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In every productive process, regulatory provisions are put in place to ensure best practices, quality and sustainability. In the exploitation of oil resources in Nigeria, the political will required in enforcing institutionalized rules for optimal output is lacking. As such what obtains is operational negligence and corruption leading to oil theft, harmful gas emission, recurring oil spillage and environmental pollution. The study adopted the Frustration-Aggression theory to explain and predict the variables. Exploratory research technique was employed and content analysis of secondary data was done. Findings revealed that while the Niger Delta oil producing areas suffer the consequences of poor regulatory enforcement, oil companies and opportunistic groups continue in self-aggrandizing exploitation, resulting in pervasive poverty, frustration, militancy and other security challenges in the region. The paper recommended reengineering of the oil and gas sector regulatory framework to ensure transparency, accountability and effective enforcement strategy for environmental sustainability, optimal output, and inclusive growth.

Keywords: Governance, Human Security, Oil Spillage, Gas Flaring, Regulatory framework.

Introduction

Oil and gas contributes to government revenue through royalties paid by oil companies, petroleum profit tax, rents and other fees ranging from the granting of various forms of operating licenses such as oil exploration licenses (OELS), Oil Pipeline licenses (OPL) and Oil Mining Licenses and Leased (OMLs). Of all these sources of revenue, petroleum profit tax is the most significant, accounting for above 60% of the total revenue from petroleum sources. The share of the petroleum sector in GDP significantly rose in the 1970s. During the period 1975-1984, oil GDP accounted for 23.75% of the total revenue share, while the share of agricultural sector fell from 35.45% - 21% (Ubogu, 1979:58 cited in Orubu, 1996:4). Remarkably, Crude oil receipts provided

90% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and about 80% of budgetary revenue, with export receipts of about \$90b in 2011 (CBN, 2012). The Oil and Gas (O&G) industry has maintained its lead as the economic mainstay of the country, regardless of government policies intended for inclusive sector growth, especially targeting the contributory potentials in Agriculture and Mining. Though the oil and gas sector contribution to the nation's economy is less than 10% of the country's GDP, it contributes about 65% of government revenue and 88% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings (KPMG, 2019).

The impact of petrodollar in the country's economy is pervasive and a strong determinant for growth and development. The potential of oil and gas is evident in the provision of infrastructural and investment

capital needed for economic transformation. The role of the petroleum sector is also visible in the county's fiscal and budgetary policies, and a factor in the micro and macro indices of the nation's economy. Contrariwise, this impact is also measurably evident in the issues of environmental sustainability regarding operational dynamics of oil and gas exploitation, which portends major consequences for the maximization of oil revenue and daily lives of host communities. Trend in the oil and gas output figures shows unsteady flows over the years indicating vulnerability of the sector to environmental complexities (Olusegun 2008; <https://africacheck.org>).

In the Nigerian federal system, the oil and gas sector is owned and controlled by the government, headed by the Minister of petroleum and centrally operated through joint venture agreements with Multinational Oil Companies (MNCs). Hence, it is argued that extent of government's regulatory capacity, political prioritization, and utilization of assets and opportunities in the sector is largely responsible for profitability and human security outcomes (Bronkhorst, 2011; Owen 2004). Though, regulatory provisions are put in place to ensure best practices, the sector is rift with problems of environmental hazards at various stages of exploration, giving rise to existential challenges in the host areas of operation. The UNDP captures the situation when it maintained that the "appalling development situation in oil producing regions reflects the uncontestable fact that after half a century of oil extraction, the vast resources from an international industry have barely touched pervasive local poverty (UNDP, 2006; Watts, 2008).

Governance and Human Security Conceptualized

The broad concept of governance is deliberately narrowed to provide a turf in the direction of argument presented in this work. In this regards, governance is seen as the act of governing, and the problematic interplay between the state and civil society encompassing the private sector (Regional Development Dialogue, 1998). The UNDP in aligning with the World Bank define governance as the totality of the exercise of authority in the management of a country's affairs, comprising of the complex mechanism, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulates their interests, exercise their legal rights and mediate difference (UNDP, 1997). The idea is that through an effective collaboration between the state, civil society and the private sector, based on a participatory principle, there would be development dividend from governance.

The concept of governance as a process emphasizes rules, procedures and formal organization of government. According to Walter & DiMaggio (1991), the act of governance deals with the enforcement of rules, which guide or constrain the behaviour of individual actors. These rules, moreover, are as likely to be informal as formal, policy-making processes, sometimes being shaped more by unwritten conventions or understandings than by formal arrangements. Thus, just as actors within an institutional setting are socialized to accept key rules and procedures, the institution itself operates within a larger and more fundamental body of assumptions and practices.

The World Bank interprets governance as the capacity of governments

to design, formulate, and implement policies and discharge contractual functions. In this regards, the quality of policy-making and implementation is germane to service delivery. In this sense, governance is treated as both activity and process that sets the parameters for how policy is made and implemented. It becomes an exercise that influences outcomes; formation and stewardship of the formal and informal rules that regulate the public realm, the arena in which state as well as economic and societal actors interact to make decisions (The World Bank 1992).

Human Security

Throughout history people have been killed by several other nontraditional security threats other than military conflict, which has continued to attract global security concern (Al-Roldhan, 2008). As such alternative views of security have become increasingly pronounced. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, state that the concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly e.g security threat from external aggression, protection of national interest in foreign policy or global security threat of nuclear holocaust. Security has narrowly been linked to the nation state more than the people, forgetting where the legitimate concerns of ordinary people lies in their daily lives. Thus to UNDP, security should encompass protection from threat of diseases, hunger, unemployment, crime, (or terrorism), social conflict, political repression and environmental (UNDP, 1994). This view focusing on the human occupants of the state, rather than the traditional focus on the states' territorial protection shaped the human security concept.

The UNDP Human Development Report of 1994 attempt to draw global attention to the new order of security based on seven dimensions of focus in guaranteeing security; namely economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security. This view thus encompasses tackling impediments to human freedom, and dignity of human life, not necessarily on the concerns of weapons. It denotes safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. It implies protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life- whether in homes, in jobs or in communities (UNDP 1994). Human security incorporates the creation of the social political, economic, military, environmental and cultural conditions necessary for the survival, livelihood, and dignity of the individual, including the protection of fundamental freedoms, the respect for human rights, good governance, access to education, healthcare, and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his/her potential (AU Summit Meeting of July 2004). It also entails taking practical, preventive measures to reduce or eliminate the vulnerability of human beings and taking remedial action when prevention fails (Knight, 2008).

Sen (1989) argues that human security is a fundamental part of broader development processes, integrally connected with securing human capabilities. In this context, illiteracy and innumeracy are forms of insecurity in themselves, as lack of education hinders people's capacities to make informed decisions concerning their lives. The role of states and governments is therefore singled out in eliminating threats and vulnerabilities

as well as providing the supporting conditions and opportunities for individuals to overcome these threats. As argued by Anderson (2014), the protection and empowerment of individuals is the duty of state and its institutions. It alludes to a state-driven broad process that is geared towards the expansion of individual choices, capabilities and opportunities. This implies that with states living up to its expectation regarding security, people live under secured socioeconomic condition to sustain their daily living, which includes economic safety nets, health care, basic education, political and social inclusion. Ironically, the state being the foundation of human security, is on the other hand one of the primary sources of insecurity.

The Frustration-Aggression Theory

Frustration and Aggression according to Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mower, and Sears (1939) is the result of frustration. That frustration builds when there is disparity between value expectation and value capabilities. It is derived from assumption that human behavior is contingent on environmental determinism, in creating organic human response to negative stimuli. Frustration creates strong emotion which very often finds an outlet through aggressive and invariably violent disposition towards the environment (Myers, 1996). According to Freud's early psychoanalytic theory anchors on human biological desire, to explain that human actions are determined by instincts, particularly the sexual instinct. When expression of these instincts is frustrated, an aggressive drive is induced. Thus the hypothesis follows that whenever a person's effort to reach any goal is blocked, an aggressive drive is induced that

motivates behaviour towards the entity causing the frustration (Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith, Daryl & Hoeksema, 1993).

Aggression is recognized as a malicious behavior, attitude or deviant behaviors towards someone or something, usually triggered by frustration. However, one is not unmindful of the problems and limitations of the frustration-aggression thesis, such as the fact that an aggressive response to frustration may be dependent upon the individual's level of tolerance. Or the fact that frustration need not lead to aggression or that aggression need not always be negative and violent, but could also be positive and constructive. However, it is an established fact that frustration does produce a temporary increase in motivation, and thus lead to more vigorous responses (Bandura and Walters, 1963). There is therefore sufficient generality to provide a basis for the explanation of various forms of aggressive behaviour, including political violence.

The effects of oil around the Niger Delta communities and its environment have been massive. Local indigenous people are suffering from the impact of oil and gas exploration on their natural environment. There are evidences of severe pollution of the air, poisoning of soil, waters and the destruction of vegetation together with agricultural lands as a result of gas emission and oil spillage which takes place during extraction of petroleum resources. Consequences of these abound poor health, education, loss of social identity, family and communal life to dehumanization of men, women and children especially in areas where rape, child abuse and neglect are used as an instrument of war. This has resulted to deepening frustration, anger, hunger and poverty, which leads to

agitations and criminality as a survival strategy. Hence armed insurrection against military and civilian targets in the Niger Delta by militant youths is directed against government and the foreign oil companies with view of getting attention for redress. (Turkson, 2016).

Regulatory Framework for Oil and Gas Operations in Nigeria

Oil and gas exploration is prone to environmental hazards at different stages operation; hence regulatory provisions are put in place to ensure best practices as contained in the petroleum Industry Act.

Gas Sector Regulations

The law regulating the incidence of gas flaring in Nigeria is the Associated Gas Re-Injection Act (AGRA) enacted in 1979. By this law, oil and gas companies in Nigeria are expected to submit their programmes and schedule for the implementation of gas re-injection. As stated in Eghosa (2016); Olabode, Oyewunmi, Olusola & Olujobi, (2016):

Section 1 of the Act states that every firm producing oil and gas in Nigeria must submit to the Minister of Petroleum a preliminary programme encompassing:

- (a) Schemes for the viable utilization of all associated gas produced from a field or groups of fields; and
- (b) Project or projects to re-inject all gas produced in association with oil but not utilized in an industrial project.

Furthermore, Section 1 of the AGRA Regulation regulates the issuance of certificates authorizing the continuation of gas flaring, such certificates are issued when the following conditions are met:

- a) where more than seventy-five per cent of the produced gas is effectively utilized or conserved;
- (b) where the produced gas contains more than fifteen per cent impurities, such as N₂, H₂S, CO₂, etc. which render the gas unsuitable for industrial purposes;
- (c) where an on-going utilisation program is interrupted by equipment failure: Provided that such failures are not considered too frequent by the Minister and that the periods of interruption is not more than three months;
- (d) where the ratio of the volume of gas produced per day to the distance of the field from the nearest gas line or possible utilisation point is less than 50,000 SCF/KM: Provided that the Gas to Oil ratio of the field is less than 3,500 SCF/bbl, and that it is not technically advisable to re-inject the gas in that field;
- (e) where the Minister, in appropriate cases as he may deem fit, orders the production of oil from a field that does not satisfy any of the conditions specified in these Regulations.

In addition to the stated code above, the Nigerian government included in Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2001 that “any licensee who flares or vents gas without the permission of the Minister in (special) circumstances shall be liable to pay a fine which shall not be less than the value of gas’.

Section 2 of the AGRA oil and gas companies were obliged to submit to the Minister plans for gas re-injection.

Sections 3 and 4 of the AGRA, gas flaring is prohibited, except with the

consent of the Minister. Also, under Section 3, any oil and gas company engaging in gas flaring without a certificate by the Minister is engaging in unlawful activities and such a firm “shall forfeit the concession granted in the particular field.

The Oil Sector Regulations

Eghosa (2016); Olabode, Oyewunmi, Olusola & Olujobi, (2016) provided insight regarding regulatory laws in the Oil sector as follows;

That the Navigable Waters Act, 205 under Section 1, prohibits the discharge of oil from a Nigerian ship into its territorial waters.

Section 25 of the Petroleum Regulations 1969 (PDPR) enjoins oil licensees or lessees to: adopt all practicable precautions including the provision of up to-date equipment approved by the Director of Petroleum Resources, to prevent the pollution of inland waters, rivers, water courses, the territorial waters of Nigeria or the high seas by oil, mud or other fluids or substances which might contaminate the water, banks or shoreline or which might cause harm or destruction to fresh water or marine life and where any such pollution occurs or has occurred, shall take prompt steps to address it.

Section 35 of the PDPR, states that abandonment of oil boreholes and wells are prohibited except allowed in writing by the Director and derelict wells and boreholes must be secured properly.

Section 36 of the PDPR enjoins oil companies (licensees or lessees) to undertake their activities or “operations in a proper and workmanlike manner” in accordance with “good oil field practices.” It also advises oil companies to maintain and keep their apparatus in good condition.

Section 40 of the PDPR enjoins the oil companies (licensees and lessees) to dispose of oil wastes from storage vessels into proper receptacles constructed in accordance with the law (Petroleum Act). Also, the waste collected must be disposed of in the way and manner approved of by the Director of Petroleum Resources or as provided by any applicable law or regulations. Under PDPR, the oil MNCs have obligation to decommission their oil facilities (when no longer being used) and restore the damaged land in that area to as far possible to its pre-existing condition.

The Petroleum Refining Regulations (PRR) 1974. Paragraph 43 (3) of the PRR provides thus:

That the Manager shall adopt all practicable precautions including the provision of up to-date equipment as may be specified by the Director from time to time, to prevent the pollution of the environment by petroleum or petroleum products; and where such pollution occurs the manager shall take prompt steps to control and, if possible, end it.

Under Section 45(1), a contravention of this regulation carries financial penalty or imprisonment for a term of six months. Furthermore, various sanctions are prescribed by the Petroleum Act to promote the enforcement of the aforementioned regulations. Sanctions include the power of arrest without warrant, exercised by the Minister of Petroleum, over any person suspected of committing any offence in contravention of the act or its regulations by virtue of Section 8(d) of the Petroleum Act.

Some of the subsidiary regulations include the Mineral Oils (Safety) Regulations, Petroleum Regulations, Petroleum Regulations 1969, Petroleum

Refinery Regulations 1974, Crude Oil (Transportation and Shipment) Regulations, Deep Water Block Allocations to Companies (Back in Rights) Regulations and Oil Prospecting Licenses (Conversion to Oil Mining Leases etc.). The Petroleum (Drilling and Production) Regulations 1969 and the Petroleum Refining Regulations 1974: These subsidiary regulations were made by the Minister by virtue of the powers conferred on him by Section 9 of the Petroleum Act.

Critique of Nigeria Oil and Gas Regulatory Framework

The existing oil and gas laws are weak in terms of provisions for transparency and accountability and most of the laws including the policies are outdated and not in tune with the contemporary realities in the global oil and gas sector. Government requires companies in the oil and gas industry to avail detailed reports of their operations to the relevant regulatory bodies. They perform on-site inspections such as checks of documents as well as identification of leakages and verification of compliance with other standards. However, there is generally poor enforcement and implementation of oil and gas regulations for a defaulting corporation. The issues are as follows;

1. The regulatory provision appears too flexible and tends to bestow undue discretionary powers on the Petroleum minister, giving room for compromises, corruption, political considerations, with transparency and accountability deficit.
2. Also, the fines provided by the law against gas flaring are minimal thus gas flaring continues unabated as the sanctions do not serve as adequate deterrent to oil MNCs. For instance, the penalty for violation,

which is imprisonment for six months or one year, is not a strong deterrent against gas flaring given the inability or reluctance of the Nigerian state to prosecute related cases, as emphases is placed on economic considerations (Eghosa 2016).

3. As argued by Eghosa 2016), part of inability to enforce existing regulatory provision is the fact that most of the oil MNCs that engage in gas flaring activities are in joint venture agreements with the Nigerian National Petroleum Limited, as such Nigeria is unable to garner the moral and political will to impose sanctions for gas flaring.
4. The fines to be paid by MNCs as stated in PIA that 'shall not be less than the value of gas,' appears ambiguous as there are doubts if either the government or oil MNCs are committed to calculating the value of the gas flared

It would appear that oil MNCs have effectively enfeebled the regulatory regime in the oil and gas sector, as it can be argued that there is no evidence of regulatory agency in Nigeria that has instituted civil or criminal actions against the oil MNCs for breaching the provisions of the laws in the oil and gas industry and sanctions imposed. This has made the oil MNCs to be more arbitrary in their activities (Eghosa, 2016; Olabode, Oyewunmi, Olusola & Olujobi, 2016).

Lack of transparency and corruption is endemic in the oil and gas sector, and both the MNCs and government officials are involved in covert unlawful practices. Some oil MNCs engage in bribery and corruption to facilitate their stake in the

lucrative oil contracts in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria. Also, illegal bunkering or criminal theft of crude oil trade in the Niger Delta is said to be committed by members of the Nigerian military, politicians, some high ranking officials of the NNPC and retired military officers. Thus what obtain is operational breach of contractual terms with consequences for environmental safety and sustainability (Eghosa, 2016; Olabode, Oyewunmi, Olusola & Olujobi, 2016).

Poor Regulatory Enforcement: Consequences for Environmental Sustainability

The consequential issues are discussed as follows;

Gas Flaring

Gas flaring is mainly occasioned by the activities of the oil multinational corporations in the oil and gas sector. These oil multinationals are practically violating the tenets of Nigerian oil and gas sector laws; this is evident in the sustained gas flaring in the Niger Delta (Amnesty Int'l, supra note 111, at 18). Nigeria is argued to have the second largest amount of natural gas flares in the world behind Russia. About 2.5 billion cubic feet of associated gas is wasted in Nigeria. In contemporary exploration MNC such as Shell, Exxon Mobil, Chevron Texaco, Agip and Total FinElf, amongst others and by extension NNPC limited which they are in joint venture arrangements with are culprits to gas flaring in Nigeria (<http://www.eia.gov/countries/analysisbriefs/Nigeria/nigeria.pdf>).

Oil Spillage

Some of the major MNCs, who are joint venture operators, endeavor to set and maintain corporate environmental

guidelines, while many others exceed international standards. Unfortunately, the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) whose mandate is to facilitate rapid investigations of spills by joint inspection teams have not sufficiently organized to ensure speedy remediation. According to the official estimate of the NNPC based on the quantities reported by operating companies between 1976 and 1996, a total of 4,835 incidents resulting in spillage, and at least 2,446,332 barrel (102.7 million Us gallons (77%) were lost to the environment. Shell's figure indicates that since 1989 about 190 cases of oil spillage occur yearly in Nigeria. This has been estimated to be 25 million barrel spills each year (The Guardian, Thursday, Feb.25, 2004:3). A report from the department of petroleum resources also stated that 95% of the volume of oil spilled in the region is still not recovered. The federal government that is in joint venture partnerships with prospecting oil companies has admitted that 40,000 oil spills has occurred in the past 50 years of exploration (Aluko, 2004; Eghosa, 2016).

As recorded in Vanguard (2008), it is estimated that in over 40 years of oil exploration and production in Nigeria, over 60,000 spills have been recorded, and over 2,000,000 barrels were discharged into the regions eco-system from oil spillages alone between 1976 and 1996. In 1997 and 1998, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) spilled 106,000 from its installations at Jones creek alone. In January 1998, Mobil recorded its worst spillage at the Idoho offshore site which spread within 30 days from Akwa-Ibom to Lagos. Within the first months of 2008 alone, Nigeria recorded 418 cases of oil spills

Consequences for Environmental Sustainability

Much of the 'associated gas' generated in the regions of oil exploration is flared daily. This unburned carbon is transported into homes and working areas, and all vegetation around are destroyed. Gas flare is the major source of sustained health irrespective of changing dynamics of the weather, including night and day. Under this discomfiting condition, aquatic habitats are forced to relocate to other parts of the waters far from the Niger delta zone for sustainable habitation including breeding. Gas flaring is also a factor in the loss of vital vegetations and forestry, as well as atmospheric pollution. According to Eyinla and Ukpo (2006), damages to buildings, acid rain formation, depletion of floral periodicity, discomfort to humans and danger of pulmonary disease epidemic are environmental problems associated with gas flaring. As stated, the soil, rivers and creeks of Niger Delta, which used to be alkaline in nature 17-40 years ago, have now, become dangerously acidic.

As asserted by Eyinla and Ukpo (2006), the greatest single environmental problem associated with the petroleum industry in contemporary Nigeria, result from off-shore and on-shore oil spillage. Useable agricultural land has been reduced drastically as most lands has been made infertile and unproductive and some, with no possibility of it being ever redeemed for forest and agricultural use. Most oil spillage are caused by blow-outs, corrosion, equipment failure, operational error and pipeline vandalization, effective which regulatory enforcement ought to check and curtail. Osuagwu & Olaifa (2018); Amnesty International (2013) pointed out some of the specific impacts of oil spills as it relates

to the destruction of the wetlands these include; loss of fish, crustaceans and other aquatic resources, loss of livelihood through loss of fishing grounds and gears, wildlife migration, destruction of farmlands, reduced agricultural productivity and yield, displacement of inhabitants, spread of water borne epidemics, to mention a few.

Resulting from unethical practices during extraction process, hazardous water is released with other contaminants like sludge from storage tanks, oil debris, gaseous pollutants and sanitary wastes. Also during oil refining process, chemicals and pollutants such as hydrogen sulphide, oil and grease, ammonia and toxic heavy metals are discharged into the environment. The process of distribution is associated with disruption of the sea bed by dredging activities for pipeline installation, beside malfunctioning flow stations and other oil installations. Sedimentation also occurs along pipeline channels, besides pollution from tank washing, deck drainage and loading operations. Consequences of this is evident in daily devastation of the environment, especially sensitive regions like the lowlands, wetlands, fish ponds and farmlands (Osuagwu & Olaifa, 2018; Pegg and Zabbey 2013).

Consequences for Human Security

A well governed oil sector will yield the benefit of environmental sustainability and socioeconomic inclusivity in Niger Delta region. A fair deal with the Niger delta region in this regards, will generate network of modern infrastructure such as good road networks linking each state in the region with the rest of the country, electricity, pipe borne water, primary and secondary schools, well equipped hospitals, better and more modern equipments for exploitation of the region's fish and fauna etc.

(International Energy Agency, (2017). However, what obtains from a relationship characterized by gross exploitation and deprivation resulting from poor regulatory measure and lack of sensitivity on the part of government and MNCs is discussed as follows:

Sustained Poverty Crisis

Majority of the inhabitants of the Niger Delta depend on their environment for livelihood. They depend on their land for agriculture, fishing and the collection of farm and forest products, which represent the main sources of food (Amnesty Int'l, supra note 111). However, environmental degradation occasioned by the activities of oil multinational firms has caused serious disruption to the livelihoods of the inhabitants of the region and exacerbated the levels of poverty. The Harmonized Nigeria Living Standard Survey pegs the average household size at 6 per household with those living below the poverty line of \$1.00 to be 67% in Bayelsa; 56% in Rivers and Delta states (HNLSS 2010). Federal statistics put the incidence of poverty in the core Niger Delta at 44% (Bayelsa State), 57% (Delta state), and 47% (Rivers State). The region has had an average incidence of poverty of 44.15% in the past 8 years with rural poverty peaking at 68%. A self-assessment/Perception index puts the incidence of poverty in the region at 74.8%, way more than per capita and income methods show Intensity of deprivation is at 57.3% while the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) pegs the percentage population living below the income poverty line at 68% ((UNDP 2006; World Bank/NBS 2010; UNDP 2013; Zibima, T. & Okoye, A. (2015).

While there are chronic poverty and other associated challenges of sustainability, this contrast sharply with the

enormous wealth being extracted from the region. A World Bank Report (in PEFS, 2004) observes that the level and pattern of poverty in the Niger-Delta is endemic. The Gross National Product (GNP) per capita is below the national average of US\$280. The unemployment level in the River states capital of Port Harcourt is 30 percent, and is believed to be equally high in the rural areas. Educational levels is also below the national average and are particularly low for women. As indicated, while 76 percent of Nigerian children attend primary school, this figure drops to 30 – 40 percent in some parts of the Niger-Delta. The poverty level in the Niger-Delta is exacerbated by the high cost of living. In the urban areas of Rivers State, the cost of living index is the highest in Nigeria. The poverty indicators of the region are manifestation of the existence of a complete low level of development that has also resulted in high degree of dissatisfaction” (PEFs, 2004; Eghosa 2016).

Insecurity

Spurred by deprivation and frustration, youth of the Niger Delta regions have engaged in militancy and other extra-judicial means to make their voices heard. This has resulted in counter measures on the part of government using the instrumentality of arms and force. The divide and rule approach of government aimed to weaken the cohesion of the people in fighting for a common course, has propelled communities and ethnic groups at loggerhead with each other, and engaging in violent conflict. However, there have been frequent communal disturbances which disrupt crude production as oil communities' clamor for higher stake in oil operations. Arising from decades of oil exploration in the region have

systematically created circumstances that have significantly contributed to the emergence of unsustainable alternative livelihood activities. There are reported cases of oil bunkering, pipeline vandalization and massive smuggling of petroleum products across the borders in quest for foreign exchange as a means of survival. The people's choices are limited to one where survival invariably leads to continued environmental destruction (Inyang,, 2018; Dialoke, & Edeja, 2017; Mgbonyenbi & Emeni, 2020).

Poor Commitment to Social Corporate Responsibility

Social corporate responsibility among others include making provisions for gainful employment through engagement of indigenes in ancillary engagements in the oil and gas sector. Also viable economic empowerment programmes and infrastructural development initiatives that impact directly on social welfare as embodied in corporate social responsibility is explored. Unfortunately, most MNCs are only committed to building roads that will be of strategic benefit for exploration engagements e.g opening-up new and lucrative oil fields. They are also able to generate electricity to power their numerous sites within the communities, without bothering to link their immediate hosts to the same grid, even when it is cost-effective to do so (Eyinla and Ukpo (2006). It is therefore in the midst of this sense of deprivation that social discontent continue to brew, as the people watch despairingly as their resources is exploited and frittered away, while they bear the brunt of indiscriminate exploitation and rapist approach to oil and gas sector engagement.

Health

Pollution from gas flaring has impacted negatively on the health of the people by causing serious damage to human, animal and plant life in the area, as nature's rhythms have been disrupted. They have been increased incidence of certain disease like bronchial asthma, upper respiratory track disease, gastroenteritis, chronic bronchitis, cancer, diseased long function, blindness, impotence, miscarriage and premature deaths, and children suffer from hearing problems because of the noise associated with gas flaring (Aluko, 2004:65, Adesina, 2012:12). Water pollution also impact negatively on aquatic and human health in the region.

Conclusive Findings

Findings of the study are as follows; That oil and gas firms in Nigeria have not shown adequate commitment in promoting sustainable international best practices in their operational activities in recent years.

Most of the activities in the oil and gas sector are shrouded in secrecy and government has not shown enough transparency and accountability its regulatory engagements.

The incidences of environmental pollution currently bedevils the Niger Delta region, evident in sustained gas flaring, oil spills resulting from weak regulatory and enforcement policies.

Partnership between the NNPC and the MNCs in joint oil and gas ventures e.g explorations, does enable government to exercise its political leverage in decisively regulating activities in the sector.

Environmental damages results from practically unregulated extractive practices, refining and distribution processes, which negatively impact on the livelihood of the

people, resulting to frustration and aggression evident in incessant agitations and militancy in the region.

Recommendations

Solutions require the collective will and effort of the industry players like the MNCs, government, and even the citizens: Government should provide stronger guidelines and professional oversight over oil and gas exploitation in the region. To forestall incessant oil spill and gas flaring, ageing pipelines, as well as drilling and refining equipment's, they should be check, and effective regulations should be applied to ensure compliance. However, there is need for holistic environmental review of the oil and gas producing region and possible remediation of all areas adversely affected by the extraction of oil and gas.

Youths should be empowered by engaging them in entrepreneurship programs in areas of mentoring, apprenticeships, internships, internet access, business incubators, and contract guarantees. Also by expanding and modernizing traditional livelihoods such as agriculture and fisheries. Introducing new techniques and inputs, introducing modern production methods, e.g. integrated poultry and fish farming etc.

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