



Oil Exploration and Underdevelopment: A Study of Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

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Abstract: This study placed at the center of its focus oil exploration and underdevelopment in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In the study, three research questions were posed; what are the benefits of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria? What are the effects of oil exploration and underdevelopment to the host communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria? What are the remedies that can enhance oil exploration and development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria? Also, three objectives were stated, which includes to identify the benefits of oil exploration to the Nigeria nation, to examine the effects of oil exploration to the host communities and to recommend remedies that can enhance oil exploration and development. Elite theory was adopted to theoretically analyze this work and descriptive research design method was employed. Secondary sources were used in gathering data and content analysis was adopted as data analysis technique. The study revealed the benefits of oil exploration such as economic growth, job creation, energy supply to power industries and homes, provide fuel for vehicles and air crafts etc. Also, the research work x-rayed the effects of oil production activities and the neglect of the Niger Delta region by the Nigerian state and oil and gas industries such as environmental degradation, exploitation, unemployment, lack of social amenities, infrastructure, poverty among others. Furthermore, the study made some recommendations advising the federal government and oil companies to ensure effective consultation and partner proactively with host communities to better their operations, to reduce environmental degradation and its adverse effects and improve the living standard of people in the areas of oil exploration by providing infrastructures like roads, schools, electricity, hospital scholarships among others which will protect the environment and enhance the relationships between government, companies and the host communities in the Niger Delta region.

Keywords: Crude Oil, Exploration, Exploitation, Pollution, Oil Spills, Underdevelopment.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study



Crude oil and exploration in Nigeria started in 1956 when oil was struck in commercial quantity in Oloibiri community in the present-day Bayelsa state. Today, Nigeria is the second largest oil producer in sub-Saharan African after Libya and the eight largest exporting country in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), (Jack, Akujobi, Uchechukwu and Azubuike, 2016, p.2). Oil whether crude or refined is generally referred to as black gold. It is like the real gold, the elixir of mankind. Nations have gone to war for it. Nations that are not endowed with oil have always fought hard to have it (Dayo, 2004, p. 2). In fact, many countries without Crude oil have envied those that have oil, on the other hand countries that are endowed with oil have problems arising from its exploration; among such problems are hostility by host communities, ethnic unrest, large scale wastage of this God given resource. The importance of oil to mankind cannot be over emphasized as most of the machinery used today are all powered one way or the other by oil and its derivatives (Dayo, 2004, p.7). Its by product gas, is as useful as oil itself in multi-dimensional ways, for instance, it is used as fuel stock to fire stations, it is also used to manufacture fertilizers as a heating agent in winter and in many applications.

In fact, very few commodities known to mankind have been found to be as useful to the global population as oil and gas. Its importance accounts for why governments in many countries have always found themselves in trouble each time the price of crude oil goes up in the international- market. Being an international commodity, oil and gas speak only one language that is US dollar, in other words the commodity is priced in US dollar (Dayo, 2004, p.10). For us in Nigeria, nature has abundantly endowed us with. This strategic mineral. It has been much of a blessing to the nation as our exploitation of it has brought wealth and global recognition to the nation. The Niger-Delta region traverses nine out of the 36 states making up the Federal Republic of Nigeria. These are Abia, Akwalbom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers States. The estimated population of the region is about 20 million, comprising over forty (40) different ethnic groups speaking 250 different dialects across about 3000 communities The predominant occupation in the area is farming and fishing “Except for the oil sector, the, industrial base is virtually none existent” (Dayo, 2004, p.14).

Oil has remained the backbone of the nation’s economy contributing about 85% to the national revenue and over 90% of the nation’s foreign earnings (Ogbodo, 2003, p.2). Regrettably, these contributions by oil and gas has manifested more in capital flight than the welfare of the nation’s citizens. This, according to observers is due to the fact that though the resources are located in Nigeria, their economics are elsewhere. The multinationals undertaking the operations have had to dictate the politics and of the industry to the detriment of the owners. This is neocolonialism in action (Ogbodo, 2003, p.14). What is happening in Nigeria is a contrast of what is obtainable in other oil producing countries such as Gabon, Angola Namibia, Algeria, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brazil, Oman, Norway, Venezuela etc. in these countries, they develop services and manufacturing activities in the oil and gas sector to the level of domesticating them (Ogbodo, 2003, p. 20).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Oil exploration and exploitation has been on-going for several decades in the Niger Delta. It has had disastrous impacts on the environment in the region and has adversely affected people



inhabiting that region. The Niger Delta consist of diverse ecosystems of mangrove swamps, fresh water swamps, rain forest and is the largest wetland in Africa. It is among the ten most important wetland and marine ecosystems in the world, but due to oil pollution, the area is now characterized by contaminated streams and rivers, forest destruction and biodiversity loss in general the area is an ecological wasteland. Etete (2009, p.11) explains that the discovery of oil subsequent exploitation of oil in the Niger Delta impacted negatively on the oil bearing communities and such impacts are not only felt in the natural environment, but also social as well as their political environment. He added that oil spills, gas flaring and other hazards in close proximity to human inhabitation. The exploration of the human environment causes pollution that contaminate the people's ecosystem with varied impacts on the areas terrestrial and aquatic vegetation provides a life support system has largely disappeared with the negative impact on the wellbeing of the people.

Adati (2012, p.57), opined that the livelihood of the indigenous people whose dependence on oil and the ecosystem services for survival is been chattered by these extreme activities leading to increased poverty and displacement of people. The oil industry located within this region has contributed immensely to the growth and development of the country which is a fact that cannot be disputed but unsustainable oil exploration activities has rendered the Niger Delta region one of the five most severely petroleum damaged ecosystems in the world. Aja (2001, p.205) believes that pollution is a health hazard. It can take the form of industrial sewage, spillage, toxic waste and gaseous effect. Oil spillage pollutes streams, arable economic lands, crops and even air. Gas flaring has sight effects on the inhabitants of oil producing communities. Against this backdrop, this work will examine the extent to which oil exploration has exploited the environment of their operation, hampered development and the living standard of people in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It is against this back drop, this research work will examine the effect of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the benefits of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
2. What are the effects of oil exploration to the host communities?
3. What are the remedies of oil exploration and underdevelopment in the Niger Delta region?

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To identify the benefits of exploration to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
2. To examine the effect of oil exploration to the host communities.
3. To outline remedies of oil exploration and underdevelopment in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study will help provide a better understanding of oil exploration activities and underdevelopment to scholars and organization in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. to scholars and organizations. Also, this study will be important to the federal government and oil and gas companies as it will help them to be informed of the numerous effects



of oil operations on the ecology and the lives of the people of the host communities and workable strategies to be urgently employed to settle existing disputes and ensuring mutual relationship among all parties involved in their work place.

Finally, this research work will be useful to other researchers who will be embarking on future studies on the same issues and other related areas as this work will serve as a relevant sources of data.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Oil Exploration

Crude oil also known as petroleum product is the oil believed to have originated from plant and animals remains over a long period of time. In the words of Collins (2018, p.19), crude oil is matter derived from organic molecules formed by dead or formally living organism millions of years ago and is perceived as the most commodity salable and demandable in the entire world today and also the largest resources for man's energy demanded for modern day survival. Crude oil is viscous, usually inflammable liquids insoluble in water. It is the lifeblood of the industrialized nation and it has become the world's most important source of energy. To Duru (2008, p.16), crude oil is a matter derived from organic molecules formed by dead or formally living organism millions of years ago, and these substances, according were compounds that formed over millions of small plants and animals, which later transformed to what is known as hydrocarbon.

Exploration is the ability to search or travel through for the purpose of discovery and to examine thoroughly. It is also the act of searching thoroughly and serving to explore or investigate. According to Akuodu (2011,p.34), Oil exploration activities commenced in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria in the early 1990s by a Germany entity referred to as the Nigerian Bitumen Corporations which started her exploration activities in the Araromi area of the Western Nigeria, but their activities were truncated by the outbreak of the first and the second World wars in 1914 and 1939, (NNPC: 1-2). To Collins (2018, p.43), oil exploration activities thereafter started with the Shell D' Arcy, the forerunner of Shell Petroleum Development Company, SPDC of Nigeria in 1937 when Shell was awarded the sole concessionary rights covering the whole territory of Nigeria. The first commercial oil well was discovered in 1956 in Oloibiri in present Ogbia local government of Bayelsa state in the Niger Delta region. This discovery opened up the oil industry in 1961 in Nigeria, bringing more oil firms like the Agip, Mobil, Saraf (now ELF), Texaco and Chevron to petroleum prospective both in on shore/off shore areas of Nigeria. Between 1956 and 1958, more oil firms were discovered at Afam, Bonu, Ebubu and later Ugheli and Kokori and the production capacity steadily raised by this period, oil has become so prominent that the search for more of it had intensified in the communities in the region, (Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, (2005: 1-2).

The Nigerian oil industry is characterized by a joint venture agreement between the Federal Government and the Multinational Oil Companies. The federal government participation with oil industry is represented by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and is



guided by 60-40 percent sharing formula for the federal government and International Oil Companies respectively. (Okaba, 2005, p. 32)

Oil exploration by seismic companies involves surveying, clearing of seismic lines, massive dynamiting for geological excavations. The exploration of dynamite in aquatic environments leads to narcotic effects and mortality of fish and other faunal organisms, (Zabby,2014, p.13).

2.1. 1 Steps of Oil Exploration

According to Pearson (2019, p.23), there are seven steps to oil exploration. Thus, they are;

Step 1: Preparing the rig site

According to him, the infrastructure pads and access roads are built, setting up the land for the next step. From start to finish, everything from traffic plans and designated access roads to noise barriers and safety procedures is carefully planned and monitored according to state and local laws.

Step 2: Drilling

First, the drill is brought to the location (may be so to 30 truck loads), now it's time to build the infrastructure necessary to unlock the oil and natural gas trapped more than a mile below the ground. A well is drilled straight down into the ground beneath the pad. The first stage is to drill what is called the surface hole and the deepest known as aquifer (Peason,2019, p.23).

Step 3: Cementing and Testing

According to him, once the target distance is reached, the drill pipe is removed and steel pipe is pushed to the bottom. This "well casing" is cemented in place. Rigorous test is per permeable before any production of natural gas or oil can occur.

Step 4: Well Completion

Before drillers can trap the oil and natural gas, a perforating gum is typically lowered into the ground and fired into the rock layer in the deepest part of the well, creating holes connect the rock holding the oil and natural gas and the wellhead.

Step 5: Fracking

Now that the first stage of the well is open, it's time to unlock the oil and natural gas that has been trapped in the well using specialized instruments to monitor pressure and data from the well in real time, fracking fluid, which is 99.5% water and sand 0.5% chemicals, many of which are found in everyday household products, is pumped at high pressure through the perforating holes to create paper-thin cracks in the shale rocks, freeing the oil and natural gas trapped inside. The cycle of steps 4 and 5 are repeated, gradually working up the hole until all the lateral length of the wellbeing has been fracked. This might be 20 or 30 times but a process that typically only a few days to finish.

Step 6: Production and Fracking Fluid Recycling

Once fracking is completed, provision begins, oil and natural gas flows up from the well bore



and fracturing fluid is then recovered and recycled and used in other fracking operations

Step 7: Well Abandonment and Land Restoration

When all of the recovered oil and natural gas has been produced, the land is returned to the way it was before drilling operations started. The land can then be used for other activities and there is not a sign that a well was once there.

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria known for its beautiful vegetation, table landed soils, fertile for agricultural produce, and fishery activities, surface underground natural resources, and gas deposits and abundance of human and natural resources is now subjected to environmental degradations of various magnitudes, due to crude technological mining methods, ecological unfriendly exploration of oil, deforestation and state policies that subvert the indigenous people of Niger Delta from their natural rights of ecological habitation, (Collins, 2018,p46).

2.1.2 The Concept of Underdevelopment

According to Okike (2004, p.11), the concept of development and underdevelopment are used to denote the extent of progress of a community. In the words of Okereke (2002, p.12), underdevelopment is the absence of development. He further opined that in any society where underdevelopment thrives, poverty, unemployment, inequality, hunger among others are inevitable. To Collins (2018, p.42), underdevelopment means a situation where a country is insufficiently developed, with resources inadequately used, having a low standard of living and backwardness in education. He further averred, that underdevelopment is a stage of stagnancy and non- advancement, lack of innovations, events, circumstances and industries.

In the words of Olewe (2001, p.49), underdevelopment means inadequately developed, economically, socially and politically. It means that things are below, beneath or at a lower side or place. It may mean a state of being inferior or subordinate position or rank. underdevelopment connotes a number of things. It entails the existence of poverty low per capita income, high mortality rate, poor medical care, lack of relevant technology and illiteracy among others

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Every research work leans on a suitable theoretical framework. The framework of analysis adopted in this research is Elite Theory. Elite Theory was propounded by Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941), and Robert Michels (1876-1936), were cofounders of the Italian school of elitism, which influences subsequent elite theory in the western tradition. Shannon (2011, p.28) opined that elite theory is a theory of the state that seek to describe and explain power relations in contemporary society. The society posits that a small minority, consisting of members of economic elite and policy- planning networks, holds the most power and this power is independent of democratic elections (Chambliss, 2013, p49). Shannon, (2011, p.29) asserts that elite class is the highest stratum within a society. This class of elites is further sub- divided into governing elite and non-governing elites. The governing elites comprises of individuals who directly play some considerable



part in government such as Presidents, Ministers, Governors, Chief Judges, Legislators among others. While the non-elites are those people not connected with government activities such as the CEOs/Board of directors of Multinational Corporations and indigenous industries and top business moguls of men and women within and outside the Nigerian state.

From the ongoing, the elite theory is related to this study by saying that the elite class who are in charge of policy/ decision making and implementation, determine how the country is to be governed and who gets what, when and how according to David Easton.

The elite class are in the highest stratum in all spheres of every society –federal, state and local areas including some community representative. They take advantage of their position and authority in making laws and policies for the state which covers oil exploration activities and administration in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, (Shannon, 2011, p.30).

During implementation stages, the elites manipulates political, economic and social tools in the society within their jurisdiction geared towards enriching themselves to the detriment of oil producing communities’ environments and their inhabitants. The elite mastermind corruption in all spheres of the state through their positions, leaving the people in a poor and complaining situation which in part necessitated the carrying out of this study by the researcher.

Etete, (2009, p.8) explains that the discovery of oil and subsequent exploitation in the Niger Delta impacted on the lives of the oil bearing communities and such impacts are not only felt in the natural environment, but also social as well as their political environment. It is on record that more than 50 years of crude oil exploration and exploitation in the Niger Delta region, the process has caused unquantifiable damages to the environment and underdevelopment and ruthless devastation to the people, (Nwabuenyi, 2012 p.25).

Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria which is our case study is a land blessed with oil mineral resources but it has suffered undue exploitation in all ramification. Evidence presented by Human and Environmental Rights Action (E.R.A.) shows that oil companies operating in Nigeria have not only ignored their responsibility towards the environment, but have also acted in complicity with the government’s repression of the common people.

The oil giants are making money but are distributing a small part of it to a largely redundant corps of employees who are intellectually emasculated and paid in naira while the whites working in the oil companies are paid in dollars. Most of the indigenes employed by the oil companies are casual workers. „The oil companies have not provided adequate compensation for damage resulting from oil exploration and production in Niger-Delta region.

The Oil Multinationals in the strategic sector of our economy, controls the pace and direction of the development of our nation. The more the commanding height of our national economy they control, the more the issues we encounter and deal with in our day-to-day living they control. This is because economic policies determine policy direction and pace. Niger-Delta region’ as a whole is characterized by the dynamics of external exploitation coupled with blatant disregard for the basic rights and needs of this oil rich communities. 85% of the foreign’ earnings gotten from oil manifested more in capital flight than the welfare of the nation’s citizens.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



A descriptive survey design was adopted in this research. Kingsley (2019, p.5), opined that descriptive survey is a type of research design that describes “what is” by recording, analyzing and interpreting condition that exist. The process involves the collection of data, describing events exactly as they are in order to answer research questions generated in the study. Also, this research study largely adopted the library research method in gathering data from Textbooks, Magazines, Journals, internets among others and content analysis method was adopted in analyzing data gathered.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Benefits of oil exploration in Nigeria?

Many claimed that Nigeria is the most rapidly developing country in the history of sub-Saharan Africa due to the influence of oil exploration activities, and the development of oil industry in Nigeria which has equally contributed very notably to the socio-economic comfort of Nigerians. The ironic situation is that Nigeria’s economy is heavily dependent on oil like the economies of other Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC), the remains that other countries have alternative means while Nigeria is docile, and this has made Nigeria to remain that 98% of the foreign exchange revenue is been generated from the oil sector. (United Nations Report 2006, 2011).

In Nigeria and other nations around the globe oil affects the lifestyle of humans directly and indirectly in so many ways. So many have accounted that oil remains the lifeline of human’s existence since oil and its related products are used practically in every sector of man’s daily activities, in domestic appliances, industrial, and commercial purposes etc. It is quite important to note that without petroleum products industrial sector cannot function, machines and other automotive equipments operate without oil and if this assertion is real, therefore the need of exploration in industrial production and expansion in exploration is unavoidably dependent in the growth of economic sector, which will guarantee technological advancement. Ideally, natural resources-abundance would help the backward states to overcome their capital shortfalls and provide revenue for their governments to provide public goods and emancipate citizens from the doldrums of poverty (Oyefusi, 2009, p.12).

To Dayo (2004, p.7), oil and its derivatives is very important to mankind are used today to powered machines and industrial equipments by in one way or the other. It’s by products, gas is as useful as oil in multi-dimensional ways for example, it is used as fuel stock to fire stations, used to manufacture fertilizers among other benefits.

Furthermore, some profits from oil exploration is used in providing social amenities such as roads, electricity, building of schools and awarding of scholarships (both locally and abroad), building of health facilities like hospitals and equipping them and periodic free medical services environmental clean-up assistance among others. (Collins, 2018, p.11).

Oil is used as transportation fuels, essential to the mobility of people, goods, and services. Crude oil is refined into usable products such as transportation fuels- gasoline, diesel, and aviation fuel for air crafts. Oil is sent to the refineries where they become feedstocks. The



feedstock is used in petrochemical plants and turned into plastic to make essential products used in everyday lives. It is important to note that hundreds of products get their start from oil, including dish washing liquids, solar panels, food preservatives, eye glasses, DVDs, children toys, tyres and heat valves.

This study revealed that there are lots of benefits been derived from oil exploration. Oil, its discovery, production, marketing and use today is by far the most important and widely used energy resource in the modern world economy and into everything from vehicle and airplanes fuels to farm fertilizers, plastics, drugs and paints. Its production and distribution today affects the relations between nations and even the purchasing power of individual citizens (Nwankwo, 2013, p.1). The study also shows that oil is the lifeblood of most nations of the world. Revenue from oil exploration from the Niger Delta region of Nigeria accounts to about 85% of the national income, 90-98% of the export earnings and more than 98% of the foreign revenues is been generated from the oil sector (United Nations Report 2006, 2011).

Other benefits of oil economy are; infrastructural development, some of the oil firms go into agreement with the host communities to draft memorandum of understandings (MoU), some of the developmental features of such MoU's includes, construction of some kilometer of roads in the area, electrification projects, primary to university level scholarships in both local and abroad, building of schools, employment opportunities, award of petty contracts, intervention during natural disasters, remediation projects, impact assessments, relocation projects, shore protection, stay at home payments for chiefs and elders, free medication projects, environmental clean-up assistance, sponsorship of festivals and provision of security personnel among others. But the question is; does the benefits equate the effects? This research study will contrast it in this mimeograph. (Collins,2018, p.11)

4.2 Effects of Oil Exploration in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

In the view of Omotoye (2013, p.13), the above oil exploration activities which brought so much wealth to the nation and to those in power brought much poverty, disease, death, loss of livelihood to the people of the oil bearing areas. In spite of this high cost of hosting the oil industry, the oil bearing communities are developmentally an eyesore, denied basic amenities and their indigenes are denied employment in the oil industry. Also, their demand for compensation for damages to their farmlands, crops economic trees, fishing lakes and equipment etc, are generally treated with levity and even dismissed as irritants on occasions. Evidently, over six decades of crude oil and gas exploitation, the sector has accounted for over 80 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and has largely contributed to the growth of the Nigerian economy. The wealth gotten from crude oil exploration, instead of enhancing development, has impoverished the local communities of the Niger Delta where the oil and gas operation in the country is nested, (Okaba, 2005, p.19).

Collins (2018, p.76), outlined that environmental degradation caused by oil exploration practices includes

Air pollution: the activities of oil companies have actually disrupted the natural atmosphere, breathing air is being polluted with foreign particles, which are dangerous to human life, through gas flaring and other emissions.



Water pollution: the effluents from dangerous chemicals, fertilizers, oil sludge among others are been flushed into our water ways and this practice irrespective of several laws at both local and international is not been upheld, the adverse effects of this pollutions is residue on the aquatic lives and human health.

Noise pollution: the activities of the oil operators generate unbearable noise that affects the hearing of neighbouring communities, displaces animals within the area thereby causing ecological imbalance

Health pollution: the stable health of the people within the area of these operation is being seriously compromised, due to the adverse effects of polluted waters, airs, noise and other factors; some health issues are hypertension caused by noise pollution, typhoid caused by contaminated waters, cancers caused by various kinds of radiations and hunger caused by unproductive farm soils.

Land pollution: the pollution of land could be the mostly affected among all, this ranges from clearing of site otherwise known as deforestation, and the resultant effect of this is erosion, introduction of heavy metals, flooding and abuse of land use.

Social pollution: the effects of this class of pollution can be said to be the worst amongst all; this ranges from alteration of indigenous cultures, introduction of immoral behaviours, social vices, corruption, disunity among kinsmen, kidnapping, destruction of public properties, (pipelines), militancy, communal conflicts, agitation of resources control, hate speech, militarization, forceful cohesion, unprofessionalism, lack of technological advancement and neo-imperialism.

Afinotan&Ojakorutu (2009, p.77), rightly asserts that simple-minded people in leadership and governance of multinational oil companies and federal government neglects the massive degradation in the region, occasioned by oil production and export activities against the pain of the Niger Deltians for peanuts in the name of contracts, homage royalty, casual employment and political pockets filling.

Ahimadu (2003, p.2), contends that the land of Niger-delta has been impoverished to an extend where land which produced over 30 straw-basins of cassava and yams now produces less than 2 in 3 years. Palm fruit which provided the area with all her consumable oil needs and which was exported to Britain for soap and ointment making in 1964 had by 1984 become so scare that Nigeria has to import consumable oil from Malaysia to feed her ever increasing army, bureaucrats and of course oil workers without any consideration for the ordinary people, using oil earnings as foreign exchange for this purpose.

Furthermore, the adverse effects of oil exploration gave birth to youth restiveness in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Youth restiveness is defined as a sustained protest embarked upon to constituted authority by an organized body of youths marked by protest, violence and disruption of lawful activities in whichever society it occurs as a result of bad governance, environmental degradation, unemployment, lack of basic infrastructure (Nlerum, 2012, p.5).



Cases of youth restiveness which took place in the study area such as in Umuechem and Ogoni communities in 1990s, Chobacomunities in 1999 and Ogoni saga in November 3, 2003 etc. The consequences of youth restiveness in rural areas includes insecurity, of people, kidnapping and proliferation of arms cultism among others, which in turn disrupted oil explorations and other activities within the country.

The above mentioned sad effects and consequences led to high level of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta region areas of Nigeria.

In the words of Olewe (2001, p.49), underdevelopment means inadequately developed, economically, socially and politically. It means that things are below, beneath or at a lower side or place. It may mean a state of being inferior or subordinate position or rank. Underdevelopment connotes a number of things. It entails the existence of poverty low per capita income, high mortality rate, poor medical care, lack of relevant technology and illiteracy among others.

He further stated that underdevelopment means a condition of economic and technological backwardness, which together constrains the evolution of stable and enduring political system and dynamic external relation. Under development in his view is not natural. It is not divine. To believe, otherwise, is to accept that the God of the universe is partial. Underdevelopment is a human factor, it is man-made. Okereke (2002, p.12), opined that underdevelopment connotes the existence of poverty, low per capita income, high mortality rate, poor medical care, lack of relevant technology and illiteracy among others

The Niger Delta region is underdeveloped in all its ramifications, despite the fact that it is the bread basket of Nigeria. Adati (2012, p.5) aptly described the economic dilemma of the region when he stated that “the oil region in Nigeria seems to be stuck in time warp, with little real change since oil was discovered 45 years ago. Away from the main towns, there is no real development, no roads, no electricity, no running water and no telephone.” The underdevelopment is so severe; the youth of the area are the hardest hit by lack of development. This is why many of them have resorted to militancy in an effort to focus national and international attention to their plight. Despite all the victims by the oil companies to be involved in the development of the region, it is to the contrary. The pervasive underdevelopment made Adati to note that, “the government and oil companies have profited by hundreds of billions of dollars since oil was discovered, yet most Nigerians living in the oil producing region are living in dire poverty.” Unemployment is very high among the people of the Niger Delta as the oil companies do not hire their employees from the region that produce the oil, but from non-oil producing regions of Nigeria.

The research study further revealed that there are numerous devastating effects of oil exploration and exploitation to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria the careless oil spillages and gas flaring emitted by oil firms has destroyed the very source of the economies upon which the Niger Delta depends upon. Collins (2018, p.42), enumerated several malicious damages caused by oil exploration to the environment of the Niger Delta to include but not limited to; destruction of arable soil, deforestation, destabilizations of the physicochemical properties of the oil, pollution of drinking waters, alienation of the people from cultural inheritance and practices, air pollution, social and communal conflicts, global warming, heavy down pour, cancerous sun, noise pollution and social vices. The researcher



confirms this allegation to be true when he observed engine oil that spilled in his compound killed the crops planted in their darden.

According to Yakubu (2017, p.33), he observed that Nigerian government and Shell have paid little attention to the cry of have been Niger Delta people whose ecosystem, ecology and consequently, means of livelihood have been severely impacted. The recent effort channeled towards environmental justice by the improvised Ogoni people culminated in the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP). MOSOP led protest, sustained and continued struggle to end the prevailing environmental degradation in the Niger Delta which gave birth to youth restiveness in the region.

To Nlerum (2013, p.16), youth restiveness is defined as a sustained protest embarked upon to constituted authority by an organized body of youths. Youth restiveness is marked by violence and disruption of lawful activities in whichever society it occurs. Cases of youth's restiveness which took place in the study area occurred mainly in the rural areas of the region such as in Umechem, Choba, the Ogoni saga and other numerous agitations and protest in other Niger Delta regions.

In the last decade and more there has been a proliferation of cases all over the country and indeed the world, of youth agitations which have tons of people dead and valuable infrastructure as well as personal properties lost and destroyed.

A sustained protestation embarked upon to enforce a desired outcome from a constituted authority by an organized body of youths, fits the label of youth restiveness. It is also a combination of any action or conduct that constitutes unwholesome, socially unacceptable activities engaged in by the youths in any community.

It is a phenomenon which in practice has led to a near breakdown of law and order, low productivity due to disruption of production activities, increasing crime rate, intra-ethnic hostilities, and harassment of prospective developers and other criminal tendencies.

This scourge has been around for a long time and it looks as though it is defying solutions. In Nigeria for instance, the Niger Delta region which is unarguably the bedrock of the oil industry in Nigeria permeated the news for a lengthy period of time as the youths of that region tried various means of getting government and oil companies to pay attention to their dire conditions of living and alleviate their sufferings since according to them, the resources which is building the nation is flowing from their land so by virtue of that they should also be partakers of its benefits. This strife led to a rise in kidnapping and vandalization of oil pipelines, militancy as well as other vices that were being perpetrated (collins, 2018, p.98)

4.3 Remedies to enhance oil exploration and underdevelopment

The Federal government should ensure the wildest possible consultation with the people who will be affected by oil exploration and installation in their planning. To collins (2018, p.89) this action will prevent some future agitation, protest and youth restiveness. He also suggested that the federal government should as a matter of urgent measure embark on massive provision of infrastructure like roads, schools, scholarships, electricity, hospitals and periodic free medical services as these will enhance the living standard of host communities. According to Adati (2012, p.36), government should ensure that the benefits from oil trickle down from the state and the oil companies to the host communities. Adati added that



contracts should be secured to the host communities by oil companies and gas industries from time to time as that will give them a sense of belonging.

To Etete (2009, p.69), the multi-national corporations should imbibe the concept of peace, mortality, harmony, commitment and progress towards host communities' development agenda. Also, there should be a well reformed performance of Niger Delta Development Corporation (NDDC) and the ministry of Niger Delta devoid of administrative and political intimidation or oppression.

4.4 Research Findings

Findings from the research question one reveals that Provision of infrastructure such as building of dams for electricity production, construction of roads, Provision of social amenities such as building of health centers, hospitals, equipping them and periodic free medical services, building of schools and awarding of scholarships and provision of portable water among others are some of the benefits of oil exploration in Nigeria.

Findings from research question two also revealed some devastating effects of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria such as environmental degradation through deforestation, gas flaring and air pollution which causes respiratory diseases, pollution of water sources which kills the aquatic lives and farmland, destroying crops as result of oil spillage which puts many people out from their primary occupation, leaving the host communities unemployed and struggling with poor living standards.

Furthermore, the findings from research question three revealed that consultation by government and oil companies with host communities through effective discussion and negotiations when making oil exploration policies is vital, thereby including their yearning and aspirations in their decision making process. Also, government and oil companies should engage in the provision of electricity, construction of roads, building of schools, hospitals, health centers, provision of portable water and job creation among others will enhance oil exploration and development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

5. CONCLUSION

From the study of Niger-Delta as regards oil exploration and underdevelopment, the conflicts in the Niger-Delta have been rightly describe as a threat to the process of democratization in Nigeria. The communities that make up the Niger-Delta have continued to play high prices for being host to the wealth of the Nation. The issue of environmental and social justice to the people of Niger Delta remains central for achieving stability in the Nigerian State. The clamour for freedom from central authority and self determination by various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria like Ijaws, Ogonis the Ithsirietc and demand for resource control by them is as a result of devastation of their environment by oil multinationals. These people have been marginalized, oppressed, neglected without remedies. This has made the youth restive, continually fighting for their emancipation.

Recommendations

1. Federal government should ensure the wildest possible consultation with the people who will



- be affected by oil installation in their planning.
2. Oil companies should partner proactively with the oil host communities and should imbibe the concept of peace, harmony, commitment and progress towards their host development agenda.
 3. There should be increase transparent negotiation, dialogue and bargaining adopted by the federal government during disagreement and dispute between oil bearing host communities and oil companies rather than the use of force against the communities.
 4. Government and the MNCs should seek to improve the quality of life of the areas of oil exploration activities by urgently embarking on massive provision of infrastructure like road, school, scholarship, electricity and hospital etc.
 5. The harassment of individual and organizations that engage in research into the activities of oil industries to ascertain the compliances of oil companies in meeting the environmental, international and industrial standard should be stop.
 6. The federal government should appoint an independent judicial inquiry into the action of his security forces in the oil producing areas and make public finding of their enquiry.
 7. They should put to trail those alleged to be responsible for human right abuse The national assembly should as a matter of fair play review the 13% derivation principle and should increase to 40- 50% to reflect the standing during the 1960-1963 era which people fill was close to the practice of true federalism.
 8. Development issues should not be politicized and government and MNCs should contribute immensely towards the development of the area of operation.
 9. MNCs should attach priority to the payment of compensations for damages that result from operation without delay to avoid agitation and youth restiveness.
 10. Government and MNCs should always take steps to enhance, resuscitate and improve on the environmental degradation challenges of the people of the Niger Delta.
 11. Corruption and bad governance should be checked through effective periodic auditing of accounts and ensuring that defaulters are severely punished to serve as lesson to others to desist from such fraudulent acts of diversion of materials and equipment and misappropriation the people funds.

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