



Militancy and Kidnapping in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria; A Recap

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ABSTRACT

The Niger Delta of Nigeria is the largest mangrove Forest in Africa and the chief source of wealth to the Nigeria state. This naturally endowed region has become a hot bed of hostage taking, violence, insurgency, crude oil bunkering and gang war. This paper writes on the causes and effects of militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta region, its implication on Nigeria economy and transnational cooperating in the region. The study adopts the Marxian political economy approach. It relied heavily on primary data. The study reveals that the tensions that rob the region of its peace and stability were the long years of neglect and the people's quest to get a reasonable share of the states resources. The study also examine the role of the Nigeria state in ameliorating the situation. It recommends that current measures at restoring peace and infusing a massive infrastructure in the area should be maintained. Lastly, the provision of life sustaining skills for the youths of the region should be continued. This will enable the youths to survive without recourse to militancy and kidnapping.

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Introduction

The crisis in the Niger Delta Region has metamorphosed into militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta region. However, the problem of militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta region is endemic and requires urgent attention now more than ever. This act of militancy and kidnapping has not only affected Nigeria's business or economic relation but it has also threatened the entire economic system since it targets on oil companies, business corporate, politicians and their relations and targets are also currently on lecturers medical doctors, teachers etc.

This obnoxious act take place on a daily basis in places like Eleme, Port-Harcourt, Bonny, Creeks and other local government areas and villages in Rivers State. It also takes place in Ughelli, Warri, Asaba, Creeks and other Local Government Area's and communities in Delta State.

In Bayelsa it take's place in Yenegoa, Creeks, Local Government Area's and Communities. Also in Akwa Ibom State, it takes place in Uyo, Ikot Ekpene, Eket other Local Government Area's, Creeks and Communities. The same goes on among other Niger Delta State. The issues inherent in the Niger Delta question are self determination, resource control, social and infrastructural development. Others are environmental degradation, social inequalities, fiscal and true federalism etc. The people of Niger Delta region have dialogued with the Nigerian State before and after independence. This forms part of the demands made by the minorities group in Nigeria, including the Niger Delta which was responded to by then colonial government in rather lukewarm manner. This led to the Willinks commission that was set up to look into those demands. And bring measures that will help to ameliorate the problems of the people and

provide a lasting solution. As a result of the failure of dialogue and diplomatic moves made by the people.

Frustrated Niger Deltans becomes extremely aggressive and restive. They (youth) resorted to armed violence, pipeline vandalism, illegal oil bunkering, hostage taking (kidnapping) and other illegal activities as a last and only way to show their grievance. This formed the various violent moves made by the people, especially the youth in actualizing the region's dreams and goals. Militancy and kidnapping therefore, appeared on the scene due to the inability of the people to achieve their aims and objectives through dialogue and diplomacy. It is this unwanted condition of militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta that stimulated this research study to vividly paint out the factors responsible for the emergence of militancy and kidnapping in Niger Delta Region. The study therefore, attributed militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta to long years of negligence of the region by the Nigerian state and transnational (cooperating in the area). Also corrupt politicians, youth leaders and Chiefs in the region contributed to militancy and kidnapping. The war of militancy therefore started moving and spreading in the Niger Delta Region in the early 1980's and 1990's. These increased when declaration were made by the people of the Niger Delta.

Notable among these declarations was the Ogoni Bill of Right of 1990 and others. Due to the fact that the Niger Delta youths are restive and unemployed. The struggle has shifted from its original purpose of self-determination, resource control, social inequalities to personal aggrandizement and gain. In other words, the struggle is no longer for the welfare of the people of the region. This brings in elements of criminality, gang extremism and cultism operating from the original idea behind the struggle.

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This struggle was started by reasonable responsible and purposeful Niger Delta leaders like Isaac Adaka Boro, Nottingham Dick, Ken Saro Wiwa and others whose goal was the total liberation of the Niger Delta people. To worsen the situation of the Niger Delta people, the Nigerian state introduced policies such as, the Nigerian petroleum act of 1969, the pipeline act of 1968, the land use out of 1978 and the on-shore offshore dichotomy act of 2004 to deprive the region their right to self determination and resource control. The challenges evoked by the age long neglect of the Niger Delta region which became a snag to the Nigerian body polity. The dusts and thorny issues it raised have been a bone in the neck of the Nigeria government for several decades. Militancy and kidnapping (in the recent past) made negative headlines in both local and international media portraying Nigeria in a bad light. The Nigeria government later realized that the normal oil exploration activities, the main stay of the Nigerian economy, could no longer continue in the face of militant uprising and warfare in the Niger Delta. The government thus saw the need to take proactive measures in addressing the problems of the region. This study is expected to be stimulated for further studies in this area especially bothering on the objective and research hypothesis.

Statement of the Problem

No doubt, the Niger Delta Region generates about 90% of Nigerian revenue. This revenue and funds derived from the region is used to develop other region and cites outside the Niger Delta region. However, on return to democratic rule in 1999 expectations of Niger Deltans were very high. This was particularly so in the area of true federalism at this point, the Niger Delta question appears to be the most critical component of the National question in Nigeria, this was so because the people in this region strongly believed that democratic rule will give them the golden opportunity to air their views and demand for their rights. This was a mere wishful thinking, the people of the Niger Delta Region never witnessed any positive change. Rather the people are neglected, marginalized, discriminated, oppressed, subjected and exploited. These led to growing issues of lack of significant positive change in the well being of Niger Deltans.

1. There is high rate of militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta region.
2. There is armed violence, pipeline vandalism, illegal oil bunkering leading to disruption of transnationals (operating in the area), operative and other business activities in the region.
3. No adequate compensation from transnational (operating in the area) and lack of basic social amenities in the region.
4. The Niger Delta people also faced or face regular environmental pollution and degradation leading to infertile soil and destruction of water life in the region.
5. There is high rate of unemployment and youths restiveness in the Niger Delta region.

Research Question

The following research questions have been formulated which will guide this study.

1. To what extent can militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta be associated with socioeconomic conditions?
2. To what extent have the Nigerian state helped in the amelioration of militancy and kidnapping.

Objective of the Study

1. To examine whether socio-economic challenges are responsible for militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta region.
2. To examine the role of the Nigerian states in the amelioration of these problems and the way forward.

Scope of the Study

The area of the study is strictly the Niger Delta region. This implies that the research covers the entire Niger Delta. The Niger Delta consist of Nine (9) states. These include Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers State.

The researcher will cover both male and female adult participant in the region.

Historical Background of Militancy and Kidnapping

The history of protests and conflict of acrimony by the Niger Delta people against forced union and exploitation dates back to the period before 1957 when testimonies were made in respect thereof before the Willink commission of inquiry into minority fears

The grave implications of continued conflict in the Niger Delta may be better appreciated against the background of the fact that, from historical experiences, the Nigerian nation and especially the Niger Delta have had a prolonged familiarity with social struggle against colonial rule. The Niger Delta militants are drawing from this experienced in prosecuting the current phase of confrontation with the Nigerian state and trans-nationals like struggle against colonialism, the present phase of militancy and kidnapping has incubated over long periods of unaddressed grievances and disenchantments among communities in the region Afinotan and Ojatorotu 2009:6).

Subsequently, several protests and clamors for justice have been registered to no avail. Characteristically, both militancy and civilian governments have ignored clamors for equitably remedy and forcibly smothered protest through use of overwhelming militancy might and other documented acts of state sanctioned political violence. The existing concept of federation in Nigeria today falls short of prospects in both definition and practice to the extent that it is being practiced as quasi federalism. There has been an overly concentrated control of resources by the federal government. Therefore making its component units (states) including the Niger Delta state to be completely dependent on the federal government for survival. This abnormally continues to generate continual conflicts with indigenous rights, hence, it has become a main cause of conflict in the Niger Delta region especially from dishonourable derivation principles for revenue allocation to the state in its region. The struggles of the Niger Deltans which have assumed that dimensions in our recent history, are explained to be an expression of the people's grievances neglects, marginalization, oppression, exploitation, sub jugations and deprivation by the Nigerian government and its collaborators (trans-nationals) of the people right to equity and justices of their resources.

As Biakpara (2010:3) opined that "what the people of the Niger Delta are asking for is equity and justice and due recognition of their rights as citizens. These issues are contained in the Ogoni Bill of rights, the Kalma Declaration, and similar declaration by other groups in the Niger Delta. Since, the people are insisting on a cessation of destructive oil exploration activities which destroy the Niger Delta ecology and human lives.

Biakpara (2010) reports further that, the Niger Deltans want the abrogation of all laws which dispossesses them of their rights as a federating unit within Nigeria. They want the crisis of poverty in the Niger Delta to be addressed, according to him, although the general poverty index of Nigeria has risen sharply, the worse poverty situation are found in the Niger Delta. The people also want Nigerians government to pay attention to their message and treat them with respect and

equal in the Nigerian Nation. Biakpara 2010 and Mamka 2010 stated that “the situation in the Niger Delta is both curious and is an annoying paradox. The people live in difficult hostile areas surrounded by water, and yet do not have enough water to drink. The Creeks are littered with pipelines bearing petroleum products to other parts of the country, but in the Niger Delta fuel is scarce and expensive. The Niger Deltans have also lamented that, before their very eyes, revenue from crude oil sales is being taken away to provide infrastructure in other parts of the country (beautiful roads in Abuja, skyscrapers and flyovers in Lagos) etc. while many communities in the Niger Delta are cut off from civilization because there are no roads or bridges to get to them”.

Biakpara (2010) also stated that “in another development, the Niger Delta youths in thousand, if not in millions are largely unemployed. The qualified ones among them have struggled with other Nigerians to get position in the oil companies. The oil companies have their head quarters in Lagos and Abuja, not in the Niger Delta, the people feel neglected as illiterates and minorities that can be manipulated. Youths, adults, women and children grow up and die in the region without much hope and change for the better future, while people from other parts of Nigeria, enjoy the benefits that oil wells wealthy brings. Consequently, the militants among them feel they have reached a point where the only choice they find attractive is violence, kidnapping, illegal oil bunkering and pipeline vandalism to drive home their demand for equity, justice and due recognition of their rights as citizens”.

Tell, June 25, (2009:6) asserts that “the precedence was set when in 1966, Isaac Adaka Boro and Nottingham Dick two Ijaw young men, set up the Niger Delta Volunteer Service (NDVS). They were concerned with the rising poverty level of their people and also perceived that the domineering tendencies of the major tribes in Nigeria were to be blamed. It was on the platform of the NDVS that they declared an Independence Niger Delta Republic in February 1966. This first secessionist-bid in the history of Nigeria failed”.

Biakpara (2010) stated that “the passage of Isaac Adaka Boro and his lieutenant Nottingham Dick only marked the beginning of history. Between the late 1980’s and 1990’s Kenule Saro Wiwa led the movement of the survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP) and brought the plight of the people of the Niger Delta to international attention. This led to the Declaration of the Ogoni Bill of Rights. This was followed shortly by the emergence of militant groups and war Lords in the creeks.

By 2007, the situation in the Niger Delta had degenerated into full anarchy. Series of armed young gangs had emerged fighting for the control of oil resources in their localities. These happened in the midst of pure criminality, kidnapping oil bunkering and pipeline vandalism. The militants were armed with superior weapons and very defiant. They issue ultimatums both to government and oil installation and their actions were carried out with little reprisals from government forces (Tell, June 25 2009:64) as Ruben Abati captured the situation.

Biakpara (2010:2) posits that “they attack oil installations, kidnap oil company officials. Seeing that crude oil is stolen openly by state officials, and that a whole ship, bearing oil cargo can disappear from Nigerian shores and the Navy and everyone else could claim ignorance, the militants have also begun to engage in illegal oil bunkering”.

An elder statement and spokesman of the Niger Delta Edwin Kiagbodo clerk corroborated this position when he asserts that

“the boys are fighting for their own survival. They are fighting unemployment, criminal negligence of the area, dehumanization of our own people and lack of education for them (Newswatch, August 4 2005:15).

News watch, August 4 2008:16 opined that

“In the same Iluin, Ifse Sagay, explains that militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta Region has assumed an alarming proportion because of the continued oppression, marginalization, exploitation and gross underdevelopment of the area that produces virtually the entire wealth of the nation.

Government had to cope with all these embarrassment arising from the lawlessness in the Niger Delta oil, theft, the kidnapping of Innocent children, the abduction of men, married women and open warfare. Infact, in contemporary time, kidnapping has become the business of the day in the Niger Delta region. Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, (1990:225) asserts that the foregoing analysis confirms Marx’s assertion that all history is the history of class struggle between a ruling group and an opposing group. From which came a new economic, political and social system.

The Niger Deltans have articulated their points, advancing reasons why they took arms against the Nigerian state and trans-national oil companies (TNOC) which is the ruling group in this struggle. This is the promise upon which the incidents of militancy and kidnapping is situated and founded. Hence, the origin of the problem of militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta region.

Causes and Effects of Militancy and Kidnapping in Niger Delta as a Region

The causes of militancy and kidnapping came as a result of the battle for resource control, self-determination unemployment, lack of basic amenities and among others and this battle has crippled business enterprises, industries as well. The operations of the trans-national oil companies in the Niger Delta region (Newswatch 2007).

According to John Iwori (2009) he states that at the root of the current problems of militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta region is the issue of resource control “oil” by the oil producing communities.

Since the exploration and production of crude oil and gas commenced in the region over 47 years ago, the federal government has always claimed to have “owned” and “controlled” the resources while production is carried out by transnational oil companies (TNOC). Under joint venture arrangement with the federal government. The oil producing states and communities have been left out in this arrangement (between the federal government and the transnational oil companies?), worse still, less than 3% of the total oil revenue that the federal government has realized from its “control” of the oil industries has been used in the development of oil producing communities. The result is that abject poverty is still preclusive in oil producing communities unlike many parts of the country and oil producing communities. In other parts of the world thus, the oil producing communities have been struggling to wrestle back “ownership and control” of the oil industries from the federal government and/or compel the federal government and the oil companies to devote more resources to tackle the development and environmental problems of the oil producing communities.

Most other problems of the region are high unemployment, lack of or poor socio-economic infrastructure, poverty, communal conflicts, insecurity etc plus the neglect of the region by successive militancy or civil rule and oil companies hence the struggle by the people to correct the socio-economic injustice. This development has given rise to militancy and kidnapping in the region which is today affecting the region and Nigeria in general.

According to Linda Dokubo (2007) "what is going on in the Niger Delta is no siege. What is going on is only a situation of people reacting against deprivation and injustice. To Linda, no, it is not a siege.

Because the Nigerian government has conspired in the past with transnational oil companies to deprive the people of the Niger Delta and they have also been excluded from the process that should primarily involve them. According to her, the people of the Niger Delta are not allowed ownership of what belong to them, they are not even allowed to participate in the process of deciding what happen to their resources.

The people demand justice and to that effect their reactions has been given all sort of names.

She further pointed out, that government in the past underplayed what was happening in the Niger Delta by saying these are mere criminals. They also have security reports pointing that everything is well, but the injustice by there.

The people of Niger Delta are still suffering deprivation, lack of social amenities and total collapse in everything they do. What the people are asking for is justice, that is why they resolve in militancy and kidnapping as their best strategy. As pointed out by Linda, the people demand justice, equity and fairness. The people also demand repeal or amendment of those laws that exclude them from the ownership of what belongs to them. But in short term let them begin to provide social amenities in the Niger Delta and let transnational oil companies live up to their social responsibility. Why are we being insensitive to the situation in the Niger Delta?

According to Oronto Douglas (2009) militancy, kidnapping and other problems of Niger Delta and the demands of the people could be broken down to five key areas(1) the access and control of resources(2) Environmental justice(3) Self determination(4) Political, social and economic development of the Nation and finally (5) the building of a United Nigeria that is based on the rule of law and justice, where minority rights are protected. These 5 cardinal issues have been canvassed by the people of the Niger Delta have not been attended to all these years and it has led to several major upheavals.

According to Chioma (2007), she described the causes of militancy and kidnapping on the sorry state of the Niger Delta environment, as the destruction of the flora and fauna and their biodiversity, pollution of the water they drink and the air they breathe, yet the oil produced from the region account for about 90% of the country's total exports and over 80% of total government revenue.

In 1983 it was reported that the government owned NNPC had noted "we witness the slow poisoning of the water of this region and the destruction of vegetation and agricultural land by oil spill which occur during petroleum operation. But since the inception of the oil industries in Nigeria more than 40 years ago, there has been no concrete and effective effort on the part of the government, let alone the oil operators, to control environmental problems associated with oil industries, not much has changed since

then". The degradation of the environment still goes on unabated, gas flaring has not stopped, spillages and pipeline leaks still occur, there are still effluent discharges from production and refinery operations. Now the problems has reached an alarming dimension.

The youths have formed themselves in vanguards brandishing sophisticated arms, kidnapping and killing people, disrupting oil operations and putting the entire region into a state of anomic. Lot of lives and property and money have been lost in the process. This is the premise on which militancy and kidnapping emerge in the Niger Delta region cannot be over emphasized. Indeed, the activities of militant groups has led to many businesses and companies packing out of the region which has caused unemployment to the people of the region. According to Newswatch sources, the disruption of oil exploration by the activities of militants has compelled the Warri refinery and petrochemical company as well as the Nigerian gas company to close operations. Also, the activities of militant have to a large extent driven away foreign investors wishing to establish in the region. In the area of tourism, it limits the number of immigrants coming to the region thereby reducing the revenue accruing to the states in the region. The vandalization of pipeline by militant causes environmental degradation, air and water pollution, this causes the region, more hardship and crisis plus the neglect of the region by the federal government and trans-nationals operating in the region. In addition, the responds of the federal government to the problem of militancy and kidnapping by deploying armed forces to the region worsen the situation, this is because it causes more harm and hardship to the people of the region. For instance, the J.T.F. entered the area with force, making major waterways unsafe to pass, disrupting traditional occupations of fishing and farming, and blocking free movement, trade and commercial activities between communities. Those trapped in the process ran for safety into the bushes and swamps including both indigenes and non-indigenes and serving members of the national youth corps. Some waded into the deep mud-swamps until rescued, while others got lost in the forests, until they reached some settlements of kind-hearted Ijaw people. Youthful people escaped relatively easily while the children, the aged and the infirm people were left behind, abandoned.

Dr. Oboko Bello, an Ijaw youth leader condemned this situation as "a wrong application of Nigeria's militancy might on her own citizen". Indeed, militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta emerge as a result of long years of neglect, marginalization, discrimination, oppression, subjugation, exploitation and deprivation of the region.

The emergence of militant in the Niger Delta region was evidence in hostage taking (kidnapping) of both foreigners and Nigerians oil worker, innocent business men and women and children. Today, kidnapping in the Niger Delta is a lucrative business. The negligence of the region by the federal government and transnational oil companies and the activities of militants in the region has led to the underdevelopment, unemployment, political, social and economic backwardness of the region. No doubt militancy and kidnapping has affected the region negatively. The question is, how can we resolve this dilemma of a region that is both rich and poor, whose squalor is the fallout of its splendor, whose poverty is a product of its wealth. How can we bring peace to this region and stem the tide of militancy? How have successive government responded to these threats? This forms the discussion in the next segment of the paper.

The Effects of Militancy and Kidnapping in Nigeria Economy

Economically, the Nigerian economy revolved around the Niger Delta region. This is because the region is naturally endowed with numerous natural resources especially crude oil which is the chief source of revenue and foreign exchange in Nigeria. In other words, The Niger Delta generates 90% of Nigeria revenue. However, the long years of neglect, marginalization, oppression, subjugation, discrimination, exploitation etc of the region has led to crisis in the region including militancy and kidnapping of oil workers both foreigners and Nigerians and other innocent people in the region. Militancy and kidnapping has multiplier effect in Nigeria economy. It impedes business investment, economic growth and productivity. Spurs inflation unemployment and negatively affects the living standard of people. A nations living standards are tied to it productivity. Political instability also affects national income when investors and individuals in the society begin to perceive the crisis in the region as a serious threat to their investment and savings, they will sell off their assets and buy assets in other politically secure and stable societies. The crisis of militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta region brought unfold hardship and instability to the Nigerian economy .For instance in 2008, about \$20.7 billion revenue due to government was lost. Mamka (2010) asserts that National electricity supply was down to amount 800mw because of the disruption of the supply of gas from the Niger Delta. This greatly affected public and private businesses in Nigeria". Nigeria loses N174 billion to pipeline vandals in the past ten years, Barkindo Sanusi group Managing Director of NNPC made the assertion (Vanguard 2010).

The sea ports have been one of the major contributors of revenue to the federal government especially the once in Delta State, River State and Cross River state in the Niger Delta region. The activities of militant groups have reduce revenue generated by these parts to the federal government from N50 billion to N35 billion in 2009 and even till date the revenue from these parts are reducing per day.

Revenue accruing to the federal government from oil companies and other companies operating in the Niger Delta region has also dropped

The Niger Delta region also happen to be a good tourist ground. For instance, places like Benin, Bonny, Uyo, Port Harcourt etc are important tourist centers for Nigeria. The economic benefit accruing to Nigeria from tourism has also dropped rapidly.

From the analysis above, it is clear the Nigeria state cannot function economically without the Niger Delta region, but the activities of the militant groups in the region has affected the economy of Nigeria negatively.

The Effects of Militancy and Kidnapping on Transnational Oil Companies in Niger Delta

The long years of neglect and exploitation of the people of the Niger Delta region, by Nigerian government and transnational oil companies has degenerated into militancy, kidnapping, violence and other forms of armed struggle. The armed struggle by angry youth of the region has affected the activities of transnational oil companies operating in the region. These happen in the midst of pure criminality, hostage taking (kidnapping) illegal oil bunkering, pipeline vandalism etc. For instance, hostage taking alone have cost these transnational oil companies billions of Naira. Some of the transnational oil companies operating in the Niger Delta include Shell, Chevron, AGIP, Total, Exxon Mobil, Texaco

etc. It is believed that every private business firm is out to make profit be it national oil companies or other forms of business firms. However, when the environment in which these firms operate is not friendly then, the firm begin to run at loss. This is the case with the oil companies operating in the Niger Delta region. For instance on the 4th of February 2015, four (4) employees of Agip were kidnapped by militant on a speed boat from Amassoma to Ogoimbia Southern Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State (stakeholder democracy org././27). On the 2nd of April 2011, five (5) Exxon Mobil staff were kidnapped by militant in Niger Delta of Ibeno Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State (ventures africs.com/fiveexxonmobil) and among other cases of kidnapping of oil worker both foreign and Nigerians, in the Niger Delta region. All these comes with huge expenses of transnational oil companies operating in the region. Example, shell had to pack out at Warri, Delta State because of persistence kidnapping of it's staff. The same thing happened to other companies like "Julius Berger" a construction company that had to pack out of Port-Harcourt. Pipeline vandalism by militant has cost so much to transnational oil companies operating in the Niger Delta region in terms of maintenance and clean up exercises. No doubt, the activities of militants in the Niger Delta has affected the operations of transnational oil companies and other business firms in the region as evidence in the huge money spent for pipeline maintenance, cleanup exercise and release at hostages. Again, much money is also spent by transnational oil companies to beef up security as a result of militant activities in the region. From all angle, militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta region has not affected the operations of the transnational oil companies positively, but rather it has disrupt the operations of oil companies thereby losing billions of naira in the process.

Governments Efforts at Addressing the Niger Delta Problems

The quest for addressing the Niger Delta question started during the pre-independence days. Precisely, in 1958, the Willinks commission, was set up to address the minority question. In its reports, the commission observed that the need of those who live in the Creeks and swamps of the Niger Delta are very different from those of the interior, stating that a feeling of neglect and lack of understanding was widespread. A case was therefore made for the special treatment of this area. Specifically, the commission recommended the setting up of a Niger Delta development board (Blakpara, 2010).As a response, the indigenous government that succeeded the colonialist established River Basin Development Authorities (RBDA) but there was hardly any political will to drive these authorities towards development. Where there are government efforts at resolution, such efforts have been limited in representation, haphazardly coordinated, repetitive and incomplete. All efforts at conflict resolution have been generated by the federal government and imposed upon all stakeholders. For example, the Niger Delta Development Act (NDDA) 2000 recently adopted is a variation of the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) decree enabled by General Sanni Abacha in 1995. It is known that both structures and scope of the OMPADEC could not resolve entrenched causes of conflict in the region and its variation in the NDDC Act 2000 is not estimated to prove better in addressing insufficiency of the OMPADEC decree.

The OMPADEC or its descendants the NDDC Act 2000, assuming, it shall be properly managed according to its

charter of creation by self-merit act partly authentic means to an ultimate resolution of conflicts. Despite their inevitability, neither can one singularly resolve crises as a stand alone model nor is surrounding enough in representation of indigenous people and their varied interests. Both represent unbalanced creations of the majority stakeholder – the federal government that considerably favours already protected transnationals corporations and without equity indigenous people and their interest. Historically, commissions created by the federal government are scandalously challenged in management styles while personifying as breeding of corruption and extreme government bureaucracy. It is as a result, made according to pattern that present Niger Delta commission has no satisfactory delineated purpose, scope and structures expected of such important role and offices is created to implement.

Another reason that challenges the well intentional NDDC is traced to similar retrogressive laws that are shades in present regional conflicts. These laws represent another replica, handed down by previous government and law makers towards resolving conflict through revenue allocation.

These authors are inclined to indicate unreasonableness in most sections of such laws and suggest immediate legislative and judicial reviews.

Against these inherent natures of self-service, ineffectiveness and limitations that characterize earlier commissions created by the federal government for regional resource control and developments, it cannot be overemphasized the desirability for an equilateral resource control model created to provide checks and balances while ensuring equity for all stakeholders.

In 1999, the Babangida administration set up the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC). This agency was reportedly starved of necessary funds to operate optimally and make a difference and on the other hand, the OMPADEC officials misappropriated the resources placed at their disposal. In 1999 the Obasajo's administration set up the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) as a new approach towards fast tracking the development of the Niger Delta. This agency has made it's own challenges. For instance, the scenario of its operation makes it look as it's more of political patronage, and opportunities for awarding contracts rather than the serious development objectives it was created to address (Newswatch, May 4, 2009). This does not however mean that the agency has nothing good to it's credit. The Yar'Adua administration in 2007 created the ministry of Niger Delta affairs to demonstrate government's determination to squarely address the plights of the Niger Delta people. This is a fully fledged federal government's ministry charged with the responsibility of planning and administering development programmes in the Niger Delta region.

Apart from the above, other efforts in the past include, 1998, Maj. Gen. Popoola committee formed by head of state Gen., Abdusallam Abubakar to look into the problems of the Niger Delta Report was not implemented some other efforts as identified by Mangut and Egbefo (2010) include;

(1) Government at different for a encourages oil companies to improve the infrastructure of their hosting communities.
 (2) The establishment of the Niger Delta University and the Federal University of Petroleum resources as instrument for appreciating and collectively adopting ways of ameliorating the problems associated with oil exploration.

(3) Encouragement of companies to give scholarship schemes to Niger Delta students studying specified course in tertiary institutions.

(4) Utilization of the Education Trust Fund (ETF) proceeds for developing infrastructure in the educational institutions and for given internal and overseas scholarship awards to indigenes of Niger Delta.

Theoretical Framework

The research adopts the Marxist Political Economy Approach as captured by Ake (1981). The political economy approach is based on dialectical materialism which places primacy on material or economic conditions of society. It is premised on the belief that man is dominantly motivated by economic needs. Labour is the essence of material existence hence; economic activity is man's primary concern. To Marx, every political system corresponds and reflects the kind of economic structure is in the society. He places emphasis and premium on the production base (i.e. the structure). This, from the substructure one can easily understand the nature of internal relations, how a society organizes, manages and reproduces itself, the causes of tension, conflict or contradiction in any given society and the bearing or direction of social change. Marx further contends that, there occurs in the capitalist mode of production an economic surplus for which different interest groups in the society scramble. That scramble usually generates conflicts. Political conflict is therefore an extension of economic conflict into the realm of politics, the conflict takes place between classes which are themselves the product of the mode of economic production. The difference in economic conditions therefore define both the parameter and the nature of politics in a society.

As it relates to this study, we shall with this theory seek to analyze how the resources (economic surplus) generate from the Niger Delta region used for the development of the region.

As well as the level of class consciousness of the Niger Delta people towards the economic surplus generated from the region. That is to say, have the resources of the Niger Delta region properly been used by the Nigerian State to improve the welfare of the citizen of the region?

Method of Data Collection

In order to effectively evaluate militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta Region, it causes, effects and possible solutions. Questionnaires were designed and administered in the area of study. The questionnaire administered was about 140 but 120 was successfully retrieved, information gotten from the questionnaire was tabulated and analyzed accordingly. The questionnaire is divided into three sections in line with the objectives, research question and hypothesis of the study. Each section of the question seek to establish facts as it relates to the hypothesis and objective of study. Section A contains the personal data of respondents. Section B seeks to associate militancy and kidnapping to socio-economic conditions. Section C wants to know if the Nigerian state have played a role in past and present in solving the problem.

Having established the fact above, attention is shifted to detail analysis of the data collected. The data will be analyzed on percentage basis making use of tabular presentation.

Section A is not analyzed because it contains personal data of respondents.

Table 1

S/N	Questions	Option	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Do you agree that unemployment and restiveness in Niger Delta contribute to militancy and kidnapping in the region?	Yes	118	98.3%
		No	2	1.7%
		I don't know	0	0%
		Total	120	100%
2.	Do you agree that socio economic conditions are responsible for militancy and kidnapping in Nigeria?	Yes	100	90%
		No	10	5%
		I don't know	10	5%
		Total	120	100%
3.	Do you agree that lack of youth empowerment programme in the region contribute to militancy and kidnapping in Niger Delta?	Yes	115	95.8%
		No	2	1.7%
		I don't know	3	2.5%
		Total	120	100%

S/N	Questions	Option	Frequency	Percentage	Total
4.	Do you agree that lack of established infrastructure and basic social amenities in the region by the Nigerian state and transnationals contribute to militant activities.	Yes	116	96.6%	
		No	2	1.7%	
		I don't know	2	1.7%	
		Total	120/100		
5.	Do you think that environmental degradation and pollution by transnational contribute to militancy activities in the Niger Delta?	Yes	105	87.5%	
		No	10	8.3%	
		I don't know	5	4.2%	
		Total	120/100		
SECTION C		Table 2			
6.	Do you agree that militancy and kidnapping can be solve through dialogue and due compensation by Nigerian state and national?	Yes	115	95.8%	
		No	1	0.8%	
		I don't know	4	3.4%	
		Total	120/100		
7.	Do you agree that militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta can be eradicated by force?	Yes	11	9.1%	
		No	105	87.5%	
		I don't know	4	3.4%	
		Total	120/100		
8.	Do you agree that the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) have helped in reducing militancy activities in the region?	Yes	55	45.8%	
		No	60	50%	
		I don't know	5	4.2%	
		Total	120/100		
9.	Do you agree that militancy can be ameliorated by the Nigerian State?	Yes	95	79.2%	
		No	20	16.6%	
		I don't know	5	4.2%	
		Total	120/100		
10.	Do you agree that the amnesty programme has helped in reducing militancy activities in the Niger Delta region?	Yes	75	62.5%	
		No	40	33.3%	
		I don't know	5	4.2%	
		Total	120/100		

Data Analysis and Techniques

SECTION B

Data Interpretation and Qualitative Explanation

From section B Table 1, question 1 shows that 118 (98.3%) of respondents filled "YES" to agree that unemployment and restiveness in Niger Delta contribute to militancy and kidnapping in the region while 2(1.7%) respondents filled "No" to disagree and No respondent filled "I don't know". The data above clearly states that 118(98.3%) being the highest number of respondents agreed that unemployment and restiveness contribute to militancy and kidnapping in the region. Question 2 shows that 100(90%) of respondent filled "YES" to agree that socioeconomic conditions are responsible for militancy and kidnapping in Nigeria while 10(5%) respondent filled "NO" whereas 10(5%) responded filled "I don't know", the above data clearly states that 100(90%) being the highest number of respondent agreed to the fact that socio-economic conditions are responsible for militancy and kidnapping in Nigeria. Question 3 shows that 115(95.8%) of respondents filled "YES" to agree that lack of youths empowerment

programmes in the region contributes to militancy and kidnapping in Niger Delta while 2(1.7%) filled "NO" to disagree and 3(2.5%) filled "I DON'T KNOW". It is clear from the data above that 115(95.8%) being the highest makes it true that lack of youth empowerment programmes in the region contributes to the militancy and kidnapping activities of the region.

Question 4 shows that 116(96.6%) respondents filled "YES" to agree that lack of established infrastructure and basic social amenities in the region by the Nigerian state and transnationals contribute to militant activities while 2(1.7%) filled "NO" to disagree and 2(1.7%) filled "I DON'T KNOW". It is clear that 116 being the highest number of respondent to agree makes the assertion true that lack of established infrastructure and basic social amenities in the region contributes to militant activities.

Question 5 reveals that 105(87.5%) of persons filled "YES" to agree that environment degradation and pollution by transnationals contributes to militancy activities in the Niger Delta whereas 10(8.3%) filled "NO" to disagree and 5(4.2%) persons filled "I DON'T KNOW" the above data

shows that 105(87.5%) being the highest number makes it clear that environmental degradation and pollution by transnationals contributes to militancy activities.

From section C, table 2, question 6 says that 115 (95.8%) respondent filled "YES" to agree with the saying that militancy can be solved through dialogue and due compensation by the Nigerian state and transnational, while only 1(0.8%) filled "NO" to disagree and 4(3.4%) filled I don't know. The data above reveals that 115(95.8%) of respondents being majority confirms to the assertion that militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta region can be resolved through dialogue and due compensation by the Nigerian state and the transnational. Question 7 states that 11(9.1%) respondent filled "YES" to agree that militancy and kidnapping can be eradicated by force, while 105 (87.5%) filled "NO" to disagree and only 4(3.4%) filled "I DON'T KNOW". Based on the above data, it is clear and true that 105(87.5%) being the highest number disagree to the assertion that militancy and kidnapping in Niger Delta, region can be eradicated by force.

Question 8 shows that 55(45.8%) persons filled "YES" to agree that the ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, NDDC have help to reduce militant activities in the region, while 60(50%) filled "NO" to disagree and 5(4.2%) filled "I DON'T KNOW". Therefore, it is clear from the data that 60(50%) of respondent being majority disagreed that the MNDA have not helped to reduce militant activities in the region.

Question 9 shows that 95(79.2%) respondent filled Yes to agree that militancy can be ameliorated by the government while 20(16.6%) filled "NO" to disagree and then 5(4.2%) filled "I DON'T KNOW". From the data above 95(79.7%) being the highest number confirms that militancy can be ameliorated by the government.

Question 10 reveals that 75(62.5%) persons filled "YES" to agree that the amnesty programme have helped in reducing militant activities in the Niger Delta region, while 40(33.3%) filled "NO" to disagree and only 5(4.2%) filled "I DON'T KNOW". The data shows that 75(62.5%) respondent being the highest number makes it true that the amnesty programme have helped in reducing militant activities.

In testing the hypothesis, using Chi-square test. This is the outcome of data from the response of distributed questionnaires to 140 respondents of which 120 were returned.

Sex	Yes	No	I Don't know
Male	80	9	3
Female	20	1	7

Testing at 0.05 level of significance

Source: Field survey by Inyene, 2017

Yes	No	I Don't know	Total
80	9	3	92
20	1	7	28
100	10	10	120

O	E	O _i - E _i	$\frac{O_i - E_i)^2}{E}$
80	76.6	3.6	0.16
9	7.6	1.4	0.25
3	7.6	-4.6	2.78
20	23.3	-3.3	0.46
1	2.3	-1.3	0.73
7	2.3	4.7	9.60
	Total		13.98

X² Calculated = 13.98

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis if X² calculated is less than X² critical value.

Degree of freedom (r - 1) (c - 1) = (3 - 1) (2 - 1) = 2 x 1 = 2

X² Critical value = 5.991

Decision: Since X² calculated is greater than X² critical value (x² cal > x² crt), the null hypothesis is rejected which means that there is a relationship between socio-economic conditions and militancy in Niger Delta.

Hypothesis 2:

H₀: There is no possibility that militancy can be ameliorated by the Nigerian state.

H₁: There is the possibility that militancy can be ameliorated by the Nigerian state.

In testing the hypothesis, using Chi-square test, this is the outcome of data from the response of distributed questionnaires to 140 respondents of which 120 were returned.

Sex	Yes	No	I Don't know
Male	85	5	1
Female	10	15	4

Testing at 0.05 level of significance

Source: Field survey by Inyene, 2017

Yes	No	I Don't know	Total
85	5	1	91
10	15	4	29
95	20	5	120

O	E	O _i - E _i	$\frac{O_i - E_i)^2}{E}$
85	72.04	12.96	2.33
5	15.1	-10.1	6.75
1	3.7	-2.7	1.97
10	22.9	-12.9	7.26
15	4.8	10.2	21.67
4	1.2	2.8	6.53
	Total		46.51

X² Calculated = 46.51

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis if X² calculated is less than X² critical value.

Degree of freedom (r - 1) (c - 1) = (3 - 1) (2 - 1) 2 + 1 = 2

X² Critical value = 5.991

Decision: Since X² calculated is greater than X² critical value (x² cal > x² crt), the null hypothesis is rejected which means that there is a possibility that militancy can be ameliorated by the Nigerian state.

Generalization and Findings

From the result of the questions asked in this study and from an analysis of data collected, presented and analysed, it is clear that significant findings of the study is that socio-economic conditions can be associated with militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta Region. This is because, there is high rate of unemployment, youth restiveness, lack of infrastructure, basic social amenities, youth empowerment, environmental degradation and pollution in the Niger Delta Region from the findings. These socio-economic conditions have also instigate militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta. This confirmed with the research hypothesis and objective of this study that socio-economic conditions can be associated with militants activities in Niger Delta.

Section C table 2, reveal that militancy and kidnapping in Niger Delta cannot be eradicated by force but through dialogue with the people of the region. Also compensation by transnational and federal government must be made when necessary.

A striking and important finding is the fact that the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs and Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) have not done enough to eradicate militancy and improve the living conditions of the people of the region. The reason being that money allocated to these agency and ministry have not been properly used to develop the region. This confirms the study objective of looking at the role played by Nigerian state to ameliorate the problem of militancy. It also confirms the research hypothesis that there is the possibility that militancy in the region can be handled by the Nigerian state. It is also true from findings that the amnesty programme have helped to reduce militancy in the region. From the findings provision of employment and basic social amenities will help to eradicate militancy in the region. It is interesting to know that militants activities in the Niger Delta Region have effects on Nigerian economy and transnational activities in the region. With the reasons being that Nigeria operate a mono economy. That is it depends completely on oil from the Niger Delta Region. It is also confirmed that the Nigerian state and transnationals are the main due to the fact that the Nigeria state work hand in hand with the transnational by issuing license to them to operate in the Niger Delta Region. And in return, the region is not well compensated but rather neglected.

Conclusion

With regard to the findings in this study, one cannot but posit that the Niger Delta people have not been treated fairly. This is especially so with the aspect of the resolution of the Niger Delta problem. The people of the Niger Delta who constitute a minority ethnic group in the polity are victims of the politics of resource controlled by the dominant majority ethnic group who are at the helm of affairs (Anugwom, 2005). The federal system is responsible for the rising violence at various times and location, that threatens to destabilize the polity. Therefore, it has been emphasized in this work and still needs to be emphasized in this section that the core and dominant cause of instability and lack of peace in the Niger Delta Region is not militancy itself. But the factors that precipitated militant activities in the region, such as the denial of the people's right to control their resources through anti-fiscal federalism policies and legislations, environmental degradation, economic exclusion of the people by the Nigerian state and its collaborators. Great efforts have been made by various regimes in Nigeria to resolve the problem in Niger Delta but most of these efforts are thwarted by the worm called corruption which has eaten deep into Nigerians. Example can be sighted on the effort on amnesty, majority of the people who are currently benefiting from the programme are not reported militant. This trend is capable of spurring militant group elsewhere in the state in order to dubiously benefit from the national cake. Poverty, negligence and frustration breed tension. Tension robs the people off their peace and development. Giving the people a complete sense of belonging, and putting in place a massive infrastructural development, and pursuing a vigorous poverty eradication strategy, capable of creating sustainable employment can assuage the already wounded people. This study therefore is repeated with issues that bother on militancy and kidnapping. As it is experience in the Niger Delta Region vis-à-vis possible measures at resolving the spate of conflicts and crises in the oil rich region.

Recommendations

In view of the issues raised in this study concerning militancy and kidnapping with respect to Niger Delta, the following recommendations are made.

- (a) Experiences have shown that the Niger Delta crisis cannot be solved by force. The solution is to be found in the constructive involvement of the Niger Delta people themselves in the resolution of the mounting and daunting socio-economic problems of the Niger Delta.
- (b) The constitutional structure of the federation (federalism and the derivation principles) and governmental functionality need to be urgently renegotiated to enable the people utilize their natural resources for their own development.
- (c) Sustenance of the amnesty deal entered into with the erstwhile militant will determine the substance of peace in the Niger Delta Region. Most of the youths have surrendered their arms, but that does not translate into lasting peace. Current efforts at training and retraining of the youths should be sustained to give them skills to enable them survive without recourse to militancy and kidnapping.
- (d) Transnationals should give scholarship to quality Niger Delta students and also employ them after the programme. Regular dean up exercise should be carried out by transnational: This will help to reduce or prevent the level of environmental pollution in the region. Due compensation and massive employment should be given to the people by the transnational.
- (e) The ministry of Niger Delta Affairs (MNDA) and Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and other development agencies must spend the monies at their disposal in the correct proportion, and do all they can to put in place the necessary infrastructures without leaving and community unattended to. This will further assuage the feeling of the people.
- (f) The provision of basic infrastructure in the Niger Delta Region is sine-qua-non for sustainable development in the region. Good and reliable roads connecting the whole region should be constructed. This will open up the region to both domestic and foreign investor.
- (g) Democratization and anti-corruption are vital to resolve conflict in the Niger Delta. This is so because all the beautiful strategies put in place by the government will amount to nothing if corruption and these strategies are bed fellows. State governments and public servants in the Niger Delta have been living higher than their salaries. The Niger Delta citizens are aware that the flamboyant life styles of those in government and how their friends are maintained by ill-gotten wealth. Therefore, the rising tide of corruption in high places must be seriously addressed.

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