



## *RESEARCH ARTICLE*

### **INTERSECTION OF GENDER AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT: EVALUATING THE IMPACTS OF NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (NDDC)**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The intervention in the Niger Delta environment became necessary due to the degradation engendered by the exploration and exploitation in the region. The condition has caused suffering for both men and women creating poverty, health problems, and loss of inhabitants and means of survival. The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) as an agency of the Federal Government was created to cushion these effects of degradation in the Niger Delta region. This study is set to assess how the environmental intervention by NDDC in the Niger Delta region has helped to make better the lives of both men and women in the region. The ex-post facto research method is chosen for this study with secondary sourced data from journals, newspapers, books, and the internet including in-depth interviews of selected individuals with key information on the subject matter. In its theoretical analysis, the study adopted Structural functionalism. The study therefore concludes that NDDC has not carried out its responsibilities as expected in the life of the female and their male counterparts mainly due to its challenges of corruption and funding issues. It is then recommended that the government ensure proper monitoring of the agency in managing funds and leadership roles.

**Keywords:** Degradation, environmental intervention, gendering, Niger Delta, NDDC

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#### **1. INTRODUCTION**



The Niger Delta in Nigeria through which the river Niger flows into the Atlantic Ocean inhabits mostly the southern part of the country Aransiola, Zobeashia, Ikhumetse, Musa, Abioye, Ijah, & Maddela (2024). The geographical structure of the Niger Delta shows that it is comprised of swampy mangrove forests to the coastal areas, the thick rain forests to the hinterland and the soil is mainly of the sedimentary form and largely with crude petroleum oil and natural gas (Omojimate, 2011, p. 46-470). Environmental issues in Niger Delta have become a global issue over the years with its historic kick-off in the Stockholm Conference of 1972. The interest and care for the environment have continued to grow with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which can also be called 'Earth Summit', and was organised in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3-14 June 1992 (United Nations, 1997). With the Rio Conference (Earth Summit) sustainable development became an achievable goal for people from all parts of the world irrespective of their coming from different levels as local, national, regional, or international (United Nations, 1997). The conferences have also captured economic and social values attached to human existence values.

Niger Delta is an oil-producing region that attracts exploration and exploitation of the environment by oil workers that involve both foreign and local oil companies. This activity is an age-long one as it dates to the period of the first discovery of oil in Oloibiri in 1958, a place that is today located in Bayelsa state (Efebeh, 2017). Environmental degradation in Niger Delta became an outcome that needed serious intervention that will have impacts in all its nine states. Administratively, politically and in developmental terms, the Niger Delta region is made up of all the nine states that have in its exploration of oil and gas having about a land mass totaling 110,000 square kilometers (cited in Oboh, 2018, p.4).

Niger Delta region volatility has become so glaring of some non-progressive events considering the social and economic backwardness that has continued to stunt due to negative attitudes such



as cultism, militarism, oil and gas pipeline vandalism, holding workers hostage, harassment, kidnapping, of the landowners and populace (cited in Oboh, 2018).

Uduji, et al (2019) maintained that there are numerous differences between the education that boys and girls receive since girls that most girls in rural areas lack access to needed education despite the efforts of the oil Multinationals in their corporate social responsibilities (CSR);

*The oil exploration in the Niger Delta region has affected every inhabitant of the area with the women as the worst hit. The hardships are seen in areas such as ecological degradation, environmental pollution, absence of economic growth, related human rights abuses, high inflation and loss of livelihood, bad governance, and ignoring the plights of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta area by the national and international and oil multinationals. Women's victimisation is so glaring with unimaginable poor living, lack of jobs, and various forms of exploitation (Usono, et al, 2020).*

Environmental intervention in the Niger Delta region has become an issue of utmost importance considering the harsh effects of oil workers' exploration and exploitation. This harshness has contributed to the problems of farming, displacement/unemployment, and ill health for both men and women. It has also been confirmed that there is a great drop in food from Agriculture (Inoni et al, 2010). This condition is not unconnected with the continuous pollution of agricultural land, all water bodies such as lakes, streams, and ponds caused by spillage of oil and flaring of gas (Anete, 2010; Anderson, K. (2010); Ebenezer & Eremasi, 2012; Nodu & Ohimain, 2014; Eni et al. 2017; Efebeh, 2017). Similarly, in the words of De (2017), it has become common for people daily to be vulnerable to sudden infections that emanate from increasing environmental pollution and high rates of on-the-job hazards or loss of lives occurring from disasters in the industry like the one which occurred in Bhopal. (P.110).

Numerous uprisings have been staged in protesting the degradation of the environment in the oil region. Youths, men, and women have protested in the same line. A good example of women's protests is the 1990 Ogoni Women's Struggle (Okoroba et al, 2019). There was also the seizure of Shell's Odidi Oil well in 1995 and the Converge and March of Ego Women on the Invite gas



plant of Elf (Ukeje, 2004). All hazardous situations need a matching intervention to assuage situations especially as it has posited in Niger Delta.

The Nigerian Federal Government never overlooked the predicament of the Niger Delta people, the problem has existed since the time of the exploration of oil in their land. The problems of Niger-Delta has moved from having less peace in the 1960s, to a region deep in the conflict in the 1980s, and finally to an outright region laden with instability and continuous violence since the 1990s” (cited in Oladipo, 2017, p.181). Regarding the intervention in the Niger Delta environment, alleviation of poverty has not been fast in developing nations such as Nigeria;

*Many African nations are mostly as a result of the actions of certain acting foreign powers, such the World Bank and other "aid" donors. The National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), the Better Life and Family Support Program (FSP), and the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) are just a few of the organisations, agencies, and initiatives designed to reduce poverty that have failed to meet people's diverse needs. People and Community Banks are real examples of the actors that chose to gather peoples' resources rather than alleviating their poverty. The poor depositors are therefore left in more anguish with bad financial situations (Bassey et al, 2012. p. 31).*

As a result of these delays, the Nigerian government decided to take some interventionist measures at various times to address these crises. These measures include the establishment of the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA), Presidential Task Force (PTF), Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), and lately the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (Efebeh, 2017, p. 387).

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) is an interventionist agency set up by the Nigerian former President Olusegun Obasanjo in the year 2000. The mission of NDDC is, to proffer sustainable solutions to the socio-economic hindrances of the Niger Delta region and the



rapid and lasting development of the Niger Delta into a region of economic prosperity, social stability, ecologically renewing and politically non-violent (Niger Delta Development Commission [NDDC}, n.d).

Isidiho and Sabram (2015) noted the challenges of NDDC towards performing well in its responsibilities and pointed at causative factors such as corruption, poverty in the Niger Delta region, militancy and leadership tussles, sustainability, monitoring and evaluation, inadequate findings and environmental factors. The study is out to assess the commission, NDDC in its efforts of intervention in the Niger Delta and ensuring at men and women of the area live meaningfully.

## **2.1. Literature Review**

The Niger Delta region includes all nine oil-producing states in Nigeria (Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers states) comprising of land area of about 75,000 square kilometers and 185 local government areas. In these areas, agricultural production which involves land clearing tilling, planting, weeding, food processing, threshing, winnowing, milling, transportation, marketing, and rearing of Livestock (Ekwe, 1996), were women's major occupation in the tropical rain forest zone where the Urhobo, Isoko, Ukwuani,(Delta State), Oguta, Egbema (Imo); Owaza (Abia); Eket, Ike-Town (Akwa-Iborn); Ikwerre, Ogoni, Ogba, Ekpeye, Egberna, Etche (Rivers State) and the Edo (Edo State) are found. The region is an embodiment of the world's number three largest wetland, having the most extensive clean water swamp forest and valued biological diversity. More than half of the region is mixed with creeks and small islands, with other just being lowland rainforest zone (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2006).



Gender in a social context refers to the roles and responsibilities of individuals about their sex (male or female). In different societies, people and institutions with biological specifications regulate expectations of men and women, rights and privileges enjoyed, resources obtained, and societal participation (United Nations Development Programme {UNDP} Nigeria, 2006). On the other hand, gendering refers to the different ways of relating to the dominant gender norms. As part of efforts in gender betterment direction, the remarkable Beijing conference of 1995 in China was a furtherance of the Nairobi 1985 conference and was targeted at checking out the level of adherence of member nations in addressing women's concerns in some vital areas as health care needs, discrimination, and ability to secure credit (cited in Nwagbara, et al, 2012).

The Nigerian government since the Beijing conference of 1995 has put together policies concerning women on health issues, education, employment, agriculture, culture, and industry. To ensure that the policies are well executed, it was spelled out in Chapter 11 Section 17 (2) of the Federal Republican constitution of 1999 with emphasis that "every citizen shall have equal rights, obligations, and opportunities before the law".

Arisi & Patrick (2012) in their work titled, "Cultural Violence and the Nigerian Woman" show that; in Nigeria, gender preference culturally on the side of the male child to keep the family name entitles him to land and ownership of property, associating and talking with the elders where older women only prepare food and serve the men at their meetings in family and community levels. Women and girls have majorly remained in disadvantaged positions as they are incapacitated and suffer limitations in all efforts towards freedom of movement, expression, and victimisation of gender-based violence (World Bank {WB}, 2012). All these are also determined by the differences in ethnic regions.

Gender-based violence has long existed in Nigeria with its background in Nigeria and other societies in African countries in general. In several societies, cultural practices, norms, and beliefs add to the negative behaviors and downgrade women to second fiddle.





Several gender activities assigned to women are to ensure their total compliance with domineering males and control at home in ways that elongate gender differentiation (Asiri et al, 2012, p. 3).

Uduji, et al (2019) stressed the inequalities that exist between male and female folks in society;

In the Niger Delta area, there are a lot of differences between the boys' and girls' obtained education. Many girls, especially in the villages, lack access to quality and needed education. The mediation of multinational oil companies' Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) in scholarship and education programmes, and minimal levels of human resources remain a feature in the region. Women are not near the human capital as attained by their male counterparts. This inequality in output has limited the ability of women to grab opportunities that they are exposed to, especially around the economy.

When compared to their male counterparts, women are found to be under-represented in business, politics, and high-level managerial roles (World Bank {WB}, 2012). According to Uzokwe et al. (2017), which he confirmed, women in many parts of Africa are traditionally more responsible for producing food for their families than men. In addition to their underappreciated domestic duties, Nigerian women have consistently contributed significantly to the advancement of the country in their various spheres of endeavour. Like other African women, Nigerian rural women have made incalculable contributions to the production, processing, and distribution of food in the agricultural sector (Nwagbara et al., 2012).

## **2.2. Theoretical Framework**

Structural Functionalism is the theory chosen for the underpinnings of this study. As defined by Odunuga, Structural Functionalism is a theoretical perspective in Sociology and Anthropology that views and interprets society as a structure with interrelated functional parts (Odunuga, n.d). In furtherance, Structural Functionalism is a sociological theory that tries to describe the reasons



society acts the way it does by concentrating on the interaction that exists between many social institutions that amount to what society is, such as Government, Judiciary, and Religion.

Within social sciences, Structural Functionalism was first applied in Anthropology but was developed later and patterned more in solely sociological analysis, Talcott Parsons (Nitsha, n.d). The key advocates of Structural Functionalism are Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Talcott Parsons, Gabriel Almond, and Bingham Powell. Other influential theorists are Emile Durkheim, Niklas Luhman, and George Murdock.

Structural Functionalism has its foundational assumptions; Societies and social units have order and interdependent parts like a biological organism. The NDDC is a government establishment that impacts both males and females in the devastated areas. They are all social units that have stated orderliness and are interdependent. All features are geared towards achieving development in society.

Structural Functionalism has been criticized for its inability to account for social change or for conflicts that emanate from contradictions in the structures and at the same time ignores the differences in features such as race, gender, and class that spark conflicts in society (Odunuga, n.d).

Foundationally, the concepts of Structural Functionalism are more sociological and are not well fitted into Political Science, for example, 'system' and 'interaction' are Anthropology words that appear more confusing in Political System (Nitsha, n.d). Despite the criticism, Structural Functionalism has been seen as the most fitted theory in the analyses of this study.

### **3.0. METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative research approach is adopted for this study. Support and the data of the study are collected through secondary sources such as Journals, Newspapers, Magazines, Books, and reliable online platforms. In-depth interview of three individuals (a male and two females)

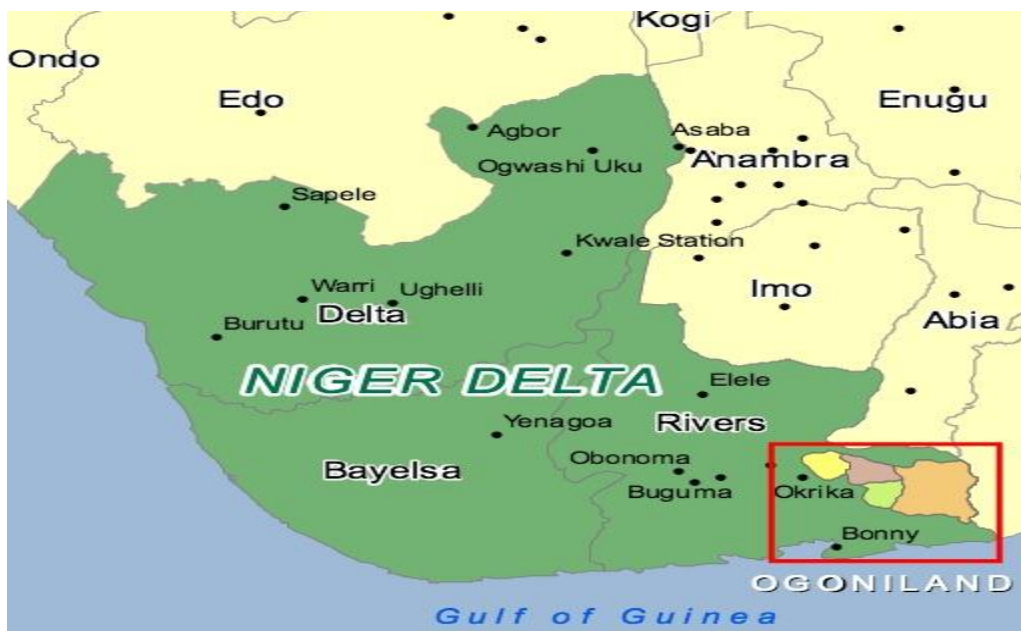




selected from affected areas as Ogoni, Calabar, and Warri (each represented by an interviewee). NDDC Senior Personnel were also interviewed to obtain first-hand information on the operations of NDDC. These four interviewees were purposively selected based on their exposure to key information needed in the descriptive analyses of this study. The description and analyses of the gathered information are critically handled to make up conclusions and recommendations for the study.

#### 4. 1. Description of Study Area

**Figure: 1 Map showing Niger Delta Areas**



**Source:** Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group (NDBMG) (n.d.)

The Niger Delta, a large area where the Niger River meets the Atlantic Ocean, is situated in southern Nigeria, as seen in Figure 1. Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers are among its nine states. With an area of about 70,000 square kilometers, it makes up 7.5% of Nigeria's total land area. The region is essential to Nigeria's economy because



of its substantial oil deposits and rich biodiversity (NDBMG, n.d). The creation of NDDC was required due to the difficulties the local population experienced, particularly concerning gender and development after the oil discovery. Despite several obstacles, the NDDC has made efforts in the Niger Delta.

#### **4.2. Assessment of NDDC**

NDDC in Niger Delta has invested in agricultural projects aimed at enlightening the women and youths in the production of crops, livestock rearing, fisheries, snail rearing, processing, and marketing of farm produce (UNDP, 2006 & Ikoro, et al, 2014). It is in the record that NDDC has made impacts in such projects as electrification, road development and bridge construction, building, erosion management, water provision, education, and healthcare services (Nwachinyere, 2007).

In performing its functions;

NDDC has its objectives which are upgrading crop production at the grassroots, community level from peasant activity to commercial status, and attainment of self-sufficiency in basic food production with special reference to those areas that have comparative advantage. Development of agricultural production, processing, preservation, and dispatch through the adoption of developed technologies ... Niger Delta and attractive to youths and promotion of youth/women interest and participation in agricultural activities by encouraging and assisting youth groups in the area (Ikoro et al, 2014, p.23).

It is important to note that efforts on Environmental sustainability are based in part on the following items.

- considering the effect of our activities on the health and well-being of natural ecosystems including all living organisms.
- There is no endless amount of earth's resources. We must live within ecological bounds that allow freshwater and other renewable resources to be replenished for future demands.
- we must each participate in the duties for environmental sustainability (Raven et al, 2010).



It is noteworthy that the troubles facing Niger Delta and the challenges NDDC is battling cannot be separated from the state of the Nigerian nation. In the submission of Isidiho (2015);

The backwardness of the Niger Delta is mainly due to corrupt political, government officials and bureaucrats who have continued to mismanage the large resources from oil coupled with the dilapidation of the region by the oil companies working in the area who at many times asserted that their tasks were much on paying their taxes and royalties to the Nigerian Government instead of improving the region (p.38).

The environmental degradation in the Niger Delta did not just start today.

Historically, environmental abuse commenced in the distant past due to the work of oil multinationals. The nature of the oil business and the neglecting behaviour towards the environment on the part of the corporations and the state's lack of effective management and control since the late 1950s contributed to immense pollution and degradation of the lands, water, and air of the area...The persistent environmental abuse and growing misery of most people in the region led to the emergence of ecological activists, who are resolute on increasing local and international knowledge of the problems created by oil corporations (Olaniyan, 2017, p. 1).

According to the revelation of (Atuenyi, 2021) as of February 2021, an amount of N15.45 billion was never accounted for by the NDDC. The corporation did budget for projects numbering about 115 that were worth N98.52 billion and out of the amount, N61.84 billion was given directly to the corporation for the carrying out of these projects. The discoveries made have revealed that up to N15.45 billion of money was nowhere to be found.

Corruption is one of the major obstacles of Nigerian society and this has remained devastating in all areas of polity including the NDDC. Sanctions must be applied to correct those individuals and groups that have defaulted in their expected conduct (Aluko, Apeloko, Chukwudi, & Paimo, 2023; & Chidozie, Chukwudi, Aje, & Osimen, 2024). The Governors of the Delta region have failed to contribute positively to the improvement of the area (Isidibo et al, 2015). The change in the climate of a place may have a lot of effects on people's health in Canada, including high



leveled heat aiding the spread of the epidemic, mental retardation, sudden sounds, and pregnancy malformations (Tarasuk et al, 2016).

There are indications that the training programmes have failed which is visible in the high level of unemployment which is a pointer to the fact that the people concerned lack incorporation in their society and this condition cannot support human development (Nussbaum, 2001 cited in Okinono et al, 2015, p. 231).

NDDC in all its efforts as an interventionist group has noted with high regard the importance of education in handling the Niger Delta region's environmental issues like the dispatch of educational materials; To change the status of education and increase students' morale, the NDDC has started sending science supplies to 46 selected local high schools. NDDC interim administrator Mr. Efiong Akwa stated that science education is important to the commission's role during his remarks at the commencement ceremony in Warri, Delta state. So we are providing essential science equipment to 46 schools in the area," he said. In order to encourage and foster young people's interest in studying the sciences, the commission seeks to guarantee that science courses are taught and learnt effectively (Akani, 2024).

After the establishment of NDDC by former President Olusegun Obasanjo in the year 2000 the Niger Delta Ministry was later established in 2008 by late President Umaru Yar'adua but they all failed mainly due to mismanagement, limited funding, corruption, poor project execution and eventually leading to underdevelopment (Okinono, et al, 2015). NDDC has in its activities showed they have not totally failed as they perform some humanitarian functions with regard to the welfare of the women and children. Uduma (2021) informed on how NDDC has made available more than 2,170 bags of rice for women, children, and the physically challenged from the eight local government areas of Bayelsa state.



During an Interview with an indigene of the Niger Delta region on how they have coped with the activities of oil companies in their area, he categorically stated that their environment has become horrifying to the inhabitants, in his words; “the degradation in our environment is horrifying, the people in the Niger-Delta have been impoverished by the hazardous pollution in both land, air and water caused by the operations of the oil exploration” (Respondent 1, 2024).

The situation of our environment has deprived us of all opportunities to maximally utilize it in different types of farming; planting, fishery, and animal husbandry (Respondent 2, 2024). Ojo (2020) revealed that oil and gas extraction for almost ten years has led to a lot of contamination of the water and soil in Ogoni communities. All forms of community development contribute to the development of the wider society (Chukwudi & Owoh, 2024).

In an interview with an Indigenous person from Niger Delta, she maintained that NDDC’s impact has not been felt by her family, herself, and her entire community and she agreed they used to see some projects, but she cannot say that one has really impacted on her as an individual (Respondent, 3, 2024).

An Interviewee made it clear that NDDC’s performance is below expectations; “most of their projects are always abandoned or permanently in its halfway towards completion, we don’t always come out to ask questions and no official either of the government of NDDC comes up to explain or enlighten our people on the status of their projects” (Respondent 1, 2024).

On what he has benefitted from the NDDC, he (Respondent, 1, 2024) stated that he has not benefitted directly from NDDC projects and is unsure how others in their locality have benefited from NDDC.

This may point to the fact that NDDC, as a commission, has not informed the people about what they intend to contribute to the people as a company. There are other cases of personal interest



by some Niger Delta indigenous persons and politicians. “I can tell you that some of those NDDC officials are greedy and self-centred; they would rather care only for their family than do what will benefit all the members in the region” (Respondent 3, 2024).

In an interview with personnel of NDDC, he stated that the Commission has significantly contributed to the welfare of the people of Niger Delta in cushioning the hazardous effects of the environment due to the activities of oil companies but the people most times are divided and this division does not allow equitable division of the resources going to the people from the commission (Respondent 4, 2024). Respondent 4 (2024), an NDDC personnel was asked if NDDC has challenges that face them which can limit their efforts, he said that corruption among all cadres is the most militating factor against the efforts of the commission and this corruption has affected the commitment that most members of staff have in the progress of the commission. In support of this assertion, Eke (2021) revealed that “members of staff that retired in 2011 and in 2012 still have their take away end service packages not given to them as no MD is out to take the responsibility of that treatment even when the budget of the commission well covered that particular provision”.

#### **4.3. Challenges of NDDC**

Corruption happening within NDDC has been seen to be on the high side. The oil communities are also vulnerable as they are denied their entitlements because of corruption. In the submission of Ejoh (2020, p.1), “Governors in the Niger-Delta region and other oil-producing states have been accused of taking away the 13 percent (%) derivation fund mapped out for the welfare and improvement of oil producing communities for other purposes in contravention of section 162, Sub-section 2 of the 1999 Constitution”.

It was also discovered after the review and analysis of data and audit reports by Auditor Generals that between the period of 2008 and 2018 a whooping amount of N90.9 billion that was for the execution of 176 projects disappeared without any trace in the coffers of NDDC (Akinpelu,





2021, p.1). A lot of misappropriation of funds has also taken place in the pretense of providing infrastructure/ welfare for the people of the Niger Delta;

The infrastructure was divided into three sub-areas, including water projects, road projects, and other projects that include installing solar power, electricity, etc. N59,827,213,250 has been sent thus far, but more than N52 million is still unaccounted for out of the N96,390,115,618 that was anticipated for contracts awarded for infrastructure (Attueyi, 2021).

The people have persistently raised alarms on various financial criminality bedeviling all supposed good intentions of either the commission or its engineer allies. Respondent 4 (2024) felt disappointed by the manner the people in the oil region area are treated; “NDDC can make the environment in the Niger Delta a super one, but greed and lack of commitment are salient obstacles between the people and the commission” (Respondent 4).

The President of Ijaw National Congress, Professor Benjamin Okaba has expressed disappointment on how NDDC is managed from one caretaker to another; without any certified board that can institute a level of proper organization. He lamented how hand gloves for COVID-19 were procured at N500m and the illegal recruitment of about 1000 people without any existing board (Igoni, 2021). The Niger Delta-based Civil Society Organisations (CSO) have beckoned on the Nigerian President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.) to give a quick response to the implementation of the forensic audit of NDDC and allow adequate for defaulters (Ochei, 2021). In this direction, Chukwudi, Bello, Apeloko, & Olawunmi, (2024) have submitted that organisations’ activities have contributed greatly to socioeconomic development

The Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) has named ministers and members of the National Assembly as greedy and selfish individuals who have foiled all efforts towards the institution of a new and strong board for NDDC. The politicians are at loggerheads over who would produce the NDDC Managing Director and the board’s membership. Ebilade Ekerefe, the IYC spokesperson in his statement at Yenagoa urged the President, Major General Muhammadu Buhari (retd.) to



disregard the greedy politicians of Niger Delta and endeavour to put a new board in place for NDDC (Igoni, 2021). The grievances are not unconnected with the discontent among the youths. Ezebuilo (2023) maintains that the empowerment of the youth is vital for continuous socioeconomic development.

One of the Interviewees strongly stated that he has not seen any impact of NDDC in the area of empowerment and that it would be better to go into the remote areas, mix with the people, and find out in unity the best ways to tackle it and carry it out together (Respondent 1, 2024). This idea will be impactful as it will help to avoid excuses for limitations or lack of infrastructure or know-how acquisition training.

#### **4.4. Results and Discussion**

The study draws attention to the serious environmental damage brought on by widespread oil drilling in the Niger Delta, which has had a negative impact on both sexes through poverty, health issues, and loss of livelihoods. The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was created to address these issues, but the study finds that corruption and a lack of funds have prevented the organisation from successfully carrying out its mandate.

There are differences in the results of NDDC initiatives, according to findings from secondary data and in-depth interviews. For example, women have been particularly affected by environmental deterioration and receive insufficient help from the NDDC, while being the primary carers and dependent on agriculture for survival. This supports earlier research showing that Nigerian environmental policies lack gender-sensitive methods (Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010). Gender-based economic disparities are further exacerbated by the fact that males, who usually fish and participate in other economic activities, have lower incomes because of contaminated waterways.



Structural-functionalism's theoretical discoveries highlight the connection between societal well-being and institutional efficiency. The ineffectiveness of the NDDC, which is caused by financial errors and corruption, limits its ability to solve the interrelated issues that the people of the Niger Delta face (Akinola, 2020).

Additionally, the study states that gender-inclusive interventions and strong surveillance systems are necessary for sustainable development in the area (UNDP, 2019). This study also confirms that fairly and focused interventions are essential to rehabilitating the environment of the Niger Delta and enhancing livelihoods.

## **5. Conclusion**

There is no question about the Niger Delta's significance to Nigeria's economy. The region's oil supply and production have made significant contributions to the local and global economies. Along with ongoing demands from the commission, this investigation revealed the tremendous degree of poverty, starvation, and degradation that have persisted in the Niger Delta. The structural functionalism argument, which holds that collaboration and order would have improved society, has been disregarded by the commission and the government. Despite adopting numerous techniques to accomplish its goals, the Niger Delta Development Commission has not had the good impact that the people of Niger had hoped for. The commission must conduct investigations to identify the factors that contributed to the NDDC's limitations; corrupt practices must be exposed and those responsible brought to justice; the Niger Delta's men and women must have well-organised leadership to allow for acceptable representation with the NDDC, which will be based on the structural functionalism theory; and women in production are potent forces for development who should receive all of the backings they need to further their efforts.

It should be a top priority for the ministries in charge of women's affairs in the Niger Delta to guarantee that women in the area are not subjected to discrimination but are instead supported in their aspirations, such as obtaining arable land, evaluating loans, and comparing government



funding for the Niger Delta Development Commission. To achieve its goals, the NDDC requires strong leadership free from weakness and responsibility; in other words, a strong NDDC board is essential to the organization's success in all its administrative responsibilities. As an interventionist organisation, the NDDC must comprehend the people's plight and create the best possible support to enable them to succeed. A task force or other body should be established in addition to interventionist authorities to keep an eye on the operations of oil firms in the area and make sure they follow the precautions that have been mentioned to reduce the risks that they pose to the public.

It is best to avoid the government's broken promises and careless approach to the condition of the Niger Delta's citizens, which has left the area in agony. The people who truly need farm infrastructure and input should have access to them. To prevent their efforts from becoming politicised, the commission NDDC should try to keep their projects and contract awards apart from political activities. The establishment of a code of conduct bureau, frequent audits, and transparency will all aid in maintaining discipline among NDDC employees. Giving education to the current population is crucial since it will raise awareness, comprehension, and engagement in areas where people's opinions are needed. Members in default should be subject to the full force of the law, and indiscipline should be discouraged.

### **Statement of Interest Declaration**

There is no kind of conflict of interest among the authors.

### **Competing Interest**

The authors have declared that no conflicting interest exist in this paper.



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