

The Contributions of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and its Effect to Economic Development in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the effect of the contributions of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to economic development in South-South, Nigeria. One research question and one hypothesis were formulated for the study. The sequential explanatory mixed method (Quantitative and Qualitative) design was adopted for this study. The population of this study comprised 10,123 respondents (3,356 youth associations executives; 6,310 registered Community Development (CD) associations/committee executives; and 457 NDDC staff) in South-South, Nigeria. The sample for this study was 478 respondents which comprised 129 Youth Associations' Executives; 133 Registered CD Associations/Committee Executives; and 222 NDDC staff across the four selected States in South-South Nigeria (Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta and Rivers). The instrument for data collection was self-questionnaire titled; "Economic Development Questionnaire (EDQ). Three experts validated the instruments, two from the Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies and one from the Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation Unit), all in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. A reliability coefficient of 0.87 was established as a measure of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha statistic. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation in testing research question while ANOVA was used in testing hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings from the

study revealed among others that Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has contributed to economic development to a low extent in South-South, Nigeria.

Following the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that NDDC should put more efforts in terms of creating more employment opportunities for youths, establishment of skill acquisition centres, and youth empowerment programmes among others in South-South of Nigeria, in order to ensure economic development in the area.

Keywords: NDDC, Economic, Development

Introduction

Niger Delta is the delta of the Niger River located along the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean in Nigeria. It typically covers all the nine coastal States in Southern Nigeria, this includes the six states in South-South geopolitical zone, Ondo State from the South-West, Abia and Imo States from the South-East, Nigeria (Hogan, 2013 & Oboqua et al. 2017)). Since the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta region, activities of oil companies in the area have become a threat to the well-being of the people. Oyebamiji and Mba (2013) mentioned that Niger Delta region is faced with problems of desertification, oil spillage, water pollution and environmental degradation that have made life difficult for the inhabitants of the area. Ayuba (2012) stated that the pollution as a result of oil activities in the Niger Delta has caused the massive destruction of farmlands, sources of drinking water, mangrove forest, fishing grounds and reduction of aquatic animals. There is a devastating destruction of farmlands and rivers which has altered the economic life of the people of the region (Agbiboa, 2013). Due to this, the Niger Delta Region has witnessed several attempts to influence the pace and nature of development in the area and improve the standard of life for its people. One of such attempts is the institution of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

NDDC was officially inaugurated on December 21, 2000 with a vision to offer a lasting solution to the socio-economic difficulties of the Niger Delta Region and a mission to facilitate the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful (Aghalino, 2011). As enacted by Decree 1998 and 2000 Act, No.6 by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria establishment, of the Niger-Delta Commission and the Governing Board, there is hereby an established body known as Niger-Delta Development Commission (in this Act referred to as "The Commission"). The Commission is a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal; and can sue and be sued in its corporate name. The Commission was expected to have its head office in Port Harcourt, Rivers State and shall establish office in each member state of the Commission (Ibok et al. 2025).

There is hereby established for the Commission a governing Board (in this Act referred to as “The Board”), which shall consist of- a Chairman; and one person who shall be an indigene of an oil producing area to represent each of the following member States, that is, Abia, Akwa-bom, Bayelsa State, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers State. According to the Act, three persons to represent non-Oil mineral producing States provided that such membership should be drawn from the remaining geo-political zones which are not represented in the Commission (Bessong et al. 2025). The Commission vested with function and power to: formulate policies and guidelines for the development of the Niger- Delta, area; conceive, plan and implement, in accordance with set rules and regulations, projects and programmes for the sustainable development of the Niger-Delta area in the field of transportation including roads, jetties and waterways, health, education, employment, industrialization, agriculture and fisheries, housing and urban development, water supply, electricity and telecommunications, prepare master plans and schemes designed to promote the physical development of the Niger-Delta area among others (Oroka et al. 2024). The NDDC is basically an initiative aimed at tackling the developmental setbacks faced by the region. The NDDC development programmes have a master plan for implementation process. To achieve the NDDC mandate in the region, projects are conceptualized and implemented based on the master plan and in line with expert opinion, community suggestions and other stakeholders (Garuba, 2013). However, Ugoh (2010) asserted that the NDDC with all the commendable programmes initiated by the government in the Niger Delta region is yet to resolve the underdevelopment challenges of the region. In line with this, Wilson (2011) reported that the NDDC master plan has not adequately address the problems of socioeconomic development of the region, therefore, suggested an all-inclusive systematic approach to the problems of the region. Okolo (2014) reported that the NDDC strategic master plan can only help in resolving the challenges of underdevelopment of the region only when the commission can re-strategize her approach on community through economic development.

Economic development is a concept that has no universal definition. The United States Department of Commerce (2015) defined economic development as the expansion of capacities that contribute to the advancement of society through the realization of individual, firm and community potentials. Furthermore, it is perceived to be measured by a sustained increase in prosperity and quality of life through innovation, lowered transaction costs, and the utilization of capabilities towards the responsible production and distribution of goods and services. Economic development requires effective creation of the conditions for economic growth and better standard of living (Fanta, & Upadhyay, 2009). Ighodaro (2010) also viewed economic development as a process of radically increasing per capita national

income, and drastically reducing poverty, in order to improve food security and nutritional quality. Economic development comes as a result of transformation of an area from a dominantly rural and low-productivity agricultural economy to a dominantly urban and non-agricultural society (Enimola, 2010 & Ibiang et al. 2014). The authors further described economic development as the creation of jobs and wealth, and the improvement of quality of life.

From a broader perspective, the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), (2013) defined economic development to encompass three major areas: Policies that government undertake to meet broad economic objectives such as control of inflation, increase in employment rate, and sustainable growth; policies and programme to provide services such as building highways, managing parks, and providing medical access to the disadvantaged; and policies and programs that are targeted at improving the business climate through specific efforts, business finance, marketing, neighborhood development, business retention and expansion, technology transfer, real estate development and others. The World Bank (2016) also defined economic development as the increase in the standard of living in a nation's population with sustained growth from a simple, low-income economy to a modern, high-income economy. Schumpeter (2011 and Bessong et al. 2018) also defined economic development as the process of improving a community's well-being through job creation, business growth, income growth and improvements that strengthens the economy. It is also viewed as a concerted effort on the part of the responsible governing body in a city or country to influence the direction of private sector investment toward opportunities that can lead to sustained economic growth (Stephan, 2012 & Ibok et al. 2025).

Thus, the essence of economic development is to improve the economic wellbeing of a community through various efforts such as creation of jobs, and enhancements of the quality of life among others (Akin-Fakorede et al. 2025). The concept of economic development has also been considered as a set of activities that expand capacities to realize the potential of individuals, firms or communities who contribute to the advancement of society through the responsible production of goods and services (Feldman, Hadjimichael, Lanahan, & Kemeny, 2016). In this study, economic development is the process by which the economic and quality of life of a nation, region or local community are improved. Thus, the NDDC is charged with the responsibility of facilitating the economic development of the Niger Delta region.

In the area of economic development, the Commission also trained staff, in a bit to strengthening the workforce for higher productivity. The Commission had set up an NDDC volunteer scheme for youths in the Niger Delta Region in Port Harcourt where Four hundred

and fifty (450) youths were engaged in the programme (Akpama et al.2017). The youths were engaged to work in the following areas in the region: traffic control/decongestion; environmental sanitation services; cleaning and opening of blocked drainages; and clearing of grasses and weeds on the sides of major roads (NDDC, 2016). By so doing, the commission had created means of livelihood for some of the youths in the region.

Furthermore, the NDDC building skills technology training programme at King Amachree Academy in Cotonou, Republic of Benin was also a step towards economic development. Two hundred and seventy (270) youths and women benefitted from the programme which priority was on hands-on experience (NDDC, 2016). In the same vein, a total number of 198 entrepreneurs were selected from the nine states of the Niger Delta to be trained in various aspects of entrepreneurship including mentoring under business consultants. According (Anyadike et al. 2024), ninety-five percent of the trainees have received their expansion grants of depending on the nature of their business or the approved business proposal. The commission has also embarked on the training of 180 Niger Deltans on Telecommunication (Fibre Optics) technology. The training was held in Owerri, Imo State capital. The key objective of this initiative was to build specific skills in leading-edge technologies to enhance employment creation and growth in the communities (Oboqua et al. 2018). All these are some of the contributions of NDDC in order to ensure economic development in the Nigeria Delta region as a whole and South-South, region in particular.

Unfortunately, Igbuzor (2016) stated that even when the South-South zone provides a lot of employment opportunities superior to those in other region, many youths in the region are still unemployed. In many countries for example Nigeria, lack of employment opportunities reinforces youth restiveness. In the Niger Delta region, this situation is evidenced as widespread unemployment and underdevelopment of youths is common in the region (Ojo et al. 2014). In the same vein, Eneh (2011) revealed that the region has the highest rate of unemployment of youths in Nigeria. For example, while the region has 9.5 percent, North-East has 3.2 percent, North-West has 2.2 percent, North-Central has 4.3 percent, South-East has 6.6 percent and South-West has 4.5 percent respectively. However, whether the contributions of NDDC to economic development is enough or not, is the concern of this present study.

Purpose of the Study

1. The main purpose of this study was to examine the extent Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria.

Research Question

One research question guided the study.

1. To what extent has NDDC contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO₁:

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of registered youth associations' executives, CD associations/committee executives and NDDC staff on extent NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria.

Methodology

The sequential explanatory mixed method (Quantitative and Qualitative) design was adopted for this study. The population of this study comprised 10,123 respondents (3,356 youth associations executives; 6,310 registered Community Development (CD) associations/committee executives; and 457 NDDC staff) in South-South, Nigeria. The sample for this study was 478 respondents which comprised 129 Youth Associations' Executives; 133 Registered CD Associations/Committee Executives; and 222 NDDC staff across the four selected States in South-South Nigeria (Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta and Rivers). The multi-stage sampling procedure was used for this study. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw four states from the study area. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw 3 Local Government Areas (LGAs) from each of the four selected sampled States. Cluster sampling technique was used to draw from each LGA, making a total of six associations/committee (3 youth associations and 3 community development associations/committees) from each State and overall total of 24 associations/committees from the four states sampled. Consequently, all the executives of the 24 youth and community development associations/committee were sampled (129 youth associations' executives and 133 CD associations/committee executives) formed part of the sample for the study. Proportionate sampling was used to draw 72% of the population of NDDC staff in each of the four States sampled thereby giving a sample size of 484 respondents. For the Focus Group Discussion Schedule (FGDS), six respondents in each state (3 Youth Associations' executives and 3 Community Development Associations/Committee executives) giving a total of 24 respondents in the 4 selected states were purposively sampled; (Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta and River State). A self-developed questionnaire was as an

instrument for data collection titled; “Economic Development Questionnaire” (EDQ). The EDQ consisted of two sections, A and B. Section A elicited responses on the demographic data of the respondents while B consisted of ten (10) items on research questions. The instruments were validated by three experts, two from the Department of Adult Education and Extra-mural Studies and one from the Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation Unit), all in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. A reliability coefficient of 0.87 was established as measure of internal consistency using Crombach Alpha procedure. The instruments were personally administered by the researchers with three research assistants trained for the purpose. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation in answering research question while ANOVA was used in testing hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question One:

To what extent has NDDC contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the extent to which NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria (N=478)

S/ N	Item Statements	Youth Association Executives (n=129)		Community Development Association/Committee Executives (n=133)		NDDC Staff (n=216)		Overall (N=478)		D
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
1	Provision of job opportunities for graduates through initiatives/programmes in the community	1.90	1.07	2.40	0.74	2.67	0.95	2.39	0.99	L E
2	Establishing institutions for skill acquisition programmes to	2.08	1.08	2.35	0.82	2.72	0.98	2.44	1.04	L E

	encourage self-employment										
3	Provision of grants for small scale business enterprises	1.6	0.9	2.1	0.7	2.3	0.9	2.1	0.9	L	E
4	Establishing small scale industries in the community	1.9	0.9	1.8	0.7	2.2	1.0	2.0	0.9	L	E
5	Building markets in different communities to bolster trade	1.8	0.9	1.7	0.6	2.3	0.9	2.0	0.9	L	E
6	Empowering unemployed youths with motorcycles, vehicles for commercial transportation	1.9	1.0	1.6	0.6	2.4	0.9	2.0	0.9	L	E
7	Ensuring that inhabitants are employed into multinational oil companies in the community	1.9	1.1	1.6	0.6	2.4	1.0	2.0	1.0	L	E
	Grand mean	1.9	0.2	1.9	0.2	2.4	0.4	2.1	0.4	L	E
		1	3	5	0	4	2	6	1		

Key: \bar{X} = Mean, SD =

Standard Deviation, Dec.=Decision, Very High Extent (VHE) equals 3.50 - 4.00, High Extent (HE) equals 2.50 - 3.49, Low Extent (LE) equals 1.50 - 2.49 while Very Low Extent (VLE) equals 1.00 - 1.49

Result in Table 1 shows the mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the extent to which NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria. From the overall mean, the result shows that NDDC has engaged in provision of job opportunities for graduates through initiatives/programmes in the community($\bar{x} = 2.39$, $SD = 0.99$), establishing institutions for skill acquisition programmes to encourage self-employment($\bar{x} =$

2.44, SD = 1.00) and provision of grants for small scale business enterprises ($\bar{x} = 2.10$, SD = 0.96) among others (items 49-52) to a low extent. This is because the mean ratings for the items are within the range of 1.50-2.49 set as criterion for low extent. Moreover, the overall grand mean of 2.16 with a standard deviation of 0.41 is also within the same range which explains that NDDC has contributed to economic development to a low extent in South-South, Nigeria.

This result is buttressed by the findings from the Focused Group Discussion held in Cross River State on the 24th, of January, Akwa Ibom on the 31st of January, River State on the 6th of February and Delta State on the 13th of February 2020 with 24 discussants (12 members from youth association executives and 12 executive members from community development associations/committee) across the States sampled for the study. On “the extent they think NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria”, discussants from the four States (Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Delta and River State) asserted that: “NDDC has set volunteer scheme for youths in the Region in the areas of traffic control/decongestion; environmental sanitation services; cleaning and opening up of blocked drainage as part of job creation for youths in South-South, Nigeria”. Furthermore, majority of the discussants noted that as part of contribution to economic development, “NDDC has also “established skill development/acquisition centres” and youths’ empowerment programmes”. Nonetheless, the discussants were still of the view that “NDDC has not made meaningful contribution to economic development in the region since many youths in the region are still unemployed”, and “there is still high rate of poverty among the people of the region”. Therefore, the overall finding shows that NDDC contributed to economic development to a low extent in South-South, Nigeria.

HO₂:

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of registered youth associations’ executives, CD associations/committee executives and NDDC staff on the extent to which NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 2: ANOVA analysis of the significant difference in the mean ratings of registered youth associations’ executives, CD associations/committee executives and NDDC staff on the extent to which NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Dec.
Between Groups	31.215	2	15.608	146.930	.000	S
Within Groups	50.457	475	.106			
Total	81.672	477				

Key: df = degree of freedom, F = ANOVA test statistic, Sig. = Significant level/Exact probability value, Dec. = Decision, S = Significant

Results in Table 2 showed that an F-ratio of 146.930 with associated or exact probability value of 0.000 was obtained with respect to the difference in the mean ratings of registered youth associations’ executives, CD associations/committee executives and NDDC staff on the extent to which NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria. Since the associated or exact probability value of 0.000 when compared with 0.05 (a priori value) was found significant because it is less, the null hypothesis five (H_{05}) was therefore rejected. Consequently, the conclusion drawn was that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of registered youth associations’ executives, CD associations/committee executives and NDDC staff on the extent to which NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria. This was further confirmed by the result from the post-Hoc test presented in table 3.

Table 3: Scheffe Post-Hoc test for the significant difference in the mean ratings of registered youth associations’ executives, CD associations/committee executives and NDDC staff on the extent to which NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria

(I) Designation	(J) Designation	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Dec.
Youth Association ExcOs	Community Dev.	-.04455	.04028	.543	NS
	Ass/Com. Exco				
	NDDC Staff	-.53502*	.03627	.000	S
Community Ass/Com. Exco	Youth Association ExcOs	.04455	.04028	.543	NS
	NDDC Staff	-.49047*	.03592	.000	S
	Youth Association ExcOs	.53502*	.03627	.000	S
NDDC Staff	Community Dev.	.49047*	.03592	.000	S
	Ass/Com. Exco				

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level, Dec.= Decision, S=Significant, NS=Not significant

Table 3 shows a post-Hoc test results for the significant difference ($p < .05$) in the mean ratings of registered youth associations’ executives, CD associations/committee executives and NDDC staff on the extent to which NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria. The result shows that there was a significant mean difference between the youth association executives and NDDC staff. Likewise, there was a significant mean difference between community development associations/committee executives and NDDC staff. Therefore, the conclusion drawn is that youth associations’ executives and community development associations/committee executives differed significantly from NDDC staff in their opinions on the extent to which NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study showed that NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria to a low extent. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Orumie (2008) whose study showed that the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has not made meaningful impact in various communities in the region with respect to creating employment opportunities for the people of the area among others. Similarly, the finding somehow lends support to the finding by Akintonde (2012) who reported that the projects implemented by the Niger Delta development commission were not strongly felt by the inhabitants of Rivers State especially in the area of employment and skills development

among others. Likewise, the finding is somewhat consistent with that of Okolo (2014) which showed that NDDC projects in the Niger Delta are yet to cover all the benefiting communities. This implies that many communities in the area have not benefited from economic development projects of the NDDC.

Further finding showed that youth associations' executives and community development associations/committee executives differed significantly from NDDC staff in their opinions on the extent to which NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria. That is to say, while youth associations' executives and community development associations/committee executives were of the notion that NDDC has contributed to economic development in terms of provision of few job opportunities for graduates through initiatives/programmes in the various communities, establishment of institutions for skill acquisition programmes to encourage self-employment and provision of grants for small scale business enterprises among others to a low extent, the NDDC staff have a contrary opinion. But, given the fact that youth associations' executives and community development associations/committee executives are among the beneficiaries of economic development programmes in the area, their view on low contribution by NDDC to such programmes should be considered as true.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion of the findings, it was concluded that Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has contributed to economic development to a low extent in South-South, Nigeria. However, these contributions made so far in the above area by NDDC were insignificant. It was also concluded that youth associations' executives and community development associations/committee executives differed significantly from NDDC staff in their views on extent NDDC has contributed to economic development in South-South, Nigeria. The differences in opinion are believed to stem from different reasons given by these categories of people. The youth association's executive and community development associations/executives believe that significant things have not been done with regards to improving economic development in South-South by the NDDC. This view does not correspond with that of the NDDC staff who hold contrary view. From the researcher's opinion NDDC needs to do more to meet the yearning and expectation of the people of the region in order to bring about sustainable economic development.

Recommendation

Following the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that NDDC should put more efforts in terms of creating more employment opportunities for youths,

establishment of skill acquisition centres, and youth empowerment programmes among others in South-South of Nigeria, in order to ensure economic development in the area.

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