

## **Calls for a Multi-Stakeholder Funding Strategy for Live Births Registration: A Case Study of Rivers State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract :** According to the 2006 Census of Nigeria, there are 2,525,690 females out of the total population of 5,198,716 of Rivers State. Of that figure, about 90 percent are still within the reproductive age of (0-49). With an annual growth rate of 3.4 percent, the population of Rivers State is estimated to grow to 7,262,755 by 2016. This means an increase of 2,064,039 within a ten year period. From a projected population increase of 182,766 in 2007 only 30,394 live births were registered while an astronomical increase of 543,275 live births were registered in 2008 as against the anticipated increase of 188,980. Preliminary investigations revealed that this exceptional figure in 2008 was occasioned by manpower and logistics support provided by the Rivers State Government for the Port Harcourt office of the National Population Commission (NPC). The mop-up exercise of 2008 by NPC that was engineered from the support provided by the Rivers State Government indicates that the agency needs the co-operation and partnership of the three tiers of government and the communities in performing its statutory duties that is pertinent to national planning, growth and development. Because the incentives received from Rivers State Government did not continue in 2009, live births registration nose-dived to only 60,546 from the expected increase of 195,405. It was further observed that Port Harcourt City and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas which constitute the state capital have the highest number of live births registration during the period of 2007 to 2014 covered by this paper. This trend of not adequately accounting for or registering all live births in the state has continued till date without being addressed by the authorities concerned. The current situation if left unchecked portend serious danger for the state and indeed Nigeria, as paucity of data could hamper sound economic planning as well as proper allocation of resources to targeted sectors. This paper therefore recommends an innovative multi-stakeholder funding strategy comprising the federal, state, local government and communities. Their participation in an integrated manner will aid the achievement of comprehensive live births registration in the state. It is hoped that investments in education, health and social sectors could help in addressing most of the problems bedeviling the nation as such as lowering of fertility and improving lives.

**Keywords :** live births registration, population, rivers state, national population commission, Nigeria

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