

NIGER DELTA CRISIS – A STUDY OF EVWEREM AND OTU- JEREMI COMMUNITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIA’S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The Niger Delta region constitutes a number of ethnic nationalities which are rich in natural resources mainly in oil and gas reserves. However, the region has suffered extreme marginalization and neglect over the years despite its major contribution to the nations economy leading to agitations for better living standards by the people. The agitations have transformed from peaceful talks and dialogue to violence, unrest and chaos resulting to huge losses to the region and affecting the development process of the nation at large. This study examined the effect of the Niger Delta crisis on Ewureni and Otu-jeremi communities in Delta State. Data was collected through the administration of questionnaires, conduct of interviews and consultation of books and relevant documents. The data analysed revealed that the Niger Delta crisis has affected job creation, infrastructure provision and maintenance as well as increased criminal activities in the areas. Finally, the researcher recommended diversification of the economy, job creation and training programmes, strengthening of security measures, provision of basic amenities amongst others as a solution to the crisis in the region.

Keywords: Crisis, Security, Development

Introduction

The Niger Delta region is widely known for its rich oil and gas reserves which contribute enormously to the economic prosperity of the Nigerian nation. The region has some unique characteristics which tend to make development difficult. It covers an area of about 70,000

square kilometres and is noted for its peculiar and difficult terrain. The whole area is transverse and crisscrossed by a large number of streams, swamps, canals and creeks. These peculiarities attracted the attention of even the colonial masters. Consequently, the British colonial government set up the Sir Henry Willink's Commission to recommend the best strategies for the development of the region, which has the most difficult terrain in the country. When the Commission turned in its report in 1958, it specifically recommended that the Niger Delta region deserves special developmental attention and should therefore be made a special area to be developed directly by the Federal Government. It is pertinent to state that this was before the discovery of crude oil which is abundant in the region and later became the mainstay of the Nigerian economy. Prior to the discovery of crude oil, people thrived on their traditional vocations of farming and fishing for which they depended on land, watershed and natural resources which were highly productive. However, since the commencement of oil exploration activities, the people have suffered gross neglect and deprivation over the years despite its contribution to the nation's revenue base. The people in the region believe that the oil producing communities do not benefit as much as many other non-producing areas. According to Ikporukpo (2003), the type of federation operated in Nigeria is such that Government owns all oil resources and land. The revenue from oil is shared among all the 36 states of the federation and local government areas with very little consideration for those areas the oil is exploited.

Governments renewed commitment to addressing the age long neglect and above concerns of the Niger Delta region led to the establishment of the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1993 and later the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000 with specific mandate on infrastructural development. This is outside the interventions put in place from independence. However, the people were not satisfied with the pace and quality of developmental projects and decided to form groups for peaceful protests. Gradually, the rather peaceful political struggle for resource control degenerated into violent agitations by the various militant insurgent groups that emerged to take over the struggle.

The World Health Organisation in articulating the effects of violence in its report of 2002, stated that the main victims of crisis are youths, adolescents and young adults. Developmental goals of nations can hardly be achieved in hostile and volatile environments. Due to the lingering crisis in the region, thousands of workers have lost their jobs with the oil companies because of decreased production and harsh operating environment. Blowing up of pipelines has worsened the problem of spillages, environmental pollution, degradation and further depletion of farmlands. Developmental processes have been stalled due to the unfriendly investment environment which scares away potential investors and infrastructural improvement. The crisis has led to increased poverty, crime rate and insecurity as well as sharp drop in production of oil and the nation's revenue base.

Statement of the Problem

The 2006 UNDP report states that in reality the Niger Delta region is suffering from administrative neglect, crumbling social infrastructure and services, high unemployment rate,

social deprivation, abject poverty, filth, squalor and endemic conflict. The World Bank report (1995) concluded that despite the vast oil resources available, the region has remained poor. GNP per capita is below the national average of US\$280 and educational levels are below the national average and particularly low for women. While 70% of Nigerian children attend primary school, this level drops to 30-40% in some parts of the Niger Delta.

On the basis of available evidence, the crisis in the Niger Delta arises from the injustice in the relations formed around oil extraction activities and injustice in the appropriation of the huge oil revenues from the area. It is thus a crisis of underdevelopment and the people in the region have been involved in demonstrations, petition writing, armed struggle, shutting of oil production activities, agitation for true federalism and resource control as well as compensation for ecological damage. However, this process is compounded by the entrance of kidnapers, criminals, syndicates and gangs who claim to be pursuing the interests of the people but their mode of operations does not give credence to this assertion.

The crisis has had major implications for development and socio-cultural relations in the Niger Delta in particular and in the nation as a whole as it is a known fact that development and crisis cannot go hand in hand. The crisis has fractured relations between the communities and the oil companies on one hand and the communities and the Nigerian state on the other. The outbreak of hostilities has taken its toll on the nation's development. Since hostilities began, very few new investments have come into the area as no investor would want to invest in an environment that is so patently insecure such as the Niger Delta region. The crisis has had a negative effect on jobs and job creation in the Niger Delta as Oil companies withdraw from areas of operation and shut down production activities. This drift of investors has aggravated the unemployment problem which in turn has compounded the security problem of the Communities. The unemployed youths roam about the streets and involve themselves in criminal activities such as kidnapping, murder, vandalisation of pipelines and armed robbery. The safety of oil workers and members of their families have also been negatively affected. The crisis has resulted in huge revenue losses for the country and has created an atmosphere of uncertainty. An obvious consequence of the crisis is the further deterioration of infrastructure supply situation in communities. The fact that conflicts often result in the destruction of these facilities not only discourages their provision but also impacts on the available stock. In effect, the Nigerian state, the oil companies and communities in the Niger Delta have all been affected by the crisis as developmental efforts have been thwarted. The Niger Delta crisis is not only a national problem but also a global problem deserving serious attention. Any disturbances in the flow of oil in Nigeria will impact negatively on the world economy. This calls for peace in the Niger Delta as national development is impossible when there is no peace.

Objectives of the Study

- (a) To determine the effect of the Niger Delta crisis on employment opportunities for youths in Evwreni and Otu-jeremi Communities.
- (b) To ascertain the extent to which the Niger Delta crisis has affected infrastructure supply in Evwreni and Otu-jeremi Communities.

(c) To determine the contribution of the Niger Delta crisis on criminal activities in Evwreni and Otu-jeremi Communities.

(d) To provide adequate recommendations for a lasting solution to the Niger Delta crisis.

Hypotheses

(a) H0: The Niger Delta Crisis has not led to increased youth unemployment in Evwreni and Otu-jeremi Communities.

H1: The Niger Delta crisis has led to increased youth unemployment in Evwreni and Otu-jeremi Communities.

(b) H0: The Niger Delta Crisis has not impeded infrastructure provision and maintenance in Evwreni and Otu-jeremi Communities.

H1: The Niger Delta crisis impedes infrastructure provision and maintenance Evwreni and Otu-jeremi Communities.

(c) H0: The Niger Delta Crisis has not led to increased criminal activities in Evwreni and Otu-jeremi Communities.

H1: The Niger Delta crisis has led to increased criminal activities in Evwreni and Otu-jeremi Communities.

Literature Review

Unemployment in the Niger Delta

Unemployment has been identified as the main cause of socio-economic tensions and violence rocking the Niger Delta area of the country (Amaechi, 2011).

When large number of youths are unemployed, their quest to survive may make them to become willing tools in the hands of maverick and disgruntled politicians who may want to use them for anti-social and clandestine activities (Okafor, 2011). They have also been used as local militants to attack, vandalize and destroy oil pipelines, lives and property in the Niger Delta region. According to Eboh, 2009, over 60% of the youths in the Niger Delta are unemployed and thus many are good militants including male and female, young and old while different cultural background is never a barrier. Anti-social activities such as political thuggery, militancy, restiveness and other social vices evident among the unemployed and jobless youths are real dangers to the stability of democracy in Nigeria (Okafor, 2011). As part of the seven point agenda of former President Musa Yaradua, the provision of employment to young graduates and other skilled workers has been identified as an agenda to be given urgent attention.

Table: Unemployed persons in Otu-Jeremi and Ewvereni by educational level/age-group & Sex as at December, 2011 (Rural and Urban combined)

Level	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
All levels	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
No schooling	20.0	21.12	28.2	20.0	21.9
Primary	11.5	1.9	15.8	12.9	26.2
Secondary	51.3	46.8	49.5	59.4	36.2

Post-secondary	18.2	29.9	7.8	8.7	15.7
Age group All groups(15-59)	100.0	100.0`	100.0	100.0	100.0
15-24	45.0	46.0	47.1	58.4	59.6
25-44	46.1	43.6	35.4	29.2	31.5
45-59	9.19	6.0	13.8	7.2	6.3
60-64	-	3.1	6.0	5.2	2.6

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2012

The table above revealed that there is evidence of high rate of youth unemployment in Otu-Jeremi and Ewwereni Communities of the Niger Delta Region.

Infrastructure in the Niger Delta

Otite (2010) states that with millions of barrels of oil harvested per day and an over 90% income to Nigeria, the Niger Delta provides enough strength to sustain the country, yet the people in the region feel infuriated as their environment remains undeveloped with few or no infrastructure in health, schools, transportation, industries as well as Federal and State Government presence. Their resources are used to develop the Federal capital and other places. According to Davis (2009), pervasive corruption within the government, oil companies and even some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) prevents the delivery of funds intended for infrastructure and community development. It has been identified that efforts by the Federal Government and Oil Companies to improve the quality of human lives and to provide infrastructural development have been insufficient to ameliorate the problems (Ugoh and Ukpere, 2010). There is no doubt therefore that provision of basic amenities should be paramount in the Niger delta and for better standard of living. Funds realised from oil exports should take care of providing for the people the necessary basic facilities required for human beings to thrive comfortably (Eboh, 2009).

Table 2 – Infrastructural development in Otu-Jeremi and Ewwereni Communities as at 31st December, 2011

Social Amenity	Otu-Jeremi	Ewwereni
Portable water reservoir	2	1
Electricity	Under construction	Not available
Asphalt road	1 federal road	None
Health care facility	1 cottage hospital	1 cottage hospital
Government school (Primary and Secondary)	2	2

Source: Niger Delta Development Commission, (2010)

The table revealed that infrastructural development in Otu Jeremi and Ewwereni communities are generally poor. The communities whose lands produce very high percentage of Nigeria crude oil could only boast of one federal road that is asphalted is sad. The table also revealed that only three water reservoir tanks are available in the two communities that has over 10,000 population strength. According to Eze (2010), the cottage hospitals are poorly equipped and the health

personnel that work in the hospitals are not properly trained. As at the end of 2010, the two communities are yet to have electricity.

Criminal Activities in the Niger Delta

Youths within the Niger Delta area by association of various ethnic militia groups, have become restive in their bid for greater control of their natural resources (Ugho and Ukpere, 2010). According to Otite, (2010), the otherwise rightful agitation for an equitable deal from the Federal Government has been criminalized. These criminal activities include illegal oil bunkering, fire arms business, kidnapping and hostage taking, piracy and armed robbery. Also identified is that the militants are the unemployed youths disengaged by political elites who had used them as political thugs and general supporters during elections (Otite, 2010). Violence in the Niger Delta is estimated to have killed about 1000 persons a year between 1999 and 2004 on a par with conflicts in Columbia and Chechnya (Oyefusi, 2007). The violence in the region has led to disruptions of oil operations rising over the last 5-10 years. In the last few years, militant groups have kidnapped over 250 expatriate oil workers and cut oil production by as much as one million barrel per day (Davis, 2009).

The rise in militancy among the youths in the Niger Delta has been fuelled by extreme poverty and underdevelopment, discontent with the International Oil companies, oil spillage, environmental damage and corruption by Government officials which ensures little development funding reaches the host communities. Between 100,000 and 300,000 barrels of crude oil were stolen in Nigeria daily between 2003 and 2008 not including the incidence of excess lifting or cargo theft by licensed transporters and Oil servicing Companies. (Davis, 2003). Sophisticated weapons are widely available throughout the Niger Delta to militia groups, cults and gangs. Political Godfathers and aspiring politicians have promoted and used gangs, cult groups, vigilantes and the militia group to exert power and influence (Davis, 2009). According to the Petroleum Engineering Technology Association of Nigeria (PETAN), the hostage taking crisis on the Niger Delta region will lead to unemployment of oil workers except the Federal Government and other stakeholders have control of the deteriorating situation.

Table 3- Criminal activities among youths in Otu-Jeremi and Ewwereni Communities of Niger Delta Region between 2007 and 2011

Survey period	Kidnapping	Armed robbery	Assassination	Other crimes	Total
2007	130	98	10	15	253
2008	135	101	9	10	255
2009	141	100	11	15	267
2010	183	90	4	4	281
2011	190	40	1	3	234
Total	779	429	35	47	1,290

Source: Divisional Police Headquarters Otu-Jeremi

The above table revealed that kidnapping and hostage taking appeared to be the highest crime committed in Otu-Jeremi and Ewwereni communities. From the table we could deduce that armed

robbery, assassination and other petty crimes were on the decline. According to Eze (2010) the decline was due to the fact that kidnapping of the foreign oil workers appeared to pay off in a very high measure compared to other forms of criminality.

Factors Responsible for the Niger Delta Crisis

The discovery of oil in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region in 1957 triggered a chain of events that has led to the political and economic marginalization of the inhabitants. Indeed, it has been argued that oil has been more of a curse than a blessing to the people who have been at the receiving end of horrendous government oppression and brutality, often resulting in fatalities (EPU Research Papers, 2007). According to available records (Africa Report N0.113), Nigeria has earned over \$400 billion dollars as Oil revenue since the early 70s but despite 40 years of oil production and huge revenue, the local people remain in abject poverty without even the most basic amenities such as water and electricity. Although the Niger Delta has a long history of violence, the situation has gone from bad to worse and recently to the emergence of armed militant groups willing to kill as part of their campaign for a greater share of the regions oil wealth. The campaign for fair deal or control of the oil wells by the people did not start today. It started in 1966 when Isaac Adaka Boro led a rebellion with his Delta Volunteer Service (DVS) against the Federal Government and formed the Niger Delta Republic. However, the rebellion was crushed, but it has brought consciousness into the minds of the people. The spirit and consciousness to bring to the international level, the suffering and deprivation of the people of the Niger Delta was championed by Ken Saro-Wiwa in the 90s. He and eight other fellow compatriots were arraigned for trial, in a military tribunal, set up by the government of General Sanni Abacha, for the alleged murder of four Ogoni elders. They were convicted, and hanged in November 1995 though however, "his more likely 'crime' was his effort to organize the Ogoni ethnic minority to stop destruction of their homeland caused by operations of Shell and Chevron, the multinational oil companies, and seek compensation for his people's lost farmland and fisheries" (ICE Case study: Factsheet on the Ogoni Struggle). A decade after the hanging, the potential consequences of the Niger Delta conflict have escalated in both human and economic terms. Various militant groups have sprung up of recent to undermine the activities of the oil companies using different methods and tactics, thereby daring the Nigerian state. Prominent among such groups are the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), the Joint Revolutionary Council (JRC), and Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality (MOSEIN). Different reasons have been given as the cause of the Niger Delta crisis. The European University Centre for Peace Studies highlights the following factors as being responsible for the crisis in the Niger Delta:

(i) Structural Deficiency of the Nigerian Federation: It has always been discussed both at national and international levels, that one of the factors responsible for the Niger Delta crisis is the structural injustices that led to the marginalization of the Niger Delta region in the Nigerian Federation. Historically, the Nigerian Federation has been dominated by three large ethnic groups-the Yoruba, Igbo and the Hausa-Fulani. The British colonial government exploited this situation by ruling through the existing aristocracy, thereby reinforcing the historical imbalances already present. The post-colonial history of Nigeria has been marked by massive instability, including a number of military

coup d'état, as a result of conflict between these three groups. The smaller ethnic groups in the Niger Delta have been systematically excluded from positions of power. Furthermore, under the 1999 Federal Constitution which is the supreme law of the land, and the Mineral and Mining Act rights in Nigeria, all minerals are held by the federal government, a structure which has been unresponsive to the Niger Delta grievances. As a result, the people of the Niger Delta region have through various declarations like the Ogoni Bills of Right, Kaiama Declaration of the Ijaws, Akakalaka Declaration etc made request for self determination and resource control.

(ii) Poverty/Deprivation of the Means of Livelihood: The government of Nigeria has made a lot of oil revenue in the last 40 years of oil production in the Niger Delta. Despite this huge amount of money, the local people remain in abject poverty and deprivation as they lack basic things of life like water, electricity, hospitals and schools. The World Bank views poverty as one of the key causes of conflict in oil producing countries. The Bank in an outcome of a research conducted asserts that "the key root cause of conflict is the failure of economic development such that many of the world's poorest countries are locked in a tragic vicious cycle where poverty causes conflict and conflict causes poverty". (Jill Shakleman, 2006)

(ii) Environmental Damage: the social and environmental costs of oil production have been very extensive. They include destruction of wildlife and biodiversity, loss of fertile soil, pollution of air and drinking water, degradation of farmland and damage to aquatic ecosystems, all of which have caused serious health problems for the inhabitants of areas surrounding oil production. It is ironical that environmental regulations which are common practice in developed nations are often not followed due to the lack of power, wealth and equity of the affected communities. As a result, oil companies often evacuate inhabitants from their homelands, further marginalizing them. The system of oil production in Nigeria is skewed in favour of the multi-nationals and government elite who are the direct recipients of oil production revenue. As a result of environmental damage brought about by the activities of the oil companies, environmental problems like erosion; flooding; land degradation; destruction of natural ecosystem; fisheries depletion caused by dredging ; toxic waste into the rivers etc, are common phenomenon in the region. The local people can no longer take to farming and fishing which are their major occupations. As a result of the impact of oil activities on the environment and the ecosystem of the region, the United Nations warned in a report that "the degree and rate of degradation are pushing the Delta towards ecological disaster". According to Torulagha (2001), pipeline explosions take place due to the following reasons: (1) during drilling activity at new site, (2) following an accidental bursting of pipeline work taking place around the pipeline, (3) an old pipeline that has not been checked for maintenance, (4) vandalisation by angry youth and members of the host communities, (5) oil bunkerers who steal crude oil by intentionally breaking the pipelines. As a result of the consequences of oil explosion to lives, property and environment, people of Niger Delta have consistently blamed the oil companies and the federal government of Nigeria for showing non-challant attitude and lacking any systematic mechanism to come to the aid of its citizens when emergency assistance is needed as a result of oil exploitation. A case in point was the Jesse, Delta State, pipeline explosion of October, 1998 in which over 1000 reportedly lost their lives. It was alleged that

Government did not respond immediately to assist those affected, like it would have been done in Western and industrialized countries (Torulagha, 2001).

(iv) Lack of Development and Unemployment: the Niger Delta region is underdeveloped in all its ramifications, despite the fact that it is the bread basket of Nigeria. Whittington (2001) aptly described the economic dilemma of the region when he stated that “the oil region in Nigeria seems to be stuck in a time warp, with little real change since oil was discovered 45 years ago. Away from the main towns, there is no real development, no roads, no electricity, no running water and no telephone”. The underdevelopment is so severe, the youth of the region are the hardest hit by lack of development. This is why many of them have resorted to militancy in an effort to focus national and international attention to their plight. Despite all the claims by the oil companies to be involved in the development of the region, it is to the contrary. The pervasive underdevelopment made Whittington to note that, “the government and oil companies have profited by hundreds of billions of dollars since oil was discovered. Yet most Nigerians living in the oil producing region are living in dire poverty”. Also, the anger of the people of the region, especially the youth, derives from merely that the other parts of the country, sometimes the arid regions, are built to the standards obtainable in the developed world. They have bridges built over dry land and less travelled roads, while most of the Niger Delta communities are only accessible by boats and seriously in need of bridges. Unemployment is very high among the people of the Niger Delta as the oil companies do not hire their employees from the region that produce oil, but from the non-oil producing region of Nigeria. Speaking also on the unemployment level of the youth, Brisibe (2001) said “Majority of the youth from the region are unemployed. They do not benefit from the presence of the Multinational Corporations operating in their communities. Less than five per cent of the people from the Niger Delta work in these companies, women from the region in oil companies are less than one percent. A majority of the beneficiaries are from other parts of Nigeria”.

(v) Distortions in the Social and Economic Fabric of the Local Societies: the oil companies introduced major distortions into the social and economic fabric of the local societies. According to Hutchful (1985), “Shell and other oil companies have perpetuated regional and class inequalities by creating oil colonies in local areas where oil executives live quite lavishly in comparison to the impoverished conditions of the local communities.” Because the oil industry requires highly skilled workers, local villagers are either forced to migrate to the urban centers after being economically displaced, or to become low-skilled workers dependent on the oil company. This structural change in the economic life of the local communities has often generated bitter conflict as the issue of employment and participation in the oil industry has divided different segments of the communities, often along ethnic line.

(vi) Human Rights Violations: Violations of the human rights of the local populace can be cited as one of the factors responsible for the militancy in the Niger Delta region. The human rights of the people are constantly violated by security forces, at the behest of the companies. For instance, in attempt to suppress the Isaac Boro rebellion in 1966, Nigerian troops terrorized entire communities including raping of innocent women. The people of the region viewed all these as assaults and marginalization because they belonged to ethnic minority groups in the Nigerian Federation.

(vii) Bad Governance/Corruption: the Niger Delta region is riddled with bad governance/corruption on the parts of government officials, both at the state and local government levels. Under section 16 of the 1999 constitution, all revenues of the Federation are paid into the Federation Account. Among the principles for the distribution of the funds in the Federation Account are derivation (not less than 13%), equality of states, internal revenue generation, landmass, terrain, population density and ecological damage. These revenues are shared vertically among tiers of government and horizontally among states and among local governments.

It has been argued that if government officials in the region have judiciously utilized their monthly allocations, to better the lots of the ordinary people, through the creation of jobs, and embark on infrastructural development of the region, the situation would have been better than this current sorry state. Rather, the monthly allocations are spent on frivolous things that have no corresponding bearings on the life of the people.

(viii) Divide and Rule Tactics of Oil Companies: One of the reasons that has been adduced to be responsible for the Niger Delta crisis is the divide and rule tactics of some oil giant firms operating in the area. The oil companies rather than involve themselves in the development of their areas of operation prefer to give financial gains to some vocal local chiefs which usually result in crisis.

(ix) Alleged insincerity of the Government: The alleged insincerity of the Federal Government of Nigeria to fully develop the region in partnership with the state governments is one of the factors responsible for the Niger Delta crisis. The government set up commissions like the Oil Minerals Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) and Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in order to bring development to the communities. However, the activities of the agencies were hampered by lack of funds which became an obstacle in pursuing the goal of developing the region. Due to this insincerity on the part of government, the people could only come up with the issue of militancy, which marked the beginning of hydra headed issue of kidnapping of oil workers, disturbing the flow of oil.

The present olive branch of amnesty dangled by the present administration does not seem to cater for the antecedent attitude of successive Nigerian government, which is the dominant factor responsible for the degeneration of the Niger Delta crisis today (Udotai, 2010). It is a surface-scratching strategy which does not address the deep root causes of the issues involved in the crisis. This is the reason many Nigerians are of the opinion that amnesty, as it is being presented, is incapable of yielding sustainable results. From the reports, the few militants who have handed-in their weapons only turn-in rusty and old ones and these are not from the major militant groups. Again, the main actors in the vociferous and nefarious militants are still very adamant in their struggle. As it is there is no guarantee that the oil facilities and the workers are free from another attack. Incidences of kidnapping and other forms of criminality are still frighteningly occurring with near absolute ease in the region and other parts of the country.

The Niger Delta Crisis and its Implication on National Development

The crisis in the Niger Delta region through the activities of the different militant groups operating there, have brought about some negative impacts on oil and economic activities, and on development in general (EPU Research Papers, 2007). The sense of relentless crisis has deepened in

recent times when the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) and other groups intensified attacks on oil platforms and pumping stations, attacked and killed soldiers, kidnapped foreign oil workers as well as set off car bombs. A kind of insecurity has been created in the minds of people, thus bringing about some negative impacts with it. These impacts can be prompted into economic and security implications..

Security Implication of the Crisis

The crisis has brought about serious security implication for the country as a result of increased criminal activities in the region. This is manifested in the following ways:

(i) Confrontations with the Military:

The Nigerian Military, under the aegis of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF), have been fighting with the militants since 2006 when the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) started its violent activities. MEND and other militia groups have been able to withstand the military in several clashes they have had. They have been able to do this because of their access to sophisticated weapons which they use in attacking oil platforms and facilities.

(ii) Kidnapping and Hostage Taking:

Kidnapping and hostage taking has become the other of the day with oil workers and individuals becoming the targets, thus worsening the security situation. According to the International Herald Tribune "Oil companies find themselves in an uneasy position, stuck in a crisis that they, in a sense, helped to create. For years, human rights groups accused them of turning a blind eye to the corruption of Nigeria's successive military regimes while damaging the environment in the delta". Besides expatriates, individuals and even toddlers have been kidnapped by militants for ransoms. As a result of the prevailing insecurity in the Niger Delta, expatriates have been abandoning their work and relocating from the region.

(iii) Illegal Bunkering Activities:

The crisis has made illegal bunkering of oil to thrive, which is also the source of funds for the militants operating in the creeks of Niger Delta. According to a report of the Brussels based International Crisis Group, Nigeria loses about 70,000 to 300,000 barrels per day to illegal bunkering, which is the equivalent output of a small oil producing country (ICG, Africa Report No 118, 2006). Illegal bunkering has been a key source of funds for anti-government militant groups. Several militant warlords have either publicly or privately admitted involvement and others said they consider the practice a defensible means of providing income for aggrieved and impoverished residents of oil producing communities. However, it must be noted that the activities of these bunkerers have become a serious threat to the security and well being of the Nigerian nation (EPU Research Papers, 2007).

Methodology

Population of the Study

The research was designed to cover two crisis prone areas in Delta State namely:

- (a) Ewreni town in Ughelli North Local Government Area with a population of 22,128 at the 2006 census.

- (b) Otu-Jeremi town in Ughelli-South Local Government Area with a population of 23,576 at the 2006 census.

These areas are endowed with natural resources such as oil and gas reserves and have fishing and farming as the major occupation of the people.

Sample Size Determination

In determining the sample size, the Taro Yamani (1964) formula was used as presented below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+(Ne^2)}$$

Where n = Sample size

N = Population Size

e = error limit

Using the above formula with an error limit of 0.08, a total of 155 per town as sample size was chosen

Method of data collection and analysis

Data for the study were collected through questionnaire, face to face interview, focus group discussion and observation. Data collected were presented and analysed using frequency tables. Hypotheses were tested using chi-square non parametric statistics.

Hypotheses Testing

The chi-square (X^2) analysis is the statistical tool used in establishing if there is any relationship between two variables. In the analysis, we look at the sets of data with a view to evaluate whether or not empirically obtained frequencies (observed) differed significantly under a certain set of theoretical assumptions. It also reflects the amount of divergence between the observed (o) and expected (e) frequencies.

The computation of the chi-square is based on the formula:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(Fo - Fe)^2}{Fe}$$

Where X^2 = Chi-square

\sum = Summation (sigma)

Fo = Obtained Frequency

Fe = Expected Frequency

Formula for expected value (e) =

$$Fe = \frac{\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total}}{\text{Grand Total}}$$

Hypothesis 1

Alternative Hypotheses (H1):

The Niger Delta crisis has led to increased youth unemployment in the region.

Null Hypothesis (H0):

The Niger Delta crisis has not led to increased youth unemployment in the region.

Decision Rule:

Reject null hypothesis if the calculated value exceeds the critical value, if not, null hypothesis is accepted. The null hypothesis will be rejected or accepted at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom (r-1) (c-1),

Where r = Number of rows
 c = Number of columns

The table has been derived from the response to research question 5.

What is the effect of the crisis on employment rate in your community?

Table 1: Effect of Niger Delta Crisis on Employment Rate

Response	Respondents		Total
	Evwreni	Otu-jeremi	
Reduced Employment Rate	(a) 140	(b) 120	260
Enhanced Employment Rate	(c) 10	(d) 20	30
No effect	-	-	
Total	150	140	290

Source: Field Survey (2011)

Expected frequency (Fe) = $\frac{\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total}}{\text{Grand Total}}$

- (a) $\frac{260 \times 150}{290} = 134.48$
- (b) $\frac{260 \times 140}{290} = 125.51$
- (c) $\frac{30 \times 150}{290} = 15.51$
- (d) $\frac{30 \times 140}{290} = 14.48$

Table 2: Computation of X²(Chi-Square)

CELL	Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	(Fo-Fe) ² /Fe
A	140	134.48	5.52	30.47	0.226
B	120	125.51	-5.51	30.36	0.242
C	10	15.51	-5.51	30.36	1.957
D	20	14.48	5.52	30.47	2.104
				X²	4.3256

Source: Field Survey (2011)

Decision

Since 4.3256 is greater than the critical value (3.841), we reject null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. We therefore accept the alternative hypothesis, and conclude that the Niger Delta crisis has led to youth unemployment in the region.

Hypothesis 2

Alternative Hypothesis (H1):

The Niger Delta crisis impedes infrastructure provision and maintenance in the region.

Null Hypothesis (HO):

The Niger Delta crisis does not impede infrastructure provision and maintenance in the region.

Decision Rule:

Reject null hypothesis if the calculated value exceeds the critical value, if not, null hypothesis is accepted. The null hypothesis will be rejected or accepted at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom (r-1) (c-1),

Where r = Number of rows
 n = Number of columns

The table has been derived from the response to research question 7.

Do you agree that the crisis and uncertainty in your region has negatively affected the provision of basic infrastructures and maintenance of existing ones?

Table 3: Negative effect of Crisis on infrastructural provision and maintenance

Response	Respondents		Total
	Evwreni	Otujeremi	
Agree	(a) 123	(b) 130	253
Disagree	(c) 27	(d) 10	37
Total	150	140	290

Source: Field Survey (2011)

Expected frequency (Fe) = $\frac{\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total}}{\text{Grand Total}}$

(a) $\frac{253 \times 150}{290} = 130.86$

(b) $\frac{253 \times 140}{290} = 122.14$

(c) $\frac{37 \times 150}{290} = 19.14$

(d) $\frac{37 \times 140}{290} = 17.86$

290

Table 4: Computation of Chi-Square (χ^2)

CELL	Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	(Fo-Fe) ² /Fe
A	123	130.86	-7.86	61.78	0.47
B	130	122.14	7.86	61.78	0.50
C	27	19.14	7.86	61.78	3.23
D	10	17.86	-7.86	61.78	3.46
				X²	7.66

Source: Field Survey (2011)

Decision

Since the calculated value (7.66) is greater than the critical value (3.841), we reject null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. We therefore accept the alternative hypothesis, and conclude that the Niger Delta crisis has impedes infrastructure provision and maintenance in the region.

Hypothesis 3

Alternative Hypothesis (H1):

The Niger Delta crisis has led to increased criminal activities in the region.

Null Hypothesis (HO):

The Niger Delta crisis has not led to increased criminal activities in the region.

Decision Rule: Reject null hypothesis if the calculated value exceeds the critical value, if not, null hypothesis is accepted. The null hypothesis will be rejected or accepted at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom (r-1) (c-1),

Where r = Number of rows

c = Number of columns

The table has been derived from the response to research question 12.

What would you say is responsible for increased criminal activities in your community?

Table 5: Factor responsible for increased criminal activities

Response	Respondents		Total
	Evwreni	Otu-jeremi	
Crisis Related Factors	(a) 122	(b) 129	251
Other Factors	(c) 28	(d) 11	39
Total	150	140	290

Source: Field Survey (2011)

Expected frequency (Fe) = $\frac{\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total}}{\text{Grand Total}}$

$$(a) \quad \frac{251 \times 150}{290} = 129.827$$

$$(b) \quad \frac{251 \times 140}{290} = 121.172$$

$$(c) \quad \frac{39 \times 150}{290} = 20.172$$

$$(d) \quad \frac{39 \times 140}{290} = 18.827$$

Table 6: Computation of Chi-Square (χ^2)

CELL	Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	(Fo-Fe) ² /Fe
A	122	129.827	-7.827	61.26	0.47
B	129	121.172	7.828	61.27	1.50
C	28	20.172	7.828	61.27	3.04
D	11	18.827	-7.827	61.26	3.25
				X² =	7.26

Source: Field Survey (2011)

Decision

Since the calculated value (X^2) 7.26 is greater than the critical value (3.841), we reject null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. We therefore accept the alternative hypothesis, and conclude that the Niger Delta crisis has led to increased criminal activities in the region.

Findings

The research established that the Niger Delta crisis has affected job creation in the Niger Delta as oil companies withdraw from areas of operation and shut down production activities while prospective businesses consider the area one of high risk.

It was also discovered that the mono focus on the oil sector has led to the neglect of other sectors of the economy especially manufacturing which would have eased the unemployment issue.

The study established that infrastructure provision and maintenance has been impeded due to the crisis as there are cases of destruction of amenities and structures during chaos while resources which would have been used in developing the region are being channelled to peace process and military mobilization. Also, qualified medical personnel and teachers are not attracted to offer their professional services in the region due to uncertainty and unrest leaving the people without quality health and educational services. With companies withdrawing their services from the region due to the crisis, the much desired social responsibility expected from them is non-existent further hindering infrastructure provision and maintenance. The reduction in oil production has also led to lower derivation fund (based on the 13% derivation formula from the Federal Government) thereby leading to limited available resources for infrastructural development.

It was discovered that the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) established in the year 2000 has been inefficient in formulating poverty alleviation policies and rarely monitors implementation of contracts awarded. Members of the recipient communities are not involved by the Commission during project identification and implementation making it a top-down approach without the establishment of any harmonious relationship.

The study established that the crisis has provided opportunity for syndicate crime to operate especially in the areas of pipeline vandalism and damage of oil installations, bunkering, kidnapping, murder and armed robbery. These criminal acts have led to huge revenue loss to the nation and losses to multinational companies and families of innocent individuals who have to pay ransoms for the freedom of their loved ones.

Finally, it was discovered that the Amnesty Programme initiated by the Yar'adua Government is far from achieving its objectives of demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Recommendations

For a study of this nature to be complete, meaningful and rewarding, it must be able to advance practicable solutions to the various problems highlighted during the course of this study. Consequent upon the research findings, the following recommendations were made:

- The three tiers of Government must as a matter of urgency fashion out an aggressive policy mechanism to address the simple and basic needs of the people of the region in

areas such as health facilities, pipe-borne water, good and affordable shelter, electricity supply, road construction maintenance, education and effective skill acquisition.

- The Government should foster job creation and organize training schemes to train youths in the region in different vocations to enable them to be industrious and self employed.
- Efforts must be made urgently to take concrete and practical steps to diversify the Nigerian economy in order to reduce its overdependence on non-renewable oil and gas resources.
- Budget transparency and financial accountability at local and state levels should be strengthened by State Assemblies so that resources are properly utilized to benefit the region and implement priority projects.
- The Government should strengthen the security arrangements in the region by enforcing improved collaboration between the police and local security including private and community based security organizations.
- The Government should initiate attractive programmes of demobilization, rehabilitation and re-integration of militants
- The Niger Delta leaders and militant commanders must reciprocate government initiatives by handing over their arms to the Presidential Panel on Amnesty and Disarmament of militants.
- Hostage taking and abduction of oil workers must stop as this has taken a negative toll on the community and on innocent citizens. Rather, there should be broad based consultations and dialoguing between the people and the oil companies and the state and other stakeholders.
- There is the need to establish a mechanism to protect the oil pipelines. Part of such a strategy is the establishment of Pipeline Marshalls Commission (PMC) which would also create jobs for youths in order to protect the pipelines against further vandalisation.
- Multinational oil companies must ensure they rehabilitate and ameliorate the hazards from oil and mining exploration during and after their activities as a result of health and environmental effects in the course of their operations.
- The Oil companies must consider qualified indigenes of the communities during recruitment processes.
- Communities which have been denied their means of livelihood should be compensated for the environmental and ecological deprivations.
- The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) must make proper consultation with the respective communities in selecting projects for implementation. Also the Commission must ensure proper monitoring of all contracts awarded for proper accountability and execution of projects.

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