

## PUBLIC ENTERPRISES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF IBOM POWER COMPANY LIMITED (2015-2024)

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**ABSTRACT:** This study investigated the relationship between Ibom Power Company Limited (IPCL) and community development in Akwa Ibom State, focusing on IPCL's role as a state-owned enterprise responsible for driving socio-economic growth through employment creation and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. IPCL's efforts included rural electrification, scholarships, school infrastructure development, and healthcare services. However, the company's impact was hindered by institutional weaknesses, limited resources, and financial mismanagement, resulting in ongoing infrastructural deficits, persistent poverty, and slow economic progress in many host communities. Issues such as inconsistent project implementation, inadequate local investment, and weak community engagement further undermined developmental outcomes. The study population comprised selected communities from three local government areas Ikot Abasi, Eket, and Mkpata Enin covering a total population of 25,936 based on the 2006 census. These communities were strategically chosen for their demographic and socio-

economic diversity. A descriptive survey design employing both qualitative and quantitative methods was adopted. Data were gathered through questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and interviews, supplemented by secondary sources from academic and governmental publications. Using the Resource Dependence Theory as a framework, a sample size of 377 respondents was determined via Krejcie and Morgan's table, with purposive and simple random sampling techniques employed out of which 369 were retrieved for final analyses. Findings showed that IPCL significantly contributed to community development through CSR, with statistical evidence supporting improvements in healthcare access ( $\chi^2 = 702.31$ ), economic empowerment through skill acquisition ( $\chi^2 = 5197.17$ ), educational support ( $\chi^2 = 76.68$ ), and infrastructural development ( $\chi^2 = 70.27$ ). FGDs confirmed positive community perceptions of IPCL's impact. Nonetheless, financial constraints, regulatory challenges, and high community expectations sometimes limited the effectiveness of these programs. The study recommended enhancing partnerships with government, NGOs, and community leaders and instituting a transparent stakeholder engagement framework to better align CSR initiatives with community needs and ensure sustainability.

**Keywords:** *Public Enterprise, Ibom Power Company Limited (IPCL), Community Development, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Infrastructure Development, and Human Capital Development*

## Introduction

Public enterprises have historically served as strategic tools for promoting socio-economic development across various national contexts. Globally, governments have established such entities to deliver essential services, stimulate industrial growth, and correct regional and social imbalances. In developed nations like Sweden and Norway, public enterprises have demonstrated that it is possible to harmonize economic efficiency with social responsibility. Through state ownership in key sectors such as energy, transportation, and healthcare, these countries have promoted equitable development, advanced regional integration, and enhanced public welfare (Hodges, 2020).

In the context of developing countries, particularly in Africa, public enterprises continue to play a vital role in national development strategies. They often serve as

primary providers of critical infrastructure and social services. Institutions such as Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen) and South Africa's Eskom exemplify efforts to expand access to electricity and related services. However, African public enterprises are frequently hampered by institutional inefficiencies, limited resources, and governance challenges. These constraints undermine their ability to fulfill their mandates and hinder progress towards inclusive development (Adetula, 2019; Davis & Okeowo, 2016).

In Nigeria, public enterprises like the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the defunct National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) have historically contributed to economic growth, employment generation, and infrastructure development. Beyond their operational roles, these entities have undertaken Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, including scholarships, skill acquisition programs, and investments in education and healthcare. Despite these contributions, public skepticism remains due to recurrent issues of inefficiency, corruption, and inadequate accountability mechanisms, which have prompted calls for privatization and restructuring (Thurston, 2020).

At the subnational level, public enterprises like Ibom Power Company Limited in Akwa Ibom State illustrate the intersection of state-level policy implementation and local development aspirations. Established by the Akwa Ibom State Government, the company was envisioned as a catalyst for regional industrialization and socio-economic transformation. It has initiated several CSR programs such as rural electrification, skills training, educational support, health interventions, and the provision of low-interest loans for local entrepreneurs, particularly in Ikot Abasi, Mkpata Enin, and Eastern Obolo Local Government Areas (Ibom Power, 2022; Ojo, 2012). Despite these reported interventions, the anticipated developmental impact in host communities has been less than satisfactory. Many residents continue to experience poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to basic social services. Critics have pointed to the inconsistencies in project implementation, insufficient stakeholder engagement, and perceptions of favoritism in the allocation of CSR benefits. Concerns have also been raised about weak institutional structures, resource constraints, and poor leadership within the company, all of which contribute to the failure to realize sustainable development outcomes (Akpan, 2016; Archibong,

2019). Moreover, Ibom Power Company operates within a challenging socio-political and regulatory environment, where land disputes, political interference, and corruption frequently disrupt project execution. These factors have led to growing distrust between the company and its host communities, thereby threatening the long-term viability of its development initiatives.

Given these issues, a critical evaluation of Ibom Power Company's contributions to community development is warranted. This study seeks to investigate the extent to which the company has fulfilled its developmental mandate, assess the effectiveness of its CSR strategies, and identify areas for improvement. The findings aim to inform policy interventions and strategic planning efforts that can enhance the role of public enterprises in promoting sustainable development at the local level. To achieve this, the study was guided by the following objectives:

### **Research Questions**

- i. Has Ibom Power Company Limited engaged infrastructural intervention projects in its host communities within Akwa Ibom State?
- ii. How effectively has Ibom Power Company Limited invested in human capital development programmes within its host communities in Akwa Ibom State?

### **i Research Hypotheses**

- i. Ibom Power Company Limited is likely to engage in infrastructural intervention projects in its host communities in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. Ibom Power Company Limited tends to embarked on human capital development programmes within its host communities within Akwa Ibom State

### **Review of Conceptual Literature**

#### ***Concept of Public Enterprises***

Public enterprises, commonly known as state-owned enterprises (SOEs), are multifaceted entities that have been conceptualized in various ways across academic disciplines. At their core, these organizations are characterized by public ownership and are primarily established to advance national interests and deliver services that may be underprovided by the private sector. They are not merely economic instruments but also vehicles for social policy, governance, and public

accountability. The conceptualization of public enterprises extends beyond ownership to encompass their broader socio-economic functions. Scholars like González, Lazzarini, and Musacchio (2018) emphasize their role in promoting public interest and national development, highlighting the intrinsic link between state ownership and the pursuit of collective welfare. Rather than being profit-driven, these entities are oriented toward fulfilling policy objectives, ensuring the provision of essential goods and services, and maintaining economic equilibrium.

This functional role becomes especially pertinent in developing economies, where private investment is often insufficient in key sectors. Baud, Schenk, and Molenaar (2017) frame public enterprises as corrective mechanisms for market failures, particularly in infrastructure, health, and education. They are designed to bridge socio-economic gaps and drive development where market forces fall short. Similarly, Wang, Xu, and Wang (2020) underscore the policy-driven nature of these enterprises, noting their unique capacity to integrate governmental objectives with operational efficiency thereby forming a hybrid model of governance and enterprise.

In times of economic instability, public enterprises are conceptualized as stabilizers. Bortolotti and Faccio (2021) argue that they provide continuity and price stability during market disruptions, acting as buffers against inflationary or deflationary pressures. This stabilizing function extends to equitable service provision, as highlighted by Mühlenkamp (2015), who sees public enterprises as tools for reducing inequality by reaching underserved and marginalized populations.

Public enterprises are also subject to legal and regulatory frameworks that shape their governance and accountability. Bernier (2021) conceptualizes them as juridical entities, whose operations are bounded by laws and oversight mechanisms intended to safeguard transparency and prevent misuse of public resources. This aligns with Shirley's (2016) perspective, which highlights the importance of oversight, audit mechanisms, and public scrutiny in maintaining accountability within these institutions. In the context of competition and economic regulation, the OECD (2016) envisions public enterprises as entities capable of operating in competitive environments while being regulated to prevent monopolistic abuses. They serve a dual function of participating in markets and upholding public interest, particularly in sectors susceptible to natural monopolies like utilities and transportation.

Beyond their domestic roles, public enterprises are increasingly seen as instruments of global economic engagement. Xu and Hitt (2019) conceptualize them as transnational actors that project national economic interests abroad, facilitating trade, investment, and diplomatic influence. This global orientation is complemented by their role in innovation and technological advancement. Mazzucato (2018) redefines public enterprises as dynamic agents of innovation, capable of undertaking high-risk research and development ventures that the private sector might avoid, thereby catalyzing national progress in strategic sectors. Collectively, these conceptualizations reflect the evolving and adaptive nature of public enterprises. Far from being uniform entities, they are complex, policy-driven organizations that embody the interface between public governance and economic activity. They are shaped by legal, economic, and social imperatives, and their success is measured not solely by financial performance but by their capacity to generate public value, address inequality, promote stability, and drive innovation.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been defined in multiple ways by scholars and institutions, but most interpretations consistently highlight three fundamental dimensions: economic, social, and environmental (Thomas & Nowak, 2006). The European Union Green Paper (2001) describes CSR as a voluntary commitment by companies to integrate social, economic, and environmental concerns into their core strategies while actively engaging with stakeholders.

Several authoritative definitions illustrate the diversity and scope of CSR:

- i. **Beyond Economic Goals:** CSR is viewed as a business effort to achieve social benefits in addition to traditional economic objectives (Davis, 1973, p. 312).
- ii. **Comprehensive Obligations:** It involves a combination of legal, economic, ethical, and voluntary responsibilities that organizations are expected to fulfill by the communities in which they operate (Carroll, 1997, p. 500).
- iii. **Promoting Social Welfare:** CSR comprises actions by firms that support societal wellbeing beyond profit-making and legal compliance (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001, p. 117).

- iv. **Community Engagement:** This entails businesses making deliberate efforts to contribute positively to their host communities outside of their profit-driven motives (Chapple & Moon, 2005, p. 416).

Despite different emphases, these definitions share key ideas. Notably, CSR initiatives go beyond mere legal compliance. For instance, multinational oil companies adhering only to environmental laws would not fully qualify as practicing CSR. However, if such companies invest resources in community health programs or social amenities, they exemplify responsible corporate citizenship (Edet, Ebong, and Oki, 2023).and Banerjee, 2008). Moreover, CSR is fundamentally voluntary; it cannot be legislated, although firms engaging in CSR are expected to follow ethical codes based on local, national, and global standards none of which are legally binding (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

An important evolution within CSR is the shift from focusing solely on “society” to embracing the broader concept of “stakeholders.” This reflects the understanding that multiple groups employees, customers, local communities, regulators represent societal interests and exert influence over corporate behavior (Banerjee, 2008). According to Hohen (2007), corporate social activities involve decisions and actions that affect both communities and the environment, promoting sustainable development aligned with stakeholder expectations and legal frameworks. Similarly, Barney (2001) and Borowski (2014) define CSR as a company’s voluntary commitment to assess and manage its social and environmental impacts, often exceeding statutory requirements. CSR is also interchangeable with the term “corporate citizenship,” which involves accepting short-term costs for long-term social and environmental gains (Barney, 2001; Borowski, 2014).

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2004) frames CSR as an obligation for companies to contribute to sustainable economic growth by collaborating with employees, their families, local communities, and society at large to enhance overall quality of life, including considerations for future generations. Carroll (2000) similarly describes CSR as a company’s responsibility to comply with laws, uphold ethical standards, contribute to societal welfare, and remain profitable. Enuoh and Inyang (2014) further highlight CSR as a leadership commitment to align business decisions and policies with the values and interests of society. Werther and

Chandler (2006) summarize CSR through three interconnected dimensions: it forms a vital link between business and society, entails shared responsibilities, and demands continuous stakeholder engagement. These points underscore the reciprocal relationship between companies and their societal contexts and the necessity to meet stakeholder expectations. Expanding on this, Heeskerk (2012) emphasizes that CSR covers a broad spectrum of obligations economic, social, cultural, environmental, ethical, and legal aimed at addressing stakeholder concerns, fostering employee and community growth, and embedding community support within business operations. Likewise, Akachukwu (2005) defines CSR as the voluntary social responsibility of companies, grounded in ethical principles. Egbon, Idemudia, and Amaeshi (2018) add that CSR involves addressing socio-economic and environmental challenges beyond profit motives, a stance supported by Orlitzky (2007), who sees CSR as a global strategy to combat poverty, social exclusion, and environmental harm. Finally, Perrini, Russo, and Tencati (2007) argue that CSR encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations society places on firms. These demands often arise from public pressure, especially from host communities who may feel marginalized or inadequately compensated for disruptions caused by corporate activities.

### **Concept of Community Development**

Community development is an evolving and interdisciplinary concept that encapsulates the processes, goals, and mechanisms employed to enhance the social, economic, cultural, and environmental well-being of communities. At its core, community development is a human-centered and participatory enterprise, aiming to empower individuals and groups to actively engage in shaping their future. It is both a philosophy and a practice that emphasizes agency, collaboration, inclusion, and sustainability. From a conceptual standpoint, community development is anchored in the belief that individuals and communities possess the inherent capacity to transform their conditions when equipped with the right tools, support, and enabling environments. It champions a bottom-up approach, where solutions to local challenges are driven by the people most affected. This people-centered focus is supported by Ife and Tesoriero (2006), who argue that sustainable development



outcomes are most effectively achieved when community members are the primary actors in the change process.

The process of community development is also inherently empowering. It does not merely address immediate needs but seeks to foster long-term self-reliance by building social capital, skills, and leadership within communities (Edet, Ebong, and Oki, 2023). Christenson and Robinson (1989) articulate this as a method of enhancing community capacity to act collectively, promoting solidarity, resilience, and autonomy. Empowerment thus functions both as a pathway and an outcome, whereby communities evolve into active problem-solvers and decision-makers. Social transformation is another key conceptual dimension of community development. It involves strengthening the social fabric and fostering collective action to confront structural and systemic issues. Bhattacharyya (2004) emphasizes that shared goals and values serve as the bedrock for communal action, leading to equitable and enduring improvements in quality of life. This transformative view frames development as a process of redistributing power and resources within society, promoting justice and inclusivity.

The concept also incorporates integrative and multidimensional approaches. As defined by the United Nations (2001), community development synthesizes economic and social progress by leveraging local initiatives and partnerships. This holistic perspective is echoed by Matarrita-Cascante and Brennan (2012), who stress the need to consider the interplay of social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors. Such an approach ensures that development is not fragmented but aligned across multiple sectors to produce comprehensive benefits. Capacity building is intrinsic to community development, both as a process and a strategic tool. Ledwith (2011) conceptualizes it as an educational journey that develops local capacities to innovate, adapt, and lead change. In parallel, Green and Haines (2015) view community development as a participatory strategy that relies on inclusive collaboration to create sustainable solutions, particularly those grounded in local knowledge and resources. The participatory ethos promotes democratic engagement and fosters a sense of ownership and accountability.

Place-based development is another significant element of the conceptual framework. Gilchrist (2009) highlights the importance of anchoring interventions in

specific geographic or social settings, acknowledging that unique cultural, spatial, and relational dynamics shape the developmental needs and opportunities of communities. In this view, effective community development must be responsive and tailored, rather than generic or externally imposed. Furthermore, community development is seen as a collaborative and coordinated process. Flora and Flora (2018) underscore the value of cross-sectoral partnerships, suggesting that collective action among stakeholders including governments, businesses, and civil society generates synergies that amplify impact. Wilkinson (1991) reinforces this by framing community development as a structured, problem-solving endeavor that mobilizes resources and ideas to confront communal challenges.

In addition, the contributions of external agencies, whether governmental, non-governmental, or corporate, are pivotal in complementing grassroots efforts. Maimunah (2009) notes that external assistance can be vital in providing the capital, infrastructure, and technical support necessary for large-scale development. This has been evident in Nigeria, where public enterprises and the government have played instrumental roles in community development through corporate social responsibility programs, grants, and the deployment of community development officers. Finally, community development remains a dynamic and adaptive process. As described by Theodori (2008) and Azzopardi (2011), it requires continuous engagement, learning, and responsiveness to emerging needs and opportunities. It is as much about fostering a culture of civic engagement and empowerment as it is about delivering tangible outcomes. In essence, community development can be conceptualized as a holistic, participatory, and empowerment-driven process aimed at fostering sustainable and equitable improvements in the living standards of communities. It draws from diverse disciplinary insights and operates through the interplay of internal initiatives and external support. The process is deeply rooted in collaboration, place sensitivity, and the continuous expansion of community capacity to act collectively and effectively.

### **Models and Strategies for Community Development**

Strauss (1970), as referenced by Tom and Amadu (2014), identifies two fundamental models of community development: the organic model and the inorganic or

mechanistic model. These models reflect differing approaches based on the sources of initiative and support for development activities.

#### **i. Organic Community Development Model**

The **organic model** is characterized by its grassroots orientation, emerging naturally from within the community. It is based on the premise that community development is a timeless and intrinsic process, rooted in the historical and cultural evolution of human societies. This model emphasizes self-reliance, with community members taking the initiative to conceptualize and execute development projects independently of governmental or external assistance. Typical examples include the communal construction and maintenance of basic infrastructure such as roads, schools, water supply systems, markets, hospitals, and electricity projects (Tom & Amadu, 2014). According to Umoh (1985), as cited by Tom and Amadu (2014), Akwa Ibom State is replete with development projects spearheaded by local communities through collective action, underscoring the enduring relevance of this organic approach.

#### **ii. Inorganic or Mechanistic Development Model**

In contrast, the **inorganic or mechanistic model** relies primarily on interventions from external actors. Rather than originating from the community itself, development in this model is driven by outside entities, such as government bodies or private organizations (Fanolumi, 2002; Chino, 2004; World Bank, 2004). This model is divided into two categories based on the nature of external involvement:

- i. **Public-driven efforts**, in which government agencies and ministries plan, finance, and execute development initiatives.
- ii. **Private-led interventions**, where development is supported by non-state actors like individuals, companies, professional unions, or philanthropic foundations. These stakeholders pool resources to implement projects aimed at improving infrastructure and economic opportunities.

In Akwa Ibom State, many current development efforts, including the building of roads, schools, healthcare facilities, and industrial infrastructure, align with this mechanistic model, reflecting a dependence on structured, externally initiated programs.

## **Public Enterprises and Community Development in Nigeria. The Nexus**

Public enterprises are created with a dual mandate: to achieve national development goals and to stimulate socio-economic advancement within their host communities. Typically financed and overseen by the government, these organizations play a crucial role in fostering local development through job creation, infrastructural improvements, and the delivery of essential services. The relationship between public enterprises and their host communities is fundamentally reciprocal; while communities supply vital resources, labor, and social capital necessary for the enterprises' functioning, these enterprises are expected to contribute positively to sustainable development and the enhancement of living standards in these areas. Oyelaran-Oyeyinka (2018) argues that the developmental impact of public enterprises can be optimized when their operational policies are harmonized with the specific developmental needs and priorities of their host communities.

The dynamics of interaction between public enterprises and host communities can be examined through theoretical perspectives such as Stakeholder Theory and Developmental State Theory. Stakeholder Theory, as introduced by Freeman (1984), posits that organizations have responsibilities that extend beyond profit generation to encompass the interests of all stakeholders, including local populations. By recognizing and balancing diverse stakeholder interests, public enterprises can facilitate enduring societal benefits. Similarly, Developmental State Theory (Evans, 1995) highlights the pivotal role of state-led enterprises in driving socio-economic transformation, especially in contexts where private sector investment is limited or inadequate. These frameworks emphasize that public enterprises should operate on principles of inclusivity, fairness, and environmental sustainability, reflecting their embeddedness within the social fabric of host communities.

Public enterprises significantly influence host community development across several domains, particularly economic empowerment, infrastructure provision, and social responsibility efforts. Economic empowerment is often realized through employment generation and the stimulation of local enterprise growth. For example, Akpan and Umoh (2021) illustrate how the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) company supports local suppliers and contractors, thereby catalyzing economic activities and enhancing community livelihoods. Additionally, public enterprises

invest in vital infrastructure such as roads, schools, health facilities, and water systems, filling critical service delivery gaps and enabling broader socio-economic development. The energy sector in Nigeria, for instance, has made substantial infrastructural contributions in oil-producing regions to improve accessibility and quality of basic amenities.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs form another essential avenue through which public enterprises engage with host communities. These initiatives typically address community-specific challenges, including educational scholarships, vocational training, healthcare outreach, and environmental preservation. Ejumudo (2014) notes the positive impact of CSR activities by public enterprises in Nigeria's Niger Delta, where such programs have enhanced education and health services in rural areas.

However, despite these positive contributions, public enterprises face significant challenges that hinder their integration into community development. Corruption and mismanagement are persistent problems; funds earmarked for community projects are frequently misappropriated or inefficiently deployed, undermining developmental outcomes. Adewuyi and Olowookere (2020) document how such governance issues in Nigerian public enterprises have eroded public confidence and hampered progress. Additionally, tensions between enterprises and host communities often arise from environmental degradation, land disputes, and unfulfilled development commitments. The Niger Delta's oil and gas sector exemplifies this, with widespread community protests against pollution and perceived neglect of social welfare (Aghalino, 2019). Policy and regulatory weaknesses further exacerbate these challenges. As Obi (2020) highlights, inconsistent policies and weak governance frameworks limit the capacity of public enterprises to fulfill their developmental mandates effectively.

### **Review of Empirical Literature**

Adewuyi and Olowookere (2020) investigated the challenges and opportunities facing public enterprises in Nigeria, based on the premise that these enterprises are vital for socio-economic development but are hampered by inefficiencies. Through surveys and analysis of secondary data from public enterprise reports, using

descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, the study identified corruption and mismanagement as major factors limiting the ability of these enterprises to achieve their developmental goals. The authors emphasized the need to strengthen governance and accountability mechanisms, recommending regular audits and enhanced transparency to better align public enterprises with community development objectives.

Similarly, Akpan and Umoh (2021) studied how infrastructure development by public enterprises affects relations with host communities in Nigeria's energy sector. They posited that infrastructure investments improve socio-economic conditions and foster positive community relations. Using structured interviews and field surveys, analyzed through regression and thematic coding, the research found that investments in roads, schools, and healthcare facilities significantly enhanced local living standards and built trust between enterprises and communities. The study concluded that ongoing infrastructure investment is critical for sustaining community harmony and called for increased funding allocation to community development projects.

Ojo (2023) focused on the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in addressing grievances among host communities in the Niger Delta. The study assumed that CSR efforts targeting education, healthcare, and social services are crucial for nurturing positive relationships between public enterprises and communities. Employing surveys and focus group discussions analyzed through content and inferential statistics, Ojo found that while CSR improved access to education and healthcare, it inadequately addressed environmental concerns. The study concluded that effective CSR must involve community participation in both planning and implementation, with a stronger emphasis on environmental management alongside social programs.

Adamu and Ahmed (2022) examined the contribution of public enterprises to youth employment in host communities, operating on the assumption that these enterprises help reduce unemployment and promote skill development. Using questionnaire surveys analyzed through chi-square tests and regression analysis, they discovered that although public enterprises generate job opportunities, these tend to be concentrated in low-skill positions. The authors recommended that employment policies prioritize skill acquisition and suggested expanding vocational training

programs in partnership with educational institutions. Eke (2021) explored the importance of community engagement in mitigating conflicts involving public enterprises in conflict-prone areas. Assuming that structured engagement lowers hostilities, Eke conducted case studies and in-depth interviews analyzed comparatively. The findings showed that enterprises maintaining open communication channels with host communities experienced fewer conflicts. The study advocated for the institutionalization of community advisory boards as formal mechanisms for dialogue within enterprise governance frameworks.

Okoro and Umeh (2022) studied the impact of health-focused CSR initiatives by public enterprises on community health outcomes. Using health records and community surveys analyzed through comparative assessments, they found that initiatives such as mobile clinics and immunization campaigns effectively reduced mortality rates and improved healthcare access. The study recommended expanding these programs and increasing budgetary support for community health services. Lastly, Idris and Yaro (2023) analyzed governance practices in public enterprises and their effect on community trust and cooperation. Operating under the assumption that sound governance fosters community satisfaction, they utilized key informant interviews and secondary data, analyzed thematically and via trend analysis. Results showed that transparency, regular communication, and inclusive decision-making greatly enhanced community trust. The authors recommended institutionalizing accountability frameworks and ensuring community representation within governance structures.

### **Public Enterprises and Human Capital Development In Nigeria. An Assessment**

Public enterprises in Nigeria play a vital role in human capital development and educational advancement within their host communities through targeted Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. These initiatives encompass business empowerment, skill acquisition, vocational training, educational infrastructure development, scholarships, and financial support, all designed to foster sustainable economic growth and alleviate poverty. For example, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) implements capacity-building programs, skills workshops in trades such as welding and carpentry, and provides micro-loans to diversify local economies beyond oil dependence, especially in the Niger Delta

region. Similarly, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) promotes digital literacy and entrepreneurship among youth by offering ICT training and support for tech startups in urban and semi-urban areas. Public enterprises also collaborate with educational institutions to provide vocational training that equips young people with practical skills relevant to sectors like agriculture and transportation; the Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Corporation offers farmer training and insurance schemes, while the Nigerian Railway Corporation provides technical programs in engineering and mechanics.

Financial empowerment initiatives are also significant, with the Central Bank of Nigeria partnering with public enterprises to support micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through funding and financial literacy programs. Beyond skill development, many public enterprises invest in educational infrastructure and scholarship programs to improve access and quality of education in underserved and oil-affected communities. The NNPC, for example, funds scholarships focusing on science and technology and supports school construction and renovation, leading to improved enrollment and retention rates. Likewise, the Nigerian Ports Authority and Nigerian Railway Corporation contribute to school building and vocational training opportunities, particularly in communities surrounding ports and railway facilities.

State-owned enterprises at the regional level, such as the Lagos State Development and Property Corporation, Ogun State Investment Corporation, Abia State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (ASOPADEC), and Cross River State Investment Promotion Bureau, further reinforce educational and skill development through infrastructural investments, scholarships, and vocational training programs. Collectively, these efforts by both federal and state public enterprises create a multifaceted approach that combines capacity building, educational support, and financial assistance, thereby promoting local entrepreneurship, economic diversification, employment generation, and sustainable development in Nigeria's underserved and resource-dependent communities.



## **Public Enterprises and Infrastructural intervention Programme within the host communities in Nigeria. An Assessment.**

Public enterprises in Nigeria have made substantial contributions to infrastructural development within their host communities, often stepping in where private sector investment is limited or absent. These state-owned corporations have played a critical role in improving access to essential services such as roads, electricity, water, and transportation facilities through various corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. For instance, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has been pivotal in infrastructure projects, especially in oil-producing regions like the Niger Delta, investing in road construction, clean water provision, and the building of community centers. These efforts have not only enhanced living standards but also stimulated local economies by supporting business activities and reducing poverty. Similarly, the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has upgraded infrastructure around key port cities including Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Calabar, improving road networks and urban development, which in turn have boosted port efficiency and regional trade.

The Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) has rehabilitated railway lines and stations, particularly in underserved areas, facilitating the movement of goods and people and promoting economic inclusion by connecting rural communities to urban markets. At the state level, organizations such as the Lagos State Development and Property Corporation (LSDPC) and the Cross River State Investment Promotion Bureau (CRSIPB) have advanced urban and rural infrastructure through projects like affordable housing, road construction, bridge building, and electricity extension, fostering better connectivity and economic opportunities. In Akwa Ibom State, the Ibom Power Company (IPC) stands out for its efforts in rural electrification and educational infrastructure. IPC has enabled electricity access in remote areas, which has improved education and healthcare delivery and supported local businesses by reducing reliance on costly power alternatives. The company has also funded classrooms, learning materials, and skills workshops, significantly enhancing educational outcomes. Additionally, IPC's investments in community roads and halls have improved living conditions and contributed to the socio-economic growth of its host communities. These multifaceted infrastructure interventions by public

enterprises underscore their vital role in bridging infrastructure gaps, improving access to services, and fostering sustainable development in Nigeria's underserved regions.

In the area of healthcare, Nigerian public enterprises have also played a significant role through their CSR initiatives, focusing on improving healthcare access and outcomes in underserved communities. Many have been involved in constructing and rehabilitating health centers in rural areas, providing essential medical services such as maternal and child health, immunization, and treatment of common diseases. The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation's healthcare investments in the Niger Delta, for example, have notably improved maternal and child health outcomes. Mobile health outreach programs deployed by these enterprises bring medical professionals directly to hard-to-reach populations, offering free consultations, screenings, and preventive care for conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS. Public health education is another critical area, with initiatives aimed at raising awareness on hygiene, disease prevention, and sanitation, helping reduce the spread of diseases like cholera and malaria in communities with low health literacy. Beyond services and education, public enterprises have supplied essential medical equipment and pharmaceuticals, including donations of vaccines and personal protective equipment during health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, they have addressed environmental health risks arising from industrial activities, particularly in the Niger Delta, by funding projects to provide clean water, improve sanitation, and screen for pollution-related illnesses. Partnerships with local governments and international organizations have strengthened these healthcare interventions, ensuring better resource mobilization and sustainability. Overall, public enterprises have significantly contributed to healthcare development by enhancing infrastructure, delivering mobile health services, promoting health education, supplying medical resources, and mitigating environmental health challenges, thereby improving health outcomes in Nigeria's marginalized host communities.

## **Theoretical Framework**

To provide a solid scientific foundation, this study adopts the Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) developed by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik (1978) as its theoretical framework. RDT is particularly relevant for analyzing the operational dynamics of Ibom Power Company Limited (IPCL) and its interactions with host communities. The theory emphasizes how organizations depend on external resources for survival and how they strategically manage these dependencies to reduce uncertainty. In the case of IPCL, this framework highlights the company's reliance on critical resources such as local energy demand, governmental support, and community relationships, all of which are essential for maintaining operational stability and fostering growth. As a key energy provider in Akwa Ibom State, IPCL depends heavily on natural resources like gas, as well as political resources from both local and state governments. The company also contends with environmental concerns and community expectations, particularly regarding its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. These CSR programs, which target improvements in local infrastructure, education, and healthcare, are deliberately designed to build and sustain positive relationships with important stakeholders, including host communities, government agencies, and regulatory bodies. Such efforts not only mitigate operational risks but also secure vital community goodwill that supports ongoing access to necessary resources.

Resource Dependence Theory offers a useful lens to understand how IPCL negotiates the balance between its internal resource needs and the external pressures from communities and other stakeholders. Although the theory has faced criticism for focusing predominantly on resource acquisition and potentially overlooking ethical dimensions, it remains valuable for explaining how public enterprises like IPCL operate within complex socio-political environments. By engaging in CSR activities that promote mutually beneficial relationships, IPCL reduces resource-based conflicts and strengthens its prospects for long-term sustainability. For Ibom Power Company, RDT effectively illustrates the critical role of securing local community support not only to ensure operational continuity but also to fulfill social and environmental responsibilities. This approach fosters a symbiotic relationship with

the surrounding communities, enhancing the company's reputation and legitimizing its operations within the broader societal context.

## **Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive survey research design, utilizing both primary and secondary data sources to comprehensively examine the role of Ibom Power Company Limited (IPCL) in community development within Akwa Ibom State. The research was conducted in selected communities across three Local Government Areas (LGAs) Ikot Abasi, Eket, and Mkpato Enin chosen to reflect a diverse range of demographic and socio-economic characteristics pertinent to the study objectives. Within these LGAs, nine communities were purposively selected based on their population size and their direct relevance to IPCL's community engagement activities. These included four communities in Ikot Abasi (Ikpetim, Ibekwe, Ikot Obong, Ukpum Ete), two in Eket (Afaha Eket, Afaha Uwak), and three in Mkpato Enin (Ikot Ekop, Ikot Akata, Ekim), with a combined population of 25,936 according to the 2006 national census.

A total sample size of 377 respondents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table to ensure statistical adequacy. A mixed sampling approach was adopted, combining purposive sampling to identify key stakeholders with specialized knowledge or experience relevant to the study, alongside simple random sampling to select community members, thereby minimizing sampling bias and enhancing the representativeness of the sample. Data collection involved a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques, including the administration of structured questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire instrument consisted of two main sections: the first captured respondents' demographic information, while the second comprised 17 closed-ended items designed to elicit perceptions regarding IPCL's community development initiatives. Secondary data were sourced through an extensive review of relevant academic literature, government reports, official publications, and media sources.

Questionnaires were distributed both in person and electronically, with follow-up measures implemented to maximize response rates. FGDs were conducted either face-to-face or virtually, with participant consent obtained for recording and

transcription purposes to ensure data accuracy. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, specifically the Chi-square test at a 0.05 significance level, to assess the relationships between variables. Qualitative data from FGDs and interviews were subjected to thematic analysis to complement the quantitative findings and provide deeper contextual insights. This mixed-methods approach ensured a robust and comprehensive assessment of IPCL's contributions to community development in the study areas.

Testing of Hypothesis: I Ibom Power Company Limited is likely to engage in infrastructural intervention projects in its host communities in Akwa Ibom State.

S/N	Questions	SA	A	SD	D	Total
1	The skill acquisition programs offered by Ibom Power Company Limited have significantly enhanced the entrepreneurial capabilities of community members.	140 (37.9%)	130 (35.2%)	60 (16.3%)	39 (10.6%)	369
2	Participants of Ibom Power Company Limited's skill acquisition programs have successfully established their own businesses as a result of the training received.	110 (29.8%)	100 (27.1%)	90 (24.4%)	69 (18.7%)	369
3	Educational support programmes provided by Ibom Power Company Limited enhance educational development within it host communities in Akwa Ibom State.	160 (43.4%)	130 (35.2%)	40 (10.8%)	39 (10.6%)	369
4	The resources and support provided by Ibom Power Company Limited are sufficient to ensure the success of its business empowerment and skill acquisition programs	170 (40.7%)	130 (32.5%)	30 (16.3%)	39 (10.6%)	369

Calculations of Expected Frequencies

R – C	Fo	Fe	Fo – Fe	(Fo – Fe) <sup>2</sup>	(Fo – Fe) <sup>2</sup> Fe
1-1	140	145	-5	25	0.17
1-2	130	10	120	14400	1440
1-3	60	55	5	25	0.45
1-4	39	46.5	-7.5	56.25	1.21
2-1	110	145	-35	1225	8.45
2-2	100	10	90	8100	810
2-3	90	55	35	1225	22.27
2-4	69	46.5	22.5	506.25	10.89
3-1	160	145	15	225	1.55
3-2	130	10	120	14400	1440
3-3	40	55	15	225	4.09
3-4	39	46.5	-7.5	56.25	1.21
4-1	170	145	25	625	4.31
4-2	130	10	120	14400	1440
4-3	30	55	-25	625	11.36
4-4	39	46.5	7.5	56.25	1.21
Total					<b>5197.17</b>

**Source:** Field Work 2024

$$\chi^2 5197.17$$

$$= (4-1) (3-1)$$

$$\therefore 3 \times 2 = 6$$

6 @0.05 level of significant

Table Value = 16.919

### Decision

The findings indicate that Ibom Power Company Limited significantly invested on infrastructural development projects within its host communities in Akwa Ibom State. This is supported by a Chi-square value of 5197.17, which is much higher than

the critical value of 16.919 at the 0.05 significance level, leading to acceptance of the alternative hypothesis

The table below shows the numbers of infrastructural development projects initiated and completed by IPCL in Akwa Ibom State.

S/N	PROJECTS	Type of infrastructure	location	LGA
1	Rural Electrification	Repair of low tension, provision of poles with sub-station	Ikot Idiong Village	Mkpat Enin
2	Rural electrification	Installation of 300KVA transformer, repairs of sub-station, provision of low tension	Ikot Ekop Village	MkpatEnin
3	Rural electrification	Installation of street lights	Ikot Ekop Village	Mkpat Enin
4	Rural electrification	Electrification of the community vtillage council and it environ, and provision of low tension poles	Ikot Umiang	Mkpat Enin
		Installation and rehabilitation of 300 KVA Transformer	Ikot Edim	Mkpat Enin
5		Upgrading, repairs, installed and rehabilitation of 500KVA Transformer with substation, with low tension poles	Ikot Akpaden	MkpatEnin
6		Building of 132 KVA Sub Station	Ekim	Mkpat Enin
7		Provision of 300KVA Transformer to general hospital Ikot Abasi	Ibekwe	Ikot Abasi

Source: Author Computation (2024)

In collaboration with the above table, the picture below shows infrastruclrl project initiated and completed by IPCL as part of her CSR in Akwa Ibom State.



Source: field Work, 2024

The picture below shows the 600KVA Transformer donated by IPCL in Ekim, Mkpate Enin LGA



Source: field Work, 2025.

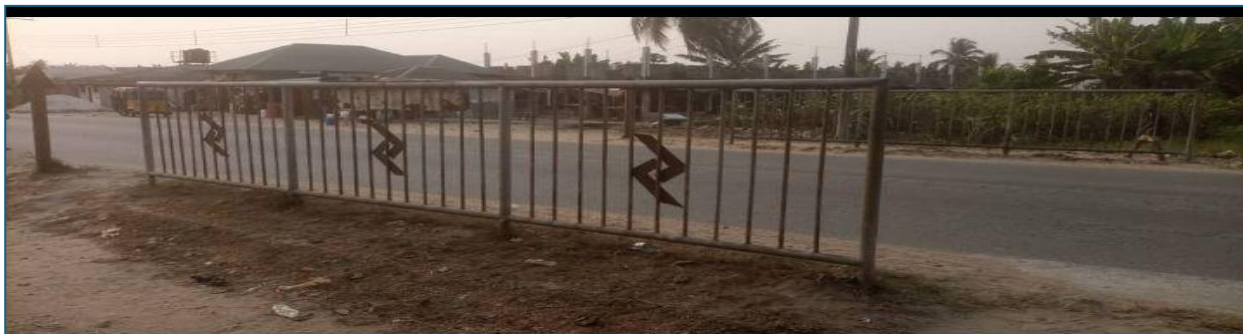
The picture below shows sample of bus stop constructed and donate by IPCL



The picture below shows Ikpa Ibekwe Youth Secretariat, renovated by IPCL in Ikot Obon Village, Ikot Abasi LGA.



The picture below shows road cross rail by IPCL at Ete Ikot Aba, Eket LGA



Source: Field Work (2024).



**Testing of hypothesis two:** Ibom Power Company Limited tends to embarked on human capital development programmes within its host communities within Akwa Ibom State

S/N	Questions	SA	A	SD	D	Total
6	Ibom Power Company Limited actively implements educational support programs in its host communities within Akwa Ibom State.	140	130	60	39	369
7	The educational initiatives provided by Ibom Power Company Limited effectively address the learning needs of students in its host communities.	150	120	60	39	369
8	Community members perceive Ibom Power Company Limited's educational support programs as beneficial to local schools and students.	160	110	60	39	369
9	Ibom Power Company Limited collaborates with local educational institutions to enhance the quality of education in its host communities.	160	120	50	39	369

**Table: Chi-square Calculation For Hypothesis two**

R – C	Fo	Fe	Fo – Fe	(Fo – Fe) <sup>2</sup>	(Fo – Fe) <sup>2</sup> / Fe
6-1	140	125	15	225	1.8
6-2	130	62.5	67.5	4556.25	72.9
6-3	60	145	-85	6970	48.07
6-4	39	122	83	6889	56.46
7-1	150	125	25	625	5
7-2	120	62.5	57.5	3306.25	52.9
7-3	60	145	-85	7225	49.83
7-4	39	122	83	6889	56.46
8-1	140	125	15	225	1.8
8-2	130	62.5	67.5	4556.25	72.9
8-3	60	145	-85	6970	48.07
8-4	39	122	83	6889	56.46
9-1	160	125	35	1225	9.8
9-2	120	62.5	57.5	3306.25	52.9
9-3	60	145	85	6970	46.07
9-4	29	122	93	8649	70.89
Total					<b>702.31</b>

Source: Field Work 2025

$$\chi^2 702.31$$

$$= (4-1) (3-1)$$

$$\therefore 3 \times 2 = 6$$

6 @0.05 level of significant

Table Value = 16.919

### Decision

The findings from the analysis suggest a significant relationship between Ibom Power Company Limited and human capital development programs in its host communities within Akwa Ibom State. The Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 702.31 far exceeds the critical value of 16.919 at the 0.05 significance level, leading to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. This statistical result strongly indicates that Ibom Power Company Limited has played a substantial role in implementing healthcare intervention programs in its host communities, demonstrating a significant commitment to improving health outcomes in the region. The above decision is supported by scholarly views and opinion which states that most state owned companies contributed immensely to their host communities development through their CSRs.

In line with the above decision, the picture below shows most of the human capital development projects initiated by and donated by IPCL in Akwa Ibom State.

The cassava processing and grinding mill center build and donated by IPCL Ikpetim Village, Ikot Abasi LGA.



Source: Field Work, 2025

The picture shows the palm oil mill by IPCL in Ibekwe, Ikot Abasi LGA



Source: Field Work, 2025

The picture below shows cross section of student enrolled and sponsored by IPCL under her secondary school scholarship scheme.



Source IPC, Annual reports, 2024.

### Discussion of Findings

The results of this study provide strong empirical evidence that Ibom Power Company Limited (IPCL) has significantly contributed to the development of its host communities in Akwa Ibom State through substantial investments in both infrastructural and human capital development projects. The findings from the analysis of the first hypothesis reveal that IPCL's involvement in infrastructural development is statistically significant, with a Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value of 5197.17 surpassing the critical value of 16.919 at the 0.05 significance level. This result confirms the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, indicating that the company has made notable investments in infrastructural facilities such as roads, electricity, water supply, and educational infrastructure. These developments are critical to enhancing the quality of life and supporting socio-economic activities in the host communities.

Similarly, the second hypothesis focuses on IPCL's contribution to human capital development, particularly in the area of healthcare interventions. The Chi-square result of 702.31, which also far exceeds the critical value, leads to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. This finding suggests a significant relationship between IPCL's operations and the implementation of healthcare programs in the host communities. The company's CSR initiatives in this regard may include the construction or renovation of health centres, provision of medical supplies, health outreach programs, and awareness campaigns. Such interventions contribute to improving health outcomes and reducing the burden of disease among local populations. These findings align with existing scholarly opinions which assert that state-owned enterprises often play a pivotal role in community development through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. In line with Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), IPCL's CSR efforts can be interpreted as strategic responses to external expectations and dependencies. By investing in community development, the company not only fulfills social obligations but also secures the goodwill of stakeholders, ensures a stable operating environment, and reinforces its legitimacy and social license to operate.

## **Conclusion**

The study examined the impact of Ibom Power Company Limited's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives on the development of its host communities in Akwa Ibom State. Findings revealed that the company has made substantial investments in infrastructural development and human capital programs, including healthcare interventions and skill acquisition initiatives. Statistical evidence, supported by qualitative data from focus group discussions, confirmed the significant role played by the company in promoting community welfare. These contributions have not only improved the socio-economic wellbeing of residents but have also enhanced the company's relationship with its stakeholders. Overall, the study underscores the importance of CSR in fostering sustainable community development and promoting corporate-community harmony.

## Recommendations

- i. **Sustain and Expand CSR Programs:** Ibom Power Company Limited should sustain its current CSR interventions and consider expanding them to cover more sectors such as education, youth empowerment, and environmental sustainability to further enhance community development.
- ii. **Engage Community Stakeholders:** The company should institutionalize mechanisms for continuous engagement with host community members to ensure that CSR projects are tailored to the specific needs and priorities of the beneficiaries.
- iii. **Establish Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:** A robust monitoring and evaluation framework should be implemented to track the effectiveness of CSR projects, assess impact, and ensure accountability in resource utilization.
- iv. **Partner with Government and NGOs:** IPCL should collaborate with local government authorities and reputable non-governmental organizations to leverage expertise, co-fund initiatives, and ensure long-term sustainability of development efforts.
- v. **Promote Transparency and Reporting:** The company should adopt transparent reporting practices by publishing periodic CSR reports that detail projects implemented, funds allocated, and outcomes achieved. This will promote trust and foster stronger relationships with stakeholders.

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