

Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Educational Development in Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract

In recent years, concerns have been raised about the effectiveness of the Niger Delta Development Commission's (NDDC) scholarship programme in achieving its intended objectives. Although many students have benefited from the scheme, there are complaints about the limited number of scholarship opportunities, delays in payment of scholarship funds, inadequate public awareness, and concerns over fairness and transparency in the selection process. These challenges have created doubts about the programme improving educational opportunities in Akwa Ibom State. The objective of this study was to examine the contribution of the NDDC to educational development in Akwa Ibom State. Human capital theory was adopted as the theoretical framework for the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study population was 7,019,115, which was the projected population of the people in Akwa Ibom State. The sample size of the study was 384. Stratified simple random sampling technique was adopted in the study. The data collected from primary and secondary sources were analysed using simple regression analysis with SPSS statistical tool. The study revealed that there is a positive and insignificant impact of the NDDC on the scholarship programme in Akwa Ibom State. The study therefore recommended that the management of the NDDC should increase the number of scholarship awards and sustain the programme to enable more qualified students in Akwa Ibom State to access higher education and develop relevant skills.

Keywords: Niger Delta Development Commission, educational development, scholarship programme.

Introduction

The Federal Government of Nigeria established the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) through the NDDC Act of 2000 to address the developmental challenges facing the Niger Delta region. Over the years, the Commission has implemented several intervention programmes to improve people's welfare through investments in education, healthcare, infrastructure, youth empowerment, and economic development (NDDC, 2023; Okaba, 2018). Among these interventions, the scholarship programme has become one of the Commission's most impactful educational initiatives. By providing financial support to qualified students from the Niger Delta, the programme enables many young people, particularly those from low-income families, to pursue higher education and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to the development of Akwa Ibom State and the region at large.

Education is widely regarded as one of the most effective tools for promoting socio-economic development because it equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to improve their lives and contribute meaningfully to society (Atakpa & Akpan, 2022). The NDDC scholarship programme helps to remove financial barriers that often prevent talented students from completing their education. As beneficiaries graduate to join the workforce or establish their own businesses, they contribute to employment generation, increased household income, poverty reduction, and economic growth. This aligns with the view of Todaro and Smith (2021), who argue that investment in education strengthens human capital and serves as a foundation for sustainable development.

The impact of the scholarship programme extends beyond individual beneficiaries. Graduates supported by the programme are expected to apply their knowledge in key sectors such as education, engineering, medicine, agriculture, environmental management, and information technology. Their contributions help improve service delivery, encourage innovation, promote entrepreneurship, and support community development. In this way, the scholarship programme not only empowers individuals but also contributes to the broader socio-economic transformation of Akwa Ibom State by developing the skilled workforce needed for long-term growth and development (UNDP, 2023; World Bank, 2022). Despite these achievements, there are growing concerns about whether the NDDC scholarship programme has fully achieved its intended objectives. Challenges such as limited scholarship opportunities, funding constraints, transparency in the selection process, and the programme's long-term impact on beneficiaries continue to generate public debate (Akinwale, 2021).

Also, while previous studies have examined the contributions of the NDDC to infrastructure, healthcare, and community development, limited attention has been given to the scholarship programme as a catalyst for socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom State. This gap in existing literature makes it difficult to determine the extent to which the programme has improved educational attainment, employment opportunities, income generation, and the overall quality of life of its beneficiaries. It is against this background that this study examines the NDDC's impact on educational development in Akwa Ibom State, with a view to providing empirical evidence that can support better policy decisions and improve the implementation of the programme.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of the Niger Delta Development Commission on educational development in Akwa Ibom State from 2015-2025. The specific objective of the study is to examine the contribution of the Niger Delta Development Commission in the provision of scholarships to Akwa Ibom State students.

Research Question

The study's research question is: "What is the contribution of the Niger Delta Development Commission in the provision of scholarships to Akwa Ibom State students?"

Research Hypotheses

The hypothesis stated to guide the study is:

H₀: There is no significant contribution of the Niger Delta Development Commission in the provision of scholarships to Akwa Ibom State students

Literature Review

Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) is a federal intervention agency established in 2000 through the Niger Delta Development Commission (Establishment) Act. The Commission was created to address the long-standing developmental challenges facing the Niger Delta region, despite the region's enormous contribution to the country's economy through crude oil production. For many years, communities in the region suffered from poor infrastructure, environmental degradation, unemployment, inadequate social amenities, and limited access to quality education and healthcare. The establishment of the NDDC was therefore aimed at accelerating development and improving the living conditions of the people. To achieve this goal, the Commission undertakes projects in areas such as road construction, electricity, water supply, healthcare, education, environmental protection, youth empowerment, and human capital development. Through these interventions, the NDDC complements the efforts of the federal and state governments in promoting sustainable development across the Niger Delta region (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2000; Niger Delta Development Commission, 2023).

Education remains one of the major priorities of the NDDC because it is widely recognised as a key driver of social and economic development. Over the years, the Commission has invested in educational development by constructing and renovating classroom blocks, providing libraries, science laboratories, ICT centres, desks and chairs, instructional materials, and awarding scholarships to students at both local and international levels. It has also supported teacher training programmes aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. These interventions have helped to improve learning conditions and expand educational opportunities in many communities, including Akwa Ibom State. However, the Commission still faces challenges such as inadequate funding, delays in project implementation, poor maintenance of completed projects, and administrative constraints. Despite these challenges, the NDDC continues to play an important role in supporting educational development and promoting human capital development across the Niger Delta region (Okon & Udofia, 2021; Niger Delta Development Commission, 2023).

Educational Development

Educational development refers to the continuous improvement of the education system to ensure that learners have access to quality teaching, adequate learning facilities, qualified teachers, relevant curricula, and a conducive learning environment. It goes beyond increasing school enrolment to include improving educational standards, expanding access to education, strengthening infrastructure, and promoting effective teaching and learning. A well-developed educational system contributes significantly to human capital development, national productivity, and sustainable socio-economic growth. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2021), educational development is the process of expanding access to quality education, improving learning outcomes, and ensuring that education is inclusive and equitable for all learners. Similarly, the World Bank (2020) views educational development as an investment in human capital through improved access to education, better learning outcomes, and stronger educational institutions that can contribute to economic and social development.

An important aspect of educational development is the provision of adequate educational infrastructure (Ndaeyo et al. 2025). This includes the construction and maintenance of classrooms, libraries, laboratories, information and communication technology (ICT) centres, furniture, and other facilities that create a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning. UNESCO (2020) explains that providing quality classrooms and learning facilities is essential because they create a safe and supportive environment where students can learn effectively. In the same vein, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2019) emphasises that well-equipped classrooms promote academic achievement, improve students' well-being, and encourage active participation in learning. Likewise, the World Bank (2020) maintains that educational infrastructure should not only be available but should also be properly maintained to support quality education and improve students' learning experiences.

Researchers have also stressed that educational development is closely linked to the availability of modern learning facilities and a supportive school environment. Barrett et al. (2019) argue that the design and quality of school facilities influence students' academic performance, behaviour, and overall learning experience. Similarly, Lachat et al. (2020) note that adequate classrooms and educational facilities promote inclusive education by ensuring that learners, regardless of their background or physical ability, have equal opportunities to receive quality education. Supporting this view, UNICEF (2020) states that a safe, healthy, and well-equipped learning environment enhances children's educational experiences and contributes to their social, emotional, and intellectual development. Glewwe et al. (2019) further observe that the availability of educational infrastructure plays a significant role in improving teaching effectiveness and students' academic achievement.

From the Nigerian perspective, educational development has been described as a deliberate effort to improve the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of the education system. Adebayo and Salami (2022) define educational development as the gradual improvement of teaching, learning, educational infrastructure, curriculum, and access to quality education to promote human capital development. In a similar view, Okon and Udo (2023) describe educational development as the systematic enhancement of educational institutions, policies, and learning outcomes that prepares individuals to contribute meaningfully to national development. Inyang and Essien (2021) also emphasise that educational development involves continuous investments in teachers, school facilities, curriculum development, and educational policies that improve the quality and relevance of education. These perspectives suggest that educational development is not limited to physical infrastructure alone but also includes improvements in educational management, teacher quality, curriculum implementation, and learning outcomes.

In the context of this study, educational development refers to the improvement of the education sector in Akwa Ibom State through the provision of adequate educational infrastructure, scholarship opportunities, and educational facilities by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). It encompasses efforts aimed at creating a conducive learning environment, improving access to quality education, supporting students' academic growth, and strengthening the overall capacity of educational institutions. Therefore, educational development is viewed as a key indicator for assessing the extent to which the intervention programmes of the NDDC have contributed to improving the quality and accessibility of education in Akwa Ibom State.

Scholarship Programme

A scholarship programme is a form of financial support provided to students to help them pursue their education without being limited by financial difficulties. It is one of the most effective ways of increasing access to higher education, especially for talented students from low-income families. Scholarships may be funded by governments, educational institutions, private organisations, or development agencies, and they often cover tuition fees, accommodation, books, research expenses, and other educational costs. By reducing the financial burden of schooling, scholarship programmes allow students to focus on their studies and develop the knowledge and skills needed for personal and professional growth. According to Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2018), investment in education through scholarship schemes improves human capital and generates long-term social and economic benefits. Likewise, Barr (2020) argues that financial support for education creates equal opportunities for students and contributes to the overall development of society.

In Nigeria, scholarship programmes have become an important means of promoting educational development and empowering young people. The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), for example, offers scholarships to students from the Niger Delta region to support their undergraduate and postgraduate studies in both local and foreign institutions. This programme has helped many students who might otherwise have been unable to continue their education because of financial challenges. Beyond helping individuals achieve their academic goals, scholarship programmes produce skilled professionals who contribute to economic growth, innovation, and community development. Okojie (2021) notes that scholarship schemes improve educational attainment and prepare beneficiaries for productive careers, while UNESCO (2021) emphasises that expanding access to education is essential for reducing poverty, promoting social inclusion, and achieving sustainable development. Therefore, scholarship programmes should be seen not only as financial assistance for students but also as an investment in the future development of communities and the nation.

Niger Delta Development Commission and Scholarship Programme

The scholarship programme is one of the most visible educational interventions of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) aimed at improving human capital development in the Niger Delta region. Through this programme, students from oil-producing states, including Akwa Ibom State, receive financial support to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate studies in universities within and outside Nigeria. For many beneficiaries, the scholarship provides an opportunity to continue their education despite financial challenges. Becker (1993) explains that investment in education improves the knowledge, skills, and productivity of individuals, while Todaro and Smith (2021) maintain that education is an essential foundation for sustainable socio-economic development. By supporting students academically, the NDDC is helping to build a skilled workforce that can contribute to the development of Akwa Ibom State. One of the greatest achievements of the scholarship programme is that it has expanded access to higher education for many young people who might otherwise have been unable to continue their studies. In many communities within Akwa Ibom State, the high cost of tertiary education prevents talented students from realising their academic ambitions. The NDDC scholarship has helped to ease this burden by providing financial assistance for tuition and other educational expenses. According to Akinwale and Yusuf (2022), educational support programmes increase access to quality education and strengthen human capital development, especially in underserved communities. As more students

obtain university degrees and professional qualifications, the state benefits from a growing pool of educated and skilled manpower.

The programme has also improved the employment prospects of many beneficiaries. Graduates who receive scholarship support often acquire the knowledge and professional skills required in fields such as engineering, medicine, agriculture, education, environmental science, and information technology. These qualifications place them in a better position to secure employment or establish their own businesses. Becker (1993) argues that education increases an individual's productivity and earning capacity, while the World Bank (2022) notes that investment in education contributes to economic growth by producing a competitive workforce. Consequently, many beneficiaries of the NDDC scholarship programme have become productive members of society, contributing to both the public and private sectors. Beyond improving employment opportunities, the scholarship programme has also contributed to poverty reduction and improved living standards. Many beneficiaries who secure stable employment after graduation are able to support their families financially, improve their living conditions, and invest in the education of younger siblings or children. This creates a positive cycle in which educational opportunities lead to better economic outcomes for individuals and their communities. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2023), education plays a vital role in reducing poverty, promoting social inclusion, and improving people's quality of life. In this regard, the NDDC scholarship programme has had positive effects that extend beyond individual beneficiaries to the wider society.

Again, among the important contributions of the programme is the development of highly skilled professionals capable of addressing developmental challenges in the Niger Delta. Some beneficiaries are sponsored to study abroad, where they gain international exposure, advanced technical knowledge, and innovative ideas that can be applied to local development. On returning to Nigeria, many contribute to sectors such as healthcare, education, engineering, environmental management, and public administration. Schultz (1961) emphasised that investment in human capital generates long-term economic and social benefits because educated individuals are more productive and better equipped to solve societal problems. This makes the scholarship programme an important tool for sustainable development in Akwa Ibom State. The scholarship programme has equally encouraged academic excellence among young people in the region. Knowing that financial support is available motivates many students to work harder and achieve the academic standards required to qualify for the award. The programme has therefore created a culture of academic commitment and healthy competition among students. Adebayo and Musa (2020) observed that scholarship programmes not only improve access to education but also encourage students to strive for excellence and develop the skills needed for future leadership and national development. As more beneficiaries complete their education successfully, the programme continues to strengthen the state's human resource base.

Despite these positive contributions, the NDDC scholarship programme faces several challenges that affect its overall effectiveness. Concerns have been raised about the limited number of scholarship slots, delays in the payment of scholarship allowances, inadequate funding, and questions regarding transparency in the selection process. These issues have prevented some qualified students from benefiting from the programme and have reduced its overall impact. Akinwale (2021) noted that funding and implementation challenges continue to affect many development programmes in the Niger Delta. Nevertheless, the scholarship programme remains one of the NDDC's most valuable investments in education. If these challenges are adequately

addressed, the programme can make an even greater contribution to human capital development and socio-economic growth in Akwa Ibom State.

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory by Gary S. Becker (1964)

This study is anchored on the Human Capital Theory, developed by Theodore W. Schultz (1961) and later expanded by Gary S. Becker (1964). The theory holds that investment in education is one of the most effective ways of developing human capital and promoting socio-economic development. It argues that education enhances individuals' knowledge, skills, and productivity, making them more capable of contributing to economic growth and improving their standard of living. According to the theory, educational investments such as scholarship programmes are valuable because they equip beneficiaries with the competencies needed for employment, entrepreneurship, and national development.

The Human Capital Theory is relevant to this study because it explains how the scholarship programme of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) contributes to socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom State. By providing financial support to students pursuing higher education, the programme enables beneficiaries to acquire knowledge and professional skills that improve their employability and productivity. This, in turn, promotes employment, reduces poverty, strengthens human capital, and enhances socio-economic development. Therefore, the theory provides a suitable framework for understanding the relationship between the NDDC scholarship programme and socio-economic development in Akwa Ibom State.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design because it was considered appropriate for obtaining information from a large number of respondents on the activities of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and its scholarship programme in Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study was the total population of Akwa Ibom State, projected to be 7,019,115 (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2025). This population included residents (both employed and unemployed), business owners, public office holders, civil servants, and staff of the NDDC in Akwa Ibom State. The sample size for the study was determined using the Cochran sample size formula at a 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error, and an estimated population proportion ($p = 0.5$), which is widely accepted for large population studies. Use standard values:

$Z = 1.96$ (95% confidence)

$P = 0.5$

$q = 0.5$

$e = 0.05$

$N = 7,019,115$

Step 1: Use Cochran's formula for large populations:

$No = \frac{Z^2 Pq}{e^2}$

Substitute:

$no = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05^2}$

$no = \frac{3.84 \times 0.25}{0.0025}$

$no = 0.96$

$$0.0025$$

$$= 384$$

So the initial sample size = 384

Step 2: Finite population correction (FPC) since the population is large.

$$n = \frac{no}{1 + \frac{no-1}{N}}$$

$$= \frac{384}{1 + \frac{384-1}{7,019,115}}$$

$$= \frac{384}{1 + \frac{383}{7,019,115}}$$

$$= \frac{384}{1.000014}$$

$$n = \frac{384}{1.000014}$$

$$= 384$$

Of the 384 samples distributed, 355 were duly filled and returned. The proportionate sampling distribution was adopted to extract samples from each of the selected Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State, while the simple random sampling technique was used to administer questionnaires to the respondents in each of the selected Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State, and is tabulated below:

Sample Size Distribution

Table 1: Projected Population

L.G. A	Population	Sample Calculation	Sample Size
Nsit Atai	136,432	384 X 136,432/ 518,961	100.9
Ukanafun	137,261	384 X 137,261/ 518,961	101.6
Eket	245,268	384 X 245,268/ 518,961	181.5
Total	518,961		384

Source: NBS (2025).

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis on Scholarship Programme

NDDC and scholarship programme	SA	Extent of Agreement					TOTAL
		A	UN	D	SD		
The NDDC scholarship programme has made it easier for students in Akwa Ibom State to pursue higher education.	174(23%)	173 (46%)	2(16.2%)	6(14.8%)	0 (0%)	355	
The financial support provided through the NDDC scholarship programme has helped students continue their education without major financial difficulties.	155(39%)	26(30%)	13(17.8%)	131(12.3%)	0(0%)	355	

The NDDC scholarship programme has helped beneficiaries gain the knowledge and skills needed to improve their career opportunities.	102(40.1%)	73(30%)	2(18.4%)	26(13.4%)	0(0%)	355
The NDDC scholarship programme has made a positive contribution to the socio-economic development of Akwa Ibom State.	164(42%)	155(30%)	19(15.1%)	7(12.9%)	0(0%)	355
Total	595	427	36	170	0	1420
Proportion of N	198	106	9	42	0	355

Source: Field Work, 2026.

The findings revealed that 69% of respondents (with 46% agreeing and 23% strongly agreeing) acknowledged that the NDDC scholarship programme has made it easier for students in Akwa Ibom State to pursue higher education. However, 14.8% disagreed, and 16.2% were undecided, indicating that the coverage may be uneven or limited.

On contributions to educational financial support, 39.8% agreed and 30% strongly agreed that the NDDC scholarship programme has helped students continue their education without major financial difficulties. Conversely, 12.3% disagreed, and 17.8% were undecided, suggesting some students may not have benefited.

Regarding NDDC's scholarship helping beneficiaries gain knowledge, 40.1% strongly agreed, and 30% agreed, confirming that the NDDC scholarship programme has helped beneficiaries gain the knowledge and skills needed to improve their career opportunities. Nonetheless, 13.4% disagreed, and 16.4% were undecided, suggesting the distribution may not have reached all schools equally.

Finally, 42% of respondents strongly agreed, and 30% agreed that the NDDC scholarship programme has made a positive contribution to the socio-economic development of Akwa Ibom State, suggesting these initiatives are equipping individuals with skills and knowledge to boost employability and long-term growth. Meanwhile, 12.9% disagreed and 15.1% were undecided, highlighting ongoing gaps in perception and impact across communities.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant contribution of the Niger Delta Development Commission to scholarship programmes in Akwa Ibom State.

Data Analysis

To ascertain the impact, the ordinary least squares simple regression technique was employed using SPSS version 20.0, yielding the following results.

Table 3: Model Summary**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.452 ^a	.204	.201	.498

a. Predictors: (Constant), NDDC

Table 4: ANOVA

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	6.15	1	6.15	23.45	.000 ^b
1 Residual	92.70	353	.26		
Total	98.85	354			

a. Dependent Variable: SCP

b. Predictors: (Constant), NDDC

Table 5: Coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.927	.305		6.32	.000
	NDDC	.334	.069	.278	4.84	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ED

The regression analysis reveals a moderate positive impact of the activities of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) on scholarship programme, as evidenced by a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.452$. This coefficient indicates a moderate strength of association, suggesting that as NDDC interventions increase, so does scholarship programme in the region. The coefficient of determination, $R^2 = 0.204$, further suggests that approximately 20.4% of the variation in scholarship programme outcomes can be attributed to the efforts and programmes implemented by the NDDC. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.201 confirms the robustness of this model by accounting for the number of predictors, indicating that the model remains reliable even when adjustments for potential overfitting are considered.

Moreover, the standard error of estimate, calculated at 0.498, points to a reasonable level of precision in the predictive capability of the model, highlighting the reliability of the findings. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) reinforces the significance of the regression model, as indicated by an F statistic of $F(1, 353) = 23.45$, with a p-value less than 0.001. This strong

statistical significance implies that NDDC's contributions play an essential role in influencing scholarship programme, thereby validating the overall fitness of the regression model.

In examining the coefficients from the regression analysis, the constant term is found to be 1.927 with a p-value less than 0.001. This indicates that, in the absence of any NDDC involvement, scholarship programme still maintains a positive baseline level. Additionally, the unstandardized coefficient for NDDC activities is $B = 0.334$, also with a p-value less than 0.001. This means that for every one-unit increase in NDDC activities, there is a corresponding increase of 0.334 units in scholarship programme, signifying a tangible and quantifiable impact. The standardised beta value of 0.278 further substantiates the assertion that NDDC has a meaningful contribution to enhancing scholarship outcomes in the region.

The findings from this analysis strongly indicate that the NDDC has a positive and statistically insignificant impact on scholarship programmes. Consequently, the null hypothesis, which posited no relationship between NDDC interventions and scholarship outcomes, is rejected. Instead, the evidence supports the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, which asserts that the NDDC plays a positive role in fostering scholarship programmes in the region it serves. This underscores the importance of continued support and investment in NDDC initiatives to further enhance scholarship outcomes.

NDDC and Educational Development Programmes

On the discussion based on primary data, the results demonstrated that NDDC interventions have positively enhanced scholarship programmes, explaining 20.4% of the variance. Scholarships have directly impacted learning outcomes, though with limited impact, consistent with earlier works that highlight the importance of educational investment in human capital development.

Similarly, baseline data demonstrated that scholarship programme constitutes a major pillar of the Niger Delta Development Commission's (NDDC) socio-economic intervention strategy in Akwa Ibom State between 2015 and 2025. The data obtained from the NDDC (2025) showed that 12 students from Nsit Atai, 12 from Ukanafun, and 17 from Eket completed the Commission's local and foreign scholarship programme, making a total of 41 beneficiaries. This demonstrates that the NDDC has made efforts to support higher education by giving deserving students the opportunity to further their studies. Through these scholarships, beneficiaries were able to acquire knowledge, professional skills, and qualifications that can improve their employment prospects and enable them to contribute meaningfully to the development of their communities and the state.

However, the findings also revealed that there were no ongoing scholarship programmes in any of the selected Local Government Areas as of 2025. While the completed scholarships reflect the Commission's commitment to educational development, the absence of ongoing scholarship opportunities suggests that many other qualified students may not have had access to similar support during the period under review. Given the increasing cost of tertiary education in Nigeria, many students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds require educational assistance. The lack of continuous scholarship opportunities may therefore reduce the programme's ability to reach a larger number of deserving students across the state.

Although the scholarship programme has produced positive outcomes, the total of 41 beneficiaries over a ten-year period appears relatively small when compared with the growing number of students seeking admission into higher institutions in Akwa Ibom State. This suggests that the programme has had a positive impact, but its overall reach has been limited. To maximize

its contribution to educational and socio-economic development, the NDDC should consider expanding the scholarship scheme, increasing the number of beneficiaries, and ensuring that scholarship opportunities are made available on a regular basis. Such efforts would enable more young people to access higher education, strengthen human capital development, and make greater contributions to the socio-economic growth of Akwa Ibom State. The study therefore deduced that there is a positive and insignificant contribution of the Niger Delta Development Commission to scholarship programmes in Akwa Ibom State. Details of the contribution of NDDC to scholarship programmes in Akwa Ibom State are shown in the table below:

Table 6: Contributions of NDDC to Scholarship Programme in Akwa Ibom State (2015-2025).

State	Local Government Areas	Full-time local and foreign scholarships from 2015-2025.	Ongoing applications for educational scholarships
Akwa Ibom State	Nsit Atai	12 (completed scholarship programme).	There are no ongoing applications for scholarship at the moment
	Ukanafun	12 (completed scholarship programme).	There are no ongoing applications for scholarship at the moment
	Eket	17 (completed scholarship programme).	There are no ongoing applications for scholarship at the moment
		41 (completed scholarship programme).	There are no ongoing applications for scholarship at the moment

Source: Department of Planning, Research & Statistics/Management Information System, NDDC Report (2025).

Conclusion

This study concludes that the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has made a positive contribution to educational development in Akwa Ibom State through its scholarship programme. By providing financial support to students, the Commission has enabled many young people to pursue higher education and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to build successful careers. The programme has not only reduced the financial challenges faced by beneficiaries and their families but has also contributed to the development of skilled manpower capable of supporting the economic and social development of the state. This shows that investing in education remains an effective way of promoting human capital development and improving the well-being of the people. However, the study also concludes that the full potential of the scholarship programme has not been realised. Although the programme has benefited some students, the number of beneficiaries is relatively small compared to the growing demand for higher education in Akwa Ibom State. The absence of ongoing scholarship programmes in the selected Local Government Areas also suggests the need for greater commitment and continuity. Therefore, expanding the scholarship programme, increasing the number of beneficiaries, and ensuring that the selection process remains transparent and inclusive will enable more young people to access quality

education and contribute meaningfully to the sustainable educational development in Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommended the followings:

1. The management of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) should increase the number of scholarship awards and sustain the programme to enable more qualified students in Akwa Ibom State to access higher education and develop relevant skills.
2. The management of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) should ensure a transparent selection process and timely payment of scholarship allowances to improve the effectiveness of the programme and enhance its contribution to educational development in Akwa Ibom State.

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