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The Nigerian State and Development in the Niger Delta Region

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Abstract

The paper examined the Nigerian state and development in the Niger Delta region. The Niger Delta region of Nigeria exemplifies the contrast between enormous wealth and severe underdevelopment. The Nigerian government has made several attempts to stimulate development in the region by establishing special development agencies. However, none of the special development agencies established have been successful in improving the living conditions of the people of the Niger Delta. As a result, the purpose of this paper is to investigate some of the challenges confronting the Niger Delta region, as well as the Nigerian government's responses to them in order to achieve development. The Marxian Political Economy (MPE) theory was used as the theoretical framework of analysis. The paper relied on secondary sources of data collection. It was discovered that the Niger Delta region faces unemployment and poverty, as well as a lack of quality education and healthcare, as well as water and transportation issues. Furthermore, the several specific development agencies established by the Nigerian government to address these issues are failing to change the narrative, as the people of the region remain impoverished. As a result, the paper recommended a change in the mentality on the part of the Nigerian government, of those who supervise the activities of the NDDC and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, as a way forward to assure speedy development of the Niger Delta region.

Keywords: Nigerian State; Development; Underdevelopment; Niger Delta; Poverty; Marxian Political Economy

1. Introduction

The primary concern of any government is to ensure the well-being of its citizens. To protect the welfare of its citizens, the government develops and implements policies aimed at bettering their living conditions. Every government owes its inhabitants the task of improving their living conditions. To improve citizens' living conditions, governments must ensure that socio-economic, infrastructure and human development goals are met. And so, the Nigerian government must become devoted to achieving a high degree of development, as it is a critical component of any nation's push to self-sufficiency. Any vibrant nation's growth and sustainability are dependent on development. As a result, in order to assure development, socio-political and economic stability must be ensured at all levels of government, as this will encourage citizens' natural commitment to the governing process.

Nigeria's Niger Delta region is an oil-producing region. More than 90% of oil and gas revenues, 80% of Nigeria's GDP, and 95% of the national budget are generated in the region [1]. Aside from that, the region has good agricultural land, a large forest, excellent fisheries, and a large labour force. With so many resources, the region should be one of the world's most developed areas. Surprisingly, the region is one of the world's most underdeveloped areas. Despite its enormous resources and contributions to the Nigerian economy, the Niger Delta region is nevertheless marked by people living in abject poverty, with short life expectancy, a high infant mortality rate, widespread illiteracy, and significant

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unemployment. Then one can imagine what efforts the Nigerian state, through its government, is doing to change the narrative.

People in the Niger Delta have staged a number of protests and agitations as a result of the Nigerian government's failure to develop the region. What are the development challenges facing the Niger Delta? What is the Nigerian government's approach to the Niger Delta's developmental issues and agitations? Is the government's response to the Niger Delta's developmental aspirations changing the narrative? These are the essential questions that this paper seeks to answer.

2. Conceptual Clarification

2.1. State

Many authors have attempted to define the state in different ways. The State, on the other hand, can be traced back to two separate perspectives, namely, the Liberal and Marxist perspectives. From a liberal standpoint, the state exists to constantly improve and preserve the best possible living for residents and citizens. The state is viewed as an abstract entity, a moral and collective body that is formed by the community as a whole. The state was established to keep things in check and maintain law and order for the benefit of all those who live inside its borders [2]. As observed by Ekekwe [3], "the liberal view is that the state is neutral, that it merely balances things out between competing elite groups. According to this view, there is no ruling class as such in society; therefore, state power is not exercised in favour of any such class". "The State is a human community that claims the monopoly of the lawful use of physical force in a certain territory (Max Weber cited in 4: p.58). According to Weber, the State's claim to the monopoly of the use of force is vital to prevent the breakdown of law and order. As a result, the emphasis on the State here is on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all citizens inside its borders. "The State is a sovereign body, says Heywood [5], which allows it to wield absolute and unfettered power over all other associations and groups in society, as well as to function as an independent actor among other actors in the community of nations." As a result, all members of society recognise and accept the State's decisions as binding.

The Marxist perspective rejected the liberal theory's premise that the state is neutral and stands aside to mediate the inherent conflicts in society. Rather, the Marxist perspective sees the state as a product of a social structure marked by class contradictions, struggles, and dominance [4]. The dominating class and the labouring class are the two antagonistic classes in the state. These classes have different interests. The dominating (bourgeois) class, which controls a substantial portion of the nation's wealth at the expense of the labouring class, also known as the proletariat, is also referred to as the ruling class. The dominating class in society controls the means of production, while the labouring class sells only its labour, which is frequently undervalued. Class struggle is the term used to describe the conflict that normally ensues between these two groups. The State, according to Ake [6], is a special form of class dominance. The state was construed as an agent of the bourgeoisie in the Communist Manifesto, so the modern state's executive is a committee for managing the bourgeoisie's common affairs.

As a result, the paper agrees with Amadi's [2] definition of the state, which is a complex, dynamic, volatile, and sometimes unpredictable interaction of networks of interest, contradictions, institutions, and processes that interact at various levels for the reproduction of a particular social formation at any given time.

2.2. Development

Not only in Development Studies but also in the field of Social Sciences, defining development is a contentious issue. The debate over what defines development appears to be rooted not only in differences in what constitutes development but also in ideological attitudes. Some scholars view development via the lens of economics, while others see it as a multifaceted term that extends beyond the realm of economics. Scholars, on the other hand, have attempted to conceptualize development.

Liberal scholars have viewed development through the lens of growth and major increases in the gross national product (GNP), per capita income, and growth in the national economy's physical infrastructure. Growth and development indices are considered interchangeable by liberals, who believe that growth leads to development and that the benefits of growth invariably trickle down to affect the quality of life at all levels of society [4].

According to Seers [7], three questions should be asked and answered in order to establish the condition of a country's development:

- What has been the state of poverty?

- What has happened to the unemployment rate?
- What has been the state of inequity?

He maintained that if all three of these indices had fallen over the time period in question, the country has entered a phase of development. Even if per capita income had doubled over the period under consideration, the situation cannot be one of development if one or two of them have been deteriorating, especially if all three have been deteriorating.

Rodney [8] defined development as an increase in man's ability and capacity, as well as greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and economic well-being. In Rodney's definition, man is the one who benefits from development initiatives. Even though different perspectives on development exist, Igbuzo [9] claims that there is a general agreement that development will lead to positive change in people's ability to control material assets, intellectual resources, and ideology, as well as obtain physical necessities of life (food, clothing, and shelter), employment, equality, participation in government, political and economic independence, adequate education, gender equality, and sustainability. He went on to say that this supports the idea that development's goal is to better people's lives by giving them more options, freedom, and dignity.

Any development endeavour must be people-centred and targeted in order to succeed. It should be people-centred, continuous, and ever-changing. It should be geared toward maximizing man's potential and capacities. Man's individuality is increased when he becomes the pivot for development. This enlarged personality will help man to meet his requirements, increase his talents and education, and enjoy greater freedom, among other things. People's well-being can be improved through development, as well as their choices and possibilities. Development is a continuous process and not a monument.

3. Theoretical Framework

In analysing the Nigerian state and development in the Niger Delta region, this study situates its arguments on those works which attempt to use the Marxian Political Economy (MPE) theory as the basis for explaining the nature of the post-colonial states and their inability to promote development. The Marxian political economy theory was propounded by Karl Marx. The Marxian political economy theory is broad, integrative, and historical in its examination of society as a whole. Social scientists primarily employ the theory to examine social formations, classes, and their contradictory relationships. In its understanding of the economic process, the theory took a radical stance. According to Marx, the economy, which is the society's substructure, determines the total superstructure. As a result, the political, legal, cultural, and other sectors of society are determined by the economic base of the society. The Marxian political economy examines society as a whole, through existing relationships within it, and primarily under the umbrella of social production.

Alavi [10] bases his post-colonial states thesis on the idea that post-colonial states are the result of civilizations that are systematically divided into antagonistic classes. This not only nullifies individual autonomy but also renders the state incapable of launching and implementing development programs that benefit the entire society. In this approach, the state's problem cannot be reduced to inefficiency. Ake [11] sees post-colonial states as capitalist tools since the indigenous bourgeoisie that took over government lacked a secure material base; as a result, they use the state as a base for primitive capital accumulation. The Nigerian state, like most post-colonial governments, reflects and caters to narrow interests. It is the institutionalized interests of the State machinery that are expressed, backed by the compulsions of power. This exacerbates underdevelopment and jeopardizes development plans [6]. As a result of the foregoing, the unusual situation of the social group that holds State power in Nigeria precludes it from being primarily engaged in development. It may declare a commitment to development and establish development policies. The political class, on the other hand, is only concerned with adjustment because it is only within this framework that it can maintain its power and existence [12].

Based on this theoretical framework, this paper argues that the Nigerian State's solutions to the development of the Niger Delta region through the developmental agencies established by it serve only to safeguard the interests of the ruling class, and not to squarely address the region's developmental issues. The Nigerian State's managers appoint members of their class to run these special development agencies they set up, in order to further defend their class's interests. As a result, allegations of misuse of funds and other acts of corruption involving managers of these development agencies are treated with levity.

4. The Niger Delta Region's Characteristics and Challenges

The Niger Delta is geographically and politically defined. The geographical Niger Delta includes states in the South-South Geo-Political Zone, including Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, and Cross River, while the political Niger Delta includes the neighbouring oil-producing states of Ondo, Abia, and Imo for administrative, political, and development reasons [13]. It is an oil-rich region, with oil revenues totalling \$600 billion for the government since the 1960s [14]. The region's present oil and gas reserves are believed to be at 34 billion barrels and 160 trillion cubic meters of gas reserves, respectively [15]. After the Mississippi River, the Niger Delta is one of the world's most important wetlands and marine ecosystems, and it is Africa's largest. It is divided into several ecological zones, ranging from a sandy coastal ridge barrier to low-land rainforest; the creeks and swamps are teeming with birds, marine life, giant ferns, and towering mangrove plants; and the creeks and swamps are teeming with bird, marine life, giant ferns, and towering mangrove plants [16]. The Niger Delta is home to 32 million people (22% of Nigeria's total population), with 62% under the age of 30. [17]. The region is extremely diverse, with over 40 ethnic groups speaking 120 mutually incomprehensible languages and dialects. The Ijaw ethnic group is the largest; the Itsekiri, Urhobo, Ibibio-Efik, and Igbo sub-groups are all significant. Historically, the region's two main vocations have been fishing and agriculture [17].

The Niger Delta region is characterised by a general state of underdevelopment, underemployment, excessive poverty, and a lack of competent and suitable infrastructure. The rural areas of the region are characterised by failed and abandoned development projects aimed at improving people's material living situations, but economic and social rights, such as the right to an adequate standard of living, remain unmet [18]. Administrative neglect, deteriorating social infrastructure and services, high unemployment, social deprivation, abject poverty, filth and squalor, and endemic war are all described as problems in the region by the United Nations Development Programme [13]. The majority of the region's residents lack appropriate access to clean water and health-care services. Their poverty, in contrast to the wealth generated by oil, is a classic illustration of poverty in the face of abundance.

Furthermore, underdevelopment is characterised as follows by Ekanem, as the inability, failure, unwillingness, or structural impediment to a people's ability to utilise available mental, physical, and material resources in society at a given moment and place to improve the quality and quantity of their lives (19: p.53).

Therefore, the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is socially and economically underdeveloped. This is because, according to a UNDP assessment of the region's Human Development Index (HDI), pervasive poverty exists in the Niger Delta region [20]. According to the report, this region, which is home to Nigeria's oil wealth, is nevertheless the poorest in the country, missing basic infrastructures such as a good road network, health care facilities, adequate schools, and potable water. As a result, the report indicated that the residents of the region have a poor life expectancy, a high new-born mortality rate, a high degree of illiteracy, and unemployment.

Farming and fishing, which are the people's main vocations, have suffered as a result of environmental contamination and deterioration caused by oil spills and gas flaring. This has resulted in little income revenue for the population, resulting in extreme poverty and development. According to UNDP [13], the region's historical neglect is a significant impediment to socio-economic development.

The following are some of the challenges that the Niger Delta region is facing:

4.1.1. Poverty and Unemployment

Unemployment occurs when those who are able and eager to work are unable to find adequate paid labour. Unemployment and poverty are particularly high in the Niger Delta states. Despite Nigeria's oil output for almost four decades and hundreds of billions of dollars in cash, the people of the Niger Delta region remain impoverished. The poverty rate is around 80%, and the unemployment rate is around 70%. [21]. They do not have access to even the most basic utilities like pipe-borne water and electricity.

4.1.2. Health and the provision of health-care services

Hospitals, clinics, and basic health centres are in poor condition, and there is a lack of an adequate operational plan for holistic health management. The majority of Niger Delta populations living in remote areas lack access to even the most basic modern medical care, such as first aid, due to the dearth of formal health services in much of the hinterland [22]. According to the NDES [23] report on primary health care, there is only one health care facility for every 9,805 persons, with each facility serving a 44-square-kilometer region. For every 131,174 individuals, there is just one facility serving a 583-square-kilometer region. An average of 48 settlements are served by a single facility [24]. People's quality of life suffers as a result of their lack of access to health care, which contributes to their poverty.

4.1.3. Education

According to statistical estimates, 80% of children attend primary school (which compares favourably to the expected national average of 54%) (13: p.32). However, practically every school facility in the region is in a condition of deterioration that necessitates considerable renovation. The secondary school system has been severely hampered by a lack of qualified teachers, a regional pattern that is growing increasingly acute due, in part, to inconsistencies in infrastructure investments made outside of a well-coordinated planning process.

The NDES report [23] revealed the enormous issue of development and provision of social amenities for sustainable lives, noting that there were only 2,169 primary schools in a certain area of the Niger Delta states, spanning 30,000 square kilometres and an estimated eight million inhabitants. This equated to one primary school for every 3,700 people in a 14-square-kilometer area, as well as one school for every two settlements. Secondary schools serve an average of 55 square kilometres, with one school per 14,679 people and one school every seven settlements.

4.1.4. Water Issues

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics [cited in 25], revealed that water in the majority of Niger Delta states comes from unsafe supply facilities, including rivers, lakes or ponds, unprotected wells, and boreholes. The Bureau classifies available sources of potable water for household consumptions as pipe-borne, untreated pipe, bore-hole, protected well, unprotected well, river/lake/pond, vendor trucks, and other categories in five of the nine states of the region; Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Ondo, and Imo, water problems are very acute and result in supplies of unsafe water in more than 50% of the cases. Poor access to adequate drinking water has had serious implications for the general health, environment, economic activities, and sustainable livelihoods in the Niger Delta region [26].

4.1.5. Transport

According to the UNDP [13], the Niger Delta roads are mostly bad. Efforts by local government authorities to repair the roads have worsened them and left the local people with more hardship. Although urban road transportation development has been accorded some priority, less regard has been shown for rural transportation, especially water transport, which the majority of the rural population depend on. Analysts refer to transportation and communication in the area as a source of misery [24].

4.2. State Responses to the Development of the Niger Delta Region, 1961-2008

To ensure speedy development in the Niger Delta region and also, in response to the developmental concerns of the region, various special development agencies have been created at different times by the Nigerian Government to address developmental challenges faced by the Niger Delta people. Unfortunately, the efforts of the Nigerian Government to ensure the development of the region have not been able to effectively provide the required results. Some of these government agencies charged with the development of the Niger Delta region include; the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB), the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA), Presidential Task Force on Niger Delta Development (PTFNDD), the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the recently established Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA).

The first was the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB), which was established in 1961 on the recommendation of the 1958 Willink Commission. The NDDDB received British government contributions and continued colonial policy by focusing chiefly on agricultural development. The board was underfunded, and it truncated the Board's developmental objectives. By 1966 it had met a few of its objectives and was beset by political crises and the outbreak of civil war. The NDDDB was succeeded in 1980 by the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA). Again, little was achieved by the NDBDA. There is no denying the fact that, with the politicization and proliferation of development authorities in the country, the funding problem became worse. The agency failed to succeed like its predecessor and lost its relevance as a body established for the special development needs of the Niger Delta. In 1982, the Shagari administration set up a Presidential Task Force on Niger Delta Development (PTFNDD) to formulate solutions to the problems of the Niger Delta region, leading to the "1.5 percent Commission", a body that had modest funds and little development impact in the region. The category of people appointed to the Committee was completely ignorant of the problems of the region, thus, a yawning gap emerges between the aspirations of the people and the interest of the committee members. The Committee had virtually done nothing when the Supreme Court in a judgment (following a contention by the government of the old Bendel State) put a stop to the utilization of the fund (27: p.110). It is worthy to note that between 1982 and 1988, two presidential committees were established. The 1982 Committee did nothing to settle the problems of the region. The 1988 Presidential Committee on the development of the communities disbursed the funds and executed some projects. However, it is worthy to state that the Niger Deltans were excluded from running the affairs of the Presidential Committee; which meant that their destiny was placed in the hand of people from other regions [28].

This is because, in the Nigerian setting, the exercise of power (allocation of resources) at every point largely benefits the dominant group or individuals that wield power. The argument is that the types of projects executed, and the beneficiaries of contracts, did not promote the interests of the oil-producing communities; but the operators of the state, the Committee members, and their collaborators. Again, due to a lack of clear goals, so many projects were embarked upon at the same time [28]. Hence, at the end of its existence in May 1992, a total of 1.207 projects were either abandoned or on-going [27].

As a result of strenuous advocacy by the Niger Delta people, in 1992, the Oil and Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) was created by Decree No. 23 by Ibrahim Babangida to address the development challenges of the Niger Delta region. The fundamental objective of the Commission was spelt out as follows: (i) the rehabilitation and development of oil-producing areas; (ii) the tackling of ecological problems that have arisen from the exploration and exploitation of oil minerals; (iii) to identify...the actual Oil Producing Areas and embark on the development of projects properly agreed on with the local communities of Oil Producing Areas; and (iv) to tackle the problems of oil pollution... (27). Despite a more generous statutory allocation of 3% derivation, OMPADEC also failed to actualize the developmental aspirations of the oil-producing Niger Delta region. Although, it has been argued that OMPADEC suffered from poor funding which made it difficult for the Commission to actualise its developmental mandate. However, the Commission quickly gained a reputation for poor planning, maladministration, nepotism, lack of popular consultation with the residents of the Niger Delta region, expensive and unfinished capital projects, contract proliferation, routine corruption, faulty project ideas, and faults in the implementation strategy. After five years, the Commission had also run up debilitating debts. As the sole national entity mandated to receive derivation funding, OMPADEC's failure to return value from oil production to the region only served to compound rising anger. According to Azaiki [30], OMPADEC conceived grandiose and unwieldy projects which were not in the priority interest of the masses, so the problem of development continues to exist unresolved. Thus, by and large, OMPADEC failed to actualize its mandate.

Soon after the 1999 election, President Olusegun Obasanjo established a committee that led to the creation of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000. NDDC's mandate is to "conceive, plan, and implement... projects and programs 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" [31]. Since the NDDC was established after the prolonged military rule in the country, a cross-section of Niger Deltans believed that the new Commission will go a long way in ameliorating the plight of the oil-producing region, while others dismissed it as another cosmetic and tokenistic menu advanced to downplay oil agitations, and that seems to be the case with the existential realities. NDDC is financed, under the Act, from four sources:

- 15% of the monthly federal statutory allocations due to the oil producing states;
- 3% of the operating budgets of the oil and gas producing companies;
- 50% of the Ecological Fund due to the Niger Delta States; and;
- Any foreign aid or other private sector contributions.

In addition to planning programs and executing projects, the NDDC was tasked with the creation and implementation of a comprehensive plan for the region, called the Niger Delta Regional Development Masterplan (NDRDMP) [17]. This masterplan was conceived as a blueprint for the sustainable development of the region.

Despite the claim by the Commission's official website that it has delivered over fourteen thousand, two hundred and eighteen (14,218) projects in the region since 2015 [32], poverty and underdevelopment level in the region is still very high. The Commission has 5,034 on-going projects, 5,575 completed projects, 2,443 newly awarded projects, and 669 recently commissioned projects [32].

Without being cynical, many have come to see the NDDC as a mere change in nomenclature, especially when the performances of the Commission are thoroughly assessed. Like previous efforts and agencies, the NDDC has also grappled with official corruption, politics, inadequate staff, and outright inefficiency. Thus, over decades of its establishment, the problem it was set up to tackle is not only still there but has grown in great proportion. NDDC operates under the mandate of improving social and environmental conditions in the Niger Delta region which are described as horrific in its reports. How well the agency has impacted on these problems is questionable because the crisis, which precipitated its creation, has shown no sign of improvement. In fact, in recent times, NDDC has come under scrutiny. There are those that regarded the NDDC as a source of corrupt practices and conduit pipe for stealing public funds. When its activities so far are compared to the rate of environmental degradation, poverty, and serious health cases which engulf the region, it is safe to say that, like its predecessors, the NDDC has not recorded much success. Besides the problem of official corruption, abandoned projects, and negative politicking that the Commission has to

contend with, the Nigerian government has been accused of withholding the statutory allocation to the Commission to the tune of many billions of naira. The Oil Multinationals as well have also come under serious criticism for not paying the mandatory 3% of their annual budget, as contained in the NDDC Act 2000 setting up the Commission to it. The NDDC Committee of the House of Representative in the Nigerian National Assembly reported in 2003 that:

Some oil companies are not complying with the NDDC Act Even the Federal Government is not fully complying with the provision of the Act. For example, an oil company which year 2002 budget was 2.235 billion dollars, made a deduction of 627 million dollars from its budget before making its 3% deduction from the remainder. Another company budgeted 1,203 billion dollars for 2002, but deducted 504 million dollars before the 3% was worked out... Federal Government is also paying 10% instead of 15% (33 p.23).

In addition to the NDDC, a new Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA) was created by President Yar'adua in September 2008 to provide development in the region, following the regional model suggested by the Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja. This decision seemed to affirm the government's strategic commitment to the region in a year of political tumult and escalating violence. The Ministry was charged with a dual mission: coordination of mega-regional infrastructure and environmental projects and youth empowerment and training [17]. Each activity was overseen by a respective senior and junior minister.

Several years after its establishment, the MNDA now has staff and offices in Abuja but has otherwise achieved little. Its entire \$333 million budget for 2009 was absorbed by existing road contracts and constituency projects earmarked for funding by elected officials under their representational budgets. A piecemeal program emerged after a series of consultative visits by the Minister to state leaders and constituents. In view of an increased, though still modest budget of \$430 million for 2010, the list of proposed projects reflected political inspiration rather than pragmatism. It included a portfolio of projects replicated for each state with a costly coastal road running from Calabar to Ilaja in Ondo State. In 2011, the Ministry's initial budget fell to its 2009 level of \$333 million, although President Jonathan later unsuccessfully sought an upward adjustment of \$220 million (Francis, et al, 2011). According to a prominent business leader, the Ministry would require approximately \$6 billion over the next three years - roughly five times its current budget - to develop infrastructure and spur economic growth in the region.

The Niger Delta region has remained underdeveloped due to the respective roles of the NDDC and the MNDA, and the people of the region continue to live in abject poverty. It becomes obvious that the Nigerian Government's responses to the development yearnings of the people of the region are not meeting up to their expectations. There have been cases of official corruption, misappropriation of funds, negative politicking, embezzlement, low performance in the various agencies created by the Nigerian state to facilitate development in the Niger Delta region. Despite these Commissions' and Ministry's efforts, the people of the Niger Delta continue to suffer from poverty and underdevelopment. This situation shows that government efforts in the development of the Niger Delta region need to be improved.

Table 1 Special Development Agencies/Ministry created for the Development of the Niger Delta Region, 1961-2008

S/N	Agency	Year Established	Head of State/President	Status
1.	Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB)	1961	Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa	Non- Operational
2.	Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA)	1980	Shehu Shagari	Non- Operational
3.	Presidential Task Force on Niger Delta Development (PTFNDD)	1982	Shehu Shagari	Non- Operational
4.	Oil and Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC)	1992	Ibrahim Babangida	Non- Operational
5.	Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)	2000	Olusegun Obasanjo	Operational
6.	Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA)	2008	Umaru Musa Yar'adua	Operational

Source: Compiled by the researcher (2022).

Table 1 demonstrates that for the development of the Niger Delta region, five agencies and one ministry have been established so far. Only the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA) remain operational, while the rest have ceased to exist.

5. Conclusion

Many attempts have been made in the preceding analysis to establish that the continued poverty, infrastructural decay, unemployment, and other forms of agitation in the Niger Delta region are the result of the government's failure to address the region's underdevelopment issues through governance and institutional framework. It is clear that the Nigerian government's response to the development of the Niger Delta region is to create special agencies dedicated to the region's development. However, more action needs to be taken by the Nigerian state to ensure that the Niger Delta region is developed as it appears that the creation of special developmental agencies by the government as a way of state response to the developmental yearnings of the people of the Niger Delta region is not adequate. This is because the developmental reasons behind the creation of these special agencies by the Nigerian state have not largely been achieved. And so, the paper concludes that the special development agencies created to solve developmental challenges in the Niger Delta region are a mere cosmetic solution to the deep-rooted issue of sustainable development of the Niger Delta region.

Way Forward

The solution to the Niger Delta's development difficulties does not lie in the creation of new agencies, ministries, or institutions in general; rather, the government must acquire the correct attitude and willpower to act appropriately. This became necessary and crucial since there have been so many developmental agencies established to develop the Niger Delta region, but none has been able to fulfil this task properly. As a result, the Nigerian Government must be earnest in its efforts to develop the Niger Delta region quickly. The Nigerian Government must be honest in paying close attention to the actions of the NDDC and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs. The government, as well as those designated to supervise the activities of the NDDC and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, should adopt a new mentality. The government must radically reposition the NDDC for it to operate better and fulfil its goal. Finally, the Nigerian Government should be willing and committed to providing the finances required to accelerate the region's development.

Compliance with ethical standards

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There is no conflict of interest among the authors.

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