

**SECURITY MANAGEMENT IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY: A
PANACEA FOR RESOLVING ARMED CONFLICT IN THE NIGER
DELTA OF NIGERIA.**

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ABSTRACT

Security connotes the prioritization and provision of necessary human needs such as economic, political, health, food security and environmental to the citizens in free society that is defined and backed by the rule of law. This paper observed that since the discovery of crude oil and subsequent exploration and exploitation in the Delta region of Nigeria, the region has not known peace due to environmental pollution by the multinational companies carrying out businesses and lack of development commensurate to the volume of money generated from the area. These issues have generated a lot of tension with attendant effect of lost of human and material resources resulting from militant groups embracing violence against the state. Violent confrontation and other crimes such as, kidnapping, pipeline vandalism and hostage taking for ransom became more pronounced with the introduction of democracy in 1999. This is in protest against the state of deprivation, marginalization, hopelessness and squalor in the Niger Delta as a byproduct of leadership failure by successive administrations in Nigeria. In finding solutions to the protracted instability in the region, a lot of interest groups, activists, intellectuals and indeed government have reeled out different propositions and ways out for an entrenched sustainable peace and development. This study is one of such effort using security management with a null hypothesis that harps on no significant relationship between democratic society and the rise in armed conflict in the Niger Delta, with theoretical framework that centers on Ted Gurr's psychological frustration-aggression theory to examine the heart of men and women of Niger Delta, and the reason they are disenchanted with Nigerian government and policies of multinational companies towards them, the utility and justifiability of increase in armed conflict in Niger Delta in a democratic dispensations.

Keywords: Security Management, Democratic Society, Armed Conflict, Niger Delta, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The decades past have witnessed government in different parts of Africa not being committed to the provision of the needs of its citizens and leaving them to determined their future. All efforts were geared towards amassing weapons of various proportions to silenced opposition and safeguard the regimes in government. Security strategy(s) fashioned or evolved were towards traditional security of consolidating power, protecting borders and wading off external threats. Bearing this in mind, various regimes increased military expenditures and played down on other aspects security management. This gave rise to occasional confrontation between government and the civil populace. In most cases, these clashes are climaxed by suppression and repression of those that stood out to challenged the authority of the state.

However, these past decades saw many countries in Africa ridden in conflicts as a result of the civilian population demanding expansion of political space and improve economic wellbeing. These agitations for open political space and improve governance that is anchored on transparency, accountability and rule of law was to give them leverage to participate in political affairs of their respective countries. It is poignantly clear in Africa that whoever had political power controls the resources of the nation. The challenge posed by the demand for political inclusion to the system is a serious threat to corrupt and unpopular regimes presumed to have committed series of atrocities.

These leaders sometimes dread democracy because of their vulnerability to losing power in free and fair contests. They believed their activities while in office will be questioned by the collective will of the people in the event of losing power. Every step by the opposition is seen as a threat to the system that must be crushed and deployed apparatus of coercion to silenced the opposition and perpetuate themselves in power. In that sense, the governments become closed, coercive and totalitarian with maximum use of force to spread fear in the minds of her citizens for the sole purpose of commanding obedience Oche (2007:77-80).

In that case, improve security management becomes the readily weapons introduced to counter the entire gamut of dictator ship. The proposition of Security implies taking necessary steps to ensure that mankind is not immersed in threats that are capable of inhibiting their wellbeing. It connotes Protection of people's values and minorities rights in democratic society. It does not substitute national security; it compliments and makes the state legitimate and more stable with the necessary ingredients of human rights protection. Hubert (2001:163).

In Nigeria for example, the past decades saw military incursion into the political firmament of the country with dampened morals of the citizens to questioned government activities because of the instrument of coercion and it autocratic nature. The military junta not only sauntered into

politics like colossus but suspended every democratic norms and ethics. The constitution which is the grand norms was suspended with an introduction of decrees and edicts to allow them the degree of freedom to manipulate our body politics.

The military regimes in Nigeria censored reportage and clamped down on media houses that would have served as watch dogs to the government. Civil society organizations were not spared either in their onslaughts. Political institutions that would have been strengthened to address various concerns and agitations from various quarters of the country were dismantled and left unattended to. The resultant effect was that social and economic injustice festered unhindered which later accentuated into armed conflict with the advent of democracy in 1999.

The emergence of democracy in 1999 in Nigeria propped up many issues that were put on hold by successive military regimes in Nigeria. These issues ranges from identity crisis, ethno-religious conflict, the Niger delta questions, accompanied problems of globalization like global warming, human trafficking, prostitution, HIV/AIDS, and Tuberculosis Osaze and Oshita (2007:114) and Hubert (2007:160).

On the identity crisis that brewed through the country, Kingsley and Odigbo (2015:17-22) posits that the advent of democracy in 1999 brought an upsurge of violence that resulted in identity crisis in Nigeria's body politics. According to them, these crises became visible in areas that have well pronounced affinity.

Thus, Niger Delta was not left out in the emerging conflagration as a result of many years of bottled up grievances. The spontaneous increase in armed conflicts and government response arising from many years of social exclusion, economic injustice and human rights violations emboldened more groups to embrace violence against the state.

Niger Delta Region is the resource based of the nation. But event of the past decades has proved what Eteng etal (2015) called in their jointly contribution the Paradox of Fascination and Horror'. A critical analysis of the living condition of the people due to oil exploration and exploitation shows a people decapitate and strangulated by endemic poverty amidst surplus.

Furthermore, Eteng etal (2015) observed that the people of Niger Delta are living in endemic human starvation, abject poverty and wanton destruction of the environment through oil spillage by multinational oil companies carrying out business in the region. There is evidence of disappearance of plants and animal species which are best in the world owing to the indiscriminate discharge of oil into the environment through spillage. They maintained that the spillage has caused the disappearance of biodiversity and intensified the depletion of ozone layer that shield mankind from ultra-violet race that causes cancer.

This study therefore intends to find the nexus between security management and the steady rise in armed conflict in a democratic society like Niger Delta and investigate why armed conflict occur in a democratic regime that should strives to accommodates all shades of interest and opinion and how it could be resolved.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical frame work that fit into this study is predicated on Robert Gurr's Psychological Frustration-Aggression theory. The theory explained the import of people indulging in violent tendencies or having aggressive dispositions about life and situations is as a result of many years of harbored wounds in the hearts. According to him, frustration does not all the time result in violence but when it is consistently felt could lead to anger and violence. He explained this in line with the hypothesis he termed relative deprivation, which shows disconnection to what people believe is their dues and what they got in the end. When people think there is no solution to their deplorable state of life and the only way out for a change of the status quo ante-bellum is to revolt in order for the established authority to listen and come to compromise. When talks or moral persuasion is not yielding any desirable effect, violent reactions seems to be imperative. It is natural characteristic of humans to resist oppression and injustice when it is very glaring that all actions and inactions are tilted towards an entrenched template of debarring them from what is rightfully theirs.

The situation is what is playing out in Niger Delta. The people are not getting enough shares of the oil proceeds. And it seems there is a grand plan by successive administrations to make the region subservient to the Nigerian authority through deliberate amplitude of poverty in the middle of wealth. A graphic looks at the faces of the people tells of poverty and starvation, sicknesses and diseases stamped all over them like a trademark with an indelible ink in the midst of abundance. It beat ones imagination as to how long it would take for the opaque situations that are written on the cobweb of unrealistic policies of government towards the people to be addressed.

The theory is a lucid explanation of the state of condition of the Niger Delta as buttressed by Eteng etal(2015:177-122), about the untold hardship and suffering the Niger Delta people are going through as a result of environmental pollution from the multinational corporations without adequate care and compensation. This state of hopelessness and deprivation stemmed from concerted effort and attitude of the government and multinational corporations in ensuring that the Niger Delta people are denied of the wealth accruing from hydrocarbon resources. This situation thus prepared fertile ground for resistance movements in the region in the oil rich region of the Niger Delta. www.beyondintractability.org/bksum/gurr-men.

BOTTLED UP GRIEVANCES BEFORE THE ADVENT OF DEMOCRACY IN 1999

There are issues that are core to the armed conflict in the Niger Delta and Nigeria's fledgling democracy that needs government attention. Top of this is the wanton oil spillage and gas flaring in the environment. The effects of this spillage are the destruction of mangrove forests, streams, rivers, relocation of communities, farmlands and sickness and disease Osaze and Oshita (2007:111-114). The Niger Delta had been dependent on the environment for farming, fishing, trading and logging, and canoe building to eke a living but environmental pollution have erased that and made life unbearable for the people. The environment witnessed heavy pollution of underground water and large amount of mercury. The World Bank in its report had warned of the dangers of 40 percent of habitable land in the region disappearing in the next 20 years if no step is taken to reclaim the environment Vanguard (22 august, 2016:). It is estimated that within the last 58 years 40000 cases of oil spillage has taken place since the discovery of crude oil in the 1950s. Recently, the administration of Buhari had offered to clean up Ogoni land with the inauguration of committee but so far nothing tangible is on ground.

Another issue swimming against the tide of democracy is human right violation. During the military regimes in Nigeria, there was gross violation of human rights in the Niger Delta. This is evident in the killing of Ken Saro Wiwa and five others who merely protested against the pollution of ogoni land by SHELL Company without necessary steps to clean up the environment. It was roundly condemned by international communities to the extent that they severed ties with the military government of Nigeria until the return of civilian administration. Militarization of the Niger Delta region was also a case in point that provoked the people to anger. This was done through establishing military joint taskforce as a form of counter insurgency. The taskforce adopted repressive approaches in dealing with the various protests in the Niger delta in order to keep peace. In carrying out their tasks, communities were destroyed by soldiers. Some of the communities include Odi, Oporaza, Odioma, Bakassi and choba, Hakuri(cited in Igbuzor 2006),

Arrest and detention of activists who often spoke vehemently against the injustice meted to the region became widespread. With the return of democracy, activists and stakeholders took advantage of the freedom guaranteed in the 1999 constitution to press for a change in the living condition of people of the region.

There are also revenue distributions, land tenure system and denial of basic amenities as some of the contentious issues that breed violence in the region. Revenue distribution has been a vexed issue amongst the Niger Delta people. It is believed that the current revenue sharing formula and the former are unsustainable and could not facilitate development in the region. They argued that the groundnut pyramid in the early 1950s attracted 50 percent revenue derivation but that of the

Niger Delta began with 50 percent and drop to 13 in 1999. Leaders of thoughts and young people are calling for fiscal federalism where they will have greater access to the resources and harness it to the benefit of the people. Odu(2008), Eteng etal (2015) and Vanguard (22 August, 2016).

Furthermore, government made series of obnoxious laws and decrees from the beginning of oil explorations aimed at regulating, controlling operation of oil companies and exclusion of the region from sharing in the prosperity that accompanied oil exploration and exploitation. It was done to give the central authority an upper hand in deciding who gets the benefits accruing from oil mineral proceeds. The laws are; mineral Act of 1914, Mineral Oil(safety) Regulation 1963 Oil, petroleum Regulations 1967, Oil in Navigable waters act No. 34 Regulations of 1968, Petroleum, Petroleum Decree Act 1969, Petroleum(Drilling and production) Regulations 1969, Petroleum (Drilling and amendment) Regulations 1973, Petroleum Refining Regulation 1974, Anti sabotage Decree of 1975 and Land Use Act of 1974 . Igbuzor (2006). Niger Delta people “picked hole” in all the laws and Decrees especially the land tenure system that allowed only the federal government power to mined natural resources in their back yard without them having a say. They maintained their God given natural right and called on the central authority to abrogate such laws.

THE PARADOX OF NIGER DELTA WEALTH

The pathetic situation in the Niger Delta calls for concern. A region that boasts of Nigeria’s 90% export and revenue, rich in human resources, but lives in abject poverty and squalor is unimaginable. The Niger Delta part of Nigeria housed 30 billion of Nigeria’s oil reserve and 160 trillion cubic of gas yet 70% of the population cannot boast of a comfortable condition of leaving with unprecedented unemployment. Odu (2008). This is partly blamed on corruption. The little resources that would have been used for the benefit of people are being cornered by few elites who had access to the multinational companies and government.

However, between 1958 to June 2016, Nigeria as a nation has earned about 96.212 trillion in crude oil revenue. Out of this humongous amount, only 12.3 trillion has been paid to oil producing areas with a short fall of 35.848 trillion meant for the development of the oil region. Vanguard (22, August 2016). In spite of this huge earning, the Niger Delta region is deftly underdeveloped due to corruption and nonchalant behavior of the authorities concern towards the development of the region. Today, the region is in dire need of infrastructure such as good roads, electricity, water, education and hospital in line with millennium development goals Nigeria signed in 2000. Nigeria oil wealth today is concentrated at the centre with the collusion of few elites, multinational companies and their foreign partners who have major stakes. Nigerian government is largely the beneficiary of oil wealth as a country but has no appreciable impact on

grinding poverty bedeviling the region as all human development indices points towards that disposition.

PEOPLES AGGRESSIVE REACTIONS

The very first attempt towards drawing government attention, the world and perhaps finding solution to the bleak future and reordering the cause of development of the Niger Delta people was the Isaac Boro's rebellion against the government in the 1960s who asked for separate state for the Ijaw nation Madunagu (2006:560-561) and Odu (2008:84). They saw the effect of oil exploitation on the environment by SHELL Company without commensurate development. This rebellion was stopped by the use of state superior apparatus by the Military government of General Aguiyi Ironsi. Another instance was the coup led by Gedeon Orkar 1990. The coup staged was predicated on access and control of the petroleum resources in Niger Delta. The coup was out rightly put down, the leader and members of the group were rounded up, tried for treason, convicted and executed during the military government of Ibrahim Babangida, Odu(2008:85).

The third scenario was the introduction of the bill of rights of the Ogoni people and formation of Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, (MOSOP). The body embarked on protests, seminars and symposia to attract the attention of government and international communities to the plights of the Ogoni people. They publicized the Bill of Rights and demanded for self determination to enable them harness the oil resources to the greater benefit of its people. Odu(2008). These actions did not go down well with government of Sani Abach. In 1995, the leader of the group Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others were executed for treasonable offence.

The fourth dimension towards responding to the Niger Delta problem was the Kiama Declaration in 1998. The people had met in the remote community in Ijaw land to put pressure on the government by resolving to chase away any company that employed the services of armed forces to intimidate them, immediate stoppage of oil production until the multinational companies take steps to stop gas flaring, oil spillages, blowout, reclaim the environment and finally called for self Government and resource control. www.unitedijaw.com/kaiama.htm.

The final stage is the employment of militancy, hostage taking, kidnapping for ransom and blowing up of petroleum pipelines in the region. This began by the radicalization of street gangs in the region after seeing the deteriorating living condition in the region, offered to provide basic needs for themselves since the government and multinational companies don't care about them. It became heightened in 2003 elections when politicians acquired guns for the gangs to protect them and scare their opponents. Afterwards, the guns were now used in the creeks to compete for illegal bunkering, kidnappings for ransom, hostage taking and bombing of pipelines. Militancy

became intensified by, to the extent that 300 militants' leaders openly told the government to change course and ensure that Niger Delta was developed, or they will embark on actions against the government and oil installations. Bokoe(2015) . Since then, there have been formation of militants groups ranging from Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) founded in 2004 and led by Asari Dokubo, Movement for the Emancipations of Niger Delta (MEND) founded in 2004 and commanded by Tompolo, Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV), The Niger Delta Liberation Front(NDLF) founded in 2005 and commanded by John Togo and Niger Delta Avengers(NDA) established in 2015. These militant groups have been consistent in attacking oil installations to ensure that economic justice is served the Niger Delta People.

GOVERNMENT PALLIATIVES

The first attempt made by government to solved Niger Delta problem was the creation of Niger Development Board NDDB in 1960s. The board did but little due to the civil war. The discontentment from stakeholders in the region who agitated for resource control propelled the federal government to set different committees to review revenue formulas and derivations in the country. This began with 50% between 1960-69, 45% 1971, 45% minus offshore proceeds. In 1975-79 it was 20% minus offshore proceed, it dropped to 15% in 1982-92, 3% in 1992-1999 and 13% till date. Igbuzor (2006).

When the revenue formulae did not yield the needed development in Niger Delta, stakeholders appealed to the former President Shehu Shagari to consider the living condition of the people. He responded by rapidly carrying out developmental projects in the region, using derivation accrued to the revenue pool. This could not also assuage the people. In 1992, Ibrahim Babangida set up Oil Mineral Producing Development Area Commission OMPADEC. 3% of oil revenue was given to it to transform the region into Eldorado, but the body became fantastically corrupt and in effective. Again, General Sani Abacha came and raised the region's hope by establishing Petroleum Trust Fund superintended by Rtd General Mohammadu Buhari. The agency also dashed the hope of the people because the mandate given it was not limited to Niger Delta but to spread development across the entire country.

Similarly, when the civilian administration came in 1999, there were series of presentation and outcry to the civilian administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo about the degradation of the region by oil exploration, endemic poverty and suffering; he swung into action by establishing NDDC in 2000. The vision of NDDC was enduring solution to the poor socio-economic disposition of the region while the mission is to engineer holistic development of the area that would be economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically stable. Odu (2008). To crown it all, former President Umaru Yar'dua created the ministry of

Niger Delta to complement the development of the region and proclaimed amnesty 2009 for repentant militants. This was done to fast tract peace and usher in stability in the troubled region.

SECURITY MANAGEMENT AS A SOLUTION TO ARMED CONFLICT IN NIGER DELTA

The proposition of security management became popular and attracted scholars' attention when United Nations Development Programs UNDP presented its report on human development in 1994. The report admonished leaders of the world to consider human needs as a centre piece in fashioning their security policies.

Over time, the definitions of security by nations of the world has been tailored towards protecting states borders from external intruders, national interest and a well articulated foreign policies without taking into cognizance the welfare and well being of its people. Many countries see security from amassing weapons of all sizes to deter who would be trouble makers. For nations to be free from security threats and free itself from whatever contradiction that may be thrown up by social change such country must be capable of providing for its citizens. A country grappling with internal security as a result of economic, political and social injustice opens its borders for external intruders to exploit and destabilize it.

Thus security encompasses protection from threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental degradation UNDP (1994). These issues are capable of causing conflagration in the society if they are not addressed holistically. Security management advocates a paradigm shift in traditional security whose emphasis borders on the protection of regimes to the people through social inclusion. There should be paradigm shift in defining the conflict in Niger Delta. The region has witnessed government neglect over time. The recent apology tendered by General Gowon over the failure of successive government to creatively harness the resources and develop the area is a welcome development. The prognosis and diagnosis of the armed conflict in the Delta region of Nigeria require the confluence of security and democratic dispensation that allows the protection of human rights, gradual and extensive clean up of polluted areas in the region, giving economic, political and social justice. Doing so will make the area safe and give legitimacy to the government and multinational companies.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis done, it is clear that the emergence of democracy offers significant rise in armed conflict in the Niger Delta. This is despite the fact that it accommodated diverse interests and opinions, the struggle for available opportunities and other competing interests, i. e who gets

what, when and how often times amounted to clashes with those that have been left out of the power and economic play.

More so, the rise of this system of government open up wounds from different ethnic groups in the country that had refused to healed since the creation of Nigerian state. These wounds borders on the lopsided structure of Nigerian, such as unequal distribution of economic wealth, uneven development and social justice. The developments have propelled formation of various ethnic militia groups across the nation for the purpose of attracting federal government attention to their region. The militia groups that emerged with the tide of democracy are Oodu People Congress (OPC), Arewa Consulted Youth Forum, Boko Haram, and Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOP) and Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) etc. The militia groups had waged relentless armed battle with Nigerian security forces and the nation to upturn the existing social order, after enduring the totalitarian military administrations for a long period. They craved for a liberal government that would give them a facelift and address many years of accumulated injustice. But the civilian administration could not handled in a hurry the many demands of Niger Delta and other regions, hence the spontaneous armed conflict by ethnic militia to put pressure on the central government to response to the needs and yearning of the region (Niger Delta).

The way forward is the proper articulation of security policies that are all embracing that would act as a catalyst for immediate development of the entire regions of the country. Doing so will reduce tension in the country and fast tract economic development that would in turn lead to prosperity, economic and social wellbeing of the Nigerian people and a stable Nigerian state.

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