



AKSU JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION RESEARCH (AJCR)



ISSN:2579-0706

VOL. 2 NO. 2.

AUGUST 2017



**A PUBLICATION OF
DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION
AKWA IBOM STATE UNIVERSITY, NIGERIA**

AKSU JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION RESEARCH
ISSN: 2579-0706 VOLUME 2 NUMBER 2 August, 2017

CONTENTS

- R**
1. Coverage activities of Fishermen of Akwa Ibom Coastal Communities by Selects Nigerian Newspapers - Anicfiok J. Udouo, Ph.D and Uduot A. Iwok. Page 1-16
 2. Influence of Sexuality in Advertising on the Socio-Moral Values of University of Calabar Students - Anthony Paul Udoh. Page 17-42
 3. Media Dependency and the Information-seeking Behaviour of the Electorate During the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria- Barikui Nnaane ph.D Page 43-61
 4. Terrorism and Photojournalism Management: The Economics of Bring-Back-Our-Girls Campaign - Dr. Ndoma J. Brown, Juliet D. Etteh and Anthony Ulayi. Page 62-80
 5. Satellite Television Programme Preference Among Youths in Uyo Urban, Nigeria - Nevelyn W. Batta, ph.D and Samuel S. Udo-Akagha Page 81-98
 6. The Influence of Facebook Usage on Offline Information Seeking Behaviour Among University Undergraduates in Nigeria - Church S. Akpan ph.D and Umefien Dakoru Epepe ph.D Page 99-117
 7. Public Relations Practice and Corporate Image of Nigeria Immigration Service. Peter Esuh & Casmir Ihejirika Page 118-129
 8. Newspaper Reportage of Housewives' Abuse in the Punch and Vanguard Newspapers from January to June, 2016 - Felix Olajide Talabi ph.D Page 130-146
 9. Assessment of Business Reporting in Select Local Newspapers Published in Akwa Ibom State - George Udoh, PhD. Page 147-164
 10. Media Influence on Female Body Image: An Analysis of Select Internet Advertisements - Kierian, Nnamdie Udo, Daniel Calixtus Akarika and Abigail Ukpe Inyang. Page 165-194
 11. The Advertising Paradigm in Nigerian National Dailies: A Content Analysis Approach - Bassey Nsa Ekpe Page 195-207
 12. Print Newspaper Survival Strategies in the Era of Media Convergence Prof. Nkereuwem Udoakah, Nsirik Solomon Idiong, PhD and Abasifreke Idiong Page 208-230
 13. Coverage of Rural Communities by Local Newspapers in Akwa Ibom State - Anicbo Chimezie Samson ph.D, Oyokunyi Otu Ita and Esther Etim Page 231-242
 14. Journalists' Attitudes toward their Work Environment: A Study of Three Broadcast Houses in Ilorin, Nigeria, Patrick Udende and La'aro, O.A., ph.D. Page 243-260
- C**
- J**
- A**

COVERAGE OF ACTIVITIES OF FISHERMEN OF AKWA IBOM COASTAL COMMUNITIES BY SELECT NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS

By

Aniefiok J. Udoudo, *ph.D*

*Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies,
University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt*

and

Uduot A. Iwok

Department of Communication Arts, University of Uyo, Uyo

Abstract

This study investigated the contributions made by newspapers in Nigeria to the development of Nigeria's fishing industry through their reportage of fishermen in Akwa Ibom coastal communities. Four newspapers, namely: The Guardian, The Punch, Vanguard and The Pioneer were purposively selected for analysis. As one of the objectives, the study sought to find out the extent to which the select Nigerian newspapers have been involved in the coverage of the activities of fishermen in the coastal communities of Akwa Ibom State. Another objective was to find out the comparative reportage of the activities of fishermen in the coastal communities of Akwa Ibom State among the select Nigerian newspapers. Triangulation - content analysis and survey - was used as the research design for the study. A time frame of between January and March, 2016, presumed to be the high point of fishing activities was adopted for the study. Census was used instead of sample to select the issues of the newspapers for analysis. That is to say that the universe of the study was used for analysis. Findings showed virtually zero coverage of the fishermen in the coastal communities of Akwa Ibom State. Only The Pioneer which is the newspaper owned by Akwa Ibom State Government that published just two straight news stories within the time frame of the study. Factors such as inadequate correspondents in the state and funding for correspondents to travel out of the state capitol could be responsible for newspaper inability to cover the fishermen in the state. The study has recommended that as a way of contributing to reducing poverty, especially in the rural communities of Nigeria and diversifying the economy from oil, Nigerian newspapers should come up with a policy of reporting the activities of artisan fishermen in the coastal regions of Nigeria, specifically, Akwa Ibom State.

Keywords: Coverage, Fishermen, Akwa Ibom State, Coastal Communities, Nigerian Newspapers

Background

Over the years, there have been several calls for diversification of the Nigerian economy from the petroleum sector. One of the major areas often pointed to as a means of the diversification is agriculture. Although fishing is part of agriculture, most times when advancement in agriculture is advocated, improved methods of fishing seem not to catch public attention, perhaps, mainly because the media have not done enough of reportage of this sub-sector of the country's economy. Artisan Fishermen Association of Nigeria (AFAN), AkwaIbom Chapter, alleges that the Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Agriculture which has the Department of Fisheries has failed to promote fishing activities in the state through mass media coverage (Ekong, Dec. 2, 2015). This was

confirmed by both the state Ministry of Agriculture and Akwa Ibom State Agricultural Development Programme (AKADEP). AKADEP which is a unit in Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Agriculture, charged with the responsibility of publicizing agricultural activities in the state admitted that it could not focus on the fishermen or fishing activities in the state (Akpanam, March, 4, 2016).

Fishing does not only contribute to Nigeria's GDP but also helps in reducing unemployment and poverty which have the country for a long time. Apart from its contribution in terms of income, fishing supplies the Nigerian population with foods and by extension, contributes to the health of the nation. Improved fishing would also supply the manufacturing sector with raw materials for secondary products. On the whole, the Nigerian society would have it much better. But Artisan Fishermen Association of Nigeria states that the ceaseless oil spills from Exxon Mobil oil wells have destroyed fishes in Akwa Ibom waters and have caused the lack of specific species of fish example, bonga fish are no longer found in Akwa Ibom waters (Ekong and Ayadi, Dec. 2, 2015). This is a very serious allegation that should require due coverage by the mass media yet the public seem to be shielded from it due to what AFAN terms as "gross media negligence". The allegation confirms earlier researches on the destruction that oil spills have done to fishes in the Niger Delta waters (Akintola, 2003; Ashong and Udoudo, 2007; Udoudo, 2015).

Akwa Ibom State is one of the fishing states in Nigeria and is blessed with rich expanse of coastal area. The state has an area of 7,081 sq kilometres and occupies a coastline of 129 kilometre. There are eleven coastal local government areas in Akwa Ibom State. These are: Eastern Obolo, Eket, Esit Eket, Ikot Abasi, Itu, Okobo, Onna, Oron, Ibeno, Uruan and UrueOffong Oruko. Many communities in these local government areas are fishing communities. The people in the coastal communities make use of the God-given waters in fending for themselves and their dependants. One thing that is, however, obvious is that these people still use crude implements in carrying out their fishing expeditions. The use of these crude implements indeed, has impeded their ability to expand their scope. Their complaints and yearnings seem not to get to appropriate places where the needed assistance to improve their performance could come. This is where the concern about reporting the sub-sector lies and on which the focus of the study is. Apart from fishing, indigenes of the state are engaged in farming and trading. Thus, the state has enormous to contribute to the country's GDP if the resources are properly harnessed.

Problem

Many national newspapers are widely read in Akwa Ibom State, especially in Uyo, the state capital. These newspapers also have their correspondents in the state. The editorial policies/objectives of some of these newspapers include promotion of economic activities in the country. At the time Nigeria is overdue for diversification of the economy, newspapers in the country should be involved in covering activities in other sectors of the economy. Since fishing is one of the sub-sectors of the country's economy, it implies that newspapers that have correspondents in Akwa Ibom State should cover activities of fishermen just as they have been covering other activities in the state. The problem of this study can be stated thus: what efforts have Nigerian newspapers made in covering the activities of the fishermen in Akwa Ibom coastal communities?

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the extent to which the select Nigerian newspapers have been involved in the reportage of activities of fishermen of Akwa Ibom State coastal communities?
2. What is the prominence given to the reportage of activities of fishermen in Akwa Ibom coastal communities by the select Nigerian newspapers?
3. What is the comparative reportage of activities of fishermen in the coastal communities of Akwa Ibom State among the select Nigerian newspapers?
4. What are possible hindrances to the reportage of activities fishermen of Akwa Ibom coastal communities in Nigerian newspapers?

Scope

The study covered all the fishermen in Akwa Ibom State with specific mention of those in the coastal communities. Newspapers studied were *The Guardian*, *The Punch Vanguard* and *The Pioneer*. Correspondents of these newspapers in Akwa Ibom State also made up the scope of the study.

Justification

The primary need that has warranted this study is the Nigerian government's repeated emphasis on the diversification of the country's economy. The need to bring to fore the activities of and the challenges faced by fishermen in Akwa Ibom State is an offshoot of the diversification of Nigeria's economy that prompted the study. It is hoped that since newspapers are media of mass communication which have wide coverage, issues bordering on fishermen in the state published in the newspapers in the country would get to appropriate quarters where the concerns of the fishermen could be addressed. Prominent among the national newspapers which have correspondents in the state are: *The Guardian*, *The Punch* and *Vanguard* which are the subjects of this study. In addition to the national newspapers, *The Pioneer*, published by Akwa Ibom State

Newspaper Company and owned by Akwa Ibom State Government will be a subject of the study. The choice of *The Pioneer* is necessitated by the fact that it has as its objective to promote through its publication, the life of Akwa Ibom people. The study is justifiable since its findings may serve as a reference material to both newspaper workers in the country and agencies in Akwa Ibom State, responsible for issues affecting fishing business in the state and in response to the Federal Government's call for the diversification of the economy.

Newspaper role on economic development

Economic role of the newspaper in any given society covers a wide range of activities; such activities will include highlight of economic activities through news report or features, advertising of goods and services, editorials on state economic policies, business columns through which the economy is analysed (Udoakah, 1998b). Sometimes, newspapers allocate spaces to business organizations for advertorial in response to advertising patronage received from such organizations (Wragg, 1992; Udoakah, 1998b). All these are done bearing in mind the penetration and the readership enjoyed by newspapers from their audiences. Dahlen, Lange and Smith (2010) point out how consumers' choice and loyalty are conditioned by the media to which they are constantly exposed.

Among the three major crises facing the media of which newspaper is one, is economic crisis (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2011). Others are ecological and political crises. The ecological crisis is expressed in global warming, pollution, and diminishing natural resources. Political crisis is expressed in terms of power struggles fuelled by ethnic, national and religious differences as well as social inequalities. O'Shaughnessy and Stadler (2011) add that "there is an economic crisis of growth, consumption and production. This crisis is, of course, linked to ecological and political power issues" (p. 32). Indeed, the challenges faced by journalists in their reportage of global economic progress are interlocked among the three. Take example from the global perspective in the handling of global warming, the Copenhagen meeting of 2009 could not yield any result as global politics superseded reasoning. Although similar meeting in Paris in November, 2015 produced an agreement from all member-countries, there has still been some level of scepticism among observers that commitment to the agreement is total (European Commission, 2015). Ignoring the effect of greenhouse emission by industrialized nations has a huge adverse effect on the less industrialized nations as the natural resources in the less industrialized nations get diminished. This is the connection between the ecological and political crises which have mounted serious pressure on the economic development of less developed nations.

In Nigeria, the UNEP report found Shell Petroleum Development Company liable for the polluted Ogoni environment and its ecosystem. As a result it recommended that the company should clean the pollution-affected environment since 2011 (United Nations Environmental Programme, 2011). But this has been subjected to political manipulation and subject of election promises by both the governing political party and parties seeking to take over the reins from the governing party. During former President Jonathan administration, instead of abiding by the UNEP recommendation to direct SPDC to clean the Ogoni environment as was specifically advocated, the Federal Government set up another body known as HYPREP to report on how to clean all areas affected by oil pollution in the Niger Delta (United Nations Environmental Programme, 2011). Throughout the life of that administration neither UNEP report to clean Ogoni environment nor HYPREP report to clean the Niger Delta region of oil pollution was carried out. Whether Ogoni environment or the entire Niger Delta environment, the pollution has affected fishermen in all the states in the region, among which Akwa Ibom is one.

Udoudo (2015) observes that why journalists and by extension, newspapers fail to give appropriate coverage to oil pollution-related issues in the Niger Delta region is because journalists always have their offices in the state capitals (Wilson, 1997) while petroleum-related pollutions take place mostly in the rural areas, many times in the coastal communities. He adds that where some journalists try to respond to such issues, they do so when they are invited mainly by the companies that cause the pollution.

Deliberate plans by government departments and agencies which are responsible for the development of specific sectors of the economy such as fishing may be lacking in many states of the federation due to over-dependence on petroleum products (Udoakah, 1998b). If these departments and agencies were as serious as the need for these sectors is, bringing a sector like fishing to the knowledge of newspaper readers and policy makers would often be a priority (Oyero and Areoye, 2008). Servaes and Malikhao (2013) aver that if knowledge has to be effectively employed to help people, people must have "access to information on the issues that affect their lives and the capacity to make their contributions to policy-making processes" (p. 175). Newspaper contribution to economic development of any society seems to be conspicuous in paid commercials but more of this contribution is found in the business editorial contents which engage the reader in global economic policies, regional and national economic activities and the availability of new technologies (Servaes & Malikhao, 2013). This information may be relevant to the specific economic needs of the people.

Social responsibility role of newspaper

Since newspapers have a stake in the development of the society, their practice ought to be socially responsible, in the interest of the society and the individual citizens. The need for such commitment prompted the setting up of the Hutchin Commission in 1947 by the United States Government to look into how the press could use its freedom in the discharge of its duties responsibly in the interest of the citizens (McQuail, 2005). The Commission came up with the proposal that the press should practise with utmost social responsibility to the citizens and by extension, the society. This proposal thus became a theory which is acceptable to every society where freedom of the press is respected. The implication of the theory is that while the press has the freedom to report what goes on in the society, such freedom must be exercised to the benefit of the citizens. If the press should have to carry out its functions in the interest of the citizens of the state, more of such should be seen in the rural areas of the developing countries where development in all respects is needed.

Newspaper and rural coverage

The coverage of the rural communities by newspapers in Nigeria seems to be not in the front burners of their functions. Udouo (2008) sees this deficiency in the number of correspondents who represent their organizations in different states and the concentration of the few correspondents on the state capitals. This kind of arrangement indeed, does not give room for quick access to the rural communities who need the attention of the journalists. It paints a picture of availability of news only in the cities at the expense of the rural communities where poverty is in a large scale (Batta and Isine, 2012). UNICEF (2010) reports that "Social and economic inequities make some groups such as children and adults in poverty far more vulnerable to a crisis, and far less able to recover from it" (p.37). It can be inferred from this observation that because of poverty - which is the result of inequity in socio-economic infrastructure rural communities in Nigeria are in serious crisis. Then journalists in the country have the responsibility of arresting the situation before escalation, by reporting the crisis at its early stage. Development journalism should be focused on de-escalating tension more than reporting tension. Economic-ridden crisis that Nigeria faces now (whether recession or depression), has more dangerous incidence on the poor and the low income earners.

This, perhaps could be one of the reasons why Asadu (2017) has carried a study on youths' use of citizen journalism in their bid to participate in rural development of Rivers State of Nigeria. In the study, Asadu has identified that mostly Facebook group platform to engage one another in development issues in rural Rivers State.

Akwa Ibom Coastal Region

Udoakah (1998b) reports that the maritime areas (to which coastal areas of Akwa Ibom belong) are very rich in untapped forests, and expanse of waters, yet lack of attention to the resources in the areas does not allow development agencies in the country wake up to tapping the resources and matching it with the development of the areas. He specifically adds that "the fishing industry in the country is still not yet fully developed. It is yet to be able to provide fish to every family at affordable prices" (p.115). Ekong (2015) states that very little of water pollution in Akwa Ibom coastal line and waters is reported by the mass media, including the newspaper. He points out that fishermen who always work in water can reliably narrate the volume of pollution caused by the activities of oil companies on Akwa Ibom waters. He specifically accuses ExxonMobil of extensive damage done to Akwa Ibom waters as a result of oil pollution yet without significant newspaper report. Ekong (2015) also accuses Akwa Ibom Government of complicity in the water pollution caused by Exxon Mobil oil activity. Tributaries, estuaries and other networks of rivers in the state have been seriously affected by pollution caused by activities of oil companies. The pollution of the land and rivers resulting from oil spills from Shell Petroleum Development Company's (SPDC's) oil pipeline in Ikot Ada Udo and other communities in Ikot Abasi Local Government Area in 2008 is one example of very serious effect that farmers and fishermen have suffered in the State (Harvey & Hirsch, 2013; saharareporters.com/.../).

The possibility of pollution in Ogoni affecting fishermen in Akwa Ibom, according to Ekong (Dec. 2, 2015) is that oil pollution on water is not static; it moves with the water current and transmits through the network of waters in the region. According to Ekong, because of oil pollution in Akwa Ibom waters, fishes have run away for safe habitation in Cameroun waters but the problem is that Nigerian fishermen are not allowed to fish in Cameroun waters; if they try to, their fishing implements would be seized from them and they would be subjected to serious beating by Cameroun gendarmes (Ekong, 2015).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The study is premised on the **Development Media theory** which evolved as a product of UNESCO (1980) report showing the need to incorporate the media in facilitating the development of the developing countries. The rationale of the theory is that for sake of development, the media cannot afford to carry out their functions in these countries at the expense of development strides made by such

societies (McQuail, 2005). It is necessary that the media should carry out their functions bearing in mind encouragement given to such efforts. It must be noted that development can start with an individual, a group of individuals, or a government agency; in the context of the theory, these categories of development agents should be covered by the media in the developing countries even down to the rural communities where the majority of them reside (Udoakah, 1998a). But the question as to if the media, especially those in the developing countries have really paid adequate attention to development media function generates studies such as this one.

Since the study is being looked at from the perspective of newspaper contribution to the economic activities of the fishing industry and by extension, Nigeria's diversification of economy, **Agenda Setting theory** of the media is another theory upon which the study is based. Griffin (2000) states that McCombs and Shaw - the proponents of agenda setting theory based their theory on selective exposure hypothesis which claims that people attend to news which do not threaten their established beliefs. The stress here is the selective exposure of items of news which is at the discretion of the media. Littlejohn (1996) argues that agenda setting establishes the salient issues or images in the minds of the public. He adds that agenda setting occurs because the press must be selective in reporting the news. The news outlets as gatekeepers of information, thus make choices of what to report and how to report. Indeed, the theory acknowledges the latitude of discretion in the choice of items of news and how to report those items to meet the newsworthiness that their audience have to appreciate. Given this latitude of discretion, newspapers in Nigeria have the discretion to provide adequate exposure to activities of fishermen in coastal areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Methods

Content analysis was used as the main research design for the study. The study analysed issues of the select newspapers published between 1st January and 31st, March, 2016, not because of any special reason other than that fishing activities are at their peak at this time. Also, the coastal terrain is more accessible at this time and any journalist who would wish to cover the area would have less difficulty in meeting the fishermen.

The universe of the study was composed of all the issues of the four newspapers published within the timeframe of the study. In this case, the study population size stood at 313 with a breakdown of contribution by each national newspaper at 91 while *The Pioneer* contributed 37. A census of the population of the study was used in the analysis. That is to say that all the 313 issues of the newspapers were analysed. This took place after a constructed week for sampling the newspapers' issues had failed to yield any findings.

The study used the following units of analysis in data collection: editorial, straight news stories, features and photos. Education, marketing, technology, support, disaster, loss and confrontation were the content categories for the study. The prominence of the items published by the newspapers was determined by front page contents, back page contents and inside page contents. Also, editorial contents of each page were graded to show their page value (prominence). Consequently, front page was assigned 5 points, back page was assigned 4 points, editorial was assigned 3 points and inside page was assigned 2 points. Analysis of the data collected for the study was based on simple percentages. To establish the perspectives of the findings, the analysis was categorized under *Favourable*, *Neutral* and *Unfavourable*.

Correspondents of *The Guardian*, *The Punch* and *Vanguard* in Akwa Ibom State were interviewed on their contribution towards the coverage of the fishermen in the state. Also the desk editor in-charge of agriculture in *The Pioneer* was interviewed.

Result

In all the newspapers, except *The Pioneer* which carried two straight news stories on fishermen in Akwa Ibom, there were no straight news, features and photos. In other words, *The Guardian*, *The Punch* and *Vanguard* had 0% each in straight news, features, and photos in any expectation that they would cover the fishermen in Akwa Ibom coastal areas. The two news stories reported by *The Pioneer* were categorized under Disaster and Loss, sharing 50% each. Also, *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *Vanguard* and *The Pioneer* had 0% coverage of the fishermen under education, technology, support, and confrontation. *The Guardian*, *The Punch* and *Vanguard* had 0% under disaster and loss.

The two straight news stories by *The Pioneer* were reported in the inside pages. The news stories could be described as being in favour of the fishermen.

Discussion of Findings

RQ 1: What is the extent to which the select Nigerian newspapers have been involved in the reportage of activities of fishermen of Akwa Ibom State coastal communities?

All the select national newspapers that are represented in the state did not have a single report of the activities of the fishermen in the state. The presumption is that if the national newspapers in the country could report the activities of the

fishermen, whether positive or negative, these activities would have been brought to the attention of the Federal Government, investors and others in the fishing industry who would have wanted to do business with the fishermen. Similarly, such connections would have created ready market for their products. The negligence of the newspapers to cover this economic sub-sector negates the agenda setting role of the newspapers (Griffin, 2000). That *The Pioneer* whose objective is to promote through its publication the life of Akwa Ibom people has failed to show any significant coverage of the activities of the fishermen in the state confirms the fear expressed by Ekong (2015) that the Department of Fisheries in the State Ministry of Agriculture and the mass media have failed to publicize the activities of fishermen in the state.

In a nutshell, responding to the research question, it could be stated without any basis on the content evidence that the select newspapers have virtually zero extent in their coverage of the activities of the fishermen of Akwa Ibom coastal communities. This, however, is at variance with the claim by the State Correspondents of *The Punch* and *Vanguard* who pointed out that they reported the fire incident at Otonglwuchang, a fishing settlement and Iwuokpon another fishing settlement, both in Ibeno Local Government Area in which the victims lost over N250 million. *The Punch* correspondent claimed that his story on the harassment of fishermen by pirates in Iko, Eastern Obolo engendered the Nigerian Navy to be stationed in the area to check activities of the pirates. Since these claims were not within the period this study was carried out which was enough for significant media coverage to take place it could therefore, not be seen as any committed media practice.

RQ2: What is the prominence given to the reportage of activities of fishermen in Akwa Ibom coastal communities by the select Nigerian newspapers?

On what prominence that was given to the coverage of fishermen in Akwa Ibom coastal communities by the select Nigerian newspapers, the data presented have proved that there was no prominence at all. In the first place, the select newspapers hardly reported the fishermen in Akwa Ibom coastal communities, then how would they have given prominence to what that has not existed? But the unexpected came from *The Pioneer* which would have given prominence to the activities of the fishermen in the state as part of promoting the sub-sector and helping in mobilizing the sector for poverty reduction for failing to deliberately

carry out this responsibility. The two news stories by *The Pioneer* did not give prominent angle to the fishermen; they came as a secondary importance. One of the stories did not have activities of the fishermen in the lead. The other which had the artisan fishermen in the lead had the primary angle on oil spill with the fishermen calling for intervention from President Buhari. It is worthy of note that if the newspapers had had deliberate editorial policies that could make them publicize the activities of the fishermen, much would have been done in encouraging youths in the state to be engaged in fishing activities, thereby reducing youth unemployment. This indeed, would agree with the development media theory (UNESCO, 1980; McQuail, 2005) which sees media in the developing countries as co-contributors to the development of their countries by reporting development efforts of the different sectors of the countries. But this theory is neglected by the select newspapers in relation to the activities of the fishermen in Akwa Ibom coastal communities.

RQ3: What is the comparative reportage of activities of fishermen in the coastal communities of Akwa Ibom State among the select Nigerian newspapers?

On the comparative coverage of activities of fishermen in the coastal communities of Akwa Ibom State among the select Nigerian newspapers, the picture is very gloomy but glaring that it stands at 2:0:0:0. There was really nothing to compare but *The Pioneer* had shown a bit of what could be termed as en passant reportage of the fishermen activities in the two reports. This is so because the two reports by *The Pioneer* were not direct reports of the activities of the fishermen. One of the reports had a collapsed bridge as the main focus while fishing was one of the economic activities affected by the collapsed bridge. The other one reported oil spill which led to artisan's fishermen in the state calling on President Buhari to intervene by urging the oil company to pay compensation.

RQ4: What are possible hindrances to the reportage of activities fishermen of Akwa Ibom coastal communities in Nigerian newspapers?

On the possible hindrances to the coverage of the activities of fishermen in the state by the select newspapers, the respondents agreed that staff deficit was one of the reasons why they were unable to cover the fishermen efficiently. Indeed, they

all agreed that they were unable to visit the fishing communities regularly. In addition to inadequate staff correspondents, staff on ground were not funded by their organizations to embark on trips that take them away far from the state capital. These hindrances confirm earlier study by Udondo (2008) that some national newspapers in the state have one and not more than two correspondents to work in the state. As such, their attention is focused more on strategic government offices within the state capital unless an event too serious has taken place or the event could be paid for coverage. Even though this may be so, it still appears that the lack of a deliberate policy by the newspapers to encourage artisans' skills such as those of the fishermen could have been the major reason why the commitment is not seen.

On the whole, what has happened to the coverage of the activities of the fishermen in Akwa Ibom coastal community by the select newspapers is summed up by what Udondo (2008) has stated that the inability in the newspaper coverage of the rural communities is a direct result of the deficit in the number of correspondents newspapers in the country have in each state. Where one or two correspondents represent a newspaper in a state, the concentration of the correspondents is on the state capital. This can hardly take journalists away from the usual "official reporting" to independently investigative reporting which is the requirement for bringing to the limelight what the people in the rural areas and artisans can do, as well as reporting challenges facing them.

Conclusion

The study has affirmed that the select newspapers virtually did not cover the activities of the fishermen in Akwa Ibom State coastal community during the period of this study. This has also confirmed similar studies whose results are not different in respect of newspapers in the country covering the rural communities and perhaps economic activities in the rural communities (Baatta and Isine, 2012; Udondo, 2006; Udondo, 2008). The study has also established that newspapers in the country are yet to come to terms with the role of making the readers aware and accept the kinds of economic diversification that are available for the Nigerian reading public by evolving suitable editorial policies that would make them report all available economic sub-sectors that can encourage Nigerians to be engaged in any of them.

Recommendations

Newspapers in the country especially, *The Pioneer* have the responsibility of reporting the activities of the fishermen in Akwa Ibom State coastal communities, since awareness that results from this coverage may lead in the long run to creating more job opportunities to those who may be interested in fishing business.

There is a need for newspapers in the country to evolve editorial policies that would enable them to cover activities of fishermen and other small scale economic activities in the country. This is in consonance with the development media theory.

Newspapers need to employ and deploy more state correspondents to state and these correspondents do not all need to concentrate on the state capital alone. Some of them should cover a group of local government areas, at the least, each should be made to cover one senatorial district.