

An Appraisal on the Role of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in the Reduction of Vandalism of Oil Pipelines in the Niger Delta Region

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Abstract

Vandalism is an act that disrupts the progress of communities, plays down on the integrity of the people and jeopardize the economy of the nation. The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps is a Para-military agency of the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Part of its obligations is to protect and prevent vandalism of major government infrastructure including the oil pipelines. The study is geared towards the measures employed and the achievements by the corps in the reduction of oil pipeline vandalism. This paper is solution oriented rather than dealing with causal factors of vandalism. Reviewed literature brought the awareness of various achievements of the Corps in this regard. Statistical analysis of anti-vandalism operation, list of recovered items from the vandals and bunkers make the study most understandable. However, the Corps is considered here as positivist and to backup this claim, exchange theory of George Homan is employed to explain the sacrificial effort of the NSCDC personnel on the one hand, and the security of the good Nigerians, the oil pipelines and the Corps's alliance to the government of her father land on the other hand. Since vandalism is in itself a crime, liable to 45 years of jail term and it occurs as a result of personal choice, then it can be controlled and eradicated without much enforcement of punishment but through raising the awareness on the danger involved through various government institutions and agencies. By so doing, the perception of wastefulness will be eschewed, while the spirit of reservation and hard work will be inculcated in the people. To stand the taste of time, with regard to her zero tolerance to compromise, the Corps should retain its professional ethics to improve upon her standard of performance. Other measures for the prevention of vandalism are suggested in the main text.

Keyword: Vandalism, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Vandal, Professional ethnics, Alliance.

1. Introduction

Oil pipeline vandalism is a subject that has contributed to dominate sociopolitical as well as discourse within Nigeria and among Nigerians. The reason being that securing and maintaining such government asset plays a vital role in a nation's development process. Crude oil remains the central point to which Nigeria as a nation depends largely on for survival. A nation whose economies are characterized by structural rigidities, high level corruption and weak security network cannot attest that she has the potentials to be addressed a developed or developing nation.

Eradication of the crime of oil pipeline vandalism being very crucial, the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps is saddled with the responsibility of protecting and preventing vandalism of major government infrastructure including the oil pipelines. In the actual sense of it, NSCDC is a Para-military agency of the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The corps is empowered to institute legal proceedings by or of the Attorney General of the Federation in accordance with provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria against any person or persons suspected to have committed an offence, maintains an armed squad in order to bear fire arms. Memory unveils that the NSCDC has its history from the Western region of Nigeria in 1967 then called Lagos Civil Defense Committee. The Committee was tasked with the responsibility of sensitization and protection of the civil populace of Nigeria. It later metamorphosed into the present Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in 1970, saddled still with the responsibilities of educating and enlightening the civil populace on enemy attacks and how to save themselves from danger as most Nigerians living in and around Lagos then had little or no knowledge about war and its implications.

In 1984, the Corps was transformed into a national Security outfit and in 1988; there was a more significant restructuring of the corps that led to the establishment of commands in all the states of the federation having its headquarters in Abuja. On June 28th 2003, the corps became autonomous agent of the government. It makes decisions and act on them, free from the intervention of other law enforcement agencies. An Act to give statutory backing to the NSCDC passed by National Assembly was signed into law.

The Corps in collaboration with some aid agencies such as the police Joint Task Force, the Military Officers, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and others is striving to fly higher and it is displaying its potentialities. Meanwhile, the corps is still facing some fundamental challenges.

The high point of this paper is the appraisal on the role of NSCDC in the reduction of oil pipeline vandalism in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. Despite the varying opportunities introduced to combat pipeline vandalism in the region, the practice persists. The security agents are unable to totally erode the unwholesome practice. The evidence of this is seen in the day to day running battle the corps encounters in the region over oil pipeline vandalism. The study is designed to inform, educate the populace and act as a guide on the various varying approaches employed by the corps on the reduction of oil pipeline vandalism, the activities of vandals in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

There is the outcry of poverty among the estimated 150 million of Nigerians, especially people in the rural areas. Properties worth billions of naira are being wasted out to fire. The depletion of ecosystem, where Micro-organisms, animals on lands are in extinct and aquatic lives destroyed. Research holds it that there is a steady decline of about 4% per decade of ozone layer.

www.wikipedia.org/ozondepletion

The report of Daily Trust Newspaper (June, 2013) reveals that 6,000 Nigerians died of pipeline fire in 5 years. On the other hand, the petroleum and National Gas Senior Staff Association President (PENGASSAN), Mr. Babaturide Ogun reported that Nigeria loses 6 billion US dollars annually to crude oil theft and also lost 105 billion naira to theft of refined products. Officials of pipelines and products marketing Company (PPMC), who are deployed to effect repairs on the broken pipelines often, taste the vandals' weapons. They are killed and buried in shallow graves.

The menace of vandalism is a threat to development both of human, communities, state and nation. The activities of the vandals have led to various psychic- illnesses of vandalism victims, because they have recorded lost of property and close relatives. Any knowledge that can contribute to the solution of the problem of vandalism is important and relevant.

Oil pipeline vandalism is an unpleasant and destructive phenomenon that no individual or group of persons should tolerate if development is desired. The study is topical and timely especially in this 21st century where both the layman and the elites of Nigeria are worried about the economic situation of their father land. The study will provide the intellectual window into the various achievements and the challenges of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps as an entity.

Imperative Review

There are various already published literature on the menace of oil pipeline vandalism, but there is none specifically that have applauded the lucid contributions of the NSCDC on the reduction of vandalism of oil pipelines. This chapter is tailored at reviewing the already written works on the Issue of vandalism to facilitate easy understanding of the study.

Nigeria is regarded by the external world as a nation with tremendous potential. Their distinguishing characteristic places it higher in the community of nations. Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa, it is the largest black nation and this assumption is critical for Nigeria. By virtue of its large population and the amount of economic resources, it is capable of mobilizing; Nigeria should be able to decide the existence of sustained peace, tranquility and security in the country (Joy, 1989).

Niger Delta region is densely populated with about 31 million people inhabiting it. The land mass extends over about 70,000Km² and make up 7.5 percent of Nigeria's land mass. The region consists of the present day Akwa Ibom, Abia, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers states it harbours more than 40 ethnic groups which include; the Annang, Efik, Ibibio, Isoko, Ijaw, Oron, Itsekiri, Urobo, Ukwuani and kalabari. Each of these ethnic groups has its own unique feature in terms of culture; the Niger Delta region is oil rich by nature and has been the center of international controversy over waste of natural resources, devastating pollution, ecocide and human rights violations. The nation extracts 2 million barrels of crude oil from the Niger Delta in a day. As at early 2012, the estimated value of crude oil yet untapped in Niger Delta was 38 billion barrels and by virtue of statistics (NSCDC, 2013). It could be assumed that about 36.5 billion barrels of crude oil is yet tapped. It therefore suggests to reasonable minds that the life span of the crude oil in Niger Delta is drawing to its extinct, probably in less than 12 years the nation may have all the oil wells in Niger Delta dried up.

Beside the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps having the statutory responsibility of watching over pipeline and arrest vandals who disrupt the NNPC pipelines which hitherto adversely affect crude oil production, the Special Task Force on Anti-vandalism is also charged with the duty of protecting the oil pipelines. There are also surveillance outfits with multi-billion naira contracts awarded by Federal government to select former Niger Delta militant leaders for the protection of pipelines and check destruction of oil facilities.

This is not a contest between the awardees and the awarders or how much has been deployed to safeguard oil pipelines, but it is to what extent has the resources put in place to tackle the menace of oil pipeline

been effectively deployed. The yielded results of anti- vandalism campaign are being noted on the faces of a few Nigerians who probably are the few smiling today. They do not have the interest of the nation at heart. The yielded result should be felt on the nation's improved economy. Improved economy where average Nigerians is able to live above poverty line of \$2 a day (NSCDC, 2012).

Section 3(1) (f) (i) of the NSCDC Act (Amendment Act 2007 being lucid and unambiguous expressly conferred the authority to investigate offence of oil pipeline vandalism and to initiate proceedings thereto on behalf of the Attorney General of the Federation to the corps. This meaning that even though the NPF that apprehend any person suspected to have committed the offense of vandalism, it is the responsibility of the NSCDC to prosecute such a suspect and not the Nigeria Police Force. The rising concern on the issue of prosecution of offenders is that women and children are also involved in pipeline vandalism process. The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps ought to be alert of this fact and therefore make necessary provision that would take care of even juvenile vandals in its prosecution scheme.

It is an undeniable fact that several measures have been put in place to combat the crime of oil pipeline vandalism, especially the NSCDC collaboration with the Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, NIMANA, and the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) through their forensic analyst, who is the only section of NNPC authorized and equipped with the facilities to conduct forensic analyses. Well, it is hoped that in the near future the corps will be given the authority to conduct forensic analysis. Until then, the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps will cease to see through the eyes of the DPR of the Nigeria National Petroleum Commission, but sees through its own eyes.

Viewing comparatively the incessant menace of vandalism of a decade ago and into present, it appears that there is increased success recorded by the corps through the efforts and sacrifices of its personnel. A sort of effort emphasizing zero tolerance of compromise, and a sacrifice of self denial among the NSCDC personnel. Owing to fire outbreak in communities during vandalism process, the corps has positioned its emergency response teams and ambulances at various major Airports across the nation. Precisely they are in; (I) Port Harcourt, River. (ii) Owerri, Imo state. (iii) Nnamdi Azikiwe, Abuja and (iv) Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos state. Also emergency response ambulances are stationed along major roads across the nation for quick response to emergency situations including fire outbreaks. In the case of disaster control, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) lay vital role too.

In an interview with the public Relation Officer, NSCDC Command, Akwa Ibom State requesting to know the reason for not positioning the ambulance in places nears the pipelines. His responds seem to be attuning with the general challenges the rural roads in Nigeria are facing, the rural roads are unfit for use. The PRO, NSCDC, Akwa Ibom State command ensure that as soon as there is alert of disaster, the victims are evacuated immediately from the scene and given first Aid by the rescue team before they are moved out of the scene for further treatments. He further reveals that the corps' emergency response team has been able to assist in emergency situations, search and rescue operations, rehabilitates and provides emergency shelters to disaster victims and especially in communities prone to fire outbreak and other natural disasters. The corps also report on areas know to be at risk of natural and/or man-made disaster, to ensure adequate steps are taken in reducing the density or prevent such a disaster. In maximizing its perfection, the corps is on fit to deal with and make vandalism less interested to vandals through its zero tolerance of compromise.

2. Methodology

This study employs a survey research design in the selection of respondents for the study. Randomly, one hundred respondents were targeted (25 from each of the state in the Niger Delta Region) Bayelsa, Delta, River and Akwa Ibom State for the survey opinion. A multi-stage sampling design was adopted. First, cluster sampling method for the states was used. Therefore, the traditional leaders, women leaders, youth leaders, and opinion molders were reached at the instance of the stratified random sampling method. The structured interview, questionnaire and focus group discussion was adopted for data collection. An average of 5 persons constituted each focus group. One group held in each state in the region. This work is mostly survey types.

2.1. Data Presentation

Table 1. Reference to September, 2012 and August 2013, Bayelsa State Anti-Vandalism Report

S/N	Discovered Item	Quantity
1	Oil spillage and bunkering zone	1
2	Car	3
3	Shovel	5
4	Kidnap victims	2
5	Jerry can	3
6	Wooden Boat	4
7	Arrested Militant	4
8	Illegal refineries	8
9	Arrested suspects	8
10	Wheel barrow	10
11	Illegal Oil Distillery camps	42
12	Cotonou Boat	40
13	Iron Tanks	33
14	Plastic Drums	127

The reports also include the number of mortality during the time, which is one.

Source: (<http://www.interior.gov.ng/anti-vandalismreport>)

Table 2. Reference to September, 2012 and September 2013, Delta State Anti-Vandalism/Illegal Bunkering Activities Report

S/N	Discovered Item	Quantity
1	Truck	1
2	Kidnapped Victims	2
3	Illegal refinery	7
4	Trucks	4
5	Pistol	5
6	Shovel	4
7	Cars	6
8	Cotonou Boat	8
9	Wheel barrow	10
10	Metal Drums	15
11	Dug Pit	19
12	Hose	24
13	Persons injured	24
14	Gee pee Tanks	35
15	Arrested suspects	80
16	Wooden Boat	177
17	Vessels	3,000
18	Jerry cans	6,205
19	Surface Tanks	105
20	Plastic/Iron drums	9,527
21	Quality of AGO	10,975 liters

The reports also include the number of mortality during the time, which is one.

Source: (<http://www.interior.gov.ng/anti-vandalismreport>)

Table 3. Reference to September, 2012 and September 2013, River State Anti-Vandalism and Dismantling of Illegal Refinery Report.

S/N	Discovered Item	Quantity
1	AGO	29,785 ltrs
2	Plastic drums containing crude oil	1
3	Crude oil	2420 ltrs
4	Welding gas cylinder	1
5	Pressure Gauge	1
6	Pumping machine	3
7	Pipeline leakage	1
8	Empty drums	10

Source: (<http://www.interior.gov.ng/anti-vandalismreport>)

Table 4. Reference to September, 2012 and September 2013, Akwa Ibom State Anti-Vandalism Report.

S/N	Discovered Item	Quantity
1	AGO	14,076 ltrs
2	Illegal refinery	2
3	Suspected vandals	9
4	AK 47	5
5	Rifles	2
6	Iron drums	69
7	Suspected vandals including a politician	3

Source: (<http://www.interior.gov.ng/anti-vandalismreport>)

3. Theoretical Framework

A theory is a set of ideas that provides an explanation for something. It is a mental construct designed and meant to be used only when necessary. There are various theoretical explanations for actions that are commendable as well as prime causal factors of vandalism that in itself is a criminal offense liable to 45 year jail term. On the one hand, exchange theory is employed to discuss the operation of NSCDC, with regard to its admirable approach to work. On the other hand, the theory of modernity and the rational choice theory are used to explain the rational but destructive approaches of the vandals. The theory of George Homan presents the corps as a group of personnel with positive ideology. To Homan, human interaction at all levels is governed by reward and punishment. People exhibit various behavioural traits when they enter into interaction and each of the people in interaction carry with them portable aspects of self such as values, beliefs and sentiments which are freely expressed to attract reward, gains or profits and avoid punishment and losses. (Charles, 2005).

Based on the aforementioned assumption of Homan, the social world is a market place where people 'chaffer and wrangle' to get better of the other person. However the notion is not about the corps entering into interaction with the vandals but it is the multiplicity of approaches of the effective operation strategies of the corps on the one hand, and the safety of the communities, the people and the oil pipelines, and maintaining the alliance with the government of their father land on the other hand. The goodwill of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps will sustain its interaction that every persons be that the individual Nigerian groups and/or government would long for its service.

In the context of self actualization, the vandals seem to be established in the concept of modernization, where there is freedom of choice, advanced technology and other prevailing features of modern world are in operation. In the view of Emile Durkheim, modernization is understood in terms of organic solidarity and the awakening of collective consciousness. (Ritzer, 2008). While Organic Solidarity brings freedom and increase productivity, it also poses a series of problems. Taking advantage of modern ideology, actors play down on the conventional and societal values thereby creating the world of anomie.

Besides being pushed by the modernization ideology to breach the law of the land, the rational choice theory of the criminologists is on the opinion that committing crime is solely a personal issue. A decision to vandalize oil pipeline is a carefully, well articulated plan of the individual or a group of persons, it does not just occur by accident. A decision to vandalize oil pipeline may be based on a variety of personal reasons, including greed, revenge, need, anger, jealousy, thrill seeking or vanity. Cesare Beccaria, a social thinker of the classical school of criminology viewed crime in terms of both offense and offender specific. A crime is offense-specific because offender reacts selectively to the characteristics of a particular crime. For instance, a decision to commit vandalism involves evaluation of the targets, the likely cash yield, the available resources such as empty drums, means of conveying the stolen gasoline as the case may be, and the probability of being caught by the NSCDC patrol team.

A crime is offender-specific because criminals are not simply driven people who for one reason or the other, engage in random antisocial acts. Before deciding to commit crime, they analyze whether they have what it takes to be successful; they carefully evaluate their skills, motive, needs and fear. (Conklin, 2007) In this case the offender-specific and offence-specific are means to an end. (The end is the commission of a particular crime). Therefore if the means are not available the end is not accomplished. Although (Seigel, 2005) believes that crime commission brings rewards, excitement, prestige, or other desirable outcome without lengthy work or effort, although the statement is not to encourage criminality.

Andrew Von, (1969) in (Udousoro, 2010), argues that while punishment is needed to preserve the equity disturbed by crime, punishment should commensurate with the seriousness of the crime committed. This seems to be the accepted proposition by the NSCDC. It is also argued that since crime is a rational choice, it can be controlled or eradicated by convincing potential offenders that crime is an unhealthy choice, which can never bring anything other than suffering, hardship and pains.

4.1 Conclusion

The study, Appraisal on the Role of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps in the Reduction of Vandalism of Oil Pipeline is a lucid presentation of the operation of the NSCDC in the reduction of oil pipeline vandalism. The vandals 'voluntarists' believe that government infrastructural facilities are free and can be tempered with at any time while the NSCDC 'determinists' who believe that although human beings have the free will to do whatever they desire, they are not to take laws into their hands. This notion has placed a huge security responsibility on the corps and over the years the corps has not deviated in her obligation.

4.2 Recommendations

The prevalent of oil pipeline vandalism is an unpleasant and destructive manner of seeking wealth and or expressing anger, therefore its prevention is obviously much better than its consequences and subsequent control after they occur.

However, the following recommendations are necessary for the prevention of oil pipeline vandalism.

- (1) Qadri, (2007) opines that prevention of pipeline vandalism (which is in itself a crime liable to 45 year of jail term) should include the efforts to improve family relationship, promote better adjustments in school, provide education and recreation that capable of producing useful and upright citizen. The social workers and psychiatrists also have challenging role to play in preventing vandalism process in the society. The reason is that, the social workers are closer to the rural people than the NSCDC personnel.
- (2) A programme for the prevention of oil pipeline vandalism should be made, not only designed for incarcerated offenders but should also be directed to those either has manifested some tendency to suggest possible vandalism in future or who may be normal but due to either peer or other influences operating against them could be criminals. Although the preventive programmes do not pertain exclusively to young people, but it is more relevant to them in view of the fact that the chances of a person turning criminal after reaching a certain age, when the value and attitudes fixed are somewhat lower than in the case of persons of immature age and understanding.
To acclaim the undeniable fact, Ruhi, (2009) states that;
'it is extremely difficult to teach the individual and refine his character once puberty is passed. By then as experience has shown, even if every effort he exerted to modify some tendency of his, it all avail nothing. He may perhaps improve somewhat today: but let a few days pass and he forget, and turned backward to his habitual condition and accustomed ways'.
- (3) For the prevention of further vandalism, the NSCDC needs to involve the service of psychiatrists, both of clinical and psychiatrists social workers in their struggle to prevent potential vandalism. The psychiatric social workers will understand the people's personal problems, treat and counsel them at appropriate time.
- (4) The NSCDC rather than investing exclusively on combating vandalism through deploying its personnel to watch over day and night the oil pipelines laid all over strategic spots in the region, should channel part of the energy and resources to engage in behavioural research, focusing on identifying non-delinquent juveniles. Researches have show that psychiatric-oriented sciences suffer from serious handicap. George Ablee in Qadri, (2007) observes that psychiatry- oriented services are treating the wrong people, they are using the wrong methods of treatment, and the clinics are located in the wrong places and are improperly staffed and administered. Educational and recreational programmes are also relevant tolls in combating criminality in a society.
- (5) Beside measures mainly directed to individuals with the view to eliminatin the factors responsible for their social maladjustments. There should also be programmes to involve the community and groups.

- By this efforts are made to reach out to the people in need of help. Minimize the role of professional leaders from hijacking the purpose of the programme. In this case, the NSCDC personnel try to reach out to potential vandals in order to provide assistance and guidance to them. The main function of the change programme, besides reducing the rate of vandalism is to mould the people values in order to make their behaviour socially acceptable. In the work of Walter Miller (1959), it states that the process of inducing change in the value configuration of delinquent group is predicted on the existence of substantial support for the maintenance of law-abiding behaviour within the value system. Shifting the delinquent group's value from law-violating behaviour to law-abiding behaviour entails increase availability of law-abiding avenues to valued ends already present in the vandals' own cultural milieu.
- (6) There is also the pressing need to establish vagrancy law. The objective of vagrancy laws is to take preventive action against vagrants who may be a potential source of criminality. A vagrant is an idle person who is without visible means of support and who refuses to work despite the ability and opportunity to work. The aim is to control undesirables and criminality in the society. In view of this law, any person indulging in disorderly public behaviour, such as drunkenness, vagabonds, sturdy beggars, and loitering should be arrested and counseled.
- (7) The civil Defence need to be more proactive, more articulate, more disciplined, more friendly, more people oriented as a grassroots based organization, and must continue to exhibit transparency, discipline, uprightness, and sense of patriotism. There is also the need to redouble effort to ensure sustenance of people's confidence, perception and image for the Corps. They must retain professional ethics and their standard in terms of performance which must be sustained and improved upon. Their job ethics must also be noted; their Anti Corruption slogan must not be a mere statement but must reflect their integrity. In their professional conduct, justice must never be perverted, rights, duties and obligations of citizens must be observed, and the law must be respected as well as the fundamental human rights of citizens. Therefore, arbitrary arrests and detention must never be part of their philosophy; commitment and loyalty to service must be exhibited.
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