



Research Paper

## National Question, The Niger Delta And The Politics Of Revenue Allocation In Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** One of the most contending issues in contemporary Nigeria is the way the nationally accrued revenue should be allocated. The oil producing states of the Niger Delta in Nigeria believe that the federal government is perpetrating injustice against them, since the oil which is responsible for about 80% of national revenue is derived from their region, hence the series of conflicts between them and the federal government. This has resulted into the activities of militia groups crippling the national economy. This has become one of the teething challenges against the indivisibility of the national polity, Nigeria which is now called national question. This paper is conceived to underscore the national question from the Niger Delta region regarding to their resources and their unceasing agitation for better allocation from the national revenue. The various revenue allocation formulae to douse the tension associated with the revenue allocation from 1946 to date vis-a-vis their challenges were examined. This paper also attempted to proffer a policy strategy which looked at the allocation from the area of production of the resources. The secondary source of data collection such as documentary papers; government publications; library records; scholarly journal, newspapers; magazines; circular technical reports and guidelines as memoranda on the issue of the Niger Delta were consulted And useful in the paper. Resource Competition Theories were used to analyse the socio-political economic implications of the crisis on the Nigerian nation in this work.

**KEY WORDS:** Revenue allocation, National Question, Niger Delta, Development, Crisis

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, the most populous black nation of the world with an estimated population of about 170 million has over 250 ethnic groups and about 400 languages. Its political history has been characterized with a plethora of agitations, and in some cases has resulted into conflicts. From 1967 to 1970, the country had to fight a war of survival with unquantifiable loss of lives and property. These conflicts and agitations have since challenged the indivisibility of the nation as a country. All these culminated to be referred to as national question which in some cases must be resolved in the interest of the unity, peace and prosperity of the state and the citizenry. Momoh (2001) opines that these problems of resource control and revenue allocation pose a serious challenge to any nation where they exist. In Nigeria, the national question has since been associated with political instability, which includes high turn-over in the country's administration occasioned by military coups, inconclusive and contested electoral outcomes, and frequent changes in policy, political violence and crisis of legitimacy. Between 1960 till date (2018), there had been no less than eleven officially known coups. Seven of these – two in 1966 and one in 1975, 1983, 1985, 1993 and 1998 were successful and involved the government being overthrown; two were unsuccessful but bloody (1976, 1990); and three were nipped in the bud and officers involved were jailed or executed (1986, 1995). Politics in Nigeria, especially contestation for the state power and resources, tended to be organised around regional, ethnic and religious interests. The divisive issues emanating from this pattern of politics made resolution of what Nigerian social scientists refer to as the national question difficult (Osaghae, 1998).

The question thus is how the national question relates to the Niger Delta. Naanem (2001) posits that we cannot address the national question without connecting it to the cardinal notion of equity, justice and development for the diverse component parts of the Nigerian entity. There is a general perception in the Niger Delta that these attributes are lacking otherwise they could not have been producing resources that sustain the

nation and yet remain so poor, underdeveloped and marginalised. As they argue, about the main thing they get from oil is environmental degradation and conflicts over ownership of oil-bearing land they do not control. This has led to a profound disaffection and crises in the region which has further complicated the national question by enlarging the threats to the economic and political stability of the Nigerian state. The developmental challenges facing the Niger Delta are closely intertwined with the current patterns of violent conflicts and instability in the region. These challenges are multi-dimensional; and tackling them will require a thorough understanding of the drivers and dynamics of conflict escalation and de-escalation, as well as the links between conflict and poverty.

The percentage of people living in poverty in the Niger Delta is lower than the national average, according to United Nations Development Program (UNDP) figures for 2004. The Niger Delta performs poorly in comparison with the rest of the country on social indicators such as education, health and the quality of the natural environment. For example, the region has among the highest levels of infant mortality in Nigeria; some estimates place the level of youth unemployment at 40 percent in the Niger Delta. Rates of unemployment and under-employment in the Niger Delta states with large oil revenues are especially high, a condition that has contributed to youth restiveness (World Bank, 2008).

In the last one decade and a half decades, the Nigeria's Niger Delta question has become seemingly irresolvable. The region plays host to the most violent ethnic militia groups in the country with the aim to totally destroy the capacity of the Nigerian state (The Guardian, Sunday, January, 14, 2007). The problems are acute and complicated because of the recurring incidence of citizenship contestation, communal and youth violence; with killings, pipeline vandalism, kidnappings and destruction of both private and government property on a large scale, which have raised a number of crucial issues in national discourse. Moreover, the phenomenal increase of citizenship-based conflicts since 29 May 1999 has raised awareness of the fundamental importance of constitutional reforms. In particular, with the incidence of inter-group violence in the country, the question of how to sustain and consolidate democracy in Nigeria has become more crucial than ever before. More importantly, there are concerns over the sustainability of democratisation project in Nigeria and the very survival of the state which stem largely from the poor performance of government. This is because, in the contestation and conflicts, how the issues involved are played out and how they are resolved or not resolved have serious implications for democratisation in particular and the state, society and the economy in general (PEFS, 2004).

The Niger Delta question is perceived mainly in the delivery of social justice, equity and equality. For this delivery to be possible they have identified certain basic conditions: rapid development, revenue allocation, states and local; government creation, self determination, resource control and environmental protection.

Deductively from the above the paper examines dynamics of the agitation in the Niger Delta vis-a-vis the call for acceptable and equitable revenue formula and resource control. The paper will also proffer policy statements on the way by which this agitation can be attenuated.

### **Conceptual clarification**

#### **Niger Delta: A Problem of Definition**

One great challenge with the Niger Delta is the problem of what actually is the area described as Niger Delta. In one of its series titled "The Niger Delta Question: Background to Constitutional Reforms", Programme on Ethnic and Federal Studies observed that:

The attempt to link certain manifestations of the social, economic and political problems of the Niger Delta with the ongoing debates on the contradictions in the organisation of the Nigerian federal state has created a problem of definition in understanding the Niger Delta situation (PEFS: 2004:9).

Niger Delta can therefore be defined politically, administratively, functionally, geographically, ethnologically linguistically and culturally. Niger delta is the largest wetland in Africa, and the second in the world. It covers an area of 70,000km square and consists of a number of ecological zones – sandy, coastal ridge barrier, brackfish or saline mangroves, freshwater, permanent and seasonal swamp forests and lowland rain forests. The whole area is transverse and criss-crossed by a large number of rivers, Streams, rivulets, creeks and twenty estuaries – Forcados, Escravos, Benue, and Ramos in the western flanks and dodo, Pennington Digotoru, Middleton, Koluama, Fishtown, Sangana, Nun, Brass, St Nicholas, San Barbara, San Bartholomew, New Kalabari, Andoni, and Opobo (Azaiki, 2007).

Azaiki (2007:22-23) further posits that:

Some people define the Niger Delta in terms of its ethnography, as the region occupied principally by the Ijaw peoples together with a variety of smaller ethnic groups, including the Itshekiri, the Urobo and the Isoko peoples in the western part of the Delta... On the other and (sic), many Nigerians perceive the Niger Delta as synonymous with the oil-producing areas of Nigeria. In their own thinking, the Niger Delta is the same as the

oil-producing areas. In other words, Niger Delta includes the following states: Abia, Imo, Edo, Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Akwalbom and Ondo states.

Ekpo (2004) submits that the Niger Delta lies in the southern part of Nigeria, stretching from the Nigeria Cameroon boundary in the East to Ogun – Ondo states boundary in the West. The area is bounded in the north by Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra, Kogi and Ekiti states, with the Atlantic coast forming the general boundary in the South. The Niger Delta comprises about 1,600 communities in nine states, namely, Abia, Akwalbom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. According to PEFS (2004), this definition is political. This description which is synonymous to oil producing areas in Nigeria is a modern perception that has over the years been shaped or sharpened by developmental and administrative convenience. The quest of government and other stakeholders to conveniently administer, relate with or extend some entitlements to oil-bearing areas seem to be the main reason the area is so coined. The core Niger Delta was previously limited to a few states in the South-South geopolitical zone with commercial oil reserves and rivers which empty themselves to the Atlantic Ocean.

Contributing to the debate on definition, Naanem (2001:217) posits that:

The debate has given rise to what could be regarded as two conceptions of Niger Delta – geographical Niger Delta and the political Niger Delta. The World Bank (1995: iv) defines the Niger Delta in territorial terms as encompassing over 20,000 km square in south-eastern Nigeria with Rivers (and now Bayelsa state) and delta consisting 80 percent of the Niger Delta. One could add the thin slice of Ondo and Akwalbom states to make up the remaining 20 percent. The Willink Commission (1958) had taken a narrower view of the Niger Delta by recommending, for the constitution of the Niger Delta Development Board only parts of the present River and Bayelsa states. Applying this implicit definition would exclude even the present Delta state.

He goes further to asserts that the political Niger Delta comprises all the states that constitute the proposed Niger Delta Development Commission. Therefore, our use of the term Niger Delta in agreement with Naneem (2001) will embrace both the geographical and political Niger Delta. Geographically, the Niger Delta concept is identical with the South-South zone.

Demographically, the current population of the Niger Delta is 45 million, constituting almost 24 percent of Nigeria's total population. The states with the largest populations are Rivers, Delta, Akwalbom and Imo (FRN 2007). There are indications of a predominance of males in the population of the Delta: 54:46 according to the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Master Plan (NDDC 2005); 52:48 according to the provisional 2006 census figures. This trend may be due to the influx of migrant males from other parts of Nigeria. The population is youthful: 62 percent are below 30 years of age, while 36 percent are between 30 and 69, and just 2 percent aged 70 and above. The age structure of the population has important implications for development planning, making social investment a crucial need (United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP) 2006; World Bank, 2008).

PEFS 2004:12 contends that:

The problem of defining the Niger delta is further compounded by the attempts of scholars to explain the series of related problems in terms of “oil and community disturbances” or as “the Niger Delta crisis” or simply “the Niger Delta problems”. It has also been referred to as “minority agitations” in the contest of national questions...they are invariable tied to oil in one way or the other.

Despite all these, our definition of the Niger Delta shall embody all the above and shall also include all the oil producing areas of the Niger Delta.

### **National Question**

The concept of ‘National question’ has a long history. It came into serious intellectual discussion in 1905 when Rosa Luxemburg first raised it as a likely problem for Marxist universalistic materialism (Onyeoziri, 2001: 36). Onimode (2001:63) underscoring the historical background of national question pointed out that: Since Stalin’s epochal discourse on Marxism and the National Question (1913), the issue has expanded and become globalized.

From the Balkans to the Cape in South Africa, from Peru to the Fiji Islands in the Pacific, the national question has taken on the spectre of a self-igniting wild fire across the comity of nations. The issues range from the traditional land rights claims of aboriginal people in the USA, Canada, Australia, the Pacific and Africa, to the arbitrary colonial boundaries that scattered single nationalities across several states, to post-colonial struggles for equitable accommodation and effective democratic participation in development progresses (Onimode, 2001: 63).

Scholars submitted that, the national question is a question about the nation, and one form that (the) question can take is the following: what policy about the nation or nationalities can guarantee enduring stability for the state? The national question therefore is the question of whether relations among people conscious of their separate identities shall be based on liberty equality and fraternity (Adebanwi, 2002).

Deducing from this, Toyo (1993) further asserts that, the question is engendered by contradictions and signifies the difficulties and struggles that arise in effort to induce or coerce self-conscious cultural – linguistic groups of a state into larger organic formation or keep them in those larger moulds. Anyanwu (1993), asserts, that the general issues of the composition of the nation or the fundamental basis of the political existence of same are implicated in the national question. It is concerned with the political union, or the unity, integrity, autonomy, or viability of states as composed of ethnic groups or nations. Toyo (1993), applying the historical materialist method, relates the national question as a social phenomenon, to the totality of the socio-economic formation on which it is based. Among the relevant points identified are:

- i. Man has a need to be his own master but the rise of economic surplus in history encourages some to permanently dominate others. The conflict arising from this move and opposition to it leads to the national question.
- ii. Leaders of ethnic (or racial) groups which have advantage strengthen their domination in the socio-economic realm, while those who are disadvantaged struggle to terminate or reverse the hierarchy.
- iii. Exploitation, antagonistic competition, uneven development, and domination throw up and deepen the national question (Toyo, 1993; Adebawo, 2002).

Defining the national question has remained a problem. This position is buttressed by Ejembi (1985:906) when he submits that:

Much of the existing literature on the National question or nation building as some prefer to term the problematic, has miserably failed to even identify the nature of the problem, let alone point out correct ways to its solution.

Onyeoziri (2001) asserts, that the concept of nation is distinguishable from that of the state, as it is within the context of the state that the nation acquires its political significance. Therefore, any adequate understanding of the determinative character of the nation and national identity must necessarily lead to an equally inadequate understanding of the relationship between the state and the nation, and therefore, the national question. It is on this pedestal that Onyeoziri, (2001: 36) submits that:

Presumably the national question means some questions about the nation, but what exactly is the question (?) or may be the question should be regarded as synonymous for (sc) problem

Therefore in support of Ake (1986), who opines that national question is a problem that emerges when different nationalities are brought together under the political domination of one state structure. The national question can therefore be rather conceptualised in terms of how to liberate and harness the energies and loyalties of sub nationalism to the health of the state. In other words, how do we organise the state such that its recognition of the integrity and equity of the sub-national groups within it no longer poses a threat to its stability. Without mincing words, Oyovbaire (1989:385) states that:

By the national question, I mean the concrete problems of social existence arising from assertive competition among persons who possess multi-ethnic or multi-communal and regional consciousness (Oyovbaire , 1989:385).

In the same vein, Ajayi (1992) avers that the national question has to do with how to order the relations between the different ethnic, linguistic and cultural groupings so that they have same rights, privileged access to power and an equitable share of national resources. Accentuating this position, Onimode (2001:62-63) says:

The core of the national question then consist of political mobilisation and struggles by the satisfying and aggrieved groups to redress and exact more just and equitable accommodation, in the name of self determination. These struggles have ranged from those of minority ethnic nationalities for separate states and more recently for equitable resources and power sharing. It has also involved more localised but nationally consequential induced conflicts, between minority groups.

Also contending what national question is Abubakar (2006:2) asserts that:

The national question is the question about the social, economic and political survival of nations or a nation state. It is the intricate, complex and multifaceted nature of the engaging manner of relationships between/amongst peoples, groups and interest; their ideational system, their systemic rooting and their multi-fold attempts to find solutions to their common problems... The national question may be a struggle to institutionalise those values and principles or to subvert them.

Deductively, it is logical therefore, to conclude that the national question is about problem that exists when different ethnic and cultural groups inter relate, interact, and cohabit in the society. In Nigeria today, the



national question has been reduced to the nationalities question and this has been further reduced to the ethnic question. There is a near unanimity among a fraction of the political elite that the national question is nothing but the ethnic question. Hence the discourse about federalism is more about ethno-federalism, of politics, about ethnic politics, and economy of ethnic control or ownership of resources (a la resources control) (Abubakar, 2006).

### **Oil Politics and the Niger Delta Question**

Nigeria has a long history of minority question, which had fuelled separatist tendencies among the diverse ethnic nationalities that make up the country. The emergence of the minority question is organically linked with the creation of Nigeria as a colonial state by the British imperialists (Obi, 2002:97). Putting this in a more concrete term, Obi (2002:98) observes that:

The politicization of inter-ethnic group relations often referred to as national question is tied to the social relations spawned by the mode of colonial capitalist accumulation and the inequalities sown between the ethnic majority groups by the differential rate of capitalist penetration. In terms of patron-client relation that sustained this mode of peasant expropriation, the unequal trade, the majority ethnic groups using the advantage of demography and acting politically, were able to marginalise the other competing minority ethnic groups within the framework of the three regions: northern, eastern, and Western. Since each of the three regions in Nigeria coincides with a majority ethnic nationality, it established a basis for future distrust, fear of domination and instability in the Nigerian federation.

The discovery of oil changed the mode of trend of the majority-minority relations. This period coincided with the face-off between the federal government and the Eastern region under Ojukwu, which culminated in the 1967-1970 Nigerian Civil War. When the Nigerian Civil War ended in 1970, the oil minorities discovered the over-concentration of power and resources at the centre provided whoever held power at the federal level had the capacity to control and transfer resources, in this case of oil wealth, from the minorities to the majority ethnic nationalities. By the enactment of Decree 51 of 1969, the federal government legislated the monopoly of the collection and sharing of all oil revenue to itself. The monopoly was further extended by Decree 9 to include all offshore oil revenue from oil wells located in the coastal waters adjoining the oil producing minority states. In order to concretise its monopoly of oil revenues, the federal government changed the basis of the revenue formula from derivation in favour of the principles of equality and the population of states, thereby shutting off, and alienating the oil producing minorities from any direct access to oil – the new wealth of the nation (Obi, 2002). The oil issue has brought the struggle of oil minorities to the fore of the national question in Nigerian politics. Oil is paramount and central to the rentier state's capacity to produce its brand of patrimonialism.

It is observed that, Nigeria was a beneficiary of an oil boom of the 1970s and early 1980s. In 1975, the earnings from oil shot up from few hundred million naira to 4.733billion naira in 1980 (Olikoshi, 1990). The state, in spite of being awashed with petrol-dollars, remained outside the actual production of oil multinationals led by Shell. As such, the state was reduced to a collector of "oil rents or toll booty". The rentier economic nature of the Nigerian state transformed the state power into an authoritarian core sustained by a series of patron-client network terminating at the feet of a giant patron, and involving the depression of contending/opposition groups. This brings out clearly the strategic importance of the oil economy to the national question and the ongoing struggles between those who control and reap the gains from oil; and those whose access to it has been blocked (Obi, 2002). Obi 2002:102-103) also contends:

These struggle have reached an unprecedented pitch since 1990 in the form of massive protests in the Niger Delta, the emergence of a new brand of community activism and militancy led by pressure groups and popular movement, the emergence of very vocal spoke-persons and groups of the oil minorities who have not only acted nationally, but have also taken their cases to international for a. these groups have drawn up charters of demands and Bills of Rights insisting on the right to self-determination, a derivation-based redress in Nigeria's fiscal federation and adequate compensation for restoration of the oil producing environment whose devastation by the oil producing communities strikes at very core of the people's basis of existence and livelihood. Also, there have been demands for the restructuring of the Nigerian federation on the basis of the principle of true federation.

Oil has become more relevant in a context where oil is both the mainstay of the economy (since 1970s over 80 percent of the government revenues and 90 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings), and the fiscal basis of the state. The economic and debt crisis whose immediate roots lie in the collapse of global oil prices in the late 1970s and early 1980s exposed the fragile economic basis of the Nigeria Nation and its unity. On this note, Obi (2002:102) further asserts that:

With the deepening of economic crisis, continued devastation of the oil producing environment, and increasing federal expropriation of oil rents, have grown calls by the minorities for a redress in the distribution of oil rents

and international relations within Nigeria. Thus, oil and the distribution of oil revenues between and among the diverse nationalities made up Nigeria in a manner that is just, equitable and fair has become a central issue in the on-going struggles over oil. The oil minorities have become united around the issues of equity, fairness, justices and the right to self-determination in the struggle against Federal (and by implication majority nationality) hegemony and appropriation of oil revenue.

The discovery of oil has brought both curses and woes upon the Niger Delta area. These have manifested in the preponderance of environmental degradation and hardship that is experienced daily by the inhabitants. In the Niger Delta, the social and environmental costs of oil have been monumental. They include the destruction of wildlife, and bio-diversity, loss of farmland and damage to aquatic ecosystems- all of which have caused serious health problems to the inhabitants of the area. About 75% of gas produced in the Niger Delta are flared annually causing considerable ecological and physical damages to other resources such as land/soil, water and vegetable. Life has made unbearable as a result of 'gas flare' and oil spillage (Obi, 2002). Between 1976 and 1990, about 3,000 oil spill incidents were reported by the oil companies operating in Nigeria; within this period, over two million barrels of oil spilled into the country's territorial, coastal and offshore marine environment (Obi, 2002). Conjointly, between 1982 and 1992, 1,626,000 gallons of oil were spilled from the company's operation in 27 separate incidents. Shell admitted that there were at least 200 spillages of different sizes in a year in recent times (Agbu, 2005).

The formation of a film of oil in waters bodies adversely prevents natural aeration, resulting in the death of organisms tapped below the water surface. The drinking water, in a number of places in this area is heavily polluted. The contamination of ground water in the coastal environment is readily shown by the rise in the Millennium Permissible Concentration (MPC) of crude oil found in ground water. For example, the ground water in Port-Harcourt had MPC of 1.8 milligrams per litre in 1987 as against 0.1 milligram per litre recommended by the world Health Organisation (WHO).

These devastating environmental scourges, the fast deteriorating socio-economic condition and the attendant conflicts emanating from increasingly threaten the future ecosystem in the area. Over four decades of oil exploration has brought little benefits to the communities. In commenting on the politics of oil in Nigeria, Adejumbi (2002:155) posits that:

The politics of oil played a key role in this area, while oil which constitute the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, is sourced from the Niger Delta, the communities live in squalor and abject poverty, lacking basic amenities like feeder roads, electricity, pipe borne water, and cottage industries. The general perception in the area is that their marginalization is related to their minority status in the Nigerian federation; that the dominant ethnic groups use the resources gained from the oil producing areas to develop their own places. The fact that oil producing communities suffer serious ecological and environmental damages in form of water and air pollution, destruction of aquatic life, and land degeneration suggest that the people of the area are confronted with enormous dangers.

The case of Niger Delta is associated with the biblical diction of "muzzling the ox that treads the corn". Niger Delta produces the largest proportion of the nation's resources and wealth, yet has nothing in term of infrastructure to show for it. This has led to various and degrees of agitations and demands by the oil producing communities. According to Suberu (1996), the demands can be identified under five broad themes. These relates, respectively, to the disposition of mineral land rents; the application of the derivation principles to the allocation of federally collected mineral revenues, the appropriate institutional and fiscal responses to the ecological problems of the oil-prospecting areas, the responsibility of the oil-prospecting companies to the oil producing communities and the appropriate arrangements for securing the integrity and autonomy of the oil producing communities within the present federal structure (Suberu, 1996).

### **The Politics of Revenue Allocation in Nigeria and the Niger Delta Question**

Closely linked with the discovery of oil at the Niger Delta is the issue of revenue allocation and resource control. The most contentious national issue that also concerns the Niger Delta is the revenue allocation and resource control. This issue has a long historical antecedent. To a large extent, the Niger Delta's agitation for rapid development depends on the formula for sharing national revenue, which conversely will be used to develop their area. The allocation of resources has always been problematic because the resources have always been scarce. The reality in the Nigerian is that there are disproportionate contributory capacities to the national pool. The component units, not minding their revenue generating capacity, always embark upon annual budgets, which are to be financed from federal allocation accruing to them at any time. Since the federal Government is responsible for the authoritative allocation of values (Easton, 1957), which are the resources derived from nature or man from various states and accrued to the federal purse, the centre now becomes very attractive. This eventually generates conflicts since the states are not equally endowed. Lasswell's (1936) conception of politics as who gets what, how and when is apposite as the producers of the resources or the host communities or states

from which the resources are derived would strive to control the resources. The oil producing states believe that the Federal Government is perpetrating an act of injustice against them, hence the series of conflicts between them and the Federal Government. Each party strive to maximise the benefits in the political system and this engenders crises as divergent interests arise to make claims on the available scarce resources.

Revenue allocation is undoubtedly a sensitive issue tied inextricably to the national question. The sensitivity to the issue is understandable as it affects the distribution of national cake. The search for an acceptable revenue allocation formula led to the adoption of several principles and economics indices that have in various combinations be used, faulted, discarded and reinvented through instrumentalities of revenue allocation commissions such as Philipson's (1946), Hicks Philipson's (1951), Raisman's (1958), Binn's (1964), Dina's (1968), Aboyade's (1977), and Pius Okigbo's (1979) commissions.

Since 1946, a number of revenue allocation principle and criteria for using them have been recommended by each respective revenue allocation Commission, but no level of satisfaction has been attained due to perceived or actual inequalities inherent in the system. Find below is a table describing the various Commissions and decree for revenue allocation and their criteria for the allocation.

The Phillipson Commission of 1946 allocate to the regional governments a residue of the budgetary needs of the central government. The distribution of the regional allocation was based on the twin principles of derivation and even progress/development. The Hicks-Phillipson Commission of 1951 while retaining the principle of derivation included that of need and national interest and provided for the fiscal autonomy of the regions (East, West and North). In addition, provisions were also made for spherical grants to the regions for education and police protection. In the Chicks Commission's report of 1953, emphasis was placed on the principle of derivation in allocating resources to the regions. Raisman Commission of 1958 revisited the principle of need and balanced development, while retaining derivation and fiscal autonomy. The commission assigned the following percentages share to the regions:

North	40%
West	31%
East	24%
Southern Cameroons	5%

The Binns Commission of 1964 with the realignment of the boundary with the Cameroons and the creation of the Mid-Western region, the following formula became operational:

North	42%
East	30%
West	20%
Mid-West	8%

With the creation of 12 more states in 1967 by Gowon's regime, a revision of revenue sharing formula was effected through military Decree (No. 15, 1967). The basic principle of allocation in the previous Commissions report was retained. The six states created out of the Northern region were regarded as equal and each was assigned one-six of the region 42% i.e. 7% per each of the states. The remaining six states from the southern states were to share the balance on population basis. The Dinna Committee of 1968 upheld the principles of need, even development and derivation and introduced minimum responsibility of government as a revenue sharing criterion. In addition, it recommended the establishment of permanent revenue planning and fiscal commission which was however rejected by the government. Decree 13 of 1970 recognised two revenue sharing principles of population and equality of states. Each principle was allocated 50% of the distributable pool account. The Decree also reduced export duties going to the states from 100% to 60%, fuel duty from 10% to 50% and mining rents and royalties from 50% to 45%. Decree 13 of 1970 tended as could be seen to increase the amount of revenue going to the federal Government while reducing those of the states. The Decrees No.9 of 1971 and No. 6 of 1975 retained the principles of population and equality of states as a way of sharing revenue among states. However, it removed from the states pool, the entire rents and royalties from off-shore petroleum mining. The states share was reduced from 45% to 20%.The Aboyade Committee of 1977 recommended the establishment of a Federation Account, a common pool into wish all federally collected revenue (except the Personal Income tax of members of the armed forces, external affairs, staff and residence and non-residence of the Federal Capital Territory and members of the Nigerian Police Force) would be paid and shared among the three tiers of government (Ikeji, 2011).

The disbursement of the federation account is as follows:

Federal government	57%
State government	30%

Local government	10%
Special Grant Account	3%
Three years later, Okigbo Presidential Commission of 1980 was set up and at the end of its sitting; it recommended the following formula for sharing the federation account:	
Federal government	53%
State government	30%
Local government	10%
Special funds	5%.

Later on, the Government White Paper on the Commission report increased the share of the Federal Government by 2% which brought it to 55% and lowered the local government share to 8% while those of the state government and spherical fund remained unchanged. On the principles to use in the allocation, the following principles were recommended:

- i. Population 40%
- ii. National Minimum Standard for National Integration 40%
- iii. Social Development factor 15%
- iv. Internal Revenue Effort 5%

Okigbo's Commission recommendation on horizontal basis i.e. sharing of revenue on certain principles among the states was accepted by the Federal Government. It should be noted that it was Okigbo's Commission recommendations in 1980 that formed the basis of the 1981 Revenue Allocation Act. The structure that emerged was as follows:

Federal government	55% (unchanged)
State government	30.5% (changed by 0.5%)
Local government	10% (increased by 2%)
Special funds	4.5% (decreased by 2.5%)

With the resurgence of the military government in December 31, 1983 after four years and three months with democratic governance, the Buhari military regime through Revenue Amendment Decree No. 36 of 1984 modified the 1981 Revenue Act and introduced a new formula as follows:

Federal government	55% (remained unchanged)
State government	32.5% (changed by 2%)
Local government	10% (remained unchanged)
Special funds	2.5% (decreased by 2%)

There was grouse particularly among the oil producing areas that the 2% and 1.5% kept aside for derivation and development of mineral producing areas were inadequate. Obviously, the amount of money involved as per these percentages were significant compared to the amount of ecological damaged and deprivation of these communities from farming and fishing activities on account of oil exploration over the years (Offiong, 2010).

During the Babangida's administration through Decree 49 of 1989, a permanent Commission to oversee revenue sharing arrangement was constituted. The name of the Commission was labelled National Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (NRMAFC). Apart from the allocation of revenue, this agency was charged with the responsibility of mobilising revenue and ensuring fiscal efficiency. The establishment of this agency was seen as a major breakthrough in the mobilisation and distribution of revenue throughout the federation. Despite the creation of (NRMAFC), the question surrounding revenue allocation still remains mostly a political one which obviously involves apolitical process. The Commission undertook a comprehensive review and came up with the following recommendations:

Federal government	47%
State government	30%
Local government	15%
Special funds	8%

Government approved the Commission's recommendations with the following modifications:

Federal government	50%
State government	30%
Local government	15%
Special funds	5%



It should be noted that the Federal Government usually have the largest share of these allocations. This could probably be justified on the basis of the responsibilities born by the Federal Government. Whatever may be the case, the trend has been a consistent one.

NRMAFC further recommended the following formula for revenue sharing among the states:

Equality of states	40%
Populations	30%
Internal Revenue Effort	20%
Social Development Factor	10%

The social development factor hitherto limited to primary school enrolment has now been broadened to include health, landmass, and terrain. The Government later approved the following formula:

Equality of states	40%
Populations	30%
Social Development Factor	10%
Internal Revenue Effort	10%
Land Mass and Terrain	10%

Decree 3, 1991 by the Federal Military Government transferred the responsibility of primary education to Local Governments (formerly shared by the three tiers of government). This action led to the emergency of a new revenue allocation formula as follows:

Federal government	50%
State government	25%
Local government	20%
Special funds	5%

This was effective in 1992 but within six months of the adoption of the formula, the Federal Government effected another adjustment which reduced further the states' share by 1%, the Federal Government's share was equally reduced by 1.5%. Before Babangida left office, the following formula for sharing revenue emerged in January 1992:

Federal government	48.5%
State government	24%
Local government	20%
Special funds	7.5%

In 1994, the new military government under general Abacha set up a constitutional conference. This issue became a contentious in the failed National Political and Constitutional Reform Conference in which the Niger Delta regional representatives demanded for 50% of the revenue. Though, the National Conference recommended an increase in the level of derivation from 13% - 17% pending the report of an expert commission. Delegates from the South-south however insisted on 50%, but were willing to accept 25% in the interim with gradual increase to attain 50% over a period of 5 years (Agagu and Olatubora, 2005). Eventually, it was agreed to allocate 13% of the revenue derived from mineral producing areas to the affected state government. This was not to be until the proposed new constitution was promulgated in May 1999.

In Nigeria, the search for a fair and rational system of allocation remains unresolved. The issue has often been met with conflict rather than resolution in the political arena because policy makers are steered more by regional or political interests than by objectivity (Ikein, 1990). The advent of democracy in 1999 has not been able to reduce the tension generated by the appropriate revenue formula in Nigeria. Despite the constitutional provision, the elected civilian government of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo refused to implement it. Instead, it appointed a Committee to review the 1999 Constitution. The Committee recommended that the derivation formulae be increased substantially beyond the 13 percent minimum as recommended in the 1999 Constitution. The government refused to accept this recommendation. Rather, the government asked the Supreme Court to declare that the derivation principle does not apply to offshore oil. The Supreme Court, in its landmark judgement in April 2002 agreed with the position of the federation government. The uproar, especially from some of the affected oil producing states, and the imminence of the April 2003 general elections however made the federal government to cede some grounds to the states on the issue. The legitimacy of such concessions however remains in doubt. This is especially so given the fact that the Supreme Court has already interpreted the constitutional provisions on the matter. It could therefore be argued that only a constitutional amendment can effect a change to the existing position. The revenue allocation debate is therefore likely to continue unless a new system is enthroned which will change the nation's focus from revenue sharing to revenue generation.

## **II. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Nations exist for the welfare needs of its citizenry, whenever these needs are not met, agitations are conterminous. Niger Delta Question cannot be discussed in isolation without Nigeria's national question i.e. in isolation from the general issues in the country. We cannot address the Niger Delta question without connecting it to the cardinal notion of equity and justice for diverse component parts of Nigerian entity (Naneen, 2001). In the course of this study, it was discovered that there is a general perception in the Niger Delta that these attributes are lacking, otherwise they could not have been producing the resources that sustain the nation and yet remain so poor, underdeveloped, and marginalized. As they argue, the main thing they get from oil is environmental degradation and conflicts over ownership of oil-bearing land that they do not control.

The oil rich Niger Delta in Nigeria which produces the national wealth is characterised with poverty, infrastructural decay, and economic impoverishment and these have pose a serious challenge of mitigation. The civic approaches are repressed by the government/state; this has led to the emergence of various ethnic militias that daily send jitter to the national spine. The approach adopted by the state to the problem of the Niger Delta as exemplified by the activities of the militias is criminalised. They are braded as 'disgruntled', 'misguided elements', or 'terrorists' organisations rather than distilling the salient issues that constitute the basis of their emergence and activities, which is predicated on injustice, inequality and inequity meted to them by the state through exploitation and expropriation of their resources and the attendant impoverishment, pauperisation, degradation, and neglect.

To the people in the region, development is cardinal, which is expected to be the joint responsibility of the government and the oil producing companies that have established a partnership for exploitation of resources of the region. This quest has also been central to the social ferment in the region. It has been responsible for the call for local autonomy and even the demand for a Sovereign National Conference.

Revenue allocation has remained consistent and contentious as ever. The people at the region have always hinged their quest for accelerated development on the formula for sharing national revenue and have argued for derivation principle. The principle has had a roller-coaster career in the country's revenue allocation politics – 100 percent between 1953 and 1959 through 2 percent during the second republic under ShehuShagari's presidency to the current 13 percent under the 1999 constitution. Two demands are currently in vogue in the oil-producing states: first, that the 13 percent derivation formula should be effective the date 1999 constitution came into effect, that is May 29, 1999 instead of January 2000 as the government made it. Second, that the derivation principle should now be applied 100 percent! The argument for local control has logically led to the call for the abolition of such laws as the land Use Act and Petroleum Act, which have been the main instruments for expropriating the resources of the Niger Delta. These laws are further entrenched by the Exclusive Economic Zone Act of 1978. This legislation vested in the central government exclusive sovereign rights with respect to the exploitation of natural resources of the sea bed, sub-oil and adjacent waters of the exclusive zone up to 200 miles from the sea shore.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is important for the government and the policy makers to restructure the economy in such a way that the oil producing communities should have a control over their resources.

Restructuring also should be done in such a way that these oil producing communities should be reverted to the period when revenue allocation was 100 percent between 1953 and 1959 or better still they should have 50% of the revenue as against the current 13%.

All obnoxious laws such as the land Use Act and Petroleum Act, which make all the land in the country to be controlled by the federal government, should be abrogated. This will enable the communities to control their lands and resources.

The political leaders from the region should be made to be more accountable to the people, communities and electorates.

Development of the region should be a priority to the all the levels of government: federal, states and local governments. A massive infrastructural development programme should be embarked upon by the government.

The government should create and fund more intervention agencies that will be saddled with the responsibilities of socio-political and economic development of the oil producing region or communities.

The youth of these communities should be productively engaged by the government through employment, training on vocations that will make them self employed and dependent rather than becoming security concern in the area.

The government should also make the issue of security to be a priority. Lives and properties of the people vis-a-vis the oil producing companies and staff should be adequately protected.

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### **3.1An Overview of the Niger Delta Crisis**

The discovery of oil in commercial quantities in the late 1950's has become a cynosure of both national and international oil interests. The reason for this development is not difficult to fathom. The Niger Delta region accounts for 80% of Nigeria's oil industry (Olojede, Fajonyomi, Akhabe and Mudashiru, 2000). This has made the region, according to Khan, the gold mine of the country's wealth. In his words:

Since oil was discovered at Oloibiri, the Niger Delta basin has proved to be the most prolific producing area in Nigeria, containing seventy eight oil fields, including the largest, forcados and Yorke (Khan, 1994:40)

Apart from its oil wealth, the Niger Delta region has been described as fragile and complex (Olojede (2000). This is due partly to its "vast interface between land and water. It is said to comprise 26 language groups. In the last one and half decades, Nigeria's Niger Delta question has become seemingly un-resolvable. The region plays host to the most violent ethnic militia groups in the country with the aim to totally destroy the capacity of the Nigerian government (The Guardian, Sunday, January 14, 2007). The problems are acute and

complicated because of the recurrent incidence of citizenship contestation. Communal and youth's violence with killings, pipeline vandalism kidnappings and destruction of both private and government property on a large scale which have raised a number of crucial issue in both national and international discourse.

In recent times, oil pollution has become an issue of serious concern to oil producing communities due to its deleterious effect on human and material resources of the people. In spite of the rich potentials and abundant wealth, the region is blessed with good agricultural land, fertile forests, excellent fisheries, as well as a rich reservoir of oil and other minerals. Its future is however threatened by deteriorating ecological conditions that are not addressed by government politics and actions.

The insensibility of government at various levels and the oil corporations operating in the area, have created more tension and crisis that have threatened the peace and security of the nation.

The struggles over oil, particularly the quest to correct the perceived injustices embedded in the separation of those that profit from the oil production and commoditization (Multinational Countries, MNCs and the Nigerian ruling elites), from the others (dispossessed local inhabitants) whose land and waters the oil is extracted, has led to the violent agitation in the Niger Delta region (Obi, 2010; Oluduro and Oluduro, 2012). The Publicity and tempo of the agitation for environmental justice increased in the region with the formation of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) in August 1990; the November, 1995 hanging of Saro – Wiwa and eight Ogoni compatriots; the punitive expedition against the inhabitants of Odi in February, 2000; the formation of the Ijaw Youth Council in December 11, 1998 and the famous Kaiama declaration on December 11, 1998. Other groups that were formed during these periods include the Movement for the Survival of Ijaw Ethnic Nationality (MOSIEN), Community Right Initiative (CORI); Niger Delta Woman for Justice (NDWJ); Chiccoco Movement; IjawNatioanl Congress and Egbesu National Congress.

These groups continued to criticize the government and the oil MNCs for the environmental drainage caused due to the oil exploration activities by the MNCs. In 2005, the pattern of agitation shifted from unarmed peaceful protest and demonstration used by these groups like the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND); Egbesu Boys; Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), and others to the extent that the whole region had become highly militarized (Oluduro and Oluduro, 2012). Their activities have spread armed resistance resulting in hostage taking, kidnapping of expatriates, pipeline vandalism, closure of flow stations and gross insecurity of lives and properties in the area. The cumulative effects and quasi-military resistance by the Niger Delta Youth have been enormous in terms of human, financial, and economic sacrifices. The impact of hostage taking has come to be regarded as national malady afflicting the soul of the nation's economy. It is more hazarded as nation's output is the worse with the loss of 600,000 barrels of crude oil per day. Nigeria's daily oil revenue loss for 2006 was a whopping \$700,000,000 (The Punch, Friday, February 9, 2007:15).

Conversely, the Nigerian economy has been worse for it. In 2006 alone, Nigeria lost \$4.47 billion in oil revenue due to the crisis in the Niger Delta.

### **3.2 Amnesty programme**

On June 25, 2009, the then President, Late AlhajiShehuYar'Adua granted amnesty to all persons who have been directly or indirectly involved in militant activities in the Niger delta. The crisis had become a national embarrassment to Nigeria locally and internationally. It was a political solution to the crisis. The militants had only 60 days to embrace amnesty and anyone caught in the act of militancy thereafter will be prosecuted. The militants are expected to lay down their weapons and vacate the creek. They were to be trained locally and abroad. This is expected to restore peace to the Niger Delta.

On October 4, the Nigerian Government formally ended its amnesty programme for the militants in the Niger Delta. The programme had met with limited success and even response from the militant groups. Despite the hundreds of billions of dollars brought in by the oil, basic human needs remain unmet. Only 61% of Nigerian children have access to primary education, and fewer than 45% have access to secondary education. Poverty is the starkest in the states of the main oil-producing region, the Niger delta. Large numbers of villages have no access to electricity, clean water, health care, job or education. Despite the campaign of the federal government to end militancy in the Niger delta, and the promise of development, nothing but a military campaign against the militants has been forthcoming. Promised actions have shown few results so far. The newly created Ministry of the Niger Delta has 50% of its budget dedicated to a single road project. The previous Nigerian government presidents had announced roughly \$22 billion in infrastructural development and job creation by various multi-national corporations from the West and Asia. These projects have also failed to materialize under the current administration, further underscoring the complete absence of progress in alleviating poverty in the region.

The government plan amounted to bribery, where militants' were rewarded with cash for turning in weapons. Some prominent leaders took part in the programme. Recently, militants under MEND leader came to the street to protest the fact that they had received no money from the settlement.



### **3.3 Insurgency in Nigeria and the amnesty policy: the Niger Delta militancy: prospects and challenges**

#### **a. Amnesty programme**

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The federal government of Nigeria had employed various strategies to contain the insurgency at the Niger Delta to no avail. Rather than ameliorate the crisis, made it aggravated. Following his inauguration in May, 2007, the late President UmaruYar'Adua inaugurated a Technical Committee on the Niger Delta. The committee, under the chairmanship of DrLeduMitee, the chairman of MOSOP, recommended amnesty with incorporated disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation of the Militants among others.

#### **b. Implementation of the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme: prospects**

As posited by Urbenin (2013), the proclamation of amnesty in the Niger Delta by the former president Yar'Adua, on 25 June 2009 received commendation from the National Council of States. The Nigerian government demonstrated commitment to the programme through financial allocation which amounted to N127billion between 2009 and 2011.

**Table 4. 1: budget received by the Niger Delta amnesty programme, 2009-2011**

Year	Budget receipt (N)	Purpose
2009	3bn	Programme take off
2010	30bn	Feeding, stipends and reintegration for ex-militants
2011	90bn	Feeding, stipends and reintegration for ex-militants
Total	N127bn	

Source: Ubhenin: 2013:194.

Deductively from the above table N127billion was initially budgeted for the programme for 2009 – 2011. A further analysis has shown that of that amount, N3billion was spent in 2009 as takeoff grant for the initiatives, while N30billion and N96 billion were spent respectively in 2010 and 2011 for feeding, payment of stipends and training of the ex-militants. The fund is also expected to be used in re-integrating the ex-militants back into the civil live. Another N74 billion, was allocated for the programme in the 2012 budget and the budget for the amnesty programme in 2013 was N66, 781,093.03 (Ibitoye, 2004, Amnesty Office, 2014).

In analyzing the activities of the so far, Mr Kingsley Kuku, the Chairman, Presidential Amnesty Programme posits that 11,828 former militants had graduated from universities within and outside the country, out of the number 11,700 former militants graduated from the skills acquisition centres and 128 graduated from universities in the united Kingdom and Malaysia (Amnesty office, 2014).

According to him:

Those employed included 10 with Nigeria army and six with the Nigerian customs services. The Century Energy Group employed 40, while SAP Drilling Oil and gas Limited engaged five and another 30 are working with the Proclad Group in Dubai, UAE. Pursuant to our carefully worked out post-training policy, we



are currently setting up 2000 of the graduates of our skill acquisition programme in small businesses. This post-training policy is designed to help several already trained delegates to become self-employed and subsequently become employers of labour themselves. Our women programme has over 500 people in various training programmes, including hospitality and fashion design. Several are still in line to attend their programmes in Nigeria and Europe (Amnesty office, 2014:1)

He pointed out that out of 30,000 people enlisted in the amnesty programme, 12,031 had undergone vocational training within and outside Nigeria. 5315 are in the universities in the UK, USA, South Africa, Malaysia, Canada, United Arabs Emirates, Kaplan colleges as well as private Universities in Nigeria.

Kuku further points out:

31 of our delegates are already qualified commercial pilots. They are currently undergoing type-rating at the famous Lufthansa aviation Academy in aircraft Engineering and Maintenance (Amnesty Office, 2014).

Furthermore, it is axiomatic that relative peace has been restored to the region due to cease-fire heralded by the programme of amnesty. The country's oil output had risen to 2.3 million barrels a day from 800,000 barrels per day (in the 2006-2008 periods) as a result of the improvement in security in the oil region (Igwe, 2010). An increment of 1.5 million barrels per day indicates 120.45 million dollars of revenue to national coffers everyday (Igwe, 2010; Oluduro and Oluduro, 2012). This lush of peace enabled some companies to repair some of their damaged oil facilities.

The amnesty programme is expected to improve the human capital development of the country which is presently low. Nigeria's Human Development Index value (comprising three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living) for 2011 stands at 0.459, positioning the country at 156 out of 187 countries and territories (UNDP 2011). In contributing to this, Oluduro and Oluduro (2012) contend that:

If well implemented, the amnesty programme in Nigeria, could serve to negate the 'resource curse' theory that resource-rich economies such as Nigeria, Congo, Angola etc are more prone to mismanagement, underdevelopment and violence. Examples of UK and Norway, both major oil exporting countries, reveal that resources curse is avoidable with functioning institutions and good governance in place (Oluduro and Oluduro, (2012:52).

The amnesty programme in no doubt has improved the nation's economy. According to the Kuku: Prior to the amnesty proclamation, unending violent agitations by the youths and communities of the Niger delta virtually crippled the economy and social activities in the Niger Delta. At the peak of the crisis in 2009, Nigeria's crude production fell from 2.2 million barrels per day to as low as 700,000 barrels per day. Owing to the relative peace in the region and in spite of the oil theft, Nigeria and its joint venture partners now produce 2.4 to 2.6 million barrels per day (sic). Nigeria and its joint venture partners are currently making production savings of about N14.9 billion a day. (Amnesty Office, 2004)

### **3.4 Implementation of the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme: Challenges**

Despite the prospects adduced to the programme that need to be commended, yet it is not immune to some teething challenges. A review of the programmeset up in January 2010 to review the rehabilitation aspect of the DDR revealed some inadequacies thus leading to calls by the elders in the Niger Delta region for the dissolution of the Presidential Amnesty committee and its attendant dissolution (Obi and Rustad, 2011). Poor implementation bedeviled the Amnesty programme. It was not implemented as recommended in the report of the Niger Delta Technical Committee. Rather than engage in an open negotiation or a formal peace agreement with the militants, the consultations were at the highest level of federal government, involving the Niger Delta elites/elites and top government officials of Niger Delta origin negotiating with the militants commanders. This top down non-inclusive approach, through the militant commanders who are only interested in what comes into their pockets, or for their own personal aggrandizement is a serious challenge to the programme. To this end, the militant felt cheated and sidelined by the government. For sustainable peace and development in the Niger Delta to be achieved, there is need for the adoption of bottom-top approach through the inclusion of participation of all stake holders including the grass roots people (Ako, 2011), militants, youth organization, women groups, civil societies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious organizations.

As observed by Oluduro and Oluduro (2012); the total number of ammunitions/weapons handed in by the militant totaling 1,798 rifles, 1,981 guns of various types; 70 Rocket Propelling Grenades (RPGs), 159 pistols, one spear and six cannons are certainly low when compared with 26,358 militants which registered for the amnesty programme. The region is still ridden with arms and this is evident in the various attacks that have been carried out by the militants even after the disarmament exercise.

The amnesty programme has also been criticized for its exclusiveness. The programme targeted only militant without considerations for the victims of the militancy and hostage taking in the region. Many people (women and children) who have lost their fathers, sons homes, rape, loss of homes, farmlands and suffered

displacement which have caused internal refugee by the conflict are not been considered or factored into the amnesty programme. To this end, Ibaba 2011 (as cited in Oluduro and Oluduro, 2012) queries:

Does the surrender of arms and renunciation of violence by the militants bring the frustration of the entire population to an end? Are the militants the only deprived and aggrieved Niger Delta? Is the amnesty programme the attention given to the ex-combatants not reinforcing the frustrations of those who did not take up arms against the Nigeria State?

He also provides answers;

My answers to the first two questions is no, but the answer to the third question is in the affirmative. This brings us to the point that violence could recur in the region if the frustrations which support insurgency are not resolved. Resolving these frustrations is therefore a requirement for peace-building in the region.”

Deducing from the above, the amnesty project has not been able to restore sustainable peace and development into the region despite the huge amount of resources devoted to amnesty programme which amounted to N127 billion between 2009- 2011 (Ubhenin (2013) and another N74 billion, in the 2012 budget and N66, 781,093.03 in 2013 budget (Ibitoye, 2004, Amnesty Office, 2014). Oil theft and bunkering are still underway in the Niger Delta. Many jobless youths in the region have taken on the title of ex-militants and are agitating and threatening to go back to their arms if payments are not made to them. In other words, there are varying opinions on whether the programme is over funded or underfunded. To this Ibitoye, (2004) observed that from all indications, the amnesty programme is not underfunded but funds have been misappropriated leading to delays, diversions and reductions of the stipulated amounts. The programme appears to be a new largess lucrative business for militant leaders, NGOs and politicians alike. While in the camp, ex-militants were paid N1500 per day feeding allowance and N20,000 per month for a minimum of three months for the period of demobilization. This monthly stipends has since been increased to N65,000. Also a contract of N15 billion was awarded to the Global West Vessel Specialist Limited (GWVSL), a firm widely believed to be owned by Tompolo, an ex-militant warlord, to supply 20 vessels for the use of the nation’s military authorities to secure the waterways. These are more of recklessness and wasteful spending.

The ratio of the arms and ammunition (weapons) declared and submitted by the militants are a far cry to the number of the militant registered for the programme. Hence, a lot of ammunitions are still at large and hidden somewhere in the Creek. The recent activities of the militants call for caution and concern. In March 2010 in Warri, Delta State where a post amnesty dialogue was being held, MEND bombed two cars which left one dead and several others injured. The disruption of the October 1, 2010 of the 50<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary at the Eagles’ square in Abuja which also left about 12 people dead and several injured cannot be whisked away under the carpet; MEND also claimed responsibility for the bombing. Recently, the activities of the militia at the Niger Delta region raise the fact that the region is about relapsing into the pre-amnesty era. The violent riot of the militia’s at Bayelsa which led to the death of at least one person and several properties destroyed; the death of 13 police officers and the recent vituperations by the Niger Delta warlord, AsariDokubo in the built up to the 2015 presidential election and the President Jonathan candidature, all these are pointers to the fact that all is not well with the region. The activities of MEND in the Niger delta despite amnesty make the policy suspicious.

Apart from the flawed implementation of the programme, several issues that affect community reintegration are yet to be addressed. Oil-producing communities still suffer from extreme poverty and underdevelopment, two years after the emergence of the amnesty programme. They lack basic infrastructural facilities such as roads, pipe-borne water and electricity, while land and water pollution and gasflares continue unabated, depriving inhabitants of known sources of livelihoods. The 2011 United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) report on Ogoniland attests to the challenges of environmental degradation and decay in the region, engendered by years of insensitive and greedy exploitation of crude oil. The DDR process is a means to achieving peace and development but, unfortunately, the failure of the Nigerian state to address highlighted problems especially those dealing with community reintegration leaves much to be desired. The impact of failing to address these fundamental challenges may not be appreciated until the rehabilitated and reintegrated ex-militants return to their communities and realise that no real form of development has occurred in their communities to show for their voluntary disarmament. Therefore, urgently tackling the DDR challenges holistically is the first step towards addressing a future of peace, security and development in the Niger Delta region.

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