will promote attitude change, employment generation, poverty reduction and wealth creation, from its establishment, the NDE had never turned down the request of any applicant because of the purpose and reason it was established for. Based on this premise, it will be right to say unequivocally that the youth from the Niger Delta has not yet thought it wise to embrace the opportunities to be trained and be useful tomorrow, that out of 29 million youths, only a fragment of 33,790 were trained in (2010, p.vi) this amount to only 15% of those who partook in the training came from the Niger Delta region.

Chart below shows their level of willingness to be trained for the future.



Source: field survey (2022) with the aid of NDE (2010) report

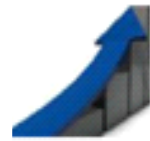


Figure 5, revealed that out of 190,769 only 33,760 emanates from states in the Niger Delta region. Figure 6 indicated that only 33,790 youths participated and were trained out of the total of 29 million (11.40%) youths from the region. Leaving a total of 28.9million. This includes the 50,000 possible graduates (estimated by NYSC) from the region. From this, it could be interpreted that both the graduates and non-graduates never took advantage of the training opportunity given by NDE. Figure 9 showed the Bar chart of the total number of participants in the country and those from the south-south geopolitical zone.

Table 3. Summary of NDE Beneficiaries for south-south January- Decembers 2012

S/N	STATE	TOTAL
1	A/Ibom	6,777
2	Bayelsa	2,727
3	C/River	3,125
4	Delta	2,887
5	Edo	11,627
6	Rivers	1,312
	Total	28,455

Source: NDE (2012:9) Annual Report.

The Table 3 shows total number of beneficiaries from the NDE scheme which comprises of VSD, SSE, REP, SPW for the year 2012 from south-south geopolitical zone (Niger Delta) region. The total number for each state represents male and female who participated in programmes of vocational skill development, (VSD) scale Enterprises (SSE) Rural Employment programme (REP) and the special public work (SPW).

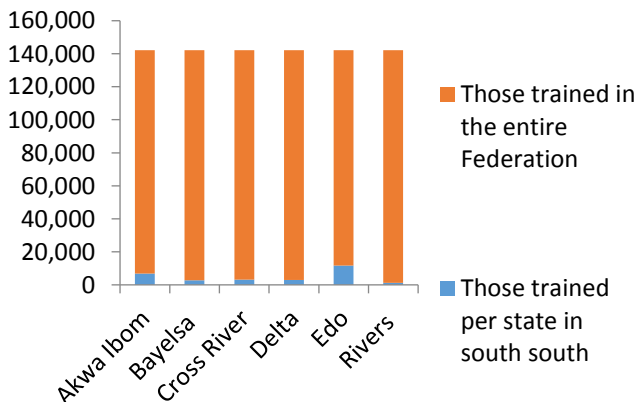


Figure 9

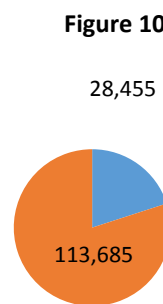


Figure 10

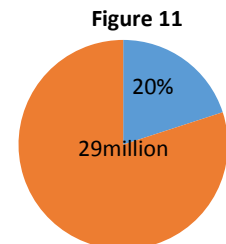
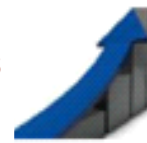


Figure 11



Source: field survey (2022) with the aid of NDE (2012) report

Out of the 142,135 opportunities, the states in the region could only have a total of 28,455 showing only 20% of the entire figures, whereas three (3) state from the North (Adamawa, Zamfara & Jáduna) have a total of 21,220 participants who benefitted from the various NDE training schemes. Comparing these two regions, one would say that the youth of the Niger Delta region did not take advantage of the exercise. This is not an issue of head count or politics, but issue that has to do with willingness, preparedness and plans to change ones future, which could be summarized that the youth of Niger Delta did not exploit the chance to better their lives.

Table 4: Showing summary of NDE and the Beneficiaries from the Niger Delta state (south-south) January –December 2013

S/N	STATE	TOTAL
1	A/Ibom	1,406
2	Bayelsa	658
3	C/River	662
4	Delta	553
5	Edo	2,120
6	Rivers	452
		5,851

Source: NDE (2013: p.3) Annual Report

Table 4 revealed the total number of youths who took part in the various training schemes of the NDE in the year (2013:3). Although it could be observed that the figures of trainees in the entire federation did not make progress, rather it nose –dived as it could be seen that only an armful of youths numbering 5,851 from the states in the south-south participated in the training, out of the total of 39,101 who took part in whole federation. Our concern here however is the youth from the Niger Delta, and how they accept the hand of fellowship provided by the Federal government via training programmes to become employed. The questions raised here are, where are the rest 28.999 million youth? What work are they doing during this period under review?

From the result, it means that only 0.02% of the 29 million youths in the region were trained in that year; meaning that the rest were not doing any meaningful Job.

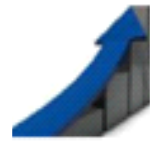


Table 5: Summary of NDE’s Job generation for beneficiaries Jan-Dec, 2015

S/N	STATE	TOTAL
1	A/Ibom	1,190
2	Bayelsa	1,168
3	C/River	1,676
4	Delta	1,464
5	Edo	5,132
6	Rivers	1,001
Total		11,631

Source: NDE (2015, p.8) Annual Report

Table 5 showed the total number of beneficiaries from the NDE (Vocational Skills Development) who are from the Niger Delta. It reveals that out of 57,805 opportunities, only 11,631 emanated from the Niger Delta Region representing only 20.1%. This figure is absolutely too small compared to the 29 million youth in the region (census, (2006), NDE’s report (2015, p.8).

Apart from those who avail themselves for the opportunities provided by the federal government through the NDE, the question is what about the remaining 28,988 million youths who could not grab the opportunity? What will their future look like? Poverty will just be steering at their faces if they are not engaged meaningfully or formally, because even the illicit- jobs they do will one day fail and be brought to an end if they are caught.

Charts below shows:

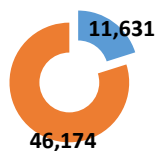


Fig. 12: Total number of trained youths out of the Whole youths trained in the Federation.

Figure 12

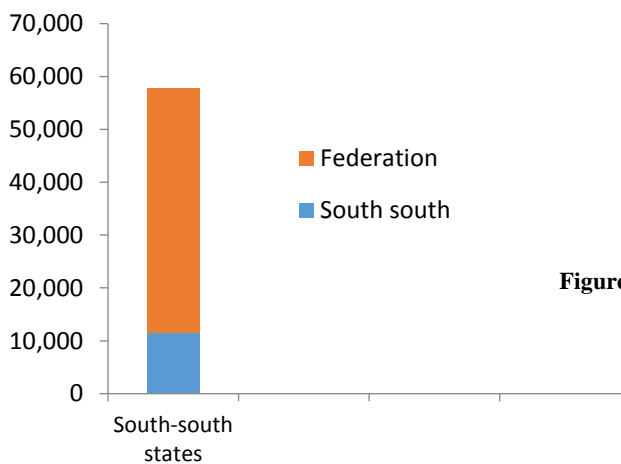


Figure 13

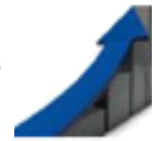


Table 6: Summary of NDE’s Job generation for beneficiaries Jan-Dec; 2016.

S/N	STATE	VSD		SSE		RED		SPW		TOTAL
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Akwa-ibom	191	142	0	9	14	1	74	37	
2	Bayelsa	47	64	36	14	27	10	39	33	
3	Cross River	183	150	0	0	13	2	92	76	
4	Delta	42	70	29	21	23	12	42	72	
5	Edo	120	219	0	0	16	15	23	21	
6	Rivers	39	72	38	12	27	12	44	40	
Total		1339		150		172		593		3,216

Source: NDE annual report, 2016

Table 6 showed the distribution of number of trades for states in South-south for both male and female. The table looks a bit complex as compared to the 2010-2015. From 2010-2015, there were no distribution between male female but 2016,2017 and 2019 showed how the distribution for each state is shared between male and female. Be that as it may, the summation of both male and female make for the total distribution for each trade (skill) from each state of the south-south region. Thus, for Vocational Skill Development (VSD) programme the total number of both male and female trained in the Federation plus FCT was 8503 in 2016 out of this number, only 1,339 emanated from the south-south states. This indicates that only 15.74% of the over 29million youths avail themselves for training opportunity under the NDE Scheme to better their lots.

On Small Scale Enterprise (SSE) for the 2016, were only 150 from the six states that make up the South-south out of 1285. This is accounted for only 11.6% of the total number of people that were given the financial leverage for empowerment. That is to say only 11.6% of over 29million youths were trained by NDE. Training on Rural Empowerment Programme (REP), the number of people (male and female) that were trained and resettled cases from the South-south was 172 out of 1249. This accounts for only 13.7%.

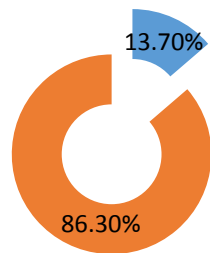
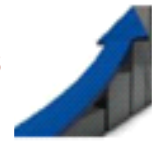


Figure 14



While out the total of 3,216 that were trained in the Special Public Works (SPW) by NDE throughout the federation 593 emanates from the south-south states on SPW trade. This figure accounts for 18.4% of the total of over 29million youths from the region. In all, a total of 19,253 were trained nationwide, but only 3,216 came from the south-south zone.

In 2017, the National Directorate of Employment carried out a new formation of training under the Vocational skill Development (VSD) which scheme has the National Open Apprenticeship by categorizing the training into:

- a. The Basic National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (B-NOAS) and
- b. The Advance National Open Apprenticeship (A-NOAS) (2017, NDE report, pp. 10-11).

The Basic National Open Apprenticeship (B-NOAS) is a scheme through which unemployed school leavers are recruited and posted to Master craft men/women who informed sector operators to acquire descent skills that can earn then job opportunities.

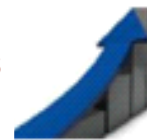
In all, seventy six thousand, four hundred (76,400) unemployed youths of males/females were trained. According to the NDE (2017 report, p. 11) she overshot her target from 76,400 to 76,900 a difference of 8500. The advanced was designed for Artisans who were graduates of the B-NOAS. The scheme according NDE report (2017, p. 12) is to bridge the skills-gap and upgrade the skills of the benefiting persons who are business (ie) to enable them have higher level of competence

Table-7 below which shows participants from south-south for B-NOAS.

S/N	STATE	NO. RECRUITED		NO. GRADUATED		NO. STILL IN TRAINING		TOTAL OF SCUCESS OF TRAINEES
		M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Akwa-Ibom	859	1051	859	1051	Nil	Nil	1110
2	Bayelsa	614	1413	550	886	64	524	591
3	Cross River	854	883	854	883	Nil	Nil	1731
4	Delta	880	1120	880	1120	Nil	Nil	2000
5	Edo	600	1400	600	1400	Nil	Nil	2000
6	Rivers	600	1400	600	1400	Nil	Nil	2000
								10,232

Source: research NDE annual report, 2017

Table 7 shows beneficiaries of VSD for south-south. That out of 76,900 beneficiaries' nation-wide, only 10,232 came from the south-south extraction. Which is to say out of over 29million youths from the region, only 0.04% of the youths shows interest to be trained.



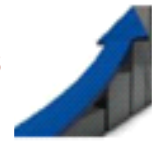
The NDE report also shows that in the month of October, 2017 another set of training was enunciated for the entire 36 states plus the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Total number of youths trained were four thousand, eight hundred and seventy (4,870), however, 4,612 trainees covering the entire 36 states and Abuja commenced training on the 29th October, 2017 in different vocational and technical skills.

Table 8 which shows the trainees from South-south extraction.

S/N	STATE	NO. RECRUITED		NO. GRADUATED		NO. STILL IN TRAINING		TOTAL OF SCUCCESS OF TRAINEES
		M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Akwa-Ibom	57	93	857	93	Nil	Nil	150
2	Bayelsa	22	78	22	78	Nil	Nil	100
3	Cross River	71	79	71	79	Nil	Nil	150
4	Delta	23	73	21	71	Nil	Nil	92
5	Edo	103	150	103	150	Nil	Nil	253
6	Rivers	31	69	31	69	Nil	Nil	100
								845

Source: NDE Report, Oct 2017, 2nd window training opportunity.

Table 8 shows the number of trainees from south-south region who participated for the Oct, 2017 second window training opportunity, out of 4,612 only 845 youths were from the south-south states. Again, this figure (845) would be seen as very infinitesimal if compared to the total of 29 million youths that makes up the south-south zone (NDE report 2017, pp. 13 & 15).



On the A-NOAS beneficiaries,

Table 9: reflection of those from south-south.

S/N	STATE	NO. RECRUITED		NO. GRADUATED		NO. STILL IN TRAINING		TOTAL OF SCUCCESS OF TRAINEES
		M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Akwa-Ibom	10	10	10	10	Nil	Nil	20
2	Bayelsa	10	10	10	10	Nil	Nil	20
3	Cross River	11	9	11	9	Nil	Nil	20
4	Delta	11	9	11	9	Nil	Nil	20
5	Edo	6	14	6	14	Nil	Nil	20
6	Rivers	8	12	8	12	Nil	Nil	20
								120

Source: NDE report, 2017 for A-NOAS

Table 9 showed youths from the south-south zone who participated in the Advanced National Open Apprenticeship (A-NOAS) for the year 2017. That a total of 740 youths that there trained in the federation, only 120 youths from south-south participated in the advanced scheme.

The NDE annual report for 2017 says that, under the Basic National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (B-NOAS) a total of 26,174 unemployed youths benefited from various training across the 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). And on the Advanced National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (A-NOAS) which was designed for artisans who were graduates of B-NOAS, a total of 1,400 graduates benefited from the upgrade A-NOAS Scheme. The interest of this study is to know how many south-south youths took the opportunity to be trained to change their futures.

Table 10: Rate of participation of south-south youths in NDE training scheme (VSD) for 2019.

S/N	STATE	B-NOAS		A-NOAS		TOTAL
		M	F	M	F	
1	Akwa-Ibom	255	370	0	0	625
2	Bayelsa	409	434	90	10	943
3	Cross River	170	388	11	39	1008
4	Delta	204	746	-	-	950
5	Edo	764	1,221	30	20	2,035
6	Rivers	235	715	22	28	1,000
GRAND TOTAL						1,561

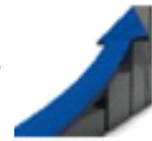


Table 10 shows the total number of youths trained in the state of the federation and FCT (Abuja) in the year 2019 was for 27,574 (NDE, 2019, pp. 11-14). The south-south youths featured only 6,561 youths, out of the 29million youths from the region.

Figure 19: showing Bar chart representing states in South-South showing training activities of the NDE and the years.

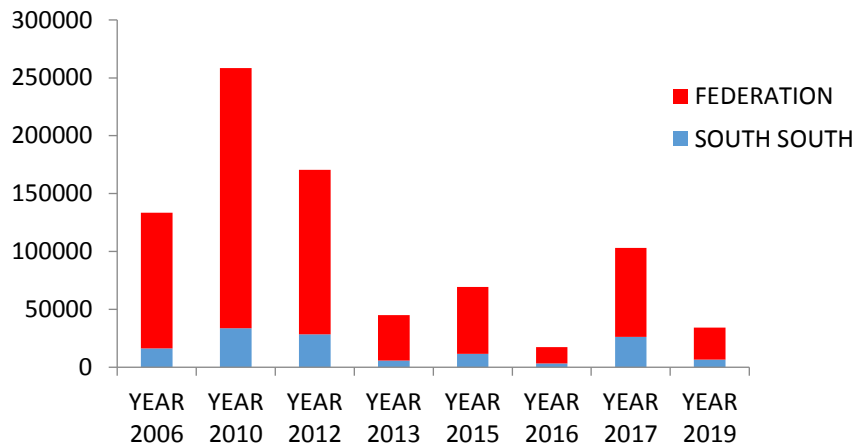
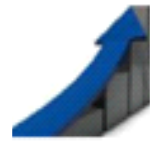


Figure 19, Bar chart showing representative of South-South states in training activities of the NDE within the years (2006-2019) Source: Field Survey, 2022

The chart above shows the summary of all the programmes and training carried out by the NDE for a period of eight years (between 2006, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019 respectively according to the NDE’S report), that a total of 699,748 persons of different categories were trained in different trades in the Federation. Out of this number, a total of 131,882 were trained from the south-south (Niger Delta).

The breakdown shows that in 2006, a total of 16,204 youths only were trained out of 117,421 job opportunities. In 2010, 33,970 were trained from the region out of 224,556 opportunities, 2012 shows a total of 142,135 opportunities provided; but only 28, 455 opportunities were utilized. 5,851 in 2013 out of 39,101 opportunities; for 2015, total number of trained youths stood at 11,631 out of 57,805 opportunities, 2016 has 3,216 out of 19,253 were trained nationwide; in 2017, 81,012 and only 10,352 were trained. And in 2019 only 6,561 out of 27,574 were trained.



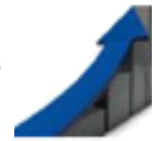
Discussion of Findings

The product of what one is made up of is a summation of what one chooses to be in the past. Their present life explains the choice and decision taken some time ago which has gone to affect certain luxuries in life, or may have aspired to become great person tomorrow, but without a good plan. And the lack of effective planning have landed them where and what they are today. The youth of Niger Delta came out to agitate to kick against all forms of deprivations, disregards, incommensurate and unequal treatments development of the area in spite of the rape from the areas' abundant mineral resources (Ibaba, 2017, pp. 5-6). As a matter of fact, their agitations crescendo to the notice of the whole world, and attracted some palliative measures such that intervention agencies were established to better the lots of the youths, but it has been observed that despite the frantic effort of the Federal Government putting in place numerous lenitive measures, the youths of the area have not yet settled down to take advantage of the mitigatory training programmes designed to rehabilitate them, rather they are still inclined to illicit businesses and criminal act, and have remained resolute and unwilling to change their status. This brings to fore a common attribute where people have alluded to the fact that they are ill prepared to be relevant tomorrow. Unlike the ants that spend time preparing for the rainy days, the youths from the Niger Delta have not prepared for the future. The mere fact that they cannot settle down to learn any trade to be self – employed but waiting for what politicians will give to them, and the illicit businesses they do have portrayed them like the praying mantises who only hunt to satisfy her momentarily without thinking of the future, (Sophie, 2012).

Form our findings based on the personal observations, and the evaluation carried out from the eight years (8) report from the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), it was gathered that the youths of the region were stack in keying into the training opportunities provided by (NDE), even starter packs given to them were sold out.

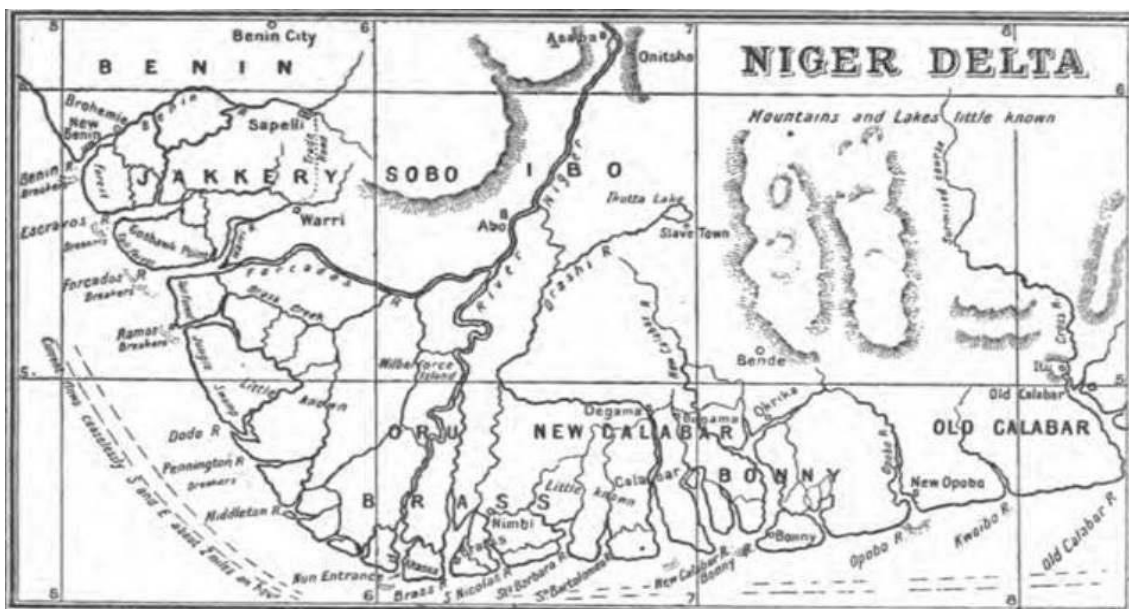
The reviews of the reports of the National Directorate of Employment covering a period of eight (8) years have shown that they are not bothered about their tomorrow and can't be self-reliant. For instance, it was observed that in 2006, only 16,202 benefited from the 117,421 NDE Programmes, out of the 29 million youths that make up the region. This account for only a slim 13.7% (percent) of the 117,421 trained youths in the federation (2006, NDE Annual Report).

Again, in 2010, only a handful of 33,790 youths of the region were trained out 224,559 youths who benefited from the programme. The prospective recipients are trainees instead of increasing, witnessed a decline in the Niger Delta region showing only 28,455 trained out of 142,135 that embraced the government mitigatory gesture nationwide (2010, NDE Annual Report).The figure in 2013 became worsen as only 5,801, albeit there was a drop of the number of participants throughout the federation. Total figure that partook in the exercise stood at only



39,101. There were no significant improvements in the subsequent year under review, which indicates that, out of 57,805 participants nationwide, only a pocketful of 11,631 emanates from the region which comprise of 29million youths, (Ndah-Isaha, 2017 & NDE report 2013).

From the overall analysis, 699,748 youths were trained nationwide within the eight (8) years period under review (from 2010-2017 & 2019). Out of this number, only 116,110 indicating 16.5% are from the Niger Delta region; which means only 3.3% represent the 29 million youths from the area.

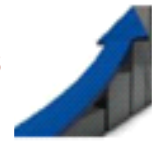


Source: http://www.waado.org/egi-bin/Maps/1898_map_niger_delta_by_bindloss.jpg

Conclusion

In view of the fact that the National Directorate of Employment was established to create jobs for all, the agency has its mission statement as an establishment designed to create and implement policies for job opportunities. Its programmes are also made to promote, change, rehabilitate the attitude of people, generate employment, reduce poverty and make wealth (if the opportunities are utilized) NDE (2006, p. 5). But, it is most surprising that the youths of Niger Delta have not realized their inadequacies and incapacitations that they are of the minority region and the only way out is to develop themselves either academically or entrepreneurially. They have failed to understand that the greatness of a man does not come by mere wishes over-night; rather it is subject to hard work. And greatness can only be achieved through effective planning.

If the youths of Niger Delta cannot become relevant because of lack of parental sponsorship, they should as a matter of fact, embrace and accept the various alleviatory



programmes enunciated by the federal government to change their status. But judging from the analysis presented above, it is crystal clear that apart from the few youth who are gainfully employed out of stroke of luck, the fate of the remaining 28 million youths who are either graduates or been trained are hanged in the hands of politicians and the government.

From the analysis above, only 116,110 youths out of the 28 million, if one million can be said to have been engaged in one way or the other, how will the 28 million youths survive? This according to Nda-Isaiah (2017) may be the contributing factor of the impoverished area; as a result of the high unemployment rate. This is because the zeal to plan to be great tomorrow is not there.

Too much sleeping and laziness begat joblessness which result to poverty (Proverbs 6. pp. 6-11), after all it is said “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop”. As a matter of fact, this has contributed to the improvement of the region since youths who would have constituted the average business and working-class men lived in the forest, creeks and montane areas indulging in one negative and non-profiting venture or the others.

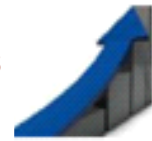
Recommendations

On the strength of these unplanned feats, this study suggests and recommends the following:

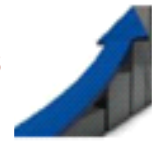
1. Youth should break their camps and move to embrace the peace moves and key into the government gestures.
2. That government should introduce a Business Contributory Fund (BCF), to be given to any youth who attain a voting age, and a business be established for such a person;
3. Upon the above, government should set up a monitoring team who also check the effective use of the fund and punish those who divert the fund for other purpose.
4. The National Directorate Employment (NDE), also should have a feedback-tracking mechanism to be able to check and punish those who will divert the starter pack.
5. Youths on their own should learn and inculcate the habit of saving and later divert the proceeds for trading or start of a vocational job of their own after been trained.
6. Entrepreneurial skill should be introduced in the secondary school curriculum; young school leavers should not only be taught and issued certificates, but should be encouraged, made to develop and grow with vocational as craft men and women.
7. Government should ensure that the degradation areas caused by oil spillage be cleaned up, and develop the region physically.

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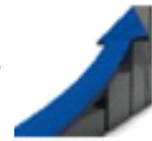
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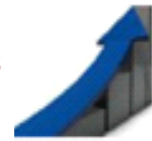
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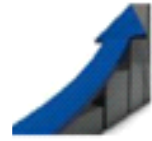
EXPLANATORY NOTES

ITF	-	Industrial Training Fund
SURE-P	-	Sovereign Reinvestment Fund Programme
VSD	-	Vocational Skills Development
SSE	-	Small Scale Enterprises
REP	-	Rural Empowerment Programme
SPW	-	Special Public Works
NOAS	-	National Open Apprenticeship Scheme
SOW	-	School On Wheel
EDP	-	Entrepreneurship Development Programme
SYOB	-	Start Your Own Business
RLS	-	Resettlement Loan scheme
PPP	-	Processing, Preservation and Packaging
RHS	-	Recreation and Horticultural Scheme



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