

# Attitudinal Influence of Political Administrators toward the Development of Niger Delta Region in Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study examined the attitudinal influence of political administrators toward development projects in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Purposefully, the study assessed the attitude of political administrators towards development projects in the Niger Delta region; the attitudinal influence behind the successive development agencies towards development projects in the Niger Delta region; and the restiveness of Niger Delta region associated with the attitude of political administrators. The researcher used descriptive and survey designs to carry out the study. The respondents were eighty (80) political analysts and economist drawn from Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-Rivers, and Delta states. The data obtained was facilitated by administering a research questionnaire of twenty (20) items to seventy-five (75) political analysts and economists, having a response rate of 93%. Among other things, the findings of the study revealed that there is no positive attitude of political administrators toward development projects in the Niger Delta region; there is attitudinal influence behind the successive development agencies toward development projects in the Niger Delta region; and restiveness in the Niger Delta region is associated with the attitude of political administrators. In light of this, the study concluded that there is no positive attitudinal influence of political administrators toward development projects in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

## Introduction

Attitudinal influence of political administrators is one of the key factors toward the development of Niger-Delta region in Nigeria. As a matter of fact, political administrators are individuals democratically elected by the people to manage the affairs for the interest of the public of which, Niger Delta is not an exception. Thus, attitudinal factor of those elected into office of political administratorship matters a lot to live-up to expectations of the people. Hence, the import of attitudinal factor has rich meaning patterning to political administrators, who are expected to commit themselves willingly and not under compulsion to serve the people, not to the detriment of the people but to care for them by paying attention to existing problems affecting the masses.

The import of attitude may be positive or negative. King Solomon in ancient Israel had a positive attitude towards his people and they lack nothing. Many development projects were executed by him because he has public interest at heart (1Ki 8:22-53; 2Ch 6:12-42). Admirably, a keen political administrator was selected and sworn into office based on the interest he/she has to serve his/her people. Under normal circumstances, the function of political administrators, among other things, is to make use of available resources to provide social amenities (including network of roads linking all cities, towns and villages in this modern times), agricultural produce, low cost housing, communication, easy transportation, effective health care delivery system, sound educational system as well as publicity of government activities to ensure transparency and accountability. This can be enhanced only if a political administrator has positive attitude to serve his people and not himself. In this case, the political administrator will focus attention on change in society regarding problems that affect the public. For instance, U.S. President Barrack Obama has positive attitude in governance of the American people and actually has strong desire to make a change in the lives of people. Biblical Joseph of ancient Egypt also has positive attitude and actually worked hard to overcome a great famine that befell over all the surface of the earth. Then Joseph began to open up all the grain depositories that were among them and to sell to the Egyptians, as the famine got a strong grip on the land of Egypt. Moreover, people of all the earth came to Egypt to buy from Joseph, because the famine had a strong grip on all the earth (Gen. 41: 50 – 57).

Basically, attitude of an individual political administrator matters a lot to administer the affairs concerning the general public. Therefore, political administrators fill the need of public administration which is not an easy task to toil with, as we can see today in some countries, most especially in developing countries like Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya, etc. Hence, for an individual to fit into any political office of governance, he/she must have positive attitude with intention to serve the public. This awareness will help such individual politician to understand that public administration is a strategic factor in economic and social development. A positive attitude of political administrator can influence and determine the success of any development plan such as that of Niger Delta. However, opposite is the case when a negative attitude personality emerges in governance as a political administrator in Nigerian context. Majority of Nigerian politicians assumed that they were sworn into political office by their effort, so they are in charge and all public financial resources belong to them and their godfathers or party stakeholders. Thus, ignoring their responsibilities to work for the benefit of the people they governed. No wonder negative attitude of many rulers in the past and present lack public administrative

capacity which, had been observed as a major obstacle to development most especially in developing country like Nigeria. This is even more serious obstacle than lack of fund.

It is explicitly remarkable that attitudinal influence of political administrators has a great deal on Niger Delta development projects. The obligation of political administrators to develop Niger Delta region in Nigeria, need not to be over emphasized. The reason is not far fetch if only we call a spade a spade. Ashiomanedu (2008) also attested to the fact that the Niger Delta is the richest part of Nigeria in terms of natural resources. The area has large oil and gas deposits, extensive forests, arable land, and abundant fishing resources. The Niger Delta is the main oil-producing region of Nigeria, which is the largest oil producer in Africa (Maxted, 2006) and the eighth largest exporter of oil in the world (Chukuezi, 2006). In spite of this vast amount of natural resource, the region remains a paradox of poverty, in the mist of plenty, as little of this wealth is distributed within the Niger Delta or to the Nigerian people as a whole. A significant feature of the Niger Delta region is its general state of underemployment, extreme poverty, disrepair, and lack of proper and adequate infrastructure, which has progressively led to a deterioration of both political and social cohesion. A quick trip through the rural regions of the Niger Delta reveals the true extent of the state of failed and abandoned development projects, meant to improve the material living conditions of the indigenes. Economic and social rights, such as the right to an adequate standard of living, remain unfulfilled (Maxted, 2006). Poverty in this area is widespread; roads are in a constant state of disrepair, power outages and failure are frequent - some communities have no electricity.

The Niger Delta environment as a result of several decades of oil production, and industrial and infrastructural developments had witnessed tremendous environmental degradation. Profound changes have often had adverse effects on local livelihoods and social well-being. For years, local people hoped for protection that never came from successive Federal and State Governments. Attempts to fight back have at times compounded their environmental challenges—the sabotage of oil pipelines, for example, has only exacerbated oil pollution. Sustainable development demands an integrated and interactive approach that allows for the understanding of the complex relationship between society and nature, simultaneously respecting human rights and assuming that environment is a vital dimension of the future of the human kind. The level of infrastructure and industrial development demanded can hardly be sustained by the fragile ecosystems in the core Niger Delta, particularly in the unique mangrove swamp zone. The need of Integrated Coastal Management in the Niger Delta is well known due to the fact that the fragile coastal ecosystems are simultaneously attacked by organic and chemical pollution and the degradation of natural resources is sometimes irreversible. In fact, coastal zones are vulnerable areas in different parts of the world, but in developing countries like Nigeria, the impacts of degradation can be worse than in other countries. The complex and conflicting interactions of social equity, human security and environmental sustainability within the social process of shaping and building development for present and future generations are important issues to address (Angela, K. E: 2008).

From all indications all over the world, oil rich countries apart from religious crises; have embarked on various development projects for the betterment of their people including socio-economic activities, political improvements and technological developments (typical examples are Dubai, Saudi Arabia, etc.). Niger Delta region should not have been exception for the fact that same human lives are involved. Already, more harm had been done than good to the lives of people in this region, especially in the rural areas because of pollution in air, water and land resources they rely on. The people of Niger Delta deserve fair play for the use of their oil which imperatively they could have used to develop the region. If the dwellers in this region are not meant to be exterminated: then they need good drinking water; well equipped hospitals with adequate manpower employees, network of good roads linking cities, towns and villages; means of communication; easy transportation system; constant electric power supply in both towns and villages; well equipped Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges to provide sound education for youths and others to engage themselves for meaningful development in modern society like ours today. When we are talking about development of oil rich region like Niger Delta, we are not talking about skeletal development with so many uncompleted projects or abandoned projects, lack of social amenities and so on and so forth.

Specifically, all of these facets of development depend largely on the attitude of our political administrators. If they want to use the available public financial resources for the development of Niger Delta region/states, they could do so. Because, in the past we have remarkable personalities like Chief Diете Spiff, Chief Melford Okilo and present Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amachi who have made tremendous impact on the lives of old and present rivers people respectively. These are public administrators who have public interest at heart and work purposefully to provide the needs of the people. Even though the activities of the respective periods they governed are not perfect, at least their concern and desire to serve the people have made a point.

The development of Niger Delta region also require Federal Government positive attitude toward the lives and properties of the people in the region from which all other non-oil producing states benefit. It is not just setting up Niger Delta Basin Development Authority or OMPADEC or NDDC per say. Rather these agencies set up by Federal Government to develop the Niger Delta region should have been genuine enough to follow the development plan and judiciously used the funds provided to execute the various outlined projects in the region.

But then, failures upon failures of these development agencies down to this day and proceeded to establish Ministry of Niger Delta. A critical look at all these establishments is sources of diverting public funds for pecuniary gains as a result of collective attitudinal formations. This can also be the other way round made possible to develop the Niger Delta region by closely following the plan to achieve at attainable goal by this same agencies with good intentions. For instance, the city of Abuja, the present capital of Nigeria was also built by Federal government. So what is not possible about developing Niger Delta region when the perpetual generating of oil money is there wasting in the hands of negative attitude personalities. Therefore, proper attitudinal frame of mind and heart is required of those who have political ambition, so that when they come onboard the seat of public administrator, they should be able to focus attention on development projects that will benefit the people.

**Statement of the Problem:** It is a perplex situation that insuate a deep thought about what is happening to Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This is oil rich region with serious degradation of air, water and land pollution that affect human lives in reality. The proceeds of the extracted crude oil sales, among other things, are far enough to develop the area lively for the inhabitants, if they are not meant to be prestigiously tortured and wipe-off from the surface of the earth.

Generally speaking, where there is rich oil money in these modern times, there is high expectation of the people for better living conditions. The marvelous situation is about what happen to the successive development agencies (NDBDA, OMPADEC and NDDC) and their respective development projects for the region? Are these agencies/commissions actually established to address the development problem in the Niger Delta with adequate funding? Do the allocations of funds portray genuine interest to commence development projects as per the master plan of Niger Delta with the intention to complete them? Is there any arrangement by Federal Government to spear head in carrying out development projects in Niger Delta region according to plan? Or, is it left in the hand of the affected Niger Delta states' governments to develop its own state and that the respective states' political administrators cannot help it? Whether is Federal or State government's responsibility to carry out development projects, it all depends on the personality (positive or negative attitude) of those at the aim of affairs. Hence, this study is initiated to examine what is responsible for the slow pace of development in the Niger Delta region.

**Purpose of the Study:** The objective of this study is to examine the effect of attitudinal influence of political administrators on development projects in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The wealth of this nation, Nigeria comes from Niger Delta region. Naturally, it requires certain precautions be taken for reservation of the crude oil, i.e., re-planting of trees in the deforested areas due to extraction of oil, providing solutions to curb pollution and make available good drinking water, low cost houses, etc. This dream is hard to visualize by the Niger Deltas who have long for these provisions.

In light of the present standard of living and environmental pollution of Niger Delta region/recent climate change over the global village, this study has three (3) objectives to provide empirical evidence of: (1) the attitude of political administrators towards development projects in the Niger Delta region; (2) the attitudinal influence behind the successive development agencies towards development projects in the Niger Delta region; and (3) to examine if restiveness in the Niger Delta region is associated with the attitude of political administrators. The outcome of examining these issues will provide solutions to this study.

**Research Questions :** The research questions listed below focus attention on the main areas of concern in this study. Therefore, attempt to trace the attitudinal component facts towards the slow pace of the development of Niger Delta region, will reveal if at all the so-called government effort is genuine or not.

- ✚ What concern does the leaders of Federal and State governments exhibited towards Niger Delta region of Nigeria?
- ✚ What is the attitude of political administrators towards development projects in the Niger Delta region?
- ✚ What attitude did the successive development agencies have towards development projects in the Niger Delta region?
- ✚ Is restiveness in the Niger Delta region associated with the attitude of political administrators?

**Hypotheses:** The following hypotheses are proposed to be examined in this study:

- ✚ There is no positive attitude of political administrators towards development projects in the Niger Delta region.
- ✚ There is no attitudinal influence behind the successive development agencies towards development projects in the Niger Delta region.
- ✚ The restiveness in the Niger Delta region is not associated with the attitude of political administrators.

**Significance of the Study:** The essence of this study justifies the true position of the Niger Delta region and its development projects opted for execution. There have been successive development agencies established in the past down to this day in order to solve the problem of Niger Delta development issues. And now today, the Federal Ministry of Niger Delta has come to stay in collaboration with NDDC to set-up development programmes and fully carry out the implementation processes. But then, what will be the faith of the poor Niger Deltans who strongly hope that one day government may consent to develop the region they have been making money over six decades ago, only covering up the insincerity and deceptive schemes with successive development agencies as camouflage to entangle the people's hope. This aspect has not been documented to disclose the underlying facts behind the scene.

Actually, the significance of this study is evidenced from the effort to contribute to existing literature with regards to attitudinal influence of political administrators on development projects in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It proffers useful suggestions to make and amend as a matter of attitudinal change on the part of our political leaders to be public minded and unify our nation as one country one Nigeria.

**Scope and Delimitation of the Study:** This study covers attitudinal influence of political administrators on development projects in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Hence, it looks into various contributing factors to set a pace of rolling experience while wasting funds and frustrating lives in the region as there is no stop to environmental pollution. Thus, the study is delimited to the scrutiny of attitudinal factors such as: self ambition; tribal sentiment; political party affiliations; godfatherism and its plights; carry go concepts; pursuit of power and resource control; and pursuit of materialism.

**Limitations of the Study:** The field study is limited to Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta and Rivers states in the Niger Delta region which the researcher collected the required data from respondents. This is due to time and cost constraint of carrying out the research.

#### **Review of related literature**

**Affect and Attitude Change:** *Emotion plays a major role in persuasion, social influence, and attitude change. Much of attitude research emphasized the importance of affective or emotion components (Breckler & Wiggins, 1992). Emotion works hand-in-hand with the cognitive process, or the way we think, about an issue or situation. Emotional appeals are commonly found in advertising, health campaigns and political messages. Recent examples include no-smoking health campaigns (see tobacco advertising) and political campaign advertising emphasizing the fear of terrorism. Affective forecasting, otherwise known as intuition or the prediction of emotion, also impacts attitude change. Research suggests that predicting emotions is an important component of decision making, in addition to the cognitive processes (Loewenstein, 2007). How we feel about an outcome may override purely cognitive rationales.*

In terms of research methodology, the challenge for researchers is measuring emotion and subsequent impacts on attitude. Since we cannot see into the brain, various models and measurement tools have been constructed to obtain emotion and attitude information. Measures may include the use of physiological cues like facial expressions, vocal changes, and other body rate measures (Breckler & Wiggins, 1992). For instance, fear is associated with raised eyebrows, increased heart rate and increase body tension (Dillard, 1994). Other methods include concept or network mapping, and using primes or word cues (Shavelson & Stanton, 1975).

**Factors Impacting Attitude Change:** *Important factors that influence the impact emotion appeals include self efficacy, attitude accessibility, issue involvement, and message/source features. Self efficacy is a perception of one's own human agency; in other words, it is the perception of our own ability to deal with a situation (Bandura, 1992). It is an important variable in emotion appeal messages because it dictates a person's ability to deal with both the emotion and the situation. For example, if a person is not self-efficacious about their ability to impact the global environment, they are not likely to change their attitude or behavior about global warming. Dillard (1994) suggests that message features such as source non-verbal communication, message content, and receiver differences can impact the emotion impact of fear appeals. The characteristics of a message are important because one message can elicit different levels of emotion for different people. Thus, in terms of emotion appeals messages, one size does not fit all.*

Attitude accessibility refers to the activation of an attitude from memory (Fazio, 1986); in other words, how readily available is an attitude about an object, issue, or situation. Issue involvement (Zaichkowsky, 1985) is the relevance and salience of an issue or situation to an individual. Issue involvement has been correlated with both attitude access and attitude strength. Past studies conclude accessible attitudes are more resistant to change (Fazio & Williams, 1986).

**Nigerian attitudes toward problems in the Delta:** A key demand of both activists and militants in the Delta is that there should be an increase in the percentage of oil revenues that are fed back by the federal government to

the oil producing states. The rest of the country sees this as a zero sum game, which means that more revenue for the Delta states will result in less money going to the rest of the country. This only compounds the sensitive relationships on so many issues between the north and the south. In fact, if some of the key demands from the oil states were accommodated and this brought peace to the region, oil production would increase significantly and the whole country could benefit. In 2006-2007 the federal government's portion of oil revenues dropped by \$10-\$14 billion a year because of disruptions in production, which in turn is an amount that did not go to any of the states.

**Government Attitude:** The attitude of state government towards community development is ambivalent. While it gives legal backing to traditional institutions to encourage community development and uses its information capability to make people more aware of it, practical actions in other respects tend to mitigate these moves. It has been pointed out that the rationale of laws setting up divisional administration is to give support to indigenous community development. This is commendable. Equally commendable is the attempt to popularize the concept of *olu obodo* which emphasizes that the new system is no longer provided by an alien, distant government.

On the other hand, most state government actions toward the community councils do not lend credibility to this concept. They do not aid the idea that people should regard the councils as their own in the same way as they regard the cultural unions. State government tends to exercise too much control over the affairs of the councils. Estimates, for instance, have to be approved by the Divisional Administration Department at the state capital, Enugu. All items of expenditure in the estimate have to be approved and payment vouchers countersigned by the divisional administrative officer. Even the staff are employees of the state government. The community councils have no power to hire, fire, or discipline them.

While these controls could be defended on the ground that, if they are not exercised by the government, the councils could abuse their powers as county councils did in their own time. But it must be admitted that they do tend to show the communities that they do not yet have full control over their affairs. After all, cultural unions which handle finances and have their officials do not have similar remote controls. [The ambivalent attitude of the government can also be seen with respect to technical and financial assistance to community projects. The point was made in Section III that government technical assistance to enable communities to effectively prosecute their development projects is sometimes inadequately or belatedly met.

The position is even worse with respect to financial assistance. It is the state government's declared policy to give matching grants in respect of approved community projects. The rationale behind such matching grants is that they act as incentives to communities to embark upon development projects. But here again the action of the state government does not lend support to its policy. Judging from enquiries made in course of this work most communities felt they were let down by the government. This is given support by looking at actual government commitments in column 7 Table 1. While column 6 of the table shows that total expenditures by communities on approved development projects amounted to N895,668.82 at the time of publication, government assistance was only N361.00.

**Attitudinal Change for National Development:** The atmosphere was charged with unprecedented excitement. The people savored the luxurious air of freedom, after decades of British imperialism. The first day in the month of October 1960 was no ordinary day, for it was the day that gave birth to the pride of the black race. It was a day of intense celebration and unparalleled joy, the dawn of a strong and independent Nigeria, full of potential and promise. Forty-three years down the road, Nigerians are asking if there exists a cause for laughter.

The pride of place, which this great nation held in the past, has unfortunately been beclouded by the bulwarks of corruption, inordinate tribal sentiments, violent conflicts and inadvertently, poverty for a significant segment of the populace. Like a wall ripped down by an invading army and left unrepaired, the 'Giant of Africa' has exuded vulnerability at global economic and political changes, attracted the ridicule and taunts of the international community for being passive while the world passes by and left it's people despondent. The economic indicators label a resource-rich nation like ours as poor, our academic institutions serve as breeding grounds for various anti-social activities, our strong cultural values are being eroded on a daily basis and the virile youth, the hope and future of Nigeria, are disillusioned at what tomorrow holds for them.

This is the precarious reality of the state of the nation. It is not a palatable situation and has tested the resilience of the Nigerian spirit to the extreme. For the most part, the problems we face are self-inflicted and demand a solution that we as Nigerians must develop if we are to reach the seemingly evasive land of promise. The challenges against our collective destiny as a people are many. Fortunately, they are not insurmountable. Nigerians must come to this realization and have a deep burden for the holistic emancipation of Nigeria from debt and poverty, before we start the reconstruction of the Nigeria of our dreams with great urgency.

An old proverb says: "No one climbs a tree from the top", so it would be only wise if we retrace our steps to the root of our current predicament before mapping a workable strategy for national development. It is no secret that the disunity of individuals is precipitated by mutual distrust, which nurtures conflict. From the

early years of independence, through the obnoxious years of military adventure into civil administration, the stench of tribal affiliation that separates numerous tribes has been pungent in our national life. The vice of tribalism is not the preserve of our ethnic constituents, as there exist even more lines of delineation within ethnic groupings that births conflict. Such conflict reveals that the problem is not a case of tribalism per se but an innate state of intolerance. For Nigerians to come together, it is imperative that we come together as one people, united in the spirit of brotherliness and determined to change our destiny for good. Each of us must compel ourselves and fellow tribesmen to tolerate the God-given differences of each other, shed any form of ambivalence towards anyone called a Nigerian and embrace each other in love and sincerity. We have stayed together as a people for too long, fought a civil war and come out beaten but not battered, laughed and suffered together, endured the hardship of tyrannical rule, built a veritable workforce, played major roles in bringing peace to other nations and witnessing the growth and dynamism of Nigerian entrepreneurship. All these, we have achieved collectively. Divided we fall, but united, we are guaranteed of standing strong.

In the spirit of unity, we would discover a passion for the resuscitation of our nation and indeed, the salvation of Africa. It is this passion for our motherland that demands our change of attitude in every facet. In whatever capacity we find ourselves, let us strive to preserve the sanctity of our nationhood by restraining ourselves from the madness of corrupt practices. Nigeria should be viewed as belonging to us all and to be exploited for our collective good. Corruption must be extinguished by instilling the strong cultural value of honesty into every Nigerian, starting from our young, on whose shoulders lie the future of the nation. Favoritism must be discouraged as it deprives many of their right to the 'national cake', in its stead, equity in the allocation of resources and positions should be effected on the honorable pedestal of merit. Families condemning members who engage in such practices should enunciate the role of the family as a moral institution, and extolling only acts of honesty and justice should be the norm.

A wise man once said, "Places do not make people, it is people that make places". It is true that the developed nations have better standards of living, which may cause many Nigerians to emigrate in search of greener pastures; but all Nigerians must realize that our commitment to the success of the Nigerian project would create a 'greener' Nigeria, which would cause others to come to bask in our 'locally-made' prosperity. The Nigerian nirvana would be born when we take responsibility for our lives and decide to become self-reliant. The modern economy guarantees the prosperity of producers and the poverty of consumers. For Nigeria to take its rightful place in the comity of nations, we must develop a culture of production. A paradigm shift in the handling of our finances must start with us all engaging in simple forms of production and subsequently migrating to more complex forms of production. This form of economic empowerment can only occur when we relieve ourselves from the inferiority complex that portrays locally produced commodities as low quality. Nigerians must develop economic responsibility and exhibit patriotism by patronizing everything Nigerian, starting from our ever-vibrant real sector and investing in the growing capital market. This is our economy; to be supported by us, to generate our prosperity and not that of any other nation.

The development of our great country would be actualized through great sacrifice. The future of the largest black nation on earth would require the resilience of Nigerians more than ever and demand commitment in all endeavors. The habit of lackluster performance of duties should be discarded in favour of a disciplined approach to duty. Success is earned and we must justify our right to greatness by individually engaging in productive activity with a sense of responsibility, dedication and zeal.

In the face of declining moral values globally and the ills it brings to society, it behooves on all Nigerians to hang on to the strong cultural values that have sustained us for generations. We must extol the principles of respect for elders, preserving the dignity of our womenfolk, taking responsibility for our actions, engaging in communal gatherings to deliberate on issues affecting our host communities and not necessarily our hometowns, nurturing the younger generation to understand and appreciate the dictates of family values and hard work, imbibing in all Nigerians a sense of belonging and mutual respect for each other; and consolidating brotherliness through inter-ethnic interactions, particularly marriage. The sustenance of these values would keep alive the needed passion for bringing positive change to Nigeria. It would also serve as a veritable pedestal for the grooming of future leaders who would be mindful of how their decisions influence the collective.

Nigerians are renowned for their affinity to the divine and their belief in a supernatural God. However, this religious nature has not been converted moral soundness by many. It is widely expected that a God fearing personality would be adroit at managing the resource base of the nation and provide quality leadership if circumstances permit it. It is this forms of leadership the country needs that would give form to the aspirations of the people. It is this form of leadership that must be instilled in us all, for we are indeed leaders wherever we find ourselves. It is this leadership that Nigerians desire and deserve. Leadership rooted in reverence for the Almighty and passion for the people. Therefore, individually we must change from a complacent form of religion and engage in sincere communion with our creator to draw strength for the journey towards national development. As we join hands in unity, determined to change our attitudes in the various facets of national life; we all shall become one people, one nation, living under God in a prosperous Nigeria where peace and justice reigns.

**The Niger Delta:** The Niger Delta is located in Atlantic Coast of southern Nigeria where River Niger divides into numerous tributaries. It is the second largest delta in the world with a coastline spanning about 450 kilometers terminating at the Imo River entrance (Awosika, 1995). The region spans over 20,000 square kilometers and it has been described as the largest wetland in Africa and among the three largest in the world (CLO, 2002). About 2,370 square kilometers of the Niger Delta area consist of rivers, creeks and estuaries and while stagnant swamp covers about 8600 square kilometers. The delta, with mangrove swamps spanning about 1900 square kilometers has the largest mangrove swamps in Africa, (Awosika, 1995). The region consists of nine states in southern Nigeria and includes Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and River States (as shown in figure 2.1 below).

**Peoples of the Delta:** The peoples of the Niger Delta are, like other Nigerians, highly diverse culturally. Historical differences in their political behaviour have been imposed by their peculiar riverine geography in which isolated settlements on the little available dry land, surrounded by mazes of an atomizing creeks, fostered small ancient city-states and kingdoms such as Bonny, Brass, Akassa, Kalahari, Okrika, Nembe, Ogoni, Opobo, Bassan, Andoni, Itsekiri and Urhobo, which were contemporaries to their much larger neighbouring Old Calabar, Arochukwu Trading political behaviour among the peoples of the Niger Delta, than among those Nigerians who were traditionally used to more centralized authority. Youth alienation, dissent and radicalism have bordered on open rebellion against unemployment, frustration and exclusion from the flourishing petroleum economy of the delta. In their more confrontational attitude towards constituted authority, it is not unusual for the youths of the Niger Delta to dethrone and desecrate traditional authority whenever they suspect that their chiefs and kings have colluded with oil companies to deprive them of what they consider their legitimate benefits from petroleum. Another backlash of youth unemployment and alienation in the Niger Delta is their atavistic recourse to organized resistance and tactics similar to that which their ancient kings employed in colonial days against the British. Just as King Jaja of Opobo (1821 - 1891) resisted British traders and missionaries, proclaimed the autonomy of Opobo, which he founded, and controlled the supply of palm oil to European merchants, through recourse to arms and African Traditional Religion, some youths in the Niger Delta have resorted to cultism in their quest for similar control of their natural resources. Ethnically, the people of the Niger Delta comprise those in Rivers and Bayelsa States (Kalahari, Ikwerre, Ijo, Okrika, Ibani, Nembe, Ekpeye, Ogba, Engenni, Epie-Atissa); Akwa Ibom State (Ibibio, Anang, Oron); Delta State (Urhobo, Igbo, Isoko, Itsekiri, Ijo); Ondo State (Yoruba, Ijo llaje); Edo State (Edo, Etsakos, Yoruba, Igbirra, Okpameri); Cross River (Efik, Ejagham, Bekwarra), and the Igbo in Abia and Imo States. These are the indigenous peoples of the oil fields of the Niger Delta. Besides, since the great-grandfathers of today's Niger Delta youths were oil merchants, there is a perceived need for continuity and participation in the oil business.

**Extant policies for development of the Niger Delta:** The Niger Delta with an estimated population of about 30 million people is famous in Africa due to its geographical location and remarkable oil revenue, which accounts for about 96 percent of Nigeria's foreign earning (Agbu, 2005; Jike, 2005). The region has gained international limelight since the 15<sup>th</sup> century following the arrival of Portuguese explorers in its kingdoms, such as Bonny, Warri, and Benin in Rivers, Delta, and Edo States, respectively. Community interaction with the explorers showed that collective actions and social movements have been established in the region. The Niger Delta people were vocal in the resistance against colonialism and during the struggle for Nigeria's independence. For instance, in the affairs of the Igbo-led Eastern Region, the Ijaws challenged their marginalization and demanded for infrastructure, including roads, water, and electricity, schools, and health institutions.

Despite several demands, however, inadequate infrastructure remains a major problem in the Niger Delta. For example, the average number of health facilities and primary health centres in the Niger Delta were 296 and 271, respectively, which were far lower than the national averages of 395 and 370. Also while the average number of public primary school in the region was 956, that of the average national figure was 1,371 (National Bureau of Statistics-NBS, 2006).

The logic of recurrent agitations, violence and militia movements derives from the lingering deprivation of people in the region. Major Isaac Adaka Boro, an Ijaw youth from Kiama, led the foremost Niger Delta attempt to secede from Nigeria in 1966 (Omoweh, 2003; Akinwumi, 2004). The secession movement was driven by renewed interests in the negotiation for the development of Nigeria Delta as provided for in various documents. During various constitutional conferences prior to 1960 when Britain officially granted Nigeria political independence, the Niger Delta was recognized as an area for special development. The pre-independence constitution provided a special right for areas with oil/gas resources and spelt out that 50% of the royalty derived from oil/gas exploration should be paid to oil/gas producing areas. Subsequently, Nigerian governments modified the constitutional provisions, discontinued royalty payments, and adopted the derivation principle for revenue allocation to oil/gas producing areas. The 50% derivation principle adopted after the Nigerian civil war (1967-70) was dropped to 1.5%, 3%, until it was increased to its current rate of 13% after

much debate (Dafinone, 2007). The motion for increasing the current rate of revenue allocation to the Niger Delta was a major factor that led to the abrogation of the Nigerian National Conference (Confab) of 2005. The Confab-like existing state actions failed to address the fundamental issues of nation building in Nigeria where different development agencies, such as the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) in 1961, the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA), the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992, and the NDDC in 2000 have been established. The OMPADEC was expected to mediate between the oil companies and the communities, as well as receive and administer the monthly allocation from the federation account in accordance with confirmed oil–production ratio in each state of the Niger Delta (Osuntawa and Nwilo 2005; Okonta, 2006; Sanya, 2006).

The OMPADEC performed unsatisfactorily as it only provided electricity and pipe-borne water to some villages, while most of its funds were misappropriated. A major limitation of OMPADEC was corruption, which was so entrenched that in quick succession its first two sole administrators, Albert K. Horsfall and Professor Eric Opia, were dismissed. Opia was removed in September 1998 for his inability to account for N6.7 billion, then worth about U.S. \$80 million (Frynas 2001:38). Opia allegedly embezzled \$200 million (Okonta, 2006; Sanya, 2006). The poor performance of OMPADEC could be attributed to insufficient regulatory mechanisms to monitor its activities. In the first three years of its establishment, OMPADEC commenced projects worth \$500 million, but the bulk of the money was said to have been paid to contractors whose addresses could not be traced (Sanya, 2006). Other major problems that confronted the OMPADEC included the inadequate funds and its eventual politicization. The federal government reportedly withheld about N41 billion due to the commission. Politically, the federal government reorganized the commission three times and replaced its Director (Opia from Delta State) with an Assistant Inspector General of Police (Alhaji Bukar Ali from Northern Nigeria) (Omotola, 2007).

The failure of the OMPADEC to significantly contribute towards the development of the Niger Delta served as motivation in the search for alternative institutional measures resulting in the establishment of the NDDC. Similarly, some Niger Delta States established different development agencies such, as River Basin Development Authorities, Ondo State Oil-Producing Areas Development Commission (OSOPADEC), and Delta State Oil-Producing Development Commission (DESOPADEC). Some Nigerian governments provided substantial financial resources for various development agencies to tackle underdevelopment in the Niger Delta (Frynas, 2001; Agbu, 2005) but many of the agencies became moribund and socio-economic situations in the Niger Delta remain deplorable. The state of the Niger Delta infrastructure (roads, pipe-borne water, and health facilities) remains poor (Agbu, 2005; Jike, 2005). This situation depicts flaws in extant responses towards the development of the Niger Delta and provides justification for the rising spate of agitations for resource control. A recent study (Omotola, 2007:78) describes thus: The most threatening dimension of the agitation is the resort to violence, most often where peaceful means have failed, and at times as a response to governmental repression. Some of the people's approaches have included outright seizure of oil wells, kidnapping of oil workers, violent demonstrations, and direct confrontation with the state and its agent, the oil multinationals.

The famous Ogoni uprising, spearheaded by Ken Saro-Wiwa's Movement for the Survival of Ogoni people remains legendary. Agitations have become popular strategies in negotiating for state social welfare in the Niger Delta. In 1958, the Colonial Office in London inaugurated a commission led by Sir Henry Willinks to study the minority (Niger Delta) grievances and make recommendations. However, the commission hardly contemplated the centrality of oil to the Nigerian economy. As the Niger Delta people witnessed the ascendancy of crude oil to the centrality of the Nigerian economy, they became more sensitive of their deprivation and restless in their demands for resource control. For instance, the Ijaw became more militant in the 1970s and 1980s due to special circumstances, such as enormity of environmental degradation and ethnic alliance with few powerful representatives in the higher echelons of the Nigerian polity. In the late 1980s and 1990s, the tempo of the Niger Delta crises spread as the youth in the area became increasingly displeased. In 1994, the Ijaw National Congress (INC) was formed to rearticulate the grievances of the Niger Delta people but the Nigerian government and Multi-national Oil Corporations (MOC) frowned at such initiative. In 1998, the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) was formed as an arm of INC through "Kaiama Declaration", which contains principles of equity and justice. Kaiama is the birthplace of an Ijaw hero, Isaac Adaka Boro. A key component of the Kaiama Declaration states thus: All land and natural resources (including mineral resources) within the Ijaw territory belong to the Ijaw communities and are the basis of our survival... We cease to recognize all undemocratic decrees that rob our communities of the right to ownership and control of our lives and resources, which were enacted without our participation and consent...it is our wish to remain part of the Nigerian family, but not in conditions that would undermine our survival and demean our humanity" (Barrett, 2008:18).

The above statements show a collective determination to wrestle resources control from the Nigerian state with calls for recognition and expression of willingness to remain part of Nigeria. Following the declaration, the spate of agitation and militancy increased in the Niger Delta. In 2001, the Nigerian National Assembly deliberated on a petition demanding US\$1.5bn as compensation and reparation for the environmental damage



arising from the operations of Shell Petroleum Development Company in Ijaw land. The National Assembly ratified the Ijaw grievances and ordered Shell to pay the compensation. However, shell is yet to comply. Shell's refusal to pay the compensation and rejection of the Nigerian government adopted military tactics are coterminous with rising spate of resistance in the Niger Delta. Following the recommendations of key leaders from the Niger Delta, the Nigerian President (Olusegun Obasanjo) presented a Bill to the National Assembly for the establishment of NDDC to ensure peace and stability. The NDDC commenced operations from the offices of the defunct OMPADEC and launched a new master plan for the development of the Niger Delta. The master plan has been applauded. NDDC attracts funds from various sources, such as the Federal Government account, grants-in-aid from international agencies and statutory contributions from MOC and the Niger Delta states. However, some state governments and MOC have been reluctant to contribute towards meeting the level of funding needed for NDDC projects. Though the NDDC had mapped out development projects and constructed new roads to remote communities, it has not been able to transform the region. Thus, the NDDC is yet to be the ultimate solution to the Niger Delta crises, which remain relatively high and more volatile.

**Development in the Niger Delta:** Traditionally development has meant the capacity of a national economy whose initial economic condition has been more or less static for a long time in order to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national product (Todaro & Smith, 2003). However, according to Todaro (1982) development refers to the multidimensional changes involving progress or improvements in structures, institutions, the general aspects of life of a given people; this entails the acceleration of economic growth, decline of poverty, and the reduction of inequality. Development strategies have therefore usually focused on rapid industrialization, often at the expense of agriculture and rural development. Prior to, during, and after independence, the agricultural industry in Nigeria was the backbone of the economy and a major employer of the active labor force (Ali159 Akpajiak & Pyke, 2003). However, with the discovery of oil and the seemingly endless opportunities to join the ranks of the industrialized nations, hopes were raised for a bright future and agricultural activities were abandoned for the lure "petrodollars".

Development planning in Nigeria dates back to the formative 10-year development plan for 1946-1955, prepared by the Legislative Council of the colonial administration (UNDP, 2006; Annual Departmental Reports, 2006). Since the colonial era, policies and programs within the national development plans have been formulated to address the minority status, agitations and perceived marginalization of the people of the Niger Delta. The Willinks Commission of Inquiry, in 1957, made the first major attempt to address these grievances. The commissions' report in 1958 stated that "the needs of those who live in the creeks and swamps of the Niger Delta are very different from those of the interior" (UNDP, 2006). The commission also noted that a government operating inland would find it difficult to concern itself with, or fully understand, the problems of a territory where communications are extremely difficult, building is so expensive, and education so scanty; especially in a country that is unlikely ever to be developed. The commission concluded that "a feeling of neglect and lack of understanding was widespread". This unfortunately is still the case today in the region. In response to this report, the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) was set up in 1961 (UNDP, 2006). Failure of the NDDDB to solve the problems highlighted in the Willinks report led to the setting of agencies, such as the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA) in 1976 and the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992. These agencies also failed in their mandates. One of the main reasons given for the failure of the NDBDA was a result of organizational 160 problems; none of the board members appointed by the federal government to run the Authority came from the Niger Delta. Also, it was felt that these agencies were used by the government for political gratification. OMPADEC, established in July 1992, was given the statutory responsibility to receive and administer the monthly allocation of the Federation Account in accordance with the confirmed ratio of oil production in each state. This allocation was set aside for the rehabilitation of local indigenes displaced by exploration activities, the development of the mineral producing areas, and for tackling ecological problems that have arisen from the exploration of oil minerals. The commission, noted for its extravagance and profligacy, did not make any meaningful impact on the lives and environment of the people of the Niger Delta. The Commission identified three main problems:

- ✚ There was no available data for planning purposes, such as the allocation of crude oil production quota for each state;
- ✚ The commission had no means to deal with the volume of demands;
- ✚ Inadequate funding.

At the time it folded, OMPADEC owed its contractors billions of naira (the currency of Nigeria) and left the Niger Delta with numerous abandoned projects. These failures and problems highlight the need for capacity building in the Niger Delta. When President Olusegun Obasanjo came into power in 1999, his administration commissioned a new body, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in December 2000, with the hope that it would offer a lasting solution to the socio-economic problems of the Niger Delta. In order to achieve its mandate, the NDDC board identified 161 key areas of focus:

- ✚ Development of social and physical infrastructure;
- ✚ Industrial and technological revival and prosperity;
- ✚ Economic development and environmental remediation and stability;
- ✚ Human development.
- ✚ Pursuit of social and political stability

The need for a master plan as part of its overall strategy was identified and completed. In spite of its attempts to help catalyze economic and social development in the region, the NDDC has not made any positive impact on the people of the Niger Delta. It is facing some of the same funding problems that plagued OMPADEC and, as such, is widely perceived to be ineffective and opaque as a result of allegations of corruption and inefficiency. Comments by participants and stakeholders at focus group discussions organized within the Niger Delta indicate that local people view the NDDC with suspicion and see the Commission as an imposition from the federal government. All the members of the Commission are political appointees of the federal government. The fact that the local people had no say in determining its composition is seen as a glaring example of political exclusion. As far as ordinary people are concerned, the loyalty of the NDDC is not to the Niger Delta but to the federal government and the oil companies that provide the bulk of its budget. This has led to a heightened level of tension and conflicts between the indigenous communities, the state, and the multinational corporations.

**The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC):** NDDC was established in December 2000 following the federal government initiation of a master planning process for physical and social development to achieve speedy and global transformation of the Niger Delta into a zone of equity, prosperity, and tranquility (Emerhi, Kotschoubey, and Wolf, 2001). The Federal Government demonstrated renewed interests in the development of the region, which was made visible from President Obasanjo's speech earlier quoted at the very beginning (Okereke, 2007:2). NDDC was constituted to serve the oil producing communities as a result of the lingering crises and abysmal performance of extant commissions in the region. In March 2001 NDDC requested for top development priorities of the Niger Delta states, which generally cut across nine states: Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers (Barrett, 2008). These states can be grouped into the core and peripheral states of the Niger Delta. The core states of the Niger Delta are Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers, while others are referred to as peripheral. The oil and gas found in these states had become the stronghold of the Nigerian economy. Nigeria's position as the 8th largest producer of crude oil and the 5th largest reserves of natural gas is dependent on extraction of resources in the Niger Delta (Barrett, 2008). The NDDC Act states that: the commission shall formulate policies and guidelines for the development of Niger Delta and conceive, plan, and implement projects capable of fostering sustainable development of the area in line with set rules and regulations. In doing these things, it would have access to contributions of each of its member states, and it would submit to the direction, control, or supervision of the president in performing its functions" (NDDC Act 1999: Section 7).

A "top-bottom" development initiative is obvious in the NDDC Act. Section 14 of the Act provides that all stakeholders in the Niger Delta areas and oil companies should help finance the NDDC. The Act mandates Federal Government to contribute to NDDC 15 percent of the total monthly statutory allocations due to the Niger Delta states from the federation account. The Act also mandates MOC, including gas-processing companies, operating onshore and offshore in the Niger Delta to pay 3 percent of their total annual budget to the commission (NDDC Act, 1999). These sources of fund give NDDC a potentially strong capital base. However, without effective and efficient regulatory mechanisms, the reemergence of corruption would be a danger (NDDC, 2000). In Section 18, the Act states that the Nigerian President should present the NDDC's annual budget to the National Assembly for approval and should keep a proper book of account, which must be audited at specified intervals. The Act empowers the president to appoint a monitoring committee to monitor the management of NDDC's funds and projects (NDDC Act, 1999). The Act shows that NDDC could be at the whims and caprices of the president. NDDC executed 810 projects in the Niger Delta between 2000 and 2003, as presented in Table 1.0. Despite the statistics, however, the Niger Delta crises remain as hinted below: "The NDDC may not have lived up to its high billings after all, despite the number of projects it boasts of having commissioned and completed. Some of these official claims may be fictitious, exaggerated, or handled in manners inimical to the advancement of public interest—which is the amelioration of the people's living conditions. The task of evaluating the performance and effectiveness of the NDDC presents us with a measurement dilemma. This is because there are no good independent studies of the effectiveness of NDDC projects, and so we must for now rely on the opinion of interested parties. To complicate matters, opinions are sharply divided regarding the effectiveness of the NDDC in discharging its responsibilities, and a large proportion of available views on the issue are negative. This explains why skepticism about project effectiveness is warranted" (Omotola, 2007: 82).

Unfortunately, like extant public policies, NDDC has not bequeathed significant improvement in the welfare of the Niger-Delta people. As presently constituted, the NDDC gives room for financial

misappropriation given the allegations of corruption against it. If the situation continues unabated, social tension in the Niger Delta will continue (Saliu and Omotola, 2007) with the exploitative tendencies of multinational oil companies, which have partly orchestrated development enigma in the region and truncated the sustainability of the indigenous environment (Dike, 2004). This development issue is a strong factor fuelling the continuing crisis of youth restiveness and resistance against the Nigerian state.

**The NDDC'S master plan:** The Master Plan, which was designed by GTZ of Germany and patterned after Alaska and Alberta, was scheduled for implementation in different phases. The Master Plan, which is principally designed to develop rural communities and reduce rural-urban migration, is based on three 5-year phases, namely: the foundation phase (2006-2010); the expansion phase (2011-2015); and the consolidation phase (2016- 2020) (Africa Research Bulletin, 2007; Barret, 2008). The broad based targets of The Master Plan (for which satellite mapping had been completed) cover the following aspects: demography; environment and hydrology; agriculture and aquaculture; biodiversity ; transport; rural, urban, regional planning and housing ; community development; governance and capacity development; education; health; small and medium enterprises (SMEs); water supply; energy (especially electricity); telecommunication; vocational training (for employment generation) ; waste management and sanitation ; large-scale industry; solid minerals; tourism; social welfare; arts, sports, and culture; women and youth employment; conflict prevention; access to financial instruments; and investment promotion. In 2007, the Nigerian President (Umar Yar'Adua) endorsed The Master Plan as the policy framework for the Niger Delta Development. This gesture seems to settle the question of continuity. It is believed to be the first integrated development plan driven by stakeholders' participation in Nigeria. The plan covers different sectors including health, education, transportation, and agriculture, while its objectives embrace economic growth and infrastructural development. In particular, its major goal is to reduce poverty, induce industrialization, and ensure social economic transformation of the area. Thus, it is aimed at raising the people's living standard in accordance with the nation's 'Vision 2020' and the Millennium Development Goals-MDGs (Aigbokhan, 2007). Special road projects costing over N180 billion, new health facilities, and a full-fledged University of Petroleum Resources are listed in the Master Plan. It is believed that the Master Plan would be the means of solving problems such as unemployment and violence, in the Niger Delta. It was estimated that \$50 billion (N6.4 trillion) would be required for the implementation of the Master Plan for 15 years (Babalola, 2008).

The effectiveness of the Master Plan depends on commitment from all stakeholders, especially the Federal Government, the Niger Delta states, and MOC. However, militia organisations like the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) alleged that NDDC awarded contracts to cronies contributing to abundance of 'white elephant' projects in the Niger Delta. Studies (Aroh, 2000; Egborge, 2000) showed the development of a Master Plan would require a comprehensive approach with strong considerations for traffic, river hydrology and morphology, environmental assessment, socio-economic impact, and institutional strengthening (a re-engineering). The capacity of the NDDC master plan in these areas has been disputed.

**Problems and Prospects of the NDDC's Master Plan:** Regrettably, NDDC has achieved very little. The Master Plan for the development of the Niger Delta was crafted by expatriate (GTZ of Germany) with the collaboration of few political elites and imposed on the Niger Delta people (Dafinone, 2007). Unlike the success stories of similar structures in Canada and the United States of America where special funds were provided from royalties for the development of Alberta and Alaska, respectively; the Nigerian NDDC Master Plan is retarded because the Commission formulates the policies, decides the contracts and to whom they are awarded, monitors their implementation, and equally pays the contractors themselves without any interference from any other party (Dafinone, 2007). Although the NDDC has generated services with improved accessibility, the broad consensus in the region favours empowerment, strengthened communal autonomy, and improvement in living standards (Barrett, 2008). Unexpectedly, different militant gangs seem to have largely gained credibility in their struggle for liberation of the Niger Delta. Obviously, the NDDC has not shown capacities and strategies to address the lingering spate of militancy in the region. The future of the Niger Delta is dicey in light of current uncertainties. The outcomes of the rising militancy have attracted attentions worldwide. Different identity based social movements, including youth associations, 'area boys', militants, vigilantes, and cults, draw on repertoires of discourses and enter into hostile relations with state authorities and agencies, including NDDC. These groups mobilize members for resource control and community development in response to the Nigerian 'politics of plunder', endemic since the beginning of the oil boom, but locally perceived as having intensified from the 1990s onwards (Gore and Pattern, 2003; Anoruo and Braha, 2005).

Insecurity arising from the activities of the social movements in the oil-rich Niger Delta has been a major drawback to the execution of NDDC projects. It remains an unavoidable risk and obvious hazard in the management of NDDC projects in spite of the Federal Government's efforts to ensure peace in the region. For example, a major oil company has purchased a high technology solution supplied by Blue Sky Network (a

company in California) to help enhance the safety of its personnel and equipment (Okereke, 2007). A major problem militating against successful operations of NDDC is hostage taking. Cases of hostage taking are on the increase in the Niger Delta where some kidnapped foreigners and indigenes were forced to pay a huge amount of money as ransom. The increase in hostage taking has been attributed to government's military attacks against militant groups in the Niger Delta. A militant youth noted as follows: "our interest lies in how to bring the attention of everybody to the issue of the Niger Delta...to see physical development, both from the oil companies and the federal government" (Okereke, 2007:3).

Undesirable socio-economic situations in the Niger Delta have bred a frustrated population, ethnic polarization, communal suspicion, anti-establishment agitation, and hostility, all of which create instability and impede development. Basic amenities or infrastructure such, as good roads, safe drinking water, electricity, telecommunication, housing, transportation, health, and educational facilities are in short supply in the Niger Delta (Dafinone, 2007). The Niger Delta communities have been excluded in the management of the upstream and downstream operations of the oil industry through the Petroleum Act promulgated in 1969. Generally, the Niger Delta is under-represented in key sectors including the armed forces, the police, the customs, immigration, prison, and security services. A recent study captures the situation, thus: Over 90% of the national revenue comes from sale of oil produced from the Niger Delta but the States and Local Governments in the region receive very little revenue allocation due to the unjust adoption and application of such principles as land mass, population, primary school enrolment and security as opposed to such other vital considerations as water mass, ecological problems and difficulties associated with infrastructural and physical development in a swampy and marshy terrain like the Niger Delta" (Dafinone, 2007:3).

The actions of militants have adversely affected socio-economic development in Nigeria. For instance, some organisations have abandoned their productive activities in some areas due to insecurity and fear of militant groups. This abandonment has diminished volumes of oil production and lowered revenue generation from oil producing communities. Similarly, the power generation has been adversely affected. Despite government's huge investment in the power supply failure to maintain and utilize the installed capacities of power generating plants and damages to oil and gas pipelines feeding power generating stations have resulted to astronomical rise in power outages in Nigeria. However, the Nigerian President Yar'Adua's promise to declare a national "energy state of emergency" has not been fulfilled though the power situation has worsened. In contrast, one of the NDDC Directors revealed that a fundamental focus of the plan is quality education, which is the key to solving the Niger Delta unrest. The following quotation shows a comment about the Master Plan: In so far as all stakeholders embrace it (the plan) and implement it, then we are going to see substantial improvement in the quality of education... This is very fundamental. A lot of things are tied around education, even unemployment is tied to quality education, conflict has some of its root in poor quality education, because people come out of school, they cannot get jobs and they cannot go back to farming, they find themselves in the middle of nowhere and they become ready recruits for militants...Details of the infrastructure that needs to be developed to deliver the plan will become known with time as the plan is implemented. In the mean time, it is hoped that the execution of the plan will bring to an end the neglect, poverty and the resultant unrest in this important area of the country" (Okereke, 2007:3).

The above statement contradicts findings of the recent studies showing that the vast foreign investments in the crude-oil and natural-gas (CONG) sectors have not resulted in significant benefits for most people in Nigeria where the government and multi-national companies have generated remarkable revenue from the sectors (Nwosu et al, 2006). Only minor contracts have been awarded to local contractors due to several factors ranging from inadequate finance, lack of technical expertise, and corruption to conflicting attitudes of multi-national operators and local contractors (Nwosu et al, 2006). The rising conflict and ethnic militias that pervade the Niger Delta are eloquent testimonies to disappointment in the NDDC. This situation could be attributed to NDDC's seemingly intractable problems, such as financial limitations. An erstwhile NDDC Chairman noted that comprehensively developing the Niger Delta would require more than N400 billion (NDDC, 2004a) but as of October 2004, the NDDC had spent N80 billion. Also, some Niger Delta states queried the Federal Government on deduction from their allocations from the federation account while MOC have not been contributing the statutory 3 percent of their annual budget to the NDDC (Ojameruaye, 2004). Corruption remains another problem, as suggested by the fact that the leadership of the NDDC has been changed three times in less than six years, and "a recent allegation of corruption that led to the indefinite suspension of Mr. Godwin Omene, the Managing Director of NDDC, is very much a reenactment of history" (Jike, 2005:159). In the light of the foregoing, the problems that confronted present development policies are currently confronting the NDDC. Therefore, a re-engineering of the NDDC policy framework would be necessary.

A pellucid description of the NDDC problems shown in the above submission is extended further in this present paper, which makes a case for re-engineering the NDDC's Master Plan for development of the Niger Delta.

**Conservation and Development of the Niger Delta:** According to Petters (2006), the Niger Delta of Nigeria is among the richest deltas in the world. Other major deltas are either famous for crude oil and natural gas (Amazon in Brazil, Orionoco in Venezuela, Mississippi in the U.S.A., Mahakarn in Indonesia) or grow mainly rice (e.g. Indus in Pakistan, Ganges in Bangladesh, Mekong in Vietnam). The Niger Delta however has huge oil and gas reserves and ranks as the world's sixth largest exporter of crude oil and the second largest producer of palm oil, after Malaysia, which even obtained its palm seedlings from Nigeria. Environmental conservation and economic development in the Niger Delta depend on the flow of federal funding and goodwill into the region, and on improved understanding of the delta, its petroleum occurrences and its peoples. But the historical background and human dimensions of the unrest in the Niger Delta have, hitherto, not been sufficiently highlighted in the search for lasting peace in the oil producing communities. Since pre-colonial days, the Niger Delta has played a crucial role in the Nigerian economy. Its ports and rivers provided access for the British to penetrate the Nigerian hinterland; the gateway for the trade in slaves, and later export commodities such as palm produce timber, rubber and even groundnut and cotton from the distant northern parts of Nigeria. The potentates who ruled the Niger Delta city states and neighboring kingdoms were also the sentinels that guarded the lucrative trade routes of the Niger Delta. They either received or resisted British mercantilism and imperialism. But through negotiations, the Europeans, principally the British secured the co-operation of the rulers of the Niger Delta city-states, who then became the middlemen in the slave and palm oil trade.

Participatory continuity is what their descendants in present-day petroleum-rich Niger Delta seem to be clamoring for. Whether for peaceful resolution of the unrest in the Niger Delta, or for environmental protection and development, the human factor has a crucial role to play. The Niger Delta is also among the world's major wetlands; with one of the largest mangrove ecosystems. Environmental degradation, arising from total dependence of the rural population on unsustainable agriculture, fishing, forestry and wildlife exploitation, has seriously threatened the Niger Delta. Land resource degradation, renewable resource depletion and oil pollution are now the irreversible consequences of prolonged dependence on the natural resources of the region by the indigenous population and the nation. But conservation must start with human considerations before it can succeed. The social and political impact on the attitudes of the local people of centuries of exposure to colonial and national economic pressures should also be examined. The following questions are pertinent for the Niger Delta: Are there any social dislocations; political alienation and discontent; and the erosion of traditional values along with environmental degradation? These questions are prompted by the serious unrests in the Niger Delta and the urgent need to restore peace and security.

**Economic development:** A common assertion is that there is little to show for the 13 percent of oil income already going to the oil producing states. This is a large sum of money but the population of the region sees little benefit from it; much of it seems to disappear. The current set of governors seems to be making progress in terms of transparency and moving benefits down to the grassroots, but much more progress must be made. Similarly, the three percent of oil income that goes to the Niger Delta Development Commission to be used for regional development does not seem to be effectively spent. So, the first step toward enhancing the development of the region is to ensure that the funds already allocated for this purpose are more effectively and honestly used.

Anderson (1983) suggests that the inter-structural composition of an associative network can be altered by the activation of a single node. Thus, by activating an affective or emotion node, attitude change may be possible, though affective and cognitive components tend to be intertwined. In primarily affective networks, it is more difficult to produce cognitive counterarguments in the resistance to persuasion and attitude change (Eagly & Chaiken, 1995).

This is the petroleum definition of the Niger Delta. But it must be emphasized that for development purposes it is the coastal, riverine parts of the Niger Delta that is problematic. The definition of the Niger Delta can be likened to the proverbial elephant that was described in the fable about the seven blind men of Hindustan. Each blind man touched a different part of the elephant and described it differently. The historian, the geographer, the petroleum geologist, the politician and even the fanners and the fishermen of the Niger Delta all perceive their delta differently. But what is needed is a bird's-eye view of the entire Niger Delta region. The recent Niger Delta Development Bill equates the Niger Delta with the South-South geopolitical zone, comprising Edo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River States, to which neighbouring oil-producing parts of Ondo, Abia and Imo States must be added. The Niger Delta has to be meaningfully and comprehensively defined to be useful to the people that live there, who are exposed to oil pollution and environmental degradation, and have suffered from neglect and poor infrastructural development. It is perhaps equally instructive to view the Niger Delta from the perspectives of both human and natural history, in order to be able to trace the roots of the discontent in the Niger Delta region today. Mankind has a past which we study as history. (In fact, a publication in the *Guardian* newspaper in June 2006 quoted the then governor of Bayelsa state - Jonathan Goodluck as saying that the state was still on the waiting list of areas to be connected to the national electricity grid.) The water available is of poor quality and largely contaminated, schools and hospitals are understaffed and ill-

equipped. 50 years of oil and gas exploration has left large areas of the Niger Delta uninhabitable due to frequent oil spills, leakages, and 158 the effect of gas flaring. These acts have enraged the local communities and led to community protesting against the huge environmental degradation and abuse of general human rights resulting from the lack of environmental protection and development. Exploration for oil in Nigeria began in 1908, but the first serious discoveries were not made until 1956 onshore in the Niger-Delta by Shell D' Arcy (now Shell Petroleum), an Anglo-Dutch oil company (The Economist, 1984; Agbola & Alabi, 2003). Commercial shipments began two years later but were on a modest scale until the mid 1960's, when offshore production began. The 1970's boom in production coincided with the surge in world oil prices. The expectations surrounding the discovery and exploration of oil has waned over time due to the state of affairs in the Niger Delta region; its people have not been positively affected by the discovery.

**Lack of Development and Unemployment in the Niger Delta region:** The Niger Delta region is underdeveloped in all its ramifications, despite the fact that it is the bread basket of Nigeria. Whittington (2001) aptly described the economic dilemma of the region when he stated that “ the oil region in Nigeria seems to be stuck in a time warp, with little real change since oil was discovered 45 years ago. Away from the main towns, there is no real development, no roads, no electricity, no running water and no telephone”.<sup>24</sup> The underdevelopment is so severe, the youth of the region are the hardest hit by lack of development. This is why many of them have resorted to militancy in an effort to focus national and international attention to their plight. Despite all the claims by the oil companies to be involved in the development of the region, it is to the contrary. The pervasive underdevelopment made Whittington to note that, “the government and oil companies have profited by hundreds of billions of dollars since oil was discovered. Yet most Nigerians living in the oil producing region are living in dire poverty”.<sup>25</sup> In an interview with Associated Press, Isah-Aaron gave a gloomy picture of the level of underdevelopment. He said, “Look, here is where we bathe, and also toilet. We are very poor”.<sup>26</sup> Also, the anger of the people of the region, especially the youth, derives from merely that the other parts of the country, sometimes the arid regions, are built to the standards obtainable in the developed world. They have bridges built over dry land and less travelled roads, while most of the Niger Delta communities are only accessible by boats and seriously in need of bridges. In an interview conducted by Michael Peel of Chatham House, in July 2005, he confirmed the plight of the people of lack bridges to connect them with neighboring communities. In his words, “residents of the community of Soku told me that they had to pay N500 (Five Hundred Naira), about 2 Pound Sterling, to go by speed boat to Abonnema, the nearest large town with good road links, or else face hours in a canoe”.<sup>27</sup> Unemployment is very high among the people of the Niger Delta as the oil companies do not hire their employees from the region that produce oil, but from the non-oil producing region of Nigeria. The situation was aptly described by a leader of a protesting women's group, “our children and our husbands have never been employed by the company (Shell). We want to know why they should continue to be operating here”.<sup>28</sup> Also, the issues of underdevelopment and unemployment made members of the Akwa Ibom House of Assembly to launch a protest against Mobil Producing Company in May 2001. Mobil is the largest oil company in that part of Niger Delta with a major facility at Eket. Speaking also on the unemployment level of the youth, Brisibe (2001) said “Majority of the youth from the region are unemployed. They do not benefit from the presence of the Multinational Corporations operating in their communities. Less than five per cent of the people from the Niger Delta work in these companies, women from the region in oil companies are less than one percent . A majority of the beneficiaries are from other parts of Nigeria”.<sup>29</sup>

**Structural Deficiency of the Nigerian Federation:** It has always been discussed at foray, both national and international, that one of the factors responsible for the Niger Delta crisis is the structural injustices that led to the marginalization of the Niger Delta region in the Nigerian Federation. Historically, the Nigerian Federation has been dominated by three large ethnic groups-the Yoruba, Igbo and the Hausa-Fulani. The British colonial government exploited this situation by ruling through the existing aristocracy, thereby reinforcing the historical imbalances already present. The post-colonial history of Nigeria has been marked by massive instability, including a number of military coup d'etats, as a result of conflict between these three groups. The smaller ethnic groups in the Niger Delta have been systematically excluded from positions of power. Furthermore, under the 1999 constitution, mineral rights in Nigeria are held by the federal government, a structure which has been unresponsive to the Niger Delta grievances. As a result, the people of the Niger Delta region have through various declarations like the Ogoni Bills of Right, Kaiama Declaration of the Ijaws, Akakalaka Declaration etc made request for self determination and resource control. For instance, the demand for self determination was brought to the fore in a statement issued by the Niger Delta Women at the end of their meeting held in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, from 25-27 November, 1999. They declared: “Beginning with the Ogoni Bills of Rights in 1990, the ethnic nationalities of the Niger Delta have declared the intention and determination, to reclaim their human dignity and fundamental human rights. These declarations, the Ogoni Bills of Rights, the Kaiama Declaration, Akaka Declaration of the Egi People, the Oron Bill of Rights, the Warri Accord, Resolutions of the First

Urhoro Economic Summit, form the basis for the struggle for self-determination and control of resources by each community”. The same demand is contained in the manifesto of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Community Defence Law Foundation (CD-LF) fighting for the course of the Niger Deltans. The core 11 Demands of the First Niger Delta Indigenous Women’s Conference of Bayelsa State held at Yenagoa, 25th-27th November, 1999, accessed from on 25th June, 2007 issues in the manifesto includes: self determination and political autonomy within Nigeria; restructured federalism; environmental and resource control; social development; social development; international dialogue and solidarity; resolve to resistance; and transparency and accountability.<sup>12</sup>

**Poverty/Deprivation of the Means of Livelihood:** the government of Nigeria has made hundreds of billions of dollars of oil revenue in the last 40 years of oil production in the Niger Delta. Despite this huge amount of money, the local people remain in abject poverty and deprivation as they lack basic things of life like water and electricity. Life in the creeks of Niger Delta is anything but rich and prosperous. The region, according to Mukagbo, Cable Network News (CNN) anchorman for Inside Africa, “is a region where time seems to have stood still and where people live the most meager of existences, leaving them bitter and angry from not having benefited from the black gold that makes Nigeria Africa’s largest producer”.<sup>13</sup> Commenting further on the deprivation being faced by the people Mukagbo, said “In Niger Delta, scenes of abject poverty pervades the area, very similar to what you find in a refugee camp. The region fetches the government oil revenue within the region of \$100M a day”. Some leaders of the Niger Delta have alluded to the fact that poverty and deprivation is one of the reasons behind the agitation of the people of the region. Corroborating this assertion, Ken Saro- Wiwa, the murdered leader of Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) said during his trial at the military tribunal: “My lord, we all stand before history. I am a man of peace, of ideas. Appalled by the denigrating poverty of my people who live on a richly endowed land, distressed by their political marginalization and economic strangulation, angered by the devastation of their land, their ultimate heritage, anxious to preserve their right to life and to a decent livingNN”.<sup>14</sup> Also amplifying this position, the facilitator of the Niger Delta Democratic Union, Barrister Mudiaga-Odje, in a statement he forwarded to the President of Nigeria, Umar Musa Yar’Adua, on the need to resolve Niger Delta crisis, said, “Mr. President should offer them reassurance, hope, employment and empowerment programmes, which will better their lives. The reason for the agitation in the region is deprivation and poverty amidst its plenty oil and gas resources”.<sup>15</sup> All these statements seems to have corroborated the World Bank view that poverty is one of the key causes of conflict in oil producing countries. The Bank in an outcome of a research conducted asserts that “the key root cause of conflict is the failure of economic development such that many of the world’s poorest countries are locked in a tragic vicious cycle where poverty causes conflict and conflict causes poverty”.<sup>16</sup>

**Environmental Damage:** the social and environmental costs of oil production have been very extensive. They include destruction of wildlife and biodiversity, loss of fertile soil, pollution of air and drinking water, degradation of farmland and damage to aquatic ecosystems, all of which have caused serious health problems for the inhabitants of areas surrounding oil production. It is ironical that environmental regulations which are common practice in developed nations are often not followed due to the lack of power, wealth and equity of the affected communities. As a result, oil companies often evacuate inhabitants from their homelands, further marginalizing them. The system of oil production in Nigeria is skewed in favour of the multi-nationals and government elite who are the direct recipients of oil production revenue. As a result of environmental damage brought about by the activities of the oil companies, environmental problems like erosion; flooding; land degradation; destruction of natural ecosystem; fisheries depletion caused by dredging ; toxic waste into the rivers etc, etc are common phenomenon in the region. The local people can no longer take to farming and fishing which are their major occupations. As a result of the impact of oil activities on the environment and the ecosystem of the region, the United Nations warned in a report that “the degree and rate of degradation are pushing the Delta towards ecological disaster”<sup>17</sup>. The oil multinationals contributes significantly to the environmental destruction of the Niger Delta through the following ways:

**Oil Spillage:** This is a major problem in the region. The indigenes and the environment suffer from oil spillage and lack of coordinated efforts by the oil companies and the federal government to clean up as soon as oil spillage takes place. According to Etim (2003)<sup>18</sup>, a spillage from a pipeline owned by the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in the Karama Community of Okordia/Zarama Local Government Area of Bayelsa State in June 2003 caused enormous economic and environmental damage and hardship to the area. The spillage was not properly cleaned and the indigenes were not evacuated by the oil company. Community leaders in the area alleged that SPDC awarded the contract for cleaning the spillage to a company that did not do an effective job, thereby resulting in fires and destruction of the ecosystem.

**Gas Flaring:** Just as the Western oil corporations are inflicting untold hardship on the citizens of the Niger Delta by engaging in oil exploratory activities with total disregard for the political and economic sensibilities of the people, they are also wrecking the fragile ecosystem of the region through uncontrollable gas flaring. Gases flaring takes place 24 hours and some have been burning for over 30 years, thereby resulting in the

release of hydrogen sulphide (sour gas). According to an expert, hydrogen sulphide produces sulfur oxides and when sulfur oxides mix with oxygen and water in the atmosphere, they produce acid rain. Acid rain causes innumerable negative effects on the world, particularly the people and the environment.<sup>19</sup> A Report by the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) indicated that “everyday, eight million cubic feet of natural gas are burned off in flares that light the skies across the Delta, not only driving off 5 cms, hunting the fishing and poisoning the agriculture, but contributing to global warming”.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the oil companies are not only destroying the Niger Delta, they are also contributing to global warming. A statement by MOSOP on the effect of gas flaring on the people of Ogoni would show how it has negatively affected the life of the people. It read: “The once beautiful Ogoni country side is no more a source of fresh air and green vegetation. All one sees and feels around is death.”<sup>21</sup>

**Oil Pipeline Explosions:** To a certain extent, there is a relationship between pipeline explosions and oil spillage. In another sense, the two are not directly related. A spillage can take place while drilling is in progress. On the other hand, there is always spillage when there is an explosion. According to Torulagha (2001)<sup>22</sup>, pipeline explosions take place due to the following reasons: (1) during drilling activity at new site, (2) following an accidental bursting of pipeline work is taking place around the pipeline, (3) an old pipeline that has not been checked for maintenance, (4) vandalisation by angry youth and members of the host communities, (5) oil bunkerers who steal crude oil by intentionally breaking the pipelines. As a result of the consequences of oil explosion to lives, property and environment, people of Niger Delta have consistently blamed the oil companies and the federal government of Nigeria for showing non-challant attitudes and lacking any systematic mechanism to come to the aid of its citizens when emergency assistance is needed as a result of oil exploitation. A case in point was the Jesse, Delta State, pipeline explosion of October, 1998 in which over 1000 reportedly lost their lives. It was alleged that Government did not respond immediately to assist those affected, like it would have been done in Western and industrialized countries.<sup>23</sup>

**Lack of Development and Unemployment:** the Niger Delta region is underdeveloped in all its ramifications, despite the fact that it is the bread basket of Nigeria. Whittington (2001) aptly described the economic dilemma of the region when he stated that “the oil region in Nigeria seems to be stuck in a time warp, with little real change since oil was discovered 45 years ago. Away from the main towns, there is no real development, no roads, no electricity, no running water and no telephone”. The underdevelopment is so severe; the youth of the region are the hardest hit by lack of development. This is why many of them have resorted to militancy in an effort to focus national and international attention to their plight. Despite all the claims by the oil companies to be involved in the development of the region, it is to the contrary. The pervasive underdevelopment made Whittington to note that, “the government and oil companies have profited by hundreds of billions of dollars since oil was discovered. Yet most Nigerians living in the oil producing region are living in dire poverty”. In an interview with Associated Press, Isah-Aaron gave a gloomy picture of the level of underdevelopment. He said, “Look, here is where we bathe, and also toilet. We are very poor”. Also, the anger of the people of the region, especially the youth, derives from merely that the other parts of the country, sometimes the arid regions, are built to the standards obtainable in the developed world. They have bridges built over dry land and less travelled roads, while most of the Niger Delta communities are only accessible by boats and seriously in need of bridges. In an interview conducted by Michael Peel of Chatham House, in July 2005, he confirmed the plight of the people of lack bridges to connect them with neighboring communities. In his words, “residents of the community of Soku told me that they had to pay N500 (Five Hundred Naira), about 2 Pound Sterling, to go by speed boat to Abonnema, the nearest large town with good road links, or else face hours in a canoe”. Unemployment is very high among the people of the Niger Delta as the oil companies do not hire their employees from the region that produce oil, but from the non-oil producing region of Nigeria. The situation was aptly described by a leader of a protesting women’s group, “our children and our husbands have never been employed by the company (Shell). We want to know why they should continue to be operating here”. Also, the issues of underdevelopment and unemployment made members of the Akwa Ibom House of Assembly to launch a protest against Mobil Producing Company in May 2001. Mobil is the largest oil company in that part of Niger Delta with a major facility at Eket. Speaking also on the unemployment level of the youth, Brisibe (2001) said “Majority of the youth from the region are unemployed. They do not benefit from the presence of the Multinational Corporations operating in their communities. Less than five per cent of the people from the Niger Delta work in these companies, women from the region in oil companies are less than one percent . A majority of the beneficiaries are from other parts of Nigeria”.

**Distortions in the Social and Economic Fabric of the Local Societies:** The oil companies introduced major distortions into the social and economic fabric of the local societies. According to Hutchful (1985), “Shell and other oil companies have perpetuated regional and class inequalities by creating oil colonies in local areas where oil executives live quite lavishly in comparison to the impoverished conditions of the local communities.”<sup>30</sup> Because the oil industry requires highly skilled workers, local villagers are either forced to migrate to the urban centers after being economically displaced, or to become low-skilled workers dependent on



the oil company. These structural changes in the economic life of the local communities has often “generated bitter conflict as the issue of employment and participation in the oil industry has divided different segments of the communities, often along ethnic lines”.<sup>31</sup> Other structural effects of the oil industry are “rural depopulation, disintegration of the peasantry, and urban marginalization”.

**Human Rights Violations:** Violations of the human rights of the local populace can be cited as one of the factors responsible for the militancy in the Niger Delta region. Oil companies like Chevron, Shell, Agip, Mobil and the other Western Oil Companies have been very unkind to the people of the region. The human rights of the people are constantly violated by security forces, at the behest of the companies. Perhaps, few examples of military and security activities carried out in the past might help to buttress this assertion. For instance, in attempt to suppress the Isaac Boro rebellion in 1966, Nigerian troops terrorized entire communities including raping of innocent women. Boro was considered to be a threat to the free exploitation of the petroleum resources in the Niger Delta.<sup>33</sup> In 1987, the Iko Community in Akwa-Ibom State was extensively brutalized by a team of Nigerian Mobile Police Force, at the request of Shell.<sup>34</sup> In 1992, at the insistent of Shell, some youth were killed in Bonny during a peaceful demonstration against the activities of the oil company.<sup>35</sup> In January 1993, the crisis over environmental pollution and economic marginalization from the oil industry reached its peak when 300,000 Ogoni protested against Shell Oil. This organized protest was followed by repeated harassment, arrests, and killing of Ogonis by the Federal government troops. On January 11, 1999, Ijaw women who were engaged in a peaceful demonstration and marginalization of their people in Port Harcourt were violently tear-gassed, beaten, stripped, and detained by a combined team of policemen and soldiers. Also, the Warri wars of 2003 were allegedly instigated by the activities of some oil companies and Nigerian Naval officers. The people of the region viewed all these as assaults and marginalization because they belonged to ethnic minority groups in the Nigerian Federation.

**Bad Governance/Corruption:** The Niger Delta region is riddled with bad governance/corruption on the parts of government officials, both at the state and local government levels. It has been argued that if government officials in the region have utilized judiciously their monthly allocations, to better the lots of the jumbo monthly allocations are spent on frivolous things that have no corresponding bearings on the life of the people. The case of Rivers State during the immediate past government of Dr. Peter Odili would lay credence to this assertion. The Rivers State government, for example, had a budget of \$1.3 billion in 2006. It includes transportation fees of \$65,000 a day for the governor’s office; \$10 million for catering, gifts and souvenirs; \$38 million for two helicopters. Health services received \$22 million.<sup>38</sup> Disturbed by the wastefulness of some States and Local Governments especially those in the oil region, the then Minister of State Finance, who later became the substantive Minister, Esther Nenadi Usman, asked for greater scrutiny of the activities of governors, particularly those receiving huge sum from derivation each month. In her words, “States have been a source of worry to us, lately. If you look at the way money is shared at the Federal Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC) meeting, Federal Government gets about 48 per cent, while State and Local Governments take the remaining 52 per cent..... Three to four days after the FAAC meeting, exchange rate rates jump up, which means they are using them to buy foreign exchange. If you look at the States, the States that get so much, you can hardly see anything to show for it”. Continuing, she said “ make telephone calls to any of the States and ask after the governor and you will be told that he has gone abroad. Not Only the governors, even the commissioner for finance”.<sup>40</sup> The Head of the Nigerian Anti-Corruption Agency, the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), Nuhu Ribadu, estimated that in 2003, 70 per cent of oil revenues, more than \$14 billion was stolen or wasted. A case in point is that of the former Governor of the oil rich Bayelsa State, DSP Alameiyesegeha, who stashed hundred of millions of dollars in foreign bank accounts to buy mansions in the United States and send his children to private schools in London.<sup>41</sup> Seeing money coming from the Federal Government, on earnings on crude oil sales, with essentially none of it reaching the ordinary people, has created condition for insurrection. Confirming why the militants were fighting against the system and bad governance to Jeff Koinage of CNN, a leader of the foremost militant group operating in the region, Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), General God’s Will said, “we are in the middle of a struggle for the liberation of the Niger Delta, the most devastated and the most threatened region in the world”.<sup>42</sup> The former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, also decried the situation in the Niger Delta despite the 13 per cent of revenues from onshore and offshore oil fields without much impacts on the ordinary people. In his words, “ so far not much impact has been made on the lives and living standards of most ordinary people of the Niger Delta”.<sup>43</sup>

**Divide and Rule Tactics of Oil Companies:** One of the reasons that has been adduced to be responsible for the Niger Delta crisis is the divide and rule tactics of some of oil giant firms operating in the area. The oil companies rather than involve themselves in the development of their areas of operation prefers to give financial gains to some vocal local chiefs which usually result in crisis. For instance, the crisis that occurred in Rumuolemeni, Rivers State on 1st July, 2007 was attributed to sharing of booties from oil companies in the area.<sup>44</sup> those who are not favored in the largesse usually because confusion by attacking the oil firms until their demands are met.

Alleged insincerity of the Federal Government: Another factor that has been attributed to be one of the reasons responsible for the crisis, is the alleged insincerity of the Federal Government of Nigeria to fully develop the region in partnership with the state governments. Commission like Oil Minerals Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC), created by the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida, for the development of the area did not achieve its aims due to poor funding on the part of the Federal Government, in spite of the huge dollars made from the area from crude oil. This gradually led to some leaders in the region to begin agitation for resource control. The government of Obasanjo equally set up another agency, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NNDC), to bring development to the doorsteps of the people, but the operation of the Commission is being hampered by lack of money to carry out its mandates, and it became a serious obstacle in pursuing the goal of developing the region. According to Akanna Campbell, Executive Secretary, South-South Community Development Union (SSCDU), a Niger Delta research group, the insincerity of the Federal government made the people want to confront the issue in a militant way. In his words, “the situation forced many indigenes to begin feel frustrated that another hope and promise has gone down the drain. It marked the beginning of hydra-headed issue of Kidnapping of oil workers. The people, particularly the youth, in their own judgement, now felt that the best way to react was by disturbing the flow of oil. They were of the view that since Abuja would not fulfill its pledges, they too would cripple the source through which oil money flow to the seat of power.”

**Accountability and Governance:** Accountability and governance are part of the explanation of each other. Victor and Fidelis (2009) emphasized on this point as they explained “From Authoritarian Rule to Democracy in Nigeria, regarding citizens’ welfare a myth or reality”. An elaborate explanation is given as it continues to arrive at the style of governance in Nigeria. Indeed, since 1995, both concepts have become part of the debate and research language on democracy. This is perhaps because of the intrinsic value of democracy as a political system and a subject of attraction for scholars for years, and more for the reason of explaining the experience and variance among countries so described as democracies today. For instance, Diamond (2004) insists that there is a close connection between democracy and good governance. In short, he argues that democracy possesses the capacity and functions as good governance. Conceptually, accountability emanated from the democratic political ideology in which the citizen is the ultimate sovereign for which all authority must be held to account (Davis, 2007:3-5). Within the context of democracy it implies the existence of some sort of mechanism to ensure accountability to taxpayers and beneficiaries of state service. As noted by Davis: Thus the rise of the concept of accountability in Western public life is closely linked to the development of the modern nation state, modern nation state, modern state bureaucracy and the increased role of the state in the provision of public goods. The concept evokes notions of responsibility for one’s action and outcomes, in which both answerability or responsibility and enforcement are latent components. To answer for actions is to give account to those with power that are necessary for judgment of the motives of such actions. Enforcement is the utilization of account given for reward or punishment. Within the context of democracy, citizens’ judgment of actions and motives based on information or account given by leaders enables them to reward by way of support for the regime or returning of a party and its leaders during an election year. These processes clearly portray some welfare implications for citizens. For instance, if leaders have this sense of accountability and fear losing elections because of negative judgment of citizens of their activities while in political office, it may well contribute positively towards meeting the welfare needs of citizens. Within the context of democracy, ultimate power lies with citizens in the sense that those entrusted with responsibility of governance should be answerable to citizens. Being answerable then provides opportunity for citizens to access their stewardship for the purpose of reward and punishment. Both reward and punishment can be manifested in regime change through free and fair elections. In this sense, problem seem to have been created for democratic theory when it is considered that in many democracies today citizens lack this power to exercise their power in order to benefit from accountability. For although Nigeria is seen as democracy from a purely liberal sense, it appears that citizens lack power to ensure accountability of public officials, and this may well be a serious factor in the poor provisioning of welfare services to the people.

**Democratic Governance:** Governance portrays the connection between the civil society and the state over issues or problems of national interest and of common concern (Barten et. al., 2002: 131). Issues of governance have emerged so strongly in recent times with focus on a participatory approach to development by scholars (Diamond 2005:4; Barten et. al., 2002: 134).

The United Nations Development Programme says that governance has three core dimensions: economic, participatory and administrative governance. It makes a lot of sense to think of economic governance in terms of public decision-making processes on the economy and how such processes affect economic activities of citizens and a country’s external relations. In essence economic governance has large scale implications for welfare of citizens. Political governance refers to the processes of formulating public policies, such as whether it is participatory or not. In contrast, administrative governance points to processes or mode of implementing

public policies. Good governance then means all three dimensions to governance in terms of structure and processes that define the socio-economic and political relationships (UNDP, 1997; Diamond, 2005: 4; Barten et al, 2002: 132). Indeed the UNDP insist that good governance should be understood in terms of participation, transparency and accountability and emphasis on process. For Diamond, good governance entails several dimensions, such as for example, the capacity of the state to provide the public good; commitment to the public good; transparency; accountability; rule of law and mechanisms for conflict resolution( Diamond 2005: 5). To be sure, Habitat ( 2000: 197-202) has added credence to the argument that principles of good governance include: decentralizing responsibilities and resources to local authorities and encouraging the participation of the civil society (Habitat 2000: 198). Following from the above, democracy and good governance facilitate economic development. This assumption is problematic when drawn into the experience of African countries where often scholars decry and explain poor living conditions of citizens with the lack of quality democracy and good governance. Apparently a working democracy where the ruled actually wield the power to control the ruler through voting and other accountability mechanisms and freedoms inspire a logic of an embedded good governance where participation and consultation with citizens over pertinent issues and policies are the defining characteristics.

The ruler will not only be powerless to stop citizens over the exercise of their rights but will respect the outcome of such processes. From the foregoing, it is clear that democracy is said to possess the ability, through good governance, to improve citizens' quality of life. A growing theoretical literature is replete with optimism on the relationship between democracy and improvement of the quality of life of citizens (Diamond 2005; Gyimah-Boadi 2004). Ironically, a corresponding volume of empirical literature is skeptical of the reality of this relationship in most of Africa. (Ake 1996; Sindzing 2006; Carter and Stokes 2002; Ufo and Fidelis, 2005; Drung, Kriechehaus and Lutzig 2006). This thinking has been explained in terms failure of eurocentric development paradigm to address problems of human advancement within the context of parallel liberal democracy for most of Africa and the third world (Ake, 1996). As Ake has argued, politics within the context of liberal democracy has prevented social progress in Nigeria, as much as in other countries of Africa. Ideally, the whole idea of addressing the welfare of citizens is linked directly to the overall development of a country in all sectors. In that sense, a rising economic profile of a country ought to, by logical extension translate into improvement in the living conditions of citizens.

**Neglect of Citizens' Welfare:** If a regime, democratic or authoritarian, neglects the peoples' welfare, the consequences are usually diverse, political and socio-economic. Apparently, the performance of democracy in terms of its stability is also dependent and conditioned by it. The neglect of citizens' welfare in Nigeria represents threat to freedom. There is a semblance of what can be described as the autocracy of the elites, where, in most cases in the political processes, the political elites in power or seeking it do not respect basic rights of citizens. This section argues that the neglect of citizens welfare has two basic implications for democracy: it degrades the human condition, and democratic institutions; and, secondly, it defines the conflict structure in some segments of the Nigerian system. Yet the neglect of welfare by democracy does matter, in respect of its integrity and performance. Initial failure of democracy in Africa to bring social and economic progress was explained severally, but to be remembered is Ake's, whose explanation for democracy's neglect of welfare of citizens is based on his critique of the Eurocentric development paradigm, as in the failure of development strategies to address the human condition within the context of liberal democracy. He argues that politics within the context of liberal democracy has prevented social progress in Nigeria, as much as in other countries of Africa (1996:4). The whole idea of addressing the welfare of citizens ought to be linked directly to the overall development of a country in all sectors. In that sense, a rising economic profile of a country ought to, by logical extension translate into improvement in the living conditions of citizens. Unfortunately, it is not so. The problem borders on governance, on how present character of the state and its operators might have actually constituted an obstacle to development. It is for this reason, perhaps that Ake has argued that the state in Africa has a narrow social base. Nigeria has recorded a steady rise in national income over the years (thanks to oil money) without a corresponding improvement in the living conditions of Nigerians. Liberal politics and economics in Nigeria, though transitional, lack any human centredness. By that, I mean the giving of priority to the needs of the poor in the formulation and implementation of policies. Development strategies adopted by leaders, are more externally determined than internally, in the sense of how and what ultimate purpose they serve in terms of affecting the well-being of people. This is not strange, considering the history of Nigeria, a former colony of Britain, whose legacies include neo-colonial economic and political links to the country. The colonial history that produced these leaders and development strategies in Nigeria, as much with other counties in Africa, are not without interests. The conflict of this interest, for example as in the functioning of the economy and democracy and their outcome on the poor lies partly, the reasons for the neglect of the welfare of the poor.

The welfare of citizens also suffer neglect because of a seeming crisis of identity and lack of purpose for civil societies. Having fought very hard to enthrone a civil regime after many years of military dictatorship, a

role vacuum seems to have appeared for the civil societies in the years after the lowering of the flag of military rule in 1999. Confirmable that there are so many existing civil society organisations doing one work or the other, the absence of a peoples' organization outside the realm of the state, with defined mission to check the excesses of political elites has large-scale implications for the functioning of democracy and welfare of citizens. Of course, this also depends on the political environment and nature of political leaders, most of whom use violence as means to achieving their ends. For one, Labour as earlier mentioned, deserve some self appointed role in governance, but many believe it can compromise with politicians on some national issues. Some workers whom I have interacted with concerning the influence of labour towards improving the living conditions of workers are also skeptical about the extant leadership of labour to cause changes in the polity that affects the poor positively.

Many Nigerians believe that the government under the present civil democracy neglects welfare of citizens' inspite of colossal amount of national revenue accruing from oil extraction. In short, from 1999 to June, 2006, a total of about N11 Trillion was allocated to the three levels of government in the country. The federal government alone has had N5.6 Trillion of that amount. Elected officials, who have managed this amount seems to have very little to show for this amount (Sunday Vanguard, August 13 2006: 13). Among the Niger Delta states, Rivers State alone had had 12 percent; highest, compared to what the other states of the region, put together have collected. For the month of June, 2006, Rivers State alone collected N23.246 billion. That was also the highest in all 36 states of the federation. Paradoxically, per capita income in Nigeria in 2006 stood at \$1,030, something far removed from the case of Botswana and Mauritius which stood at \$8,000 and \$12,000 respectively. The Gross Domestic Product in the 1990s stood at 2.9%. It has since 2000 risen to 4.6% but remains essentially short of expectation when compared with countries like Botswana whose GDP is 5%. Security in terms of public safety is one area that the state seems to have failed . An astonishing 95% of sample of respondents to questionnaires indicated that the government has done poorly in the area of providing security. Provision of security and safety of lives and property are basic indices of good governance. i Consequently, ordinary citizens and patriotic citizens, who quite naturally would have been interested in politics, are now being scared away by "hoodlum politicians." Hoodlum Politicians are those without requisite democratic cultural traits needed for a stable and developmental democracy. Developmental democracy is change oriented in terms of distribution of welfare and guarantees of individual and collective rights. The political class conceives security in terms of threats to source of revenue for the state. Liberal politics appears to be a threat to them, essentially because of their deficient democratic cultural credentials. Many also believe that provision of basic social amenities is below expectation, with implications for the living conditions of Nigerians. Since emphasis on Agriculture dropped due to the expansion of the oil economy and shift away in government policy, citizens seem to have become more expectant from the government for survival. Politicians have concentrated limited development projects in their villages of origin, leaving out others, especially where their oppositions come from. For the Niger, oil has destroyed much of historical farmlands, leaving the rural people helpless, with resultant grievances partly being manifested in the current level of violence.

Politicians seem to lack needed democratic culture of dialogue and non-violent approaches to resolving differences. Often, they resort to the use of violence. The behaviour of the political class leaves much to be desired, looking at the negative identity of *huggery* and determination to secure political power by all means. The madness can reduce if the state were not dependent on oil for revenue. If corruption of politicians were fought by citizens in their demand of accountability for revenue generated from taxes on individuals. How many Nigerians really pay true tax, except those in the employment of the state. Even when they pay, how much is truly remitted to the accounts of the government? Although without statistics to show, impressions got from the activities of bureaucrats at the finance units responsible for collection of taxes and those of politicians who manage allocated funds, suggest the devastating effect of a corrupt state.

Ekewe (1998:176-178) has rightly articulated an aspect of the explanation to the neglect of citizens' welfare by the political class under the supposed liberal democracy in Nigeria, in his argument that the state exist to serve its interest. For a state that must protect its interest, which of course is different from those of the citizens' which liberal democracy extols, the question of an objective and selfless mobilization of the resources of the state towards the welfare of citizens should not be strange. One responded to questions in the questionnaire stated that the government in Nigeria has become more withdrawn in spending towards the public except for the cost of administration, benefiting the political class. According to him the effect is negative on the weak in society. Another responded faulted the privatization programme of the government stating that the process lacks integrity. For instance labour accused the government of selling the Eleme Petrochemical Company to an indigenous firm, rumored to belong to powerful politicians. Labour claimed that Nigeria will be losing about N100, 000,000 daily for selling the company for a paltry sum. The overall welfare implications for labour are part of the problems of democracy and liberalism. Governments all over the world have waged war against labour, and that of Nigerian does not constitute an exception, at least for now. Nigerian variant of capitalism enjoys protection from the state. What is of issue is the effect of this protection to the living conditions of citizens. Whereas, the more advanced democracies such as Canada and the United States have

constructed interventionist mechanisms in checking and controlling the excesses of economic actors under the market economy, those of Africa, and Nigeria lack even the political will to do it because of vested interest. Evidently, the state puts capital first and the people last. This is why cut in government spending and social services are without unemployment benefits, public job creation schemes etc. or some form of social security. Elections have been badly conducted and managed in Nigeria (Adejumobi, 2000:59-73; Nwokedi, 1994; Momoh, 1997). Rigging, brigandage and violence are easily identified features of the election process. Elections continue to provide the logic for liberal democracy. It is the nucleus of a democracy founded on consent of the people. Indeed, the opportunity and existence of a culture of free and fair regular elections is the most cherished properties of democracy for which failure to accomplish have painted any claim of democracy uncertain. Yet, the Nigerian experience tilts towards explanations of elite theorists who argue that elections in a African democracy is the affair of a few political class. Election is therefore not done by voters but by this class of few that do not represent the interest of all. The Nigerian situation is not far from this scenario. The implication is that the functions of elections in Nigeria with particular reference for the 1999, 2003 and 2007 years have played negative roles to the welfare of Nigerians. This is reflected in the perception of respondents on the issue of elections in Nigeria. Both empirical and theoretical literature supports this perception concerning elections and democracy in Nigeria (see for example, Olaitan, 2005:43-50; Omele, 2005:69-91; Odofin, 2005:93-111; Nnadozie, 2005:112-131).

### **Methodology**

**Research Design:** This provides the glue that holds the research project together. According to Williams (2006), "A design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the research project. Specifically, the researcher used descriptive and survey design. Hair, et. al. (2006:63) attested to the fact that descriptive research design uses a set of scientific methods and procedures to collect raw data and create data structures that describe the existing characteristics (e.g. attitude, intention, preferences, etc.). The descriptive design is appropriate for this study because it makes it easier to understand the research study area of attitudinal influence of political administrators towards development projects in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The survey design however guide the researcher to collect the primary data required to verify the hypotheses and answer the research questions. Cross-sectional survey method is employed to obtain the data from a sample of elements of the study population.

**Population of the study:** The target population of this study consists of political analysts/economists in Nigeria. These are drawn from Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states respectively. Baridam (1990:74) pointed out that "The target population is the entire population to whom the findings of the study are held to be applicable. A target population is therefore a finite population, its boundaries fixed and described by time, geography and the characteristics of the individual members composing it, as well as the nature of the variables being studied".

**Sample size:** Statistically, a conservative sample size for this study is eighty (80) in number of sampling units needed to be representative of the defined target population. That is, the number of people that have to be included in a drawn sample to ensure appropriate representave of the defined target population.

**Sampling Technique:** The researcher employed nonprobability sampling technique in this study, because it involves peculiar nature of individual personalities in Nigerian ruling class of political administrators. Hair (2006:330) stated that nonprobability sampling technique is a form of selecting sampling units based on some type of intuitive judgment or knowledge of the researcher. The degree to which the sample may or may not be representative of the defined target population depends on the sampling approach and how well the researcher executes and controls the selection activities. Thus, purposive sampling method is applied in this study, considering the sample with a purpose in mind to including elements of the population that can offer valid and reliable information.

**Instrumentation:** The main instrument used in this study is the questionnaire. The questionnaire design involves a scientific process that integrates established rules of logic, objectivity, and systematic procedures. Dichotomous questions which take the form of "Yes" or "No" and Agree or Disagree, were used to determine the attitude of political administrators toward development projects in Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Hence, the question/setup used in to collect raw data from the respondents is structured. According to Hair, et. al., (2006:430), structured questions are closed-ended questions that require the respondent to choose a response from a predetermined set of responses or scale points. This question format reduces the amount of thinking and effort required by respondents. In general, structured questions are more popular than unstructured ones. Interviewer bias is eliminated because the interviewer simply checks a box or line, circles a category or record a number that best represents their response to the question.

The frequency of each response category to a questionnaire item are presented and interpreted. To this effect, questionnaire is the major instrument used to collect the required data.

**Instrument Validity:** Joppe (2000) provides explanation of what validity is in quantitative research that validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. This research instrument however allows the researcher to hit "the bull's eye" of the main objective. In the questionnaire design, the researcher develops the questions to determine validity by asking a series of questions to look for the right answers. Wainer and Braun (1998) also describe the validity in quantitative research as "construct validity". The construct is the initial concept, notion, question or hypothesis that determines which data is to be gathered and how it is to be gathered.

**Reliability of the Instrument:** In the measurement of research variables, reliability is another important construct. It is the extent to which measures give consistent results. Baridam, (1990:69) confirmed that reliability refers to the consistency or precision of the measure. A measure is said to be reliable if it is consistently reproducible. Hence, to check the reliability of responses, each sample subject was cross-examined in order to ensure data collected are consistent and precise. For this reason, there is an acceptable reliability of data obtained.

**Procedure for Data Collection:** A questionnaire method is used to collect the data from the selected subjects. The questionnaire contains twenty (20) items, which were administered to a total number of eighty (80) political analysts and economists respectively. However, seven-five (75) respondents provided the database (given a 93% response rate). Besides, the researcher also employed face-to-face interview method to cross-examine the respondents in order to ensure data collected is authentic. Regarding, this method of data collection, questionnaires and interviews are most used when the researcher wants to find out a person's knowledge, motivations, anticipations, attitudes, beliefs, feelings, future plans or past behaviors" (Baridam, 1990:83). For the purpose of analysis as per category of issues investigated, a frequency count of each questionnaire items is made.

**Method of Data Analysis:** The data obtained from the frequency count of each response are classified into categories of issues investigated. Nominal scales of measurement were used to generate quantitative data. The frequencies in each category are analyzed to answer the research questions and verify the hypotheses.

The data analysis technique applied in this study is the chi-square. According to Lind and Mason (1997:416), the chi-square goodness-of-fit test is one of the most commonly used nonparametric tests and it is appropriate for both nominal and ordinal levels of data. Chi-square goodness-of-fit as the name implies, is purposeful to determine how well an observed set of data fits an expected set of data. Spearman rank correlation is also used to test association between variables.

#### **Data presentation, analyses and interpretation**

**4.1 Results and Data Analysis:** The results from the data obtained are presented in tabulated form and analyzed with descriptive statistics as well as testing hypotheses proposed and findings discussed in this chapter.

**Political Administrators of Federal/State Governments' concern toward the Niger Delta region:** Taking a critical look at Table 4.1, questionnaire item number 1, 47% response stated those political administrators never feel pity or show concern about the degrading condition of the Niger Delta region. While 46% gave affirmative response that political administrators do show concern. Regarding political administrators' visit to rural areas in the Niger Delta region, 39% response indicates that they never thinking of doing so, whereas 37% response affirmatively that political administrators in the Niger Delta region do visit rural areas to see what could be done to help people in rural communities. In item 3 of the questionnaire, equal responses of 43% gave negative and positive expressions of government sending or not sending relief materials to rural communities where pollution/oil spillages occur. Nevertheless, questionnaire item 4 responses show that 87% do not accept that even though government send relief materials to disaster areas, it is not done on regular basis. Another fact is that 46% versus 47% responses argue against the possibility and none possibility of government ever pay compensation in monetary terms to oil disaster areas in the Niger Delta region. Therefore, the data on Table 4.1 suggest that government do not show genuine concern about the development of Niger Delta .

**The Attitude of Political Administrators towards development projects in the Niger Delta region:** The data on Table 4.2 interprets that 36% response supports the claim of political administrators to be commended in terms of providing pipe-borne water, hospitals, electricity, public schools, roads for the Niger Deltan States under the development scheme, while 39% response never support such opinion. However in item 7, 56% response confirmed that government do not follow the development master plan to provide social amenities/infrastructures in the respective Niger Delta States. In aspect of progress made so far by executing

development projects in the Niger Delta, 46% responses do not agree that it depends solely on individual State political administrators to develop their respective states in the region, while 43% response claimed that is true. While 47% response supports that there are abandoned projects in the Niger Delta region, 45% response express that there is no abandoned project. Nevertheless, 46% of the respondents express their opinions that all Niger Delta States' political administrators support development projects in the region, 47% response declined on such assertion. In reality, the data on Table 4.2 suggests that the attitude of political administrators in Niger Delta States is questionable with exception of few states' administrators as the positive responses indicate.

#### **The Attitude of the Successive Development Agencies toward development**

**projects in the Niger Delta region:** The data presented on Table 4.3 shows that 68% response agree with Niger Delta Basin Development Authority for not showing seriousness in executing sustainable development projects in the Niger Delta region in power as development agency established by Federal government. Subsequently, OMPADEC succeeded Niger Delta Basin Authority. That is not withstanding, NDDC was established to replace OMPADEC. All of these development agencies have the same non-chalant attitude toward the execution of development projects as 56% response attested to this fact in questionnaire item 12. Examining the issue of capital votes for the development of the Niger Delta, 46% response disagree that fund allocations were not judiciously utilized for intended projects whereas 45% response acknowledged that funds allocation were actually utilized. However, 40% response disagree that the formation of sequential development agencies of Niger Delta was not as a result of their performances. But then, 37% response confirmed that these agencies were not measuring up to expectations. Hence, 45% response agree that the establishment of these development agencies one replacing the other, for the Niger Delta were political driven, which induced them to decline in carrying out sustainable projects in the region. However, 42% response disagrees with such statement.

**The Attitude of Political Administrators and Restiveness in the Niger Delta Region:** Regarding the attitude of political administrators and restiveness in the Niger Delta region, 55% response agrees that complacent attitude of political administrators toward development of the Niger Delta that contributed to the restiveness in the region. However, 38% disagree with that opinion. One of the contributing factors of restiveness in Niger Delta region as confirmed by 56% response agrees that the use of youths as body guards in political struggles also empower them to carry arms. But, 37% response disagrees with the assumption of involving youths in political struggle that causes restiveness in the Niger Delta region. In the same vein, 51% response agree that lack of proper orientation programmes for the youths in the region, and empowerment for creative ventures is another major cause of restiveness in the Niger Delta. Likewise, dumping the youths after the political struggles without compensating them also infuriated the youths to carry arms that resulted to the restiveness in the Niger Delta region as 54% confirmed. In questionnaire item 20, 44% response indicates that political administrators' attitude of wasting public fund and lack of rehabilitation of youths also contribute to restiveness in the Niger Delta region.

#### **Test of Hypotheses**

This study proposed three hypotheses to be verified. The summarized results of data presented on tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 are used to verify the three hypotheses respectively.

**Test of Hypothesis 1:** There is no positive attitude of Political Administrators toward development projects in the Niger Delta region.

The tabulated chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value is 9.48 for 4 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance and the computed chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value = 1.36. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted based on the criteria that the computed chi-square value (1.36) is less than the critical value (9.48). This proved that there is no positive attitude of political administrators toward development projects in the Niger Delta region. This suggests that the funds voted for developing the Niger Delta, much of it is converted into individual business; thereby fail to carry out intended projects in the region.

**Test of Hypothesis 2:** There is no attitudinal influence behind the successive development agencies toward development projects in the Niger Delta region.

The calculated chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value is 13.08 and the tabulated chi-square value is 9.48 for 4 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated chi-square value is greater than the tabulated value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is attitudinal influence behind the successive development agencies toward development projects in the Niger Delta region. This suggests that the establishment of the successive development agencies were influenced by individuals, who did create avenue for pecuniary gains. Hence, the successive development agencies could be arranged as a camouflage to deceive the international community that something has been done to develop the Niger Delta region.

**Test of Hypothesis 3:** The Restiveness in the Niger Delta region is not associated with the attitude of political administrators. Applying Spearman's rank correlation co-efficient, let the options "agree" be "X" and "disagree" be "Y". Using table 4.4, we have:

x	r	y	r
44	4	31	5
45	5	30	4
41	2	29	2
43	3	29	3
35	1	28	1

$$\sum d^2 = 1 + 1 + 0 + 0 + 0 = 2$$

$$\text{The rank correlation coefficient } (r^s) = 1 - \frac{6 \times \sum d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

$$= 1 - \frac{6 \times 2}{5 \times 24} = 1 - 0.1 = 0.9$$

This result (0.9) demonstrates relatively high positive correlation. Therefore, the restiveness in the Niger Delta region is associated with the attitude of political administrators. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected based on the analysis of Spearman rank correlation that indicates relatively high positive correlation.

**Discussion of Findings:** Political Administrators concern toward Niger Delta region: The results of the study show that political administrators never give required attention to assess the extent of degradation or pollution in Niger Delta region so as to act wisely. Occasionally, the government might have sent relief materials to areas where oil spillages occur. But the after effect of oil spillages is not a serious concern to government as far as oil money is generating continually for them to share. Most important, when paying compensation to affected communities, if at all, money is paid only little amount is paid to the beneficiaries.

The attitude of political administrators towards development projects in the Niger Delta region: In this regard, the findings revealed that there is no positive attitude of political administrators toward development projects in the Niger Delta region. From the examination of this issue, the results show that few development projects were carried out when compared to funds voted for sustainable development projects in the region. Hence, much has not been achieved in terms of development in the Niger Delta region. Although, in recent times some Niger Delta political administrators show much concern to develop their states, only concentrated in the capital cities. The master plan for developing the Niger Delta region has no indication of being adhered to by the development agencies. The findings also observed abandoned projects by federal and state governments as well as the so-called development agencies.

Attitudinal influence behind successive development agencies towards projects in the Niger Delta region: The Niger Delta Basin Development Authority did not show seriousness in executing sustainable development projects in the Niger Delta region when in power as development agency established by Federal government. Subsequently, OMPADEC succeeded Niger Delta Basin Authority. That is not withstanding, NDDC was established to replace OMPADEC. All of these development agencies have the same non-chalant attitude toward the execution of development projects. Thus, the findings revealed that it is the same attitude all the three development agencies have in collaboration with those who are at the aim of affairs to decide what should done or not. Nevertheless the issue of capital votes for Niger Delta development is a questionable issue no one can explain fund allocations were utilized. The reason is not far fetch because since the establishment of these development agencies, up till now Niger Delta people have no good drinking water, good roads, sound health care delivery system, well equipped schools, etc. The formation of successive development agencies for the Niger Delta region was as a result of lack of trust and poor performances. Of course, the study confirmed that these agencies were not measuring up to expectations. The establishment of these development agencies, one replacing the other, was political driven, which induced them to decline in carrying out sustainable projects in the region.

Restiveness in the Niger Delta region and the attitude of political administrators: From the findings, it was discovered that there is association between restiveness in the Niger Delta and the attitude of political administrators. Right from the military era in Nigeria, the fight for resource control had been pressurized before this democratic dispensation. The outcome of cross-examining respondents revealed that the struggle for resource control has been intensified which is a coincident with the present political era. The results of the critical investigation into this issue revealed that the complacent attitude of political administrators toward development of the Niger Delta also fuels the restiveness in the region. Not only that, using youths as body guards in political struggles also empower them to carry arms. Although, it seems convincing that the



assumption of involving youths in political struggle causes restiveness in the Niger Delta region, lack of proper orientation programmes and empowerment of creative ventures for the youths in the region, are other major causes of restiveness in the Niger Delta.

### **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Summary:** The findings of the study so far discussed clearly show that political administrators never give required attention to assess the extent of degradation or pollution in Niger Delta region. This should have served as a guide to plan and execute appropriate development projects that will sustain the lives of the dwellers in Niger Delta region, most especially, in the rural areas. Findings also revealed that there is no positive attitude of political administrators toward development projects in the Niger Delta region. From the examination of this issue, the results show that few development projects were carried out when compared to funds voted for sustainable development projects in the region. Hence, much has not been achieved in terms of development in the Niger Delta region.

The study findings proved beyond reasonable doubt that there is attitudinal influence behind the successive development agencies toward development projects in the Niger Delta region. Hence, the establishment of the successive development agencies was influenced by individuals, who actually create avenue for pecuniary gains. Thus, Niger Delta Basin Development Authority did not show seriousness in executing sustainable development projects in the Niger Delta region, followed by OMPADEC and NDDC. And more to watch out for is the Federal Ministry of Niger Delta that has just been established for the same development purpose of the Niger Delta region. It is no fond that all the three development agencies maintained the same attitude in collaborating with those who are at the aim of affairs to decide what should be done with the vote. Therefore, no wonder up till now the Niger Delta people have been denied good drinking water, good roads, sound health care delivery system, electricity, well equipped schools and so forth.

**Conclusion:** The research study has examined the attitudinal influence of political administrators toward development projects in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Although, our data centered on selected sample units taken from Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-Rivers, Delta and Rivers States as the researcher's accessible population, it is believed that the information obtained may not be very different from others parts of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria.

Purposefully, the study concentrated on the following issues such as: the attitude of political administrators towards development projects in the Niger Delta region; the attitudinal influence behind the successive development agencies towards development projects in the Niger Delta region; and the examination of the restiveness in the Niger Delta region if it is associated with the attitude of political administrators.

However, the data analysis supports all the propositions. This is evidenced by the findings that there is no positive attitude of political administrators toward development projects in the Niger Delta region; there is attitudinal influence behind the successive development agencies toward development projects in the Niger Delta region; and the restiveness in the Niger Delta region is associated with the attitude of political administrators. Hence, the study concludes that there is no positive attitudinal influence of political administrators toward development projects in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

**Recommendations:** Given serious thought to the findings of the study, the researcher therefore recommends the following suggestions.

1. For one to be a political administrator, he or she be prepared to serve his people that make up the nation just as political administrators of other developed nations.
2. It is only when the political administrators show genuine concern for the Niger Delta region, that development projects would be realized in proper execution, and then the country will make progress in terms of investment and economic growth.
3. If Federal government of Nigeria really cares to develop the Niger Delta region where the country source of revenue is based, then there is no point to establish one development agency upon another. Just like Abuja is developed, a master plan could be drawn and stage by stage the Niger Delta region will be transformed over a stipulated period of time.
4. Our political administrators should present themselves matured and capable of administering the affairs of the public so that privileges of service should not be abused in the face of younger generation, such that the faith of our future leaders would not be doubted. It is only then Nigeria will be recognized and honoured abroad.
5. Political Administrators should note that the world interest in Nigeria is the Niger Delta resources that serve as the nation's wealth to attain its peak and become a developed country. Therefore, developing the Niger Delta region as a matter of fact will attract world recognition rather than siphoning trillions upon billions of naira to foreign countries as waste of funds only to borrow

- more and more from the World Bank enslaving the nation and her citizens.
6. Political Administrators should put first the nation's goal ahead of their personal goals or ambitions just as few state political administrators have shown interest to develop their states in loyalty to serve the people they stood for.
  7. Political administrators should be serious with the amnesty programme to take its proper position in order to allow peace to reign and not just propaganda of amnesty. This is the only way to solve the restiveness in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

**Suggestions for further study:** The researcher suggests further study on what should be done to discourage negative attitude of political administrators toward development projects in Nigeria.

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## Glossary

**Attitude:** This is defined as "mental and neural representations, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on behavior" (Breckler and Wiggins, 1992:409). Henry, et. al.(2004:B2) also define attitude as "A fairly stable, evaluative disposition that makes a person think, feel, or behave positively or negatively about some person, group, or social issue."

**Attitude change:** Attitudes can be changed through persuasion and we should understand attitude change as a response to communication.

**Administrative Machinery:** This is a body or an organization set-up to carry out development projects as well as other public affairs.

**Carry-go concept:** This is ideological concept introduced in Nigeria during this democratic dispensation to share the money among their party members.

**Environmental Degradation:** This is a situation that the natural conditions in which people, animals and plants live is damaged.

**Globalization:** This is a process of advancement and increase in interaction among the world's countries and peoples facilitated by progressive technological changes in locomotion, communication, political and military power, knowledge and skills, as well as interfacing of cultural and value systems and practices (Apolo Nsibambi, 2001:1).

**Political Administrators:** The study define political administrators as those that are sworn into political offices such as President, Ministers, Lawmakers, Governors, Commissioners, Local government Chairmen, Councilors, etc.

**Public Affairs:** Hornby (2006:1173) defines public affairs as issues and questions about social, economic, political or business activities, etc. that affect ordinary people in general.

**Table 2.1 NDDC Projects in the Niger Delta (2000-2003)**

Type	2002	2003	Completed	Commissionable	Commissioned	Total
Building	402	15	316	275	138	417
Canalization	9	9	0	0	0	18
Electrification	130	24	125	106	46	154
Flood Control	1	0	1	1	0	1
Jetty	41	6	32	31	11	47
Roads/Bridges	40	18	20	12	4	58
Water	91	24	76	70	21	115
Grand Total	714	96	570	495	220	810

*Source: NDDC (20046)*

**Table 4.1 Political Administrators concern toward the Niger Delta Region**

Questionnaire Item number	Option/Frequency counts (%)	
	Yes	No
1	37 (46%)	38 (47%)
2	30 (37%)	31 (39%)
3	34 (42%)	35 (43%)
4	0 (0%)	70 (87%)
5	37 (46%)	38 (47%)

*Source: Survey Data, June 2010*

**Table 4.2: Attitude of Political Administrators toward Niger Delta development**

Questionnaire Item number	Option/Frequency counts (%)	
	Yes	No
6	36 (45%)	39 (48%)
7	32 (40%)	43 (56%)
8	35 (43%)	37 (46%)
9	38 (47%)	36 (45%)
10	37 (46%)	38 (47%)

*Source: Survey Data, June 2010*

**Table 4.3: Attitude of the Successive development Agencies toward development Projects in the Niger Delta Region.**

Questionnaire Item number	Option/Frequency counts (%)	
	Agree	Disagree
11	55 (68%)	20 (25%)
12	45 (56%)	30 (37 %)
13	36 (45%)	37 (46%)
14	30 (37%)	32 (40%)
15	36 (45%)	34 (42%)

*Source: Survey Data, June 2010*

**Table 4.4: Political Administrators concern toward the Niger Delta Region**

Questionnaire Item number	Option/Frequency counts (%)	
	Agree	Disagree
16	44 (55%)	31 (38%)
17	45 (56%)	30 (37%)
18	41 (51%)	29 (36%)
19	43 (54%)	29 (36%)
20	35 (44%)	28 (35%)

*Source: Survey Data, June 2010*

**Table 4.5: Attitude of Political Administrators and Development projects in the Niger Delta.**

Options	Observed / Expected Frequency cells					Total
Yes	36 (36)	32 (36)	35 (35)	38 (36)	37 (36)	178 (48%)
No	39 (39)	43 (39)	37 (37)	36 (38)	38 (39)	193 (52%)
Total	75	75	72	74	75	371

Source: Summary Data on Table 4.2

**Test of Hypothesis 1:** There is no positive attitude of Political Administrators toward development projects in the Niger Delta region. Applying chi-square analysis technique, we have the following:

$f_o$	$f_e$	$(f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$
36	36	0
32	36	0.44
35	35	0
38	36	0.11
37	36	0.27
39	39	0
43	39	0.41
37	37	0
36	38	0.10
38	39	0.03

$$\sum X^2 = 1.36$$

The tabulated chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value is 9.48 for 4 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance and the computed chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value = 1.36. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted based on the criteria that the computed chi-square value (1.36) is less than the critical value (9.48).

**Table 4.6: Attitudinal in influence behind the successive development agencies and development projects in the Niger Delta region**

Options	Observed / Expected Frequency cells					Total
Agree	55 (43)	45 (43)	36 (42)	30 (35)	36 (40)	202 (57%)
Disagree	20 (32)	30 (32)	37 (31)	32 (26)	34 (30)	153 (44%)
Total	75	75	73	62	70	355

Source: Summary Data on Table 4.3



**Test of Hypothesis 2:** There is no attitudinal influence behind the successive development agencies toward development projects in the Niger Delta region. Applying chi-square analysis technique, we have the following:

fo	fe	$(fo - fe)^2 / fe$
55	43	3.34
45	43	0.09
36	42	0.85
30	35	0.71
36	40	0.40
20	32	4.50
30	32	0.12
37	31	1.16
32	26	1.38
34	30	0.53

$$\sum X^2 = 13.08$$

The calculated chi-square ( $X^2$ ) value is 13.08 and the tabulated chi-square value is 9.48 for 4 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated chi-square value is greater than the tabulated value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is attitudinal influence behind the successive development agencies toward development projects in the Niger Delta region.

## LIST OF FIGURES

2.1 The Niger Delta Map.



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BBC:	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN:	Cable Network News
CD-LF:	Community Defence Law Foundation
CIA:	Central Intelligence Agency
DVS:	Delta Volunteer Service
EFCC:	Economic and Financial Crime Commission

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EITI:	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EPA:	Environmental Protection Agency
ETA:	Environmental Impact Assessment
FAAC:	Federal Allocation Accounts Committee
IDP:	International Development Partnership
IEA:	International Energy Agency
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
JTF:	Joint Military Task Force
JRC:	Joint Revolutionary Council
MOSEIN:	Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality
MOSOP:	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People
MTN:	Mobile Telecommunication Network
NEITI:	Nigerian Extractive International Transparency Initiative
NDPVF:	Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force
NHIS:	National Health Insurance Scheme
NNDC:	Niger Delta Development Commission
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NNPC:	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
OMPADEC:	Oil Minerals Producing Area Development Commission
OPEC:	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Country
SPDC:	Shell Petroleum Development Corporation
SSCDU:	South-South Community Development Union
USAID:	United States Agency for International Developm

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