



Oil Exploitation, Environmental Issues and Resource Curse in a Post-Colonial Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: The Unending Search for Peace, 1960-2009

Chidiobi, Okechukwu Christian

Department of General Studies, Federal Polytechnic Ohodo
Enugu state, Nigeria

Juliet Chinenye Ibekwe

Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Faculty of Environmental sciences, University of Nigeria Nnsuka (UNN)
Enugu Campus, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The issues surrounding the conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria can never be over-flogged. It is no doubt that so much have been written in this regard, with each paper proffering a possible solution or adding to the numerous suggestions and recommendations already on ground. In spite of these however, the quest for peace has remained elusive or unending because the government and her counterpart multinational oil companies seem not to have really made a genuine or sincere efforts in addressing the myriad of teething issues that have generated conflict in the region ever since the discovery and exploitation of oil. There is therefore the need for a lasting peace and permanent solutions to all the areas of conflicts. If not the situation of the region shall continue to attract comments from scholars, relevant authorities, public affairs commentators, social analysts and concerned or interested opinions. It is thus on this note that this paper comes in handy as modest but useful contribution of the authors to the litany of extant literatures on the lingering conflicts in the region. It is worthy of note that the post-colonial Niger Delta region has never known peace ever since the oil exploitation began in commercial quantity in 1950. The Hobbesian state has almost become the order of the day. Despite the fact that over 90% of the country's revenue (GDP) is being generated by oil exploitation from the region, the greater majority of the people are still languishing in squalor, in addition to large scale unemployment as well as lack of basic life infrastructural facilities. These obvious denials in the midst of abundance resources coupled with environmental related issues of degradations have been fundamental causes of conflict between the people and the government on one hand, and between the people and the oil extracting companies on the other hand. In view of this ugly development, it is therefore apparent that the gift of oil is now more like a curse than the earlier perceived blessings to the people of the Niger Delta. This study thus examined all the series of failed efforts made by Nigerian government to broker a lasting peace in the region starting from 1960 when the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) was established through the recommendation of Sir Willinik Commision of 1957, down to the "Amnesty Program" granted by late president Umar Musa Yar'Adua's administration in 2009 which led to a large number of the militants numbering 26,808 surrendering their

arms to the government in return for technical training and monthly payment of stipends. In spite of the temporal reprieve, there was a resurgence of new militants groups in 2016 seven years down the line. Thus, there is yet to be a definite solution to the conflict in the region as there are still clamour for resource control and occasional threats of militancy activities. In view of this, this paper in addition to many other suggestions already on ground in this respect, also made a number of some useful recommendations that if adopted can bring about lasting peace in the Niger-Delta region.

Functional Words: Oil Exploitation, Environment, Peace-Conflict, Niger-Delta-Region and Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of the twentieth century (20thC), the discipline of international relations (IR) witnessed an emergence of disciplinary diversification. The realist state-centric model and the liberal approach which were the major theories at that time became inadequate to expound the myriad of the global issues in the discipline. As the traditional theories (Realism and Idealism) witnessed this trend, emphasis shifted to other seminal and topical areas like: feminism or gender studies; environmental studies or ecology; behaviouralism and other emergent fields within the discipline. Among these pertinent challenges confronting the world at that time, were the environmental related issues which were at the front burner of international discourse.

Today, the environmental concerns remains one of the major focuses of national and international contemporary scholarship and the trend is bound to persist far into the future. This is because of inextricable relationship between man and his environment as well as the unpleasant connection/nexus between environment, peace and conflict... (Phil-Eze, 2009:389). It is perhaps believed that the increased concern for the protection and preservation of the environment is partly due to the sudden realization of the grave danger posed to the future of our globes by human activities. Thus, if the environment is not preserved, it can become uninhabitable thereby making it impossible for humans continued existence. According to Orange (2013;117), this increased danger of global destruction by human activities have manifested in several environmental disasters... This disastrous consequences of man's legitimate and most times reckless or negligence attitudes against our world have been identified by Okonkwo and Eboatu (1999:iv) to include "acid rain, ozone layer depletion, deforestation & desertification, toxic chemicals, and so on". Others are excessive rainfall pattern, high insulation/radiation, health hazards, environmental pollution, burning, to name but a few

The coming of green scholarship (green revolution) however did a lot to transform man's thinking, orientation and attitudes towards his environment. The need for man to improve his environment thus garnered and attracted more academic acceptance—hence the unbridled quest for biodiversity. This development has also led to a number of world summit, conference and session on the environment in the recent years. In the words of Enuke (2019), "in the concerted bid to rid the globe of environmental dangers and insecurity, there had been international environmental conferences, international environmental organizations and the rest". And these included Stockholm conference 1972; the Nairobi Declaration 1982; the

Montreal Conference, Canada 1987; The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 1992; a Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly held from 23-28 June 1997 in New York; the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development held in 2002. There were also the Kyoto protocol 1997 and the then Copenhagen conference held in Denmark, between 7th - 19th December, 2009. With all these conscious efforts towards combating the menace, the study of environment has seen a lot of breakthroughs, and within the context of global theorizing in international relations (IR), its discourse dominates debates among IR scholars.

Similarly, man's activity (friendly and unfriendly) towards the environment attracted particular attention. For man's quest to conquer his environment for survival, his toil to make out a living or livelihood in his neighborhood occasioned unsustainable outcomes at the expense of scientific and technological innovation. Today, the environmental challenges bedeviling and plaguing Niger Delta region of Nigeria is of much serious global-environmental concern as it is to Nigeria. It is an example of environmental hazards and seriously so. The discovery of oil since the 1950's and its subsequent exploration within that environmental region Niger-Delta has amounted to no less serious puzzle and conundrum for the Nigerian state on one hand and then to scholars of conflict resolution at the other hand. The unwholesome activities of major or all the multinational oil companies (MNC's) have provoked a cocktail of violence, militant activities and what is more, parallel militant pressure groups such as the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger Delta Greek Warriors (NDGW), Redemption Fighters Coalition Group (RFCG), Niger Delta Republic Seekers (NDRS), Adaka-Boro Avengers (ABV) and several other groups have sprung up in such manner that Hobbesian State seems to be the order of the day or better still, the norm rather than exception. Thus it is suffice to say that oil exploitation in the Niger Delta region has for a very long time now led to environmental related issues like ecological degradation, oil spillage, social disconnection, destruction of peoples' means of livelihood, health related hazards and so forth. There have also been cases of marginalization, alarming unemployment, lack of basic social amenities / infrastructure as well as repressive, suppressive and oppressive constitutional and legal framework which makes the demand for change in the status quo or resource control by the people almost impossible. The consequences of all the above challenges is the environmental conflict which has manifested in forms of political, social, economic, ethnic, religious and territorial conflicts as we have seen it in the region today. Nwosu (2009:548) aptly captured the problem when he stated that, "the problems of the people of the Niger Delta are traceable to economic deprivation, oil exploration and production activities that impact negatively on the lives of the people. Similarly, Okorie (2018:5-11) noted that:

The current wave of conflict... is a means of alerting the world of the many years of injustice, exploitation, marginalization and underdevelopment of the Niger Delta Region. According to him, the apparent negligence and underdevelopment of the region have always been explained with limp reasons. The oil companies claim not to be responsible by virtue of the fact that they work for Nigeria government and as a matter of fact pay royalty to the government. The federal government on its own blames the ministries constituted by it for inability to tackle the problems of the region while the ministries on the other hand, blame youths for disrupting projects.

In summary, the conflict in Niger Delta Region are of two dimensions; One, it is environmentally induced due to the effects of exploitation activities of oil companies. Two, it is predicated on the absence of positive peace or lack of structural justice and blatant shortchange of the people in their own God-given resources.

Conceptual Frame work

This section of the paper attempts to examine some relevant concepts with respect to the Niger Delta question in Nigeria.

The Concept of Environment

There are many varied definitions of the concept “environment” which depends on the writer’s opinion of the subject. In the words of Phil-Eze (2009:390), the term “environment”, has been defined by many scholars which include but not limited Sada (1998); Miller (1991); Ogunlakin (1991); Orogwu (1994); Nkwoede (2001) as well as Aguwa and Ehiodo (2004:153). All these definitions according to him are just an attempt to capture the full meaning and special interest of the scholars. He however observed that these variable sources of definitions have helped in no small measure to confuse students about its precise meaning. To Orogwu (1994); Ezeani (2006) among others categorized the concepts of environment into biophysical, natural, social, built, health and work place environment. To this end, environment could also include legal, market, academics, banking environment, to name but a few. In view of this, Oranye (2003:19) however, noted that all the categories of the environment of human beings can be dichotomized into two namely: the physical (natural) and social environment. But for the purpose of this academic discourse, physical environment therefore remains to be our focus here.

Physical environment in the opinions of Macionis and Plummer quoted in Enuka (2019:59), refers to the earth’s surface and atmosphere including all the living organisms as well as the air, water, soil and other resources necessary to sustain life. Corroborating this view, Obasiet. al., (1997:66), see it as consisting of natural features such as land, weather, climate, vegetation, rivers, seas, oceans, hills or mountains, temperature, natural resources and so on. To them, these are the bases of life from where all living organisms obtain their living. In this study, the environment or better still physical environment is simply viewed to include all the various forms of habitats which living organisms are found and which to an extent determines their continual survival. Thus, the destruction or degradation of the physical environment by extractive activities of the oil companies in the Niger Delta has been observed to be one of the major sources of the lingering conflict in the region.

The Concept of Conflict

Daleep Singh (1997) observed that there is no simple definition of conflict. Thus Enuka (2015:8) noted that students of conflict have divergent interpretations of what conflict really is, just as there is no common acceptance or unanimity on the theory of origin and cause of conflict. According to Phil-Eze (2009:392), the definition of conflict in most cases reflects the academic background of the researcher and it is for this reason, that many scholars... from diverse disciplines have defined conflict with varying inclinations, meanings and interpretations.

Etymologically speaking, the term “conflict” is of Latin origin or verb “confligere” meaning “to clash”, “to throw”, or “strike together”, to collide”, “to engage in conflict” as well as “a battle” or

“struggle”, “contentions”, “controversy” or “quarrel” (Schid, 2000: 12; Albert, 2001:1; Euka, 2003; Nzeakor& and Osondu, 2013:368; Ohajanwa, 2011; Anthony & Ohajanwa, 2016:194 and Euka, 2015:8). In a closely related vein, Opara, GbengaAjileye and Eluchie (2014:9) defined it as an armed battle, fighting, a war and a struggle between opposing principles or aims, a clash of feelings or interests, to be at variance, clash, to struggle. Conflict can therefore be seen as manifestation of hostile attitude in the face of conflicting interests between individuals, groups or states (Onu, 2009:84). These conflicting interests according to Onu can be over resources, Identity, power, status or values.

To Lewis Cosser quoted in (Osumah, 2018;Nyom, Ikpilaka and Ugbegili, 2021:140) conflicts is viewed as a struggle between opponents over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources... this according to this study is the case between the Niger-Delta people and the Federal Government of Nigeria.

In this paper, the thought of Mbaisi (2012:156) is adopted when he noted that conflict has an ontological basis in human needs, and that it is the denial which causes violent conflict, or causes solvable differences to degenerate into violence or armed conflict. In agreement to this submission, Osaze(2001), also define conflict with emphasis on elements of marginalization which to him situates a condition where a class or group of people are not getting their fair share from the issues in question or where equity has not prevail. This paper therefore equally see conflict as arising from marginalization, injustice, lack of fair treatment and unequal distribution of resources and the denial of one's or group share from a common or collective goods.

It is however, this very denial, marginalization, injustice or economic deprivation that has been the bane of the perennial conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria since the discovery of crude oil deposit in commercial quantity.

The Concepts of Environmental Degradation and Environmental Conflict

Environmental conflict in the words of Phil-Eze (2009:394) is conflict induced by environmental degradation which manifest as political, social, economic, ethnic or religious, territorial conflict. It is a conflict over resource use, resource control, resource allocation or national interest in which the physical structures or the two parties to the conflict fail to respect one another, observe good judgment in the exploitation, control or development of environmental based activity. Just as the name implies, environmental degradation on the other hand is the destruction of the environment and making it uninhabitable for human beings and other living organisms as a result of man's reckless and negligent attitude. To Phil-Eze, the factors that contribute to environmental degradation and subsequently to environmental conflict in Nigeria particularly in the Niger Delta region include climate, water, flooding, soil erosion, mineral and non-renewable resources, renewable natural resources, mining, agricultural practices, waste disposal, industrial activities... Thus, the environmental conflict as witnesses in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is primarily induced by the exploitative and extractive activities of the oil companies operating in the region.

The Concept of Peace

Peace in the opinions of Ikejiani-Clark and Ani (2009:3) is one of humanity's highest values and there are many definitions of what peace is. Thus, the Animists, Christians or Muslims as well

as the Pacifist, Socialist, Democrats, Fascists and Theorists of International Relations would view the concept of peace differently. Peace according to Akakuru(2014:39) can therefore be defined as the other side of conflict that represents harmony and reflects a mutually satisfying relationship; a product of individual, group and state interaction at the many levels of social, political and economic life. To Francis (2006:17), it is generally defined as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence, and about peaceful coexistence. He added that it is primarily concerned with creating and maintaining a just order in the society and the resolution of conflict by non-violent means. Wikipedia (2014), see peace as an occurrence of harmony characterized by lack of violence, conflict behaviours and freedom from fear of violence. It is sustained amicable relationship between political organization and groups; a positive and constructive state of affairs, not just the absence of war (Opara, Gbenga-Ajileye and Eluchie, 2014:123).

This paper would however view peace as the harmonious existence of individual members of social groups that is devoid of acrimonies, disputes, quarrels and other ill-feelings and unpleasant dispositions associated with man's interactions with his fellow man. But for the purpose of this study, the view of Johan Galtung (1990) on the concept of peace is most ideal. Thus Galtung see peace as the absence of unjust structure such as poverty, unemployment, police brutality, lack of equity, fairness, justice as well as economic deprivation, marginalization and so on. These according to him refer to positive peace. It is therefore the existence of these anomalies (indirect violence) according to our studies that have contributed to the conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria today.

Theoretical Framework

The environmental issues in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, its attendant conflict as well as the perennial search for elusive or unending peace can be expounded in many sound academic theories like the relative-deprivation theory. But for the purpose of this paper, attempt is made to discourse the problems with another viable theory known as green theory environmental or ecological studies

Green Theory

The environment is indeed nature's kind gift ever to mankind. The first contact manmade was with his environment and no man was born outside environment. The question of preserving the ecosystem dominated the green thinking among scholars hence, the emergence of green theory. With this, "environmental concerns have influenced international relations (IR) theory (Dunne et al 2007:247). This green-theory, a theory in (IR), according to Dunne et al 2007:248) became so crucial by the 1970s owing to sustained awareness towards the "escalation in trans-boundary ecological problems".

The environmental question dominates debate today because the environment is a good. If the environment is maximize positively, it gives positive results to all the global actors, but if the environment is undermined, then a global problem has been created not for the polluting or degrading nation but for all global actors. Realizing this, Henry Nau (2009:460) had averred thus: "The world has many actors but only one stage". This stage to him is the environment, a collective good seen as "indivisible" and "non-appropriable".

Many nations today in order to attain sustainable development tend to checkmate their unfriendly environmental acts. Carbon emission which poses a serious threat to the stratospheric ozone layer has witnessed a regime-carbon-tax and the so-called cap and trade policy to regulate climate change.

Conferences on environment in the form of Global Earth Summits are held frequently with a view to tackling environmental challenges. Equally, regimes have been created; non-state actors and environmental regimes like Greenpeace seem to be mounting vigorous campaign for states to follow the path of environmental responsibility. The United Nations Stockholm environmental programme, the Kyoto protocol and even the recent COP Conference in Paris are all platforms for tackling environmental problems. While the Stockholm conference in 1972 remains an eye-opener to the world about the deterioration and degradation of the environment as a result of man's advanced knowledge in science and technology, it was also resolved in Kyoto protocol that developed countries should cut down emissions of greenhouse gases (petroleum, soot, coal, diesel, wood, biogas etc) to an average of 5.2% below ground level by the year 2010 (Umeh, 2008; Ikwuegbu 2013;1-2). For the Protocol to come into existence, about 55 Nations ratified it. At the time of signing this agreement, USA was the largest producer of greenhouse emissions or green gases and it is still believed to be the largest producer even today. European produces 24.4%, Russia 17.4% and Japan 8.8%. However, the US withdrew during the George led Bush administration claiming that the protocol would hurt the US economy (cited in Ikwuegbu, 2013:2).

Recently, the call to de-carbonize the global economy led to the campaign for states to limit the rise in global temperatures to more than 2% beyond pre-industrial levels (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2014: 238).

No matter how one looks at it, the green thinking and theorizing seems to be pushing states towards more areas of global interdependence. This has created what in the words of Nyre and Welch (2011:248) "a situation in which actors or events in different parts of a system affect each other". Many individuals have come to be recognized as the friends of environment. For instance, former Vice-President Al Gore of the US was recognized for the program "live earth". Similarly, former President Barrack Obama received the peace medal for his role towards environmental peace and conservation. The issues of endangered species, global warming and rise in sea levels, drought, famine, greenhouse effect among others are environmental problems humanly induced.

Green revolution or theory is therefore, aimed at correcting this anomaly or problem that has been created through the activities of industrial revolution. It is aimed at preserving and protecting the environment from further degradation emanating from such factors as oil spillage, erosion, deforestation, desertification, carbon emission, aquatic destruction just to name but a few. It promotes a sustainable environment for man's continual survival and healthy living. Therefore, if the environment is not preserved, it can become uninhabitable thereby making it impossible for man's continued existence on earth.

In view of these challenges posed by environmental irresponsibility, why is it that the Nigerian government and the multinational companies have always and increasingly found it difficult to play by the rules in its environment of Niger River Delta coastal region of Nigeria? Why has the

same government found it difficult to tackle gas flaring oil spillage etc? These probing questions beg for an answer. And this is our point of departure to easily understand the task that is set before us, especially the Niger Delta environmental problem.

The Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: An Overview

In making an overview of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, factors such as land, geography, climate, the people, and population need to be considered as we shall see in this segment/section of this article.

The Niger Delta is the delta of the Niger River sitting directly on the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean of Nigeria (Hogan, 2013). The Niger Delta, as now officially defined by the Nigerian government extends over 70,000 km²(72,000 sqms) and this flood plain makes up 7.5% of Nigeria's total land mass. It is the largest wetland and maintains the third largest drainage area in Africa (Nwokike, Nwosu and Duru,2014: 264). Also, it is the wetland region in the Southern part of the present day Nigeria, and one of the best wetlands in the world after Mississippi and Paranatal (Akpan, 2011:4). It is equally renowned as one of the world's ten most important wetland and coastal marine ecosystems. Corroborating this assertion , Enyinla and Ukpo (2006), noted that the delta region embraced one of the world's largest wetland covering over 60% of African's largest mangrove forest and one of the world's most extensive. The region has clear and distinct aquatic environments which comprises of marine fresh water, ecosystem, extensive freshwater swamp forest in West and Central Africa and manifest an intricate network of rivers, creeks, streams, swamps, braided streams and ox-bow lakes in addition to a stretch of flat and fertile land mass (Onwubiko,2014: 147).

The geographical location of the area which is described as the Niger Delta region of Nigeria lies between 4⁰ and 6⁰ north of the equator and 4⁰ and 8⁰ east of the green which Meridian and comprises of states that have aquatic environment with several ethnic nationalities (Onwbiko,2014:146). Historically and cartographically, it consists of the present-day Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers State respectively. In the year 2000, however, the Obasanjo's regime added six more states in the region. With this development , the Niger Delta is typically considered to be located within nine coastal Southern Nigerian states which includes; all the 6 States of Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Cross-River, and Edo States from the South-South geopolitical zone; one state of Ondo from the South-West geo-political and two states of Abia and Imo from the South-East geo-political zone making it coterminous with all Nigeria's oil-producing states; stretching over 20,000 km² of swamp land in this littoral fringes of the country(Nnamani and Ayogu, 2011:160; <https://en.wikipedia.org.niger...>).

Prior to the discovery of oil in the area, the economy of the oil-producing areas was simple and generally met the need of the people. The area is blessed with a long coastline, extensive brackish and mangrove swamps supporting a wide range of fish species such as Tilapia, Threadfins, Bony tongue fish, Moon fish, Tiger fish, Sea Catfish, Snappers , Crayfish, Sea turtle, Lobsters, Sardines , West African Croakcrs, Mulletts, Mackerels, Razor fish and many others(Abosede, 2010)

In this region also lies Nigeria's over 35 billion barrels of proven oil reserves (Enyinla and Ukpo, 2006), besides an even larger deposits of natural gas. The region also accounts for over 80% of

Nigeria's Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and represents the economic jugular of the country (Afinotan and Ojakorotu, 2009)

Some thirty-one (31) million people of more than 40 different ethnic groups including the Bini, Efik, Esan, Ibibio, Igbo, Annang, Yoruba, Oron, Ijaw, Ogba, Andoni, Ikwerre, Abua/Odual, Itsekiri, Isoko, Urhobo, Ukwuani, Kalabari, Okrika, Ogoni, Epie-Atissa people and Obolo people are among the inhabitants of the political Niger Delta, speaking about 250 different dialects out of over 520 regional languages and dialects that are spoken throughout the country. According to Rogers (2019), language groups spoken in the Niger Delta include the Ijaw languages and Central Delta languages. Edoid languages and Igboid languages are also spoken in peripheral areas.

The Niger Delta is a very densely populated region sometimes called the Oil Rivers because it was once a major producer of palm oil. The area was the British Oil Rivers Protectorate from 1885 until 1893, when it was expanded and became the Niger Coast Protectorate. The Delta is a petroleum rich region and has been the centre of the international controversy pollution and other environmental degradation. The core Niger Delta later became a part of the eastern region of Nigeria, which came into being in 1951 (one of the three regions and later one of the four regions when the mid-western region was created in 1963). The majority of the people of the Niger Delta region where therefore from the colonial Calabar and Ogoja divisions, the present-day Ogoja Annang Ibibio, Oron, Efik, Ijaw, and Ogoni people(<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/niger...>)

This region as presently constituted, transcends three regions of the South-East, South-West and South-South of Nigeria with majority of it at the South-South. It comprises 185 local government councils out of the 774 of them that make up the entity called Nigeria. Its size or landmass covered the area of 112000 square kilometers miles. It is situated at the Bight of Biafra (presently Bight of Benin and Bight of Bonny) side of Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean. It is a mangrove region with creeks and swamps (www.unesco.ng/en/tentativelists/949).

Structurally, it has been a point of debate among scholars on the basis to tell exactly where the Niger Delta is or the areas that make up the region. Oil deposit has been used by some as their basis of delineating while scholars like Akpan (2011: 3) would argue that geographical "particular of the region" is used in demarcating region from other constituent parts of Niger. He went further separating the core Niger Delta region from the rest of the South using Willink's Commission of Enquiry of 1958. On this note, he thus submitted:

To be sure, the original description of the Niger Delta, as given by the Willink's Commission did not include the Igbo-speaking areas of Abia and Imo States. It also did not include the Yoruba area of Ondo State as it is today... (2011:6).

To him, the whole region of the South-South with the exception of Edo state makes up the core Niger Delta but what other areas are, he did not inform us; perhaps, the greater Niger Delta or Oil Niger Delta or peripheral areas.

Oil Exploitation in Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: A Historical Survey

The onset of the colonial rule in Nigeria coincided with the expansion of oil exploration to many areas of the world. The development of the combustion engine in the 1890s (during the period

of Industrial Revolution) opened up a new uses for oil and other local lubricant based products. With the increasing reliance on mechanized industry, Britain's demand for oil outstripped its mediocre supply of shale gas off the north coast of Scotland. In addition, the increase need of the military ships protecting the island during and following World War 1 substantially increased the demand from which the British government concluded that the satisfaction of this demand had to come from other areas of the globe that may potentially hold oil reserves. The first of which to rightly explore where their colonies which Nigeria became part of as a result of Prince Otto Von Bismarck led Berlin Conference in 1884 to 1885 which demarcated African countries among the European Super Powers. Nigeria, being one of those colonies was thus explored first for bitumen, coal and oil (<https://www.stakeholderdemocracy.org>>...)

The prospecting and search for oil in Nigeria actually began in 1903, when the mineral company pioneered the mineralogical study of Nigeria (Akpan, 2011:68). However, this was evoked after the 1914 ordinance which ordered that any oil and mineral under Nigeria soil was rightfully the property of the British crown. So, several explorative ventures occurred between 1903-1935, but it was the joint ventures of Shell and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (now BP), known at that time as the Shell-D'Arcy Exploration Parties (SDEP) that led the way of exploration performing many geological surveys of the Niger Delta and other regions of the Nigeria.

By 1908, it was said that the German company, Nigerian Bitumen Company was granted operation licence. With the coming on board of this firm, the search for bitumen began in the present-day Ondo State. According to Orji (2013:1), the year 1937 witnessed the occurrence of many great events around the world, some comic, some revolutionary, some tragic and others chivalric. He observed that it was in 1973 that Shell-D'Arcy (later Shell Petroleum Development Company) took over from its sister German behemoth. When the company arrived, with the right to prospect oil, it was headquartered at Owerri. Meanwhile, Pa Lawrence Amadioha Oparaku of Amawom village in Owere Nchise, a veteran motor driver was recorded as the first to drive the first batch of Shell workers into Owere (which the British called Owerri), an event that signaled the genesis of a great economic revolution in Nigeria.

On arrival at Owere, Shell-D'Arcy opened a camp, Shell camp, that became the then headquarter, and from there Shell-D'Arcy Exploration Parties conducted geological reconnaissance and geophysical surveys in the owere area and its surrounding or suburbs. These reconnaissance and surveys were abruptly terminated when the Second World War (WWII) broke out in September 3, 1939.

Not long after the war ended in 1945 Shell-D'Arcy returned to Owere to resume its quest for mineral oil. On arrival, it was said that the company (Shell-D'Arcy) quickly made and re-establish contact with two of their native staff namely, Pa Lawrence Amadioha Oparaku of Amawom, Owere Nchise in the present-day Owerri Municipal Council of Imo State and James Igbolekwu of Umukechi, Orji, Urata, in the present Owerri North Local Government of the State Imo. These men quickly reached other indigenous staff and Shell-D'Arcy kicked off again, this time to continue to the distance future (Orji quoted in Orji, 2013:4).

Shell drilled its first exploration well in 1951 at Iho, Ikeduru, 10 miles (16 kilometers) north-east of Owere. The depth was 11,228 feet (3,422meters) but no oil was found. Then Akata 1 was drilled in 1953, in which some oil was found but not in sufficient and commercial quantity. The

results of the appraisal wells drilled in the Owere area were disappointing and consequently further appraisal ruling was terminated (Cited in Orji, 2013:5)

The search for oil by Shell was nearly abandoned, but in January 1956, oil was found by shell in commercial quantity at Oloibiri off Port Harcourt in the Rivers area in the present-day Bayelsa State (Cited in Orji, 2013:5). From 1958, the company shipped its supply abroad thus begun the oil regime in Nigeria.

The discovery of oil in commercial quantity at Oloibiri was soon to be followed by another successful discovery of oil in commercial quantity in Afam, also in the rivers area. These oil finds in the rivers area, off Port Harcourt must have advised the movement of Shell from Owere to Port Harcourt. This movement generated a lot of sentiment and emotions among the Owere people. At a point in time, there were accusations that the movement was politically inspired or motivated by anti-Owere elements in power in the Eastern Nigeria. It must be however, be realized and noted that Shell is a profit-seeking or making company and it is not unlikely that they preferred Port Harcourt to Owere for mainly reasons of economics rather than politics (Orji cited in Orji, 2013:5).

Oil Politics and Resource Curse in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

Following the discovery of oil in 1956 and the consequent shipment in 1958, the Federal Government of Nigeria allowed the indigenous communities to keep a large chunk of the sales of the proceeds because the global oil price was not appealing then. Ironically, the 1970s witnessed a skyrocket in the global oil price and the boom that followed it led to the volte face on the part of the government with greed and famished appetite for oil. Then, came the indigenization decree and appropriation of the lands of the oil-bearing communities through repressive military fiats. Oil in the words of Saro-Wiwa (1995:68) became "the be all and end all" of Nigerian economy. The emerging trend produced the flawed feudal structure of the Nigerian state where the state played the feudal potentate and the oil-bearing communities played the serf, the economic dice was thus cast and the history of Nigeria was not going to be the same again.

When at inception, oil was sold at a low price of relatively £6 per barrel; the interest of the Nigerian state was minimal (Ojiakorotu and Gilbert, 2016). The increased in global consumption would mean exponential increase in net income of the communities controlling the bulk of the resources, this sets the stage for the government to outmaneuver the host communities to such an extent that the alienation showed that the landlords have become serfs in the renter Federation.

The Nigerian State having nationalized Shell moved towards crafting the sharing formula that threw only a crumb to the host communities. Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation NNPC representing the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) retained 60% of the oil share in a joint venture with Shell and other Multi-national Companies (MNCs) (Ojiakorotu and Gilbert, 2016:68). To further strengthen its own position, the successive Nigerian government ran a kind of fragile Federation that made them overseer of oil dealings at the expense of impoverished, pauperized and plagued people of the Niger Delta region. About this flawed and ramshackle arrangement, the activist poet Ken Saro-Wiwa (1995:63) mildly put it as thus:

So long as the structure of the federation is weak, so long shall we continue to stumble from military dictatorship to civilian chaos with the same results: anarchy

On the minority Deltans, Saro-Wiwa wondered why it was that they could not be free by the oppressive and repressive government. To him,

We must end immediately the oppressive of minority ethnic groups and free all Nigerians to express themselves and develop their cultures, their languages and their political system using their resources as they may wish.... Saro-Wiwa (1995:63)

The government seeing that oil was much profitable made itself the regime's umpire with the revenue sharing formulas that not only seem outlandish but permanently alienated the people from their God's given resources. Oil was thus politicized; the attendant negative effect was that far from enjoying the dividends, the host communities were at the receiving end of the government of Gen. Yakubu Gowon (Rtd.) who created the NNPC. The picture painted thus showed that leeway the Nigeria government had in its self meant it explored oil at the expense of human environment and population. The communities (oil bearing ones) seem to suffer from resource curse. Resource curse simply refers to a fail mechanism arrangement in which the resources of a people instead of generating wealth to them leads to a rather ironical suffering. Gas flaring alone done in the region entails that carbon, methane and nitro acid is constantly emitted. Oil waste are equally spilled in the rivers and farmland of these communities as the flaring alone is said to be responsible for emission of carbon of about 2.5 billion standard cubic feet per day (Ojiakorotu and Gilbert, 2016:100)

In addition, the innumerable gas flares which dot the Niger Delta landscape waters produce heat and light on a continuous basis, day and night. Not only can fish and fauna not breed under such conditions, they are also forced to migrate to more suitable waters elsewhere in West African Coast (Nnamani and Ayogu, 2011:171).

Again, the activities of oil production in the Niger Delta region have drastically reduced the quality of river water. For instance, River Basins in the region have been made a dumpsite which is characterized by various non-degradable petro-chemical products from industries thereby impairing the quality of river water (Onwubiko, 2014:162).

Acid rain, and oil spill which have endangered the green lives and aquatic lives leaves much to be desired. The most worrisome of all these was the total displacement of the people who hitherto were predominantly robust farmers from their daily fishing and farming activities. Forty percent or more of the youths who would have been more productively engaged are said to be illiterates or fall below illiterate lines (Ojiakorotu and Gilbert, 2011:100). Thus, Nnamani and Ayogu (2016:173-174) observed that the most debilitating disappointment was with human capital development. According to them, in order to get basic education, the youths due to bad terrain have to leave their homes in the creeks to live with the relatives and friends in the city, most of whom often abuse them by making them servants, beggars, and other forms of child abuse.

They added that when these youths eventually get education to tertiary levels, some of which are even abroad, they are faced by the realities of unemployment in their home lands, and

haven witnessed how the resources of their ancestral lands are exploited and expropriated to develop other communities in other countries of the globe and in parts of the country while their people bear the brunt of this official theft in the form of environmental degradation, political disenfranchisement, social dislocation or displacement and economic desolation. Thus, the people resort to violence, kidnapping/abduction, oil-bunkering, vandalism, sabotages and other form of violence as a means of venting their anger and frustrations.

All this and more happen in a land that has been feeding the Nigerian State with its oil wealth, yet the state and her multinational oil behemoth allies are carting away billions of petro dollars on daily basis. Funny enough, the federal government of Nigeria and their counterpart oil companies seems not to have come to term with the pervasive social expectations from the people.

The irony of this whole trend is so worrisome. The fact remains that Nigeria after giving numerous extenuating reasons of factors and promising to improve the condition of living of the people, this has yet to fare well. The challenge of economic diversification was much telling of the fact the government has not been able to broaden its economic base. Hence, the argument that oil was “the be all and end all” hold sway after all. Nigeria herself in spite of her oil boom and windfall histories has the mass of its population of over (one hundred and seventy) millions poor by over 70%. Official and high profile public corruption among politicians and retired military generals who own vast of the oil wells has remained endemic from the oil days still date. The question to ask remains; at which point will the Nigerian government quit politics of brinkmanship with her Delta population and make real her promises of developing the area or addressing the perennial and pertinent issues that have so far led to conflict in the region?

From the above account, it is good to note that oil revenue allocation has been the subject of much contention even before Nigeria fully gained its independence in 1960. Allocations have varied from as much as 50%, owing to the first republic high degree of regional autonomy, and as low as 10% during the military dictatorships and then to the present level of 13% instituted by the Obasanjo’s regime of the 5th Republic in 1999. State allocations are therefore based on 5 criteria; equality (equal shares per states); population, social development, land mass and revenue generation. The derivation formula on the other hands refers to the percentage of the revenue oil-producing states retain from taxes on oil and other natural resources produced in the state ([https://en.m.wikipedia.org>wiki>Niger....](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niger))

Below is a tabular representation of oil revenue sharing formula in Nigeria from 1985–2001)
Oil Revenue Sharing Formula in Nigeria, 1985 – 2001

Years	Federal	State	Local	Special Project	Derivation Formula
1985	40%	60%	0%	0%	50%
1968	80%	20%	0%	0%	10%
1977	75%	22%	3%	0%	10%
1982	55%	32%	10%	2,5%	10%
1989	50%	24%	15%	11%	10%
1995	48.5%	24%	20%	7.5%	13%
2001	48,5%	24%	20%	7.5%	13%

Source: World Bank Report

Agitation and Violence in the Niger Delta, the Ogoni Struggle

It was the sage Chinua Achebe who reminded us that he who throws someone at the mud must also remain at the mud with him if the person who threw the other had in mind of keeping his victim there. With the Nigeria and Niger Delta case, it is analogous to refer to that saying. The development that will follow as a response from the Niger Delta people was a corresponding thorn in the Nigerian flesh from non – violent mass based movement to violent movement by some armed militant non–state actors with different appellations and goals.

Before we go further, let us understand in full what violence is all about. We shall therefore look at the work of Fanon (2004:4). Fanon's understanding of violence was never premised on anything negative. To him, violence is a response to social injustice or unacceptable norm. Of the government's recourse to violence, Fanon (2004:4) has this to say:

We have seen how the government's agent uses a language of pure violence. The agent does not alleviate oppression or mask domination. He displays and demonstrates them with clear conscience of the law enforcers, and brings violence into the homes and mind of the colonized subject.

Nothing could be truer of the Nigerian government with regards to the Niger Delta. It is equally incumbent upon the "colonized" or dominated to act violently to keep the colonizing or alien power at bay.

Thus, the first post-colonial armed insurrection or uprising against the Nigerian state by the Niger Delta people was led by late major Isaac Adaka Boro on February 23 1966 when he and his compatriots or (countrymen) declared the secession of the Niger Delta Republic. In his words, he stated as thus:

Today is a great day, not only in our lives but also in the history of the Niger Delta. Perhaps, it will be the greatest day for a very long time. This is not because we are to demonstrate to the world what and how we fell about oppression. Remember your 70 -year – old grandmother who still farms before she cats; remember also your poverty stricken people; remember, too your petroleum which is vein pumped out daily from your vein; and then fight for your freedom (Oriola,, 2016: 49-50; Isaac Adaka Boro-available in <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac...>)

In the said struggle for secession, Boro and his comrades (Kinsmen) gallantly fought the federal forces for 12 days but were eventually routed and overpowered by the far superior federal fire power (Oriola, 2016: 49 -80). According to International Crisis Group (2006a:4) " The 5 days revolution or insurrection was largely symbolic but was short-lived" Boro challenged the exploitation and economic deprivation of the region as the resources according to him, benefited mainly the federal government of Nigeria and Eastern region in particular with capital in Enugu. He believed that the people of the area (The Ogonis or the then Niger Delta) deserved a larger chunks of the proceeds of the oil wealth. He therefore founded the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), an armed militia with members consisting mainly of his fellow Ijaw ethnic group.

This event was later followed by the Ogoni uprising of the 1990's championed by the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) under the leadership of late Ken Saro-Wiwa. It is said to be the beginning of the modern day Niger Delta struggle for resources control and

sustainable management of the Delta ecology (Omotola, 2006:13). The Ogoni struggle against the pollution of their environment by the oil companies, especially the Shell B.P operating in Ogoni land, their demand for payment of royalties for oil exploited, and reparation for the degradation of their environment, brought the people of Ogoni to a clash with the Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of late General Sani Abacha. The interest of the Nigerian government was to defend the expatriate oil companies, and to save the flow of the country's oil business from disruption. In order to press their demand through, against the obvious maltreatment by the oil companies and the military government of General Sani Abacha, the MOSOP was formed.

The movement which was led by Kenule Saro-Wiwa; led the Ogoni people to demand for self-determination on the basis of injustice inherent in the highly centralized Nigerian federation, which uses resources from oil producing communities to develop other areas to the neglect of the oil producing host communities (Enuka, 2019:75)

According to Adeoti (2009:123) cited in (Enuka 2019:76), the demand of the Ogoni oil producing communities led by Saro-Wiwa,

...Hinged on the fundamental issues: the need for social justice, for minorities, equity in power sharing in Nigeria, compensation for environmental degradation and the restoration of the environmental, payment of the economic rents to oil producing area as is the practice in civilized areas of the world, respect for human dignity and self-actualization.

The Ogoni movement in a bid to ensure fair distribution of the common wealth under the leadership of Kenule Saro-Wiwa, issued the "Ogoni Bill of Rights", which calls on government to recognized the people's rights to control their wealth and maintain their autonomous existence and rights to self-determination. Kenule Saro-Wiwa went further to highlight his belief in mutual respect for all other ethnic groups by the following words issued along the Ogoni bill of rights:

We make the above demand in the knowledge that it does not deny any other group in the Nigerian federation their rights and that it can only be conducive to peace, justice and fair play and hence stability and progress in the Nigerian nation (Saro-Wiwa, 1995:69)

Sequel to the issuance or declaration of the Ogoni bill of rights, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) was born. The MOSOP later acted as the *raison d'etre* of the Ogoni struggle under the platform of MOSOP, Saro-Wiwa mobilized the activities of Ogoni nation and gave it internationalization. In addition to his writings, the diminutive Ken aligns the Ogoni agitation and suffering with various international groups. The Ogoni question was to be known within various circles like Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), United Nations Working Groups or Special Conference on Indigenous Population (Saro-Wiwa, 1995:93). Faseke (2009) equally noted that the struggle of MOSOP or Ogoni people under Ken - Saro -Wiwa was not only limited to Nigeria, but was externalized to such organizations like... United States of America (USA)...the London Rainforest Group... With time activities of the group reached Amnesty International and Greenpeace. Saro-Wiwa has rested his case arguing that Ogoni, in spite of its numerous oil deposits which the Nigerian State has appropriated to itself, still reeks of sulphur and contaminated or toxic waste from major oil companies. Saro-

Wiwa's anger was hinged on the fact that their accommodation to Shell Company led to ecological disaster and near annihilation of the Ogoni people.

The year 1993, was the climax of the whole issues. Ogoni was celebrating its day and had issued a stop-work warning to Shell BP, in its manner, the later did not comply. The masses protested and picketed the Shell complex, then Shell had to call security operatives, one person was as a result killed in the ensuing violence and Shell was made a persona non-grata in Ogoni forcing Shell's operation to a halt. After the famous Ogoni day protest in which some 300,000 persons participated, there was a growing discontent among the Ogonis and within its rank and file. The rumors was that four traditional chief had become accomplice to Shell and government's complicity. They have taken sides and sold out the Ogoni project. These four Chiefs included Mr Albert Badey and Chief Edward Kobani who were murdered along other two at Giokoo, Ogoni. Abacha's government summarily arrested Ken and eight others. Regardless of mounting and growing international pressure, Abacha's governments tried them in a military tribunal, a case that was neither subject nor open to any repeal. On the 31st October however, the eight men together with Ken who would later become known as the 'Ogoni nine' were handed a death sentence by Abacha's tribunal. On the 10th of November 1995, Ken and eight others were executed in cold blood. The world, including the common wealth of Nations recoiled at the gruesome and dastard act by the Nigerian State. The gory picture was perhaps captured well by Karl Maier (2000:109) who thus roared:

...Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists, with their legs bound in chain were taken to the gallows at the main Port-Harcourt jail. Several hours later, they were hanged...The bodies were buried in an un-marked grave and sprinkled with lye to accelerate decomposition.

This witnessed wide spread condemnation, thus Nigeria became a pariah state being banished by the common wealth of Nations. Many nations including Mandela's of South Africa severed diplomatic ties /relations with Abacha's of Nigeria.

Today, the Niger Delta region has known no relative peace. Towards the tail end of 20th century, a sweeping change came. There was the emergence of several or panoply of armed militant or pressure groups that posed serious threats to Nigerian unity and as well as economic well being. This according to Phil-Eze (2003:162-176) has led to kidnapping (hostage-taking/abduction) of foreign oil workers for ransom and pipeline vandalization or sabotage. In the same vein, Omeje (2007:44-49), saw oil theft /bunkering and sometime blow-up or bombing of oil installations as the consequences of the emergence of these groups and many other insurgent activities. Thus, Phil-Eze (2009: 400) highlighted the increasing militarization of the struggle of the people of the region. Hamilton et al (2004) noted that violence in the Niger Delta alone is estimated to have killed about 1000 persons per a year between 1999 and 2004 and the trend is on the increase. In view of all these, violence agitation or struggle is now a norm rather than exception.

However, the emerging groups and movements in the region are distinct from MOSOP as led by late Ken Saro-Wiwa with regards to the use of brute force. The people particularly the youth of the region have resorted to the old violent approach championed by late major Isaac Adaka Boro in the 60's. With the demise of Saro-Wiwa, it became glaring that non-violence as instrument of agitation has failed. The people particularly the youths have resorted and went

back to the violent old approach championed by late Isaac Adaka Boro in the 1960's. The death of the tyrant Abacha led to the match towards democratization. Many violent movements and even cult groups emerged at the region. They are many of such groups but a few here will suffice for our analysis. This included: Movement for the Survival of Izon Nationality in the Niger Delta (MOSIEND), Niger Delta Freedom Fighters (NDFF), the Membutu Boys, Adaka Boro Avengers, Egbesu Mightier Fraternity,, Asawana Deadly Force of Niger Delta, the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) led by Alhaji Mujahid Asari Dokubo, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) led by Henry Okah and many other including their militant armed or cult groups such as the popular "Dey-Gbam" and "Dey-Well" which operates in the present day River State especially in places like Ohaji / Egbema in both River and Imo State respectively (Ojiakorotu and Gilbert, 2016:52). The major trouble among the inter-cult groups is the struggle for supremacy over which cult group to be negotiating on behalf of the communities with the federal government and their counterpart oil companies. For instance, MEND through collaborations with other loose groups once attempted to become an umbrella organization for the coordination of agitations by the people of the Niger Delta ([https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niger...](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niger_Delta))

Today's militant movement in the region may be loosely connected and speak discordant language, yet they share in increasingly common goal: resources control and better environmental management (Nnamani and Ayogu, 2011:177)

However, the Nigerian government has not been silent to the crises in the Niger Delta as they have been known to have adopted the use of stick diplomacy. In other words, state repression and violence are prominent strategy deployed by the federal government most especially the military regimes and specifically General Sani Abacha in quelling the uprising in the region. Such repressive act often involve the drafting of mobile police and armed forces to the region with the mandate to put such insurrections under control using every available options to facilitate the smooth operations of the oil companies. Thus, there was the major Okuntimos dreaded internal task force and the most dastardly operation Hakuri 2 formation against the Ogoni and the Odi people respectively. Specific instances of state repressions against the communities include: Egbema, Crises (1989: 91), Oburu violence (1989), Umuechem Massacre (Nov.1990) Bonny Tragedy

(1992), Egi – Obaji Mayhem (1994), Tai – Bara (Ogoni), Ubima tragedy (1995), Kaima Declaration Massacre (1998) Odi Massacre (1999), among many others (Ovwasa, 1999:94).

Pacification and Conciliating Attempts: The Peace Question

The various past administrations in the Nigerian State have all in the past made several attempts towards solving and addressing the Niger Delta conflict (problem/question). It begun as minority questions, then resource allocation and control and then to amnesty even to the recent Ogoni clean-up under the leadership of President Muhammad Buhari. Though in the past, the process may look a wishy-washy idealism, but if the necessary measures are taken, there can be calm and co-existence of the MNCs, the Federal Government and the Local Indigenous People at the same time.

It can therefore be noted that the peace in the Niger Delta first came up during the 1957 constitutional conference in London when the colonial office headed by the Colonial Secretary

Sir Lennox-Boyd appointed what is called Minorities Commission chaired by Sir Willink “to enquire into the fears of the minorities and suggest ways of allaying them” (Okeke and Osuagwu, 2012:26). Thus, one of the main recommendation according to the Minorities Commission of Enquiry Report (1958:209) cited in Vickers (210:172) was that a special development areas be established for the development of areas like the Niger Delta, where due to the terrain, infrastructural development had proceeded relatively slowly. It was based on the recommendations of the commission that the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) was set up in 1960 (www.boellinigeria.org/document/Niger-Delta).

Throughout the troubled period of the Niger Delta struggle to the present day, the Federal Government of Nigeria did the necessary things to ensure that there is mutual trust between the communities and the International Oil Companies (IOCs). Though these attempts were for the most times self-defeating, certain aspects of them had good proposal to achieving peace or taming the problem no matter how hollow they are or the lack of political will to enforce them. We shall look at them thus;

- i. 1960 – 1966 Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB)
- ii. 1972 – 1994 Niger Delta River Basin Authority (NDRBA)
- iii. 1992 – 1999 Oil and Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC)
- iv. 1998 – Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF), Popoola Committee Review
- v. 2000 – Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)
- vi. 2008 – Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs
- vii. 2009 – Amnesty Programme to Militants (Ojiakorotu and Gilberts, 2016: p. 93)

In addition to all these process to peace in the Niger Delta mentioned above, there was the recent clean-up exercise of the Ogoni, an attempt to follow the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) report on the Niger Delta region. From the days of Cross-River, Ogoja State agitation to Adaka Boro and the Saro-Wiwa to the present day MEND and some other groups even the ragtag ones. The state has designed one model or the other to tackle the problem of Niger Delta or minority question in whatever guise or however so defined. The same agitation that led to OMPADEC was not totally different from those that led to the creation and passage of the Niger Delta Development Bill. However, the one that seemed to have had the best good will even though it was later high-jacked was the Yar'Adua Amnesty Program. Launched in 2009 to offer stipend, and job trainings to the former militants/freedom fighters who agreed to lay down their arms unconditionally (Smith, 2015:73). The irony of the program is seen in the self-fulfilling words of Mike Smith who argue that though the amnesty helped in returning oil production to the normal level of the pre-amnesty line. The major fear seems to be that the production or supply may cut or stop once payments are denied the gang leaders and a return to violence is not far-fetched (Smith, 2015:73). The worrisome thing again, was that the leaders and elders of the region tend to make money from the whole project as some of the so-called warlords or ex militants lived off the proceeds of the amnesty deal luxuriantly. May be Achebe was right to warn us that he who throws somebody at the mud must remain there to keep him still at the mud. The Nigerian State has plunged her Niger Delta into the mud of resource control but how long the state herself can remain in the mud is an enigma of its own.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Niger Delta Region of Nigerian has been the theatre of conflict following the discovery of oil in commercial quantities in the region in 1956. Peace has thus eluded the people or the

region which once enjoyed peaceful existence prior to the advent of oil exploration and extraction. The perennial conflict in the region has led to vandalism, sabotage, oil theft, blowing up of oil installation facilities and abductions of oil workers particularly foreign nationals among others. Many of the oil bearing communities have also been enmeshed in intra and inter-communal clashes as a result of power tussles on which group controls the royalties that come to the communities. This issue has given rise to rival cult groups prominent among them are; “Dey –Gbam” and “Dey-Well”. In the midst of all these, the government on their own part has since the emergence of the conflict many years ago made several attempts toward restoring peace in the region/area but to no avail. The most recent of them being the amnesty programme of Yar’Adua’s Administration which eventually failed to broker peace in the region as there were new wave of militancy or insecurity about seven years later.

Thus, for there to be a lasting or enduring peace in the Niger Delta region, the Federal Government of Nigeria must as a matter of imperative exhibit a high level of sincerity and commitment towards addressing every aspect of the issues that have generated conflict in the region over the years. For instance, the clean up exercise embarked upon by the present government of Mohammed Buhari must be sustained and should not be a mere political rhetoric or propaganda. It should be religiously followed even by the subsequent administrations until the entire region is sanitized, purified and cleaned. This will build trust and confidence of the people on the government. Again, there should be provision of job opportunities for the army of unemployed youths in the region particularly graduates and those with requisite technical skills. More so, if basic life amenities or infrastructural facilities like electricity, motor-able roads, portable water, well equipped hospitals, affordable housing schemes among many others are provided, it will go a long way in endearing a lasting solution in that conflict zone. The government should equally realized that employing brute force is never the best strategy in managing crises of this nature as it can only exacerbate the situation. Thus, an approach that would involve all concerned in dialogue where ideas, opinions and thoughts are freely exchange during the process of interaction remained ideal. The Nigerian economy is mono-cultural; revolving majorly around the revenue accrued from exploitation and exportation of crude oil. There is therefore an urgent need to diversify the economic base of the nation where streams of income are generated from different sources. This will help to put an end to the total dependence on oil revenue and may consequently causes the government to review their stance on the issues of resource control as have been demanded by the oil bearing communities. Alternatively, the current federal system which ensures 13% derivation to the region could also be reviewed upwards even up to 40-50%. If the Nigerian government can sincerely implement these recommendations, it can go a large extent to bring about the much needed peace as well as put an end to the lingering conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Reference

Abosede, B. (2010) “ The Impact of Oil Exploitation on the Socio-Economic Life of the Ilaye-Ugbo People of Ondo State, Nigeria” *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*. Vol. 12 No.5, Clarion University of Pennsylvania

Adeoti cited in Enuka, C. (2019), the Common Wealth of Nations: A Study in International Organization, Awka: Giniks Publishers.

Aguwa, A. N. and Ehiodo, C.C. (2004), Citizenship Education Vol. II. Aba: Cheedal Global Print Ltd

- Ajodo–Adebanjoko, A.(2017). “Toward Ending Conflict and Insecurity in the Niger Delta Region: A Collective Non–Violent Approach” Available in <https://reliefweb.int>reprot>towards-en...>(Accessed 13th may, 2020)
- Afinotan , L.A. & Ojakorotu, V. (2009) “ The Niger Delta Crises: Issues Challenges, and Prospective,” *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations. Vol.3, No.5*
- Akakuro, O.C. (2014)”Conflict Resolution in the Church: Women’s Perspective” in Oprah, C. Ajileye, M.B.O, Eluchie, N.E & Oparah, C.F (eds.) *Issues, in peace and Conflict Resolution Studies; A Reader*, Aba: Rauklous Enterprises Nigeria
- Akpan, O. (2011), *The Niger Delta Question and the Peace Plan*, Ibadan : Spectrum Book Ltd.
- Albert, F.O. (2001), *Introduction to Third Party International in Community Conflicts*, Ibadan: John Archers Publishers Limited
- ANEEJ (2004)” Oil Poverty, in Nigeria Delta” African Network for Environmental and Economic Justice. Available in www.boellnigeria.org/document, Niger–Delta. Accessed 28th March, 2020
- Awake cited in Ikwuegbu, C.U. (2013), *Consequences of Global Warning on Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools in Owerri Municipal Council Area of Imo State*. Being a B.Sc. Ed. Project Submitted to Department of Geography (UNN)
- “CRS Report for Congress, Nigeria: Current Issues”, Available in <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>wiki>Niger> Accessed 18th March, 2020.
- Daleep , S. (1997), “ Regional Initiative in Economic Cooperation and Conflict Resolution: A Case Study of ECOWAS” in Volta (1997), *African, India and South–South Cooperation*, India: New Delhi Press
- Dunne et al, T. (2007), *International Relations Theories: Disciplines and Diversity*, Oxford University Press
- Enyinla, P & Ukpo, J. (2006), *Nigeria:The Travesty of Oil and Gas Wealth. Lagos: The Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria.*
- Euka, C. (2003) “ECOWAS and Conflict Management in West Africa: A Case Study of the Liberian Conflict” *Unpublished M.Sc. These Submitted to the Department of Political Science, University of JOS, Nigeria*
- Euka, C. (2015), *Conflict and Peacekeeping in Africa: The West African Peace Initiative, 1990–1997*, Awka: Arise and Shine Press
- Euka, C. (2019) *International Environmental Relations*, Awka: Giniks Publishers.
- Euka, C. (2019). *The Common Wealth of Nations: A Study in International Organization*, Awka: Giniks Publishers
- Faseke Modupeolu (2009), *Nigeria and the Common Wealth: Reflections and Projections*, Ibadan: Macmillan Publishers.
- Fanon, F (2004), *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press Ltd
- Galtung, J. ((1990) “Cultural Violence” *In Journal of Peace Research*, 27:3
- Goldstein, J.S & Pevehouse, J.C. (2014), *International Relations*, California: Pearson Education
- Hamilton, J. Stockman, L., Brown, M. Marshal, G., Muttitt, G., and Nau, H.R. (2004) “The Case for an Oil– Free Future” in www.noneoil.org.
- Hogan, C.M. (2013), “Niger River”, in McGingley, M. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Earth*, Washington DC: National Council for Science and Environmental Available in Niger Delta-Wikipedia at <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>wiki>Niger...> (Accessed 18th March, 2020)
- Ikejiani–Clark, M. and Ani, C. (2009), “The Concept of Peace” in Ikejiani-Clark, M. (ed.), *Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: A Reader*, Ibadan: Spectrum Book Limited Degradation and Environmental Conflict
- Ikwuegbu, C. U. (2013), “ Consequences of Global Warming on Teaching and Learning in Secondary School in Owerri Municipal Council Area of Imo State”, *Being a BSc. Ed Project Submitted to the Department of Geographical and Environmental Science Studies, University of Nigeria (UNN)*
- International Crises Group, “ The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigerian’s Delta Unrest”, *ICG Africa Report No 115, 3 August, 2006.*

Isaac Adaka Boro- Wikipedia. Available at <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac...>

Maier, KO. (2000), *This House Has Fallen: Nigeria in Crises*, England: Penguin Books

Macionis and Plummer quoted in Eneka, C. (2019), *International environmental Relations*, Awka: Giniks Publishers

Nau, H.R. (2009), *Perspectives in International Relations*, Washington DC; C.Q. Press

Mbalisi, C.N. (2012) "Threshold of Ethno-Political Twist to Religious Conflict in Nigeria," in *UZU: Journal of History and International Studies (NHIS) Vol. 3 No 1 . Dec. 2012*.

Miller. G. (1991), *Environmental Science: Sustaining the Earth*, California Wand worth Publishing Company

Myom, T., Ikpilakaa, S.A. & Ugbeigili (2021), "Farmers-Herders Conflict and Unemployment Challenges in Benue State 2010-2017", in *Eyenkorin Journal of Arts, Management and Social Sciences, Vol. 1, No. 1*

Nelkon in Ikwuegbu, C.U. (2013), "Consequences of Global Warning on Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools in Owerri Municipal Council Area of Imo State". *A B.Sc. Ed. Project Submitted to the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN)*.

NEST cited in Ikwuegbu, C. U. (2013), "Consequence of Global Warning on Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools in Owerri Municipal Council Area of Imo State". *A B.Sc. Ed Project Submitted to Department of Geography (UNN)*.

Nkwoede, J.O. (2001). "Environmental Protection in Nigeria's Cities: A Critical Assessment of Ebonyi State Environmental Protection Agency (EBSEPA)" in Ezeani, E.O. and Elekwa N.N. (eds.), *Issues in Urbanization and Urban Administration in Nigeria*, Enugu: Jamoe Publishers,

Nkwocha, A. E. and Ohajanwa, S.E. (2016) "Feminity Dynamics in Post-Conflict Context: Nigeria Biafra Civil War Experience of Igbo women", in Okere, T.I. (ed.), *Power in Use and Abuse. Proceeding of the International Symposium Organized by Whelan Research Academy, Owerri, Vol. 2 No. 14*

Nzeakor, N.C. & Osondu, P.A (2013), "Language, A Tool for Conflict Resolution and Nation-Building: *The Nigerian Example*", in Nwadiolor, K.L., Nkamigbo, L. Nweke, C. and Obi, N. (eds.) *The Humanities and Nation-Building*. Awka: Fab Anieh Nig. Ltd.

Nnamani, R.G. & Ayogu, C.N. (2011), " Environmental Degradation, Social Dislocation and Conflict: A Focus on Nigeria's Niger Delta," In Nnadozie, O.U. (ed.), *Social Dynamics of African State: Issues, Problems and Prospects*, Enugu: Louis Chumez Printing Enterprises. (Nig)

Nwosu, I.J.D. (2009), "Marginality and the Niger Delta Crises: Ogoni, Ijaw and Warri Crises in Perspective", in Ikejiani-Clark, M. (ed.), *Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: A Reader*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.

Nwoke, B.E.B., Nwosu, I.E., & Duru, P. (2014), "Impact of Oil Exploitation in Nigeria", In Nwalozie, M.C., Nwoke, B.E.B and Dozie, N.S. (eds.), *History & Philosophy of Science: An integrated Approach Fourth Edition*, Owerri: Milestone Publishers Limited.

Nyre, J.S. & Welch, D. (2011), *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation*, New Delhi: Pearson Education Ltd

Obasi, O.O Erondue, N.A., Ezenwa, B.N. & Ikpe P.C. (1997), *Basic Text in Citizenship Education (Part Two)*, Owerri, Centre for Research and Man-Power Development (REMD)

Ogunlakin, H.U. (1994). *Environmental Degradation and its Consequences*, London: McMillan Publishers

Ohajanwa, S.E. (2011), *Basics of Conflict Resolution*, Owerri: Cinoryz Publishers Ltd

Ojiakorotu, V. and Gilberts, L.D. (eds.) "Checkmating the Resources of Oil Violence in Niger Delta of Nigeria". Available in www.lags.org/Niger-Delta-book.pdf. Accessed on 27th April, 2020.

Omotola, J.S. (2006), " The Next Gulf? Oil Politics, Environmental Apocalypse and Rising Tension in the Niger Delta" *African Centre For The Constructive Resolution of Dispute (ACCORD), Occasional Papers Series. Vol. No. 3*

Omeje, K. (2007). "Oil Conflict and Accumulation Politics in Nigeria" *Reports from African: Population Health, Environmental and Conflict (ECSP) Reports, Journal of Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, Issues 12*.

- Onwubiko. G.O. (2014), "Oil Mining and Environmental Degradation in the Niger-Delta and its effects on the environment, in Oparah, C.C., Gbenga-Ajileye, M.B.O., Eluchie, N.E. & Oparah, C. Chidiebere (eds.), *Issues in Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies: A reader*, Aba: Ranklous Enterprises Nig.
- Onu, G. (2009), "The Methods of Conflict Resolution and Transformation" in Ikejaian – Clerk, M. (ed.) *Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: A Reader*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Okeke, O.E and Osuagwu, C.E. (2012), "The Struggle of the Minorities: From Agitation For More Regions/States to Opposition to Secession, 1952–1967", in Uzu: *Journal of History & International Studies (UJAHIS)*, Vol. 3, No. 1
- Okonkwo, E.M and Eboatau, A.N. (1999), *Environmental Pollution and Degradation*, Zaria: Onis Excel Creations Ltd.
- Okorie, C.K. (2018), "Crime of Kidnapping in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges," in *Echoes of Praise*, Vol. 52, Praise Centre Ministries Inc, Owerri. 23rd – 25th October, 2008
- Oriola, T.B. (2016) *Criminal Resistance: The Politics of Kidnapping of Oil Workers*, Routledge
- Orogwu, S.O. (1994) *Environmental Abuse in the Contemporary World*, Seminar Report, Nnamdi Azikwe University Awka
- Oranye, N.O. (2003), "Environmental Issues in Human Development", in Obiajulu, A.O (ed.), *Readings in Humanites*, Enugu: John Jacob's Classic Publishers Ltd
- Osaze, B. (2001), "Conflict, Equity and Resource Management" A paper Presented at the National Seminar on Conflict Resolution in Africa, at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution, Abuja, 12th July, 2001
- Ovwasa, L. (1999), "Oil land and Minority Question" in Saliu, H.A. (ed.) *Issues in Contemporary Political Economy of Nigeria*, Ilorin: Sally and Associate
- Phil-Eze P.O (2009). "The Environment, Peace and Conflict in Nigeria" in Ikejiani–Clark, M. (ed.), *Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: A Reader*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited
- Phi-Eze, P.O. (2003). "Oil Pipeline Vandalization: An Investigation of Dimensions of Environmental Politics in a Plural State" *Nigerian Journal of Politics and Administration*, Vol. 1 (3)
- Rogers, B. (2019), *An Atlas of Nigerian Languages (14th ed.)* Cambridge: Kay Williamson Educational Foundation.
- Saro-Wiwa, K. (1995), *A Month and a Day. A Detention Diary*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Sada, P.O. (1988), "Development and The Environment: A Conceptual Framework for Environmental Management" in Sada, P.O. and Odemerho, F.O. (eds.), *Environmental Issues and Management in Nigerian Development*
- Schmid, A. P. (1997), *Thesaurus and Glossary of Early Warning and Conflict Prevention Terms Forum on Early Warning and Early Response*, London
- Umeh, N.C. (2008) "Global Warming, Consequence and Health of Students, its Implication in Teaching and Learning". A Paper Presented at the 10th Anniversary (1998–2008) of Madonna Model Secondary School, Works Layout, Owerri. 23rd-25th October, 2008
- Vickers, M. (2010), *A Nation Betrayed: Nigeria and the Minorities Commission of 1957*, Trenton, New Jersey: African World Press
- wikipedia. (2014), Peace from Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia. Available in <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/peace>. Accessed 18th March 2020.