Revisiting a decade of State-Sponsored Terrorism and Conflict Resolution Strategy in the Niger Delta Region, Nigeria. The study of Odi, Ogoni and Umuechem invasions, 1990-2000

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Abstract

The study revisited a decade of military offensive in Odi, Ogoni, and Umuechem settlements in the Niger Delta region during the 1990s that left these inhabitants psychologically devastated to date. Sadly, the military onslaught in the Niger Delta region continued after 1990s despite transition to democratic rule in 1999. Competition for oil wealth has fueled violence between the Nigerian state and Niger Delta inhabitants, causing the militarization of the entire region. The study aimed at examining the remote and the immediate cause of the crises in Odi, Ogoni and Umuechem settlements; the adverse impact of state-sponsored terrorism in the 1990s and conflict resolution techniques employed in resolving these crises. The study adopted a triangulation method of data gathering techniques. To achieve the aim of the study, 238 questionnaire were administered to the respondents in the selected settlements, 211 was retrieved, 27 was not properly filled while 184 was valid for the study. The study unraveled that the circumstance that led to the military invasion has not changed. The study recommends amongst others the implementation Niger Delta development plan to end the protracted oil related conflict in the region.

Keywords - *conflict, conflict resolution, militarization, Niger Delta, Nigerian state, terrorism.*

Introduction

Nigeria has been the largest single exporter of petroleum in Africa since the 1970s. With the price revolution in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting countries (OPEC) in 1973, she experienced an unexpected phenomenal increase in oil revenue, and according to Briggs (2014, p. 12), such price-revolution raises development dilemma. Petroleum exploitation has created unwelcome destruction and problems in the environment of the Niger Delta Region. The people in this region have in the recent past resented the exploration and exploitation of oil on their land. These resentments have brought about several agitation from youths and affected communities and groups, thereby resulting in conflict.

The most common index relating to them is the exploration and exploitation of crude oil on their land. In other words, they are the oil-bearing communities in Nigeria that have suffered a lot of socio-economic mayhem and neglect ranging from environmental degradation, poverty, widespread unemployment, gas flaring, marginalization, lack of infrastructure, pollution, oil spillage, underdevelopment, among others. In the view of Glechtsh & Henrik (2012, p. 40), the Niger Delta produced the oil wealth that accounts for Nigeria's foreign earnings, paradoxically, however, not much of the revenues from the multi-national oil industry touch the Niger Delta.

The Niger Delta has become a boiling cauldron and has exploded in the past and will likely continue to simmer for many generations unless drastic steps are taken by all stakeholders (Chinedum & Chinua, 2010, p. 7). The Niger Delta has undoubtedly been the goose that lays the golden eggs in Nigeria, yet the inhabitants of the region live in abject poverty. They suffer neglect from government and many stakeholders, are denied basic amenities, they do not have access to clean potable water due to pollution; they suffer unemployment because their traditional sources of livelihood have been destroyed by oil activities. The former Governor of Rivers State, Chief Rufus Ada-George in a meeting with between the secretary of the Federal Government and oil-bearing communities in 1993 noted that:

> The oil company workers on site live in comparative luxury, leisure and affluence, with the provision of electricity, potable drinking water and communication facilities, in well-laid camps or site-villages. In contrast, natives of the host communities remain in conditions that are

strikingly deplorable (The Guardian, 1993, p.9).

Nigeria has been the largest single exporter of petroleum in Africa since the early 1970s. Petroleum exploitation has created unwelcome destruction and problems in the environment of the Niger Delta region. The people in this region have in the recent past resented the exploration and exploitation of oil on their land; these resentments have brought about several agitation from youths and affected communities and groups, thereby resulting into conflict. The state responded with organized violence using the security agents to arrest, brutalize, detain suspects without trial, among others. The Odi, Ogoni and Umuechem settlements were invaded and set ablaze by the Nigerian State. Usenin (1973, p. 198) noted that:

> The entire machinery of the bourgeois state, from the highest to the lowest units, is used to suppress the (inhabitants) in the class struggle. The government plays a key part in this, and its President or (Head of State) - vested with broadest powers. The prerogatives of the government and its head are not confined to the framework determined by a country's Constitution and other legislative acts. The government coordinates the work of coercive bodies, regulates the activities of the police force and military units and directs the work of administration.

Following the military operations in the 1990s, the Niger Delta region witnessed the unprecedented terror atmosphere intensified by the Operation Salvage and Operation Hakuri I, II, and III, especially in Bayelsa and Rivers States. On November 20, 1999, "there were 2 days of unstopped bombardment of Odi, a predominantly Ijaw community in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. Many observers described this military invasion to be a pogrom and recorded the massive destruction of lives and properties" (Oluyemi, 2020, p.8). Owolabi and Okwechime (2007) provided representative cases of state sponsored terrorism by the Nigerian state backed by the Transnational Oil Corporations in the late 1980s and 1990s in the Niger Delta region. They include: Iko-Shell clash (1987), the Oboburu-Elf clash (1989), the Uzere-Shell clash (1992), the Kaiama bloodbath (1998), Choba killings (1999) and the Okerenkoko, Kokodiagbene, Oporoza Kurutie (2009), Ayakoromo community (2010), among others. Pegg (1999,p. 481) noted that:

> The threats posed to the very existence of the Nigerian state by pressures for new oil revenue allocation formulars, the more than 2,000 Ogoni civilians already killed, and the massive troop deployment to the Niger Delta

following the Kaiama Declaration, however, all indicate that the security implications of TNCS for indigenous peoples fit quite comfortably even within a narrow vision of what constitutes 'security studies'(p.481).

Bassey (2012 cited in Oluyemi, 2020, p.8) argued that "the massive military operations in the region have succeeded in aggravating the situation as militants responded with more deadly attacks on the depot, pipelines, and flow stations such as Escravos (Warn petroleum products marketing company pipeline), Abiteye pipeline (Shell pipeline carrying crude oil from Billekrama to Bonny Export Terminal), Okomanifold of Chevron, Forcados offshore platform of Shell, and Atlas Cove terminal in Lagos."

The struggle against environmental injustice by the Niger Delta inhabitants have resulted in the death of many including: prominent sons, destruction of properties, among others in the region. These invasions and annihilation attempts were a grand conspiracy by the Nigeria State to silence the Niger Delta inhabitants and protect the image of Global Capital and the imperialistic agenda of the TNC in the Third World Countries.

Hudis (2002) argued that many of the social groups most severely exploited by the forces of Transnational Capital are located within the Third World Countries. Hence, we need to renew our commitment to anti-imperialist struggles, not in the narrowly defined sense of being anti-Western, but in the sense of supporting class struggles, and everywhere that capitalism hacks its way throughout the globe, dragging imperialism in the wake of its impersonal law of social domination.

Given the above, various conflict resolution strategies were employed to maintain a peace system in the Niger Delta region, particularly in Odi, Ogoni and Umuechem settlements. The study aimed at examining the remote and the immediate cause of the crises in Odi, Ogoni and Umuechem settlements; the adverse impact of state-sponsored terrorism in the 1990s and conflict resolution techniques employed in resolving these crises.

Conceptual Review
Terrorism
The term terrorism has been defined in various ways, whether political, religious or ideology, to suit a particular situation or to justify their actions. This is because "individuals, groups, movements and governments may all adopt terrorist tactics at various times in order to further their political or economic purpose-and then abandon them while still pursuing those purposes. There may be groups that only employ terrorist means and whose purpose does not reach beyond terrorism itself, but these are exceptional" (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2005, pp.68-69). Hence, Wardlow (1982, p.xx) defined terrorism as "the use, or threat to use violence by an individual or a

group, whether acting for or in opposition to established authority, when such an act is designed to create extreme anxiety and/or fear-inducing effects in a target group larger than the immediate victims with the purpose of coercing that group into acceding to the political demands of the perpetrators." After the 9/11 attack, the United State redefines terrorism as a "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience" (22 USC 2656f(d). The United Kingdom defines terrorism as the 'use or threat designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public' and 'the use ot threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause' and action includes ' serious violence against a person', serious damage to property' or ' creating a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public'(cited in Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2005, p.69). In its December 2004 report, A More Secure World, the UN High - Level Panel (2004) defined terrorism as:

> Any action...that is intended to cause deaths or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organizational organization to do or to abstain from doing something (p.49).

State Sponsored Terrorism

State sponsored terrorism is a terror perpetrated by the State on its own people. State sponsored terrorism is referred to as terror from above. State terrorism include "internal repression as well as external acts of terror and state sponsorship of terrorism" (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2005, p.70). It is severely assertion of ruthless force used by the state for the aim of silencing all resistance of internal opposition. Such brutal violence is in part a confirmation of the widely perceived illegitimacy, especially in the secular state. The state is prevalently understood "as a source of evil and harm, and those who hold power tend to be unjust, to break the law, and to play with other people's lives... injustice is the ruler, the abuse of power is the rule; the proper, adequate use of power is exceptional." It has historically viewed as the largest form of violence against citizens. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2005,p.71) revealed that in the 2002 edition of the United State Department's Patterns of Global Terrorism Report, the following countries were involved in state sponsored terrorism against her citizens. They include: Cuba, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Sudan, North Korea, and Syria. "More direct is the terrible toll exacted by totalitarian governments both in pursuit of ideological goals and in terrorizing opposition into submission in order to maintain their grip on power." Though not been specific, Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall (2005, p.71) based on

"some estimates, well over 160 million of their own citizens were intentionally killed by repressive governments in the twentieth century." Sometimes, the victims of misuse of power are rarely noticed internationally as the case of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region, Nigeria. The Arab Spring in the Middle East was a notable exception. The state sponsored terrorism are common in societies with crude oil deposit. The brutality of States on its citizens has substantially metamorphosed to mass violence in protest or popular resistance to the rule of a dictatorship. Barash and webel (2014) revealed that:

> Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, may have been the most frightening and well-published instance of state terror, but the use of terrorism from the above has a widely practiced throughout the region. A conservative estimate is more than 100,000 citizens disappeared during the reign of Saddam Hussein, with the real number probably closer to 250,000. Compare this to the 30,000 who disappeared during the dirty war in Argentina. Other regimes, from Algeria to Sudan and from Libya to Talian Afghanistan, have lesser, but equally horrifying, human rights records (p.87)

Conflict

The grave implications of continued conflict in the Niger Delta may be better appreciated against the background of the fact that, from historical experience, the Nigerian nation and especially the Niger Delta have had a prolonged familiarity with social struggle against imperial domination. The Niger Delta militants draw from this experience in prosecuting the current phase of confrontation with the Nigerian State. Like the struggle against colonialism, the present phase of the crisis has incubated over long periods of unaddressed grievances and disenchantments among communities in the region. Today, emphasis is shifting from mere bread-and-butter issues to serious questions by the people of the region, regarding their status, role and place within the larger Nigerian polity (Adekule, 2016, p. 25). Their agitations have provoked trenchant clamours for greater fiscal allocation and resource control, fiscal federalism and minority rights. These agitations are also leading to more pungent questions about citizenship, rights, duties and obligations and the moral circumstances under which these could be challenged, negated, withheld or even jettisoned. The fact that government can no longer extract voluntary obedience from the citizens, as exemplified by the visible presence of soldiers on internal peace enforcement in the Niger Delta, points to a moral crisis of authority and a serious problem of legitimacy for the federal government, in the region. Unfortunately, Ben (2010, p. 121) established that the State has lost its claim to the monopoly of violence, given the fact that the ethnic groups and individual communities in the region have illegally acquired sophisticated weaponry and trained militia that sometimes overwhelm and make mockery of government forces.

There is an increasing fear and concern about the widespread availability and indiscriminate use of weapons and ammunitions by militant communities, cult groups, hoodlums and gangsters. With such weapons, the pre-disposition to use brute force to settle even the smallest disagreements is significantly enhanced. Long years of military rule, and the propensity of politicians to rig elections and intimidate opponents through violence, have also infused a sense of impunity into society such that violence is now considered a continuation of politics by other means (Otitie, 201 l, p.91). It is also important to note that militant youth movements are mostly drawn from a growing cesspool of illiterate and unemployed youths whose attraction to violence is in pecuniary benefits and the social elixir such acts bring, especially as many of their leaders are highly educated, literate but unemployed. With the growing consciousness about the various causes of their disempowerment, youth actions have begun to provoke serious inter-generational crisis, as they are seen by the elders as irresponsible, reckless, vulgar, rebellious and dangerous. .Meanwhile the youths perceive the elders as self-centred, greedy reactionary and treacherously pro-establishment (Jaspreet, 2012, p. 5).

Conflicts Resolution

In all of these concepts of conflict as explained by various authors, there is great need to be able to find ways to address these concerns and issues through suitable conflict resolution methods. In line with this, Ojakorutu (2009, p.86), conflict resolution is a variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflict through the constructive solving of problems, distinct from management or transform that, by conflict resolution it is expected that the deep rooted sources of conflict are addressed and resolved and behavour is no longer violent nor are attitude hostile any longer, while structure of the conflict has been changed. According to Na'Allah (1998, p.40), conflicts resolution referred to an outcome in which the issue in an existing conflict are satisfactorily dealt with through a solution that is mutually acceptable to the parties, self-sustained in the long run and productive of a new positive friendship between parties that were previously hostile adversaries and process or procedure by which such an outcome is achieved. Best (2015, p.26) further stated that in principle, conflict resolution connotes a sense of finality, where the parties to a conflict are mutually satisfied with the outcome of a settlement and the conflict is resolved in a true sense of it. Through conflict resolution, it is intended that the crises in the Niger Delta region will be resolved.

Conflict resolution is conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and retribution. Ultimately, a wide range of methods and procedures for addressing conflict exists, including negotiation, mediation, arbitration, diplomacy and creative peace building. The term conflict resolution may also be used interchangeably with dispute resolution, where arbitration and litigation processes are critically involved. Furthermore, the concept of conflict resolution

can be thought to encompass the use of non-violent resistance measures of parties in conflict in an attempt to promote effective resolution (Maill & Woodhouse, 2015, p.72).

Methods of Conflict Resolution in Niger Delta Region

The major prospects for conflict resolution and positive change in the Niger Delta region rest in the number of factors identifiable within the framework of fortuitous circumstances still within the control of the parties to this conflict: First is the fact that the ethnic groups of the Niger Delta are really not yet at war with the state. According to Nna and Ibaba (201 l,p.62), the warring militants are basically Ijaws, fighting for goals that are not really congruent with the Niger Delta problem, and criminal cult gangs, both of which are merely exploiting the economic and socio-political crisis for private and primordial ends. What this means is that the Niger Delta struggle is yet to assume a really violent coloration or involve an armed struggle by the people of the region against the state. Second, is that all ethnic nationalities in the region favour dialogue and negotiation as a means of resolution of this conflict, and will be willing to shift grounds on some issues like total resource control, at least in the short run. This leaves room for negotiation and a very important window of opportunity for conflict resolution. The third is that there are positive signs that the oil companies in the region, are beginning to embrace the doctrine of Corporate Social Responsibility, and are becoming more positive engaged in some of the communities in their areas of operation. The sittings of the River, State Truth and Reconciliation Panel many years ago did provide a much needed window of opportunity for frank and open public discussions on the issues involved, between the oil companies and their hosts, and as expected it yielded positive results. Fourth is that, die governors of the region had convened a South-South Governors forum which met in Yenagoa on Friday the 21st of November 2008, and came out with a resolution to deal collectively with the criminal cult gangs operating in the region (Nna and Ibaba, 2011, p. 64). This is a giant step in the right direction fifth is that, there are at last, some signs of serious effort on the part of government to address the problem of gas flaring in some parts of the region. The 5.9 billion USD Escravos gas to liquid project (EGTL) in Delta state is the first of its kind in the region. The essence of the EGTL is to stop gas flaring (Ben, 2010, p. 100). This will go a long way not only to assuage community fears and anxiety, but also provide jobs for unemployed youths of the region.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted frustration/aggression as its theoretical construct. The frustration/aggression theory was proposed by Dollard, Miller, Doob, Mowrer and Sears (1939), and further developed by Barker, Dembo and Lewin (1941) and Berkowitz, Lepinski and Angulo (1969). These theorists argued that "aggression is the result of blocking, or frustrating, a person's efforts to attain a goal" (Friedman

and Schustack, 1999, pp. 204-207). The frustration/aggression theory explains why people are scapegoats (Whitley and Kite, 2010). It attempts to give reasons for the cause of violence in society. The proponents argued that frustration causes aggression, but when the basis of frustration cannot have contested, then, the aggression is carried out on the vulnerable. Breuer and Elson (2017) argued that the "benefit of characterizing frustration through observable qualities of events or environmental characteristics is that it allows description and testing of its causal effects, such as those with aggression, objectively instead of relying on subjective self-reported introspection."

This theory is of the view that aggression is the result of frustration and that in a circumstance where the genuine yearning of an individual is denied either directly or indirectly by the outcome of how the society is organized, the feeling of disillusionment may lead such a person to express his displeasure through violence that will be targeted at those he/she considers to be responsible for his/her predicament (Falati, 2007, p.53). According to the frustration-aggression theory, aggression is an innate drive response to frustration external stimuli from the environment. The frustration stimuli can be any social condition that thwarts our satisfaction such as poor housing, unemployment, among others.

Berkowitze (2014, p.94) demonstrates that men are more inclined to address when subjected to unjustified frustration, and drew a distinction between attitudinal aggression and behavioural aggression as direct results of sustained frustration. The potential for collective violence varies strongly with the intensity and scope of relative deprivation among members of a collectivity. If there is a significant discrepancy between what they think they deserve and what they think they will get, there is a likelihood of rebellion. Just as frustration produces aggressive behaviour on the part of an individual, so does relative deprivation predict collective violence by social groups (Mojisola, 2014, p. 57). The armed insurrection against military and civilian targets in the Niger Delta, by militant youths, directed against the government and the foreign oil companies is viewed in this perspective.

Howbeit, it is an established fact that frustration does produce a temporary increase in motivation, and thus lead to more vigorous responses (Berkowitz, 2014, p. 91). And this is perceived to be of sufficient generality to provide a basis for the explanation of virtually all forms of aggressive behaviour, including political violence. This is probably why Berkowitz (2014, p.46) further argued that men who are frustrated have an innate disposition to do violence to its source in proportion to the intensity of their frustration. This is of course a most apposite description of the situation, in the Oil bearing and contiguous communities of Nigeria's Niger Delta region.

Notable Conflicts in the Niger Delta Region, 1990 -2000

Odi Crisis

Briggs (2014, p.l2) opined that Odi is a town in Kolokuma Opokuma local government area of Bayelsa State. It is in the heart of the Niger Delta to a large extent, a new capital city, many capital intense projects, personnel mansions and businesses have been built on income the source which without much ado, can be traced to the production of crude oil in the country. Herein lays the irony of the goose which lays the golden egg being starved as it is related to Odi town and its environs. The Odi massacre was an attack carried out on November 20, 1999 by the Nigerian military in the predominantly Ijaw town of Odi in Bayelsa State. The attack came in the context of an ongoing conflict in the Niger Delta over indigenous rights to oil resources and environmental protection. Otitie (2011,p.94) stated that a singular decision by former president Olusegun Obansanjo to launch an offensive to the audio community, directing the Nigerian Army to annihilate the Ijaw population in 1999, as a result of militants' actions against military personnel (killing 12 Police Officers) in the region culminated into rapid onslaught of about 2,483 persons in the land.

Ogoni Crisis

The movement for the survival of Ogoni people (MOSOP), under the leadership of Ken Saro-Wiwa had been at the forefront of the confrontation between the indigenous communities of the Niger Delta, the oil companies and the government which sent in troops to crush local protesting members. Like other communities in the oil producing areas, the Ogoni contend that multinational oil companies, particularly the Shell Petroleum Development Company with the active cooperation of the Nigerian government have ravaged their land and contaminated their rivers while providing little, if any, tangible benefit in return (Mitee, 2009, p. 38).

The Ogoni region is a highly oil rich area in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, populated by approximately 500,000 members of the Ogoni people. Since 1990 the Ogoni has been engaged in a struggle with the government of Nigeria and the Shell Company to maintain their rights as the original inhabitants of the land. The nonviolent movement for the survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP) has been met with violence on the part of the government as well as the assassination or imprisonment of many Ogoni leaders (Mitee, 2009, p. 37).

Umuechem Crisis

Umuechem is an older community located in the Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) got into Umuechem in 1957 and started oil exploration. Today Umuechem measure as the second oldest community where crude oil is explored in Nigeria, with Oloibiri as the first. Nwanwko (2015,p.46) affirmed that series of crises which involved lives, property and goodwill started after the major conflict in October, 1990 when a group of mobile policemen at the instance of SPDC unleashed terror on Umuechem people following peaceful protest march by the community

women and others to the SPDC flow station in the community; over 700 houses, 275 bicycles, 100 motor bikes and other personal belongings to more than 3,500 persons were burnt and destroyed and over 300 persons were wounded and 100 people confirmed dead as a result of the crisis. The Niger Delta region/environment has been adversely affected by reckless exploration and exploitation of the oil companies operating in the area. According to Klare (2013, p.49) a crisis is brewing in oil producing communities in the Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State over alleged marginalization and underdevelopment of the area.

The cause of Niger Delta crises in the 1990s
The Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, which is known for the abundance of natural resources and oil production is faced with unresolved problem that have metamorphosed into full blown crises. As the crisis in the Niger Delta has become endemic, the implications of Niger Delta crises are too far reaching to be ignored. Kishi (2014, p. 5) reaffirmed that there has been a hue by some communities in the Niger Delta over the devastating nature of the area that is characterized by deprivation, neglect and unwholesome activities carried out by the multinational oil companies in the area.

Kishi (2014) buttressed that conflict in the Niger Delta had become a burning national issue that has attracted global attention. This rich oil bearing region that is perceived to be the goose that laid the golden egg and from which the countries natural resources is extracted is largely underdeveloped, pauperized and threatened by deforestation, poverty, environmental degradation and ecological extinction that has resulted in various crises. Over the years resources in the region have turned to the serious issue as a result of the neglect in the region by the Federal government and multinational oil companies. The resultant effect is violence and armed conflict between the host communities and the stakeholders. In the views of Forgotten Diarus Org (2008, p.65) in 1956, Shell BP or British petroleum, which transformed from Royal Niger Company, discovered crude oil in a small village called Oloibiri in the present day Bayelsa State. Two years later in 1958, the company discovered crude oil in large commercial quantities in Ogoni. After the extraction in Oloibiri, nothing of tangible nature was put in place to indicate petrodollar were carted away from the Federal Government and Shell oil. The government is rhetorical and adamant to attending to the socio-economic challenges arising from environmental degradation. Azaiki (2009) disclosed that:

> There is no passable road [in Oloibiri] except a bad road that was hurriedly constructed during the regime of Chief Melford Okilo to pave way for the President's visit in 1982. The road, which links nowhere, was immediately abandoned after the visit and is today flooded after rainfall. A town that was sitting on barrels of crude oil worth

several billions of dollars only got electricity in 1989 and despite this; constant power outrage has kept the town in total darkness. No potable water, no employment opportunities, and only one dilapidated community primary school is the only symbol of civilization in the town. The town is abandoned for the retirees as the youths have fled to the cities in search of urban comfort (p.16&17)..

Forgotten Diarus Org (2008) added that what could be said by the only significance was a fence land meant for the development of an oil museum which was not established to date. The deceit continued and angered Isaac Idaka Boro (1939-1968). "He took offence against what has become the norm today, "a lack of political will and deceit while the region's oil resources rest in private pockets of the privileged and also carted away by (Shell SPDC and the Federal Government through the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC).

Conflict in the Niger Delta arose again in the early 1990s due to tension between the foreign oil corporation and a number of Niger Delta minority ethnic groups who felt they were being exploited, particularly the Ogoni as well as the Ijaw. In the late 1990 ethnic and political unrest has continued throughout and persisted till 2007, despite the conversion to democracy and the election of the Obasanjo government in 1999. Competition for oil has fuelled violence between innumerable ethnic groups (Forgotten Diarus Org ,2008, p.66).

Twenty four years later, after Idaka Boro, Ken Saro Wiwa emerged in the Ogoni Kingdom. Through these structures and agitation for justice, he was sentenced to death and was executed in October 31st 1995 despite the protest and plea from the international community. This and other crisis still persists till date. Kasomo (2012,p.21) explained that the Niger Delta issue is a complex web of political betrayal at all levels of government (local, State and Federal), endless economic marginalization and massive environmental insensitivity and neglect. The issue of oil production and exploitation and its resultant effect on the environment has been the source of constant friction between oil companies and the host communities. Onduku (2011,p.25) argues that the popular perception, the marginalization and the Balkanization of the people of the Niger Delta, the despoliation of their environment and the resultant conflict have their roots in the discovery of oil, exploitation, exploration and production activities by oil multinationals in the late 1950's. Chinedum and Chinua (2010, p.57) further posited that the Niger Delta issue is a complex web of political betrayal at all levels of government (local, state and federal), endless economic marginalization and massive environmental insensitivity and neglect. They also stated that the issue of oil production, exploration and exploitation and its resultant effect on the environment has been the source of constant

friction between oil companies and their host communities (Adekunle, 2016, p. 30).

The root cause of the whole Niger Delta crisis is injustice, the conspiracies of the old colonial masters, in tandem with different international oil companies and the activities of our dictatorial and uncaring federal government caused this situation we found ourselves. They have caused the manifestation of violent rebellions from the people. The restiveness in the Niger Delta region is attributed to the politics surrounding resource control by the federal government. According to Nna and Ibaba (2011, p.63), the Niger Delta conflict is premised on the laws regulating oil exploration and land ownership, which the Niger Delta militants believe must be abrogated as they do not represent their interests as the host communities.

Methodology
The study adopted descriptive research survey design and triangulation methods of data gathering techniques. The researcher employed two research assistants administered the copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. 238 instruments were administered 211 was retrieved, 27 was not properly filled while 184 was valid for the study. The study population includes six kingdoms in Ogoni, which includes Babbe, Gokana, Ken-Khana, Nyo-Khana, Eleme and Tai; Umuechem in Etche Local Government Area both in Rivers State, Niger Delta and Odi in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area, Bayelsa State. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the researcher adopted a pilot study often (15) stakeholders, not part of the study sample (10 Ogoniland, 5 Umuechem and Odi). The Cronbach alpha (r) reliability of 0.87 was obtained. Data obtained was analysed using the mean (). Specifically, the mean ($\bar{X}$) was used to answer the research questions at 0.05 level of significance. To determine the criterion mean for scoring the questionnaire, all the points from the alternative responses were added up and divided by four, for example; $(4+3+2+1)74=10/4=2.5$. Therefore, any means that is 2.50 and above was accepted while some mean value below 2.50 was rejected. Finally, the analyses were aided using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Table 4.1: Descriptive analysis of data on major conflict resolution strategies in Niger Delta Region, Nigeria (N = 184)

S/No	Statement	Ogoni $[n_1 = 143]$		Decision	Umuechem/Od $[n_1 = 41]$		Decision
		$\bar{X}_1$	SD_1		$\bar{X}_2$	SD_2	
1.	Compensation to Odi Community in Bayelsa State, Niger Delta	3.34	0.47	SA	3.31	0.64	Strongly Agree
2.	Community sensitization programme peaceful co existence in Ogoni Rivers State, Niger Delta	3.38	0.84	SA	3.24	0.81	Strongly Agree
3.	Government resolution intervention in Umuechem Etche Rivers State, Niger Delta	3.19	0.88	SA	3.24	0.78	Strongly Agree
4.	Police and military intervention in the Niger Delta	3.25	0.62	SA	3.61	0.66	Strongly Agree
	Total	3.29	0.70	SA	3.24	0.72	Strongly Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The information in Table 4.1 presents that Ogoni's Stakeholders have a total mean of 3.29, and standard deviation of 0.85, while Umuechem and Odis' Stakeholders have a total mean of 3.24 and standard deviation of 0.70 on their rating scales of major incidents of crisis in the Niger Delta States, Nigeria. Both Ogoni and Umuechem/Odi Stakeholders have very low standard deviations indicating close cluster of the scores about the mean, and total means that lie between 2.5 - 3.5 implying strongly agree on major incidents of crisis in the Niger Delta States, Nigeria.

Table 4.2: Descriptive analysis of data on the causes of crises in the Niger Delta, Nigeria (N=184)

S/No	Statement	Ogoni [$n_1 = 143$] $\bar{X}_1$	SD_1	Decision	Umuechem/Od [$n_1 = 41$] $\bar{X}_2$	SD_2	Decision
5.	Lack of employment for Niger Delta Youths	3.41	0.69	SA	3.34	0.60	Strongly Agree
6.	Oil companies undertaking responsibilities	3.38	0.77	SA	2.97	0.78	Strongly Agree
7.	Bad governance stakeholder Local, State and Federal Government in the Niger Delta region.	3.32	0.65	SA	3.28	0.64	Strongly Agree
8.	Divide and rule by the oil companies in the Niger Delta region	2.98	1.24	SA	3.18	01.02	Strongly Agree
	Total	**3.28**	**0.84**	**SA**	**3.19**	**0.76**	**Strongly Agree**

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

In Table 4.2, Ogoni and Umuechem/Odis' Stakeholders have respectively total means of 3.28 and 3.19, and standard deviations of 0.84 and 0.76 on their rating scales of the causes of crises in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. Both the Ogoni and Umuechem/Odis' Stakeholders have very low standard deviations indicating close cluster of the scores about the mean, and total means that lie between 2.5 - 3.5 implying strongly agree on the causes of crises in the Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Table 4.3: Descriptive analysis of data on the problems such crises have caused in the Niger Delta (N=184)

S/No	Statement	Ogoni [$n_1 = 143$] $\bar{X}_1$	SD_1	Decision	Umuechem/Od [$n_1 = 41$] $\bar{X}_2$	SD_2	Decision
9.	Corruption and bad leadership from all sectors	3.24	0.87	SA	3.38	0.76	Strongly Agree
10.	Political instability	3.19	0.65	SA	3.38	0.68	Strongly Agree
11.	Insecurity	3.27	0.68	SA	3.41	0.61	Strongly Agree
12.	Ethnicity, nepotism and favouritism regional conflict	3.11	0.72	SA	3.09	0.72	Strongly Agree
	Total	**3.20**	**0.72**	**SA**	**3.31**	**0.69**	**Strongly Agree**

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 4.3 shows that Ogoni's Stakeholders have a total mean of 3.20 and standard deviation of 0.73, while Umuechem and Odis' Stakeholders have a total mean of 3.31 and standard deviation of 0.69 on their rating scales of the problems such crises have caused in selected areas in the Niger Delta people. Both the Ogoni and Umuechem/Odis' Stakeholders have very low standard deviations indicating close cluster of the scores about the mean, and total means that lie between 2.5 - 3.5 implying strongly agree on the problems such crises have caused in the Niger Delta.

Table 4.4: Descriptive analysis of data on the recommendations to reduce such crises in the Niger Delta, Nigeria (N=184)

S/No	Statement	Ogoni [$n_1 = 143$] $\bar{X}_1$	SD_1	Decision	Umuechem/Od [$n_1 = 41$] $\bar{X}_2$	SD_2	Decision
13.	Negotiation, mediation and arbitration by stakeholders and government.	3.59	0.50	SA	3.53	0.68	Strongly Agree
14.	Arbitration and litigation processes and re-location of oil companies headquarter to the Niger Delta.	3.56	0.51	SA	3.48	0.37	Strongly Agree
15.	Nigerian constitution should be democratically reviewed	3.43	0.47	SA	3.32	0.83	Strongly Agree
16.	Orientation of corruption-free region by stakeholders and diplomacy and creative peace building in the region	3.18	0.06	SA	3.3	0.47	Strongly Agree
	Total	**3.44**	**0.53**	**SA**	**3.24**	**0.59**	**Strongly Agree**

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

The information in Table 4.4 presents that Ogoni's Stakeholders have a total mean of 3.44, and standard deviation of 0.53, while Umuechem and Odis' Stakeholders have a total mean of 3.42 and standard deviation of 0.59 on their rating scales of the recommendations to reduce such crises in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. Both the Ogoni and Umuechem/Odis' Stakeholders have very low standard deviations indicating close cluster of the scores about the mean, and total means that lie between 2.5 - 3.5 implying strongly agree on the recommendations to reduce such crises in the Niger Delta, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Our findings revealed that, these incidents are in Odi, Bayelsa State, Niger Delta; in the Ogoni Rivers State, Niger Delta; in Umuechem Crisis, Etche Rivers State, Niger Delta and militancy crisis in the Niger Delta as a product of marginalization. Mite (2009, p. 97) further established that the Niger Delta inhabitants have suffered untold hardship economically as a result of these unfriendly operations that cost even lives. However, these defects are absolutely caused by the government, company and the host stakeholders. Klare (2013, p.63) a crisis is brewing in oil producing communities over alleged marginalization and underdevelopment of the area.

From our findings, what triggered the crisis in the Niger Delta in the 1990s are: Increase in the level of unemployment among Niger Delta youths; oil companies not undertaking social responsibilities; bad governance, local, state and federal government in the Niger Delta Region and divide and rule by the oil companies in the Niger Delta Region. Chinedum and Chinua (2010, p.57) further posited that the Niger Delta issue is a complex web of political betrayal at all levels of government (Local, State and Federal), endless economic marginalization and massive environmental insensitivity and neglect. They also stated that the issue of oil production, exploration and exploitation and its resultant effect on the environment has been the source of constant friction between oil companies and their host communities (Adekunle, 2016, p.30).

From our findings, the crises in these selected communities or areas in the Niger Delta region, especially in the 1990s include corruption and bad leadership in all sectors; political instability; insecurity and ethnicity, nepotism and favouritism regional conflict. Ojakorutu (2009,p.61), posited that inability to resolve these conflicts has brought an odd societal setback and circumstances endangering lives and property as a result of ineffectiveness on the part of government (failed society that gives room to violent, ill-attitude and hostility).

Our finding revealed that the conflict resolution strategies employed to enhance the peace system include negotiation, mediation and arbitration by stakeholders and government; arbitration and litigation processes. From our findings, it was agreed that the oil companies should relocate their headquarters to the Niger Delta. This approach was considered by the stakeholders as diplomacy and creative peace building in the region. Onduku (2016, p.31) posited that conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable aspect of social change. It is an expression of the heterogeneity of interest, values and beliefs that arise as a new formation generated by social change and takes learning about the recommended phenomenon to put an end to further conflicts. The thought of the conflict as an interactive process manifested in compatibility, disagreement or dissonance with two social entities (i.e. Individuals, groups, organization or government, among others).

Concluding Remarks

The current conflict in the Niger Delta first arose in the early 1990s over tensions between foreign oil corporations and a number of the Niger Delta's minority ethnic groups who feel they are being exploited, particularly the Ogonis, Umuechem and Odi. Ethnic and political unrest has continued throughout the 1990s despite the conversion to democracy and the election of the Obasanjo government in 1999. Competition for oil wealth has fueled violence between ethnic groups, causing the militarization of nearly the entire region by ethnic militia groups, Nigerian military and police forces, notably the Nigerian Mobile Police. The violence has contributed to Nigeria's ongoing energy supply crisis by discouraging foreign investment in new power generation plants in the region. Therefore, to envisage for a peaceful environs in the selected areas in the Niger Delta, the root causes of this conflict must be tackled for business to drive optimally.

Lessons from the Crisis

The use of violence rather than dialogue in resolving conflict in Niger Delta region have result in intensified the crisis. Dialogue is a mechanism and practice used in conflict. It rejects the use of violence as a conflict resolution mechanism and serves as a potent force for resolving conflict and bringing about social change control, diminish or end violence associated with conflict. Though, this strategy has failed because they lacked sufficient elements of democracy, accountability, equity and active public participation of all stakeholders. Abidde cited in NDDC (2000, p.l9) opined that 'peace cannot be dictated; It has to be a natural born child of a just and humane environment'.

Recommendations

- Sadly, after many decades continuous conflicts emanating environmental degradation, the Niger Delta region is still under development. The study recommend the implementation Niger Delta development plan.

- Part of the challenge is inability of the Nigerian State to implement fiscal federalism, the study

recommend fiscal federalism as was practiced during the Nigeria's First Republic in the 1960s.

- The use of force in resolving conflict in the Niger Delta region have not yielded peaceful environment. Negotiations should be employed, particularly on neutral ground. For instance, Ghana provides an appropriate location for negotiations. Though each case of conflict may have a unique character, they essentially share commonality, all come at a cost.

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