

# Effect of Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons on the Development of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

The study was a survey of the sources of small arms and their effects on the development of the South-South Zone of Nigeria. The study was conducted in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The data used for the project were the responses of youths, staff and adults randomly selected from the research area. The Mean and Simple Percentage Method formulae were used to analyze the data and interpret the results. The results revealed that it was not the advent of small arms but oil multinationals activities, insensitivity and long years of neglect that caused the insecurity in the Niger Delta. The Federal Government of Nigeria made no genuine effort to develop the region until the creation of Niger Delta Development Commission in the year 2000. The study concludes that rather than cause the insecurity situation in the Niger Delta, small arms aided the militants to panic the Federal Government into accepting development as the indispensable solution to the Niger Delta question. The study recommended adequate funding and supervision of Niger Delta Development Commission and accountability of the part of Commission officials to at least realize the 15 years of the Commissions Master Plan.

## INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons poses serious challenges to both international and national security especially in most of the developing countries of the world to the extent that the states are losing their traditional monopoly over the control of the instrument of violence. Small arms trade has been difficult to estimate and much more difficult to control. Most governments do not publish statistics on transfer of small arms; worst still are private companies who are highly secretive about arms deals. Much of the trade is carried out through black markets and other illicit transfers.

African states witnessed the most destructive and violent conflicts at the tail end of the 1980s and 1990s. From the genocide in Rwanda, the almost decade long conflict in Liberia (1989-1997), the Sierra Leone crisis, the bloody crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as the conflict in Mali have all gone to show the extent of small arms and light weapons wreaking havoc on the continent. In assessing the African region in the third quarter of the twentieth century, Bruce Arlinghouse (1984) did not hesitate to conclude that in Africa, "Development is security and security is development." Indeed there are several flash points that have remained so for a long while across the African continent. What makes these flash points thick is the availability and widespread use of small arms and light weapons. Without these small arms and light weapons, conflicts and crises would not be prolonged as they have been in parts of Africa. The spread of small arms and light weapons and its degree of proliferation has reached an alarming proportion especially in the developing world of Latin America, Asia and Africa that the weapons have now come to undermine the stability of most of the countries of the developing world directly and indirectly. In some cases, non-state actors possess enormous small weapons to transform political dissent into armed conflicts.

Nigeria is one of the frontline victims of prolonged internal strife occasioned by small arms diffusion; and the worst victim of this growing violence and the attendant repercussions in Nigeria is the Niger Delta region. The historically sedentary Niger Delta region covers over 7,000 square kilometres of the rain forest belt with swamp and mangrove vegetation. It is inhabited by the Binis, Efiks, Ibibios, Igbos, Ijaws, Itsekiris, Ogonis and Yorubas. Their lands, rivers and lakes have been their greatest possession. Presently the Niger Delta constitutes the states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers. The south-south geo-political zone of the country is the largest part of the Niger Delta, which comprises the five states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta and Rivers. The discovery of crude oil in Oloibiri Village (Rivers State) in 1956 and its first exportation in 1958 attracted a number of successful competitors in the exploration and drilling of crude oil in the Niger Delta. Today, the South-South Geopolitical Region is the source of Nigeria's oil wealth; accounting for over 90 percent of the country's export earnings.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The diffusion of small arms and light weapons in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria was alarming. Today, the Federal Government of Nigeria cannot estimate the amount of small arms and light weapons in the Country. How these weapons become available to non-state actors; and the repercussions of the life lingering armed conflicts on the development of the South-South Region has remained a national issue. The most outstanding development effort of the federal Government was the creation of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) by an Act of Parliament in the year 2000. The NDDC mandate was to facilitate the “rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful”. Except for the commission’s relative achievement in the Federal Government near zero gas flare programme for 2004; the long awaited rapid development is just becoming a reality in the South-South states after thirteen years of its creation. Most Nigerians and scholars, both local and international, call this ‘obvious governmental neglect’ while others, especially on the Nigerian Government side, blame it on prolonged militancy occasioned by availability of modern small arms.

## HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no relationship between militants’ access to small arms and prolonged insecurity in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will contribute to the existing literature on the Niger Delta question, the departments of Peace and Conflict Studies and political Science in general. It will further generate agitation in the minds of would-be readers and spur further research works on this subject. The findings and recommendations of this study would also improve the management of conflicts-related development challenges in the Niger Delta Region and other flashpoints in Nigeria.

## SCOPE

To achieve the purpose of this research work, the study will endeavour to:

1. Highlight the immediate and remote causes of the insecurity in the Niger Delta Region.
2. Identify the sources of small arms used by militants in the South-South Geopolitical Region of Nigeria.
3. Explore the extent to which the employment of small arms prolonged the internal security question in the South-South Region of Nigeria; and how this prolonged insecurity hindered or otherwise the rapid development of the Region.

The human development proponents are interested in the factors that affect the growth and development of the human person integrally. On this premise, Todaro (1982) defines development as a process of improving the quality of all human lives; which is believed to be taking place when the people’s living levels are raised, their self-esteem promoted, and their freedom to choose and the range of their choice variables enlarged. The UNDP (1990) similarly defines development as the improvement in the quality of life of the people as measured by longevity of life, nutrition, literacy and access to health care and education; with the appropriate measures being the human development index based on life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate and purchasing power in lieu of GNP. Walter Rodney (1986) feels that development takes place when members of a given society jointly increase their capacity for dealing with their environment in order to use the products of such endeavours to cater for their welfare and build an integrated society. Rodney emphasizes that the goal of development is to create a total man who would not only be useful to himself but also to his environment:

Development in human society is a many-sided process. At the level of individual, it implies increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well being.....; at the level of social groups, it implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relations...(Rodney, 1986:9).

Ezeanyika (1990) and The South Commission (1993) provide a holistic conception of development. In the view of Ezeanyika, understanding development goes beyond the confines of economics and includes more than the material and financial well being of people and the social aspect of live. He defines development as a multifaceted process encompassing the organisation and redirecting of the entire economic, political and social systems, embodying radical changes in administrative, institutional and social structures, popular attitudes and sometimes customs and beliefs. The South Commission conceptualises development as:

A process of self-reliant growth, achieved through the participation of people under their own interest as they see them, and must be to end poverty, provide productive employment and satisfy the basic needs of all the people, any surplus being fairly shared. In addition,

development pre-supposes a democratic structure together with its supporting individual freedoms of speech, organisation and publications as well as a system of justice, which protects all the people from actions inconsistent with just laws, which are known and publicly accepted.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

There are various theories explaining the impact of conflicts on socio-economic development. Though different and sometimes opposing in ideological, political and methodological orientations; they all seek to develop general principles, images and even laws for the analysis of development. The conflict and Seers theories of development will be employed to explain the impact of small arms diffusion on the development of the South-South region of Nigeria.

### **CONFLICTS THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT**

Conflicts theories basically assume that conflict is inevitable and exorable in the affairs of men; and its impacts on society are both positive as they are negative. The Scholars agree that there are times when conflicts can positively result in healthy competition for growth; but most often, conflicts retard growth and bring friction in the situation where there should be progress. Some of the proponents argue out rightly that conflict in its final analysis is an instrument of peace and development.

One of the Theorists, John Burton, in his "World Society", (1972:136) sees conflict as "essentially a social phenomenon, with both creative and destructive manifestations". Lewis Coser (1956: 121) believes that in some respect, conflict can itself be functional for society. He argues that in the hands of a group of people who desire positive social change and development, conflict is a reliable agent but for those who want to stagnate, conflict can facilitate their ruins.

### **SEERS THEORY ON DEVELOPMENT**

Many development economists have accepted the fact that in the third world, it amounts to sheer waste of time to see and measure development through the prism of birth-death-rate and such other indices, but through the qualities of facilities of life. Consequently, the reality of the situation is that for the current and most practical measures of development, the best way is to see how far the living standard of individuals within a given society has either improved or deteriorated. Therefore, it is on better health care delivery, long life span expectancy, better nutrition, abundant supply of food and energy, good shelter, more and better schools and opportunity to participate in the political and spiritual life of the community. A summary of this new trend in development economics was given by Dudley Seers (1963:3) who says that:

The questions to ask about a country's development are therefore what has been happening to poverty? And what has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worst especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development even if per capita income is doubled).

WCED (1987:47) argue that development is conceptualized holistically, both at the levels of the individual and society. It encompasses economic growth manifesting in both economic and human developments. Human development is taken as a process of enlarging the range of people's choices from sound physical environment to economic and political freedom. It means providing infrastructural facilities; increasing the people's opportunity for education, health care resulting in low birth, death, literacy and infant mortality rates; political participation, individual and ethnic freedoms, employment and equal justice. It requires investing in people; and people contributing to GNP growth. To achieve the goals and conditions associated with development, mankind must exploit nature or the environment in a sustainable manner. In other words, Development must be sustainable; "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs".

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE SMALL ARMS PROLIFERATION IN THE SOUTH-SOUTH ZONE OF NIGERIA**

The Niger Delta became Nigeria's treasure zone on account of the discovery of crude oil in commercial quantity at OLOIBIRI Village in Rivers State and its eventual export in 1958. Akpan (2004) notes that the Region has more than 5500 oil wells, 235 flow stations and 7000 kilometres of pipelines criss-crossing the region. The quantity of its crude oil with low sulphur content is about the best in the world. This makes the region to be regarded as the light-sweet fuel coast and Supreme Gas Province.

Tell Newspaper (March 6, 2008:24) reported that the Niger Delta is indeed acknowledged the single richest geographical region in Africa. With about 25 billion barrels of crude oil (out of Africans proven 66 Billion barrels) and gas reserves of about 200 trillion cubic feet, the zone generates the bulk of Nigeria's crude oil which according to "a recent report by the Nigeria-American Chamber of Commerce shows that crude oil

accounts for 99 percent of Nigeria's export, while the rest is covered by the export of organic chemicals, rubber, cocoa, arts and handicraft'. Former President Yar'Adua of Nigeria was eminently correct in his assessment of the economic potentials of the region when he acknowledged in the Sunday Vanguard Newspaper (May 9, 2010: 11) that:

I have a firm belief that throughout the continent, the Niger Delta region has the greatest potentials for wealth creation than any other region in Africa.

The President would not be the first to give such positive remarks about the potentials of the Niger Delta region. In 1867, Wynnewood Reade described the region as the 'Venice of West Africa' and in 1897. Mary Kingsley (in Dike, 1956:19) remarked that:

I believe the greatest swamp of the Bight Biafra (Niger Delta) is the greatest in the world, and that in its immensity and gloom, it has grandeur equal to that of the Himalayas.

Akpan (2003) noted however that despite this stupendous wealth, the area is poverty ridden as a result of incidence of political marginalization, economic pauperization and environmental degradation brought about by the activities of the multinational oil companies operating in the area and long years of neglect by the National Government.

A judicial panel of inquiry set up by the Rivers State Government (and headed by a high court judge) to investigate the massacre of villagers in 1990 by security forces highlighted the plight of the villagers in the following words:

Their streams get polluted with the disposal of waste products from oil operations rendering the river void of fishes..., their farm crop planted on the remaining areas of farm get damaged by oil pollution; their economic trees are hewn down, these deprivations without any compensatory benefit cause frustration.

Akpan calls this sad state of affairs "tragedy at mid-day", Ross (1999) calls it "resource curse", Karl (1999) calls it "paradox of plenty", Collier and Hoeffler (1998, 2004) call it "lootable resources", Alao (2007) calls it the tragedy of endowment, and Umoh (2010) calls it "crisis of abundance".

Intoxicated by the huge contribution of petroleum on the national economy, the Nigerian State interest automatically shifted from the initial collections of royalties and dues from the oil companies; and the initial rudimentary laws made to regulate the activities of the oil industry. On 14 November 1969, a petroleum Decree was enacted vesting the control and ownership of mineral oil in the Nigerian State. From this period, numerous petroleum industry legislations were enacted, which include the 1997 Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Decree and the Deep Offshore and Inland Basic Production Sharing Contract Decree of 1999. The July 2002 Revised Environmental Guidelines and Standards and the controversial Onshore-Offshore Bill of 2002.

Umoh (2010) argues the danger imposed by oil activities, the Nigerian Government resource control policies and Nigeria's lopsided regulations provoked some local agitations that have now engulfed the South-South region of Nigeria. Oil spills and gas flares have polluted the lands and rivers. The local economies are destroyed and survival in the region is extremely difficult. The meagre compensations were paid through the community leaders who did not account for them. The structural adjustment programme further devalued the compensations and infrastructural facilities were completely lacking in the area. Government failure to meet these genuine aspirations forced the expression of grievances through historically prevalent socio-cultural movements like the Ijaw National Congress (INC), the movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationalities and the Association of Mineral Oil States (AMOS). Others were the Delta People Academy, the Union of Niger Delta and the National Youth Council of the Ogoni People. Some nongovernmental organisations and militant youth movements also expressed concern in support of the plight of the people. They included the Environmental Right Action, the Niger Delta Environmental Network, the Egbesu Boys, and the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP). With one voice, the 18 December 1998 KAYAMA Declaration agitated for a loose federation with the federating units controlling their resources.

Dike (1956:1-18) notes that the federal government of Nigeria indeed made conscious but panic attempts at addressing the yearnings of the Niger Delta people. In April 1994, the first policy of the oil communities was announced. The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and its joint venture oil companies were to allocate 3% of their capital investments for developmental projects. In December 1994, the percentage was increased to 13% through the National Conference. This effort, however, made no significant impact because of the many years of government neglect. He laments that while resources from oil enhanced national capabilities in practically all spheres – economic, military, industrial, infrastructural and technological – the same resources from oil become the focal point of the most virulent and unrelenting conflict among oil companies, social classes as well as local communities and individuals in the Niger Delta.

Inko-Tariah et al argue that the compensations paid for these deprivations are just mere pittance on which people cannot subsist for even six months and they become frustrated with life. He opines that the return

of the Country to democracy on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1999 opened a new phase of internal agitations in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria. The people capitalized on the partial freedom of expression occasioned by the advent of democracy to renew their agitations for better share in the internally generated oil wealth in Nigeria. Groups like the Niger Delta volunteer Force, the Egbesu Boys, and MOSOP resurfaced with a more militant aggression; employing terrorist style of bombing, kidnapping and other kinds of brutality to compel the Federal Government of Nigeria to respect their demands. Their access to large quantities of sophisticated small arms and light weapons provided the needed impetus to hold the Nigerian State to ransom and threatened the security and corporate existence from 1999 to 2011. Inko-Teriah et al argue that the resultant effect of these obnoxious ways of the oil multinationals have indeed brought a lot of antagonism and conflict within the region; and as long as oil remains the critical factor in the Nigerian political economy and as long as the Niger Delta oil last no one can safely predict the end to the 'revolutionary' clashes between the Nigerian State, oil multinationals and the host communities of the Niger Delta.

#### **CAUSES OF THE NIGER DELTA CRISIS**

The causes of the security situation in the Niger Delta could be classified under the impact of oil activities and the Federal Government of Nigeria insensitivity and long years of neglect

#### **ACTIVITIES OF OIL MULTINATIONALS**

There are over 4,000 oil wells with about 6,000 square kilometre network of buried and surface oil pipeline in the Niger Delta region. The various flaring points emit gas daily while crude oil sometimes escaped from worn out or vandalized pipe lines. Consequently, the toxic waste and chemicals of these spill and flares pollute the land, rivers and the entire atmosphere destroying the soil nutrients and fish. Farming and fishing as the only livelihood of the people is this made almost impossible. Oil spillage and gas flares are a great threat to the ecology of the Niger Delta.

In addition to job creation, the communities expected the oil companies or government to provide amenities like pipe-borne water, roads, electricity, health and educational facilities. These facilities are unfortunately said to be grossly inadequate. Senator Fred Brume, representing Delta Central, laments that "the area lacks adequate infrastructure to attract investors". He adds that this trend is largely responsible for hostage taking and kidnapping, especially in the oil sector and other social vices. The absence of these infrastructural facilities frustrates the peoples hope for survival and could force them into violent protest. Underdevelopment is closely related to ecological degradation in provoking the Niger Delta crisis.

The Niger Delta is believed to have been neglected by government and the oil industries thus forcing the people into abject poverty. The land and rivers are no longer available for farming and fishing because they are the property of the federal government. Consequently, the people wish to feature prominently in the work force of the oil industries as compensation. The oil companies actually have a quota of employment opportunities for the indigenes with relatively high salaries. But the peoples cry is that this jobs opportunity is just too few. The few lucky indigenes, they complain, usually work under the supervision of less qualified expatriates. The inability of government to sincerely address this underemployment and poverty constitutes another major reason for the persistent crisis in the Niger Delta.

#### **POLITICAL MARGINALIZATION**

There are incessant complaints that the Niger Delta region is politically marginalized. The people cry out that considering the enormous contribution of the region to national economy growth, they should have a significant national political participation. There is no doubt that crude oil today account for over 90 percent of the national overall fiscal earnings. It is also obvious that without oil, the execution of Nigeria's financial obligations at home and abroad would be difficult. Really, a people that sacrificed their only means of survival (land and rivers) to sustain the Federation will naturally go violent if their expectations are not met. This is the actual case in the Niger Delta. The people expectations were never met throughout the long period of military rule. Their yearnings were rather treated as inimical to the corporate existence of the Federation. To these extent prominent Niger Delta indigenes, like Ken Saro Wiwa, were either executed or arbitrarily jailed. However, the present democratic freedoms of expression could be seen as an opportunity for the people to vent out their long accumulated grievances. This partly explains the reason for the social unrest in Warri today.

#### **SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS**

Small arms are not subject to any precise definition. The Encarta Dictionary defines small arms as firearms that may be both carried and discharged by one person, as opposed to artillery weapons. By extension, the automatic weapons that developed from such firearms are also called small arms: Machine guns using the same ammunition as military rifles, as well as the larger calibre machine guns, are so classified. The term usually includes rifles, handguns (pistols and revolvers), shotguns, submachine guns, and machine guns.

The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of English Language describes small arms as firearms designed to be held in one or both hands while being fired. In the US the term is applied to weapons of a calibre of up to an inch (2.5cm). The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) defines it as major weapons which are quite light, extremely durable and require little upkeep, logistic support and above all with minimal maintenance.

In the terminology of the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), small and light weapons include “all crew portable, direct fire weapons of a calibre less than 50mm and would include a secondary capability to defeat high armour and helicopters”. Generally, small arms and light weapons can be carried in hand during combat.

The 1997 report of the United Nations Panel of Government Experts on Small Arms provides the most widely-accepted definition of small arms and light weapons. According to the Panel, the category of small arms include revolvers and self loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, sub-machine guns and light machine guns; while Light weapons include heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, recoilless rifle, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket system, portable launchers of anti-craft missile system, and mortars of calibres less than 100mm. The Panel adds that Light weapons are not just small and less powerful variants of major weapons system, they are a distinct class of weapons with unique properties and advantages that distinguish them from other types of weapons. These distinctive features are low capital, availability, portability, minimum infrastructure, minimum training, conceal-ability, lethality and suitability.

The NATO and UN Experts Panel definitions are adopted as the operational and working definition of this study. Because the dividing line between small arms and artillery weapons is so vague, the various national military services have set arbitrary maximums on the calibre of the weapons regarded as small arms. Essentially therefore small arms are generally those weapons that are designed to be manned by individual combatants during combat and they include hand grenades, rifles and machine guns, while light weapons are those weapons manned by more than one person and include handheld rocket launchers, light mortars and other man portable systems.

#### **SOURCES OF SMALL ARMS IN THE SOUTH-SOUTH ZONE**

The international system witnessed a new era of cooperation at the end of the Cold War in 1986, with a fresh attention from nuclear proliferation to economic development. However, Momah (1999) observes that the breaking up of the Soviet Union left behind an alienated and impoverished populace who possessed the world’s largest collection of unregistered guns. Under the nose of the KBG, millions of these weapons disappeared from the Soviet Arsenals to the black markets in exchange for hard currency. The wave of crises tacitly shifted out of Europe to the poorest countries, many of them in Africa. Thomas Vasek and Wolf Lotter (Dec 6, 1993:34 - 36) also noted that in just one of such transactions, Charles Tailor was supplied with large quantities of AK-47 ammunition, RPG-7 rockets and 40mm grenade Launchers from Romania. The weapons flowed into Liberia from Libya through Burkina Faso.

Funso Oyeneyin (Vol 1, No 4. Dec 2005:367) highlighted that in one \$6 million transaction, for example, the Egyptian government supplied Rwanda with seventy 60mm and 80mm mortar, two thousand RPG7 rockets, four hundred and fifty AK-47 automatic rifles and three million rounds of rifle ammunition. In another transaction, R-4 automatic rifles and a host of other weapons were imported from South Africa. In 1992 alone, for example, South Africa supplied one hundred pieces of 60mm mortar, seventy pieces of 40mm grenade launchers with ten thousand hand grenades; one million, five hundred thousand rounds of ammunition for R-4 rifles. He maintains that most of the small arms and light weapons in circulation are most likely to come through the porous borders and from the various conflicts in the West African sub-region. The ease with which these arms are acquired has made them very abundant in Nigeria.

Troubled by this development, Oyeneyin (1993:368) lamented that while developed countries like USA, UK, France, Germany and others, including South Africa, mass-produce small arms thereby creating employment for their citizens, end users in Africa are the trouble spots of the world. They sell to liberation fighters who use arms to upstage legitimate governments.

Akpan (2011) argues that beyond the ugly trend of today’s militarism lies the obvious fact that the people of the Niger Delta have a culture of resistance to oppressive and reprehensible policies especially the ones initiated by force external to the region. Suffice it to note here that since the time of Jaja of Opobo, king Eyo Honesty of Calabar, Nana Olumo of Itsekiriland and Oba Ovarenwen of Benin, the people have always sought the mastery of their resources. External forces like European supercargoes and the British were fought on account of resource control. For this reason, they did not allow, until the late nineteenth century, Europeans to build commercial stations in Niger Delta. The availability of small arms today in some of these societies has been hijacked by youths and turned into platforms of bravado and terrorism.

#### **EFFECTS OF SMALL ARMS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH-SOUTH ZONE**

Akpan (2011) argues that Nigeria, until the Amnesty Deal, was dealing with a situation of civil war but perhaps of a lesser kind which is militarily called low intensity conflict. In terms of figure, the resource control combatants that surrendered weapons to the Nigeria state during the Amnesty exercise numbered in excess of 20,000. With more than 1000 deaths as a result of the Niger Delta crisis, which lingered for more than 15 years; its impact permeated the economic, socio-political and psychological lives of the people and left a toll on the development of the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.

## **ECONOMIC COST OF THE NIGER DELTA CRISIS**

Like typical civil war cases, Nigeria diverted a major part of its resources from production activities to destruction. This resulted in double loss: the loss from what resources were previously contributing and the loss from the damage they now afflicted. The first loss is quantifiable as governments increase their military expenditure during violent crisis and this affects economic growth drastically. It has been argued that during peacetime, the average developing country spends around 2.8 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on the military and this increases to about 5 percent during civil strife (WBPRR, 2003). This implies a decrease in other public expenditures such as those on infrastructure and health. The decrease in the quality and quantity of such public goods has phenomenal consequences for incomes and social indicators. M. Knight, N. Loayza and D. Villaneueva (1997) have qualified the costs of the growth of military spending during peace time and their simulations suggest that the additional 2.2 percent of GDP spent on the military, sustained over the seven years that is the length of a typical conflict will lead to a permanent loss of about 2 percent of GDP. It is worthy of note that the increase of government spending is only part of diversion of resources into violence. The resource controlled by rebels groups are also diversion from productivity efforts. Even at that, the real economic losses from civil strife arise not from the waste constituted by diverting resources from production, but from the damage that the diverted resources do when they are employed for violence. The most significant cost comes from the direct destruction of infrastructure. As part of their overall strategy, insurgents are known to target physical infrastructure.

In the Niger Delta crisis, the quality and quantity of weapons surrendered by resource control warriors would frighten some armies of some less developed countries and as a matter of fact, they run into billions of naira. These resources represent waste that ought to have been used for productive endeavours. Similarly, the Nigerian State bought counters Insurgency (COIN) munitions to rattle and dislodge the warriors. The opportunity cost here is clear: as a result of money used for weapons the welfare provisions of the citizens and development of critical infrastructure were compromised. This could rightly be considered responsible for the claim in some quarters that the NDDC could not meet its development mandate due to underfunding.

Akpan (2011) further highlighted that in concrete terms and statistics, as a result of the mini-civil war in the Niger Delta, the country lost about \$1.6 billion or N8.84 trillion between 2006 and 2008. If the scale of losses is calculated between 2000 –2010, Nigeria would have lost close to \$100 billion to the crisis. This would include the cost resulting from vandalization of oil facilities, shut-ins, oil bunkering, ransom for kidnapping and billions of dollars spent by oil companies on corporate security.

Tell Newspaper (September 27, 2009) reported that as the only region that accounts for gas for electricity in Nigeria, the Niger Delta crisis has affected the power sector tremendously. From the energy profile of about 4000 megawatts in 2007, by 2009 it had gone further down to less than 2000 megawatts. Yet the Nation was promised 6000MW in 2009, 30,000MW in 2011 and 50,000 MW in 2015. Of course, without constant and uninterrupted supply of electricity and in required megawatts, Nigerians cannot be assured of economic development.

Akpan (2011) again pointed out that in addition to the above negative tendencies resulting from the Niger Delta crisis are the twin cases of capital flight and aridity of investment opportunities. As a result of lack of enabling environment to operate, oil majors have been channelling their investment to Angola, Australia, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana and Senegal. In this direction, Nigeria's losses translate automatically into the gains of other nations and this is happening to an industry – oil and gas – that depends heavily on investments and new technologies to register any mark. Together with the losses in the oil industry, Nigeria has so far lost about \$200 billion to the Niger Delta crisis.

## **SOCIAL COST OF THE NIGER DELTA CRISIS**

Edmund Cairns (1997) argued, the most direct consequences of civil strife are fatalities and population displacement. Such internally-displaced persons (IDPs) are the rise because of the nature of modern warfare. In modern times, the impact of war has shifted radically from military personnel to civilians. Bullets do not discriminate between armed combatants and unarmed civilians. He lamented that at the beginning of the twentieth century, about 90 percent of the victims were combatants, but from the 1990s nearly 90 percent of the casualties from armed conflicts are civilians – who typically have no say in either whether the conflicts are initiated or whether they are resolved.

DFID Report (1997:16) observes that perhaps, a more substantial social cost arises from the fear that violence inevitably generates. Frightened people flee from their ancestral and residential homes. They also tend to lose in the process the assets they possess. Indeed, fear which accompanies violence is itself quite destructive because it creates an atmosphere in which distrust and animosity grow thereby diminishing the cooperative endeavour necessary for mutual security and progress. Violence generally is quite destructive as it is socio-economic development in reverse. The Report argued that:

Violent conflicts generate social division, reverse economic progress, impede sustainable development and frequently result in human rights violations. Large population movement triggered by conflicts threaten the security and livelihood of whole region.

Akpan (2011) noted too that in the Niger Delta crisis, the cost in human misery has so far been staggering with about 1000 person killed and about half the number taken as hostage. Even an international war between Israel and Hamas in 2009 did not result in such human misery. Undoubtedly, the Niger Delta crisis has been raising some social and humanitarian challenges which invariably strain further the economy of the nation. In circumstances like these, the vulnerable people in the society suffer the most. These include the sick, the aged, children and pregnant women. Practically, some communities were forced into the forests and swamps with serious health consequences. Because of the peculiar nature of the Niger Delta creeks, even the National Emergency management Agency (NEMA) could not penetrate to offer the displaced materials. Additionally, the crisis has affected jobs as most companies, for fear of losing their staff, has either shut down or relocated to other parts of Nigeria and even other countries. Even night life which used to employ at least half of the citizens employed in the day time has completely collapsed as a result of fear.

#### **POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COST OF THE NIGER DELTA CRISIS**

Jones (1985) explains that the Niger Delta crisis and other types of crisis that Nigeria experienced erode public support and cohesion. Support of government and popular unity are crucial morale factors in national power. Internal divisions consume political and military resources required to secure domestic cohesion and they pose the mortal damage of a fifth column – a domestic factor unifying itself with external enemy to destabilise the nation. In the final analysis, unit and political will are the crucial catalyst for transforming potential power into useful power. Crisis and insurgency create roadblock for national integration and unity. To be sure, violent conflicts leave legacies of atrocities. They polarise societies as hatred build up during period of violent. To this extent, people of both sides may want vengeance for atrocities committed during the conflict and these may supplant any prior grievance. Violence may equally leave a legacy of bitterness and disruptions in a society in many ways. In the first place, conflict may undermine peace for the simple reasons that rebellion has gradually changed their character, becoming less political and more commercial. Commenting on the commercialisation of insurgence and how it undermines peace efforts the World Bank Policy Research Report (2003:82) noted that:

Violent entrepreneurs, whether primarily political or primarily commercial, may gain from war to such an extent that they cannot credibly be compensated sufficiently to accept peace. Those who see themselves as political leaders benefit from war because they can run their organisation in a hierarchical, military style with power concentrated in their own hands, sometimes much more difficult to justify in peacetime. Those who see themselves as extortionists benefit from the absence of the rule of law in the areas they control. However leaders see themselves they would have invested in expensive military equipment that will become redundant once they agree to peace. Asking a rebel leader to accept peace may be a little like asking a champion swimmer to empty the pool.

Furthermore, the psychological damage of civil strife cannot actually be measured but its effects are nonetheless large and highly persistent. For a start, survivors have lost family members, friends, livelihoods and identity. Many are forced by circumstances to live in make-shift tents in refugee camps. Such experience of trauma suffered on a wide scale has psychological consequences. L. McDonald (2002:4) emphasises that intimate exposure to brutality and subsequent displacement and civil disorder leave individuals psychologically scarred and the intricate network of social interaction deeply torn. The experience of trauma continues even after the period of crisis. McDonald further notes that most individuals will experience low grade but long-lasting mental health problems. Even after displacement the threat of violence is high – as are mortality and morbidity rates. These characteristics contribute to the development of a prevailing sense of hopelessness and despair that increase the traumatic experience. McDonald is of the view that traumas are of two types – single event traumas and on-going traumas. Life in a refugee camp is an on-going trauma and clinical conditions such as depression and schizophrenia are associated with premature deaths in refugee populations. Celestine Bassey (2007:142) is also of view that civil disorders contain germs of destruction. According to him:

...civil disorders, with their 'dislocation and damage' help to foster a range of medical pathologies.... Infrastructural destruction create enabling environment for widespread disorders such as malnutrition, increase in rate of alcoholism, cholera, diphtheria, gonorrhoea, hepatitis, influenza, meningitis, plague, smallpox, typhoid and tuberculosis.

Akpan (2011) observes that in the Niger Delta, the crisis has caused a number of people to live in make-shift camps while others pour onto the capital cities of the Niger Delta states, thus provoking social stresses and strains. Perhaps the greatest psychological damage is that of generational bitterness which would take



generations to heal and this implies that if the crisis is not well damaged; future generations of the people of the region would end up hating their country.

Stoessinger (1981) also noted that internationally, the Niger Delta crisis dealt a great blow to the country's image. The psychological aspect of power is crucial, since a nation's power may depend in considerable measure on what other nations think it is or what it thinks other nations think it is. The continuous crisis in the Niger Delta and how it is handled in a cavalier manner by the Government of Nigeria has projected the country as lacking the capacity for crisis management and conflict resolution. These, along with the loss of about \$200 billion to the crisis, have drastically reduced the power rating of Nigeria.

Jones (1985:280) again notes that the country already flaunts potential power and with oil one thought that the country would work towards the next stage of power and thereafter hit the highest stage but the crisis in the Niger Delta eclipses such aspirations. It is instructive to note that there are three stages of power readiness – potential power, mobilised power and active or kinetic power. The possession of adequate resource of power is potential power. When the resources are developed, coordinated and supplied with the will to use power, then the nation possesses mobilised power and when the development resources are applied to actual situations, the nation commands active or kinetic power. He argues that many states have considerable mobilised power and this ensures a state of little more than a passive role in international politics. More powerful states are only minimally moved by the actions of state with potential power. Such a state does not have the capacity to change the prevailing norms of the international system in its favour and therefore “must tie itself to the objectives and means of a more powerful state, or must mobilise its power to play an active part in the balance”. Command of mobilised power enables a state to be a major sector in international politics and kinetic power ensures for a country all-time influential image in the international system. He concludes that in the above absence of crisis in the Niger Delta and judicious use of the oil proceeds coupled with diversification of the economy, Nigeria can quicken the process of movement from the state of potential power to active power.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research is a descriptive survey based on expo facto design because the events the research investigated have already occurred. Gay (1981) emphasizes that it involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or answer questions concerning current status of the subject matter. Nwankwo (1983) also sees it as describing systematically, the facts, qualities or characteristics of a given population, event area of interest as much as possible, to answer the questions asked by the problem under investigation. The study attempted to look at the implication of small arms proliferation on the sustainable development of the South-South Zone of Nigeria, using Ibeno Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State as a case. The survey method was employed so that a large population, like South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria, is described using the probability proportionate to size technique.

### **RESEARCH SAMPLE**

Nworgu (1991) affirms that the group of items of which the study relates (population) may be small enough to warrant the inclusion of all in the study. This assertion is supported by Qnwioduoki (2000) maintains that; “a sample can be of any size as long as it contains less than the total number of possible observation of any given type”. The sample population for this study was the adult locals of four randomly selected communities, NGOs and government officials in Ibeno Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The sample was carefully selected because its size was large enough to be used as a basis for generalizations of inference about the population. This is in agreement with Usang (2006) who maintains that if a population is too large it will be cumbersome, unnecessary or even impossible to examine every member of the population; and when this is the case, a portion of the population is selected and the information obtained from this is used to describe the entire population.

### **INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION**

The main instruments used in the research were the questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire was designed on the Four-point Likert Scale ranging between ‘Agree (A) ’and ‘Disagree’ (D). The questionnaire and the interview schedule attempted to identify the impact of small arms proliferation on the development of the South-South zone of Nigeria. The questionnaire was divided into section A and B. Section A contains the demographic data showing sex, school, occupation, tribe, etc while section B consist of two scales of three and five items respectively. The respondents were asked to indicate their extent of agreement or disagreement with the statements contained in the questionnaire.

### **METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected from the seven-item questionnaire were analyzed using the Simple Percentage (SP) and Mean (M) Methods. The data were scored using the Linkert Scale Rating. A score of 80 was assigned to all ‘Agree’ responses, while ‘Disagree’ responses were assigned 40 scores respectively. Based on this, a cut off score of 30, representing 25% was computed as follows:

$$M: \frac{80+40}{2} = 30; \quad SP = \frac{30 \times 100}{120} = 25\%$$

This obtained Mean formed the standard of accepting or rejecting any item of the questionnaires as any item that attracted a mean response of 25% and above was accepted while those below the mean were rejected.

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### DATA PRESENTATION

An eight-item questionnaire was used to obtain data from a total of 145 out of the proposed 200 respondents. The 145 respondents representing 62.5% was the overall achieved sample of the study and presented in Table 4.1. The results were scored using the Likert-type Rating of Agreed (A), Disagree (D) and Undecided (U). The percentage Respondents is in Table 4.2. The entire achieved sample provided answers to the questions therefore the U column of the scale was deliberately omitted from the table.

**Table 4.1: Percentage of Achieved Sample.**

Serial	Sample	Proposed	Achieved	Percentage
1	Traditional Rules	40	35	70%
2	Council Staff	40	30	60%
3	NDDC Staff	40	25	62.5%
4	Youth Leaders	40	35	70%
5	Women Leaders	40	20	50%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>62.5%</b>

**Table 4.2: Percentage of Respondents**

Serial	Statement	A	D
1	Proliferation of small arms was the cause of insecurity in the Niger Delta.	20(13.8%)	125(86.3%)
2	FGN neglect of the Niger Delta was not the cause of insecurity in the region.	15(10.3%)	130(89.8%)
3	Small arms did not help the militants to successfully prolong insecurity in the region.	25(17.2%)	120(82.8%)
4	Militancy in the Niger Delta prevented the FGN from developing the region.	22(13.8%)	125(86.2%)
5	The FGN would have developed the Niger Delta even if the militants did not threaten the national interest of Nigeria.	10(6.9%)	135(93.1%)
6	The creation of NDDC in 2000 was the first FGN commitment to develop the Niger Delta.	140(96.5%)	5(3.4%)
7	NDDC is currently constructing roads, bridges, schools and water project in Ibeno LGA.	145(100%)	0(0%)

### DATA ANALYSIS

The entire variable response data were analyzed using the simple percentage and Mean methods to examine the hypothesis formulated to guide this study.

**HYPOTHESIS 1:** There is no relationship between militants' access to small arms and prolonged insecurity in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

17.2% agreed while 82.8% disagreed. Since the (A) is less than and (D) is greater than 25%, the null hypotheses is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between militants' access to small arms and prolonged insecurity in the Niger Delta.

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The result from the analysis of data on the first hypothesis reveals that the Niger Delta youths did not constitute themselves into a militant group just because they stumbled on small arms. This is in agreement with the literature that the people of the region have always expressed their desire to manage and control the natural and human resources in their land even during the palm oil trade.

J.C. Anene (1966:283) notes that one recurring feature in the Niger Delta is the proliferation of guns. He said the phenomenon came with the slave economy when arms were used either to procure slave during the raid or as deterrent to slave raiders. By the time of the palm oil economy of the nineteenth century, arms were used for social and political ends. There was no major social event without the use of arms. Even though economically they were also used for hunting, it is in the political sphere that they announce their destructive

capacities and prolong political instability across Delta region, since then arms have been part of the evolution of the Niger Delta.

The testing of the research hypothesis reveals that the militants' access to small arms actually provided them with the needed combat capability to engage the oil multinationals and indeed the Nigeria Nation in a prolonged combat and thus cause tremendous insecurity in the area. Akpan (2011) recalls that earlier attempts by the ND youths to use crude weapons to violently mobilize protest against oil activities in the region were crushed with utter impunity by the FGN. But the opportunity came when the ND people became aware of the combat importance of small arms and light weapons. The ND militants engaged the FGN in a prolonged battle in the creeks and high seas, adopting techniques of terrorism. Akpan observes that, in concrete terms and statistics, the Nigerian economy suffered an astonishing blow. By the calculated scale of losses between 2000 – 2010, Nigeria would have lost close to \$100 billion to the crisis. The ND youths capitalised on the availability of small arms as a sophisticated opportunity and engaged the FGN in a prolonged combat to reinforce their agitations for survival in the hands of oil multinationals in the region. There is therefore sufficient relationship between militants' access to modern small arms and prolonged insecurity in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

Finally, result of the third hypothesis reveals that prolonged insecurity in the ND was not actually responsible for the failure of the FGN to develop the area. The FGN of Nigeria initiated several legislations to regulate oil activities in the ND. Until the year 2000 when the NDDC was created, all other legislations, like the 1978 Land Use Act and OMPADEC, were enacted as palliatives to ensure the continuous intimidation of the ND people in favour of the FGN and the oil operators. The genuine effort to address the ND question as a Nigerian people was the creation of NDDC and the Ministry of the Niger Delta in 2000 and 2001 respectively. Akpan (2011) argues that these seemingly true efforts of the FGN were compelled by the militants and terrorist posture of the Niger Delta youths from 1999 to express their age-long suffering of the people which the FGN had over the years treated with outmost levity.

The result of this hypothesis also lends credence to the positive outcome of conflicts. Akpan (2011) further opines that in line with the Conflict Theory of Development, the proliferation of small arms in the South-South Region of Nigeria indeed unfolded the positive spirit of conflicts in human society. The militants drew their strength mainly on the availability of small arms which provided the needed momentum to carry out terrorist actions and prolonged agitations which invariably compelled the usually insensitive Nigerian Government to respond to the yearnings of the people. "This was not, however, without the pinch of destruction which is one of the unavoidable consequences of conflicts".

This research finding agrees that the dream behind a conflict directed to a hitherto insensitive government, with its lack of mechanisms to manage conflicts before they escalate, can only be realised when such conflicts assume a sophisticated, concretely organised and well coordinated posture; with sufficient international appeal like the Niger Delta militants of 1999-2002. Without the pressure and consistence of the Niger Delta militants, there would have been no genuine FGN commitment to develop the Niger Delta and indeed the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. Against popular official claim that prolonged militancy prevented the FGN development efforts, the FGN neglect was responsible for prolonged insecurity in the Niger Delta and invariably the lack of sustainable development of the area.

Akpan (2011) notes that if the crisis was promptly managed and prevented; and the amount lost spent on human security and, indeed, development in the Niger Delta in particular and Nigeria in general, the country would have updated its economic development indices positively. But the continuous crisis in the Niger Delta and how it is handled in a cavalier manner by the GoN has projected the country as lacking the capacity for crisis management and conflict resolution. These, along with the loss of about \$200 billion to the crisis, have drastically reduced the power rating of Nigeria.

Recent Projects Profile shows that the NDDC is executing vast projects in all the South-South States. This is also true in Ibeno Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. There is the renovation of Ibeno Local Government Secretariat, Upenekang Water Project, Iwo-achang Water Project, and the completed NDDC Ibeno Bridge on September 4, 2013.

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **SUMMARY**

This research study was a description survey based on expo facto design. The main purpose of the study was to examine the sources of small arms and their impact on the development of the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. To achieve this, the study considered the background of arms proliferation, security and development; the causes of the Niger Delta crisis; the impact of small arms on security and sustainable development of the Niger Delta; and the current NDDC development efforts in the South-South Geopolitical Zone using Ibeno LGA of Akwa Ibom State as a case study.

The data collected were analyzed using the Mean and Simple Percentage methods. The results of the analysis revealed that long years of FGN neglect was the cause of the escalation of the Niger Delta crisis and the attendant underdevelopment of the south-south Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The research instrument was both

primary and secondary data. The primary data was a nine-tem questionnaire while the secondary data was unstructured interviews and development records from the Ministry of the Niger Delta and the NDDC.

## **CONCLUSION**

Security is fundamental to the development of any society. States are losing their traditional monopoly over the control of the instrument of violence because of small arms proliferation; especially as much of the trade is carried out through black markets and other illicit transfers. Nigeria is one of the frontline victims of prolonged internal strife occasioned by small arms diffusion; and the worst victim of this growing violence and the attendant repercussions in Nigeria is the Niger Delta region. The Federal Government of Nigeria cannot estimate the amount of small arms and light weapons in the Country. How these weapons become available to non-state actors; and the repercussions of the life lingering armed conflicts on the development of the Niger Delta has remained a national issue.

The people of the Niger Delta Region have suffered life threatening impacts of the activities of oil multinationals in the region since 1958. The most outstanding development effort of the Federal Government of Nigeria was the creation of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in the year 2000 with the mandate to facilitate the “rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta”. The commission has succeeded in achieving little after 13 of its 15 years master plan.

Most Nigerians and international scholars, blame this underdevelopment on ‘obvious governmental neglect’ while others, especially on the Nigerian Government side, blame it on prolonged militancy occasioned by availability of modern small arms. The results of the study revealed that long years of FGN neglect was the cause of the escalation of the Niger Delta crisis and the attendant delay in the development of the south-south Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Niger Delta Development Commission is a Federal Government agency established in the year 2000 with the sole mandate of developing the oil-rich Niger Delta region of southern Nigeria. In September 2008, the Niger Delta Ministry was formed, with the NDDC to become a parastatal under the ministry.

Juliana Taiwo (11 September 2008) observes that the minority communities of oil producing areas have received little or no currency from the oil industry and environmental remediation measures are limited and negligible. The region is highly underdeveloped and is poor even by Nigeria's standards for quality of life. Sometimes violent confrontation with the state and oil companies, as well as with other communities has constrained oil production as disaffected youth or organisations deliberately disrupt oil operations in attempts to effect change. She confirms that because these disruptions have been extremely costly to the Nigerian oil industry, and both the multinationals and the federal government have vested interests in permitting uninterrupted extraction operations; the NDDC is a result of these concerns and is an attempt to satisfy the demands of the delta's population.

The Commission operates under the mandate of improving social and environmental conditions in the South-South region, which it acknowledges as horrific in its own reports. To achieve its mandate, the NDDC board identified the following areas of focus: Development of social and physical infrastructure Technology Economic revival and prosperity Ecological/environmental remediation and stability Human development On the basis of the results of this research study and the importance of this laudable initiative of the FGN, it is recommended that:

- a. The NDDC should be adequately funded and its projects should be increased alongside other developmental responsibilities to catch up with the 15 year time frame of its Master Plan.
- b. The Ministry of the Niger Delta should supervise the NDDC and the responsibilities of the projects monitoring unit in the Ministry of the Niger Delta should extend to the NDDC to ensure accountability of officials.

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