# CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE NIGER

**DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA; AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (2015 -2020)**

**ABSTRACT**

The Niger-Delta region of Nigeria has a chequered history of human and material exploitation as well as environmental degradation and underdevelopment. As the heartbeat of Nigeria’s economy being the source of most revenues accruing to the federation in terms of oil mineral resources, the efforts at addressing its teeming challenge of development has taken difficult very dimension, moving from one government policy to another. Ensuring sustainable development in the Niger Delta has always appear as priority of every administration and numerous strategies and frameworks have been implemented without much success. The current framework for instituting and sustaining development in the region is the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in June 2000 and since its establishment, different civilian administration has pushed to channel development to the Niger Delta through the Commission. However, the study took a cursory look at the shortcomings of developmental agenda of federal government in the Niger Delta region, especially in relation to the funding and operation of the NDDC under the Buhari administration. Since 2015, federal government has engaged the development of Niger Delta through prioritizing the NDDC; meanwhile, the region is yet to come around its seeming underdevelopment. The study therefore assessed the contribution of NDDC to the sustainability of development in the region using qualitative archival method with reliance on both qualitative and quantitative data. The study found theoretical background in two monumental theories of development, viz; governance theory and economic penetration and integration theory respectively. The study found that whereas NDDC has taken giant strides in embarking on developmental projects across the nine NDDC states, such projects are either non-complimentary to the need of the communities or are of substandard. The quality of most of the projects could not justify the huge budget expended on them. Therefore, NDDC has not made much impact on the development of the region. The study recommended among other things, synergy between NDDC and other federal ministries that provide similar services to the oil producing communities to avoid duplication as well as synergy with the state governments irrespective of political leaning to ensure quality assurance and sustainability of the projects through multi-layer monitoring and project management.

# Word Count: 356

**Key Words**: Civil Society, Environmental Politics, Good Governance, Niger Delta, Project Management, Sustainable Development.

# CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

* 1. **Background to the Study**

The Nigeria’ s Niger Delta is the region that host much oil exploration and exploitation. The Niger Delta basin is taken into account the mainstay of the Nigerian economy for its significantly high level of oil reser ves. The region is additionally naturally endowed with viable deposits of hydrocarbon and gas reserves. Petroleum and derivatives dominate the Nigerian economy making up about 98 percent of exports, over 80 percent of government’s annual revenue and 70 percent of budgetary expenditure. petroleum resource gives the Nigeria government about US$ 20 million each day . At the instant , Nigeria boasts of over 21 billion barrels of proven oil reserves. Nigeria is Africa’ s largest oil producer and therefore the world’s sixth most vital exporter of petroleum with the majority of its exports getting to the us ( Nisirimovu, 2000), Nigeria’s boring in 2019 amounted to some 2.1 million barrels per day (Statista, 2020).

It is well-known that Nigeria’s economy is predicated mainly on oil revenues derived from exploitation of oil from its Niger Delta region. this is often the case since the 1970s ( Kaniye, 2020). Oil was found within the Niger Delta region in 1956, after a few years of exploration, and exported to Europe for the primary time in 1958 . Noteworthy, since the primary discovery of oil in 1956 it had been only in October 2019 that petroleum deposit has been found elsewhere outside the Niger Delta region. Effectively, this suggests that Nigeria's infrastructure has been built by oil revenues derived from exploitation of oil within the Niger Delta

region. However, it 's a tragic commentary to notice that the region which produces the wealth has only tales of woes, because it remains underdeveloped and its peoples impoverished (Efebeh, 2017). In fact, the Niger Delta region and its peoples may rightly be considered an archetypal example of resource curse (Ebeku, 2018)

The region remained an on- going morass from the constant Nigerian government inaction. Evidently, the dem and for petroleum affects modern society quite any particular natural resources with the exception of water. Oil may be a non-renewable resource; therefore, the profits generated from the worth need to build the capacity for equitable wealth distribution w ithin the Niger Delta (Orogun, 2010). The explanation for the armed insurgency, entrenched poverty, deteriorating living conditions, and underdevelopment in one among Africa’ s most resource rich regions relate to the role of MNOCs and therefore the Nigeria n State ( Akhigbe, 2013 ). Following this assertion, Iniaghe et al (2013) argued that MNOCs’ inability to relate to host communities as stakeholders means cumulative environmental damage as a consequence of resource extraction and depletion isn' t replaced with physical and material development. The entrenched poverty within the Niger Delta i llustrates and explicates the paradox of plenty, the “resource curse,” the “shadow state syndrome,” and therefore the debilitating effects of petroleum politics in Nigeria (Orogun, 2010, p. 2).

Peripheral development initiatives by oil companies' leaders hindered corporate community relations that affected the power of the oil company' s leaders to extend their firms' financial performance ( Lugard, 2013). Although the

region had experienced increased sustainability efforts by oil companies' leaders, the infertility of land and water received little attention. The predominant occupation within the Niger Delta region is farming and fishing; hence, the environmental damage caused by oil wealth decreased farming productivity (Olufemi, 2010 ). The challenges of sustainability were multidimensional. A unified understanding of sustainability should enable effective collaboration toward sustainable development (Sharma and Kearins, 2011 ). Extracting the perceptions or factors of the perceived sustainability challenges from experienced practitioners would offer an insight and possible solutions for stakeholders within the region.

The word ‘ Niger-Delta’ has conjured misleading and distorted interpretations of the region’s contemporary history (Agara, 2016). a correct understanding of the Niger-Delta is best done by a patient survey of its political and geographic definitions. The Niger Delta covering about 70, 000km 2 is that the largest wetland in Africa and therefore the third largest within the world. It consists of variety of ecological zones- sandy coastal ridge barriers, brackish or saline mangroves, freshwater, permanent and seasonal swamp forest and lowland rain forests with a mess of r ivers, streams, rivulets, creeks and twenty estuaries. it's made from variety of ethnic nationalities like Ijaw ( Izon), the Ndokwa, Isoko, Andoni, Itsekiri, Urhobo and Ibos.

For geographic delineation, the core Niger Deltas includes Rivers State, Bayelsa State and Delta State. However, consistent with contemporary reasoning, the meandering creeks and rivers, similar topography, common history and

ancestry, climate, and culture involve the inclusion of such states as, Edo, Akwa Ibom, and Cross Rivers States into the core Niger Delta states. The ‘political’ Niger- Delta further includes three other states located outside the core swampy territory. These are Abia and Imo states, which are connected to the core Niger Delta by a maze of intermingling seas, and On do state which is partially peopled by the Ijaw of the core Niger- Delta. Moreover, beneath their sub- soil, the three states have the new resource- crude oil that presently differentiates the Niger Delta from other geographic zones. This explains why the gov t has from time to time created economic zones made from the areas listed above, with the foremost recent being the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) and therefore the Niger- Delta Development Commission (NDDC). For the NDDC, the Act establishing it defined the Niger - Delta in terms of these states that produce petroleum . Accordingly, section 2(1)(b) of the enabling clause defined the Niger-Delta region by adding the states of Abia, Imo, also as Ondo to the core states making up the Niger- Delta region.

Arising from the above, it's easily discernible that A level of confusion exists with reference to the right definition and outline of the Niger Delta. To many, the region is seemed to be synonymous with oil producing states hence the inclusion of Abia, Edo, Ondo, Imo, Akwa Ibom and Cross River states as Niger Delta states. In 1997, the Niger- Delta Environmental Survey (NDES), a non -governmental organization with massive government presence, reported a cartographic, ethnographic and political definition of the region that tallied with the govt definition as contained within the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development

commission ( OMPADEC) Act. This successively tallies with the Willink Commission Report which agreed that the bounds of th e Niger Delta would come with areas north of Aboh, west of the Benin River estuary, east into the lmo River estuary and areas south to the palm point, below Akassa and therefore the Nun River estuary. But from all indications, both the NDES and OMPADEC see med to have misconceived the 1958 constitutional provision for the region, which grew out of the Sir Willink Commission, which provided inter alia:

To allay the fears of the minority indigenes of the Niger-Delta and address the development needs of the peculiar terrain of the Niger Delta, before granting independence to Nigeria, the British Government proposed that the Niger Delta be declared a special Federal Territory (Azaiki 2003, p. 49)

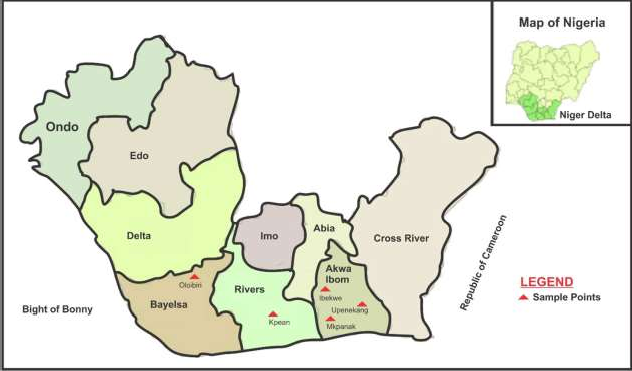
Critics of the prevailing definition like Rev. Dadikumo Odondiri have volunteered that:

There is a specific geographic location referred to as the Niger Delta with a peculiar terrain and peculiar developmental needs. These states are basically Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Akwa Ibom and parts of Edo states, not even Ondo. We have a rural area in Cross River but the Niger Delta is a specific area inhabited by the Ijaws principally, the Isokos, the Urhobos, Itsekiris, the Ogonis as well as some Kwale areas. These are the areas that ought to benefit (Ukaogo 2007)

The Niger-Delta area has a chequered commercial history, having been a preeminent slave trading port before moving to palm oil and now crude oil. The area’s involvement in the slave trade bestowed on it great social and economic consequences. With the abolition of the illicit commerce in human trafficking there was a switch to legitimate commerce dominated by palm oil (Ukaogo, 2007). By 1956, the region was to witness another economic transition when crude oil was discovered in commercial quantities at Oloibiri. This discovery within the contemporary context brought the region into sharp focus. Apart from oil and gas, numerous non-renewable natural resources abound in the region such as clay pits for burnt bricks needed in the construction

industry as well as silica sand, which is essentially important in the glass industry. Following these discoveries, a World Bank report following a visit in 1952 and 1953, declared that the region, with its great natural resources and untapped prospects, could feed the entire population of the West African sub region and still have sufficient commodities for export.

The discovery of oil raised the hopes of the natives for development and the provision of modern amenities such as portable water, electricity, hospitals, schools and good roads in return for the exploitation of these natural resources (Okonta and Oronto 2001, p. 16). The hopes and expectations of the people of the area were not fulfilled, as they soon found out that the Nigerian state and the oil companies shared a common interest in the maximization of profit and the accumulation of capital - not in their welfare or development. These unfulfilled dreams and expectations are the background to the crises in the area. Today, social ferments and unrest in the communities are now commonplace. The most interesting part of this is that the crises and conflicts in the region are rooted in the errors of history easily traceable to the colonial period.



***Figure 1.*** *Map of Niger Delta region showing study area.*

# Statement of Research Problem

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is an epitome of contradictions, while being the richest region in Nigeria, it is the poorest in terms of both human and infrastructural development. However, several government efforts to dev elop the Niger Delta region through several intervention agencies in order to expedite action on sustainable development projects particularly on human development, infrastructure and ecological development in the region has not yielded any much result (Jack-Akhigbe and Okuowa, 2013). This has generated a whole lot of grievances which have been expressed in various ways from peaceful protest to violent agitations, kidnappings and disruptions of oil exploitation in the region.

The first major attempt to address these grievances was in 1957, when the colonial administration set up the Willink’s Commission of Inquiry to investigate the fears of minorities and how to allay them. This was followed by the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDRBA) in 1976, then the Oil Producing Areas Development Commission ( OMPADEC) in 1992. The failure of OMPADEC to achieve its desired expectations coupled with the intensity of Ijaw ethnic struggles led to the establishment of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000 and creation of the Ministry of the Niger Delta in 2008. These establishments were specifically aimed at infrastructural development, environmental transformation and socio- economic empowerment of the people.

It is evident from the background that the NDDC was set up as a result of poor quality of life in the Niger Delta region, despite the region’s oil wells. This unhealthy situation resulted to severe agitation in form of youth restiveness, militancy, kidnapping, seizing of oil wells, illegal bunkering and robbery by the people of Niger Delta region. The agitation is worse in Rivers and Bayelsa States as noted by Okecha (2003 ). This agitation led to the mandate given to NDDC to initiate and execute various projects that will better the lives of the people in the Niger Delta region. These projects include health centres, jetties, electrification, schools, markets, skill acquisition centres, roads and water among others. The water schemes are central to the agita tion process as noted by Azaiki (2003) since it was contained as a mandate of the NDDC. In spite of these projects, the agitation for the development of the region and vices are still on. This has informed the researcher to examine if the NDDC is effective ly meeting i ts stated

objectives in terms of improving the quality of life of the people in the Niger Delta.

# Research Questions

The major questions that the research project will come to grips with are:

* + 1. What is the origin of development crisis in the Niger Delta?
    2. What are the impacts of interventionist programs on the development in the Niger Delta?
    3. What role has the NDDC played in solving the development crisis in the Niger Delta between 2015 and 2019

# Research Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to critically assess the dynamics of challenges

of development in the Nigeria's Niger Delta with a focus on the NDDC (2015 – 2020. The specific objectives therefore are to:

* + 1. To investigate the origin of development cris is in the Niger Delta
    2. To assess the impact of interventionist programs on the development in the Niger Delta
    3. To assess the role played by NDDC in solving development crisis in the Niger Delta between 2015 and 2020

# Justification of the Study

Notwithstanding the numerous studies carried out on the Niger Delta situation, as well as the role of government and multinational businesses in redressing the

underdevelopment of the Niger Delta, the much -desired development in the region is yet to be realised. In spite of the several intervention programmes by the government, the host community' s social needs are still left unattended to. The feelings of the Niger Delta region are that the government has left them to suffer in spite of the region’s enormous contribution to the nation’s economy. Unfortunately, the breakdown in the social contract of the local people, which is significant to peaceful community relations, engen ders the following: ( 1) Frustration: society is always peaceful when all actors in a social contract hold firm their respective roles. Unfortunately, the host communities in the Niger Delta tend to be at the receiving end of the consequences of a broken social contract while the MNOCs together with the Government have, over the decade, h ave continued to dominate them. This, alongside the resultant frustration, has generated distrust between the host communities, on one hand, and the MNOCs and the Government on the other. The poor community - relations strategy of the MNOCs has generated a negative perception: a situation where the communities believe that the MNOCs are only interested in exploiting them by extracting oil from their environment thus despoiling the communities' ecosystem with no subsequent benefit on the part of the host communities; ( 2) Aggression: The youths became aggressive after waiting for decades for promises made to them by the Nigerian government, which failed to materialize (Usang and Ikpeme, 2015). After becoming more conscious of their position as the engine of the Nigerian economy, the oil producing communities unanimously became confrontational. Consequently, some members (militant youths) of the communities attacked oil

installations and MNOCs staff members. This detrimental impact would have been avoided if there are concrete solutions to the problems in the Niger Delta.

From the foregoing, and in the context of the development discourse therefore, it becomes imperative to conduct a study that critically investigates dynamics of challenges of development in the Nigeria's Niger Delta. It examines whether or not government various interventionist programmes particularly, the Niger Delta Development Commission ( NDDC) have contributed to the development of the Niger Delta region. The research aims to also explore and e xamine the thoughts of people in the Niger Delta, especially the communities in which oil has been discovered in their immediate environment, by conducting in -depth interviews. The interviews will not only be held with the host communities, but also with t he policy makers and the actors in the oil and gas industry to find out the exact cause of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta. This research aims to clarify the reason why, despite the oil producing states having more access to the natural resource wealth and special development agencies, particularly the NDDC, the region still lacks basic amenities.

# Scope of the Study

The research is framed within the context of assessing the dynamics of challenges of development in the Nigeria' s Niger Delta: A Study of NDDC, 2015

– 2020. The historical component of the Niger Delta comprised the BRACED States (Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River Edo and Delta States) that are

reflected in the Henry Willink’s Niger Delta Report of 1958. However, the political side of the Niger Delta was the creation of the Fourth Republic in 2000, during former President Olusegun Obasanjo’s administration. It added Abia, Imo and Ondo states to the BRACED states as part of the oil producing states. The study thus centres on Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Oyo and Rivers States. The study covers the period between 2015 and 2019. It appraises the Nigerian federal practice with specific reference to ownership and governance of natural resources in these six states and the attendant poverty and development crisis that comes with centralization of states natural resources.

# Limitations of the Study

The study specifically concentrates on issues of challenges of development in the Nigeria's Niger Delta. Hence, the scope of this study is limited to the Niger Delta. This area has majorly felt the negative impact of oil mining activities. The choice of the Niger Delta is based on the fact that no known research has been conducted to unravel why the people leave in poverty in the midst of plenty.

The research work was constrained by factors such as; finance, time frame for the research study, lack of some relevant data, high cost of transportation within the state due to transport difficulty in and around the state resulting from the poor geographical terrain which has posed a lot of difficulty in transportation and other communication network.

# CHAPTER TWO

**LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Different scholars have attempted the definition of the term development. Obasanjo and Mabogunje ( 1991) define development as a process concerned with the people’s capacity during a defined area over an outlined period to manage and induce positive change; that' s to predict, plan, understand a nd monitor change and reduce or eliminate unwanted or unwarranted change. In other words, development is about people therein they constitute a repository of energy for development and it 's the careful release of this energy that constitutes development. consistent with them, development entails numerous things. it 's not almost consuming; it 's about producing. But it 's concerned with the creation by the people themselves, of the technology needed for development also because the development by the people of the capacity to manage their own affairs. Relating this to the Niger Delta, the rape that's still visited on the oil communities due to their outcry against neglect and marginalization by federal is an epitome of contradictions to development.

Hicks ( 1957) discussed the difficulty of development because i t affects both the underdeveloped and developed countries. She argues that the matter of underdeveloped countries cares with the event of unused resources albeit their uses are documented while those of developed nations are associated with growth, most of their resources being already known and developed to a substantial degree.

Some scholars argue that development may be a qualitative and quantitative improvement within the lifetime of the people. Soyomb o, (2005) while explaining national development defined it as qualitative and quantitative improvement within the living conditions of the people of a State in line with national objectives as indicated within the national development plans. He said that, rapid improvement of the quality of living of the typical Nigerian has always been a serious objective of country’s national development plans. To him, other key objectives of the event plans include: reduction within the level of unemployment, even distribution of income, reduction within the incidence of poverty, improvement within the quality of lifetime of the people, more employment opportunities, greater access to and ownership of homes and access to basic necessities of life, such as, qualitative hea lth services, potable water, education and electricity. it's when these objectives are achieved that one can talk about national development.

The conceptualization of national development shows the human aspect of development and underlines the notion that national development goes beyond growth in economic indicators like the Gross Domestic Product ( GDP) and Per Capita Income. it's the priority about discrepancy between economic indicators and quality of life that led to the event of the “Human Developmen t Index” as alternative indicators of development (Soyombo, 2005). However, he concludes that in the least levels of development the three essential developmental concerns are, for people to steer an extended and healthy life, to accumulate knowledge and to possess access to resources needed for an honest standard of l iving.

Other scholars who gave another interpretation to development are Afonja and Pearce ( 1986). consistent with them, development is aimed toward fulfilling four conditions of stabilities which includes: the steadiness of normative patterns; level of commitment of the acting units; the acceptance of a standard definition of things and integration of the system itself to the massive system of which it' s part. They argued that these four conditions are given due to the very fact that traditional societies resist innovations, in order that fulfilment of any condition doesn't necessarily mean that growth and development has taken place.

Similarly, Sanda (1985) puts development because the transitional process sustaining a multifaceted improvement in human condition resulting from structural and functional changes within the social, economic, political, techno - scientific and each conceivable sphere of hum an endeavor. To him, development entails normative and organizational changes within the society resulting in:

* + 1. the development and expansion of the mental horizon of the population arising from functional education and;
    2. the sustenance of positive and highly functional values, customs and practices to all or any aspects of life and living.

Wilnesky and Lebeaux ( 1995) therefore, explain development as something formally organized and socially sponsored institutions, agencies, programs which function to take care of or improve the economic conditions, health or inter - personal competence of some part or all of a population.

Kundan (1997 ) describes sustainable development as a construct which envisions development as meeting the requirements of this genera tion without

compromising the requirements of the longer term generation. It implies that while development meets the necessity of this it doesn't compromise the power of the longer term generation to satisfy their needs. But this ability to satisfy the necessity is decided by the human capital (through education, technological advance, etc.) and physical capital (machine, tools etc.). He argues that continued sustainable development could only be possible or assured when it's agreed and indeed concrete steps are taken to boost the extent of literacy in any society. He further laid emphasis on good governance. He stated that it depends on the extent to which government is perceived and accepted as legitimate, committed to improving people’s well-being and aware of the requirements of its citizens, competent to ensure law and order and to deliver public services ready to create an enabling policy environment for productive activities and equitable in its conduct. Relating this to the Niger Delta, the statement of the Governor of Rivers State, Dr. Peter Odili really involves mind. He opined that if the federal has lived up to i ts responsibility and sufficiently focused on the awful neglect of the Niger Delta, its difficult environment and therefore the needs of its people would are transformed into sustainable development.

Nyerere (1971 ) comes on the brink of this view. He argued that in developing nations, the tendency has always been to imagine development in terms of socioeconomic alone which there's got to lo ok beyond mere economic indices and put emphasis on human development, i. e., the complete realization of the human potential and maximum use of the nation’s resources for the advantage of all. Gunder (1972 ) insisted that the consideration of social justice and human

satisfaction were essential components of any adequate conception of development. This realization was echoed by leaders like late Gandhi that we' d like development polices which benefit all strata of the population and not just a popular minority.

Development consistent with Adedeji in Onimode and Synge (1995) means a process of bringing about fundamental and sustainable changes in society. He noted that development transcends also as encompasses growth and embraces such aspect of the standard of life as social justice, equality of opportunity for all citizens, equitable distribution of income and therefore the democratization of the event process. Eze ( 2005 ) refers development to the goal that has got to precede development actions, whether it' s about people, organizations, or nations. When it's about people, the goal is human development; when it 's about organizations, the priority is organizational development, and, when it 's about societies, the goal is national development. In each of those , the goal of development must first of all be clearly began within the sort of directions, destinations and action plans, followed by implementation of the action plans, and eventually by the belief or otherwise of development itself. Accordingly, he opine d that it' s quite certain that a society during a state of learned helplessness cannot meaningfully start genuine national development without first achieving successful emancipation.

In Africa however, the lives of confrontation are often drawn over probl ems with exclusions, identity, frustrations and denial of basic must particular area of communities by those that maintain the forces of coercion. consistent with Anyadike, (1997 ), conflicts in Africa arises as a results of a worldwide financial

system that keeps the continent locked in vicious circle of poverty and domination, aggravating local conflict over power and wealth. This seems to carry true within the Niger Delta. Since the Nigerian state lacks autonomy, it simply expropriates, using coercive instruments to sustain its dominance. This results in penury, acute environmental degradation and gross underdevelopment within the oil – producing areas. Forest, ( 1993) and Franynas, (2001) in their studies shown that conflict occur as a results of protests against injustice l ike environmental damages and displeasure with successive government policies over programs of oil companies seemed to be unjust, inadequate and repressive. As a result, the people’s economic future has led to an intensification of the s truggle for survival at the individual and group levels. The consequence is that the social - conflict profile of the country.

In the contemporary discourse of development, attention has shifted from mere attainment of development to sustaining it or making it permanent into the longer term . The central assumption within the sustainability of human society is to make sure good life at the instant without compromising the prospect of i ts future generation to possess similar life.

The literature on sustainable development presents a spread of viewpoints regarding the definition of this idea, also as a spectrum of methods to analyse the related problems (Black, 2000 ). the range of the backgrounds of the researchers and problems of interest, amplified by the vag ue definition of sustainable development (Gudmundsson and Hojer, 1996) as first posed by the Brundtland

Commission ( WCED, 1987 ), are main sources of the differences in viewpoints about sustainable development.

Nevertheless, a comparative study of the liter ature in sustainable development shows that there are many significant common points among these viewpoints despite the differences mentioned above. The emergence of economic, environmental and social (EES) variables that are universally believed to be components of sustainable development ( Hart, 2002) may be a significant common point. Dynamism is another common feature of just about all sustainable development problem definitions ( Minken, 1999). Perhaps one key feature of sustainable development problem d efinition is that the intergeneration equity (WCED, 1987), which is of course associated with the t ime dimension of sustainable development.

Furthermore, there' s a bent in recent years to quantify the qualitative concept of sustainable development, which c an be considered another common point of the recent works. Vaziri and Rassafi (2001) tried to quantify sustainable development by indicators of development and ascertain sustainability by using elasticities. Hart argues about the need for, and defines the characteristics of, the sustainability indicators (Hart, 2002). The IISD (2002) proposes the Dashboard of Sustainability, during which each of 4 main classes of indicators of sustainable development ( e.g. EES and institutional performance measures) has bee n represented by a dial or gauge, showing the status of the performance measures.

Minken ( 1999) defines sustainability because the solution of an optimization problem, while Radzicki (1999) shows how system dynamics

modelling are often effectively want to study the forces that deter sustainable development of a city. Moffatt and Hanley ( 2001) offer alternative approaches to modelling economy–environment systems within the context of sustainable development. Their model is employed to seem at long -term trends in population, resource use and pollution. Hofkes analyses sustainable development in an endogenous growth model that considers the interaction between the economy and therefore the natural environment ( Hofkes, 1996). Groller et al (1996) analyse Wonderland – a dynamic model of demographic, economic and environmental interactions – by combining numerical simulations with basic ideas of geometric singular perturbation theory. Zhang proposes a nonlinear dynamic economic model with endogenously defined variables of technological change, population, capital accumulation and pollution (Zhang, 1996). Leeves and Herbert use a 3 sector, nonlinear, discrete time dynamic model to guage different pollution control policies (Leeves and Herbert, 2002).

According to UNEP (1992, p. 2):

Sustainable development means improving the quality of human life while l iving within the carrying capacity

of supporting ecosystem. Sustainable economy is the product

of sustainable development; it maintains i ts natural resource base and it can continue to develop by adapting to changing circumstances and through improvements in knowledge

organization, technical efficiency, and wisdom.

Sustainable living indicates the lifestyle of an individual,

who feels the obligation to care for nature and every human individual, and who acts accordingly.

A more embracing definition was that by UNU (1996, p.34) which see sustainable development as:

Consisting of policies, strategies, plans, production systems,

and technologies used in executing projects and programmes aimed at satisfying real human needs in perpetuity while

maintaining environmental quality, biodiversity, the resilience of the ecosystems, and the welfare of all organisms by national, regional, and global levels.”

The ingredients for sustainable development, according to WCED (1987), include a political system that secures effective citizen participation; an economic system that is able to generate surpluses and technical knowledge on a self - reliant basis; a social system that provides for solution for the tensions arising from disharmonious development; a production system that respects the obligation to preserve the ecological base for development; a techno- logical system that can search continuously for new solutions; an international system that fosters sustainable patterns of trade and finance; and an administrative system that is flexible and has the capacity for self- correction.

Lastly, IUCN/UNEP/WWF (1991), in “Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living” articulated the following nine principles for sustainable development: respect and care for the community of life; improve the quality of human life; conserve the earth’s vitality and diversity; keep within the earth’s carrying capacity; change personal attitudes and practices; enable communities to care for their environments; provide a national framework for integration, development, and conservation, and create a global alliance.

Therefore, sustainable development holds that every society should strive to improve the conditions living of its people without foreclosing the opportunity of the future generation. Society should be concerned with the provision of the basic needs such as food, water, education, good healthcare, shelter, etc. for all the

people. Any concerted effort to achieve this is called development. Our discourse therefore when situated within the theoretical realm of distributive justice provides analytical framework in understanding the situation in the Niger Delta. The theory on rights asserts that basic rights should be enjoyed in a state and protected through legal and extra- legal instruments. Rights can be categorized into political, social and economic rights. The denial of social rights explained the pervasive poverty and underdevelopment in the area. The Niger Delta agitation is premised on right denial especially, access to oil wealth to boost living standard (Ugoh, 2008 ).

Meanwhile, the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has remained in constant mention in relation to development deficit despite the strategic importance of the region to the economic profile of the country as the oil producing region. While some scholars believe that ecological devastation and misappropriation of oil wealth is at the root of the developmental rift ( Watts, 2009), yet there are those who indict corruption and socio-political marginalization. Others agree that the cause of the crisis is unemployment and poverty ( Iyayi, 2008). From the varied positions above, one prominent factor that tends to be causal to the outbreak of the rift in the region is that it is l inked to oil being exploited in the region (Babatunde, 2012).

Scholars like Iyayi ( 2000 ), Okonta and Douglas (2003) and Watts (2009) have argued that decades of oil exploitation in the Niger Delta has transformed Nigeria's political economy making it one of the most resource -dependent nations on earth. Yet, instead of turning Nigeria into one of t he most prosperous states on

the African continent, oil production has accentuated the socio - political and economic woes of the oil- rich Niger Delta region. These scholars and many others argue that it is the disparity between the wealth appropriated from the region and the economic marginalization of indigenes of the region that accounts for the conflict. For example, a World Bank Panel report on the Niger Delta observed that despite substantial resource flows to the government, and significant natural resource endowments, the people of the Niger Delta are destitute. It described the Niger Delta as an “iconic representation of destitution amongst the possibility of wealth” ( World Bank, 2007 ). It observed that the Niger Delta people are excluded from the wealth generated by their resource- rich region and the region having the highest unemployment rate in Nigeria substantiates this. A 2006 UNDP report also noted that remote rural communities in the Niger Delta have limited economic opportunities and often cannot access employment benefits from the oil conglomerates because they lack capital resources or skills.

Clearly, the problem in the Niger Delta demonstrates how total dependence on export-focused non-renewable resource extraction can stifle human development, impoverish local communities, and provoke and exacerbate violent conflict ( Higgins, 2009 ). According to the UNDP (2006) while the Niger Delta oil wealth accounts for the bulk of Nigeria' s foreign exchange earnings (amounting to about $231 billion betwe en 1970 and 1999), these vast revenues have not translated to positive human development outcomes for the people. Higgins ( 2009) and the International Crisis Group ( 2006) argue that the slow pace of systemic reforms and lack of jobs, water, schools, electr icity and clinics in

some parts of the Niger Delta have not only encouraged militancy in the region but have also boosted support for the insurgents among local populations. Exclusion Since independence, national political power has revolved around the “big three” ethnic nationalities: Hausa- Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo. Thus, political access for minorities until now was closed.

Moreover, elections since 1999 have been widely rigged in the Niger Delta states and most of these fraudulent results are sustained by violence and threats resulting in huge democratic deficits. Because the people are economically exploited and deprived of the opportunity to alter state economic and social policy through the instrumentality of elections, they are bitter and angry. Beca use many Niger Delta youths are convinced that formal institutions and local customary institutions (particularly the system of kingship) have failed and are incapable of redressing grievances, they have turned to violence and militancy to challenge the government and extort money and oil from the oil conglomerates ( World Bank 2007).

Osaghae (1998) argues that the oil companies orchestrate the inter - ethnic conflict in the Niger Delta in a modern day attempt at "indirect rule." The strategy is to encourage oil-bearing communities to dissipate energy in fighting over which community or communities should benefit from specific welfare and rehabilitation projects to the point where no community benefits. Thus, the Ijaw/ Ilaje conflict and the Urhobo/ Itsekiri conflict, for example, results from MNOCs stoking ethnic fires to facilitate oil production and expand its profit base.

According to the World Bank (2007), oil exploration and production has generated serious environmental damages at several levels: land, wate r, and air pollution, depleted fishing grounds and territories, and the disappearance of wetlands. These serious environmental conditions have provoked serious hardships for local peoples whose sources of livelihood has been severely impacted. Many local populations have been displaced from ancestral lands and local resources and thrust into dependent relationships in overpopulated cities with no skills, craft or vocation to sustain them. The environmental devastation of the Delta has put pressure on local communities who continue to suffer from poor or inequitable land use practices ( UNDP 2006). Existing measures to counterbalance the environmental damage are at best haphazard and inadequate and grossly underestimate the enormity of damage to the Niger Delt a ecology. This chronic underestimation which translates to gross nonchalance is a major source of community discontent and violence (World Bank, 2007).

Oil exploitation has created life-threatening ecological hazards and deterioration of health and the social fabric of the inhabitants of the oil communities. The implication is that the oil industry has exploited the ecosystems for resources beyond the level of sustainability. The ecological problem is a reality, which has to be tackled. Indeed, a delicate balance exists between the human population in the Niger Delta and its fragile ecosystem (Bisina, 2006). Bisina, like other writers on the issue, held the view that there is a strong feeling in the region that the rate of environmental degradation is pushi ng the region towards ecological disaster. It has been argued that by destroying the

environment, man destroys himself and this, directly or indirectly, leads to conflict ( Egunjobi, 2005 ). One of the basic premises of sustainable development, therefore, is the recognition that environment and development are not, in the long run, mutually reinforcing. Egunjobi based his analysis of the Ogoni -Shell crisis on the context of the pervasive under - development of the oil community coupled with the environmental pollution caused by the activities of Shell.

Adebayo et al (2007) observe that the crisis in the Niger Delta can be attributed to the denial of the people from their major source of livelihood especially those whose farmlands have been taken over by oil prod uction activities without the necessary remediation. The implication is that since oil exploration and exploitation have largely contributed to the socio - economic displacement of people in the region, it is largely implicated to have generated oil related conflicts in the region. According to Adebayo et al ( 2007), this appears to have negatively left a divide between the oil rich communities and the oil producing companies with the government being alleged of playing lopsided mediatory role that significantly favours the oil companies at the expense of oil rich communities. On the other hand, the government and oil producing companies have often tried to lay claim to making successful efforts at addressing the situation in a manner that reflects the best ind ustry practice.

As early as 1990s, i t was established that part of the reason for the rift in the relationship among the oil stakeholders were the allegations of unrealized pledges, oil spillage, environmental neglect, unfair compensatory response, slow response to urgent save our souls, ‘SOS’, lack of recognition for traditional

institutions, disrespect for sacred places and corruption against the oil communities by the oil companies The devastation caused by oil spillage and gas flaring has made it virtually impossible for the people to earn a living from their hitherto agricultural activities – farming, fishing and trading. In communities where oil exploration and production activities are carried out, the consequences are great; deforestation, erosion, acid rains, and destroyed farmlands, are the main signposts for this gift of nature. Activities of these companies caused the pollution of the creeks and destroyed aquatic lives.

On the question of unrealized pledges, the former minister of finance, Dr Ngonzi Okonjo- Iweala and the former president of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo agreed that Nigeria has continuously failed to honour her obligations to the people of the Niger Delta (The Guardian, 2006). When several government intervention agencies were established, they got the mandate to develop the Niger Delta. They started well with the design of master plans for the region which initially gave the hope of realizing pledges made by the government. But subsequent development indicates that despite their master plans that were put together by several sector consultants, they could not be implemented as initially designated.

International laws on the environment call for respect for the environment. It was in pursuit of this that principle 21 and 22 of the 1972 Stockholm Declaration were entrenched which call for sustainable environment that is protected against damage and where damage inevitably occurs, due compensation should be paid to victims of pollution and other related environmental damages

(Wunmi, 2002 ). But the oil exploration and exploitation activities in the Niger Delta appear to have little or no regards for environmental protection. Also on account of environmental neglect, report indicates that such neglect runs counter to the New Millennium Goals’ expectations. Environmental sustainability is critical to the achievement of the New Millennium Goals ( UNDP report, 2006). According to the report the Niger Delta region is made up of more than 70percent of the population who depend on the natural en vironment for survival. Experts were of the view that the oil exploration and production activities in the region has a corresponding negative effect on the productivity in the region in the areas of fisheries and related agricultural activities ( Opukri and Ibaba, 2008).

According to UNDP Report (2006), with more than 1,481 oil wells producing from 156 oil fields stretching over 7, 000 kilometers of pipelines and flow lines 275 flow stations operated by over 13 oil companies in the region, the environment is compelled to face serious stress. Eregha and Irughe ( 2009) observe that though the oil companies occupy about 5 percent of the land in the region, the negative effects of their activities in terms of environmental pollution cuts across the entire region. The pollution which consists of air, water, soil and noise pollution has been alleged to have degraded the environment significantly. This was in addition to deforestation and eventual destruction of farmland that have collective negative effect on the environment ( Ofehe, 1999). The construction of canal that made salt water to flow into the freshwater has also left the environment largely degraded especially in denying the oil communities access to reliable source of drinking water.

Enemaku (2006 ) agrees that though the oil companies pay compensations to some extent, the degree of extreme poverty the oil communities are faced with makes such compensation to be of no significance. He argues that the oil communities where oil is produced are underlined by abs ence of clean water, hospitals, good road network, and schools to mention but a few. This makes their compensation to be unfair as it does not help to advance the aspirations of the people of the oil communities. According to the UNDP Report, the people of the region lack access to farmland and consequently unable to provide for food and school fees for their wards of school age apart from proper shelter and inability to afford medical services when the need arises.

The oil communities were irked by the iss ue of unfair compensation as a result of oil exploration in their communities. According to the report of the Special Committee on Oil Producing Areas in 2006, government was accused of failing to provide for adequate compensation for the oil communities ( Igben, 2016). The committee report observes that in 1958, 50percent of the revenues from oil and minerals were allocated to the areas from which these resources were extracted. But subsequent years witnessed progressive reduction on the percentage allocated to the communities concerned. In 1970, it was scaled down to 45 percent, 1975, it was 20percent. In 1979, it was completely abolished. It was later revived in 1982 to 10 percent, 1992, it was doubled to 3percent. In 1995 it was raised to 13percent where it stands till date.

Some decades after, Transnational Crisis Project Research (2010) observes that there are seven major causes of crisis in the region. They are ‘ rivalry between

and among locals, creation of unsettled expectations, breach of perceived or real agreements, clash of values, rumour mongering and violence.’ Enogholase (2000) maintains that government promises have hardly gone beyond mere rhetoric thus confirming long standing allegation of lack of adequate response to the infrastructural needs of the oil producing communities.

Efeotor (1995 ) remarks after an appraisal of the state of the relationship among the stakeholders in the region that the best description for the state of the relationship as at 1995 was ‘a state of war’. Enemaku (2006) p oints out that if the state of relationship among the stakeholders in 1995 could best be described as a state of war, then as at 2006 it had widened into greater dimension. Enemaku’s position is buttressed by the fact that the tempo of militancy was not as coordinated, sophisticated and equipped in 1995 as it turned out to be in 2006. It further suggests that the rift increases in complexity with the passage of t ime. This derives from the increase in the size of shipments of illegal weapons which include ‘pump- action shotguns, AK-47s, FNCs, general purpose machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades’. A special report of the United States Institute for Peace ( USIP) on the post amnesty programme as at May 2013 maintains that the major drivers for sustainable peace in the Niger Delta are yet to be in place (Sayne, 2013 ). The report admits that much spending was going into the region but such spending lacks alignment with the developmental goal of the Niger Delta. The report concludes that with the lack of effect ive project supervision, ad hoc like kind of spending and non-transparency, the road to a long term peace destination appears to be fraught with grievous obstacles (Sayne, 2013).

Beyond the perspective of the USIP, another major cause of the strain in the relationship between the various stakeholders to the oil production in the Niger Delta is rooted in land ownership title decree. The promulgation of Land Use Decree of 1978 now Land Use Act that gave government the power to take over ownership of land from the people was a tinder box of grievances with a sustained resentment by the oil rich communities against the government. The idea originally behind the promulgation of the Land Use Act on 26th March of 1978 then as a decree was to enable government to ov ercome the constraint associated with the acquisition of land for the purpose of development. It is believed that the Land Use Act has since its implementation and subsequent entrenchment in the 1979 and 1999 constitution been fraught with more problems than earlier envisaged (Mabogunje, 2002). The oil rich communities considered it to be highly vexatious as it has also turned out to be an instrument of denial of their right of ownership to what by tenure system or heritage was naturally theirs yet without due compensation in the face of industrial hazards occasioned by oil production activities in the Niger Delta ( Adebayo et al,2007).

The revenue allocation formula being adopted by the Nigerian government has been particularly criticized and roundly rejecte d for not reflecting the interests of the people in the Niger Delta region where over 80 per cent of the national resource is generated. The Federal Government attributes the restiveness in the Niger Delta region to the politics surrounding resource contro l. In the opinion of Afinotan and Ojakarotu (2009), the Niger Delta upheaval has grown from bad to worse, assuming a debilitating pattern traceable to the formation of

social groups that sought to challenge the state and its policies. The Niger Delta conflict is triggered by oil revenue allocation and oil related decrees that the restive youths believe must be abrogated as they do not represent their interests: as the host communities. Closely related to this view is the argument by Watts, Okonta and Kemedi (2004 ) that the struggle for natural resources as a means of survival remains the driving force of agitation amongst groups in various communities. This is what Adunbi (2015) describes as the oil citizenship phenomenon. The Niger Delta conflict means diff erent things to various ethnic nationalities in the area that view resource control as paramount to their sustainable l ivelihoods and need to be given much desired attention by policymakers if they mean well for the people and Nigerians at large (Ojakorotu , 2009, p.6). This does not require the politics of oil as far as the actualization of stability is concerned. The foregoing is reaffirmed by Obi (2001, p. 87), in his argument that the revenue sharing formula being adopted in Nigeria is the major cause of most of the conflicts in the area, and how well the government is able to resolve it would largely determine the peace and development of the region.

The objectivity and complexities of the situation in the region are crucial in helping people to comprehend the suffering of the residents whose children have grown up with the perception that, until the government and oil companies address the problem of resource control, there would be no peace in oil -producing areas (Ojakarotu, 2009). The perception of the people within the host communities of the region is more negative than positive, as they feel the oil has brought more

of a curse to them than a blessing, owing to associated lethal violence, insecurity,

environmental crisis, and the loss of cultural valu es ( Aghalino, 2012). Oyefusi (2007) also note that the attitude of some stakeholders motivated the formation of restive groups. These grievances of the Niger Delta people over the revenue allocation mechanism in the country allegedly prompted the renowned environmental activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa, to embark on a peaceful struggle for the emancipation of the Ogoni people from state-imposed poverty (Ako, 2013).

According to Ejibunu (2007), in 1990, the Ogoni evaluated their situation. They came to a conclusion that, despite the stupendous oil and gas wealth in their land that feeds the entire nation, they still unfortunately live in poverty and squalor; unemployment and underemployment were running high by the day; and worse still, their environment has been adver sely affected by reckless oil exploitation, and ecological warfare sponsored by the transnational oil industries operating in the area. The Ogoni believe that their existence as a people was endangered by environmental degradation, political marginalizatio n, economic strangulation and “slavery, which the people of the region were being subjected to every day”. Afinotan and Ojakaruotu (2009) suggests that it was their unprecedented response to the dangers to human existence that generated the emergence of environmental rights activism and civil society groups in the region. Some of the organisations fighting for the economic liberation of the Niger Delta people today include the Pan- Niger Delta Resistance Movement, the Environmental Rights Action (ERA); the I jaw Youth Council ( IYC); the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP); the Movement for Reparation to Ogbia (MORETO); and the Movement for the Survival of the Ijo in

the Niger Delta (MOSIEND). Each group was formed with an inclination towards ethnic nationalism in order to liberate the people in the Niger Delta region. Obi (2001) describes the evolution of the politics of oil in the Niger Delta as a gradual process, where ethnic identity was transformed into a mobilizing element, not only to interrogate resource control, but also as a channel for social mobilization and an alliance for resisting alienation, extraction and exclusion of the Niger Delta people from the proceeds meant to alleviate their suffering having been deprived of the use of their land and water to earn a living. Ethnic nationalism in the Niger Delta has become one of the major problems in the region, as many people, under the guise of fighting for the economic emancipation of the people, exploit the oil companies and the Feder al Government by demanding money that never gets to the hands of the downtrodden citizens in the Niger Delta region.

# Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study are governance theory and economic penetration and integration t heory.

# 1 Governance Theory

Governance theory is about the practice of collective decision - making. Chhoray and Stoker (2009 ) argue that governance is about the rules of collective decision-making in settings where there are a plurality of actors or organizations and where no formal control system can dictate the terms of the relationship between these actors and organizations.

The governance theory lay emphasis on the use of networks, partnerships, collaborations and very many other terms that underscore governance as an external engagement rather than an internal processes of organizations. This theory argues for the involvement of public organisations engaging with stakeholders in collective decision- making processes in a formal, consensus- oriented and deliberative way (Berkett et al, 2013). Scholars studying governance and collaboration see the importance and merit of using networks in studying a new governance paradigm where public administrators work across the sectors and judicial boundaries ( Hwang and Moon, 2009). The model is defined by Ansell and Gash (2008 ) as an “arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non- state stakeholders in a collective decision -making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage programs or assets”. The key tenet is that the work of government, whether in terms policy formulation, implementation, service delivery, at various levels— global, national or local—should be a product of inclusive partnership of government, private sector and civil society. The various applications constitute nuances of usage which generally do not deviate much from this core tenet. Cadman (2012: 34) integrating the views of other scholars, explains this paradigm thus:

Modern governance is portrayed as essentially social political in nature, and defined as “more or less continuous processes of interaction between social actors, groups and forces and public or semi-public organizations, institutions or authorities”. Interaction is key, and is identified as a series of “co”- arrangements between state and non-state actors, more oriented towards collaborative approaches to problem solving. In such models the transmissi on of information and knowledge and i ts valuation by those involved

plays a central role; and deliberation rather than directives has become an alternative mechanism of dealing with the complexity and ambiguity of political and social problems.

The partnerships which this theory espouse, offer the potential to deliver outcomes that single organizations cannot, or to do so more efficiently. Like other governance models, the aim of governance partnership is to achieve good governance or effective and efficient public administration. Processes aim at securing defined mission by participatory decision -making of all stakeholders, accountability directly linked to performance standards and assessments, accountability of partners to their own stakeholders; partner to partner accountability and accountability of the partnership to i ts stakeholders and beneficiaries. This is essentially why these new approaches are also described as the public value management model (Moore, 1995). Public value can be created in different ways, but more importantly, by starting with the group of people in question and involving them in discussing and defining how they can contribute to and benefit from the creation of public value ( Todorut and Tselentis, 2015). The model fundamentally emphasizes the fact that public administration is insufficiently flexible, innovative and creative. And this missing link could well be realised through use of networks, collaboration and partnerships. The perspective reflects the perception that the previ ous organizing models of the public sector neglected the civil society and public positioning as a passive receiver of public goods or as a simple consumer on a huge market ( Todorut and Tselentis, 2015 ).

The basic premise is that governance scholars are in terested in how governance arrangements are chosen ( intentionally or unintentionally), how they are maintained or how they are changed. But governance is not a science with clear causal pathways to be identified, nor can i t be adequately captured by laws, statutes or formal constitutions. Governance is a practice. Moreover, it is an intensely human activity and is not undertaken by super beings that are all - seeing and all- knowing. Governance is undertaken by human agents who are defined by bounded rationality – limited by their information processing capacities – and constrained by conflicting power positions and perceptions.

Two things flow from this statement. First governance is a political activity; it is about coordination and decision -making in the context of a plurality of views and interests. Conflict and dissent provide essential ingredients to a governance process. Given human society, as it has been and as it might reasonably be expected to be in the future, people will make judgements about what is right for themselves and for others, and that there is no reason to assume that those judgements will be shared. Equally it is clear that as humans we need to find ways to act together, to engage in collective action, to resolve the problems and challenges of l iving together. Dunn ( 2000) defines politics as ‘the struggles which result from the collisions between human purposes: most clearly when these collisions involve large numbers of human beings’. Politics informs governance in that i t provides the raw material both to construct governance arrangements and the focus of much governance activity when it is operating.

The second factor to flow from this assertion that governance is an intensely human activity is that its existence to some extent is explai ned by the limits of our human capacities (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009). If we are all -seeing and knowing and could faithfully predict each other’s behaviour then the frameworks and rules of governance would be unnecessary. We could exchange views and resolve conflicts without resort to institutions and practices that simplify our choices, limit our areas of focus, push our understanding in certain directions and provide rules of thumb or heuristics so that we have a rough idea about what to do in different settings (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009). Governance exists in part because it provides us with effective ways to cope with the limitations of human cognition and understanding. It provides architecture for choice in the context of our bounded rationality (Jones, 2001).

Governance arrangements are brought to life by decision -makers that are boundedly rational. Decision-makers, as it were, have to deal both with the external environment and their inner world, their cognitive architecture. The inner world helps them to focus on some things and ignore others and i t is driven by habits of thought, rules of thumb, and emotions. Rationality is ‘bounded’ by this framing role of the human mind. Insights from social psychology and cognitive studies suggest that actors develop various coping techniques and heurists to deal with the challenges they face. Some are seen as providing effective ways of coming to a judgement – ‘ better than comprehensive rationality’ – and others are seen as having in-built pathologies or weaknesses (Bendor, 2003). One of the characteristics of an effective governance mechanism is that it steers actors and

the organisations they lead to certain types of desired behaviour in the context of bounded rationality. Governance at its best brings into play what Dunn calls ‘the cunning of unreason’ ( Dunn, 2000).

The driving force behind the explosion of interest in governance is a sense that changes in the practice of governing our societies are being driven by powerful and relatively novel forces. Indeed, g overnance systems are seen as particularly under pressure in all sectors of society as changes in the economic, political, social and ecological context place new demands on existing arrangements. The greatest of these forces for change is relatively easy to identify in the literature drawn from politics, international relations and development studies, the spread of global economic and social l inks, and the rising power of democratization.

In view of the foregoing analysis on the theory of governance, the time- tested principles of the theory will be adopted in evaluating governance in the context of the development in the Niger Delta in particular and Nigeria in general. Therefore, an attempt will be made to contextualize the theory of governance as it concerns the Niger delta and adopt the principles as searchlight for redressing the poverty challenge not only in the Niger Delta but in Nigeria in general.

The theory of governance and the principles or criteria by which they can be assessed, have been elucidated upon. There is, therefore, the need to further analyse, juxtapose and evaluate governance in Nigeria based on these principles. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), section 14( 1), stipulates that Nigeria is a state based on the principle of democracy and social

justice. It further stipulates that the primary purpose of government should be the security and welfare of Nigerians in order to guarantee the majority of Nigerians decent l iving standards which any political leadership that derives its mandate from the people ought to subscribe and preserve.

Most analysts would however, agree to failed expectations in developmental strides despite abundance of human and material resources. Invariably, governance at its various models has not impacted on development. A number of factors account for this governance failure. Nigeria is made up of different public administration systems including in principle one federal government, 36 state government administrations and 774 supposedly auton omous third tier local government public administrations. Invariably, some of these autonomous public administration systems in one way or another engage non -state actor for governance purposes ( Ikeanyibe, 2016).

The governance perspective assumes that th e challenges in the Niger Delta region are the result of the absence of development, democracy and good governance. There is thus a concentration of effort in bringing about development and good governance through a range of activities in the Niger Delta t hat include establishment of a development board, construction of roads, provision of amenities, forceful impeachment of corrupt governors, promoting transparency in public budgeting and supporting monitoring of oil revenues.

# 2 Economic Penetration and Integration Theory

The Economic Penetration and Integration Theory of Development is a variant of the Marxian theories and it is associated with scholars such as Lenin (1933), Schumpeter (1955 ), Barratt (1974), Hobson (1983), to mention bu t a few.

The theory offers explanation on the penetration or migration of capitalists into the backward regions and be able to influence some members especially the political class, in the peripheral state to legitimize their occupation of viable regions or enclaves in their territory (Offiong 1980).

The rise in organic composition of capital and the decline in the rate of profit, place a dilemma on the capitalist. He cannot opt for oligopolistic competition because it restricts an increase in prod uctivity. Neither can he increase the rate of exploitation because the worker must earn something that is enough to reproduce himself since the continuity of the capitalist business is worthwhile. The decline in the rate of profit was due to excess supply of goods and services and the low purchasing power of the people in the metropolis ( Ake, 1990).

The most viable option left for the capitalist is redeployment of capital to other lands where the organic composition is still relatively low. In such place of low organic composition of capital, the surplus value per unit of labour will be comparatively high because labour is plentiful and therefore, cheap. Thus, as a reaction to the contradictions of capitalists’ accumulation, the capitalists from Europe and beyond turned their attention to the economically under exploited Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Gallagher and Robinson (1953) rightly noted that within a given under exploited region, economic expansion tends to flow into sub -regions of maximum

opportunity. The oil rich Niger Delta region to them is a region of maximum

opportunity in Nigeria. However, they contend that in the process of integrating a new region into an expanding economy, maximum opportunity depends largely upon political consideration of security as upon the question of profit. Illustratively, they maintain that if economic opportunity seems large but political security small, then full absorption into the extending economy tends to be frustrated until power is exerted upon the region in que stion. This is in line with O’Connor’s argument about imperialists’ pre- condition for expansion:

The pre- condition for a truly favourable investment

climate is an indirect or direct control of internal politics in the backward regions. Economic penetrati on therefore leads to the establishment of spheres of influence.

( O’Connor, 1971: 32).

In order to actualize this objective of exerting power, the imperialists resort to the substitution of internal colonialism that Green and Seidman (1968) refer to as false decolonization. Under this arrangement, power is now translated to the domestic ruling classes. In other words, puppet governments represented by stooges and based on some chiefs, reactionary elements, unpopular politicians, big bourgeoisies, compradors or corrupt civil or military functionaries are put in place to run the affairs of the state or region under the control of the imperialists.

In order to achieve this, the foreign power brokers represented by the multinational oil companies try to put in place local marionettes that they can negotiate with so as to create conducive atmosphere - devoid of security threat for exploration of the people’s resources. This could involve the introduction of a disagreement between community leaders and their subj ects. While the

community leaders are busy dancing to the tunes of the imperialists, they will be at loggerheads with their subjects. If none of these strategies work, they embark on smokescreen projects and spending strategies by establishing development boards and interventionist agency for host communities such as Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB), Niger Delta Development Authority (NDBDA), Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), to menti on but a few aimed at assuaging the minds of the people while multinational oil companies plunder their wealth away through reckless exploratory activities. At the state level, reactionary elements, anti-popular politicians, corrupt civil or military elite s are made to emerge as leaders of the Nigerian state. After all, Ogege (2007) rightly observed, that no one in power in Abuja ever wants to lose control of the Niger Delta and its oil and gas resources. Control of power in Nigeria has always been about co ntrol of oil revenue. These crops of people who are at the helm of affairs are only interested in what accrues to the Nigerian states and not the harmful impacts of oil exploration on the inhabitants of the host communities in the Niger Delta.

The tactical refusal to address the plight of the people in the Niger Delta triggered off various shades of interminable violent agitations. Most times, they put in place other institutional measures of violent repression to silence the inhabitants from agitating or asking for equitable and just distribution of the oil revenue derived from their land. The repressive strategies include indiscriminate beating, arrest, detention and even killing by the state security forces. The killing of Ken Saro Wiwa and others show th e extent the state can go in trying to pacify

the oil companies and making the Niger Delta region conducive for uninterrupted exploration and exploitation of petroleum resources (Ogege 2008).

In extreme cases, the federal government at the draining end pe rpetually draft warships and an entire division of army to wipe out any community that is agitating for the underdevelopment problem in the region to be addressed. The genocide in Ogoni land in 1993, Odi massacre of 1999, the Gbaramatu ethnocide of 2009 and 2016 in desperate search for Government Tompkolo by the Joint Task Force ( JTF) point to this fact.

The Nigerian government was desirous to create an enabling business climate for the multinational oil companies to operate unencumbered. What readily comes to mind after due consultation with foreign powers, and the interlocuteur elements- governors and influential traditional rulers in the region was the amnesty initiative. The amnesty initiative was a strategic state policy that is aimed mainly to peacefully but deceitfully dispossesses the militants of their arms, take them to camps so that the Niger Delta region remains calm and peaceful for steady and uninterrupted oil production by the multinational oil companies, at the expense of the Niger Delta peopl e (Adejumbi 2009). While the Nigerian state has enough revenue to squander, the Niger Delta predicaments caused by unregulated oil exploration remained unaddressed.

This theoretical perspective sufficiently reveals the motive behind the economic penetration of the multinational oil companies and how they control the internal politics of the Nigerian state and the Niger Delta and destabilize the communal social structure of the people to ensure a favourable investment

climate. The theoretical framework also explains how the political consideration of security constitutes a precondition for maximum economic opportunity for the multinational companies in the Niger Delta. This dream can only be actualized through institutionalized developmental programme initiat ive put in place by the managers of the Nigerian state since they realized that the repressive measures were fast becoming counterproductive.

# CHAPTER THREE

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

# Introduction

The aim of this chapter to provide a clear view of the instruments and techniques adopted for the purpose of data collection and analysis in the study.

# Research Design

The research designs adopted for this study is the descriptive approach and archival method. The adoption of this research design is due to the fact that data were collected from secondary sources.

The research will explore secondary sources of data and shall adopt a qualitative research approach to study the research objectives and answer the research questions. The method is adopted simply because it will help to establish reliability of the findings, ensure i ts acceptability giving the intellectual exploits of vast literature on Niger Delta issues and enhance the credibility of the study.

# Research Setting

The study area is the Niger Delta, South-South Nigeria. The Niger Delta region is one of the largest wetlands in the world. This geo -political zone is occupied mainly by the minorities of Southern Nigeria which currently comprises the nine states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers, redefined to encompass the contiguous three other oil - producing states; Abia, Imo and Ondo, in addition to the original six.

# Population of the Study

The population for the study comprised the local residence, community and opinion leaders, electoral officials, leaderships of interest groups, political parties and election monitoring groups, journalists and security agencies in the Niger Delta. The specific populations address in this study are indigenes (male and female), who are natives of the Niger Delta which stand at 40 million.

# Sample Method

Since the study adopts a qualitative and archival methods; it does not rely on primary data or have no intention of exploring any primary instrument for data collection, therefore, use of sample has minimal relevance to the study. In other words, there is no specific reference to sample, sample size or sampling technique in the study.

# Method of Data Collection

Qualitative data will be obtained mainly from secondary sources. The study shall make optimum use of library resources such as text books, journals , reports, working papers, policy papers, laws or acts, media resources as well as the internet.

# Data Analysis

Data collected through secondary sources shall be systematically arranged and sequentially presented and discussed in logical manners to efficie ntly address the research questions in the study. The discussion of findings shall be arranged in line with the specific research objectives.

# CHAPTER FOUR

**ORIGIN OF THE CRISIS OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE NIGER DELTA AND THE PHASES IN THE INTERVENTIONIST POLICIES OF THE**

# FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

* 1. **Origin of Development crisis in the Niger Delta**

The conflicts in the Niger Delta date back to colonial times (Jaja et al, 2 011). Not only is there a link between the conflicts in the colonial era and contemporary conflicts in the region (Ako and Okomah, 2009, p. 55), but also the later conflicts are, as a result of the colonially entrenched inequity that characterized the earl ier ones. The division of the country into three regions in 1939 by the British Colonial government amplified the issue of ethnicity that has proved to be very divisive, as manifested in the on- going struggle for resource control. In other words, ethnicity, that pervades politics and socio- economic competition for resources in Nigeria, is a consequence of the political division of the country into three regions.

As observed by Nnoli ( 1978), ethnicity is one of the major concerns in Nigerian politics. The three major ethnic groups in the country ( Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa/Fulani) are politically united when i t comes to decisions regarding the exploitation of the Niger Delta oil resources. The people of the Niger Delta first manifested their fear of marginalization by the major ethnic groups in 1958 under the colonial government and, therefore, opted to separate from the rest of Nigeria. This request led to the formation of the Willink Commission, whose report in

1958 held that the Niger Delta region should be tr eated as a special area for development.

The British Colonial government amalgamated the regions that now constitute Nigeria in 1914. It is posited that, without the amalgamation, there would be no country called Nigeria. The Niger Delta grievances and con flicts are deeply entrenched in colonialism. The people believe that the British colonial government enacted obnoxious laws that bestowed ownership and control of their oil to the Crown. For instance, the Mining Regulation ( Oil) Ordin ance of 1907 provided that: “it shall be lawful for the Governor to enter into an agreement with any Native Authority for the purchase of full and exclusive rights in and over all mineral oils within and under any lands which are the property of any Native Community” ( Ako, 2013 , p. 8). This implies that the land (beneath which the oil resources lay) ownership was vested on these communities prior to the Ordinance. The colonial government promulgated the Mineral Oil Ordinance in 1914,

with amendments in 1916 , 1945, 1950 and 1959 (Ebeku, 1998). The Ordinance simply reaffirmed state ownership and control of the oil resources ( exclusively deposited in the Niger Delta) by the central government (Ebeku, 1998, p. 1). The Eastern Nigerian elite were uncomfortable with these laws; they fe lt that they had deprived the inhabitants of the oil- rich region the right to their natural property. Ironically, the same Nigerian elite who criticized the colonial Mineral Acts amended the laws to vest natural resources, hitherto vested in the Crown, on the president on behalf of the Federal Government ( F idelis and Samuel, 2017). Dr. mdi Azikiwe made this amendment; he was the first Head of S tate of Nigeria. Ako

(2010 ) observes that the struggle over the ownership of oil was a cynical cause of the Nigerian civil war that took place between 1967 and 1970. The easterners attempted to secede from Nigeria because the Niger Delta was politically under the Eastern Region. While the war was on- going the then federal military government re- asserted the state ownership of the oil resources, which still st ands till today ( Ako, 2012 ). Obviously, when an existing culture is transformed via colonialism, there would normally be a negative impact on the newly transformed communities as is the case in the Niger Delta regio n. The colonial transformation in Nigeria has only led to ethnic schism and sowed the seed of conflict.

It appears erroneous to blame the Niger Delta conflict on the colonialism, as other countries, such as Malaysia, Ghana and America, were all former Brit ish colonies. The Malaysian economy has continued to grow. The corruption in Nigeria cannot be compared to the level in Ghana; and America, through her technologies and industrial revolution, has transformed into a world power. All these are indications that the restiveness in Nigeria are as a result of corrupt governance. Obi (2010), however, insists that the current government policies and constitutions are benchmarked on the legacies of colonialism.

During the period of colonization, some of the early mu lti- national oil corporations (MNOCs) became more established in Africa, although those in the agricultural sector were more concerned with sourcing of raw materials for their parent companies in Europe. For instance, in West Africa, cocoa, groundnut, sorghum, and palm oil were exported to Europe, while those in the mining sector became major employers of labour, as exemplified in East and Southern Africa

(Gartenstein-Ross, Willcoxon and Basuni; Kennedy 1998). The relationship between the African states and the MNOCs during this era of colonialism was based more on economic benefits, and with no direct attempt at CSR. During this period, while the MNOCs supplied materials to the local African communities, which were more of firearms and manufactured goods, n either the MNOCs nor their protectors (the colonial governments) tolerated obstructions to trade (Pakenham, 1991 ).

The modern MNOCs are sophisticated; influential, and large are also impacting considerably on Africa’s culture, politics, security, environment, governance, development, regional integration and industrialization (Lall, 1996). These MNOCs are sources of employment, products, capital investment, skills and technology, infrastructure development, creation of industries, taxes and fees to government, and foreign direct investment ( FDI) in many Africa states (Pedersen and Huniche, 2006 ). They have become relatively powerful, rendering the African states almost powerless and unable to control themselves. They have also been implicated in environmental degradation, socio-political crises, labour exploitation, and economic crises in Africa (Stern et al, 2005; Pedersen and Huniche, 2006 ).

Conflict is never a static phenomenon. It is expressive, dynamic and dialectic. In as much as it is relation ally based, birthed in the world of human meaning and perception, conflict is constantly changed by on -going human interaction and continuously changes the very people who breathe life into it, and the social environment where it is born evolves and perhap s ends ( Lederach,

1995). Those who study social conflict from a scientific point of view and those who wish to find practical ways of dealing with it more constructively are interested in the characteristics of conflict and the patterns that it follows (Lederach, 1995 ). It is through such an approach that researchers have identified the life cycle or progression of conflicts and possible ways to resolve them.

The awareness that all conflicts, not least the Niger Delta conflict, are never static and have different trajectories with regard to conflict intensity means analysis geared towards conflict transformation cannot take for granted these trajectories and their implication for the protracted nature of the conflict ( Jaja et al 2011). This is because confli ct theorists have posited that how the phase of a conflict ends can determine its reoccurrence (Werner, 1999). Hence, any analysis of the Niger Delta conflict geared towards highlighting i ts dynamics calls for a perceptive historicization and periodization of the trajectories of the conflict.

For analytical convenience, the phases of the Niger Delta crisis have been earmarked into four historical landmarks, namely: Oil discovery and birth of crisis: The Isaac Adaka Boro era: the Ken Saro Wiwa era and finall y, the era of Era of Resource control. It is the differences and similarities in the type of actors, actors’ memories and expectations, new interests and difference in motivations which the conflict acquires at the different historical junctures that separ ate these eras and underscore their relevance in understanding and proposing solut ions to the Niger Delta crisis.

Ever since oil was discovered and reported officially in Nigeria in 1956, it has been a source of strife and violence ( Vangham, 2011). The cri sis in the Niger

Delta region did not start today. Even before Nigeria was officially incorporated into the British Empire in 1900, the Niger Delta has a long history of clashes and external commercial activities with the outside world primarily through th e palm oil and export of slaves before the British banned the slave trade ( Udosen, Etok and George, 2009 ; Francis, Lapin & Rossiasco, 2011). The Niger Delta people are majorly into agriculture even before the British colonialism. Palm oil from the region was exported in exchange for the importation of manufactured goods. Port Harcourt Port in the Niger Delta supported active trading, importation, and exportation of goods during this period. Yet the major ethnic groups profited above the minor groups within the Niger Delta. Also, the British government during the colonial era failed to address the neglect of the minority ethnic groups and that has persisted even after the Nigerian independence in 1960 ( Frederick, Asmunim Idris and Othman, 2013).

According to history, the Royal Niger Company was in -charge of business in the Niger Delta region ( Aniefiok, Udo, Margaret and Sunday, 2013). This company monopolised governance and trade of the region, and they were very hostile within the period of its exploitative p ractices that resulted in an attack on its headquarters in Akassa by the king of Brass in 1895 ( Udosen et al., 2009). The Royal Niger Company later sold all its asset and areas of dominance to the British Government in 1900 (Aniefiok et al., 2013). The peo ple in the Niger delta region of Niger Delta ( that was later called the Oil Rivers Protectorate, and then incorporated into the Southern Protectorate that was amalgamated in 1914 into a unified Nigeria) had always agitated against the unfair treated meted to them

(Udosen et al., 2009 ). The people of Niger Delta have always been outspoken against all forms of marginalisation and ill treatments. Ikime (1968) noted that movements for self- determination in the Niger Delta pre-date the advent of the oil complex. Since the late nineteenth century, various resistance movements have mobilized against external domination and/or exploitation in the region. The first set of movements was initiated by merchant -kings against the intrusion of British traders and proto-administrators ( Ikime 1968). Similarly, in 1929, the women of Aba were provoked by rumours of a new income tax and came into direct and violent confrontation with the police. As a result, more than fifty women were killed in the riots (Bodo & David, 2018; Fra ncis et al., 2011; ICG, 2006).

This explains Idemudia and Ite’s (2006) assertion that the Niger Delta conflict is a product of structural deficiencies inherent in the Nigerian state and systemic anomalies within its society. The aptness of their argument i s strongly supported by the evidence that emanates from a closer scrutiny of the actors, concerns and motivations that underpinned and drove the earliest manifestation of the Niger Delta conflict. Crucial here is the origin, nature and subsequent character of the post- colonial Nigerian state. Rejia and Eloe (1969) point out that in Europe, the nation preceded and created the state, thus the emergence of nation states in that region; by contrast, they noted that, in most developing countries, this relationship is reversed such that the state is creating the nation. Nigeria is no exception: ethnic plurality, religious diversity, differences in regional experiences of colonisation, and the forced 1914 amalgamation of north and south suggest that Nigeria is a true state- nation.

The state-nation status of the Nigerian state and the effective transmutation of British administrative tribalism into Nigerian political tribalism have had two major ramifications for state-society relationships ( Afigbo, 1991). The first is that politics is still often largely primordial and the second is that the post - colonial Nigerian state continues to suffer from a legitimacy crisis. These structural deficiencies meant nationalism in Nigeria had to be enforced top - down (Rejia and Enloe, 1969), which is especially difficult after decades of colonisation with the emergence of the ‘ two publics’ (Ekeh, 1975).

It is this state-nation status of the Nigerian state and the predominance of ethnic competitive communalism in politics that underpin the structural systemic origin of the Niger Delta conflict and lead Afigbo (1991) to refer to Nigeria as a ‘sleeping volcano’. It is important to note that the existence of multi - ethnic nationalities and different religious groupings do not by themselves constitute an issue with political consequences. However, it is the process of social change that elevates the interest of the different ethnic groups into the political realm (Babangida, 2002). This elevation fosters competitive communalism, where each ethnic group competes to maximise the benefits it can derive from the Nigerian state. As competitive communalism flourishes, winners and losers ultimately emerge, while the sense of identity is reinforced (i. e. majority -minority).

The antagonist nature of the north–south relationship after independence and the dominance of politics by the three major ethnic groups invariably meant political and economic marginalisation of ethnic minorities ( Osaghae, 1995). This fear of political and economic marginalisation w as raised in 1956 during the visit

of the Governor General of Nigeria to the eastern region, when the Ogoni people expressed their fears of political and economic marginalisation by virtue of their minority status. Such complaints by the people of the Nige r Delta also contributed to the publication of the 1958 Willink Commission report.

The 1950 s witnessed the emergence of another set of resistance movements that were concerned about the marginalization of the Niger Delta in the emergent regional politics of Nigeria. These movements, namely the Mid -West State Movement (MWSM), the Calabar Ogoja Rivers State Movement (CORM) and the Conference of Rivers Chiefs and Peoples, were also elitist ( Vickers 2000).

The principal concerns at this point were political and economic exclusion and domination of the ethnic minorities in both the eastern and western region (i. e. need issues) and the key actors that pushed this concern to the forefront were the local chiefs and elites of the minority group. However, to confirm their fears, the findings of the Willink Commission report did not translate into concrete actions to address the grievance of the people ( Fynas, 2000).

# 1 Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro Era

The consequence of the failure to adequately address the fears of the people

of the Niger Delta was that in the following years the people were subjected to what Naanen ( 1995) later referred to as ‘internal colonisation’. Given that the 1960s were also when secessionis t demands were widespread in the new post - colonial Nigerian state,36 i t was no surprise that Isaac Adaka Boro and Nottingham Dick would also demand a Niger Delta Republic which defined the

first eruption of the ‘sleeping volcano’ in the form of the 1966 Tw elve Day Revolution ( Idemufia, 2019)

The ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta began to express their concerns even during the transition to independence in the 1950s; however, the first major episode of militancy in the Niger Delta occurred in February 196 6, when Isaac Boro ( Ijaw born in Oloibiri), a leader of the Niger Delta Volunteer Force ( NDVF), declared the independence of the Niger Delta People’ s Republic, which consisted of the present day Rivers and Bayelsa States. Thus, he called the multinational

oil companies to negotiate directly with his government (Udosen et al., 2009).

Boro, rebelled against the authority of the Nigerian federal government under General Aguiyi Ironsi by declaring a Niger Delta Republic in February 1966. The rebellion was quashed and Boro later died fighting as a combatant on the federal side in the Nigerian civil war (Ukiwo, 1988). After Boro’ s failed attempt in liberating his people, the Niger Delta became increasingly marginalized from the political and economic systems with the progressive degradation of the environment due to unsustainable oil exploitation and impoverishment. This increased the minorities’ feelings of frustration against the federal government ( Ebeku, 2001; Bodo, 2018; Bodo, 2019; Udosen et al., 2009).

What is important here, which is also pertinent to the dynamics of the conflict, is that while the chiefs sought redress for the concerns of the Niger Delta people in the 1950s via non- confrontational means, the subsequent failure of this strategy invariably provided the impetus for the use of force and more confrontational tactics adopted by the youth in the Twelve Day Revolution.

However, two independent events were widely expected by the Niger Delta people to bring about an end to political marginalisation a nd economic exclusion. The first was the discovery of crude oil in marketable quantity in the region. This was expected to bring economic development and modernisation to the region that had little or no investment from both the regional and federal govern ment at that time. The second was that the people’ s support for the Nigerian Government during the civil war was rewarded with the creation of states that were seen in many quarters of the region as an opportunity for political participation and direct acc ess to economic benefit from the centre ( Idemudia, 2019).

These two expectations and the belief that the people’s concerns could still be addressed within the Nigerian state partly explain why the 1980s were relatively peaceful. However, the tyrannical nat ure of decrees such as the Land Use Act of 1978 and the 1969 Petroleum Act that systematically deny the people of the Niger Delta their cultural assets, and the expansion of the oil industry with the associated inability of the people to fish and farm inva riably provided the context for the dominant role oil would play in the second phase of the conflict.

# 2 Ken Saro Wiwa Period

By 1979, the Federal Government of Nigeria ( FGN) had established the oil deposits as a national asset ensuring that everywhere oil exploitation is operational, is solely government property and business depriving the host communities any form of ownership and control (Asuni, 2009). This kind of arrangement in the 1990s had left the people of Niger Delta abandoned, leaving

the development of the region in the hands of strangers (the operating oil companies) at an era when Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was not part of their operation (Asuni, 2009 ). In this same period, a tribe (the Ogonis) in the Niger Delta was on the verge of extinction by the operations of SPDC on their land. Luckily, a bold knowledgeable leader ( Ken Saro Wiwa) emerged among them to save his people from their certain doom (Bodo, 2019). The level of awareness of the local communities in the Niger Delta base d on the benefits accruing from oil to the FGN and SPDC has necessitated several attempts of bribery of willing individuals from the region to sabotage the Ogoni struggle for fairness and justice ( Bodo, 2018; Bodo, 2019).

According to Ibeanu ( 2002), when people’ s livelihoods are threatened, it arouses a feeling of deprivation, and anxiousness, thereby resulting in insecurity among such people. He explains that, in the case of the Ogoni, it will require the “elimination of deprivation”, in order to improve their “condition of security” ( Ibeanu, 2002 ). In order words, being dependent on the environment which has now been degraded, thereby making resources scarce, plus the absence of tangible compensation from the Nigerian government, the Ogoni were left with no choice but to seek for means of eliminating their source of deprivation, and one of such means was their demand for change.

In the 1990s, Ken Saro Wiwa brought the plights of the Ogoni people to the knowledge of the world through Movement for the Surviv al of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) which adopted a non- violent approach using organised and civilised protests as well as persuasive appeals to the government and the international

community (Bodo, 2018 ). Shortly after the formation of MOSOP, the Ogoni people presented the Ogoni Bill of Right to the government of Nigeria under the Military regime of Ibrahim Babangida. The Bill demanded that “the people of Ogoni be granted political Autonomy to participate in the affairs of the republic as a distinct and separate unit” including control over use of the economic resources gotten from Ogoni for the development of Ogoni amongst others (Saro - Wiwa, 1995:69 ). Ken Saro Wiwa transcends the Niger Delta struggle to a level of knowledge and intellectual discussion (Bodo an d , 2019).

This involves creating awareness in the entire region of how blessed they were, what has gone out of their communities (profits in billions of US dollars), and the consequences ( poverty and death) that were left behind (David & Bodo, 2019; Bodo & David, 2018; Bodo, 2019; Asuni, 2009; Saro - Wiwa, 1992, 1995). Through Ken, the perpetrators of environmental pollution were identified as the oil operating companies. He helped in funding MOSOP and in 1990 published the Ogoni Bill of Rights (Asuni, 2009; Bodo, 2019).

Ken Saro Wiwa attributed the injustice to the fact that the Ogonis were minorities and accused the majority groups of using their oil wealth to develop their areas at the expense of the areas that produce the oil (Osaghae, 1995). It has been reported that the cities of Lagos and Abuja were built with petrodollars from the Niger Delta (Bodo, 2019 ). The Ogoni demanded better treatment from the multinational oil companies as basic amenities were lacking in the region. Many believed that the Ogonis were too bold in their demands in 1990s, as some other ethnic groups in the region where suffering from worst conditions, but had giving

up hopes of a better life and settled with their fate. In a message to the Ogonis, the then military administrator of Rivers State, Lieutenant Colonel D.M. Komo, made similar statement to validate this assertion when he said, “they don’t have the monopoly of petroleum in Nigeria and cannot make demands that other (oil producing) communities are not making” (Osaghae, 1995 ). The Ogonis surprised even the military government with their demands, as no oil -producing community in Nigeria has gone to the extent of exerting the right to self - determination like the Ogonis did in the 1990s (Osaghae, 1995; Bodo, 2019).

MOSOP provided a platform for many groups in Ogoni such as Federation of Ogoni Women ( FOWA), Council of Ogoni Traditional Rulers (COTRA), National Youth Council of Ogoni People ( NYCOP), Ogoni Student Union ( OSU), Council of Ogoni Professionals (COP), and O goni Council of Churches ( OCC), to participate in the ogoni struggle. Being an affiliate of MOSOP gave the majority of these groups an opportunity to have a say in the issue at hand.

But, unfortunately, their demand for a “Bill of Right” was not accepted b y the then government of Nigeria, and instead of finding a path through the conflict, the government succumbed to violence. As Hugh Miall (2007: 14 - 15) notes, “The capacity to manage conflict is well- developed in modern societies and includes flexible and legitimate institutions, forms of governance that allows representation and change…” This was not the case of Nigeria. During the period 1990-1998 , Nigeria was under the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida, issues such as human right and freed om of speech where not respected. According to Human Right Watch ( 1995), prodemocracy and human activists were

often arrested, and various newspaper outlets were banned from publications. In addition, a free and fair election meant to usher in democracy, w ithin that same period (the year1993), was also annulled by the ruling military administration (HRW, 1995 ).

With the demands for justice being turned down by the government and multinational oil companies, the Ogoni youths aggressively took matters into th eir hands by openly confronting the government forces and oil company operatives

on their land. The government had always deployed the army, navy, and paramilitary police as a means of dealing with protests ( Udosen et al., 2009). Consequently, it was reported that in order to shut down the Ogoni struggle in the 1990s, the government instigated violent conflicts between the Ogonis and the neighbouring Andoni communities between July and September, 1993. Furthermore, the Okrikas in Port Harcourt was also invo lved in the conflict in December that same year, where lives were lost and properties destroyed for no apparent reason ( Osaghae, 1995). When the leaders from both sides met to resolve the crisis between them, they all agreed there was no issue that would h ave necessitated the clash in the first place, thereby giving the assumption of an external hand being responsible for the clash (the FGN and SPDC was suspected). The Ogoni militancy had reported that at various war fronts between the clashing communities, they met soldiers fighting with them with machine guns and AK47 riffles, as against their knives and cutlasses ( Osaghae, 1995; Bodo, 2019).

Moreover, there were reported cases of bribery from the FGN and SPDC, where some Ogonis who were later referred to as vultures were paid to bear false

witness against Ken Saro Wiwa and the other MOSOP leaders (Bodo, 2019). In all cases of bribery, these Ogonis later came out, after they realised that Ken Saro Wiwa had been passed a death sentence because of their testi monies against him, to confess that they were giving monies by government representatives to give false statements in court. Soon after, the Ogoni struggle led to the dead of four prominent Ogoni leaders ( Albert Badey, Theophilus Orage, Samuel Orage and Edward Kobani), Ken Saro Wiwa, and eight others. Furthermore, this resulted to the departure of SPDC in 1993 from Ogoniland (Bodo, 2019). In 1995, Ken Saro Wiwa was charged with incitement to murder and was executed by the Nigerian military government ( Vaughan, 2011; Bodo, 2019). The Ogonis openly accused SPDC of orchestrating the murder of Ken and the eight other. Also, SPDC had also disregarded their involvement in the murder of Ken Saro Wiwa by stating that the allegations being made were false and were wi thout merit (Bodo, 2019; SPDC, 2019 ). In 2009, SPDC agreed to pay £9. 6 million to the affected families as an out of court settlement of a legal action which accused it of collaborating in the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa and the other Ogoni leaders (Vaughan , 2011). The killing of Ken Saro Wiwa set the Niger Delta region into crisis, as direct attacks against the FGN and the multinational oil companies became common (Bodo, 2019). Today, the Ken Saro Wiwa -led uprising in the 1990s has given voices to other ethnic groups in the Niger Delta.

# 3 Era of Agitation for Resource Control

Ken Saro Wiwa brought the Ogoni Struggle and problems faced by the Niger Delta people to the knowledge of the entire world (Bodo, 2018; Bodo, 2019). The environmental awareness among other ethnic groups in the region has increased the demands for local ownership of lands and oil resources ( Bodo, 2019). The different ethnic groups started waging wars against the oil operators in their communities. It was reported that three successi ve major violent ethnic clashes erupted in the Warri area in 1997, 1999, and 2003 ( Francis et al., 2011; Udosen et al., 2009 ). By December 1998, a youth conference was held in Kaiama which led to the Kaiama Declaration that crystallized into the Ijaw strug gle for resource control ( Francis et al., 2011; Udosen et al., 2009). In other words, as Ikelegebe (2010) noted, the turning point in the transformation of demands into political and volatile ones and in the militant agitation for the demands was the Kaiam a Declaration of December 1998 made by Ijaw youths. It was this declaration that put resource control in the front burner. It also was the commencement point of militant agitation and militia formation and engagements.

In 2004, the situation in the region worsened as the Militant leader Dokubo Asari announces “Operation Locust Feast” and declares an “all -out- war” against the Nigerian State. Almost within this period, the violent conflicts in communities of Rivers, Bayelsa, and Delta states was on the increa se to an estimate of about 150 per year, and over fifty armed groups with an estimated 20,000 to 25, 000 armed youths were already operating in the region (UNDP, 2006; Francis et al., 2011; Udosen et al., 2009 ). Soon after, a booming business of Hostage -taking and oil bunkering became the order of the day, with attacks on oil facilities occurring

on a daily basis ( Bodo, 2019). Militant groups l ike the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), headed by Tom Polo, the Niger Delta Vigilantes ( NDV) by Ateke Tom, and the Niger Delta Strike Force ( NDSF) headed by Farah Dagogo and many others began to emerge (Asuni, 2009).

The militants expressed their intent for oil autonomy by loading a large number of boats and barges through illegal bunkering. The refined petroleum products and crude oil are transported through ships and barges and are sold in the high sea. The crude oil is sold at very low prices; when the price per barrel was 26 USD, as at 2003, it was sold for 7USD ( Okumagba, 2009; Obi, 2009). B y 2004, it was sold at about 15 USD per barrel ( Okumagba, 2009; Obi, 2009). The government inability to put an end to the activities of the militant groups has also contributed to the growing crisis in the region.

The militant agitation was a forceful attem pt to compel oil based benefits, redress grievances and seek resource control and self - determination. It was essentially a rebellion against state and corporate mis - governance and a determined effort for reforms. Furthermore, apart from the 1966 Adaka Boro ’s incidence, the militant agitation was a forceful response to militarization, repression and state violence in the region ( Ikelegbe, 2010). At the general level, the militant agitation was directed at compelling the Nigerian State and TNOCs to dialogue or negotiate on the critical issues in the struggle. More specifically, its objectives were to cut or destabilize oil production; to draw international attention to the plight of the region, and to compel the withdrawal of the TNOCs, to restrain, checkmate and demoralize the military and militarization and to

compel concessions and benefits from the Nigerian state and TNOCs ( Ikelegbe, 2010).

The militancy and insurrection in the region is a classic case of the primacy of grievances in conflict causality. A p rominent leader of the region put this succinctly when he said;

The boys are fighting for their survival. They are fighting unemployment, criminal negligence of their area, the dehumanization of our own people (Newswatch, 2008 cited in Alumuna, Ofoegbu and Edet, 2017).

Given this socio-economic context, the experience of the people of Oloibori and Ogoni in the previous phases and the realisation by communities in the region that oil was a finite resource brought a sense of urgency to act ( Idemudia, 2019). These experiences for many in the region reinforced the perception that if they were to sit back and not take their future into their own hands then the oil might dry up with nothing to show for it. This interpretation of the Niger Delta situation became particularly volatile as a huge number of youths roamed the streets of the region feeling alienated and powerless, waiting to get even with the larger polity at the slightest opportunity ( Jike, 2004).

The grievances of the region have been numerous. These h ave included disinheritance by federal laws, loss of control over their resources, marginalization in the oil economy, marginality within the Nigerian federation and militarization and repression through the military and security agencies. In relation to the TNOCs, the region complains of environmental pollution, mistreatment, poor compensation practices, poor benefits, unfulfilled promises, failures to implement memoranda of understanding and inadequate employment

and representation. Other grievances are t he poverty, deprivation, high youth unemployment and hopelessness, the location of head offices of TNOCs outside the region and the takeover of oil benefits and oil blocks by non -indigenes of the region ( Ikelegbe, 2010).

The initial demand in the region was for developmental attention, because of seeming neglect and difficult terrain. The demand has persisted because of persisting under-development in spite of trickle, poorly funded, centralized and poorly performing interventions. As the state directed dev elopment demands failed, the communities turned to the TNOCs. This has become a major source of community - TNOC conflicts since the 1970s ( Ikelegbe, 2010).

The shift from military rule to democracy in 1999 paradoxically effectively allowed for the expansion of the patron-client base, previously dominated by only military dictators and their cronies, to include local politicians and area boys in the region ( Idenudia, 2019). Here enters the greed dimension to the conflict. The shift to democratic government meant an increase in the flow of oil revenue into the region partly because of the increase and implementation of the 13 per cent principle of derivation. For example, since 1999 Rivers State alone has received more than US$636 million, with the 23 local g overnment areas average monthly allocations increasing more than fourfold over the same period HRW, 2007). Consequently, as suggested by Watts, monies became awash in the Niger Delta making access to state and local governments’ positions paramount as the struggle for power intensified ( Watts, 1998).

Elections became an instrument of factional mobilisation in which readily available unemployed youth became important tools for political elites pursuing their self-interest to draw upon to win elections. The p ossibility of winning elections of course largely depended on the ability of political elites that vie for public office to establish or reinforce existing patron - client relationships with different youth groups in the region. It is therefore not surprisin g that despite significant increases in the inflow of oil revenue into the region, the socio - economic development of the Niger Delta has remained abysmal (ANNEJ, 2004; HRW, 2007 ). This is because neo-patrimonial politics rest on the notion of political legitimacy which sees its prime responsibility as lying more with the redistribution of resources from patron to client than with the common good. This trend is perpetuated as patron- client relationships can only be maintained through well-understood forms of reciprocity which link patrons with their clients along vertical social lines (Chabal, 2002). For example, militias in the region are regularly reported to be given control over rewarding oil bunkering routes in exchange for support to governors in the st ate to win elections as well as maintain their rule (Chabal, 2002; Ukiwo, 2008).

Today, in the Niger Delta, neo- patrimonialism has mutated into the political economy of disorder. The political economy of disorder is the instrumentalization of conflict by political elites for the direct purpose of gaining and retaining control of the state for both primitive accumulation and to further the neo - patrimonial order (Chabal, 2002). Proceeds from patron - client relations either via direct exchange or through political cover for illegal oil bunkering activities are

used to buy weapons such as rocket propelled grenades, AK -47 assault rifles, machine guns, satellite phones and speed boats used to confront the state, oppose other militias or to hold on to political offi ce ( Cesarz, Morrison and Cooke, 2003) Whenever such patron- client relationships are broken, violence in the region escalates as disgruntled patrons or clients tend to compete against each other. An example is the violence that erupted between the Niger Del ta Vigilante led by Ateke Tom and the Niger Delta People’ s Volunteer Force led by Alhaji Asari Dokubo, both funded by local politicians with oil monies ( Kemedi, 2006; Watts, 2008).

Furthermore, after the Ogoni crisis in the previous phase, rather than engaging in a carefully designed strategy for supporting sustainable community development, oil companies were driven by profit logic, and instead choose to pursue a strategy that rested on throwing money at any and all forms of community relations problems ( Zandvliet and Ibiba, 2002). As such, for instance, Shell’ s community relations spending jumped from only US$330,000 in 1989 to roughly US$67 million in 2002. The consequence of this increase in community spending which does not include all other forms of payment to youth either for security or sit- at-home allowance invariably feed into the political economy of violence manifested in intra- and inter-community conflict as well as intra - and inter- militia violence. Ironically, the oil monies that are often at the heart of the competition responsible for the intra- and inter- community and militia conflicts are also used to purchase weapons to prosecute such conflicts ( Idemudia, 2019).

Similarly, the use of force to manage the conflict as in the destruction and killing of innocent people in Odi village (1999) and Odiama (2005) by the civilian government of Olusegun Obasanjo serve to accentuate the conflict (Amnesty International, 2004). This is because, unlike the early 1990s when government had a monopoly of violence, today increases in oil monies via governmental allocation, oil companies spending and bunkering activities mean that militants are more than capable of meeting governmental force with force. In addition, given the difficult nature of the Niger Delta terrain and decades of governmental failure to develop the transportation and communication networks in region, the Government is largely unable to police the region effectively at great cost. It is ironic that the Nigerian Government is in some sense a vi ctim of i ts own failure.

# Phases in the Interventionist Policies of Federal Government in the Niger Delta Development Crisis

Assessing the effect that various initiatives by government and MNOCs have on the development of the Niger Delta region can be a challenging task. If such initiatives were specifically intended to help resolve the conflict, many initiators and implementers of development management projects may assume that their efforts will contribute at least to something, such as the goal of reducing violence. The Nigerian state has responded to the Niger Delta crises with all sorts of measures which they consider in their best interests, including the establishment of several development intervention agencies, the upward review of the revenue allocation to the region, the use of brutal force and, more recently, the amnesty programme and the creation of the Ministry of th e Niger Delta. Other

stakeholders such as States and Local Governments, Development Partners, Oil Companies as well as Non-Governmental Organizations had and in time past, and are still carrying out activities aimed at ensuring quick and sustained developm ent of the region.

This chapter attempts to appraise past initiatives taken by the Nigerian state and MNOC’s in resolving the crisis in the Niger Delta region, to examine their strengths and weaknesses. ` Overall, it might be said that whilst the state - sponsored and MNOCs’ development initiatives in the Niger Delta region are believed to have done little to bring development to the region, this approach has also been blamed for not tackling the real problems which sustain the underdevelopment in the region: the deep- seated issues considered to be the root - cause of various challenges in the region are still unsolved.

# 1 Establishment of Developmental Intervention Agencies

Interventionist agencies were established by the government of Nigeria for the purposes of addressing the socio-economic and infrastructural problems faced in the Niger Delta region resulting from the negative effect of oil production on the environment and their source of livelihood (Efebeh, 2017). Essentially, the idea of a development intervention agency was based on the report of the Willink commission of 1958 (Ogan 1994). As Ekpo (2004: 65) notes, the Niger Delta has for long remained a hot bed for political activism and agitation for minority rights. It follows therefore that, agitations in the region pre-dates the discovery of oil in commercial quantity. This commission was formed by the colonial administration

in response to the agitations of the Niger Delta minorities; believed to be the result of the high level of ecological deteri oration, destitution and underdevelopment. After the commission’ s enquiry, colonial administration recommended a special treatment for the region, with the minorities‟ interest being secured by the Constitution, working alongside a special agency, which ha d to be created, confronting their developmental challenges. However, despite these decisions, conflicts resulting from oil exploitation in the Niger Delta are still not at an end. This section examines four development intervention agencies established by successive governments since independence.

# Niger Delta Basin Development Authority

The Niger Delta Development Board (NDBDA) was instituted in 1961 by the Federal legislature in accordance to section 14 of the 1960 Constitution to transform the Niger Delta into a developed region ( Ogan 1994). This appeared to be the first response to various agitations that had occurred in the region. The principal aim of the Board was to carry out an extensive survey and prepare schemes designed to promote the stabilisation of the local economy and the physical development of the region which would serve as a guide to the federal government on developing the region (Etekpe 2007). By implication, the NDBDA operated merely in an advisory capacity. Nevertheless, they i dentified the local means of livelihood (mainly agriculture) in the region, experimented with a variety of agricultural produce and techniques so as to enhance the region’s productivity and developed a scheme for the physical development in terms of

road networks and settlement ( Enemugwem, 2009). However, the Board’s activities had little impact as it never moved beyond the planning stage.

In spite of the extensive surveys and other activities of the NDBDA, the government failed to implement its recommenda tions on solving the Niger Delta problems (Enemugwem 1998). It is thought that the federal government lacked the political will and commitment. On the other hand, the political instability and the 1967 Biafra civil war also harmed the activities of the Boa rd. Note at this point that after the Biafra civil war, the government diverted the money meant for the Board’s activities into a fund for restoration and reconstruction programmes across the country; something that led some people to believe that the mili tary government had no interest in developing the region, eventually discarding the NDBDA’s recommendations on resolving the Niger Delta issue. Without ceasing to function officially, the use of the NDBDA’s money for purposes other than was originally intended rendered the NDBDA obsolete and figurative, unable to implement the objectives it was created for. The NDBDA in its seven years of existence had done a little until it was scrapped by the military regime in 1966 and the Biafran civil war of 196736. Un fortunately, or fortunately, like most of Nigeria’s development master plans and programmes of action, the NDBDA has not achieved any of the purposes for which it was established.

# 3 Presidential Implementation Committee ( PIC)

In 1981, the then National assembly enacted the Revenue Act, a law designed to focus attention on the development of the area by making provision

for the allocation of 1.5 percent derivation. However, no effective administrative organ was established to administer the fund. A Presidential Implementation Committee (PIC) was established in 1987 by the Babangida administration to administer the 1 .5 percent derivation fund. The committee could not achieve much due to reasons that had to do with inadequate fundi ng and logistics. Secondly, the committee operated from Lagos, far away from its area of responsibility. This made i t lost touch with the realities in the Niger Delta, the travails of oil producing communities, their woes, agitations and aspiration (Ekpo, 2004). The resultant consequences of the failures of all these initiatives to address the Niger Delta problems are responsible for the restiveness that eventually engulfed the region.

# 4 Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC)

OMPADEC was established by General Babangida’ s administration (1985 - 1993), under Decree no. 23 of 1992. This commission was a response to the rising discontent and restiveness in the region as it spread beyond the Ijaw youths to include the Ogoni youths in the region. The commission was mandated to address the years of neglect of the Niger Delta region. OMPADEC was funded by 3% of oil revenue which had to be utilised for the restoration and development of the region on the basis of the ratio of oil produced in p articular areas ( Adebayo 2006). This was a more generous funding when compared to i ts predecessor. However, as a result of mismanagement, OMPADEC failed to achieve its goal.

The commission increasingly gained a reputation for entrenched corruption, white elephant projects, poor planning and a lack of consultation with local people. As documented by Sanya (2006), most of its funds were embezzled while the little that remained could only provide electricity and piped water to some villages in the region. In its first three years of operation, OMPADEC started projects valued at USD 500 million but funds were paid to contractors with no contact address, leaving the institution with a huge amount of debt and abandoned projects five years prior to their intended completion (Sanya 2006; Edigin and Okonmah 2010 ). Even though, in the areas of road construction, provision of water and electricity as well as land reclamation and provision of loans were some of the high points of the commission; generally, OMPADEC was a total failure due to inter-ministerial intrigues and diverse political calculations in government (Efebeh, 2017). As Horsfall ( 1999) notes, “governments - civil or military - never stopped eyeing our funds with a view to either poaching them or indirectly controlling or sharing in them.” He further noted that, in March 1993, two billion naira was taken from OMPADEC account by the Federal Ministry of works for projects which “never ever took place”. This account is an indication that there was a clear lack of governmental commitment.

The absence of a grass-rooted developmental programme coupled with corruption resulted in the execution of projects with little or no impact in alleviating the sufferings of the Niger Delta people. In fact, the Niger Delta people saw the agency as a ploy used to enrich associates of the military

government with the pretence of developing the region (Adefaye 2008; Ibeanu 2008).

The resultant consequences of the failures of all these initiatives to address the Niger Delta problems are responsible for the restiveness that eventually engulfed the region. These agitations necessitated the creation of the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), by President Ibrahim Babangida in 1992. The OMPADEC replaced the PlC, which had become moribund. According to Horsfall ( 1999), the Decree 23 of July 1992 which set up the commission empowered i t for the urgent as well as rapid infrastructural development of the Niger Delta region, among others. While these objectives can, without prejudice, be said to be overreaching, OMPADEC recorded little success. Even though, in the areas of road construction, provision of water and electricity as well as land reclamation and provision of loans were some of the high points of the commission; generally, OMPADEC was a total failure due to inter - ministerial intrigues and diverse political calculations in government.

It follows that, in actual fact, the management of OMPADEC made advance payments to contractors, sometimes to the tone of over 50% of project cost, even before projects were executed. In one instance in1993, this led to the loss of N275million over a disputed water project, ( Ibeanu, 2008). This implies official corruption in the board and the “eyeing” of the commission's fund s by highly placed individuals in government was the bane of the commission. One is not surprised therefore that the commission failed completely to deliver on its mandate. By 1999, when the Fourth republic kicked off, a once financially

buoyant organization had become a shadow of itself, virtually buried in high debts and fraud of monumental proportions (Ekpo, 2004). Poor quality contracts were executed; it was littered with elephant projects, uncompleted projects and non - functioning projects. In fact, the commission was a sort of `Father Christmas` to many. The commission lacked adequate data on the oil sector, including institutions and states. All these led to the setting up of the OMPADEC interim management Board by General Abdulsalam Abubakar causing s toppage of funding of the commission. According to Okonta & Oronta ( 2000), OMPADEC was a woeful failure under both the Babangida and Abacha regimes. Three years after it commenced operations; OMPADEC has committed itself to projects worth $500 million. Interestingly, the bulk of the money paid out for projects completed was to contractors whose addresses could not be traced. Even Eric Opia, head of the panel set up by the Abacha junta to probe Horsfall was appointed sole administrator in his place, he too p roceeded to loot OMPADEC in an even brazen fashion. By September1998 when he was fired, Opia had embezzled some $208 million set aside for the development of the impoverished communities of the Niger Delta (Okonta & Oronta 2000). For an agency that was not properly equipped to carry out its functions, the sordid tale stated above is not surprising. A World Bank research team that studied the operations of the agency in 1995 found out among others, that aside the fact that there was no emphasis on environmentally sustainable development, the commission did not have the requisite personnel to enable it meets its ecological mandate. The World Bank also noted the absence of long term planning, lack of project assessment and

monitoring and the absence of any form of integrated approach to development as local communities were deliberately ignored. Thus, the OMPADEC essentially deepened the misery of people of the region given the political motive behind i ts creation and operations as mostly evident in the kind of projects that i t embarked upon in the oil region and the manner it awarded the contracts ( Horsfall 1999).

In actual fact, the management of OMPADEC made advance payments to contractors, sometimes to the tone of over 50% of project cost, even before projects were executed. In one instance in1993, this led to the loss of N275million over a disputed water project, ( Ibeanu, 2008). This implies official corruption in the board and the “eyeing” of the commission's funds by highly placed individuals in government was the bane of the commission. One is not surprised therefore that the commission failed completely to deliver on its mandate. By 1999, when the Fourth republic kicked off, a once financially buoyant organization had become a shadow of itself, virtually buried in high debts and fraud of monumental proportions ( Ekpo, 2004 ). Poor quality contracts were executed; it was littered with elephant projects, uncompleted projects and non - functioning projects. In fact, the commission was a sort of `Father Christmas` to many. The commission lacked adequate data on the oil sector, including institutions and states. All these led to the setting up of the OMPADEC interim management Board by General Abdulsalam Abubakar causing stoppage of funding of the commission. Accord ing to Okonta & Oronta ( 2000), OMPADEC was a woeful failure under both the Babangida and Abacha regimes. The level of corruption was so evident that the first two sole administrators, Albert K. Horsfall and Professor Eric Opia, were

sacked in quick succession. Opia was said to have failed to account for funds running to hundreds of millions of dollars ( Frynas 2001; Okonta 2006; Sanya 2006). In addition to the bane of corruption, the federal government manipulated and withheld its monthly allocations as alle ged by Horsfall, an ex-chairman of the commission (Teniola, 2000 cited in Habiba, 2018).

# 5 Revenue Allocation: the 13% Derivation Principle

The revenue allocated to the Niger Delta has been at the centre of the agitations of the indigenes. The revenue allocation to the region had been declining from 1966 until 1999 when it was revised upwards. Initially, the revenue allocation was based on the principles of Derivation and Even Progress. The three federating units (Northern, Western and Eastern regions ) retained 50% of the revenue derived from their respective region; 30 % to be retained by the central government and 20 % went to a pool account to be shared by each of the federating units on the basis of population and need (Udeh 2002). There are claims that previous formula was discarded as oil became more valuable, creating a sense of unfairness to the Niger Delta people.

As part of the response to a growing crisis, the 1999 Constitution reversed the trend and entrenched the derivation principle, peggin g it to a minimum of 13%. While the increase might have created an impression of fairness in the revenue allocation, the increase of derivation principle remains at the heart of the Niger Delta struggle (Habiba, 2018) The minimization of the derivation fac tor over the years – from the earlier 50% to 1% and now 13%, only as it affects crude

oil – is unjust and unfair when one considers that Igbeti Marble attract 55 % derivation and the Value Added Tax (VAT) still attracts 20% derivation ( Ikeji, 2011). This has been the focus of various national conference and reports by committees set up by the federal government, stated an academic acquainted with the revenue allocation project. This issue of revenue allocation alone brought the national political reform conference of 2005 to an abrupt end ( Habiba, 2018). The 13% derivation principle granted to the region has produced little in terms of real human and physical development. The clamour most especially by the ruling Nigerian and the Niger Deltan elite for an inc rease in the derivation percentage diverts focus from the real issue of how well they have utilised the funds already allocated to these oil-bearing states. This statement led to an academic claiming that the 13% derivation principle granted to the region brings to light the fundamental issue that hinders tremendous progress in the region, including failed governance, lack of accountability and transparency regarding public funds rather than the lack of sufficient funds. As noted by HRW (2007) the magnitude of corruption and governance failure in the Niger Delta is shocking. It is prevalent across the entire nation. Nevertheless, the revenue allocation formula will always remain a ticking bomb (Mefor, 2009), as the funds were corruptly mismanaged and local people did not benefit. It will keep showing up on every national dialogue in the country and the federal government cannot delay acting on i t indefinitely.

# CHAPTER FIVE

**NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION ( NDDC) AND THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION ( 2015 – 2020 )**

# BACKGROUND TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NDDC

The various agitations by minority groups that pattern discussions at the constitutional conferences that preceded Nigeria’s independence in 1960 r esulted in the establishment of a commission of inquiry by British colonial government to hear, consider and make recommendations on the substance of those agitations. The Niger Delta people of the Eastern region of Nigeria were one of the strongest among these agitating regions for recognition, environmental rights, economic compensation and political accommodation. The Henry Willink Commission was constituted after the London Conference of 1957 and i ts recommendations were far reaching even though it felt short of much of the expectation of the minority areas on the creation of political enclaves of their own.

The Willink Report of 1958 succinctly declared that the Niger Delta Region are a group of independent and autonomous kingdoms and peoples, with se parate languages, culture and religion, equal in status and in no way subordinate to one another but united as a corporate body to form the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The report also recommended that the Niger Delta be given special attention. In response, the Federal government established the Niger Delta Development Board in 1960 to manage the development challenges of the region. The area was defined

as Yenagoa province, Degema province, Ogoni Vision of Port Harcourt and western Ijaw division of Delta province.

The Board (NDBDA) existed for seven (7) years and made l ittle achievement in the region before the Military coup in 1966 and the outbreak of civil war in 1967 .After the war the Federal government did not review the Board rather the money accruing from oil in the region was used to fund the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction program in various parts of the country.

The persistence agitation for a renewed development strategy in the region gave birth to the presidential Task Force in 1980 named the PTF. The Sheu Shagari administration therefore allocated 1.5% of the Federal accounts to the committee to be dedicated to the development of the region. Although the PTF existed until 1985/ 1993, nothing much was achieved except few projects that had littl e impact on the welfare of the oil producing communities in the region. The growing restiveness in the region prompted Ibrahim Babangida Administration to establish the Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992. Three percent (3 %) of the federal oil revenue was allocated to commission to address the development challenges of the region. Due to lack of focus, inadequate and irregular funding, official proficiency, corruption and excessive political interference, lack of transparency and accountability and high overhead expenditure, the commission could not achieve much. The commission completed several projects many were abandoned. Between 1992 and 1999 it was wounded up.

By the late 1990 s, the Niger Delta R egion had become a zone where youths disrupted oil production at will and communities frequently engaged in destructive inter- and intra- community strife at the slightest provocation. This was the situation of things when a presidential aspirant, Chief Olu segun Obasanjo, visited the region during his election campaign and promised to establish a programme that would proffer urgent and fundamental solution to the developmental needs of the Niger Delta and usher in sustainable prosperity and peace to the area. In fulfilment of his promise, within two weeks of his inauguration, he sent a bill to the National Assembly to establish the Niger Delta Development Commission as an agency to implement a programme for the sustainable development of the NDR. The National Assembly enacted the NDDC Act 2000 on the 12 th of July 2000 (The NDDC Act, 2000). The NDDC was officially inaugurated on 21st December 2000, and established in 2001 ( NDDC, 2011). This is deemed the Obasanjo administration’ s greatest and most significant attempt to grapple with the grievances of the minorities in the oil -producing areas ( Isumonah, 2003 ). The Commission was established with the aim of deliberately influencing the conflict situation in the NDR positively with mandate covering development, humanitarian aid, and peace building interventions.

Hence, the NDDC was birthed into a volatile situation that heralded Nigeria ‘s returns to civilian rule in 1999. Threats from various quarters greeted the NDDC from its inception. One threat related to incl usion of other oil-producing areas in the NDDC bill, another to the location of its headquarters. Yet another contested issue was the position of the Executive Chairman of the Commission.

In other words, conflicts among the target beneficiaries heralded th e establishment of the Commission. This, in a sense, attests to the conflict exacerbating potential of interventions in contexts. Nonetheless, in the words of ex-President Obasanjo, ― the Niger Delta Development Commission has the potential to offer a lasting solution to the socio- economic problems of the Niger Delta people‖ ( Master Plan, 2006). Its vision is to ― offer a lasting solution to the socio- economic difficulties of the Niger Delta Region‖. It has the mission ―...to facilitate the rapid, even and su stainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful ( Master Plan, 2006). These clearly describe the Commission as a development ( intervention) agency. S ince it was established in response to the ND socioeconomic problems, which has made the region conflict - prone, the NDDC‘s inherent overarching goal is to facilitate the socio - economic development and peace-building in the Niger Delta. The Federal Government demonstrated renewed interests in the development of the region, which was made visible from President Obasanjo’s speech earlier quoted at the very beginning (Okereke, 2007:2 ).

In March 2001 NDDC requested for top development priorities of the Niger Delta states, which generally cut across nine states: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers (Barrett, 2008). These states can be grouped into the core and peripheral states of the Niger Delta. The core states of the Niger Delta are Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers, while others are referred to as peripheral. The oil and gas found in these states had become the stronghold of the

Nigerian economy. Nigeria's position as the 8th largest producer of crude oil and the 5th largest reserves of natural gas is dependent on extraction of resources in the Niger Delta (Barrett, 2008). The NDDC Act states that:

The commission shall formulate policies and guidelines for th e development of Niger Delta and conceive, plan, and implement projects capable of fostering sustainable development of the area in line with set rules and regulations. In doing these things, it would have access to contributions of each of i ts member stat es, and it would submit to the direction, control, or supervision of the president in performing its functions” ( NDDC Act 1999: Section 7).

Considering the failure of similar past agencies, the NDDC adopted a two -pronged approach in driving i ts policies and strategies. One of it first achievement was the facilitation of the development of the Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan to serve as a long-term pathway and harmonization framework for different intervening agencies and tiers of government.

In September 2008, President Umaru Yar'Adua announced the formation of a Niger Delta Ministry, with the Niger Delta Development Commission becoming a parastatal under the ministry. The NDDC was created largely as a response to the demands of the population of the Niger Delta, a populous area inhabited by a diversity of minority ethnic groups. During the 1990s these ethnic groups, most notably the Ijaw and the Ogoni established organizations to confront the Nigerian government and multinational oil companies s uch as Shell. The minorities of the Niger Delta have continued to agitate and articulate demands for greater autonomy and control of the area' s petroleum resources. They justify their grievances by reference to the extensive environmental degradation and p ollution from oil

activities that have occurred in the region since the late 1950s. However, the minority communities of oil producing areas have received little or no currency from the oil industry and environmental remediation measures are limited and negligible. The region is highly underdeveloped and is poor even by Nigeria's standards for quality of life.

The establishment of NDDC meant the need to fulfil certain political demands of the Niger Delta people bothering on developmental patronage, environmental justice and human capital development. This preamble was reflected in the mandate given to the Commission at inception which is articulated below:

* Formulation of policies and guidelines for the development of the Niger Delta area.
* Conception, planning and implementation, in accordance with set rules and regulations, of projects and programs for sustainable development of the Niger Delta area in the field of transportation including roads, jetties and waterways, health, employment, industrialization, agriculture and fisheries, housing and urban development, water supply, electricity and telecommunications.
* Surveying the Niger Delta in order to ascertain measures necessary to promote its physical and socio- economic development.
* Preparing master plans and schemes designed to promote the physical development of the Niger Delta region and the estimation of the member states of the Commission.
* Implementation of all the measures approved for the development of the Niger Delta region by the Federal Government and the states of the Commission.
* Identify factors inhibiting the development of the Niger Delta region and assisting the member states in the formulation and implementation of policies to ensure sound and efficient management of the resources of the Niger Delta region.
* Assessing and reporting on any project being funded or carried out in the region by oil and gas companies and any other company, including non - governmental organizations, as well as ensuring that funds released for such projects are properly utilized.
* Tackling ecological and environmental problems that arise from the exploration of oil mineral in the Niger Delta region and advising the Federal Government and the member states on the prevention and control of oil spillages, gas flaring and environmental pollution.
* Liaising with the various oil mineral and gas prospecting and producing companies on all matters of pollution, prevention and control.
* Executing such other works and performing such other functions, which in the option of the Commission are required for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta region and its people, (Source: NDDC website).

Section 1 (1 ) of the Act established the agency as a Commission, and declares it a body corporate with perpetual succession (section 1 (2) (a)). Section 2 ( 1) established a Governing Board for the Commission and sets out its composition.

The Governing Board consists of a Chairman (section 2 (1) ( a)), and one representative of each of the nine member states of the Commission ‘who shall be an indigene of an oil producing area’ (section 2 (1) ( b) (i) – (ix)). Other members of the Governing Board as listed in section 2 (1) (c) – (h) of the Act are as follows:

1. Three persons to represent non -oil producing states, drawn from geo - political zones of the country not represented in the Commission;
2. One representative of oil- producing companies operating in the Niger Delta, nominated by the oil producing companies;
3. One person to represent the Federal Ministry of Finance;
4. One person to represent the Federal Ministry of Environment; g. The Managing Director of the Commission; and

h. Two Executive Directors

The NDDC Act provides that all appointments into the Board shall be made by the President of Nigeria, subject to the ‘ confirmation of the S enate, in consultation with the House of Representatives’ ( section 2 ( 2) ( a). However, there

is a significant difference between the appointment of the representative of oil - producing companies and the appointment of one representative of each of the nine member states of the Commission. In the former case, the representative of the oil-producing companies may be regarded as the true representative of the companies because he was nominated by the companies. This is not the case with regard to the latter, i . e. the representatives of member states of the Commission ‘who shall be an indigene of an oil producing area’ ( section 2 (1) (b)). In this case, neither the member states nor the oil -producing areas/ communities have an input in the appointment of their pur ported representative. Herein lies the foundation for political interference in the affairs of the Commission, as most of the appointees see themselves as the servants of the political establishment by which they were appointed and to whom they pay all loy alty, and not to the member states/oil-producing area they purport to represent. Consequently, there is no element in the Board to criticize the decisions of the Board, as recommended by the Willink ( 1958 ) Commission regarding appointments into the Federal Board mentioned above. Noteworthy, this is similar to the composition and appointment of members of the Governing Board of OMPADEC under section 2 (1) and 2 (2)

of the 1998 decree.

With regard to the functions and powers of NDDC, the establishment Act of 2000 (like the 1998 OMPADEC decree before it) bestows enormous functions and powers on the Commission. According to section 7 ( 1) of the Act the Commission shall:

1. formulates policies and guidelines for the development of the Niger Delta, area;
2. conceives, plan and implement, in accordance with set rules and regulations, projects and programmes for the sustainable development of the Niger - Delta area in the field of transportation including roads, jetties and waterways, health, education, employment, in dustrialization, agriculture and fisheries, housing and urban development, water supply, electricity and telecommunications;
3. causes the Niger- Delta area to be surveyed in order to ascertain measures which are necessary to promote its physical and socio - economic development;
4. prepares master plans and schemes designed to promote the physical development of the Niger-Delta area and the estimates of the costs of implementing such master plans and schemes; and
5. implement all the measures approved for t he development of the Niger Delta area by the Federal Government and the member States of the Commission.

Apart from the foregoing, the Commission is also charged with other responsibilities under section 7 (1) ( f) -(j), which require the agency to: (a) identify factors that inhibit the development of the Niger Delta area and collaborate with member States in the formulation and implementation of policies that would bring about efficient management of their resources (section 7 (1) ( f)); and (b) assess and report on any Non-NDDC project being funded or carried out

in the Niger Delta area by oil and gas producing companies, inter alia, and ensure that funds released for such projects are properly utilized ( section 7 ( 1) (g)). Moreover, the agency is required to ‘tackle ecological and environmental problems that arise from the exploration of oil mineral in the Niger Delta area and advise the Federal Government and the member states on the prevention and control of oil spillages, gas flaring and environmental pol lution’ (section 7 (1) (h)). Surely, this is one of the most important functions of the NDDC, given the complaint of the Niger Delta people that oil operations have devastated their environment.

Furthermore, the NDDC is required to liaise with oil multinationals operating in the Niger Delta region on all matters relating to control and prevention of oil pollution ( section 7 (1) (i)). Lastly, given that the central aim of the establishment of the NDDC is the sustainable development of the Niger Delta Region ( Okolo, 2014 ) there is an omnibus provision which empowers the agency to ‘execute such other works and perform such other functions which in the opinion of the Commission are required for the sustainable development of the Niger Delta area and its peoples’ (section 7 (1) (j)).

# THE STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE NDDC

The position of Executive Chairman of the NDDC has been a subject of much debate. A compromise was reached where the position would be rotated within the nine oil producing states in alphabetical order: [Abia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abia_State), [Akwa Ibom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akwa_Ibom_State),

[Bayelsa,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bayelsa_State) [Cross River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_River_State) , [Delta,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delta_State) [Edo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edo_State), [Imo,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imo_State) [Ondo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ondo_State) and [Rivers.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rivers_State) The current Chairman

of the NDDC is Senator Ndoma Egba from Cross River State.

Following the sack of the new board led by Pius Odubu, which has since been cleared by the Senate, President Muhammadu Buhari appointed an Interim Management Committee ( IMC) of the Board of the Niger Delta Development Commission ( NDDC). It is instructive to note that the Odubu -led board was never

sworn in after it was confirmed by the senate before its sacking.

Aside Odubu ( Edo) nominated as the Chairman, other nominees were

Managing Director, Bernard O. Okumagba (Delta); Executive Director Projects,

Otobong Ndem ( Akwa Ibom); Executive Director Finance and Ad min, Maxwell

Okoh (Bayelsa); Delta State representative, Prophet Jones Erue; Chief Victor

Ekhatar (Edo); Joy Yimebe Nunieh (Rivers); Others are Theodore A. Allison

(Bayelsa); Victor Antai ( Akwa Ibom); Maurice Effiwatt (Cross River); Olugbenga

Elema Ondo); Uchegbu Chidiebere Kyrian ( Imo); Northwest Rep, Aisha Murtala

Muhammed ( Kano); Northeast Rep, Ardo Zubairu ( Adamawa) and Southwest Rep,

Badmus Mutalib ( Lagos).

Barr Joy Nunieh was appointed to head the IMC of the NNDC. However, in January, President Muhammadu Buhari approved the enlargement of the Interim Management Committee ( IMC) of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) from three to five. The five members of the committee are: Professor Kemebradikumo Daniel Pondei, who is the Ag. Managing Directo r, replacing Barrister Joy Nunieh; Dr Cairo Ojougboh, Ag. Executive Director (Projects); Mr Ibanga Bassey Etang, Ag. Executive Director ( Finance and Administration); Mrs Caroline Nagbo ( Member); and Cecilia Bukola Akintomide, OON, a former Vice President with African Development Bank, (Member) ( Nwagbara, 2020).

# Table 1: Organogram of a properly constituted Board of the NDDC

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Acting Managing Director | | | | |  | | |
| Executive Directors | | | | | | | | | |
| [Chairman of the commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Chairman_of_the_commission&action=edit&redlink=1) | | | | [Executive Director](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Executive_Director_%28Finance_and_Admin%29&action=edit&redlink=1) [(Finance)](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Executive_Director_%28Finance_and_Admin%29&action=edit&redlink=1) | | | | [Executive Director,](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Executive_Director%2C_Project&action=edit&redlink=1) [Project](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Executive_Director%2C_Project&action=edit&redlink=1) | |
| Directors | | | | | | | | | |
| Administration | Legal Services | | | | Finance & Supply | | | | Research And Statistics |
| Human Resources | Utility,  Development & Water Ways | | | | Youth, Sports & Women Affairs | | | | Internal Audit |
| Information Technology | Public Private Partnership | | | | Commercial And Industrial | | | | Education, Health  And Social Services |
| SERVICOM | Special Duties | | | | Procurement | | | | Project Management |
| Design Department | Agric And Fisheries | | | | Community & Rural | | | | Environmental Control |
| Heads of Unit | | | | | | | | | |
| Corporate Affairs | | | Project Monitoring | | | Security | | | |
| States Liaison officers | | | | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Akwa Ibom State | Bayelsa State | | Rivers State | | Abia State |
| Delta State | Edo State | | Cross River State | | Ondo State |
|  | | Director - Abuja Liason Office | |  | |

* 1. **NDDC AND THE CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE NIGER DELTA**

It has been seen above that by statutory provisions NDDC’s core mandate is to deliver infrastructural and socioeconomic developments and environmental sustainability in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This is a tall order, which requires huge financial resources to execute, given the wellknown difficult terrain of the region. As the Willink Commission observed in her 1958 report regarding the Niger Delta region:

... Communications are very difficult in an area divided by creeks and rivers, in which there is a t idal rise and fall and more considerable seasonal rise and fall owing to the fluctuations of the Niger, which rises by as much as 30ft, at certain times of the year. Such an area requires expenditure not so much on roads and bridges as on the prevention of erosion, on clearing snags and other obstacles from waterways, and on constant dredging. Building is very expensive and we were told that in the creek area a 40 -bed hospital which might have cost £1,000 a bed had cost £69, 000... (Willink, 1958)

More recently, President Buhari made the same point when he said that ‘developing the Niger Delta area requires enormous resources compared to other

parts of the country with firmer lands’ ( Olokor, 2019). Importantly, the draftsmen of the NDDC Act realized that the Commission cannot effectively discharge its mandate unless it has access to viable sources of funds. Accordingly, Section 14 (2) of the NDDC Act provides various sources of funding the agency as shown below:

* + 1. Federal Government contribution: the equivalent of 15 percent of the total monthly statutory allocations due to member States of the Commission from the Federation Account;
    2. Oil and gas companies’ contributions: 3 percent of the total annual budget of any oil producing company operating, on -shore and off- shore, in the Niger- Delta Area;
    3. Ecological Fund: 50 percent of monies due to member states of the Commission from the Ecological Fund;
    4. Grants, etc.: such monies as may from time to time, be gr anted or lent to or deposited with the Commission by the Federal or a State Government, any other body or institution whether local or foreign;
    5. Gifts, Loans, etc.: all moneys raised for the purposes of the Commission by way of gifts, loan, grants-in- aid, testamentary disposition or otherwise; and
    6. Other sources: proceeds from all other assets that may, from time to time, accrue to the Commission.

Undoubtedly, the above financial provisions have the potential of providing the agency with huge funds to finance its activities, particularly the execution of its mandate of developing the Niger Delta region (Ebeku, 2020). However, i t has been claimed that the agency suffers from inadequate funding, as the FGN and IOCs hardly meet their financial obligations to the agency. This claim was recently restated by the National Assembly Joint Committee on NDDC, which claims that ‘records had shown that the... oil companies jointly owed the NDDC N72bn and $73m, while the Federal Government alone owed N1. 2tn’ (Baiyewu , 2019). Perhaps it was the drive to improve its funds that led the NDDC to institute an action against the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Limited ( NLNG), which had persistently refused to pay 3 per cent of its annual budget to the NDDC in accordance with section 14 ( 2) (b) of the NDDC Act 2000 on the ground that it enjoyed exception to taxation and that it has no annual budget. NDDC lost the case both at the Federal High Court and on appeal ( NDDC v NLNG Ltd (2010) LPELR-CA/PH/ 520/ 2007 )), as the courts upheld the arguments of the company (Ebeku, 2020).

Against the claim of inadequate funding, both the FGN and the IOCs claim that over the period 2001 -2020 huge sums of money had been released to the NDDC. While there is yet no verified record of financial recei pts from the various sources, it is legitimate to believe President Buhari’s claim that huge amounts of money have been released by the Federal Government to the NDDC in the period 2001 to 2019 (Olokor, 2019) except the contrary is established. In the same vein, Shell oil company ( SPDC), for example, claimed in 2008 that it ‘ contributed

$158.2 million to Niger Delta Development Commission ( NDDC) as required by law’ (Shell, 2008; Aigbiboa and Maiangwa, 2012). More recently, SPDC claims that i t has remitted ‘ about two billion U.S. Dollars ( about N720 billion) to the Niger Delta Development Commission in 16 years’ ( NAN, 2019). These claims have not been refuted by the NDDC.

In light of the forgoing, it is plausible to conclude that notwithstanding that the agency may be owed by the statutory contributors to its funds it is certainly the case that it has received huge sums of money over the years to enable it make significant impact in the region as required by its statutory mandate. Hence, the critical question is not whether the NDDC is owed a lot of money; rather the proper question is what the NDDC has done with the substantial amounts of money it has received since it started operations about 20 years ago. For present purposes, it is sufficient and legitimate to assess the performance of the NDDC from 2015 to 2019 based on the undisputed ‘ huge amounts of money’ it has received within the period.

# Table 2: Budgetary Allocations and Releases Between 2015 and 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Budget**  **Allocation**  N000,000, 000 | **Actual FGN release to NDDC** N | **Releases% Budget** | Releases % Fed Govt  Rev. |
| 2015 | 10, 000 ,000,000 | 7. 500 | 75% | 1.40% |
| 2016 | 26,565, 000 ,000 | 24,000 | 19% | 1.19% |
| 2017 | 96,250, 000 ,000 | 26,130 | 26% | 1.13% |
| 2018 | 79,200, 000 ,000 | 19,050 | 25% | 1. 30% |
| 2019 | 27,120, 000 ,000 | - | - | - |
| 2020 | 453, 200 ,000,000 | - | - | - |

Sources: Office of Chairman, Revenue Mobilisation and Fiscal Commission, Abuja, February 9, 2021; Vanguard Newspaper, Dec 22 2020, p.5; Habiba, 2018

Ibileke (2015 ) argues that funds released to the commission are far less than the contributions agreed by law. Until 2015, the unremitted funds to NDDC stand at NGN 800 billion ( about USD 2,216, 000,000).Within the years under review, NDDC started 2 ,035 physical development projects across the Niger Delta region. As shown in tables 3,2 and 3.3, the projects included h uman capacity development, erosion control, building, shore protection, electrification, water supply, jetties, roads, bridges and canalization in the states of Abia, Akwa - Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers.

# Table 3: NDDC Projects –Summary of Completed and On-going Projects 2015 - 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N O** | **STATES** | SKILL ACQUISITION PROGRAMME | | | | **TOTAL** |
| **Mechanic al**  **Business** | **Transpo rt,**  **Health &**  **Safety** | **Home Manageme nt** | **Building Bus.**  **Skills** |
| 1 | Abia | 143 | 21 | 177 | 62 | 403 |
| 2 | Akwa Ibom | 267 | 88 | 296 | 70 | 721 |
| 3 | Bayelsa | 365 | 55 | 250 | 71 | 741 |
| 4 | Cross  River | 194 | 20 | 163 | 60 | 437 |
| 5 | Delta | 294 | 43 | 271 | 81 | 679 |
| 6 | Edo | 164 | - | 149 | 89 | 402 |
| 7 | Imo | 260 | - | 110 | 20 | 390 |
| 8 | Ondo | 213 | 25 | 136 | 117 | 491 |
| 9 | Rivers | 270 | 101 | 190 | 153 | 714 |
|  | **Total** | **2170** | **353** | **1742** | **723** | **4978** |

Source: NDDC 2019

The table above shows that NDDC within the period under review initiated 2,035 physical development projects across the nine political member States of the Niger Delta. The projects include; buildings, electrification, water supply, jetties,

roads, bridges, canalization, shore protection, erosion control, and human capacity development to deal with developmental challenge. The se projects are shown in Table 3

# Table 4: NDDC Projects –Summary of Completed and On-going Projects 2015 - 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/ NO** | **State** | **Awarded** | **Completed** | **On- going** |
| 1 | Abia | 160 | 72 | 88 |
| 2 | Akwa Ibom | 335 | 102 | 233 |
| 3 | Bayelsa | 247 | 70 | 177 |
| 4 | Cross River | 64 | 9 | 55 |
| 5 | Delta | 301 | 135 | 166 |
| 6 | Edo | 212 | 47 | 165 |
| 7 | Imo | 196 | 46 | 150 |
| 8 | Ondo | 302 | 108 | 194 |
| 9 | Rivers | 176 | 33 | 143 |
|  | **Total** | **2, 035** | **625** | **1,410** |

Source: NDDC, 2019

It was noticed that Hon. Aguariavwodo, the pioneer Managing Director of NDDC, feels strongly that the “Commission has taken giant strides to facilitate an all- round development of the region and its people to resolve conflicts” (Guardian, January 24, 2006: 3 ).

# Table 5: Summary of Completed and On-Going Projects, 2015 – 2020

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/NO** |  | Type of  Projects | No. of  Projects Awarded | No. of  Projects On- going | No. of  Projects  Completed |
| 1 |  | Buildings | 1, 139 | 805 | 331 |
| 2 |  | Electrifications | 316 | 179 | 137 |
| 3 |  | Water | 283 | 205 | 78 |
| 4 |  | Jetties | 62 | 25 | 37 |
| 5 |  | Roads | 156 | 128 | 28 |
| 6 |  | Bridges | 47 | 36 | 11 |
| 7 |  | Canalisation | 14 | 13 | 1 |
| 8 |  | Shore  Protection | 15 | 14 | 1 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 9 |  | Erosion  Control | 6 | 5 | 1 |
|  |  | **Total** | **2, 035** | **1410** | **625** |

Source: NDDC, 2019

The Commission has a preference for costly, prestigious projects such as regional roads and jetties which have not bequeathed significant improvement in the welfare of the Niger Delta people (Lapin and Rossiasco , 2011). In order words, these lofty projects satisfy contractors rather than the ordinary Niger Delta people. This contradicts the participatory approach that underpins the Popular Version of Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan (NDRDMP) where the local indigenes were involved in the plannin g process. The commission thus adopted a top- down approach in deciding on the projects to execute. This approach alienates the local people from the selection and ownership of the projects (Habiba, 2018 ) and is also seen as the source of a hostile relation ship between the contractors and the community which does not have any sense of ownership or interest in the projects (Okolo, 2014). In May 2009, the NDDC had initiated 2, 416 infrastructure projects, of which only 841 had been completed (Lapin and Rossiasco 2011 ). It is important to mention that by the end of 2014, NDDC had 4,000 uncompleted projects (Vanguard, 2014).

The commission also had human capacity development programmes, which focus on job creation, as one of its stated priorities. advises that in fulfilling this aspect of their portfolio, they executed projects such as the Empowerment Scheme (NDDC/ GLO Empowerment Scheme), the NDDC Mass Transit Scheme (providing

vehicles on Hire Purchase to the public) and issued NDDC - NTAC ( Technical Aid Corps) contracts (computer training programme).

The NDDC has executed some projects in the Niger Delta region. In Odi for example, infrastructural development projects in the community included paving of two- kilometre internal link roads, 16 -kilometre Odi-Trofani Road, Agbariye- Odonu to Sampo Road, water project, two six -classroom blocks, two three- room science laboratories, staff quarters for government school, completion of guest house, and electrification (ongoing at the time of the fieldwork). Each of these has had some positive impacts on the community. Positive impacts of the pavement of the internal link roads include making intra -community transportation easier and safer, especially during rainy season. Before paving the link roads, walking after rainfall was difficult for pedestrians because the roads were waterlogged. Also, vehicles sometimes splash dirty water in potholes on pedestrians, leading to skirmishes. Also, motorcycles sometimes skid because of the sandy road. A member of the Youth Council reported;

… like the roads they have impacted positively on us. Because for some years back, you dress well and then move out…your shoes will be passing waters and potopotos [mud]… It wasn‘t easy. But when they were able to construct the road…you will walk on the good ground…bike use to fall because we put sand on the road… Those things are not common again, bikes can now move freely. So it has impacted positively on… everybody.

Moreover, the link roads have beautified the town. In addition, the pavement of the link roads spread physical development to the Asanga ( northern) part of the community. This is like a compensation for Asanga, earlier excluded from the

local government road pavement project which was concentrated in the Tamanga (southern) part of the community. This realisation was a significant rationale for resolving the conflict triggered by the pavement of the internal l ink roads. Finally, the pavement of internal l ink roads yields economic benefits to the community. These include provision of employment for the youths ( as semi-skilled labourers in the construction), income for suppliers of construction materials such as sand and gravel by the community people and increased sales for food vendors and restaurant owners. These economic benefits have direct pos itive effect on conflict by reducing poverty, which is one of the root causes of conflict in the region. Inter- community road construction projects have some positive impacts as well. Generally, such projects bring economic benefits in form of creation of temporary jobs for youths ( usually males), markets for suppliers of construction materials such as gravel, sand, and planks for construction (since such materials must be acquired in the local environment), and increased sales for food vendors. Moreover, the Odi- Trofane Road opened up the Odi market to outsiders. As reported by a politician;

NDDC now give us another road to Trofane, which has opened up our market. Because they are very good in gaari production and so forth, now the economic benefits are so evident now.

In addition to i ts economic benefits, inter- community road has reduced the dependency on water transportation, saving precious time. As reported by a community member and beneficiary of the NDDC agricultural programme;

You see, before this time, if I want to travel to Sabagreya, just a stone‘ s throw here. I have to wait for flying boat for up to two

hours. Except the boat is full you cannot move. But NDDC now made the road to Sabagreya, to even, eh, Opokuma, Egbed.

In replacing the community secondary school converted to Federal Government College, the NDDC prevented the sense of loss and deprivation that was consequent on such development. Generally speaking, the physical construction projects, health services and occasional aid by the NDDC rei nforce the presence of the Federal Government in the community, further confirming that benefits from the central government is finally trickling down to the community. Therefore, it reduced the feeling of neglect and marginalisation. This include construction projects discussed above, the rural electrification projects the free medical campaign for the senatorial district, which is usually done at the General Hospital, Odi, and the NDDC diesel provided for generator during the Odiogorugbaogbe festival. As captured in the words of a religious leader in the community:

Now, everyone now, they see that light is coming and the youths, they are happy, they are waiting for the time when the light will fully be operation, you understand, so, it‘s…the NDDC contribution is something that has to do with making the local people feel that they are part and parcel of the country, number one. Number two, it gives them sense of belonging. Because those things they are hearing that is happening in urban area is like they are seeing, they are trying to see them, small, so they are...they see that ah, with this one now something may happen. So they now feel eh, concern or feel belong, you understand that.

Another positive, though unintended, impact of the projects is the indir ect way it builds the conflict transformation capacities of the community due to the community’ s engagement in managing communal conflicts arising from the

interventions. Conflicts that emanated from the intense interactions among community groups and individuals are mediated by the local capacity for peace existing in traditional and contemporary institutions alongside structures for conflict management. The frequency of intervention -triggered conflicts necessitates the frequent engagement of these groups and thus builds their capacities for mediating in the conflicts. A noteworthy instance is the opportunity to showcase community women group’ s capacity for non-violent conflict transformation. Non-violent direct action increases the cohesiveness of such group and makes the members conscious of their potential influence.

The human capacity development programmes of the NDDC in Ugbevwe in Ethiope west LGA in Delta state has also contributed positively to the community. Through the agricultural support training s, community people have acquired the knowledge and skills in modern agricultural practices. Capacity acquired has been deployed in personal agricultural practices and agro -businesses like FADAMA. This, to an extent, addresses the issue of occupational dis orientation, which was identified as one of the root causes of conflict in the region. Many of the beneficiaries believe that if given necessary material and financial support, they are still able to practice, successfully, what they have learnt. According to a community member;

…even their programs, as you get that knowledge, I think you will now improve on it… Like those who were trained to… en rear en grass- cutter and all those stuff, even if the thing stopped halfway, because of the knowledge they have gained from NDDC, even if you now give them another opportunity they can now excel again. Like people for fish farming, those people too, I think they have gained more knowledge and they are using it.

Moreover, the trainings provided platform for various cat egories of community people —old, young, female, male, educated, and i lliterate — to come together in a forum. This serves as an opportunity to mingle and strengthen social relations. Also, it provided a break from the monotony of their daily lives. In addi tion, stipends paid at the end of the training serve as economic benefit for some of the participants.

In Ikot Ekan in Etinan Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

however, the NDDC awarded a contract for the installation of a 300Kva/33Kv

transformer in the community which has been kept somewhere by the community.

According to one of the villagers said the transformer installed by Harrsun Invest

Limited was removed for safekeeping by the village council a few months after it was installed.

Another respondent who the assistant youth secretary of the community said

that;

The NDDC provided us with the transformer. When they brought it, they installed it well and it was working but the Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company (PHED) gave us a high bill of N200,000 monthly to pay but villagers were struggling to pay the bills.

The village has another transformer but they needed another one to compliment

it. Due to the inability to pay the high bills for the two sub - stations, PHED suggested to the village council to shut down the NDDC transformer, to which the council agreed.

In Obowo community in Imo State, the NDDC awarded a contract for the construction of Umulogho – Okwuohia – Isinweke road (9.9 km). The Commission also awarded the contract for the construction of Amaalia – Umuekwele – Umuosochie – Nwokeisiama Road. So also was the contract for the construction of Umuariam – Achara – Avutu road. However, these road contracts by the commission were mostly abandoned since 2010 and it is causing a lot of problems and gully erosion is taking over some locations making passage very diffi cult for cars in some communities especially the Alike – Umuosochie – Umulogho road, Isinweke- Okwuohia – Umulogho road. Where it is not abandoned, the roads are poorly done.

The Obowo community lamented on the low quality of the NDDC road projects in the area and the lots of abandoned projects which has caused serious erosion problems in the communities. The abandoned Alike – Umuosochie – Umulogho road contract is causing a lot of gully erosion hence the communities have resulted to self-help projects to check the erosion and if care is not taken many houses would be cleared by the menace of the erosion. For the case of Umulogho- Okwuohia – Isinweke road, the lousy contractor started a bridge and abandoned it since 2010 and this has broken the linkage betwe en the two communities making it impossible for vehicles to commute through the two communities which were motorable before the NDDC contract for the tarring of the road. This has actually affected the socio - economic and political life of these communities.

The only electrification project in Okwuohia Obowo was also abandoned. These abandoned projects have created very big negative socioeconomic impacts on these communities. However, the few road projects completed there is having positive impact but impacts on roads are more meaningful and pronounced if the stretch of the road is completed and not where two kilometer of a five kilometer road is done, the uncompleted part of the road offsets the good impact of the completed part.

A water project was awarded by the NDDC in Ifiekporo, a community in

Warri South Local Government Area of Delta State. Ifiekporo is one of the

communities that ‘benefited’ from the water projects awarded by the NDDC. But,

findings show that the project was not executed. If i t was, M s Oyibo’s dilemma

and that of other residents in the community could have been averted. On

December 10, 2004 , Bienci Resources Nigeria secured the contract from NDDC

to reactivate the water supply scheme at Ifiekporo Community. The project was

however, abandoned.

The Secretary of the community, Mr Ede said that up until early 2018, the

1. year- old borehole constructed by Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development

Commission ( OMPADEC), was their only source of water supply. The community

according to him kept repairing the borehole until they got tired until it finally packed up in February 208. The borehole is sadly today overgrown with weeds. The sad part today is that they drink and defecate in only the river that is in the community.

Ugbodede is another community in Warri Local Government Area where the residents are forced to defecate and draw water from the same source because someone refused to do their job. The water project in Ugbodede was awarded to Marigray Services Ltd on February 1, 2002, and listed as a completed project,

according to details provided by the NDDC. According to a local resident of the community, there are two boreholes in the community. One is functional while the other is not. But, none of the two was provided by the NDDC. He furth er said that the faulty borehole was constructed by Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission ( DESOPADEC), many years ago. Another resident chipped in that “when this borehole stopped working, the sea was all we had”. These water sources - stream/river are not fit for consumption due to the activities of oil mining and spillage and environmental pollution in the area.

As Habiba ( 2018) noted, most of the NDDC executed projects failed to improve the woes of the people as a result of gross mismana gement, insincerity, insider dealings and nepotism on the part of the NDDC management. This view resonates with Okolo’s (2014 ) research which showed examples of purchased vehicles meant to be given on hire purchase to the common people were hijacked; the multi- billion NGN partnership with GLO (telecom company) Nigeria limited to provide start-up equipment was also ruined by insider deals, nepotism and corruption as most relatives of NDDC staff benefitted from it. The NDDC’s performance has been riddled with a number of factors namely: corruption, insufficient planning, gross mismanagement, due process violation, lack of accountability and clarity, and lack of consultation with local stakeholders

(Habiba, 2018). Ige’s (2009 ) research, for example, underlines that, like its predecessors, successive heads of the commission were accused of corruption. The same research added that in August 2008, a former NDDC chairman, Mr. Sam Edem, was charged with embezzlement of funds amounting to NGN 800 million (about USD 2 , 216 ,000). In support to Ige’s research, the Independent Corrupt Practices and

Other Related Offences Commission ( ICPC) (2011) report, released in 2011, revealed that in that year, the acting MD of the NDDC was arrested and prosecuted by the ICPC, an anti -graft agency, amounting to USD 20 million, whilst in 2010, the execution of 500 project contracts was stopped as they did not follow due process ( Aborisade 2010).

# 1 Achievements of NDDC

The Niger Delta Development Commission ( NDDC) has been in existence statutorily for twenty years and has recorded tremendous achievements in various sectors of life in the Niger Delta region. This is not to suggest that the expectations of the majority of people and other stakeholders in the region have been satisfactorily met, but to appreciate the fact that the Commission within the available resources at i ts disposal has taken bold steps towards making overall development of the region a realisable dream .

The Commission has been committed to the execution of its statutory mandate with strict adherence to various legal frameworks that guides its operation particularly the NDDC Act of 2000; the Public Procurement Act of 2007; the Public Service Rules; the Financial Regulations and the Niger Delta

Regional Development Master Plan. Accordingly, the Commission released its first quarter report covering the period 18 th December 2015 to 18 th March 2016, where the landmark achievements of the Commission in the re cent time were reeled out, some of which are captured by the study as follows:

During the period under review, the Commission carried out a number of strategic Human Capital Development Programmes designed to create jobs and uplift the standard of living of the people of the Niger Delta. They were in the areas of Strategic Planning/ Institutional Strengthening; Agriculture & Fisheries; Education; Healthcare; Youth & Women Development; Skills Acquisition & Development; Environment; Security, Law & Order; amo ngst others.

It thus cannot be disputed that the NDDC has successfully executed several projects across the nine member states of the Commission [ 74]. Among the projects executed are construction of roads, bridges, hospitals, jetties, student hostels, and schools (Efebeh, 20017; NDDC, 2006). As Okinono, Salleh and Hj. Din (2016 ) put it, ‘... NDDC, since its inception in the year 2000 has recorded major achievements in infrastructural development in the area of roads, bridges, hospitals, canalization, schools and water supply’. In late 2019, it was reported that a major project – a 29 kilometres Ogbia- Nembe road ‘through swampy terrains in Bayelsa State’, built by the NDDC in partnership with SPDC – will be commissioned shortly ( NDDC, 2019).

Additionally, in accordance with i ts mandate on human development the NDDC has awarded several tertiary school scholarships tenable overseas to several indigenes of the nine Niger Delta states ( Ebiri, 2017). Furthermore, Okolo has

catalogued a number of projects completed by the NDDC in various Niger Delta states within the period 2001 and 2006, citing information received from field work, NDDC status report, and other sources ( Okolo, 2014). Moreover, he noted that ‘apart from physical infrastructure, the records perused in dicated that the NDDC is taking the issues of conflict management, resolution and peace - building as serious matters by organizing series of skills and peace - building workshops for the youths’ (Okolo, 2014 ).

# Table 6: Summary of Developmental Projects from 2015 - 2020

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Items | Quantity | Percentage |
| 1. | No. of awarded projects since inception | 8,557 |  |
| 2. | No. of on- going projects | 2,257 | 26.3 |
| 3. | No. of completed projects | 3,424 | 40.0 |
| 4. | No. of stalled/ abandoned projects | 292 | 0.3 |
| 5. | No. of awarded projects awaiting mobilization | 2,506 | 29.3 |
| 6. | No. of projects terminated | 49 | 0.005 |
| 7. | No. of projects taken over by State  Governments /Other Agencies | 7 | 0.003 |

Adapted from: http://www.nddc. gov.ng

# Table 7: Empowerment Schemes in Agriculture and Fisheries (1 st Quarter, 2019)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Description of  programme | No. of  beneficiaries | Description of  beneficiaries | Duration  of scheme | Activities |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Agricultural  Entrepreneurial Skills  Development | 200 trainees | large farms across 9 mandate states | Two weeks | \*Collation of data on ongoing trainees  \* Processing funds for  beneficiaries |
| Credit delivery to Farmers in partnership with Bank of  Agriculture | 374 Farmers’ Co-  operatives | Farmers  cooperative  societies from mandate states | 4 years | Agricultural  skills Training programs  graduates from 9  mandate states |
| IFAD/ FGN/ NDD C/CBNRM-ND | 421, 571 | Youths,  women/men from the poorest of the  poor communities | 10 years | Approval for release of final payment made |
| Farm  mechanization | Unspecified | Large farms, agricultural  research institutes & cooperatives | Flexible | Distribution of tractors,  implements,  seedlings &  fertilizers to large farms; computers and laboratory  equipment to Research  institutes |

Adapted from: http://www.nddc. gov.ng

# Table 8: Intervention and Aids in Education and Health Sectors (1 st Quarter, 2019)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Project title | | Project details | Projec  t cost | Location/Stat  e | | Status |
| Procurement distribution  laptops to  schools | &  of 500 secondary | Donated 202 laptops to Niger Delta Science School, Port Harcourt | N150  m | Rivers Bayelsa States | and | 40% -  distributi on  ongoing |
| Procurement distribution Fever tablets | &  of Lassa | LASSA FEVER:  \*30, 000 Lassa fever Personnel Protective Equipment, PPEs;  \*17, 000 sanitizer kits distributed;  \*awareness campaigns  on Lassa fever in 9 | N456  m | 9 mandate states | | 100%  complete d |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | mandate states via  radio j ingles and fliers | |  |  | |  |
| Free medical mission  January 24 – February 6 | | Free eye tests with glasses; free test for communicable and non-communicable  diseases; medical advices and referral letters for patients with needs for further  medical attention | | Throu gh  Partne rship | \*Torubeni  and Opokuma LGAs,  Bayelsa State | | 100%  complete d |
| Capacity  Educate-the- on ICT | building, Educators | 450 ICT- based teachers benefitted | | N150  m | Edo, and  States | Delta Ondo | 100%  complete d |
| 2-day capacity building workshop for secondary school teachers in English Language &  Mathematics | | 450  benefited | Teachers | N38m | 9 mandate states | | 100%  complete d |

Adapted from: http://www.nddc. gov.ng

# Table 9: List of beneficiaries of NDDC Science and Engineering Scholarship for 2019

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| S/N | Name of Beneficiary | Mandate State  of Origin |
| 1. | Aborisade Mercy | Ondo |
| 2. | Ademeta Esther | Ondo |
| 3. | Adeyeye Ayomide | Ondo |
| 4. | Agbodobiri Ebi | Bayelsa |
| 5. | Alabi Mariam | Ondo |
| 6. | Aladetan Seyifunmi | Ondo |
| 7. | Atamewan Sarah | Ondo |
| 8. | Bassey Grace Mbora | Cross River |
| 9. | Bernard Anne | Ondo |
| 10. | Bolade Dolapo | Ondo |
| 11. | Conquest Gina | Rivers |
| 12. | Doghor Deborah | Ondo |
| 13. | Edobor- Uzamere Nowe | Edo |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 14. | Ekeanyanwu Chinwenwa | Imo |
| 15. | Francis Bassey Edidiong | Akwa Ibom |
| 16. | Gbule Chizi | Rivers State |
| 17. | Inyang Edidiong | Akwa Ibom |
| 18. | Iwuamadi Chisomaga | Imo |
| 19. | Jeremiah James Blessing | Cross Rivers |
| 20. | Nwachukwu Chizaram | Rivers |
| 21. | Okeremeta Gertrude | Rivers |
| 22. | Okwuoha Sandra | Rivers |
| 23. | Omodamiro Bamitale | Abia |
| 24. | Oneyor Oritsemeyiwa Alero | Delta |
| 25. | Opue Perpetual | Cross River |
| 26. | Orjiugo Amarachi | Rivers |
| 27. | Sambo Rebecca | Akwa Ibom |
| 28. | Temila Abigail | Rivers |
| 29. | Udoikpong Uforo Treasure | Akwa Ibom |
| 30. | Ukachukwu Maryanne | Abia |

Adapted from: http://www.nddc. gov.ng

During i ts 1 st Quarter of operation in 2016, the Commission also recorded other milestones in cut- edge developmental approach in Niger Delta which includes:

* 1. Procurement of Equipment for Persons Living with Disability - the Commission approved N30m for the procurement of equipment such as Automated Wheel Chairs, Sensor Guide Canes, Hearing Aids and clutches for people living with disability in Niger Delta. The s um of N50m was approved for the promotion of traditional sports in Niger Delta;
  2. MSME Capacity Building & Empowerment- a total of 198 Entrepreneurs from the nine states of the Niger Delta were selected through a rigorous competitive process. They have been trained in various aspects of entrepreneurship including mentoring under business consultants. Ninety-five percent of the trainees have received their expansion grants depending on the nature of their business or the approved business proposal. Monitoring & Evaluation of the business was undertaken within the review period;
  3. Training on Building Skills Technology - the Commission conducted Building Skills Technology Training Programme at King Amachree Academy in Cotonou, Republic of Benin on March 31, 2016. Two hundred and seventy (270) youths and women are to benefit from this programme. The first batch of 130 trainees has completed the theoretical aspect and internship ( hands-on experience). The second batch of 140 trainees would soon commence training;
  4. NDDC Oil Spill Response Management Training Programme - the Commission has commenced implementation of the NDDC Oil Spill Response Training Programme. One hundred and eighty (180) trainees will benefit from this training. The key objective of this programme i s to create a pool of qualified and competent Oil Spill Respondents to be certified by National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) to manage oil spill and carry out environmental remediation

in the Niger Delta. The theoretical aspect of the p rogramme has been completed. The field work / practical aspect are on -going;

* 1. NDDC Telecommunication ( Fibre Optics) Training Programme - the Commission has embarked on the training of 180 Niger Deltans on Telecommunication ( Fibre Optics) technology. The trai ning is currently going on in Owerri, Imo State capital. The key objective of this initiative is to build specific skills in leading -edge technologies to enhance employment creation and growth in the communities. Theoretical instructional activities have been completed. The trainees are currently undergoing field work / practical activiti es, (NDDC Quarterly Report, 2019).

Lastly, the Commission is currently executing nine (9) critical Infrastructure Projects in various states of the Niger Delta due for com pletion by last quarter of the year. These are in the areas of roads/ bridges; canalization/reclamation; and electricity/power, ( NDDC, Quarterly Report, 2016).

# 2 Challenges or failures of the NDDC

Twenty years of the NDDC have seen l ittle or nothing in terms of the

development of the region despite trillions of Naira that have been voted to the

agency since its establishment. In all that period, the agency has been characterized by mindboggling corruption as if it were an institutionalized body to “settle” the leaders of the region so as to keep “the boys” quiet (Southern Examiner, 2020 ). In the final analysis, the ailment that has plagued the NDDC for

decades is symptomatic of the malaise that has pushed t he country into the realm of failed states.

So much has been written of the corruption in the NDDC that the current

minister of the Niger Delta, Senator Godswill Akpabio who doubles as the

supervising minister of the agency but who himself faces serious al legation of

graft, once described it as an ATM. “I think people were treating the place as an

ATM, where you just walk in there to go and pluck money and go away, I don’t

think they were looking at it as an interventionist agency”, he told the Nigeria

Television Authority in the early days of his appointment as the Minister of the

Niger Delta, by President Muhammadu Buhari.

It is sufficient for our purposes here to rehash some of the mindboggling

scandals that have rocked the agency since its establishment. In 2008, President

Umaru Musa Yar’ Adua ordered an investigation into allegations that the then

Chairman of the agency, Ambassador Sam Edem, spent N 1 billion to secure the

services of a sorcerer to employ spiritual means to enable him get contracts from

the Akwa Ibom State Government. In August 2015, the then Audiot General of the

Federal, Samuel Ukuru, ssaid that at least N 183 billion that was meant for the

development of the Niger Delta was diverted by those put in charge of the

commission (Nkannebe, 2020 ).

In 2017, a former Managing Director, Nsima Ekere, announced the revocation of over 600 contracts worth 200bn. According to him, the rationale behind the action was because the management discovered that some of the

contracts were either not properly awarded or some of them were awarded but the contractors had not yet gone to site. In his words, “some of the contracts were awarded as late as 2002 with some of the contractors collecting advance payments from the commission with zero work done at the site s. So we terminated these

contracts worth about 200 bn, which is the first phase of our restructuring the commission’ s balance sheet”.

Last October, the Senate said it was probing the award of the Water

Hyacinth Emergency and Desilting Contracts awarded by the agency from 2017

t0 2019. The Chairman Senate Committee on Public Accounts, Senator Matthew

Urhoghide, made this known when the Director, Special Duties of the NDDC,

Nosakhare Agbongisede, appeared before the committee in Abuja. Urhoghide said

investigation became imperative because the initial cost of the contract at 2. 5

billion was allegedly increased to N 65 billion ( Nkannebe, 2020).

In 2019 , investigations showed that a serving senator is single -handedly

handling about 300 contracts for the agency in breach of procurement laws, yet

no one has been prosecuted for that. Enter the latest in the series of sleaze that

has become second name to the agency: the revelations of the former managing

director of the Interim Management Committee, Ms Joi Gbene Nu nieh for the

better part of last week. The sordid and salacious details of the financial infractions in the 7 - month superintendence of the IMC given the theatrics that attended it are now well known that I do not intend to rehash them here, save to point out that a whopping N 81 .5 billion was spent by the agency between January and May, 2020 on inanities including N 85.6 million on “overseas travel” at a

time when the whole world was on lockdown as a result of the Covid -19 pandemic. Pray, how were these travels procured?

If there was ever any doubt as to who was keeping the Niger Delta region

underdeveloped, the current scandal rocking the agency should resolve that

against the leaders of the region who are nothing but the knees on the neck of the

people of the region. In its 20 -year history, the agency has been led by sons and

daughters of the region with little or no consideration given to the Federal

Character Principle; the thinking being that as an interventionist agency, more

confidence would be engendered by having the people of the region pilot its

affairs. We have however seen that kleptomaniacs have no sympathies for kith,

kin or kindred ( Nkannebe, 2020 ).

Yet, despite their hands writ large over the mess that the NDDC has become,

the leaders of the region have not stopped blaming the Federal Government for

the rot in the region, with endless clamoring for resource control and blaming

Northern Nigeria for the despoliation of the region. And even sometimes fanning

the embers of conflict between youths of the region and their counterparts in other

parts of the country.

# CHAPTER SIX

**SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION 6.1 SUMMARY**

After over fifty-six years of the discovery of oil and gas in over 500 communities in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, the people are still “poor, neglected, under-developed and backward” resulting from suffocation occasioned by the Nigerian State, and the hazards and confl icts associated with oil and gas exploration / exploitation. This was followed closely by the prolonged, unfruitful peaceful negotiations that the people, spearheaded by the youths, have in recent times resorted to violent disruption of oil installations, kidnapping, hostage- taking and militia activities in the region.

The study focused on the appraisal of the efforts of the Federal Government’s interventionist Agencies over the years with specific emphasis on the Niger Delta Development Commission ( NDDC) s ince 2001. This appraisal is imperative since the mandate of NDDC is to “resolve conflict and build peace” thereby restoring the confidence of the people in the region.

The study’s findings were consistent with the findings of previous researchers who found that citizen participation is crucial in sustainable community development ( Holden, Roseland, Ferguson and Perl, 2008; Saleh, 2004; Wild and Marshall, 1999). These researchers further observed that increase in civic engagement by more effective particip atory conditions for sustainable decision-making process at the local level is one of the ways to promote the success of sustainability. Community development advocates for participatory

approaches in sustainability as protection of natural and local value s as well as executed projects cannot be managed solely by the government. The involvement of the local people in project execution gives them a sense of ownership of the projects and enhances capacity, learning and interaction of the community members.

Participation is all about self-help for when there is active participation of the people in their own affairs, they are helping themselves. Citizen participation creates room for capacity building and empowerment which are the best means to achieve sustainable community development. The involvement of NDDC as a government agency in community development stands out as an important effort in our present day democracy and has contributed to the transformation of urban and rural communities. Although the aim of NDDC has been to help in the development of the Niger Delta communities by executing projects, the study revealed that the projects have created effects, which although are not yet sufficient, on the community members. The projects are not fully recognized and appropriated by community members. The panacea to sustainable development is anchored on the establishment of community involvement.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The study came up with the following recommendations based on its discoveries:

* + 1. First and foremost, no lasting and effective framework for solving environmental and violence issues in the Niger Delta can be achieved without direct engagement with the people of the region, holding a regional

sovereign conference becomes increasingly inevitable to affor d the people the all- needed opportunity to discuss their existence in the Nigeria federation;

* + 1. The politicization and partisan reflection on the Niger Delta crises must stop if any headway will be made;
    2. Rather than dialogue with the “Avengers” or any milit ant group, an elaborate open assembly forum should be held on the Niger Delta problems with all stakeholders attending, and there should not be any tailored terms of reference;
    3. Niger Delta Development Commission is not wasteful initiative after all and can only be restructured and strengthened to deliver on its statutory mandate;
       1. NDDC should be adequately funded;
       2. It should be made independent, apolitical and career - based organization;
       3. NDDC should be reformed to open it up to international collaboration and partnership with foreign governments and organizations;
    4. The commission i tself should ensure that community projects are evenly spread across the oil producing communities. The most i mportant revision in strategy may be in laying the political and legal basis for inclusive development, tackling discriminatory resource policies, and creating public policies that foster growth with equity. In this regard, the commissions’ developmental projects must involve a local process including not only the

economic targets, but also the political and the psychological aspects of life.

* + 1. In line with the recent recommendation by Dafinone (2007), a Niger Delta Bank for Reconstruction and Development and a Development Board should be incorporated. The operators of Oil and Gas business in Niger Delta, the traditional owners of land, and the people of the Niger Delta as defined by the Willink Report of 1958 should collectively negotiate and decide the membership of the Development Board whose funding should be from royalties due from the various operators of Oil and Gas in the Niger Delta.

The foregoing recommendations ( re- engineering process) should be considered as crucial if peace, equity and tranquillit y as desired in the oil- rich region will be achieved in short term.

# CONCLUSION

Attempt by successive Nigerian government to ameliorate the deplorable living condition in the Niger Delta region have been based on different criteria depending on the objective of the administration in power. The effect of these anti-poverty programs has been limited or have had only marginal impacts as their core rationale is income based rather than human -based.

Though the NDDC package appears comprehensive it is bein g incapacitated in meeting the desires of the Niger Delta communities. The NDDC, despite its seemingly good intentions, has not solved the issues on target. The Master Plan approaches are still falling short, especially as the intensity and complexity of

violence has grown. The persistent volatile conflicts seem to demand new models and new ways of thinking to crack them. Solving the problems of the Niger Delta is not just a matter of mobilizing more funds for NDDC but making the body independent and non- partisan in other to achieve goals of sustainable development.

The reality makes social reconciliation approaches that would achieve better leverage on resources, enhance effectiveness through collective negotiations, and enable more sustainable social impac t increasingly relevant. The unfortunate gaps between the Niger Delta communities and their heritage have not been bridged as people continue to confront chronic deprivation arising from anti- community policies, such as sections 34 and 36 of the Land Use A ct of 1978.

In protesting against the Nigerian state imposition of people unfriendly policies, organised bodies of militia groups have found violence a handy weapon and resisted human rights violation in their communities. The modalities for addressing the relatively long history of activism on the Niger Delta issues are not adequately reflected in the NDDC master plan. As the continuing implementation of the master plan has not significantly improved the l iving standards of majority and pacified the aggri eved militant agencies, it is necessary to re- examine the commission’ s relevance within the context of the community development discourse.