

Overhauling of Inland Water Transport System; National Capacity Building Strategy for Sustainable Development and Poverty Alleviation in Niger-Delta Region, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the level of development of Inland Water Transport (IWT) in Nigeria. 5 point likert scale measurement questionnaires were used to obtain the primary data while multi staged random sample method was used to obtain the required numbers of National Inland Water Authority (NIWA) staff and ferry operators that constituted the study sample. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The finding of the study shows that the majority of ferry operators in the study area were predominantly youths with moderate education; the level of Government commitment to develop inland water transportation in Nigeria is not significant; the impact of NIWA activities to enhance ferry operation in the study area is not also significant while the extent of operators' commitment in the ferrying business is significant. Based on the findings, some of the recommendations made are as follows: Firstly, all levels of government in the country should be committed in the development of inland water transportation in Nigeria and Niger Delta region in particular. Secondly, NIWA activities in the region should be majorly channeled to enhancing ferrying operations in the study area. Finally, Government Intervention Programmes such Sure-P and Amnesty programmes should also be made to influence the development of inland water transportation in the region. The recommendations are pertinent because of its far reaching effects in boosting National Capacity Building Strategy for Sustainable Development and Poverty Alleviation in the study area.

Keywords: NIWA; Ferry Operation; National Capacity Building; Poverty Alleviation; Sustainable Development

INTRODUCTION

An efficient Inland Water Transport (IWT) system plays a critical and positive role in the economic life of any country. Every country should realize the importance of the relationship between good and functional multimodal IWT systems in their economic development. IWT cost effectiveness and development of remote communities in several countries and in Nigeria in particular cannot be over emphasized. In many instances these advantages can be gained with little or no improvement to existing waterways (World Bank 2002).

There is this belief that the use of IWT in Nigeria has not yet reached its full potential due to lack of adequate investment in the sector over many years. All year round, use of larger vessels may have been impeded in some channels by monsoon-related draft reductions and lack of adequate depths and absence of navigational aids. Bamidele, Badejo (2009) outlined the following reasons as responsible for the further decline of IWT in Nigeria: Policy summersault; Political and legislative dimensions; Economic dynamism and market size; International conspiracy and gang – ups; Human

capacity relevance and technological changes; Access to funds and finances; Infrastructural and equipment failure; Stiff competition from international shipping operators; General absence of coordination and integration; Multilateral versus unilateral competition, etc.

The importance of youths in the development of the Niger Delta region cannot be overemphasized. This is more so that their restive nature to be related to the nature of development accrued to the region. In essence, there seems to be negative correlation between youth restiveness and development levels of the area. This is not healthy for National capacity strategy for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. For instance, Adesope et al. (2000) observed that the spate of youth disturbances is particularly serious in the Niger Delta region. According to them the nature of exploitation of the region at the expense of other indigenes has been a major source of worry to the area and has resulted in restive activities.

It is against this backdrop that this paper examined the substantial effect of total overhauling of Inland Water

Transport on National Capacity Building Strategy for sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Niger-Delta Region, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria has the second longest length of waterway in Africa. It has 8,600 kilometers of inland waterways and an extensive coastland of about 852 kilometers. Nigeria centres on its longest rivers; Rivers Niger and Benue, which cut across the country into the cardinal east, west and north sections. The two waters run into each other at Confluence Town, Lokoja and flow into the Atlantic Ocean. The coastal waterways extended from Badagry region through Warri to Calabar. However, water transport scores a distant second to road transport with an average share of about 1.6% of Nigerian gross domestic product. Although water transport is slow and while unsuitable for passenger movement, an efficient coastal and inland waterways operation and system generally can minimize the pressure on a country's rail and road transport infrastructure (Ndikom, 2008).

Most government enterprises in the sector for the provision of Inland Water Transport (IWT) services are moribund (Oriaku et al 2011). The enormous coastal trade opportunities it present for indigenous shipping companies in Nigeria overtime failed due to shipping policy in place over the years, directed on such trade. Several policies initiatives are currently directed on the operation and the management at the inland waterways such as the coastal and inland shipping cabotage Act passed (2003). However, it is not enough a thing to initiate policies whereas the management administration or rather the expected enforcement pattern of such policies is not inputted (Ndikom, 2008). There is urgent need to strategize and enhance National Capacity Building Strategy for sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Niger-Delta Region, Nigeria, hence the gap this paper tries to fill.

Objective of the Study

- i. To ascertain the extent of Government commitment on the development of inland water transport in Nigeria.
- ii. To determine the impact of the activities of NIWA on the development of inland water transport in Nigeria.
- iii. To assess the extent to which ferries/boat are employed in inland water transport in the study area.

Research Question for the Study

- i. What is the extent of Government commitment in the development of inland water transport in Nigeria?
- ii. What is the impact of activities of NIWA in the development of inland water transport in Nigeria?

- iii. What is the extent to which ferries/boat are employed in inland water transport in the study area?

Hypotheses for the Study

- i. H_{01} : There is no significant commitment by the Government to develop inland water transportation in Nigeria.
- ii. H_{02} : There is no significant impact of the activities of NIWA on the of inland water in Nigeria
- iii. H_{03} : There is no significant usage of ferries/boat in inland water transport in the study area

Significance of the Study

- i. The study will enable us know the level of government commitment in development of inland water transport in Nigeria.
- ii. The study will also give us the insight of the extent of impact of the activities of the National Inland Water Authority in the development of inland water transport in Nigeria.
- iii. The extent to which ferries/boat are employed in inland water transport in the study area will also be ascertain through the study.
- iv. The study will also show or create awareness of the oppournities in inland water transport in creating employment for the teeming youth in the area.
- v. The attention of the Amnesty and Sure-P programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria could be attracted to the inland water transport industry through the study.
- vi. The study shall be of importance to investor to know that there are investment oppournities in the coastal region of the country in the area of inland water transportation.

Limitations and Scope of the Study

The study had some limitations, thus; we would have liked to cover all the coastal region and jetties in the Niger Delta region of the country which was impossible due to lack of sufficient fund. Again, we had difficulties in sharing and collecting of questionnaire for the study due to the security situation in the region. We were harassed sometimes by some of the youths in the region that almost thwarted our effort to distribute or collect the questionnaire for the study. The staff of the National Inland Water Authority did not also give us free access to collect some secondary data needed for the study. There were also tendencies that some of the respondents gave false information about the conditions of inland water transportation in the area because of fear of the alleged detrimental consequences of such information to the region or to the organization (NIWA) sampled in the study.

Irrespective of all these limitations, it did not significantly weaken the findings of this study because some of the observed limitations were not general in all the cases.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Historical accounts reveal that aside the colonial era; economic interests have attempted the revitalization of navigation on the Rivers Niger and Benue. In the period up to 1970, these three companies dominated transportation in the inland waterways sector (L. K. Ogboye, 2012).

The nation's IWT network gave access to the Western explorers and the British. Ominu and Onokerhoreye (1995) argue correctly that: "Before the advent of the railway era in Eastern Nigeria, the only communication line which was used for inter-regional movement was the Niger-Benue water ways or Cross River". Up to the 20th century, river transport provided the most economical means of the evacuation of agricultural products (Badejo 2009). Dele Badejo (2010) stated that before 1960, transportation by river was very important and prominent thereby accounting for well over 30% of the entire produce moved in the country. Azonwu (2001) postulate that "in Nigeria, the Niger/Benue valley corresponds to the little productive middle belt and because of the handling cost in moving the produce of the area further to the North by rail transport; the river is less economic than direct rail transport to the coast.

As a consequence, the requirements in Nigeria will tremendously increase in the coming decades necessitating the Government of Nigeria to strongly develop a multi-modal system for overland transport including the Inland Waterway Transport modes (D. Dirk, Heijboer 2012). However, this is not considered a major problem to attract private sector participation as the same unbalance occurs in road transportation. The main immediate potential for IWT is imported cargo with the majority being containerized. Especially the flows of containers from Port-Harcourt to Onitsha and Lokoja are very promising (D. Dirk, Heijboer, 2012). Again, during the Nigerian Civil War of 1967 – 1970, the inland transport was severely disrupted as the Lower Niger and inter-coastal routes in the Niger Delta were converted to war territory (L. K. Ogboye, 2012). Prior to this, by a Presidential Directive by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo January 31st, 2006 in Abuja, it was decided to carry out an Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) Master plan and a Bankable Feasibility Report, covering all background and planning aspects related to this (D. Dirk, Heijboer 2012). The response of NIWA to the enormous responsibility of developing the vast inland waterways transport resources of the nation has been rather slow if not disappointing (Oriaku et al 2011). The combination of a decline in investment

coupled, with an expanding population and economy, has created an "investment gap" that led to the sorry state of the IWT sub sector (Oriaku et al 2011).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population of the study is all the jetties and inland ports that are in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. A jetty was sampled from Bayelsa, Rivers and Delta states respectively. This made up the sample size of the study. Multi stage sampling techniques was used to get the number of respondents as described thus; firstly, three states were selected from the study population bearing in mind to represent major Niger Delta area of the country with the designated ports and jetties. Secondly, three NIWA offices were sampled and ten NIWA staff was sampled from each office, resulting to 30 sampled employees of NIWA. Thirdly, in each sampled port or jetty, 20 ferry operators was randomly selected from each of the three sampled ports or jetties, resulting to 60 ferry operators.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Frequency Distribution of the Personal Characteristics of the Ferry Operators Respondents.

Table 1: Personal Characteristics of the Ferry Operator

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Age		
< 25 years	18	30
25-35 years	22	36.7
36-40 years	12	20
> 40 years	8	13.3
Educational Level		
Primary	8	13.3
Secondary	32	53.3
Tertiary	10	16.7
Gender		
Male	60	100
Female	0	0
Marital Status		
Single	28	46.7
Married	22	36.7
Do you think that commercial ferry operating need formal education to thrive in the business?		
Yes	6	10
No	54	90
Do you think ferry operating could sustain a decent livelihood?		
Yes	15	25
No		

Source: Author's survey
2013

Results and Discussion of the Personal Characteristics of the Ferry Operators

Table 1 shows that 30 percents of the respondents are below 25 years, 36.7 percent of them are between 25 and 35 years, 20 percent are between 36 and 40 years, while 13.3 percent are above 40 years. This suggests that most of the respondents in the study are between 20 and 40 years, that is, they are young.

Also, 13.3 percent of the respondents' attained primary education, 53.3 percent attained secondary education, while 16.7 attained tertiary education. This finding suggests that respondents are educated no doubt but the level of education acquired is just moderate. This study again shows that the 100 percent of the ferry operators are males. Males are more likely to be engaged in ferry operating, especially for commercial purposes.

The study further shows that 46.7 percent of the respondents are single while 36.7 are married. This suggests again that the majority of the respondents are youths with juvenile delinquencies influences. 10 percent of the respondents believe that ferrying business in the study area requires formal education

while 90 percent of the respondents in the other hand believe that ferrying business does not require formal education to engage in the business of commercial ferrying. This suggests that the business of ferrying boat for commercial activities does not require formal education.

Finally, 45 percent of the respondents believe that ferrying business could sustain them to live decent lives while 25 percent said that the ferrying business cannot sustain them to live decently.

Generally, the interpretations above suggest that commercial ferrying business in the study area has the capacity to enhance strategy for National Capacity Building for Sustainable Development and Poverty Alleviation in Niger-Delta Region, Nigeria.

Test of hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant commitment by the Government in the development of inland water transportation in the study area.

Table 2: Test of hypothesis of Extent of the Government Commitment in the Development of Inland Water Transport in Study Area

Items	Very High	High	Low	Very Low	Neutral	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
Adequate Funding	0(0)	1(3.3)	19(63.3)	10(33.3)	0(0)	2.70	0.535	Not Sig
Adequate Supervision	0(0)	0(0)	16(53.3)	14(46.7)	0(0)	2.53	0.507	Not Sig
Skilled Staff	0(0)	1(3.3)	4(13.3)	21(70.0)	4(13.3)	2.10	0.639	Not Sig
Adequate No of Staff	0(0)	1(3.3)	9(30.0)	12(40.0)	8(26.7)	2.10	0.845	Not Sig
Security Check	0(0)	1(3.3)	13(43.3)	16(53.3)	0(0)	2.50	0.572	Not Sig
Vandalism Check	0(0)	1(3.3)	16(53.3)	13(43.3)	0(0)	2.60	0.563	Not Sig
Pollution Check	0(0)	0(0)	14(46.7)	13(43.3)	3(10.0)	2.37	0.669	Not Sig
Staff Welfare	0(0)	0(0)	3(10.0)	11(36.7)	16(53.3)	1.57	0.679	Not Sig
Research Programmes	2(6.7)	0(0)	7(23.3)	8(26.7)	13(43.3)	2.00	1.145	Not Sig
Enabling Policies	0(0)	1(3.3)	9(30.0)	15(50.0)	5(16.7)	2.20	0.761	Not Sig
Better Collaboration	0(0)	0(0)	1(3.3)	16(53.3)	13(43.3)	1.60	0.563	Not Sig
Grand Mean						2.20		Not Sig

Note: Figures in brackets are percentage values

Grand Mean < Expected Mean Value (Accept null hypothesis) Source: Author's survey 2013

Decision Rule:

Expected Mean Values = 3.00

Mean Values < 3.000 suggest not significant
+]

Mean Values $\geq$ 3.00 suggest significant

Results and Discussion (Hypothesis 1)

Table 2 is the hypothesis test showing the extent to which Government is committed in the development of inland water transport in the study area. We found out from the result of the analysis that adequate funding for the IWT in the study has mean value of 2.70, followed by adequate measure to reduce vandalism which has mean value of 2.60 and provision of adequate

supervision on the activities on IWT scored 2.53 mean values. Others are; provision of adequate security, pollution control, provision of enabling policies to meet global best practices, employment of adequate number of staff, employment of skilled staff, provision of study research programmes and exchange of information and data mechanism, creation of enabling environment for better collaboration with state and local councils and staff welfare has the following respective mean values; 2.50, 2.36, 2.20, 2.10, 2.06, 2.00, 1.600 and 1.56. The data was collected with five point likert measurement which the expected mean value suppose to be 3.00 mean value. The outcome of the result suggests that the extent of government commitment in inland water ways in the study area was generally not significant.

Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that Governments in the area under study have not done enough to boost inland transportation in Nigeria which in turn will enhance national capacity building strategy for sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Niger-Delta region, Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is no significant impact of NIWA activities on ferry operations in the Niger Delta Area of the country.

Table 3: Test of Hypothesis Determining the Extent of Impact of NIWA Activities on Ferry Operations in the Study Area

Items	Very High	High	Low	Very Low	Neutral	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
Improve Customers Service	0(0)	2(3.3)	37(61.7)	21(35)	0(0)	2.68	0.537	Not Sig.
Reduce Cost of Operation	0(0)	20(33.3)	35(58.3)	5(8.3)	0(0)	2.75	0.600	Not Sig.
Safer Navigation	0(0)	15(25)	36(60)	8(13.3)	0(0)	3.08	0.671	Sig.
Improve Security	0(0)	12(20)	40(66.7)	8(13.3)	0(0)	3.07	0.579	Sig.
Improve Company Image	0(0)	9(15)	44(73.3)	7(11.7)	0(0)	2.97	0.510	Not Sig
Improve business Relation	0(0)	15(25)	35(58.3)	10(16.7)	0(0)	2.92	0.646	Not Sig
Reduce Cost of Staff	0(0)	5(8.3)	32(53.3)	23(38.3)	0(0)	2.70	0.619	Not Sig
Increase Revenue	0(0)	7(11.7)	29(48.3)	22(36.7)	2(3.3)	2.68	0.725	Not Sig
Better Licensing	0(0)	15(25)	35(58.3)	8(13.3)	2(3.3)	3.05	0.723	Sig.
Swift Response to Customer	0(0)	16(26.7)	37(61.7)	6(10)	1(1.7)	3.13	0.650	Sig.
Better Decision Making	0(0)	16(26.7)	30(50)	13(12.7)	1(1.7)	3.02	0.748	Sig.
Increase Multimodal Activities	0(0)	6(10)	23(38.3)	31(61.7)	0(0)	2.58	0.671	Not Sig
Enlarge Customer Base	0(0)	3(5)	32(53.3)	25(41.7)	0(0)	2.63	0.581	Not Sig
Reduce Empty Mile of Travel	0(0)	2(3.3)	34(56.7)	24(40)	0(0)	2.63	0.551	Not Sig
Reliability of Goods Delivery	0(0)	8(13.3)	28(46.7)	24(40)	0(0)	2.73	0.685	Not Sig
Timely Information	0(0)	9(15)	24(40)	26(43.3)	1(1.7)	2.68	0.749	Not Sig
Improved promotion Strategy	0(0)	1(1.7)	34(56.7)	25(41.7)	0(0)	2.60	0.527	Not Sig
Better Regulatory Services	0(0)	7(11.7)	34(56.7)	19(31.7)	0(0)	2.80	0.632	Not Sig
Grand Mean						2.82		Not Sig.

Note: Figures in brackets are percentage values

Grand Mean < Expected Mean Value (Accept null hypothesis)

Source: Author's survey 2013

Decision Rule:

Expected Mean Values = 3.00

Mean Values < 3.000 suggest no significant

Mean Values ≥ 3.00 suggest significant

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Again, according to the responses made by the ferry operators to ascertain the extent of impact of the NIWA activities in the ferry operation in the study area. The

following results were obtained: The impact was not satisfactory on improvement on customer services since the mean value is 2.68 which is less than the expected mean value of 3.00. The result also shows that cost of operation did not receive better impact since its mean value of 2.67 is also lower than the expected mean value of 3.00. Safety in navigation and improve security made mean values of 3.08 and 3.07 respectively. It implies that NIWA impact on the operation ferry operations were high in these areas. Others are improve business relations, reduction in cost of staff, increase revenue, better licensing, swift response to customers demand, better decisions, increase in multimodal activities have the following respective mean values; 2.92, 2.70, 2.68, 3.05, 3.13, 3.02, 2.58. We can infer from the result that improvement on the business relation, reduction in the cost of staff, increase in revenue did not get high impact since their mean values were less than the expected mean value of 3.00. Better licensing, swift response to customers demand, increase in multimodal activities were impacted to high extent since their mean

values recorded above 3.00. In addition, enlargement of customer base, reduction in empty mile travel, reliability of goods delivery, timely information, improvement on promotion strategy and better regulatory services also have the following respective mean values; 2.63, 2.63, 2.73, 2.68, 2.60 and 2.80.

The implication of this result is that the impact of NIWA activities did not make better impact in these areas since their mean values were below the expected mean values of 3.00. This again suggests that NIWA is not contributing significantly in national capacity building strategy for sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Niger-Delta region, Nigeria via inland water development.

Test of Hypothesis 3

H₀₃: There is no significant usage of ferries/ boats in inland water transport in the Niger Delta Area of the country.

Table 4: Test of Hypothesis Determining the Extent to which Ferries/Boats are employed in Water Transportation in the Study Area

Variables	Very High	High	Low	Very Low	Neutral	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
Carrying of Passengers	12(20)	17(28.3)	30(50)	1(1.7)	0(0)	3.67	0.817	Sig
Carrying of Goods	12(20)	17(28.3)	28(46.7)	3(5)	0(0)	3.53	0.811	Sig
Purchasing and Procurement	10(16.7)	17(28.3)	29(48.3)	3(5)	1(1.7)	3.33	0.877	Sig
Linkage with Roads	7(11.7)	15(25)	29(48.3)	9(15)	0(0)	3.33	0.877	Sig
Linkage with Sea Ports	0(0)	3(5)	12(20)	4(7.5)	0(0)	2.30	0.561	Not Sig.
Linkage with Rail way	0(0)	3(5)	9(15)	48(80)	0(0)	2.52	0.540	Not Sig.
Linkage with other inland water ways	0(0)	13(21.7)	27(45)	20(33.3)	0(0)	2.88	0.739	Not Sig.
Tourist Hiring	0(0)	6(10)	34(56.7)	20(33.3)	0(0)	2.77	0.620	Not Sig.
Carriage of Building Materials	0(0)	15(25)	29(48.3)	16(26.7)	0(0)	2.98	0.725	Sig.
Carriage of Mined Products	0(0)	3(5)	17(28.3)	38(63.3)	2(3.3)	2.35	0.633	Not Sig.
Grand Mean						3.00		Sig

Note: Figures in brackets are percentage values

Grand Mean > Expected Mean Value (Reject null hypothesis)

Source: Author's survey 2013

Decision Rule:

Expected Mean Values = 3.00

Mean Values < 3.000 suggest not significant

Mean Values ≥ 3.00 suggest significant

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This is the interpretation and implication of the analysis; "the extent to which the ferry operators are employed in the study area". The result shows the following: the carriage of passengers by the ferry

operators has mean value of 3.67 which signifies that ferries were utilized to high extent in the carriage of passengers. The extent of carriage of goods by the ferry operators was also high since the mean score recorded was 3.53. Purchase and procurement has mean value of 3.33 which still suggests that ferry operating were also used in a high extent in this area, Linkage with roads, sea ports, rail ways and with other inland water ways has mean values of 3.33, 2.30, 2.50, 2.88 respectively which implies that the intermodality between inland water transport and road in the study area were high while it were used in low extent in linkage with rail ways, other inland water ways because the duo have mean value are below 3.00. Tourists also utilize the services of ferry operators in a low extent which mean value of 2.77 signifies that. It implies that there were low patronage by tourists which could be as a result of lack of tourists centres in the study areas. Carriages of building material and mined products have mean scores of 2.93 and 2.30 respectively.

The result of the analysis implies that commercial ferrying business in the study area should be encouraged because it seems to thrive irrespective of the harsh conditions created by the Governments and NIWA respectively. This is an indicator that adequate inland water transport has the capacity to harness national capacity building strategy for sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Niger-Delta region, Nigeria

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

We found out through the study that the youths are major operators of ferries/boats in commercial inland water transportation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. They are moderately educated, almost all the operators are male, and the single among them are higher in number to compare to the married. The respondents (ferry operators) believe that the ferrying business does not require formal education and that the business could provide a decent sustainable means of livelihood.

The study also shows that there is no significant commitment of either States or Federal Government to improve inland water transportation in Nigeria. Also, there is no significant impact of NIWA activities in enhancing ferrying operations in the study area. Contrary, there is significant employment of ferries and boats in running commercial inland water transportation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Based on the above findings, we recommend as follow:

- i. There should be increased commitment of the Local, State and Federal Governments of Nigeria in developing inland water transportation in the country, especially in the Niger Delta region of the country so that the

teeming youths in the region could be gainfully employed which in turn will form National Capacity Building Strategy for sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Niger-Delta Region, Nigeria

- ii. The activities of NIWA should be streamlined in a way that it will have direct positive impact in enhancing the conditions of services of the commercial ferrying in the study area.
- iii. Private investors and our politicians should consider investing in the Niger Delta region of the country to boost the economic activities of the area with its positive inland water transportation consequences.
- iv. Since the study shows that the youths in the region are significantly employed in ferrying operations irrespective of the non commitment of the government and the staff of NIWA in developing ferrying business in the region. It is a sign that if the Government and other stake holders in the industry could harness resources to improve inland water transportation in Nigeria, it will go a long way to reduce poverty in the region and as well consolidate the Nation's quest to enhance National Capacity Building Strategy for Sustainable Development in the country.
- v. Sure-P and Amnesty intervention programmes should also be made to benefit ferrying business in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

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