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**OGONI MINORITY ACTIVISM: A METAPHOR FOR MINORITIES' AGITATIONS IN
THE 20TH CENTURY NIGERIA, 1990 – 2015**

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt at examining the Ogoni minority activism under the vanguard of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) as a metaphor for ethnic minorities' agitations in the 20th century Nigerian State. Using the multi – disciplinary approach and diverse historical secondary sources, the work provides that the Ogoni people under the aegis of MOSOP evidently became the epitome of minorities' consciousness in modern Nigeria as they championed the non – violent struggle for resource control, self – determination, environmental justice and political autonomy within the frame work of the Nigerian federation. The study demonstrates that MOSOP frontally confronted their alleged tormentors – the hegemonic power – blocs and the mindless oil operations in Nigeria to liberate its land from what the Ogoni perceived as brazen ethnic oppression, suppression and marginalization. Starkly put, MOSOP out – rightly demanded the restructuring of the political iniquitous imbalances in the Nigerian system, a fair and equitable distribution of the economic prosperity of the nation and the just treatment of the ethnic minorities' of Nigeria from whose land the bulk of the oil wealth that sustains the Nigerian economy is derived. The Nigerian state has often ignored its minorities' legitimate demand on account of their small size of population, but instead of being fair to them, the country's ruling power is known to utilizing bloody and brutal repressive and suppressive mechanisms. The work notes that the Ogoni struggle is not a parochial, self – recognized and an exclusive organization. Rather, it is a metaphoric representation of the plights of all the down trodden and neglected ethnic minority groups in Nigeria whose voices have hardly been heard but which deserve to be heard and treated fairly and justly. The study recommends, among other measures, the practice of "true federalism", arguing that it is only then that we can proudly say that "true federalism" exist in the Nigeria – state.

Keywords: MOSOP, Minorities, Agitation, Resource Control, Marginalizati

Introduction

Minority activism is a reality of life and a reoccurring phenomenon in almost all countries of the world. Minority struggles emanated from perceived oppression, grievances and unfair treatment meted out to the minority ethnic groups in a given country largely due to the insignificant size of their population. In most countries of the world, the ethnic mayors dominated, oppressed and discriminated against the minority ethnic groups socially, politically, economically and linguistically. In Africa, for example, the root cause of several unending bloody conflicts are traced to ethnicity or unsolved ethnic related issues. This development is predicated on the non-challant attitude of the ethnic majors to the plight of the minorities and the heterogeneous ethnic composition of the African continent. According to Dumoye (2007) there are five categories of ethnic groups based on dominant ethnic groups within a country. The bipolarity in dudes countries like Rwanda, Burundi and Sierra Leone, Unipolarity refers to Somalia and Botswana, Tripolarity is Nigeria, Cameroon, Namibia and Tanzania are fragmented multi – polarity while Niger, Kenya, Togo and Ethiopia are concentrated multi – polarity.

In Africa, Nigeria is the most heterogeneous country in which its actual ethnic conglomeration has given ethnic watchers and scholars a polemical attack. Nevertheless, the *Citizen's Forum for Constitutional Reform* (2002 pp. 2 – 3) estimates that Nigeria has about 470 ethnic groups with desperate histories, languages, customs, religions, and myths of origins. The only easiest way to classify the diverse ethnic groups in the country has been the use of the terms “Majority ethnic groups” and “minority ethnic groups”. However, there are hundreds of these macro ethnic groups that are sandwiched by the ethnic mayors. Implicit in the above discourse is the emergent of three majority ethnic groups, namely Hausa – Fulani in the North, Yoruba in the South – West, and Igbo in the South – East, in Nigeria which was coupled together in 1914 by the British colonizer. Surprisingly, the tripartite ethnic structure (alias *Wazobia*) and the later hyper – centralization of power in the Federal Government accentuated the fear of political domination among the various ethnic groups as the ethnic mayors competed for the control of the central government and the distribution of both economic and political opportunities that abound in the country at the neglect of the minorities.

The mentality of every average Ogoni man is that the forceful colonization of Ogoni and the subsequent amalgamation gave birth to the minority status hung on their neck. Over the years, this had led to their minority compelled them to be on the path of ceaseless agitations in order to satisfy their aspirations and needs. Saro – Wiwa (2012 pp. 72 – 73) seems to speak the minds of the people when he writes that:

The advent of British colonialism was to shatter Ogoni society and inflict on us (the Ogoni) a backwardness from which we are still struggling to escape. It was British colonialism which forced alien administrative structures on us and herded us into the domestic colonialism of Nigeria. Right from 1908 when Ogoni was administered as part of Opobo Division, through the creation of Rivers Province in 1947, Eastern Region in 1951 and Rivers State in 1967, the Ogoni people have struggled to resist colonialism and return to their much cherished autonomy and self – determination.

The thrust of this paper is to unearth how the Ogoni minority agitations emerged as the first major mass mobilization for self – determination’ and an epitome of other minorities’

consciousness and struggle in Nigeria especially the oil – rich Niger Delta Region. Efforts will also be made to examine the impact of the Ogoni struggle on other ethnic minority groups in Nigeria.

Ogoni in Historical Perspective

One of the most publicized ethnic groups in Nigeria today that was forcefully incorporated into the federal union and dubbed a minority group is the Ogoni ethnic nationality. Prior to the British usurpation and the subsequent creation of Nigeria on 1st January, 1914, the Ogoni existed as an independent and sovereign polity like other so – called majority ethnic groups, implying that Ogoni is older than Nigeria. The process of the systematic subjugation of the Ogoni people began in 1901 when the British conquerors from the Norah Beach Consulate declared protectorate over Ogoni at Kono (Gibbons, 1932). The Norah Beach Consulate which was first situated at Obiangia (in Eastern Obolo) and later transferred to Egwanga (now Ikot – Abasi) in 1906 with the sole mandate to “penetrate and open up the hinterland down to Akwete (now in Ndoki) and Aba and anywhere that could be reached through the Imo River to free trade and for the establishment of British rule” (Enemugwem 1990 pp. 149 -150).

The Ogoni people who have always considered themselves independent and had no history, documented or oral, of conquest by their neighbouring communities before the British incursion bitterly resented British alien rule. The advent of British colonialism disrupted an already existing well-organized society. Eleme clan, which was first colonized in 1898 was administered as part of Degema Division. The clan was later transferred to Ahoada Division in 1923. Both divisions were in Owerri Province. In 1938, they were merged with their Ogoni “kin and kith” on their request. According to Dewhurst (1936 p. 10) the burden of the Eleme appeal to join their Ogoni brethren were tripod. Firstly, “they are Ogoni and wish to be in the same division as their Ogoni brethren”. Secondly, “they wish to join with their fellow Ogoni in the Native Treasury”, Thirdly, “Opobo station is nearer than Ahoada station”. They subsequently became part of Opobo Division in Calabar Province due to the transfer in 1938.

The Ogoni, who were subsumed under the defunct Eastern Region, live in more than two hundred and twenty settlements mostly villages. In a total land area of approximately 1,000 square kilometres. The territory is inhabited by a million people with a very high population density of almost 1,250 persons per square mile. Thus, providing a classic example of rural – compact settlement in Africa and the highest cluster settlement in the world (Okoh, 2007, *Ken Saro-Wiwa's last words*, 2004). Geographically, the territory occupies an area of about 405 square miles and lies between longitude $7^{\circ} 10^{\text{E}}$ and $7^{\circ} 30^{\text{E}}$ and latitude $4^{\circ} 30^{\text{N}}$ and $4^{\circ} 50^{\text{N}}$ of the Green which Meridian. The Ogoni territory is located north of the Eastern Niger Delta mainland. (Kpone – Tonwe, 1990, Saro – Wiwa, 1992, Poronakie & Oku, 2014). The physical features of the area are mixed. The area close to the coast share the mangrove swamp features while the area situated away from the coast has the forest characteristics. For that reason, there are plain, numerous cracks, rivers, and very rich plateau soil to support agriculture. Linguistically, they are speakers of closely related dialects of the same language like their fellow minority ethnic groups in the Niger Delta. The Ogoni recognized that their political voicelessness and powerlessness was due to their minority status which the Nigerian rulers is using as the main instrument of revenue allocation and distribution of the national resources

baked in their backyards. Dibua (2011 p. 14) pungently articulates that “The Niger Delta Communities blamed their plight on their minority status and the fact that the majority ethnic groups, who by virtue of their numerical strength occupied important positions in government, were determined to exploit the wealth from their resources for their own benefits”. But in a study conducted by the late environmentalist and social crusader, Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa, he firmly established that “in terms of area, they (the Ogoni) are bigger than 21 nations that are represented in the UN in terms of population, they are more populous than 37 nations in the UN” (Saro-Wiwa, 1993 p. 24).

Politically, Ogoni is one of the major ethnic groups in Rivers State, Niger Delta Region of Nigeria and the South – South Geo – Political Zone. They are made up of six kingdoms: Nyo – Khana, Ken – Khana, Babbe, Gokana, Tai and Eleme. However, for the purposes of political administrative convenience, they are politically restructured into four Local Government Areas which are Khana, Gokana, Tai and Eleme. Bori, which coincidentally is the largest settlement in Ogoni, is the traditional and political/administrative headquarters of Ogoni, Linguistically, they are speakers of closely related dialects of the same language.

Given her strategic location and rich ecology, the Ogoni are destined to be pre – dominantly farmers and migrant fishermen. They effortlessly grow and produce a lot of yams, banana, cassava and vegetables which they consumed and exchanged with the aquatic products of their neighbours. They also process oil palm and kernels from the vast oil palm (*Elaeisis guineensis*) and distill palm wine and local spirit (*kai kai*) from matured palm tree (*Raphia vinnifera*). Saro – Wiwa (1992: 11-12) concurs with the above position when he asserts that:

The Ogoni had inherited a precious part of God’s earth and did everything to preserve it. The rich Plateau soil provided agricultural plenty and the rivers which was the borders of the entire area brimmed with fishes and sea food. The Ogoni seized the opportunity to become competent farmers and fishermen and to transform their territory into the food basket of the Eastern Niger Delta.

Customarily, the Ogoni place much premium on the land on which they live and the forest including sacred groves as well as the river that surround them. They revere and worshipped land as a god of fertility. They also honoured it through the tradition of *doo nu kuneke*. They marked every planting and harvesting season with a festival locally called *Zua/Dua*. It is usually accompanied with elaborate seasonal rituals and sacrifices to the earth/land deity known as *Yor asaa* (Kpone-Tonwe, 1990, Anokari, 1986, Saale, 2001, Igbara & Keenam, 2013). Saro-Wiwa (1992 p. 12) luminously adds that:

To the Ogoni, the land on which they lived and the rivers which surrounded them were very important. They not only provided sustenance in abundance, they were also a spiritual inheritance. The land is a god and is worshipped as such. The fruit of the land, particularly yams, are honoured in festivals and, indeed, the Annual Festival of the Ogoni is held at the yam harvest. The planting season is not a mere period of agricultural activity: it is spiritual, religious and social occasion. “Tradition” in Ogoni means in the local tongue (doonu kuneke) the honouring of the land (earth, soil, water). This

respect for the land means that forests are not merely a collection of trees and the abode of animals but also, and more intrinsically, a sacred possession. Tress in the forest cannot therefore be cut indiscriminately without regard for their sacrosanctity and their influence on the well-being of the entire community, of the land.

It is also important to note that the Ogoni territory is lavishly endowed with oil and gas wealth. Oil petroleum was discovered in commercially viable quantities it Bomu (Gokana) in 1958 by shell. From this point on, exploratory and exploitation activities of Shell Petroleum Development in the area led to about one hundred and sixteen oil wells connected to five flow stations, converging one hundred and eighty five barrels of oil per day. It was estimated that about one hundred billion dollar (US \$100) worth of oil had been drilled by Shell B.P and Chevron operating in Ogoni (OBR, 1992: 6, *Ken Saro-Wiwa's last words*, 2004 p. 3).

The History of Ogoni Minority Activism

Simpson and Yinger (1963 p. 28) remind us that “when fate has cast two people upon the same territory, one must inevitably be the hammer and the other the anvil”. So, to break the yoke of ethnic domination, the Ogoni people led their minority neighbours to demand the creation of Port Harcourt State for all the non-Ijaw people in Rivers State. State creation was initially believed by the people as a panacea to the problem of the ethnic minority groups in Nigeria. Akinyele (1996 p. 72) puts the matter frontally when he beautifully establish that “the ethnic minorities in Nigeria have always expressed a preference for the creation of states along ethnic lines within a federal system. The expectation is that this would raise the minority into a majority in the new state, thereby protecting it against domination.” Accordingly, the Ogoni people represented by Chief R.O.G. Kpai, Mr. E.N. Kobani, Mr. K.B. Saro-Wiwa and others championed the formation of the Movement for the Creation of Port Harcourt State meant for the people “who happened to live on the plains North of the Niger Delta proper” like the Ogoni, the Abua, the Ekpeye, the Ogba, the Ahoada, the Egbema, the Ndoni, the Ikwerre, the Etche, and so on. By 1974, the agitation for Port Harcourt State had reached a crescendo to an extent that all the upland areas were excited. Upland Rivers State would be carved out of the old Rivers State to ostensibly end the political and economic domination of the Ijaw (Ijo), a majority ethnic group when compared with others as mentioned above. In the words of Saro-Wiwa (1993 p. 23) the agitation for a split of Rivers State was to enable the minority ethnic groups “to have greater access to funds and development”.

Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa, then a serving commissioner in the state and who was at the front burner of the agitation incisively argues:

There was need to split Rivers State, as the interest of the ten-odd ethnic groups in it could not be meaningfully reconciled. Along with my colleagues in the cabinet, notably Dr. Obi Wali and Mr. Nwodike Nwanodi, I began in 1974, the argument for the creation of a Port Harcourt State which would include all the non Ijaw in Rivers State who happened to live on the plains north of Niger Delta proper (Saro-Wiwa, 1995 p. 203).

Collaborating this view, Amadi (2010 p. 257) writing about the contributions of Obi Wali sharply observes, “on return to Nigeria in 1967 the outbreak of the civil war ended his academic

career and paved the way to a political career which launched him on a journey from 1974 to champion the cause of self-determination for his people in the struggle for the creation of a Port Harcourt State out of Rivers State”.

Thus, the ‘Charter of Association’, a document which outlined their demand and the binding acts of the movement was signed by Chief C.D. Orike (Chairman, Charter of Association Drafting Committee). The upland state (Port Harcourt State) was not created so as to leave Rivers State to be a truly Ijaw State. The philosophy of the Ogoni led Port Harcourt State Movement was utilized by the Late Gen. Sani Abacha led junta when on 1st October, 1996, in his 36th independence anniversary broadcast, created Bayelsa State. Meanwhile, the Ogoni people who started the agitation for self-determination were victims of the cause and paid and pay through their noses. Kenule was said to have been sacked as a Commissioner in March 1973 while Mr. Edward Nna Kobani, Commissioner for Lands and Housing, resigned in June 1975 from the State Government headed by an Ijaw son, Navy Commander Alfred Papa Preye Diets-Spiff from 28th May 1967 to July 1975 (Agbozi 1993).

Before the birth of MOSOP, the Ogoni people, who were not consulted when the exploitation agreements were signed in the colonial period (*International Crisis Group*, 2008), lost the right of the ownership and control of their lands. At the end of colonialism, the British overlords transferred these rights to the newly independent state controlled by the majority ethnic groups. The Ogoni and other minority groups were completely disempowered and denied the right to their lands, participate in the distribution of the oil wealth, and to in the negotiation with the transnational companies operating in the Niger Delta through the promulgation Land Use Act (CAP 202) and the Petroleum Decree of 1969 (Okoko, Nna & Ibaba, 2006, TCND, 2018). In 1978 another Land Use Decree, which vested ownership and ultimate rights over land in the government, was promulgated and this further compounded the problem of the minorities in the oil-rich Niger Delta. These decrees have been amended and enshrined into the 1979 Constitution.

Oddly, enough, the Central Government lacks the will power to control the nefarious activities of the Multi-nationals in the area. To improve the relations between the people and SPDC, Anokari (1986 p. 150) avers that “delegations of protests were therefore made to Shell B.P. but these mostly fell on deaf ears. Consequently in August, 1965, Ogoni Youths rioted against the Shell B.P.” The demonstrations, among other things, strained the relations between the Ogoni and Shell B.P. Shell declined to carry out their social responsibility by refusing to grant scholarship to Ogoni children through college to university. Again, the relentless Ogoni desirous to better their lot, authorized seven Government recognized traditional rulers to send a memorandum to Shell and to the Military Governor (MILAD) of Rivers State in early 1970, complaining bitterly of unorthodox operations of SPDC in the area. SPDC is alleged to have devastated the Ogoni and Niger Delta environment by oil spills, pipelines criss-crossing farmlands and villages, degradation of the environment without adequate compensation and employment. These were crowned with the Nigerian state’s empty promises through the 1970s and 1980s.

The Emergence of MOSOP and the Ogoni Agenda

By 1990 the Ogoni, through their oil wealth, had significantly contributed to the development of Nigeria as oil accounts for over 90 percent as the nation’s annual foreign exchange earnings. The Ogoni is alleged to have contributed over 657 million barrels of oil worth more than 20 billion US dollar to Nigeria (OBR, 1990). Yet the Ogoni continued to suffer from environmental degradation, political marginalization, economic strangulation and disempowerment. In fact, the unethical and unorthodox methods of oil exploration and

exploitation adopted by the multinationals in the area caused oil spillages while the daily gas flaring resulted in air pollution which constitute serious threats to their means of livelihood, farmlands, fish ponds, rivers and streams. Ken Saro–Wiwa, the president and spokesman of MOSOP, refers to this ecological disaster in Ogoni as “ecological war”. According to him, “an ecological war is highly lethal, the more so as it is unconventional. It is homicidal in its effect. Human life, flora, fauna, the air, fall at its feet, and finally, the land itself dies” (quoted in *Ken Saro-Wiwa’s last words*, 2004 p. 3). Despite series of passionate pleas, evidence abound to support the fact that the people are yet to benefit from the stupendous oil wealth that God deposited at their backyard. They lack the good things of life like piped born water, modern hospital, electricity, good roads and even subsisted education. Job opportunities are reserved for the ethnic mayors. The Ogoni people attributed this brazen injustice they received for decades to the fact that they are minority group in a Nigerian Federation. Their minority status made them powerless to alter the *status quo*.

In 1990, the Ogoni thoroughly reflected on these wrongs and past injustices and confronted the Federal Government and Shell. They demanded justice for all the deprivations they have suffered. They also attempted to liberate their land from what they perceived as environmental degradation. In August, the Ogoni took their destiny in their hands and drew up the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) which they launched in October and submitted to the Nigerian Government and Shell in October 1990 and December 1992 respectively. The four main kernels of the OBR, which is more of a citizens’ charter, are:

- a. Political autonomy which is the right to self – determination
- b. Right to control and use a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development
- c. The control of Ogoni environment and adequate and fair representation as of right in all Nigerian National Institutions.
- d. The rights to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation (OBR, 1990).

The Ogoni demand of political and economic justice is not in any way extraordinary and exaggerated. It was meant for greater empowerment and autonomy to oversee their own affairs in a country where the ethnic mayors have usurped their rights and resource while the Ogoni and other minority ethnic groups live with immeasurable misery, inexplicable injustice, abject poverty and chronic unemployment.

In the pursuit of their avowed goals, MOSOP adopted a non – violent approach. Taking cognizance of their insignificant population size in a country of about 80 million people, MOSOP towed and it is still towing the path of peaceful agitation. According to Ken Saro – Wiwa the Ogoni struggle which is more of “ecological war cannot be waged with matchets and axes, but with the brain. Besides the ecological war is even more serious than the political war” (cited by N-ue, 2012 p. 178). *Ogoni review* (1993 p. 4), the official newsletter of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), expounds that in the Ogoni non – violent struggle:

1. You fight with leaves and placards, not knives and clubs
2. You don’t charge at the police or army when they confront you; you just sit down;
3. You turn the other cheek with the hope that when he runs out of more checks to strike the oppressor will leave you;
4. You pray for your persecutors rather than curse them;

5. You use your pen rather than your stick;
6. You don't fight yourselves. You cooperate
7. You may learn to laugh while crying;
8. You may reject a bad law simply by refusing to obey it;
9. You may call attention to yourself by refusing to eat or sleep;
10. People are not your target, bad laws are, so you don't use stones, you use stamps.

The well-defined and thought-out struggle continued to thread the path of non – violent when on 4th January, 1993 a carefully planned demonstration took place. On that fateful day, about 30, 000 Ogoni men and women including children staged a massive peaceful protest march against Shell's ecological war and the Nigerian government's denial to the Ogoni of all rights (*Ken Saro-Wiwa's Last words*, 2004). The MOSOP's well - organized protest coincided with the inauguration and collaboration of the United Nation's year of the World's Indigenous Population. Ogoni through MOSOP was accepted into Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO) at its 3rd General Assembly in the Hague, Netherlands on 30th January 1993 with Ken Saro – Wiwa as the Vice – Chairman (N-ue, 1997).

In their characteristic non – violent manner, the Ogoni people started effective mobilization and sensitization of their people on their democratic and human rights. On 27th February, 1993, the One Naira Ogoni Survival Fund (ONUSUF) was launched. To this fund, almost every Ogoni, including their property contributed One Naira each. This symbolized unflinching support, commitment, togetherness, solidarity, sacrifice and an oath of allegiance (N-ue, 2012). MOSOP at this stage had showed case the desires of the Ogoni people not only for freedom from marginalization but also for unity. The Ogoni people also brought their case before God in vigil organized on 13th March, 1993. The service, which was organized throughout all towns and villages in Ogoni, invited God to intervene into their situation, especially the bloody reprisals by the Nigerian Government and Shell BP to their legitimate and democratic demand.

The Ogoni campaign assumed international dimension as the Nigerian government and the multi – national oil companies responded negatively to the people just and legitimate demand. The *Ogoni Review* (1993 p. 1) informs that "MOSOP internationalized the struggle because, it only received acknowledgement of receipt of the Bill of Rights". Thus, in a meeting held on 26th August, 1990 by the chiefs, Elders and opinion leaders of Ogoni at Bori, MOSOP was mandated to make representation to international community as long as these grave injustices continue to be the Ogoni case. Justifying the internationalization of the struggle, Saro–Wiwa (1993 p. 30) explains that "the matter is beyond the care of the Nigerian government. They don't know what to do. Everything is beyond them. They cannot even tell the oil companies to stop flaring gas". He also powerfully declares that the purpose was "to draw the attention of the world to the injustices meted out to the Ogoni by Nigeria, and their accomplices, the oil companies, Shell and Chevron don't care at all" (Saro–Wiwa, 1993 p.18). Consequently, MOSOP took the Ogoni agenda to different fora outside the shore of Nigeria, especially in Europe and America. The Ogoni matter, which occupied the front burner of international discourse, attracted attention, sympathies and commiseration to the Ogoni for all their travails. As at November, 1996, MOSOP had offices in over seven countries and there are support groups in over 15 countries of the world.

The point, therefore, is that the Ogoni struggle championed by MOSOP became the first concerted attempt by an ethnic group in Nigeria to out rightly call for self - determination within the frame work of the Nigerian federation. The non – violent strategy adopted by MOSOP is also a novel innovation in the social engineering of a people towards a just cause. It was a new phase in the minority activism in Nigeria. Isola (2012 p. 78) endorses that irrespective of martyrdom, “the Ogoni struggle remains a reference point and a testimonial to the possibilities of non – violent method of achieving social goals even in a repressive environment”. MOSOP, in Niger Delta history, is a well-known household name and the foremost strongest well-articulated ethnic driver organization in the universe against oppression.

The Nexus between the Ogoni Struggle and other Minority Ethnic Agitations in Nigeria

A critical interrogation of the Ogoni agenda would reveal to a discerning mind that the Ogoni are the epitome of minority consciousness and a metaphoric representation of the minorities’ agitations in the 20th century Nigeria in particular and Africa in general. There is no doubt that the people’s claim of ethnic autonomy, self – determination and resource control represented the general aspiration and interest of most of the minority ethnic group in Nigeria, especially the oil bearing Niger Delta ethnic groups. The Ogoni’s grievances and demands as outlined in the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) published both in the local and international domains stirred the much needed consciousness among the marginalized minorities in Nigeria and beyond. The stark reality is that the agitation which was started by the Ogoni is not only for their own interest but also for the people of Niger Delta and minorities the world over. The Ogoni issue was given global publicity to an extent that the Nigerian rulers and its multinationals alliance could not contained its euphoria.

Following the precept of MOSOP, the oil bearing Niger Delta minority ethnic groups were bold enough to demand their citizenship rights and a stop to several decades of injustices perpetrated against them by the multi – national oil companies and their Nigerian Government collaboration. Through the unquenchable zeal, high consciousness and total commitment created by the Ken led MOSOP, the Ogoni’s message of economic and political emancipation spread and engulfed all parts of the Niger Delta and other parts of Nigeria, leading to the emergence of various minorities’ fora. For example, the Ogbia People’s Movement for Reparation to Ogbia (MORETO), the Ogbakor Ikwerre Convention, the Ijaw National Convention (INC), the Ijaw Ethnic National Rights Protection Organisation, the Movement for National Reformation for Ijaw Tribe, Old Delta Province Association of Minority States, Committee of Oil Producing Area, the Southern Minorities Forum, the Alliance of Oil Producing Committee, the Southern Minorities Movement (SMM), the Chikoko Movement, Egi Youth Federation, Movement for the Survival of the Izon Ethnic Nationality in the Niger Delta of Nigeria (MOSIEN), the South – South Rainbow Coalition, the Zero Renascent Union, Akwa Ibom Forum, The Middle Belt Forum and Association of Minority States, among others (TCND, 2008, Tamuno, 2012) sprung up to resist and protest the political and economic marginalization of the area, injustices, gross underdevelopment and inequitable structural imbalance in the present Nigerian federation.

Like MOSOP their fore runner, these ethnic based associations, individuals, communities, and others in the region have continued to call for greater empowerment and

autonomy to control their own affairs. The several petitions and demands took the forms of memoranda, letters, bills of rights, charters of declarations and mostly addressed to those in authorities and in the oil and gas companies operating in their area (TNCD, 2008). This is exactly the demand of the historic Kaiama Declaration (1998) which contends that:

All land and natural resources (including mineral resources) within Ijaw territory belong to Ijaw communities and are the bases of our survival. We cease to recognize all undemocratic decrees that rob peoples/communities of the right to ownership and control of our lives and properties. These include the land use Decree, the petroleum Decree etc we demand the immediate withdrawal from Ijawland of all military forces of occupation and repression by the Nigerian State. Any oil company that employs the services of the armed forces of the Nigerian State to "protect" its operations will be viewed as an enemy of the Ijaw people. Family members of military personnel stationed in Ijawland should appeal to their people to leave the Ijaw area alone. Ijaw youths in all communities in all Ijaw clans in the Niger Delta will take steps to implement these Resolution beginning from the 30th of December 1998, as a step toward reclaiming the control of our lives. We therefore demand that all oil companies stop all exploration and exploitation activities in the Ijaw area. We are tired of gas flaring, oil spillages, blowouts and being labeled saboteurs and terrorists. It is a case of preparing the noose for our hanging. We resist this labeling. Hence we advise (sic) all oil companies, staff and contractors to withdraw from Ijaw territories by the 30th December, 1998 pending the resolution of the issues of resource ownership and control in the Ijaw area of the Niger Delta (as cited in Ejituwu & Enemugwem, 2008 pp. 88-89).

Commenting on the relationship between the Ijaw Youth Council, IYC and MOSOP, Nwajiaku-Dahou (2008p:333) vividly asserts "that playing ethnic politics was in many ways new to the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) founders who emerged from a variety of civil political tradition. Many of the brains behind the formation of the IYC, Oronto Douglas, Robert Azibola and Von Kemedi, had campaigned with the movement for the survival of Ogoni people (MOSOP).... Yet MOSOP which issued the Ogoni bill of rights in 1990, was also the most progressive civic political movement of the day albeit one that used the idiom of cultural rights to highlight minority exclusion, therein providing a template for emergent 'ethnic nations' to follow". Amokari (2006 p.32) sharply reported that on October 12, 1993 when the solidarity rally of MOSOP was held at Bomu (Gokana), Prof. Claude Ake (founder of the Centre for Advanced Social Science, (CASS) and Secretary of the movement for reparations to Ogbia-Oloibiri (MORETO), Mr. Dimeari Kemadi, were in attendance.

On the same line as the above were the Charter of Demands of the Ogbia people, 1992, Resolutions of the First Urhobo Economic summit, 1998, The Akalaka Declaration, 1999, The Warri Accord, 1999, The Ikwerre Rescue Charter, 1999, First Niger Delta Indigenous Women's Conference, 1999, The Oron Bill of Rights, 1999, The Niger Delta People's Compact, 2008, to mention but a few. A common demand of these organizations was resource control including the repeal of unjust laws like the Land Use Act, 1978; the Minerals/Petroleum Decree (1969); the Oil Pipelines Decrees, 1991, The Petroleum Decree, 1991, The National World Waterways Authority Decree, 1997 and a host of other laws which are inimical to the people's rights to the

resources in the Land. Okowa (2008 pp. 48-49) seems to speak the minds of many Niger Delta Peoples when he profusely argues that:

The interesting point rally is that the Yoruba are fully in control of their rich cocoa producing land. The so-called Land Use Act has not alienated the Yoruba from their God given fertile cocoa producing land. Similarly, the Hausa/Fulani are in full control of their God-given and oil-money-enriched vast savannah land. The Nigerian state has not alienated the Hausa-Fulani from their vast land resources. This is how it should be in a capitalist system. Why then must the Nigerian state alienate the people of the Niger Delta from their God-given oil and gas resources? If the Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba must share from the oil and gas resources of the Niger Delta people who have a relatively insignificant quantity of agricultural land and whose meagre fishing grounds have been polluted by oil, why should the peoples of the former? Nigeria is therefore running a policy of "mine is mine but yours belongs to all of us". This is criminal, in human and certainly ungodly. It is colonialism in its worst form. Development for the Niger Delta is impossible in this kind of "cat and mouse" federalism.

Borrowing a cue from MOSOP which was the first to internationalize their case in 1991, the movement for the survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationalities of the Niger Delta (MOSIEND) led by its leader Oronto Douglas brought the Niger Delta issue before Bill Clinton, the former President of USA (Ejituwu & Enemugwem, 2008 p.83). As in the case of MOSOP, the movement was to garner support for the movement and peoples of Niger Delta. The effort of Oronto Douglas, a brilliant lawyer, was a replica of what the late Niger Delta's advocate, Chief Harold Dappa Biriye led deputations to Lagos to London between the 1940s and 1950s which culminated in the setting up of the Sir Henry Willink led minorities, commission in 1957. In the pre-colonial era, Niger Delta Rivers sent powerful delegations to the colonial authorities in Whitehall, London for better treatment. A few of them included William Dappa Pepple, Jaja of Opobo, Nana Olumu, William Frederick Koko, Ovenramwem of Benin to mention but a few (Tamuno, 2012).

It is instructive to state that the most significant effect of the Ogoni minority activism and ecological war was the sympathy it attracted from Aso Rock, Abuja. First, Bayelsa State, a true Ijo (Ijaw) state was created on October 1, 1996 by the Head of State, Late General Sani Abacha. The creation of the state was unique for the fact that since the creation of Rivers State on 27th May, 1967, the region was left intact while several states and LGAs were created in Minority ethnic groups. Earlier, Ken Saro-Wiwa (1991 p.15) the mouthpiece of MOSOP had queried as to: "Why should one ethnic nationality have five states while 70 others share one state? The military split the major ethnic groups into smaller units to enable them rob the minority ethnic groups of their oil resources."

This was done to reduce tension in Niger Delta. Ejituwu and Enemegwem (2008 p.82) posit that "the creation of Bayelsa State is believed to be part of the solutions to the problems of the Niger Delta", which was undoubtedly championed by the Ogoni people and MOSOP as

the above analysis has clearly shown. Secondly the dramatic rise to power and fame of the Ijaw (Ijo) born Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was not unconnected with the Niger Delta struggle. For our present purposes, it is interesting to note that MOSOP, which was formed in 1990 has continued to launch frontal attacks (though non-violent) on the hegemonic power blocs so that they may recognize the marginalized Niger Delta. By dint of an exhaustible dogged determination, the door to Aso Rock, Nigeria's Seat of Power, was opened widely to Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, an illustrious son and patriot of Niger Delta in 2007 when he was chosen as the running mate to Late President Musa Alkali Yar'dua. He later became the 14th President on 9th February, 2010 following the death of Yar'dua. Obviously, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan's meteoric rise to stardom was not by "chance" or "accident of history" at all as Tamuno (2012) wants us to believe. Without exaggeration, before the sun finally set on an indigene of minority Niger Delta, the exalted position of President has been under the manipulative powers of the 'Big three'. People from the minorities' ethnic groups were not allowed to rule. Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, one of the "extremely fortunate sons" (Tamuno, 2012 p.307) of Ijaw (Ijo), a macro-ethnic minority nationality, eventually became the trail blazer to occupy the most revered seat of Nigeria's number one citizen.

Another important point to stress is that it was the protest by the Ogoni people under the big umbrella of MOSOP in the Niger Delta and the security concerns which they mounted against the federal government that made Nigerians at the 1994/1995 constitutional conference consider an upward review of allocation of oil producing states from a negligible 3% to 13% derivation (Okoko et al, 2006, Amanyie, 2006, and Daminabo, 2005).

Quite significantly, this could be termed as a success because prior to this the principle of derivation in revenue allocation has been consciously, systematically and marginally reduced and sliced by successive governments of the Nigerian state. From 100% in 1953 to 50% in 1960. This was later reduced to 45% in 1970, 20% in 1995, 2% in 1982 to 1.5% in 1984. This rose from 3% in 1992 to 13% in 1995 due to MOSOP's ceaseless agitations for a better deal. The periods between 1999 and 2007 saw the Niger Delta States of Bayelsa, Delta, Akwa Ibom and Rivers take the lion share of the Federal Government revenue allocations (Tonwe, Ojo & Aghedo, 2011). The upward review of revenue allocation benefited all oil producing States which are also the minorities of Nigeria. To Ken Saro -Wiwa (1993) as quoted in *The News* (1993 p.212), it is an insult to the people of the Niger Delta to take away their resources and then give them only 2 percent. He reasoned that it is like someone stealing your shirt and then giving you two buttons from it.

The periods also saw Shell's positive response towards the environmental needs of oil producing states. The environment of Niger Delta has been degraded and bastardized arising from Shell's exploitation and exploration since 1957 that oil petroleum was mined on the land. Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in collaboration with NNPC, ELF, and Agip responded by establishing the Niger Delta Environmental Survey (NDES) in February, 1995. The body, which has among others Gamaliel Onosode as Chairman, Dr. Jonathan Ombo Amakiri as the Executive Secretary and late Prof. Claude Ake as a member, has the following as its mission statement:

In concert with communities and other stakeholders to undertake a comprehensive environmental survey of the Niger Delta, establish

the causes of ecological and socio-economic change overtime and induce corrective action by encouraging relevant stakeholders to address specific environmental and related socio-economic problems identified in the course of the survey to improve the quality of life of the people and achieve sustainable development in the region (cited in Daminabo, 2005 p.212).

No doubt, the establishment of Niger Delta Environmental Survey (NDES) is consequent upon the spirited efforts put up by Kenule led MOSOP against Shell ecological war in Niger Delta since oil was discovered in commercial quantities (Daminabo, 2005 .212) vividly testifies as follows:

One revenue through which Kenule's environmental crusade yielded a great result is the Niger Delta Environmental Survey (NDES)... NDES was launched in February 1995 by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) has been drilling crude oil in Nigeria since 1956. It established NDES about four decades after it started drilling oil, and only about two years after Kenule began to expose SPDC environmental degradation in Nigeria. There is no doubt that SPDC set up NDES mainly in response to checkmate Kenule's environmental war in Niger Delta.

Generally, the perception of the oil companies to their host communities seems to have changed considerably. They have tremendously improved on their corporate responsibilities to their Niger Delta host communities. SPDC, for example, has recently shifted from community assistance development. Bobo Brown (SPDC's external Relations Manager) testifies that the SPDC shifted from "community assistance towards the long-term goal of community development (CD), placing emphasis on community ownership, capacity building, economic empowerment and ... community involvement and participation in development (cited in Okoko et al, 2006 p.103). Tonwe, Ojo and Aghedo (2011 p.56) endorse that "the oil companies have increased their corporate social responsibilities, (CSR) to their host community since the late 1990s (especially when MOSOP started its campaign) when their 'social license' to operate was threatened. Shell in its Annual 2006 report stated that it spent the sum of \$53 million on community projects in the Niger Delta in 2006. It also contributed over \$44 million to the Niger Delta Development Commission, plus paying over US\$34 billion to the Nigerian state in taxes and royalties between 2006 and 2010 alone". Also, Dibia (2011 p. 126) confesses that " but the forthright and bold agitations made popular by Ken Saro-Wiwa and his fellow Ogoni compatriots, have opened up the hitherto secret and almost sealed hearts of some multi nationals operating in Ikwerre who now offers scholarships to our youths on merit ".

The point to note is that even if these demands and petitions are yet to be addressed by the government and the trans-national companies, the agitating spirit of behind them will ever remained burning until they have a large measure of fair share in their God given resources (oil) out of which they pay taxes to the central government. Dibua (2011 p. 16 – 17) was absolutely correct when he observes that:

The launching of the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) in October, 1990, by MOSOP and Ogoni leaders introduced a new phrase in the struggle for

resource control and ethnic citizenship rights of the Niger Delta people.... It also contributed to the intensification of the struggle against the degradation of their environment. In fact, the event, could be said to have marked a turning point in the activism of the oil producing Niger Delta minority ethnic groups. The document detailed the various acts of neglect, political and economic marginalization of the Ogoni people, and the dispossession of their citizenship rights by the Nigerian State... they were demanding political and economic justice that would guarantee the various ethnic groups in the country their citizenship rights through a large measure of autonomy over their political and economic affairs.... The preponderance of the available evidence does not support the accusation of secession attempt on the part of MOSOP.

The Ogoni agitation championed by MOSOP vigorously campaigned against the degradation of the Niger Delta environment and not only the Ogoni environment. On 30th July, 1992, Ken Saro – Wiwa MOSOP's spokesman took the matter of criminal exploitation, ruthless exploration and pollution of his community's environment in particular and Niger Delta as a whole to the floor of the 10th session of the United Nations working Group of Indigenous population in Geneva, Switzerland (N-ue, 1995). In an emotion laden voice, he drew the attention of the participants to the fact that unchecked oil exploitation has turned Ogoni, Niger Delta into a wasteland: lands, streams, and creeks are totally and continually polluted; the atmosphere has been poisoned, charged as it is with hydro carbon vapours methane, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and sooth emitted by gas which has been flared daily (Saro–Wiwa, 1993 p. 15 – 16). The MOSOP's mouthpiece, Ken Saro Wiwa, did not leave any one in doubt that MOSOP was waging an ecological war for Niger Delta environment when he declares "the Ogoni people are leading a revolution and other people will follow. We are fighting against the oppression of the Federal Government that has surrounded our lands with guns. The air is poisonous, the streams are polluted, the fishes die" (Saro – Wiwa, 1993 p. 18). Meanwhile, the vociferous Ogoni struggle against the effects of environmental degradation attracted international sympathizers who helped to amplify the evil effects of pollution on the Ogoni People and the Niger Delta. Prominent among them were the London Rain Forest Action Group, the Human Right Watch, Green Peace, Africa Trans Africa, Amnesty International, Friends of the Earth and the World Wide Fund for Nations, to mention but a few. Attesting to the above, Daminabo (2008 pp. 287 – 288) avers that:

The Niger Delta came into a much greater global attention in the era of globalization. Kenule Saro–Wiwa (1941 – 1995) played a major role at globalizing the Niger Delta.... Saro – Wiwa did not fight for his Ogoni people alone. Rather he used the Ogoni as metaphor for the entire minority ethnic nations of Nigeria, if not Africa.

Still reinforcing that the externalization of the Ogoni struggle informed the entire world of the ecological degradation and corresponding interests in the Niger Delta, Okorobia (2008 p. 206) recalls:

There are few countries in the world that have not heard about the Ogoni and their struggle for socio – economic and environment

rights and justice under the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), led by Ken Saro – Wiwa....The Region (Niger Delta) has accordingly been attracting more international visitors, either as technical experts, or as human right leaders, than most regions in Nigeria.

Records also indicate that the late Alhaji Musa Yar'Adua led democratic government did not turn a deaf ear to the grief, neglect and thoughts of the Niger Delta peoples. On 8th September 2008, the administration inaugurated the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta to resolve the lingering crisis in the Niger Delta. The Barr. Ledum Mittee led Committee "with a sound knowledge of the terrain" and "a history of advocacy for the Niger Delta struggle" (TCND, 2008 p. 2) made far-reaching recommendations. One of the key items proffered to launch the Niger Delta Region on the path of development was the negotiation of amnesty for all Niger Delta "militants". Sequel to this, the freedom fighters derogatorily called "militants" by the Nigerian State was granted "amnesty" deal on 6th August, 2009 and commenced on 4th October, 2009. Through the magnanimous package, the ex-Niger Delta agitators were disarmed, decommissioned, and reintegrated into the full swim of the society. Most of them acquired various skills at home and in overseas countries. It is sad to note for the development of the Region were never implemented. It is also believed that the bold step taken by President Muhammadu Buhari to restore the wasteland of the Ogoni will also be extended to other ethnic nationalities in the Niger Delta. Recall that on the 4th of August 2011, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), after its 14 – month environmental exercise made public its findings. The Report revealed failure by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and other oil and gas firms operating in the area to meet minimum Nigerian or own standard systematically contaminated a 1,000 square km (approximately 386 square mile) with disastrous implications for human health and wildlife. President Muhammadu Buhari in fulfillment of his campaign promises to the Ogoni announced the cleaning of Ogoni in 2015 by restructuring the governance frame work set up by the Goodluck Jonathan administration's the Hydrocarbon Pollution Restoration Project (HYPREP) on July 20, 2012.

The extra-judicial murder of the spokesman and President of MOSOP, Kenule Saro-Wiwa and eight of his co-campaigners by the Nigerian State in connivance with SPDC on 10th November 1995 after a highly condemnable, and kangaroo trial led to the intensification and militarization of the resource control struggle or what Tonwe, Ojo and Aghedo (2011 p. 34) aptly call "environmentalism" in Nigeria (Daminabo, 2005, Anifowose, 2011, Tamuno, 2012). According to Adejumobi (2003 p. 171) The Niger Delta youths in various climes resorted to the use of violence option under various auspices and nomenclatures ostensibly in self-defense since the Nigerian State was not ready to tow the paths of peace. In his own words "The extra-judicial murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995 increased the resolve and conviction of those groups that the Nigerian State preferred the path of violence, and it would require organized counter-violence to protect themselves and their interest". Starting from the late 1990s onwards, several associations, groups and organizations in the cloak of freedom movement engulfed the Niger Region. In the process, the region became militarized with the influx and proliferating of both small arms and light weapons, making it the most volatile region in the 19th and 20th centuries Nigeria. Tamuno (2012 p. 76) maintains that "these were the types with goals and means more radical than those espoused by Isaac Boro and Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1966 and 1990

respectively". These include but not limited to the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), the Niger Delta Vigilante Service (NDV), Iduwuni Volunteer Force (IVF), Butcher Squad, Martyr Brigade, Coalition of Militant Action of the Niger Delta (COMA), Movement of the Niger Delta People Expedition Force (NDPEF), Pan-Niger Delta Action Group (aka Lords of the Creeks), the Supreme Igbesu Boys, the Western Command, The Niger Delta Naked Freedom Fighters, Gran Alliance of the Niger Delta, Deadly Underdogs, The Emancipator, The Green Landers, The Rovers, the Ice Landers, the Green Landers and many more. They adopted different techniques and strategies to drive home their resource control agitations. The prominent techniques include hostage-taking, kidnapping, canalization of oil rigs, pipelines, platforms and flow stations.

The political class and leaders of thought swiftly responded to the consciousness raised by MOSOP among the minority peoples of Niger Delta concerning their citizenship rights by forming South-South Peoples Assembly on 9th November 2004 at the ancient city of Calabar. The Dr. Raymond Dokpesi's body has the most influential, "shakers and movers" courageous, and confident stakeholders in the oil-rich region but man-made devastated region as pioneer members Tamuno (2012 p. 184) provides that:

Its front runners were the Governors of the six States in the South-South geo-political zone: Cross-River; Akwa Ibom; Delta; Edo; Rivers; and Bayelsa. Its other leaders included Chief Edwin Kiagbodo Clark, former Vice-President Admiral Augustus Aikhomo, former Chief of General Admiral Mike Akhigbe, former Senate President Dr. Joseph Wayas, Ambassador Matthew Mbu, former Service Chiefs, former Governors, Senators, Ministers, Speakers of the State Houses of Assembly, Vice-Chancellors, University Professors, SANs, Retired Justice of the Supreme Court, Honourable Justice Adolplus Karibi-Whyte, among others.

Being wonderfully inspired by the non-violent agitation as laid down by MOSOP, the South-South delegates from the Region staged the famous united "walk-out" from the National Political Reform Conference (NRC) organized by the Federal Government at Abuja in 2005 (Daminabo, 2005, Tamuno, 2012, Nathaniel, 2012). The spontaneous or "an event not rehearsed" (Tamuno, 2012 p. 188), which was led by Chief Edwin Kiagbodo Clark, was caused by the controversial stand of the Northern delegates on resource control. Orji and N-ue (2014 p. 122) reiterate that:

The Niger Delta interest was the common desire to produce the next president of Nigeria and the control of resources that God has given to them. The Niger Delta people demanded a total of the resources generated from the region in the spirit of true federalism: This demand was met with stiff resistance from especially delegates from the North who saw no justification for the demand.... The hospitable people of Niger Delta reclined on their earlier decision and settled for a 50 percent deviation formulae. This was again resented by the Northern delegates. Still acting in the spirit of "one Nigeria", sliced their demand

from 50 percent to 25 percent but this was again greeted with stiff resistance and complete denial.

Conclusion

The paper has critically analyzed the truth in the epithet: Ogoni minority activism: A metaphor for minorities' struggle in Nigeria. The paper has abundantly shown that tension is inevitable in a majority-minority group's structure where one is the 'hammer' and the other the 'anvil'. The failure of Nigeria government to correct the structural imbalance and the consequent marginalization, oppression, suppression and discrimination of the minorities' ethnic groups that the Ogoni people led by MOSOP championed the cause of their betterment within the framework of Nigeria's federalism.

The work has also shown that people's requests are not outrageous and divisive but are legitimate and democratic. The federal government paid them lip service, insensitivity, constant neglect and heavy bloody onslaughts. This called for the internationalization of the struggle which exposed these ills to the outside world and attracted huge and significant benefits to the minorities of Niger Delta, Nigeria. Little surprise, therefore, the Late Prof Claude Ake engraved on our minds that:

For better or for worse, MOSOP and Ogoniland are the consciousness of this country. They have risen above our slave culture of silence. They have found the courage to be free and they have evolved a political consciousness, which denies power to rogues, hypocrites, fools and bullies. For better or for worse Ogoniland carries our hopes. Battered and bleeding, it struggles on to realize our dignity. If it falters, we die (as cited in Daminabo, 2005 p. 368).

From the foregoing discourse, it is plausible to conclude that MOSOP is not a self-recognized, self-centered, and ethnic based socio-cultural organization for Ogoni project alone. Rather it is a metaphoric representation and bearer of the plights, cries, and agitations of all minority ethnic groups in the 20th century Niger Delta and Nigeria. Stressing this point, Obasanjo (1994 p. 26) has this to say:

Ogoni is symbolic of most minorities' plight and thinking all over the country: No matter how we perceive their claim, it is an issue that must be put on the table. There are many Ogonis (sic), our dispensation must allow for the right of minorities, including the enjoyment of part of the God-given resource in their area and there must be a delicate balance between the rights and interest of all Nigerians. We must listen to them. We must get to know their special problem. We must respond warmly and imaginatively to their special demands.

This is also the position of Daminabo (2008 p. 288) who emphasises that "Saro-Wiwa actually did not fight for his Ogoni people alone. Rather he used the Ogoni as a metaphor for the entire ethnic nations of Nigeria, if not Africa.

The paper also contends that true federalism which is anchored on true justice, fairness, equity, and liberty should be practiced by the Nigerian State. It argues that if true federalism is adopted, minorities' discontentment in Nigeria in particular and Africa in general would be reduced significantly if not eradicated completely. Stern (1944 p. 231) strongly avers

that a "minority is discontented not because there is no national union, but because it does not enjoy liberty of conscience, liberty of movement, and so on. Give it these liberties and it ceases to be discontented. "

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