

Militancy and National Security in Nigeria: Issues and Peculiarity of the Niger Delta Militia Uprising

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Abstract— With militancy, the state of Nigeria national security has been grossly affected, wanton and continuous with dire health, social and economic consequences for the nation especially the militant activities in the oil-rich delta region. The enormity of the problems associated with the militant's activities in the area and the potential for destruction, and social disruption, has triggers the arguments of this study, observing the fundamental issues and peculiarity of the Niger Delta militia uprising. The study relied on content analysis of the secondary data and found that, the continuous security challenges in the Niger Delta region is most often as the result of provocative activities of aggressive youths who felt they were being deprived, marginalized and neglected. The study synopsis the approach to solving the problem so far and therefore recommends departure from the various amorphous program by the federal governments that do good to the pockets of some privileged individuals rather than help the Niger Delta region as a whole.

Keywords— Militancy, National Security, Niger-Delta, Aggression.

I. INTRODUCTION

At the end of Nigerian civil war in 1970s, different kinds of militia groups, rebels and even ethnic grouping emerged. Some of these are Ijaw National congress, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Egbesu Boys, the Niger Delta Volunteer Force, Oodua People's Congress OPC, Arewa Consultative Forum and presently Independent Peoples of Biafra IPOB and Boko Haram is seen as fallout of the inability of the political system to address felt deprivation, injustice or alienation by certain groups within the polity. Admittedly, the issue of Niger Delta region for example, affected Nigeria's revenue generation and national security during this period and, this however posed a very serious security challenge to the country. Most often, the argument of the Niger Delta region is the neglect since the discovery of oil in the area. These drives the youths of the region against the Nigerian state because the people of the region believed that they have been deprived of the gain from the resources that comes from their region and soil. A prominent indigene of the Niger Delta region and an environmentalist Ken Saro-

Wiwa became a vocal voice on this particularly; he used both local and international means to fight for this injustice but was eventually killed together with 8 other environmental activists by Gen. Sani Abacha's regime on "on 10th November, 1995" (Otoghagua, quoted in Oscar B 2012). The killing of Saro-Wiwa who is an Ogoni man and others escalated the crisis in the Niger Delta region and eventual lead to introduction of several criminal and anti-state activities by the youths from the region in the area like kidnapping for ransom, oil bunkering, pipeline vandalization, to name but a few. The people of the Niger Delta were demanding for adequate compensation from the Nigerian government claiming the fact that Nigeria generates about 95% revenue from crude oil in the Niger Delta but a greater percentage of this is being used by Nigerian federation to develop other areas while neglecting the development of the region. The claimed was that there are no educational facilities, good access roads, adequate electricity supply and adequate care of the environmental/ water pollution that has devastated their farm lands and waters for fish business, etc. As a result, the goal of the militant's groups in the Niger Delta area have been to protect the identities and interests of the groups they represent within the Nigerian state by violent means if deemed necessary and has at most times posed threats to the continued Ethnic Militancy and Internal Terrorism on Nigeria's National Security and the existence of the Nigerian state. The enormity of the problems associated with the militant's activities in the area and the potential for destruction, and social disruption, has given rise to such question as to what are the social realities in Nigeria that have given rise to so many criminal and anti-state activities in the country and the responses by government. Akintunde et al (2016) notes that "the oil revenue which ought to have accrued to the Niger Delta, is used to develop other parts of the country, while goose that lays the golden egg suffers official neglect (Akintunde et al 2016). He also argued that the principle of derivation – which was the operative formula when groundnut, cocoa, palm oil and kernel produced by the major ethnic nationalities were Nigeria's main sources of revenue – should not have been jettisoned. Before the discovery of oil in Oloibiri in 1956, the Niger Delta area which without doubt, is

“one of the largest wet lands in the world and consists of number of ecological zones from sandy coastal ridge barriers, brackish or saline mangroves, to fresh water, permanent and seasonal swamp forests, low land, rain forests, etc., is widely traversed by creeks, rivers, streams, rivulets and canals. For generations, the rich flora and fauna of the area have been the primary source of livelihood for the people” (Ojo, 2013).

All that changed with the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta, as the Nigerian state has continued to deprived them of the control of this resources, and unfortunately too, even the ones been allocated to the area from the federation account are being shared by both the officials at states and local governments’ levels and who in most cases connives with their local chiefs and politicians in this unpatriotic act, and thus denying the area the needed development. An attempt to stop this betrayal by the indigenes of the Niger Delta led by Ken Saro-Wiwa and 8 other environmental activists led to the murder of ‘Ogoni 7’ and the eventual arrest, trial and “execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the 8 environmental activists on the 10th November, 1995 by Gen. Sani Abacha’s regime (Otoghagua, 2007). Until recently too, there has been the unbalanced appointment into federal government offices, lack of unemployment opportunities for the people of the area, etc. Succour only came to them during the administration of Musa Yar’Adua’s with the setting up of Niger Delta Ministry and eventual granting of Amnesty to the Niger Delta militants to bring peace to the area and possibly development. The demise of the late President Musa Yar’Adua in 2009 paved the way for Good luck Jonathan, an indigene from the Niger Delta area to occupy the Office of the President. The activities of Niger Delta militants have in the past threatened not only the economy of Nigeria, but also the country’s security. Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Volunteer Force, Egbesu Boys, Independent People of Biafra IPOB etc, were arms against the Nigerian nation, agitating against perceived neglect by the country on the issue of development structural deficiency in the region made it impossible for the indigenes to enjoy those basic necessity of life, besides environmental degradation and oil spillage that has caused water pollution in the region. The perceived injustice by government and the multinational oil companies led to their continued agitation for resource control and the castration of the nation’s oil revenue until Yar’Adua’s administration which resolved the problem to great extent with the granting of amnesty to the militants in exchange for training of the youths through education and a promise of massive infrastructural development in the area. The

continuous destruction of oil pipelines, kidnapping, oil bunkering, intimidation and harassment of oil workers etc, even after the election of President Jonathan in 2011, has continued to create security problems to the country.

In this work, historical research methods were used to carry out the study. A critical examination was observed to determine the dramatic trends of militant groups and peculiarity issues from the Niger-Delta regions that give rise to the national insecurity.

These were analysed using findings from secondary data through content analysis of documents which were sourced through websites, web rich files, downloaded papers and relevant journals. Other source includes government publications, letters and correspondence, documentaries and newspapers and conference proceedings.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Niger Delta region has been a crisis prone region between the government forces and militant groups (Ojo 2013). The group which most often aggrieved over certain fundamental issues that are claimed to be affecting the region. Meanwhile, since the discovery of oil in the region, turn of a groups believed to be freedom fighters have been intensified their fight with government forces, sabotaged oil installations (which has led to more oilspillages), and taken foreign oil workers hostage and carried out different kinds of violent acts.

At the root of the problem is a crisis of claimed neglect and under development despite the fact that Nigerian major revenue are derived from the region. The crisis was rooted by gross distortion of Nigerian government as regard resource control, and environmental degradation. But, unfortunately, violent agitation has been the last result to send signals to the government, and hence, some elements have taking the advantage of the bad situation to commit criminal activities.

Though as put by Ejibunu (2007) the government do put in place the required security measures to reduce the rate of crime but also this most often affects the economic activities of these communities (agriculture, education, health, etc). The amnesty deal from October 2009 is failing, money allocated for training are not reaching the ex-militants as contractors skim huge profits for themselves, the oil companies continue to neglect the environment and needs of the community.

The Nigerian Federal and state governments’ commitment is limited to speeches and promises. This has affected economic activities within the area, leading to frustration which most of the time triggers violence acts through militancy.

III. THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS

In respect of the peculiarity of the Niger delta problem, this work explored the concept of frustration aggression theory to explain the reasons for violent conflicts in the Niger Delta region. The centrality of oil as the source of the nation's revenue for social, economic, political and infrastructural development creates the condition which has made oil rents transcends both power and authority in the process of the country's development. Therefore, whichever unit that controls political power spontaneously controls the oil rents and determines its allocations.

These have made it difficult for a shared political culture and common interest that will facilitate socio-political development and peaceful co-existence to evolve among the federating units in the country. The preferred framework of analysis for this study as earlier stated is "frustration aggression theory". Dollard et al., 1939 posited "that the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression". Gurr (1998:50-53) alluding to Dollard et al, 1939, he submitted that frustration implies 'encountering an obstacle to some desired goal' while aggression means behavior intended to injure the person at whom it is directed'. The opinion of Gurr as cited by Dowse and Hughes (1983:411) states that, Individuals and groups have goals of some sort, that much of their goal is purposive in the sense of goal-seeking and that if this behavior is not prevented in some ways the groups or individuals are likely to behave quite rationally Frustration, in this context, was specified as the thwarting of a goal response, and a goal response, in turn, was taken to mean the reinforcing final operation in an ongoing behavior sequence. At times, however, the term 'frustration' is used to refer not only to the process of blocking a person's attainment but also to the reaction to such blocking. The main trust of this hypothesis is that frustration always leads to aggression but while reviewing the hypothesis, Zillmann, cited by Akurues (2003) and in Johan <http://www.rechten.eldoc.ub.rug.nl> when he submits as follows:

- i. frustration instigates behavior that may or may not be hostile or aggressive.
- ii. that, any hostile or aggressive behavior that occurs is caused by frustration.

That frustration is not a sufficient, but a necessary condition for hostile and aggression; a frustrated person may be not necessarily being hostile when dejected and tired of the process of goal attainment and decides to discontinue agitating for a believed goal. This may be as a result of lack of encouragement from the society or non-availability of needed resources to advance the

agitation. Therefore, militarization of the Niger delta region is a product of deprivation from their land and natural resources, and neglect by the government that is using the region's resources to develop other units of the country.

This is directly results to abject poverty of the people of the region. While the failure of government to institute and implement a peaceful resolution in managing the resource conflict in the Niger delta caused their aggressive, hostile, antagonistic and violent behavior against all their perceived enemies. Deprivation of the region from controlling their resources or having a good share of its revenue in a federal arrangement has caused their aggression and subsequent taking laws into their hands for self-defense.

IV. MILITANCY IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION: THE CORE ISSUES

Accordingly, the Niger Delta region of Nigeria's is believed to be the goose that lays the golden egg. Though as cherished and feasted as the egg is to feed, give and to sustain the life of the nation, the goose itself is said to have left out, unfed, malnourished and abandoned. The environment; as a result of years of oil exploration and pollution have totally destroyed and can hardly sustain the means of livelihood of the people of the area whose main sources of subsistence is farming and fishing, (Akintunde et al., 2016). There are inadequacies in basic infrastructure and social amenities such as, roads, schools, electricity, pipe-born water and hospitals.

The people's sources of drinking water are polluted by constant oil spillages; their farm lands have been destroyed and rendered unfit for agricultural purposes. Even the air they breathe is unsafe due to gas flaring and emission of carbon monoxide and other noxious emissions that are daily released into the air due to oil and gas exploration activities. Coupled with these is the lack of job opportunities for employable and active youths from the area. The Niger Delta region and its inhabitants are therefore bombarded from the air, land and water. The region is said to be one of the most underdeveloped and poor oil producing regions in the world. While the region festers in squalor and decay, resources from its bosom have been used over the years to build and develop two world-class national capital cities. This disparity in development between non-oil producing areas and the oil producing region was one of the reasons that led to the agitation for resources control; that if the Federal Government cannot develop the region, then the people should at least be given the right to harness these resources for the development of their region and at worst pay royalties to the Federal

government (Oladoyinbo, 2012). Despite decades of protestation and even appeals to the federal, state governments, oil corporations and the international community, the core issues of the region remained largely unattended to. Ken Saro-Wiwa, a Niger Delta environmental rights activist, was murdered in the course of peaceful agitation for the environmental clean-up of the region by the Abacha regime in 1995. Violence they say begets violence and as the saying goes, those who make peaceful change impossible make violent change inevitable.

The people were not only denied this right to development, either from the centre or through resource control, they were increasingly being denied the right to life and existence, as the environment from which they can eke out a living has been rendered unfit for any such activity and the federal government wasn't ready to do anything serious to address the situation. There is no violation of human rights that can be more than the violation of the right to existence. It is this abiding condition that gave rise to what is called the Niger Delta problem. The recurring rounds of violence that continue to hold the nation by the jugular are therefore a manifestation of the deep rooted frustration of negligence on the part of government and multi-national companies over the plight of the region (Utebor et al, 2016). This has however led to the political and economic marginalization of the inhabitants of Niger delta. In spite of over 40 years of oil production and hundreds of billions of dollars generated by the federal government from oil revenue, the oil bearing communities have remain in abject poverty without basic amenities. The following factors are considered to be responsible for the militancy of the inhabitant of Niger Delta:

Deprivation of the means of livelihood: the government of Nigeria and oil multinationals have deprived the inhabitants of Niger Delta region their means of livelihood through oil exploration activities and forcing them to abandon agriculture as their primary occupation and forcing poverty on them (Ojo, 2013). Despite the huge amount of money derived from the oil revenue, the local people of the oil bearing communities remain in abject poverty and deprivation as they lack basic and natural things of life like water and unpolluted air after their environment has become artificial.

Environmental Damages: the social, economic and environmental costs of oil production have been very far-reaching. They include destruction of wildlife and biodiversity, loss of fertile soil, pollution of air and drinking water, degradation of farmland and damage to

aquatic ecosystems, all of which have caused serious health problems for the inhabitants of areas surrounding oil production. It is ironical that environmental regulations which are common practice in developed nations are often not followed in developing nations due to the lack of power, wealth and equity of the affected communities on one hand, and the unlimited powers of the central government on the other hand. As a result, oil companies often evacuate oil bearing communities from their homelands, further marginalizing them. The system of oil production in Nigeria is twisted in favor of the multi-nationals and federal government who are the direct recipients of oil production revenue. As a result of environmental damage brought about by the activities of the oil companies, environmental problems like erosion; flooding; land degradation; destruction of natural ecosystem; fisheries depletion caused by dredging; toxic waste into the rivers among others are common phenomenon in the region (Ejibunu, 2007: 13-14). He further submits that the local people can no longer take to farming and fishing which are their major occupations, as a result of the impact of oil activities on the environment and the ecosystem.

Unemployment: as a result of environmental damage caused by oil spillage, gas flaring and oil pipeline explosions, the Niger Delta people have been deprived of farming and fishing which are their major and primary occupation before oil exploration in commercial quantity in the region (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, et al. 2016). As a result of this, unemployment is very high among the people of the region. Another concern is that the oil companies in most cases do not hire their employees from the region that produce oil, but from the non-oil producing region of the country. This has remained a major concern to the people of the region because it is difficult to find a justification for this despite the destruction and distortion of agriculture and fishing as their primary occupation.

Human Rights Violation: In spite of unquantifiable hardship brought on the Niger delta people through exploration of oil, the government has constantly been suppressing all kind of protest or demonstration by the people of the region to draw the attention of the world to their plight. Examples of these include the killing of ken saro wiwa and others in 1995 without fair hearing during general Sanni Abacha regime, the January 11, 1999, ijaw women peaceful demonstration against marginalization of their people in Port Harcourt were violently tear-gassed, beaten, stripped, and detained by a combined team of policemen and soldiers, the warri war of 2003 was allegedly instigated by the activities of

some oil companies and Nigerian naval officers. Therefore, violations of the human rights of the local populace can be cited as one of the factors responsible for the militancy in the Niger Delta region.

V. DRIVERS OF MILITANCY IN NIGER DELTA: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

In third world countries like Nigeria where powerful multinational corporations hold rein, collaboration between them and the state are most often constituting a situation of double jeopardy in terms of repression of civil society (Ikelegbe, 2005).

The emergence of social movements leads to militia group in the Niger Delta (as elsewhere) is often forge relationships across national frontiers with a view to nationalizing their activities and the issues they are seek to pursue. Given that social movement activity transcends, four modes of action can be used to define these social networks' according to Adejumobi cited in Oladoyinbo (2012) these are the four modes of action which define social networks' overall character. These are:

1. Movement diffusion (i.e. temporary interactions that generate similar movement);
2. Transnational issue networks (enduring information exchange between main actors within the social movement circle);
3. Political exchange (the networking of social groupings in a number of societies); and
4. Transnational social movements (interactions between groups with shared visions and ideals).

This typology approximates the character of social movement activity in the Niger Delta. Generally, the emergence of social movements and the nationalization of their activities stem from a number of factors. These include but are not limited to democratization, the ascendance of liberal ideological issues pertaining to the environment, human rights and minority rights, and the revolution in information and communications technology with its attendant integration of the world economies (Omotola 2009).

These variables, which also underscore the collective actions of civil society have combined with local factors to engender the formation and continued existence as well as the trans nationalization of social movements in Nigeria. With regard to the Niger Delta, the grievances of the oil communities against the government and multinational oil companies has provided the impetus for social mobilization most often to include

1. Minority political activity at the elite level,
2. The emergence of different lobbies,
3. The formation of political coalitions, and
4. Local community agitations.

Cumulatively, this lead to a call for more revenue from the nation's oil wealth on the one hand and for more resource control on the other. Local people's determination to pursue these issues arose from the, "increasing de-nationalization of the state on a global scale which has seen the rise of sub-state identities as the fulcrum of group rights and citizenship claims" (Oladoyinbo, 2012). The result is that social movements in the Niger Delta have emerged as a result of environmental degradation and the political insensitivity of the Nigerian state. Most of these movements targeted foreign oil companies as a means of forcing the Nigerian state to change her policies in the region.

These movements' positions were underpinned by the fact that if foreign oil multinational companies wrestle with, this would send signals to the government. This however, underlined the activities of Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) and Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) in the early 1990s. There were numerous social movements that emerged in this period including the Urhobo Progressive Union (UPU), Isoko Development Union (IDU), Egbesu Boys of Africa (EBA), and Council for Ikwerre Nationality among others. In order to capture the attention of the international community, MOSOP, one of the early social movements in the region had to use the language of "rights" and built in international fora an image of the Nigerian state and oil companies as violators of human rights.

The government's perception of these social movements has always generated hot controversy to the issues at stake (Omotola, 2009). These conflicts are very sensitive issues that demand a diplomatic approach towards settlement. Unfortunately, the government had been only forthcoming in making sure that its hegemonic status was forcefully imposed and maintained in order to sustain their revenue interests. These factors were borne out by the authoritarian manner the state has used in promulgating decrees aimed at stripping communities of any rights over the land and its resources. On another level the multinational oil companies did not accommodate the interests of the oil-bearing communities on capitalist grounds. They continue to be viewed as protecting their capital and interests above all else. They have in most cases influenced the oversight of government institutions charged with environmental protection thereby giving them almost unrestrained access to the resources of the region. From the context of their traditional and contemporary characteristics, militias constitute part of non-state actors such that, they are autonomous from the structure and machinery of the state (Alden et al., 2011). Simply put, they are armed

non-state actors, operating outside the formal state military agency. In some context, they have near monopoly on the use of violence, indiscriminately using sophisticated weapons and/or small arms to perpetrate unconventional warfare in target areas. The diversity of militias has become more complex in contemporary times. In broad terms, there are two categories of militant groups, namely the ideological, politically-inspired or principled militants and non-ideological, criminally-motivated militants or opportunistic mercenaries (Olutokun, 2003). Ideological militants are those purpose-driven militants who display aggressive tendencies in reaction to real or perceived social injustice and other forms of marginalization which are considered as threats to their individual and/or collective identity in a given political entity.

The Niger Delta crisis was propelled by ideological militancy as youths chose to take up arms against the state and society in their quest for redress of age long inequality, marginalization, environmental damage and political deprivation. On the other hand non-ideological militants are those who perpetrate acts of violence against fellow humans without just cause. This category of militants heartlessly employs violence and criminal activities as means of survival. A larger percentage of non-ideological militants are religious fundamentalists, political thugs, and grassroots-based or campus cultists who make themselves available for commercialized criminality (Ojo, 2013). As Oscar 2012, rightly observes, criminally-motivated militants are equipped by unscrupulous elements in society such as unprincipled politicians to commit crimes including electoral violence, assassination of opponents, public unrest, and hostage taking, among others. By implication, the activities of non-ideological militants are an aberration in any given society as the rationale for their actions is not confined within the fringes of fundamental human rights and the rule of law.

In contemporary times where revolution in science and technology has compressed the whole world into a global village, militias have tended to constitute serious threats to peace, stability and security concerns at communal, national, sub-regional, regional and international levels so much so that their influence cannot be dismissed with a wave of the hand. As Alden et al. (2011:5) observe, outside of the historical American and European experience which has dwindled, the rest of the world has continued to see a very strong presence and activities of militias and their centrality to conflicts. Thus, they have severally distorted the traditional application of legitimate force within which context the monopoly of violence was confined in state actors.

Apart from perpetrating and perpetuating internal conflicts and violence in various independent states in post-cold war era, militias have continued to play a central role in the generation, intensity and manifestation of various ongoing global conflicts. Within the African context, the contemporary post-second world war period provides egregious examples of conflicts that involve a diversity of militias. Prominent among them across the continent include the Janjaweed, being interpreted as 'devils on horseback', in Darfur, Sudan; the 'interahamwe', (meaning 'those who work/fight together) among the Hutu; and the 'impuzamugambi' (meaning those who have the same goal) among the Hutus in Rwanda; the mau mau secret liberation army in Kenya (Alden et al., 2011); and Oodua People's Congress (OPC); Bakasi Boys, and Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), all in Nigeria. With particular emphasis on the Niger Delta, militancy were originally motivated by the urge to agitate for social change and justice in political, economic and environmental terms, political elite have employed their activities for anti-people and counter-productive tendencies. Elsewhere, this paper argued that political gladiators in the region have always relied on militias militancy and campus cultists to perpetrate electoral violence. For instance, they recruited, financed and armed militia groups such as MOSOP, Bakasi Boys, 'Sea pirates' and 'Creek Boys' to gang up against the state to perpetrate electoral violence in their bid to win elections at all cost. By so doing, political elites who are expected to be models of good politics and custodians of the rule of law have been the ones promoting commercialized criminality through militant activities.

Issues and Peculiarity of the Niger Delta Region: Who Takes the Blame?

"War is defeat for humanity. Only in peace and through peace can respect for human dignity and its inalienable rights be guaranteed"- pope John Paul II, World Day of peace, January 1, 2000; "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable"- John F. Kennedy, 1962 (see Barash and Webel, 2002: 28, 244).

The above popular quotation epitomizes the ideological underpinnings of militia uprising in the Niger Delta. Suffice it to say, therefore, that the rise of any militant group in whatever form be it ethnic or otherwise, anywhere across the globe, could be attributed to the urge on the part of the oppressed to reverse the unjust status quo and pave way for change. With specific reference to the third world, Dukor (2003:165)

convincingly captures why members of the public may not want to resort to violence in expressing their grievances thus:

State violence, manifesting itself in fascist and dictatorial rule, press censorship, physical and psychological intimidation of the citizenry is rampant in the third world. History has shown that forms of protest like civil disobedience, legal challenges, sit-down strikes, sit-ins, hunger strikes, self-immolation and cessation of public activities are either not applicable or ineffective in resisting State violence in third world countries like Nigeria. Instead, militant demonstrations on the part of students, traders, workers and armed resistance may be the only viable way of resisting State violence--- (Dukor, 2003:165).

Against this standpoint and with particular emphasis on the Niger Delta region, therefore, Osuoka (2003:144) argues that the resistance of the nationalities in the Niger Delta area- the Ogoni, Isoko, Urhobo, Itsekiri, and Ijaw, among others- is the peoples' response to the crisis within the Nigerian state. It is within this context that the sporadic and endemic outburst of militant uprising against the state and multinational companies could be explained. The long years of unyielding disposition on the part of the government was partly demonstrated by continued reduction of revenue allocation to the Niger Delta from 100 percent in 1954 to the current 13 percent. No doubt, the consequences of violent acts of the militants in the region under discourse have been so devastatingly far-reaching considering the invaluable human and material resources that had been lost to the crisis coupled with further damage it had done on the environment. It has also aggravated political instability, complicated economic disorder and dented the image of the nation at the international community. What is more, some opportunistic mercenaries have taken undue advantage of the militancy in the region to their selfish interests by perpetrating and perpetuating criminal and inhumane acts including hostage taking for ransom, human trafficking, electoral violence, political assassination and economic sabotage through vandalism of pipelines among other. Against this background, successive governments have always criminalized militant uprising in the Niger delta at the expense of proper diagnosis and development-inclined policy responses. More often than not, governments at all levels have always condemned the aggressive reactions of the militants as acts of rebellion against the state, and as mindless attempts to disrupt the socioeconomic order of society. These repressive measures by the state have further compounded the problem rather than solving it.

Government repressive clamp down on Odi Community during Olusegun Obasanjo administration in 1999 over the violent act of militants is a good case in point. The entire community was reduced to rubble and death tolls were counted in hundreds and the environment destroyed beyond recognition. Moreover, in May 2009, the Joint Task Force (JTF) comprising more or less 7000 troupes, two war ships, and 14 gunboats bombarded Gbaramatu kingdom and Camp 5, the Headquarters of MEND on the order of the federal government under Late Musa Yar'Adua. In the course of the counter-insurgency, 4 Ijaw communities were grossly attacked by the JTF, namely: Oporoza, Kunukunuma, Okerenkoko and Kurutie (Ogundiya, 2011). The central position of this study is that the perpetration of violence by the Niger Delta people could be explained in the context of failure of government to address the National Question through the instrumentality of constitutional provision in the interest of the continued existence of Nigeria and Nigerians. Thus it will be misleading and counterproductive to presume that the militia uprising could be suppressed by 'rhetoric, military campaigns or repressive and regulative policies' (Ogundiya, 2011), which are not directly designed to address social inequality, iniquity of state and non-state actors and unjust dealings with the environment. However, governments' fiscal responses have not demonstrated enough sense of justice to the region and its people considering continued reduction of revenue allocated to the region. Since 1946, revenue derivation to the Niger Delta has been on reducing trend. In 1946, revenue derivation to the region was 100 percent. This was reduced by 50 percent based on Raisman Commission in the 1950s when the exploration of crude oil in commercial quantity kicked off. General Yakubu Gowon military regime further reduced it to 25 percent following Ojetunji Aboyade Technical Committee on Revenue Allocation recommendation. The civilian regime of Alhaji Shehu Shagari further reduced it to 5 percent while General Mohammadu Buhari's military regime cut it to 1.5 percent; the worst so far between 1946 and 1985 when the Buhari military regime was in power. When the Babangida administration took over from Buhari through a counter-coup in December 1985, it raised it from 1.5. Apparently the present derivation conceded to the region has not met its pressing needs to any appreciable extent. The position of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in late 2005 which still remains valid, lends credence to this assertion. In 2006, the UNDP describes the Niger Delta region, as "a region suffering from administrative neglect, crumbling social infrastructure and services, high unemployment, social deprivation, abject poverty,

fifth and squalor, and endemic conflict” (The Punch, Nov. 7, 2012, P. 18). This development has informed the protracted and intractable nature of the problems as they are being treated on the face value, rather than being tackled from roots.

The Approaches to Solving the Problem So Far

Apparently, security challenges in the Niger Delta region arising from provocative activities of aggressive youths have remained a subject of concern for successive governments in Nigeria. Hence, almost all Nigerian leaders have attempted to address the problem in the interest of national security and sustainable development. Prominent among the measures employed by various regimes, both military and civilian, include establishment of agencies and state and local government creation. However, one common characteristic of most government interventions is that they are reactionary rather than responsive in nature. This has to a large extent accounted for the persistence of the problem with the far-reaching implications for National peace and security. One way by which government’s reactionary approaches are being measured is employment of coercive measures by deploying security apparatus to the troubled zone. Unfortunately, such fire-brigade measures have not been translated into much desired peace in the region. Indeed, on many instances, government’s deployment of counterforce has aggravated the existing problem it was meant to solve. A good case in point was the 2003 Odi massacre during General Olusegun Obasanjo civilian regime. As a follow-up to coercive measures, government is fond of sending delegates on an official visit to the conflict zone express concerns to the damage done on people, their property and the ecosystem. Apart from coercive approach, successive governments have attempted to address the Niger Delta crisis military governments created more states in the region. These include Akwa Ibom state on September 28 1987; Delta State on August 27, 1991 during Ibrahim Babangida administration; and Bayelsa State on October 1, 1996 under Sani Abacha administration. Subsequently by way of responding to problem of the region, management agencies were established. For instance, in 1960, the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) was established with the prime mandate to “consider the problems of the area of the Niger Delta”. Provision was made for the establishment of NDDDB in Nigeria’s Republican constitution of 1963. Section 159 of that document clearly states that “there shall be a board for the Niger Delta which shall be styled the Niger Delta Development Board”. The terms of reference of the board which was meant to be effective until July 1, 1969 is stated in the constitution to the effect that it shall

be responsible for advising the government of the federation and governments of Eastern Nigeria and Mid-Western Nigeria with respect to the physical development of the Niger Delta. It was further stated that in order to discharge that responsibility, the Board shall cause the Niger Delta to be surveyed in order to ascertain what measures are required to promote its physical development; prepare schemes designed to promote the physical development of the Niger Delta. Since then, the mandate of NDDDB has been reviewed, which has equally attracted continued change of name of the agency: Niger Delta River Basin Development Authority (NDBDA) in 1976; the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992; and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in the year 2000.

One of the latest efforts employed to address the militia uprising in the region by the Federal government was the establishment of Ministry of Niger Delta on September 10, 2008 during the regime of Late Umaru Musa Yar’Adua with Chief Ufot Ekaette as pioneer Minister (The Punch, Thursday, 1/1/2016). Comparing the amount of money the ministry since inception to its quality of delivery, it could be argued that stakeholders in that ministry have not performed up to expectation. Between 2009 and 2015, the ministry has received a cumulative sum of N392 billion. In 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013, 2014 and 2015 the ministry has collected N51.2 billion, N82.6 billion, N55.2 billion, N86.2 billion, and N63.4 billion N62.6 billion and N73.1 billion respectively (The Punch January 1/1, 2016, pp. 29). From all indications it is obvious that the ministry cannot be exonerated from fiscal impropriety and corrupt tendencies considering the prevailing socioeconomic and environmental challenges confronting the region. The Late President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua also declared amnesty for the militants in the Niger Delta on 25 June, 2009, christened “Presidential Amnesty Programme”. Musa Yar’Adua claimed to have done this, pursuant to Section 175 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and ‘in consultation with the Council of State. The root of amnesty programme could be traced to the recommendations of the technical Committee on the Niger Delta (TCND) constituted by the administration of Yar’Adua (Ogundiya, 2011:18). In its report submitted to the State House on December 1, 2008, the TCND recommended the need for amnesty to be extended to the militants within the context of Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR). Other recommendations made by TCND included increased allocation of crude revenue to the region; urgent improvement of infrastructure and human welfare services; and new institutions for

actualizing the region's longer term of development (Ogundiya, 2011). The whole idea of the amnesty was to discourage militia uprising in the region by granting unconditional state pardon to the militants. Government considered the programme necessary in view of the inadequacies of previous attempts at addressing the Niger Delta problem in the interest of sustainable development and national integration. However, apart from want of constitutional clarity leveled against the idea of amnesty programme (Ogundiya, 2011), poor policy framework, technical deficiency and faulty approach vitiated potential prospects of the project (Albert, 2011; Ogundiya, 2011). From the angle of poor policy framework, Albert (2011:17) argues that the 'amnesty' programme in the Niger Delta provides one of the most laughable dimensions of handling the problem as:

it does not come anywhere near the process and procedure of rehabilitation and reintegration", and it seems "to be in a hurry to unleash the ex-militants back on society"; whereas "there is little or no effort to come to terms with the ex-militants in relation to their perceptions of the problems of the region". percent to 3 percent, which was later raised to its present 13 percent (The News, March 6, 2006, p. 4).

From technical ground, Ogundiya (2011) observes that "poor coordination, corruption and mismanagement, inflation of militants' registers, poor funding culminating in the delay of the payment of ex-militants' allowances and delay in the skill acquisition programmes for the militants, short supply of training facilities pose dangerous threat to effective implementation of the programme. For instance, Sampson, (2010) cited in Ogundiya (2011) laments that only 20 per cent of the estimated cost for running the programme actually get to the reach of the ex-militants who are invariably the primary beneficiaries of the programme. The remaining 80 per cent goes to consultants and contractors who are strategically involved to represent the interests of certain politicians and businessmen behind the scene.

VI. THE WAY FORWARD

Fundamentally, in Nigeria today, what we practice can be referred to a unitary government which we tout as a federal system. Because we do not encourage competition and creativity amongst the federating units. The practice of states sitting back and waiting for federal allocation or going cap in hand to Abuja to beg for handouts in the name of bailouts has encouraged laziness amongst states. Just as the Amnesty Programme

created indolence and a horde of lazy youths in the Niger Delta region, so has this practice of federal allocation created lazy states and local governments.

There is no doubt at all that addressing the Niger Delta problem requires a new thinking and approach. First we must start by communicating the problems in a transparent language that is devoid of deceit and self-interest. The most important way of ensuring sustainable growth is through infrastructure. So as a short time measure, the federal government should mobilise massive funds for immediate investment in basic infrastructure across the region. This will not only raise the standard of living but will boost economic activities and employment generation. There must be a marked departure from those amorphous programmes that do good to the pockets of individuals rather than help the region. The federal government must stop forthwith the application of halfhearted political solutions to the region's problems. Niger Deltans must also begin now to reject such programmes that portray them as internal colonizers and co-conspirators in shortchanging the region for selfish motives.

There is too much power concentrated at the center. This has been the source of all the schisms in Nigeria. Name it: whether Boko Haram, Odua Peoples' Congress, OPC, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, MEND, Niger Delta Avengers, NDA, MOSSOP, MASSOB or IPOB.

All these arose over feelings of marginalisation or feelings of being left out at the centre. If the people are allowed control of the resources within their states no one will hold the centre responsible for marginalisation. If the federating states must exist as centres of development rather than wasteful bureaucracies, then they must be empowered to develop at their own pace. There are serious efforts by the Buhari Administration to diversify the Nigerian economy away from dependence on oil. This is good but can at best be only a short time measure while we commence the process of truly fashioning out a new federal constitution that is agreed upon by all constituents.

Diversification without true federalism will in the long run reverse us to this same position tomorrow. You cannot build on a faulty foundation and expect the structure to stand the test of time. A new strategy to redress the years of degradation is urgently required and that time is now, before the Niger Delta loses its influence on the economy.

It may be a long time before oil dries up but that time must surely come. Diversification from oil dependent economy may come even much earlier with the ongoing efforts. Finally, we must desist forthwith from acts that further destroy the environment. We cannot behave like

the mad man who sets his house on fire to solve the problem of rats. And those who feel and await avenue to break away from the Nigeria state. Look at your backyards very well before you attempt this.

Do not forget the states of the Balkan Peninsular, Bosnia and Herzegovina or Sudan and South Sudan. There is strength in our being together on agreed terms than being fragmented in uncontrollable strife. Whether other non-oil products become the mainstay of the nation's economy now or in the future, the Nigerian nation owes the Niger Delta region the responsibility of cleaning the mess it has made of the region. And the time to start is now.

VII. CONCLUSION

Nigeria as a democratic federal state is only in theory, hence the unending agitation for resource control in a federal system under a democratic administration. This paper position is that the vulnerability of Nigeria's internal and external disposition provides the enabling conditions for militancy that is threatening Nigeria's National Security. Such enabling factors include widespread poverty, socio-economic upheaval, political instability, neglect, organized crimes, high unemployment, widespread corruption in government agencies. Has thus, affected the citizens' disposition toward total patriotism. There is immediate need for a restructuring to full-fledged true structural and fiscal federalism as upward tweaking of the derivation formula from 13% where governments of the regions would be held accountable for how they apply the fund in the development of their areas. The federal government needs to work more on the area of in regulations that require international oil companies discharge of their responsibilities to their host communities, hence the review in the passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill in such a manner as to enhance the greater capacity and participation of oil producing communities in oil production and exploration activities.

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