



# **The Impact of the Niger Delta Development Commission Intervention Strategies on Food Production in Rivers State**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined Impact of the Niger Delta Development Commission intervention strategies on food production in Rivers State. The sampling size was made up of 500 farmers (200 males and 300 females) within the age range of 21 – 60 years. The study was descriptive survey design. Three research questions and two hypotheses were postulated. The instrument for the study was structured questionnaire in the pattern of 4-point rating scale. The study was validated by three experts and the reliability of the instrument was determined through Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient method. The reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. Percentage was used to answer the research questions while T-test was used for the testing of the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that Male and female ratings of level of impact of the Niger Delta Development commission on supply of farm inputs shows that the commission has not made any significant impact in Rivers State. The study therefore, recommended that Niger Delta Development Commission should intensify their awareness programme so that the rural farmers who do not have televisions, radio, can neither read nor write, will be aware of the programmes they have, that the commission should match their words with action. Lip service has done the region a lot of harm.

**Keywords:** Niger Delta, Intervention Strategies, Food, Production

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria is presently rural in character and about 73% of the estimated population is directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Agriculture provides the bulk of the employment, income and food for the population and raw materials for the agro-based industries.

Before 1960-1965, Nigeria's economy was based on the agricultural sector. It accounted for 71% of the total export value and about 70% of gross national product as reported by the "National concord (Lagos) Tuesday, May 3, 1988. But by 1970, agriculture accounted for only about 5% of the gross national production, indicating a basic shift in the sectoral emphasis. This situation was created due to oil, which was found to be in commercial quantity in the Niger Delta Region in 1956. Thus interest was shifted considerably to oil production. The production and purchase of oil were foreign controlled. In the 1970s, Nigeria depended on oil exports for 90% of its foreign earnings and 85% of its revenue. Unfortunately the revenue accruing from oil which accounts for 95% (percent) of the National budget generated from the Niger Delta areas was not invested in food (Agriculture) production and other sectors of the economy. Hence, Nigeria continues to rely heavily on imported food and raw materials to meet short falls in domestic agricultural output.

The problem of food shortage has done Nigeria a lot of harm. As seers cited in Nwankwoala G. (1998) pointed out, the first of his three values of development comprises of food, shelter, health and protection. As any of these is absent or in critically short supply in any developing society, a condition of "absolute" underdevelopment" exists, particularly where development planning is dominated by the indigenous middle men and the multinational corporations manipulations. Agriculture is an essential basic of social life. From farming and cultivation of the land came man's food and material

from which other necessities of life are made. For development to take place and become self-sustained, it will have to start in agricultural sector and obviously an adequate food base is essential. Thus, agricultural primary products and food problems are generally linked with process of economic development. It has often been said that without sound agricultural base, no country can really reach a stage of economic take-off. The poor performance of agricultural sector has led to a tremendous rise in food import bill in the country.

The failure of the agricultural sector to even meet a minimum requirement of adequate food supply to the ever increasing population attracted the attention of Murtala Mohammed and later Obasanjo governments (August 1, 1975 to October 1, 1979). To ease agricultural productivity and to impress upon the people the necessity for becoming self-sufficient in food production, the "Operation Feed the Nation" (OFN) Scheme was launched in 1976. The little gains acquired here were not so much in terms of increased actual food production levels as our import bills on food continues to be on the high side, rather there was rising awareness of the need to be self-sufficient in food production. As the rising awareness gains of the operation Feed the Nation began to wear-off, Shehu Shagari, came in strongly with the Green Revolution strategy in 1980. This again went with the winds as the funds voted for agriculture were siphoned to procure immediate luxury for the ruling class. Somewhere along the line, the World Bank intervened with a package of aids and assistance for integrated Rural/Agricultural Development, investing heavily on finance and technical expertise and lately the Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) was introduced. The Rivers State (ADP) Agricultural Development Programme was formerly launched on the 17<sup>th</sup> February, 1987. It is a semi-autonomous, self accounting unit within the ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources financed by the state and Federal Government and World Bank. This agricultural programme failed even in Rivers State like others.

Insensitivity and lip service on the part of the past governments left the Niger Delta Region groping in the dark until the birth of the Niger Delta Development Commission by an act of the National Assembly in the year 2000. The first of such efforts was the Niger Delta Development Board, (NDDB). It was the brain child of the Sir Henry Willink's Commission of 1958, which recommended that the area deserved special developmental attention. In 1960, the Board came into existence to manage the development needs and challenges of the region. It existed for seven years and had insignificant achievements to show (Olukorede Yishua, June 2007). The Niger Delta Development Commission was set up with a mission of facilitating "the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful". The Niger Delta Region which comprises of Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Edo, Akwa Ibom, Abia, Rivers, Ondo and Imo State have at least five distinct ecological zones. Within the zones, great potentials abound for agriculture, forestry development, eco-tourism etc. The diversity of fauna and flora is rich and exotic birds and rare primate species as well as medical plants are known to exist in the region. With the rich ecological zones in the area, hunger, unemployment and restiveness ought not to be mentioned. The region, having the commission in place is expected to attain a considerable level of food security, but rather as postulated by Prof. Alagoa "apart from political marginalization, the major problems of the people of the Niger Delta are traceable to economic deprivation, youth restiveness, unemployment, hunger and therefore anger" Opuiyo (2003).

The food importation into the country and the Niger Delta Region to be precise was for dubious reason. For example, the Shehu Mohammed commission of Enquiry which investigated Abba Kyari's administration of the then North Central State found that Kyari and a businessman, Mai Daribe, imported 3,000 metric tonnes of rice from Thailand at a cost of N28.00 per bag for the state as against locally produced rice sold for only N15.00 per bag. Little wonder why Nigeria's former Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo, contemptuously referred to Nigeria as a "nation of importer".

The traditional Nigerian societies were self sufficient in their food requirements. The decline which set in after independence can be attributed to defective agricultural policy formulation geared to service the primitive accumulation of the ruling class.

The success or failure of these agricultural programmes are closely related to the process of development of the Nigerian State. The institutions of the state, the relations of the Nigerian State, the relations of production and all the facts of social relationships determines the direction of various state

programmes including agricultural policies. It is also these sets of relationships that determine the success and failures of various programmes.

Coupled with this, is the fact that Agricultural policies are also rural development policies. It is doubtful whether a state built on colonial structures can successfully pursue programmes that will lead to viable rural development, given the fact that the custodians of state power are interested in commercial capitalism. This ensured the continued importation of food and other raw materials which enable the ruling class make their (10%) ten percent. In this regard then, we concluded that most Nigerian leaders, whose biographies portray them heroes for private ends are clearly inimical to development. The leadership that converts his official or private residence to a warehouse for government funds where he can always see it, or one that awards nearly every government contracts to himself, or to close relations, certainly beats the path of anti-development.

Against this backdrop, the major question is asked, can the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) succeed where the other policies and programmes have failed?

### **Statement of the Problem**

Although the Niger Delta Development Commission which was established by an act of the National Assembly in 2000 have a vision to offer a lasting solution to the socio-economic difficulties of the region, to achieve this saddles the commission with responsibilities which are overseen by the different directorates and departments of the commission. Reports show the contributions of the commission so far in the health sector, construction of roads, bridges, jetties, renovation of school buildings and purchase of buses for transportation (Niger Delta Development Commission at a glance, 2004, Niger Delta Regional Master Plan, 2007; Tell No. 23, June 4, 2007; Tell special publication, March, 2007), the researcher could not locate any report on the impact of the Commission on food production in Rivers State where the commissions head office is located. This study was therefore planned to fill that gap.

### **Purpose of the study**

In order to actualize this goal, the study was designed specifically to;

1. Identify how the role of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) has impacted on food production in Rivers State.
2. Identify the various roles of Delta Development Commission (NDDC)
3. Identify the various collaborating establishments with the commission

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent have the roles of the Niger Delta Development Commission impacted on food production in Rivers State?
2. What roles have the Niger Delta Development Commission played in the Region?
3. What are the various establishments the Niger Delta Development Commission is collaborating with?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were postulated and tested at the 0.5 level of significant:

- HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in mean ratings of male and female farmers on level of impact created by Niger delta Development Commission in the supply of farm inputs.
- HO<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female farmers on level of impact created by Niger Delta Development Commission in supply of farm infrastructures.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study was carried out in Rivers State. The target population of the study was made up of all the farmers in Rivers State. The sample of this study was made up of both sex (male and female), adult farmers within the age range of 21-60 years. Five Local Government Areas were sampled. They are Etche, Ikwerre, Obio/Akpor, Opobo/Nkoro and Ogba/Egbema /Ndoni. These were sampled using purposive sampling technique, sometimes referred to as judgmental. This is so because of their rurality and agricultural production associated with the agrarian or rural communities. The sample size is 500. The sample subject is made up of 300 women and 200 men. In each local government area, one hundred persons were randomly drawn from five (5)

communities with each community having twenty (20) respondents. Each local government area has sixty (60) women and forty (40) men sampled. This technique was applied because it ensures that all members of the population have an equal independent chance of being included in the sample. The researcher used a self-designed questionnaire for this research. It is grouped into three (3) sections. Section A is a four (4) point summated rating scale to access the level of impact created by the Niger Delta Development Commission Intervention strategies on food production in Rivers State. Section B is a checklist to indicate the various roles played by the Niger Delta Development Commission. Section C is a Yes or No response on the various establishment the commission (NDDC) is collaborating with. The questionnaire was administered to male and female adult farmers. The research questions were answered using mean, frequency and percentage. Research question 1 was answered using mean, questions 2 and 3 were answered using frequency and percentage.

The responses to the four (4) – point summated rating scale of extent were collected and analyzed using mean. Decision was reached on the mean of each item based on the following decision rule. Decision Rule 3.50 -4.00 (Great Extent) 2.50 -3.49 (Moderate Extent) 1.50 -2.49 (Low Extent) 1.00-1.49 (No Extent/No Activity). Hypothesis were tested with t – test which was tested to determine the significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female farmers on level of impact created by Niger Delta Development Commission in supply of farm inputs and infrastructures. All tests of significance were carried out at 0.05 Alpha level of confidence.

## RESULTS

### Research Question 1

*To what extent has the Niger Delta Development Commission impacted on food production in Rivers State?*

**Table 4:1 Male Ratings of Level of Impact of the Niger Delta Development Commission on Supply of Farm inputs in Rivers State**

S/NO	FARM INPUTS	LEVEL OF IMPACT				$\bar{X}$	DECISION
		4	3	2	1		
1.	Improved seedlings	0	10	10	180	1.15	No. Extent
2.	Disease free seedling	0	10	4	186	1.12	No. Extent
3.	Fertilizer	9	15	3	173	1.3	No. Extent
4.	Animal feeds	7	10	0	183	1.21	No. Extent
5.	Agro-Chemicals	0	17	2	181	1.21	No. Extent
6.	Suckers	0	10	0	190	1.1	No. Extent
7.	Irrigation	0	9	0	191	1.09	No. Extent

The analysis above shows that the Niger Delta Development Commission has not made any impact on the supply of farm inputs in Rivers State.

### Research Question 2

*What roles have the Niger Delta Development Commission played in the Region?*

**Table 4.2 Female Ratings of level of impact of the Niger Delta Development Commission on supply of Farm Inputs in Rivers State.**

S/NO	FARM INPUTS	LEVEL OF IMPACT				$\bar{X}$	DECISION
		4	3	2	1		
1.	Improved seedlings	0	10	5	285	1.80	No. Extent
2.	Disease free seedling	0	10	6	284	1.09	No. Extent
3.	Fertilizer	11	15	2	272	1.22	No. Extent
4.	Animal feeds	5	10	0	285	1.12	No. Extent
5.	Agro-Chemicals	0	15	3	282	1.11	No. Extent
6.	Suckers	0	10	0	290	1.07	No. Extent
7.	Irrigation	0	11	0	289	1.07	No. Extent

From the analysis above, the Niger Delta Development Commission has not made any impact on the supply of farm inputs in Rivers State.

**Research Question 3**

*What are the various establishments the Niger Delta Development Commission is collaborating with?*

**Table 4.3 Male Ratings of Level of Impact of the Niger Delta Development commission on supply of Farm Infrastructure in Rivers State.**

S/NO	FARM INFRASTRUCTURE	LEVEL OF IMPACT				$\bar{X}$	DECISION
		4	3	2	1		
1.	Electrification	3	25	25	147	1.42	No. Extent
2.	Barns	0	0	0	200	0.00	No. Extent
3.	Crops and Storage house	0	0	0	200	0.00	No. Extent
4.	Animal houses	0	0	5	195	1.03	No. Extent
5.	Road	10	30	30	130	1.6	No. Extent
6.	Farm Shop	0	0	0	200	0.00	No. Extent
7.	Farm Store	0	0	0	200	0.00	No. Extent
8.	Machine Shed	0	0	0	200	0.00	No. Extent
9.	Borehole	15	15	20	150	1.48	No. Extent
10.	Animal processing houses (Abattoir)	0	0	0	200	0.00	No. Extent

The analysis above shows that the Niger Delta Development Commission has not made any impact in the provision of farm infrastructures in Rivers State.

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference in mean ratings of male and female farmers on level of impact created by Niger delta Development Commission in the supply of farm inputs.

**Table 4:4 T-test analysis of male and female farmers on level of impact created by Niger delta Development Commission in the supply of farm inputs**

Respondent	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	D.F	S.E	P	Cal.	Crit.	Decision
Male	200	1.16	0.70	49.8	0.05	0.05	1.00	1.98	Accepted
Female	300	1.11	0.57						

In view of the fact that the calculated value of T-test (1.00) is less than the critical value (1.98) the hypothesis is therefore accepted, that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female farmers on level of impact created by Niger Delta Development Commission in supply of farm inputs.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female farmers on level of impact created by Niger Delta Development Commission in supply of farm infrastructures.

**Table 4.5 T-test of Ratings of male and female farmers on level of impact created by Niger Delta Development Commission in supply of farm infrastructures**

Respondent	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	D.F	S.E	P	Cal.	Crit.	Decision
Male	200	1.15	0.42	49.8	0.04	0.05	1.00	1.98	Accepted
Female	300	1.11	0.36						

In view of the fact that the calculated value of T-test (1.00) is less than the critical value (1.98), the hypothesis is therefore accepted, that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female farmers on level of impact created by Niger Delta Development Commission in supply of farm infrastructures.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

From the results of analyses of data collected, the findings of the study are as follows:

Male and female ratings of level of impact of the Niger Delta Development commission on supply of farm inputs shows that the commission has not made any significant impact in Rivers State; contrary to the statement credited to Timi Alaibe the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) “We have cultivated about 300 hectares of rice in Akwa-Ibom state and harvesting of the initial 100 hectares has commenced, Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Imo, Abia and Ondo States were already on queue, with an approximate 1,500 hectares of

land.” To Ukam Edodi, director of agriculture and fisheries, “the commission is also at the verge of rehabilitating four silos for rice storage in Akwa Ibom State. The project is designed to produce rice for the nation’s consumption and exportation which invariably will yield more income for the people of the region. To actualize this dream, the commission is partnering with some organizations, the state and federal government. The result shows that, the commission has not done anything on this claim in Rivers State as at the time this study was carried out.

The ratings of male and female farmers on level of impact of the Niger Delta Development Commission on supply of farm infrastructures shows that the commission has not made any significant impact in Rivers State. The level of impact as rated by male and female farmers are as follows; Electrification (1.42) males and (1.25) females. Barns (0.00) males and (0.00) females. Crops and storage house (0.00) males and (0.00) females. Animal houses (1.03) males and (1.02) females. Road Construction (1.60) males and (1.37) Females. Farm shop (0.00) males and (0.00) females. Farm Store (0.00) males and (0.00) females. Machine shed (0.00)males and (0.00) females. Borehole (1.48) males and (1.42) females. Animal processing houses (Abattoir) (0.00) males and (0.00) females.

As observed by the farmers, the following roles have been played by the Niger Delta Development Commission; construction of bridges 10% males, 6.7% females. Building of classroom blocks 20% males, 10% females. Construction of drainage canal 2.5% males, 3.3% females. Provision of generators 5% males, 3.5% females. Transformers 32.5% males, 20% females. Provision of electric poles 5% males, 3.3% females. Construction of Jetties 1.5% males, 0.7% females. Road construction 32.5%, 23.3% females. Water supply 10% males, 6.7% females. Assisting of farmers in product processing 12.5% males, 5% females. Giving of loans 2.5% males, 3.3% females. Provision of Health care services 45% males, 28.5% females. Empowerment / Skill Acquisition 7.5% males, 6.7% females. Supply of benches 7.5% males, 3.3% females. Provision of means of transportation 15% males, 8.3% females. Provision of telecommunication services 5% males and 3.3% females. This result contradict the report of the Niger Delta Development master plan which states “the commission in an attempt to bring development nearer to the people, various infrastructural projects and human development programmes have been undertaken”. The commission is reported to have so far constructed 40 roads covering about 800km, built 33 bridges, rehabilitated a number of dilapidated roads across the country and now maintains the 295km Port Harcourt – Warri High way. A total of 90 water projects have been carried out, most delivered with standby generators, purpose built generator houses, water treatment facilities as well as service quarters. At the riverine communities 47 Jetties, four shoreline projects and four canalization projects have been undertaken. Moreso, 129 electrification projects have been undertaken, 50 health centers, 205 blocks of six classrooms each. Percentage of awareness of the Niger Delta Development Commission collaboration is as follows, international fund for Agricultural Development males 10%, females 10%, international institute for tropical Agriculture males 10%, females 5%, fish farmers males 2.5%, females 1.7%, crop farmers 7.5% males, females 7.5%, world bank 12.5% males, 8.3% females, Agricultural Development programme 25% males and 15% females. There is no knowledge of the collaboration of the commission with United Nations Development programme and Ford foundation.

In hypothesis I, the calculated value of the test statistics is less than the critical value. The hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female farmers on level of impact created by Niger Delta Development Commission in Supply of farm inputs.

Hypothesis 2, is also accepted that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female farmers on level of impact created by Niger Delta Development Commission in supply of farm infrastructures.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the Niger Delta Development Commission has not made any impact on food production in Rivers State. Though, it has all it takes to have impacted on the state greatly.

Thus, the Agricultural programme embarked in Nigeria has not fulfilled any of its aims, there has been no increase in food self-sufficiency, the import bill continues to rise, unemployment is on the increase, rural urban drift is the order of the day, poverty is pervasive and hunger is on the increase in Rivers State as well as the entire Nigeria society.

The commission should watch the administrative bottle-necks that led to the failures of their products. Contracts should not be awarded from Abuja to people who have no idea of the project. Politicization of programmes and projects should be discouraged.

Insensitivity and lip service on the part of the Government which has left the region groping in the dark should be avoided. Farm inputs and infrastructures should be made available to those who are actually in need of them.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Contracts should be awarded to qualified and dedicated persons to avoid abandonment of project.
2. Niger Delta Development Commission should intensify their awareness programme so that the rural farmers who do not have televisions, radio, can neither read nor write, will be aware of the programmes they have.
3. The commission should match their words with action. Lip service has done the region a lot of harm.
4. Development intervention programmes and social services should not be politicized.

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