

**ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF NIGER DELTA
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (NDDC) TO AGRICULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The study assessed the contributions of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria. One research question and one hypothesis were formulated for the study. 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; "Assessment of Agricultural Development Questionnaire (AADQ). 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 0.84 was established as a measure of internal consistency through the use of Cronbach Alpha statistic. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation in testing the 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 to a low extent contributed to agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) should give more grants and subsidies to farmers in South-South of Nigeria, in order to promote agricultural development in the area.

Keywords: Assessment, NDDC, Agricultural 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. The people of the Niger Delta region always expect certain community development programmes or projects in the region. Agbiboa (2013) asserted that the destruction of farmlands and water bodies such as streams and rivers due to oil exploration has adversely affected the economic life of the people who

depend on these resources for livelihood. Kaur (2013), argued that with the attendant problems of desertification, oil spillages, environmental degradation and water pollution due to oil exploration, life has become precarious for the people of Niger Delta. This is because before the era of oil exploration, the major sources of livelihood or economic activities of the people were fishing and farming Oboqua et al. (2017). These are not possible in many parts of the region anymore.

Niger Delta Region according to Sir Henry Willink's Commission (1958) recommendation deserved special developmental attention by the Federal Government of Nigeria. In recognition of the plight of the people of Niger Delta region, various governments in Nigeria have initiated programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of the people. The programmes include the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB), River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), Presidential Task Force (PTF-1.5% Committee), and the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) (Bessong, et al. 2021).

Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) was established in 1960 by the Federal Government with the aim of managing the developmental needs and challenges of the region in response to Willink Commission's recommendation. After seven years of existence, the NDDDB achieved little before it faded away following the military coup in 1966 and the outbreak of civil war in 1967 and was not revived after the war. Further development effort by the Federal Government led to the establishment of the River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs) by the military Regime of Olusegun Obasanjo in 1976 (Oroka, et al. 2024; Agbor et. al 2026; Akeh et. al 2026; Inyang et. al 2022; Igyu et. al, Obi et. al 2020). The mandates given to the RBDAs were to: plan and develop water resources, irrigation work and the collection of hydrological, hydro-geological and meteorological data; supply water from RBDAs completed storage schemes to all users; and to operate and maintain infrastructural services such as roads and bridges linking projects sites. However, the RBDAs failed due to inadequate funding and corruption.

Following growing agitation for a renewed focus on the development of the region, the 1979/83 administration led by Shehu Shagari set up a Presidential Task Force (also known as the 1.5% Committee) in 1980 and 1.5% of the Federation Account was allocated to the Committee to tackle the developmental problems of the region. Although the Committee existed until early years of the 1985/93 regime, it was largely ineffective as only a few projects were established with very little visible beneficial impacts on the welfare of the people of the oil producing communities. Bessong, et al. (2024) revealed that the persistent restiveness in the Niger Delta Region further resulted in the setting up of the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992 by Babangida regime.

OMPADEC was allocated three percent of federal oil revenue in order to address the developmental needs of the region in the areas of infrastructures, education, health, agriculture, electricity among others. According to the Niger Delta Environmental Survey (2013), though OMPADEC completed several projects, it also left behind many unfinished projects. Moreover, most of its projects had little to do with poverty reduction and only few people in the region benefited from the projects. The OMPADEC however lacked focus, excessive political interference, lack of transparency and accountability, inadequate and irregular funding, official profligacy, corruption among others. Consequently, the commission failed dismally in curbing the discontentment and restiveness in the Region. As a result of this failure, President Obasanjo in May 1999 saw the need to establish the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to replace OMPADEC (Anyadike, et al. 2024; Meremikwu et. al 2022). NDDC inaugurated by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) on December 21, 2000 was mandated to bring about a lasting solution to the socio-economic difficulties of the Niger Delta Region and facilitate rapid, even and sustainable development

of the region. This is thought to make the region economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful (Oboqua, et al. 2018). NDDC establishment Act No.6, (2000), stipulated that the commission is 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; cause the Niger Delta area to be surveyed in order to ascertain measures which are necessary to promote its physical and socio- economic development; prepare master plans and schemes designed to promote the physical development of the Niger-Delta area and the estimates of the costs of implementing such master plans and schemes; implement all the measures approved for the development of the Niger- Delta area by the Federal Government and the member States of the Commission; and to identify factors inhibiting the development of the Niger-Delta area and assist the member States in the formulation and implementation of policies to ensure sound and efficient management of the resources of the Niger-Delta area (Itari, et al. 2016 & Bessong et al. 2025).

NDDC establishment Act No.6, (2000) also stipulate that the NNDC should; assess and field in reports on any project being funded or carried out in the Niger-Delta area by oil and gas producing companies and any other company including non-governmental organizations and ensure that funds released for such projects are properly utilized; tackle ecological and environmental problems that arise from the exploration of oil mineral in the Niger-Delta area and advise the Federal Government and the member States on the prevention and control of oil spillages, gas flaring and environmental pollution; liaise with the various oil mineral and gas prospecting and producing companies on all matters of pollution prevention and control; and lastly to execute such other works and perform such other functions which in the opinion of the Commission, are required for the sustainable development of the Niger-Delta area and its peoples (NDDC Act, 2000, No.6) (Anipi, et al. 2023).

For successful implementation of this initiative, the NDDC Act provided for generous funding sources, including: 15% of allocations due to member states from the federation account as contribution of Federal Government; 3% of total annual budget of any oil producing company operating on shore and off shore in the Niger Delta area; 50% of monies due to member states from the Ecological Fund Allocations due to the member States and Proceeds from NDDC Assets and miscellaneous sources, including grants-in-aid, gifts, loans and donations (NDDC Act, 2000, No.6) (Bessong, et al. 2024). The process of implementation of the NDDC master plan is in three different phases, each lasting for five years, namely: the foundation phase (2006 – 2010); the expansion phase (2011 – 2015); and the consolidation phase (2016 – 2020) (African Research Bulletin, 2007 & Barrett, 2008). Considering this commendable plan and the huge financial resources apportioned to NDDC, and the fact that the consolidation phase (2016 – 2020) has exhausted, there is need to make known the state of affairs in terms of the contributions of NDDC to agricultural development in the region, particularly in Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Bayelsa and Rivers States (South-South, Nigeria).

Agricultural development can be viewed in terms of providing assistance to farmers with the necessary agricultural resources or inputs. Agricultural development has been defined as the process of providing protection, assisting in the research sphere, employing latest techniques, controlling pests and facilitating diversity for the overall improvement of the agricultural sector (Kydd, et al. 2011). It is also the process for creating the conditions for the fulfillment of agricultural potential in a given region or country. Agricultural

development is therefore, necessary since the Niger Delta region is characterized by major agricultural activities. NDDC (2013) asserted that the primary means of livelihood among the Niger Delta people is fishing and farming. From the foregoing, agricultural development can be operationally defined as the transformation in the agricultural sector in order to promote adequate food supply and improvement in the standard of living of the people.

More so, trailing agricultural development as part of community development in South-South, Nigeria, the NDDC has established rice plants, poultry/hatchery rehabilitation projects to support poultry farmers, provided fertilizers, soft loans and grants to many farmers, and have reportedly purchased tractors for cooperative farmers in the States in order to promote agricultural activities (NDDC, 2016). However, farmers still constitute the bulk of the poor in the Niger Delta region and often face prospects of tragic crop failures, reduced agricultural productivity, poverty, increased hunger and malnutrition. Isidiho and Sabran (2015) also observed that there is no provision for alternative means of livelihood for the citizens of the region since the farmlands and water bodies for farming and fishing which ought to be the main occupation of members of the communities have been destroyed by the activities of oil companies. This challenge calls for further investigation into the contributions of NDDC to agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria.

Agricultural development is necessary since the Niger Delta region is characterized by major agricultural activities. Agricultural development can be viewed in terms of providing assistance to farmers with the necessary agricultural resources or inputs. It is the process for creating the conditions for the fulfillment of agricultural potential in a given region or country (Laiglesia, 2012). Such conditions according to the author include the accumulation of knowledge and availability of technology as well as the allocation of input and output resources. Agricultural development also entails the process of protecting, funding cutting-edge research, recruiting modern strategies, eliminating environmental hazards and fostering global best practices for the transformation of the agricultural sector (Ibiang, et al. 2014). According to these authors, some of the steps that can be taken in order to bring about agricultural development include: Carrying out research relating to agricultural resources; creating information for stakeholders and the farmers; research and development in the fields associated with organization and partnership amongst individuals conducting research, producing crops among others; designing projects for the estimation of crop yield; applying and transferring technology; and the management of pests, certification, plans for using lands in specific manner, providing financial help among others. The technical support for land use is also an essential indicator of agricultural development.

Agricultural development also involves assisting farmers with regard to livestock keeping and grazing. According to NDDC (2013), fishing and agriculture have been the primary occupations in the Niger Delta region in the past, and accounted for almost half of the economic activities. Agriculture can be seen as the cultivation of crops and rearing of livestock for in order to produce food for man and to generate income. As part of the measures to promote agricultural development, the NDDC established a rice plant with a capacity of 30 tons per day was commissioned and handed over to the State Government by NDDC at Mbiabet to serve the rice farmers within and around Akwa Ibom State. The on-going NDDC/Cross River state poultry/hatchery rehabilitation project was designed to support poultry farmers in the region. The commission again constructed two integrated farms in Mkpara-Otop, in Odukpani LGA in Cross River and Afana Ekpenedi, Esit Eket LGA in Akwa Ibom States (NDDC, 2016; Oboqua, et al. 2017). This is also applicable to other parts of the area. However, whether the contributions of NDDC to agricultural development programmes are enough or not, is the concern of this present study.

South-South States of Nigeria appear to be the major contributors to the economy of the country. This is notwithstanding the fact that the region contributes not less than 90% of

the country's revenue through its rich oil and gas resources (Watts, 2009). In spite of this, the living conditions in various communities of the region are still poor, leading to high level of hardship, insecurity and underdevelopment. This is compounded by oil exploration activities by various oil companies, which have caused oil spillage, gas flaring and generating environmental pollution, leading to massive destruction of farmlands, environmental degradation, and contamination of sources of drinking water among others. Consequently, these extreme difficulties have resulted in incidents of high level of criminality in form of militancy, kidnappings, bunkering, armed robbery, prostitution, destruction of oil installations among other violent and illegal activities in the region which the establishment of NDDC has not been able to address. Through proper assessment, the issues raised could be addressed.

Assessment is a concept that explains the process of collecting information for decision making about curricular, programmes and educational policies (Afemikhe, 2007). It is a systematic process of gathering data from variety of sources in order to understand, describe and improve a programme (Nworgu, 2015). This implies that assessment has to do with a systematic way of collecting information for the implementation of programmes, policies among others via multiple sources in order to understand and make decisions for possible improvement. According to Bessong, et al. (2025), assessment of the contributions of NDDC to agricultural development is associated with a systematic process of collecting information or data on NDDC for the purpose of understanding and describing the extent of achievement of the present objectives of the commission with respect to agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria. Hence, this study assessed the contributions of NDDC to community development in South-South Nigeria as data were obtained from youths' executives and community development associations/committee executives who are some of the beneficiaries of NDDC programmes and the NDDC Staff who are the initiators of such programmes.

Purpose of the Study

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

Research Question

One research question guided the study.

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

Hypothesis

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

H₀₁: 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 agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria.

Methods

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 478 respondents. A self-developed questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection titled; "Assessment of Agricultural Development Questionnaire (AADQ). The AADQ 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 instrument was 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 0.84 was established as a measure of internal consistency using Crombach Alpha procedure. The instrument was personally administered by the researchers with three research assistants trained for the purpose. The data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and descriptive statistics to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent has NDDC contributed to agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Extent to which NDDC has Contributed to Agricultural 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)		
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	D
1	Providing soft agricultural loans to farmers	1.88	1.09	2.36	0.75	2.97	1.09	2.40	1.10	HE
2	Distributing fertilizers to farmers at no cost to in order to promote farming	1.73	0.95	2.44	0.79	2.81	0.93	2.33	1.00	LE
3	Providing subsidies to farmers to bolster agriculture	1.58	0.79	1.96	0.62	2.48	0.98	2.01	0.92	LE
4	Providing herbicides to farmers to increase yields	1.76	0.95	2.06	0.63	2.17	1.00	2.03	0.91	LE
5	Providing improved crop varieties to farmers for better yield	1.90	0.93	1.96	0.64	2.27	1.03	2.08	0.92	LE
6	Making available food storage facilities	1.95	0.95	2.09	0.57	2.61	0.95	2.29	0.91	LE
7	Making available relevant facilities for irrigation	1.97	0.96	1.95	0.65	2.53	0.98	2.22	0.93	LE

8	Encouraging commercial farming	1.98	1.04	2.03	0.67	2.45	0.95	2.21	0.93	LE
9	Providing seedlings to farmers	1.78	0.96	2.01	0.60	2.50	0.96	2.17	0.93	LE
10	Protection of farmland from excessive oil spillage	1.66	0.84	1.98	0.63	2.63	0.96	2.18	0.94	LE
	Grand mean	1.82	0.21	2.08	0.16	2.54	0.49	2.22	0.49	LE

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

Data in table 1 ascertained the extent to which NDDC has contributed to agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria. Results in table 1 showed the mean ratings and standard deviation of respondents on the extent to which NDDC has contributed to agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria. From the overall mean, the result indicated that NDDC provided soft agricultural loans to farmers to a high extent ($\bar{x} = 2.50$, $SD = 1.10$). This is because the mean rating for the item is within the range of 2.50-3.49 set as a criterion for high extent. However, the results showed that NDDC has distributed fertilizers to farmers at no cost in order to promote farming ($\bar{x} = 2.41$, $SD = 1.00$), providing subsidies to farmers to bolster agriculture ($\bar{x} = 2.09$, $SD = 0.92$), and providing herbicides to farmers to increase yields ($\bar{x} = 2.03$, $SD = 0.91$) among others (items 5-10) 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. Furthermore, the overall grand mean of 2.16 with a standard deviation of 0.49 is also within the range of 1.50-2.49 which implies that NDDC contributed to agricultural development to a low extent.

Hypothesis One: 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 agricultural 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 agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Dec.
Between Groups	56.049	2	28.025	214.505	.000	S
Within Groups	62.058	475	.131			
Total	118.107	477				

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

Data in table 1 ascertained the extent to which NDDC has contributed to agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria. Results in table 2 showed that an F-ratio of 214.505 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 agricultural 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 one (H_{01}) was therefore rejected. Consequently, inference 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 agricultural development in

South-South, Nigeria. This is further buttressed by the result from a 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 agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria

(I) Designation	(J) Designation	Mean (I-J)	Difference Std. Error	Sig.	Dec.
Youth Association Excros	Community Dev. Ass/Com. Exco	-.06704	.04467	.325	NS
	NDDC Staff	-.72027*	.04022	.000	S
Community Dev. Ass/Com. Exco	Youth Association Excros	.06704	.04467	.325	NS
	NDDC Staff	-.65323*	.03984	.000	S
NDDC Staff	Youth Association Excros	.72027*	.04022	.000	S
	Community Dev. Ass/Com. Exco	.65323*	.03984	.000	S

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

Table 3 showed the post-Hoc test result 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 agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria. The result showed 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. Thus, the conclusion drawn was that youth associations’ executives and community development associations/committee executives differed significantly from NDDC staff in their views on the extent to which NDDC has contributed to agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study showed that NDDC has contributed to agricultural development to a low extent in South-South, Nigeria. Furthermore, it was revealed that youth associations’ executives and community development associations/committee executives differed significantly from NDDC staff in their responses on the extent to which NDDC has contributed to agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria. While the youth associations’ executives and community development associations/committee executives were of the view that NDDC has contributed to agricultural development in terms of providing soft agricultural loans to farmers, and distributing fertilizers to farmers at no cost in order to promote farming among others to a low extent, on the other hand, NDDC staff were of the opinion that the commission has really ensured agricultural development in the region.

The finding is however in line with findings from Akintonde (2012) who carried out an appraisal of the role of Niger Delta development commission (NDDC) in socio-economic development and 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 agriculture among others. Likewise, the finding is also in line with the finding of the study by Okolo (2014) whose appraisal of the efforts of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) from 2001 to 2010 revealed that NDDC projects in the Niger Delta were yet to cover all the benefiting communities. This implies that majority of the persons in South-South, Nigeria are yet to benefit from NDDC projects which include agricultural development.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion of findings, it was concluded that Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has to a low extent contributed to agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria. Furthermore, youth associations' executives and community development associations/committee executives were of the view that NDDC has contributed to agricultural development in terms of providing soft agricultural loans to farmers, and distributing fertilizers to farmers at no cost in order to promote farming among others to a low extent, on the other hand, NDDC staff were of the opinion that the commission has really ensured agricultural development in South-South, Nigeria.

Recommendation

Following the finding of this study, it was recommended that Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) should give more grants and subsidies, fertilizers and improved varieties of seedlings to more farmers in South-South of Nigeria, in order to promote agricultural development in the area.

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