

# ASSESSMENT OF SHELL PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY EXTENSION SERVICES IN ETCHE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The study assessed Shell Petroleum Development Company Extension Services in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. Data were gathered from four categories of respondents drawn from the Company's staff and the communities. A total of 180 respondents participated in the study. means scores and Analysis of Variance were used for data analysis. The respondents ratings on each of the extension services of information, method, human relations and educational programme showed significant difference between the company staff and the beneficiaries. However, ANOVA result showed no significant difference at 0.05 probability level. The study recommended programmes, and intensified efforts of SPDC in creating awareness to the host communities.*

**Key words: Shell Petroleum Development Company, Extension services, Etche**

## INTRODUCTION

Etche Local Government Area hosts some oil companies, including Shell Petroleum Development Company Limited (SPDC). The activities of SPDC in the area dates some decades now. The exploration and exploitation of crude oil in the area by SPDC have not only affected the people but also the environment. It was in recognition of this that Ekezie (1995) asserts: That meaningful operations of oil companies sometimes cause a lot of economic waste, hardship and untold inconvenience to the people in areas of operations. Many farmlands are rendered barren and economic crops and trees are destroyed. In some

cases, some socio-cultural values and valuable of the people such as house of their gods, their shrines, sacred bushes and animals and destroyed. In such circumstances food shortage and dearth of protein sources could be experienced owing to bush clearing and pollution of fishing waters.

According to him these negative effects of oil exploration and exploitation and the need to cushion the effects prompted SPDC to establish the Department of Community Development in 1965 to oversee the welfare of its host communities. The primary objective was to improve the well being of farmers and fishermen through supply of inputs, production and marketing of better-yielding food crops, improved techniques and methods of farming and fishing. This approach was what Ojoko (2000) said was a philosophy of teaching a man how to grow rice to enable him feed for his lifetime instead of giving him a plate for a meal. On the community relations' policy of the oil industry, Osuji (1999) noted that such polity must be sensitive to the local customs and the development aspiration of the oil-producing communities in the area of health, education, infrastructure and economic self-reliance. This, according to him will prove the understanding that a healthy and enlightened rural community that is well provided for, can contribute meaningfully to local and national development efforts.

As the years go by, SPDC diversified from farmers and fishing to building and renovating schools, awarding scholarships to deserving students, constructing roads and bridges, providing portable water, electricity, building and equipping hospitals and provided other environmental safety measures. All these in a bid to foster good working relationship with the host communities. But regrettably they were never satisfied as the demand and agitation continued for what Ojoko (2000) called global village effect.

Odiasi (2000), who reviewed the gains of SPDC participatory approach to community development, agrees that good relationship and capacity building were the hallmark of the company's achievement. This statement is contradictory considering the level of agitation, protest and hostilities in most oil-bearing communities which insist that SPDC is

paying lip service to their welfare. This study was therefore, designed to assess the extension services of SPDC in Etche Local Government Area vis-à-vis the company's social responsibilities to the people.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was undertaken in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. One hundred and eighty (180) respondents supplied the primary data. The respondents were of four categories of five (5) management staff of SPDC ten (10) field extension staff of SPDC (benefactors) sixty-five (65) youths and one hundred (100) adults from the community. All the field extension personnel were used on the basis of their involvement and knowledge of the area in their extension work. The other categories (youth and adults) were randomly selected from the Local Government area considering the true representation of all the communities involved in the study. a five point Likert-Type scale of questionnaire was developed, dividing the extension services into four categories of development information, human relations, extension methods and education programmes and administered to the respondents.

Weighted values were assigned to the five – point scale of possible responses. Excellent was value at (5), good (-4) fair (-3), poor (-2) and non-existence service (1). Mean scores were used to describe the responses of the respondents on the level of performance of each of the extension programmes. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the differences among the respondents on their responses on the extension services of SPDC in the study area.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Evaluation of four areas of extension service of SPDC by the respondents**

The results in Table 1 reveal an overall mean of about 3.00 (fair), in each of the categories of extension service rendered by the company. However, the ratings by each category of respondents on the extension services programme show significant differences. Though, there was a

slight difference between the benefactors (staff) and beneficiaries in perceiving all areas of the extension service, on the average they rated them good. On the other hand, the clientele (youth and adults) rated the extension services poor. Their opinion validates their constant demand and agitations for more development programmes.

### **Differences in rating of the extension services of SPDC among the respondents**

The F-value in Table 2 shows no significant difference at 0.05 probability level in the rating of the respondents on the extension services rendered by SPDC. On the average, the four extension services were all rated fair. The fair rating by the respondents depicts that SPDC needs to improve on her efforts to economically empower the people where it operates.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The result of the study brought to fore the efforts made by SPDC to Etche Local Government Area. It revealed that such efforts were either on paper work or could not see the light of the day due to poor implementation or lack of monitoring. A visit to the communities revealed more, while youth restiveness recorded in the Niger Delta region is convincing. Every year SPDC celebrates its achievement in fulfilling its social responsibilities to the host Communities, yet the socio-economic conditions of the people leave one wondering in which sector the achievement was recorded. In this situation, SPDC has failed to do one thing - monitoring. Lack of monitoring of programmes and projects has been identified as one of the causes of ineffectiveness. Sokoya (1998) sees monitoring and evaluation as two related activities that are of critical importance for realizing the objectives of development programmes and projects. According to him, monitoring and evaluation assist programme founder, planners, implementers and beneficiaries to keep track of the programme development and alert them of any shortfalls or deviation,

determine the relevance, effectiveness and their impact on intended beneficiaries and learn lessons for future development.

There is, therefore, the need for effective monitoring of programmes and projects by the stakeholders. This will validate or nullify the claims by the parties and strengthen the effectiveness of SPDC extension services to the host communities.

## REFERENCES

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**Table 1: Overall Evaluation of the four areas of extension services of SPDC by the Respondents.**

Respondents	Number	Categories of extension services			
		Development Information	Human Relations	Extension Methods	Educational groups
Management staff	5	4.27	3.92	5.02	3.89
Extension agent	10	4.30	3.24	3.74	3.84
Youths	65	1.88	2.13	1.81	1.95
Adults	100	2.51	2.40	2.13	2.14
Mean of means		3.24	3.17	2.93	2.96

**Table 2: Results of ANOVA showing the differences in rating of the extension services of SPDC among the respondents.**

Sources of Variation	Sum of square	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Ratio
Between Group	0.29	3	0.097	0.076
Within Group	15.23	12	1.278	
Total	15.32	15		P>0.05 NS