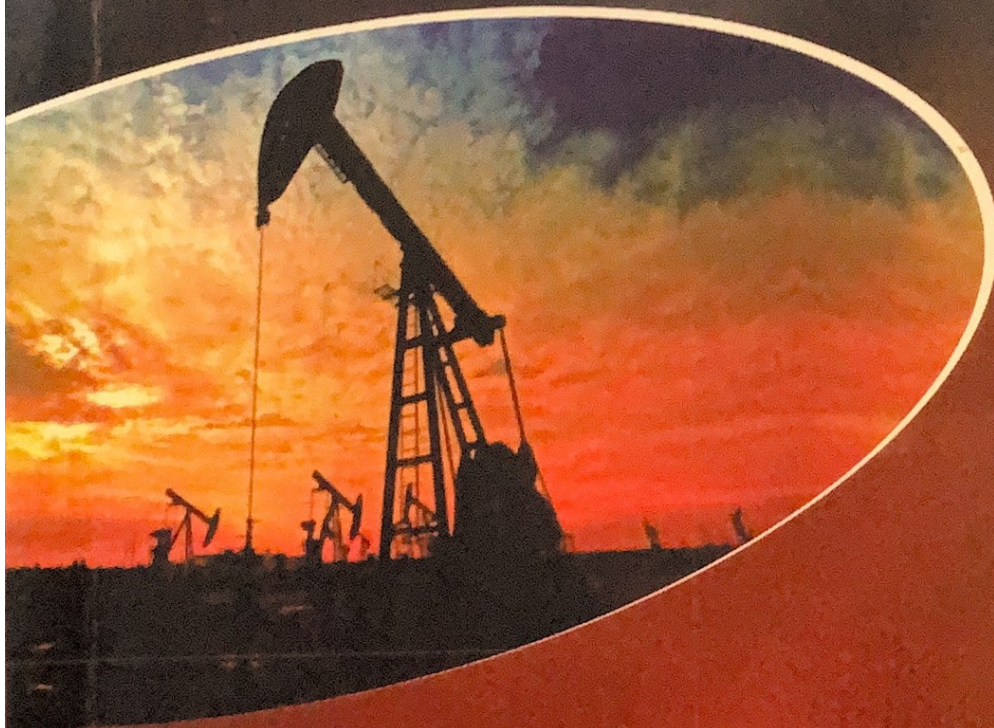


History and The Niger Delta:

Oil, Politics and Culture

Festschrift in Honour of
Professor Samuel Ovuete Aghalino



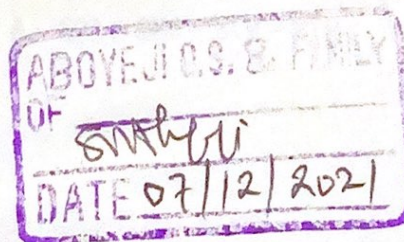
Editors
Chukwuma C.C. Osakwe
L. E. Odeh



Professor Samuel Ovuete Aghalino FHSN

HISTORY AND THE NIGER DELTA: Oil Politics & Culture

**Festschrift in Honour of
Professor Samuel Ovuete Aghalino**



Editors
Chukwuma CC Osakwe Ph.D.
Lemuel E Odeh Ph.D.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	iii
Foreword I	iv
Foreword II	vi
Contributor's	xv
 SECTION A:	
DYNAMISM OF NIGER DELTA HISTORY, OIL, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT	1
1. Professor Samuel Ovuete Aghalino: An Encounter with the Gown and the Town <i>Orji Boniface Ifeanyi and Oren Ajiri Joseph</i>	3
2. Oil Politics in the Niger Delta since the 19th Century <i>Chris B.N. Ogbogbo and Fidelis Enang Egbe</i>	9
3. From (Palm) Oil to (Crude) Oil: The Changing Phases of the Niger-Delta Oil Economy <i>Aboyeji Adeniyi Justus</i>	25
4. Political Developments of Western Niger Delta: A Historical Survey From the Earliest time till 1960 <i>Awofisayo Oladipupo Albert, Fakayode Michael Folusho and Onaolapo Foluso Anna</i>	49
5. The International Relations of the Niger Delta City States, AD 1500-1900. <i>Keke Reginald Chikere</i>	65
6. Crude Oil Exploration and its Ecological Impact on the Indigenous Economy of the Eastern Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. <i>Odeigah Theresa Nfam</i>	87
7. An Exegesis of Agriculture, Oil And Corruption in Nigeria: A Parable of the Golden Goose and a New Bride <i>Osho, Osaretin Akinola</i>	101
8. Pre-Colonial Economic Relations between the Isoko and Her Neighbours: A Lesson for Contemporary Niger Delta. <i>Uwomano Benjamin Okpevra</i>	117

9. Development of Underdevelopment of the Rich
Oil Niger Delta Region in Nigeria. A Paradox of Parody
Chinnah, Promise Chinwe 133
10. Oil and Environment
Sambo Joses Garuba 153
11. The Environment and Oil Activities in Nigeria:
An Impact Assessment of Oil Exploration and
Exploitation on Nigeria's Niger Delta Region, 1956-2016
Eduvwie Avi Nyerohwo and Ozinna Tochukwu Ntukogu 167
12. The Niger Delta and Nigerian Economy: Transition From
Agrarian to Oil Economy: Some Matters Arising
Aboyeji, Oyeniya Solomon 185

SECTION B:

NIGER DELTA ECOFEMINISM

13. Oil and Gender Vulnerability in Niger Delta during
Conflict in the Nigerian Fourth Republic
Orji Ifeanyi Boniface and Asenebi Henry D. 197
14. Remembering Edimini Kambasa: The First Queen
from the Niger-Delta
Zara Emmanuel Kwaghe and Amin Zaigi Ngharen 199
15. Women And Conflict In The Niger Delta
Bridget Oghale Omoruyi and Mary Uhunoma Isibor 213
16. Women in the Face(s) of Niger Delta Conflicts:
A Human Security Analysis, 1999-2009
Haruna Tsingari Warasini 227

SECTION C:

PETRO-VIOLENCE: STATES, FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS AND MULTINATIONALS INTERVENTIONS IN THE NIGER DELTA

17. Assessment on Niger Delta Conflict: Rethinking the
Situation, Drivers and Solutions
Adewale Adepoju and Ogunsakin Oluwasegun Dare 257

18. Issues and Discourse Surrounding Institutional Frameworks for Environmental Remediation in the Niger Delta Area: 1992-2020
Olubiyo Kolade Gabriel and Mahmud Mohammed Momoh 275
19. From Resource Curse to Blessing: Options for Sustaining Peace in Post-Amnesty Niger Delta
James Okolie-Osemene 295
20. An Appraisal of the Federal Government of Nigeria's Responses to Agitations, Conflicts and Crises in the Niger Delta Region from 1960 to 2016.
Julius O. Unumen and E. C. Emordi 311
21. Petro-Violence and The Nexus Between Poverty and Environmental Pollution In The Niger Delta
Nseobong Nkanga 327
22. Niger Delta Community and The Burden Of Oil Industry: A Case Study Of Oloibiri
Ekine Euphemia and Yilokun Isaac Babatunde 341
23. Another Failed Promise or another Food for the Boys?: Oil Spillage, Impacts and (Un)Cleaning-Up Responses in Ogoni Land, Niger Delta
B. O. Ibrahim 355
24. Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (NEITI), Resource Transparency and Niger Delta Crisis (2004-2019)
Yemisi Olawale I. 369
25. Rethinking Developmental Challenges in the Operations of Multinational Oil Corporations in Nigeria's Delta Region
Alex Amaechi Ugwuja and Nwachukwu Obiakor 389
26. Gas Flaring and the Prospect of Chinese International Oil Companies (IOC) in the Niger Delta Region
Odeh. L. E., and Oyekanola. A. K. 405

**SECTION D:
YOUTH RESTIVENESS, MILITANCY AND POPULAR
CULTURE IN NIGER DELTA**

27. Tackling Youth Restiveness in the Niger Delta Region
through Holistic and Sustainable Empowerment Models
Angela Ajodo-Adebanjoko 421
28. Piracy as a Land Based Crime: An Assessment of Piracy
In the Niger Delta region of the Gulf of Guinea
*Udeagbala Lawrence Okechukwu and
Ubong Ituen Ituen* 423
29. The Implication of Pidgin English in Teaching and
Learning in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria
Uchechukwu Orji and Ifunanya Ichie 439
30. Oil Business, Youth Restiveness and Militancy in the
Niger Delta Region of Nigeria
Shuaibu Ibrahim and Bem Japhet Audu 559
31. Niger Delta Poetry: Trauma, Blues and Bibliotherapy
*Emmanuel Babatunde Omobowale and
Stephen Ese Kekeghe* 463
32. Cultism beyond Campuses: A Historical Analysis of Street
Cultism in Ikorodu Local Government Area of Lagos State
Boge, Faruq Idowu and Nnaemeka Uwakwe Itiri 481
33. The Heroes of the Niger Delta in Postcolonial Popular
Culture
Stephen Ogheneruro Okpadah 505
34. Socio-Political Activism and Nationhood in the Poetry
of Odia Ofeimun
Peter E. Omoko 523
35. Education and Youth Empowerment in Nigeria:
An Appraisal
Ngozika Anthonia Obi-Ani and Mathias Chukwudi Isiani 535
36. Towards a Theatre of the Niger Delta
Stephen Ogheneruro Okpadah 569

**SECTION E:
POLITICS OF RESOURCE CONTROL AND PEACE
BUILDING INITIATIVES IN THE NIGER DELTA**

37. The Demand for Resource Control by Nigeria's
Niger-Delta: Dimensioning the Hysteria
Kenneth T. Azaigba 581
- 583

38. MOSOP and Rights Claims: Reflections on the Relative
Deprivation Theory of Social Movements
David Lishilini Imbua 595
39. Amnesty Programme and Militancy Resurgence in the
Niger Delta: A Reassessment of Roadmap to Peace
Building
Ogunniyi Olayemi Jacob and Akpu James Onochie 613
40. Oil Politics and the Reinvention of Minority Identity
in Post-Independence Nigeria's Niger Delta
Fred Ekpe F. Ayokhai 631
41. Screening the Risk Factors in Development
Intervention and Peacebuilding Initiatives in the Niger
Delta Region
Mathias Jarikre 647
42. Oil Politics and Agitation for Resource Control in the
Niger Delta, Nigeria: An Appraisal (1960-2015)
*Aregbesola Opeyemi Glory and
Odeh Lemuel Ekedegwa* 661
43. Land Tenureship and Oil Ownership in Nigeria:
Legal Ambiguity and Economic Injustice in the
Niger Delta
Williams Ehizuwa Orukpe 679
44. International Reactions to the Niger Delta Agitations in
Nigeria
Ineke, Ugbede Joseph 699
45. Orogun Oil Producing Community in the Niger Delta:
The Price of Oil Stakeholders Neglect
Omonigho, Amos Owem 715
46. Niger Delta: A Historical Appraisal of Niger Delta
People's Volunteer Force in the Struggle for Resource
Control.
Akinwale Fehintola Tunbosun 735
47. Resource Control or Nation's Control: Niger Delta
Avengers and the Renewed Militancy in Nigeria during
the Buhari Administration
Ajibola A. Abdulrahman, and Shola John Olarenwaju 757

48. National Insecurity and Leadership Change: A Study of the Niger Delta Militants in Nigeria, 2009-2016
Afolabi, A. S., Thompson, O.O. and Alakija, I. O 775

SECTION F:

INTER/INTRA-GROUP RELATIONS

49. Alami Sise: Interrogating Espionage System and Intelligence Gathering In Precolonial Ibadan War 1877-1893
Chukwuma C.C. Osakwe and Olawale Abayomi Adeniji 789
50. The 'Global Land Grab': Why Africa is (and May Remain) a Critical Target
Akachi Odoemene 791
51. Dynamics of Communal Conflicts between Itu and Odukpani over Mbiabo Area
Afaha Philip 811
52. Exploring the Dynamics of Ilorin War Weapons in the Nineteenth Century
Alabi Oladimeji Mohammed 827
53. Colonialism and Taxation in Ewugi District of Agaie-Lapai Division
Terhemba Wuam 839
54. Gains and Discontents of Import Control in Colonial Nigeria, 1939-1960
Ayodele Samuel Abolorunde 859
55. Colonial Regime as Underdevelopment of Indigenous Beverage Industries in Nigeria
Nwosu Ezekwesiri Okebugwu, Musa Helen and Nwaoha Chimaroke Chizoba 881
56. Impact of Colonialism on the Activities of Traditional Bone Setters in Ilorin Emirate, 1900 - 1960
Onagun Rasheed 895
57. Nigerian Workers' Resistance to Neoliberalism, 1980-2015
Emmanuel Nwafor Mordi 907
- 923

12

THE NIGER DELTA AND NIGERIAN ECONOMY: TRANSITION FROM AGRARIAN TO OIL ECONOMY: SOME MATTERS ARISING

Aboyaji Oyeniya Solomon, PhD.

Introduction

No doubt, prior foreign contact and discovery of crude oil, Niger Delta region had been a peaceful place with fishing and farming as means of livelihood. Its ports and rivers provided access for the British to penetrate the Nigerian hinterland; the gateway for trade in slaves and later export commodities such as palm produce, timber, rubber and even groundnut and cotton from the distant northern part of Nigeria. Hence, the relationship which started as a child play between the Europeans and the Africans in the 15th century began a process of change in the history of the Nigerian region. The Niger Delta was a collection of regions controlled by different tribes and kings, i.e. the Urhobo, Delta, Igbo, Isoko, Itsekiri, Oron and Ijaw. These communities traded with one another before the arrival of the European in the late 15th century(<https://www.stakeholderdemocracy.org/the-niger-delta-history/>). The Portuguese navigators in 1471 with the quest for glory and profit, ventured to the Niger Delta and established contact with the local people. The social and political organization of the Delta city states was based on the 'House System' which developed during the era of the slave trade, especially those between the Niger Delta and the estuary of the Cross River.

The Niger Delta is a very populated region sometimes referred to as the Oil Rivers because it was once a major product of palm oil. Prior the British rule in the region, the people within the Niger Delta region [predominantly the Isoko and Urhobo] had established an economic system which to a large extent revolved around the oil palm. Aside the planting, cultivating and fermentation processes, the oil palm made immense contribution towards meeting the socio-economic needs of the pre-colonial Isoko-Urhobo people of Western Delta. At the domestic level, the palm oil was ultimately used for cooking; the trunk of the palm oil could be used for building purposes and its kernel to cement marshy areas in the environment; its fiber woven into fish traps; the frond as a source of food to livestock and the veins for broom making. The oil palm industry, being the principal source of income was under the protection of a goddess called *Edjokpa*(see Aghalino, 2000:4)

After the successful penetration of the British into the Niger Delta region, palm oil exploitation became paramount. Industrial Revolution and the

development of the railway required palm oil as a lubricant. Palm oil was used for 'the manufacturing of soap, candles, margarine and as cooking fat' (Dike, 1956); and 'used for the manufacturing of pharmaceutical products' (Helleiner, 1966). Of all the principal export commodities during the colonial era, oil palm and palm kernel have the longest histories being some of the earliest exported commodities from the present day Nigeria. Hence, the area was known as the British Oil Rivers Protectorate from 1885 to 1893. An online source (A History of the Niger DeltaSDN <https://wwwstakeholderdemocracy.org>) attests thus:

The economic and social inflows into the region saw an emergence of new cities, and states, built as internal and external markets developed. Interestingly, even before the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, the region's reliance on the slave trade dwindled due to an even more lucrative opportunity in the palm oil trade. Demand for the native palm oil ran in parallel to the Industrial Revolution in Europe as the demand for factory machine lubricant increased exponentially. In addition, as the European population and wealth grew, secondary demands for palm oil based products e.g. soaps and margarine grew increasing the demand for natural oil.

Nigerian Economy Prior the Crude Oil Economy in the Niger Delta Region(*Era of Steady and Heady Performance of Agriculture*)

By the 19th century, the export of palm produce doubled in West Africa as Niger Delta in Nigeria took the lead. Notably, the Niger Delta ever since became an enterprise, partly due to the abundance of palm trees in its hinterland and also because the Niger River provided easy transportation for oil across the Atlantic. Oil palm collection became a major source of livelihood and it became a seasonal activity.

At the time of independence in 1960, all of the country's future dream hinged solidly on the productivity of agriculture which, although not prodigious, performed well enough to give birth to the dreams of transforming Nigeria into a modern industrial state. Agriculture accounted for more than 70% of Nigeria's revenue before independence in 1960. It enjoyed a pre-eminent position because farmers were motivated to produce not only for domestic consumption but for exports. Cocoa farmers in the Western region for example depended solely on this produce for their income and this accounted largely for the development of their region. So also were their counterparts in the North who engaged in cotton, groundnut, hide and skin production and those in the East and Middle-belt whose major pre-occupation was the production of palm oil, yam, cassava, etc. Statistics of agricultural production at the time were the kind of stuff which would make any developing nation to have dream of a great future. For instance, by 1958, the acreage of cocoa plantation in the Western Region alone totalled 981,091 acres and in 1961, when the country's exports were valued at nearly £200 million, about 20% of it or £34.8 million was derived from cocoa. In the same year,

groundnut production in the Northern Region topped over one million tonnes, while Palm Oil and palm kernel production in the Eastern Region exceeded 20 percent of the total exports. The land, as it were, was the main locomotive of the agriculture-based economy (Igiebor, 1987:21).

The heady performance of agriculture in the fifties and up to the mid-sixties was attributable to several factors of which the most important was the concentration of control in the regional governments. The 1954 and 1963 constitutions had made agriculture a regional responsibility as it was then regarded as a 'residual' item. This control meant that the bulk of the investments in the sector were founded by the regional governments which also got a greater percentage of the revenues from agricultural exports. The federal government on the other hand, had all the mineral rights, both on-shore and off-shore. Consequently, since agricultural exports, mainly of cash crops, was the major revenue earners for the country, the economies of the regions were relatively buoyant as money constantly flowed into their tills. This they used in executing their social and economic programmes, thus becoming the generative force of growth and overall development of the country.

Overtime, things began to dwindle. By 1966, agriculture contributed only about 60% of the country's total exports, which compared badly with its former contribution of 80%. The military intervention in 1966 put paid to regional autonomy, and more so when the country was broken up into 12 states on 27th May, 1967. The military government, being essentially more of a unified command, the residual powers and responsibilities of the states were mostly taken over by the federal government. Hence, there was drastic reduction in the revenue accruing to the states. The 1979 constitution formalized the major shift of power from the states to the federal government when it placed agriculture on the concurrent list, making it a joint responsibility of both the state and federal governments. A federal ministry of agriculture was not created until 1973.

At this juncture, it is necessary to emphasize that one auspicious development that would have profound effect on the government's attitude to agriculture occurred in 1958, the year, Shell Oil Company began production and exported the first Nigerian crude oil of 5, 134 barrels per day from Oloibiri, Rivers State (Igiebor, 1987:21).

Crude Oil Economy and the Inexorable Decline of Agriculture [Nigeria ploughs money into food importation, neglecting local agricultural resources]

The process of crude oil production is very technical and complex. Significant and extensive efforts have been made by different authors on the nature and processes of oil exploration and exploitation which needs not be duplicated. For example, Gbadegesin (1998:38-39) describes that "the entire activities involved in oil production which includes: geophysical investigation, exploration, processing, onshore and offshore, tanker loading, storage, refining and transportation—all take place within the Niger Delta." Attention shall therefore, be focused on issues and matters arising from the whole process of transition

from agriculture-based economy to crude oil economy vis-à-vis the host communities and the national economy.

In his account, Aghalino (2007:222) clarifies thus " It is necessary to stress that the history of the oil industry dated back to 1908. However, actual production was to commence in 1956 at 5,000 barrels per day". The discovery of oil in 1956 and its successful export in 1958 attracted more oil companies to Nigeria because by 1966, Shell-BP of the Anglo-Dutch, Agip from Italy, Philips, Mobil, Tenneco, great Basins, Gulf, American Overseas, all from the United States and Satrap from France were jostling for oil in Nigeria. From 1958-1960, Shell-BP sunk about 60 explorations wells across the Niger Delta. About 20 of the wells had oil in commercially profitable quantity(Ogbogbo: 2016 cited by Fidelis Egbe)which perhaps partly explains contemporary dominance of Shell's operation in the Delta area (located in Oloibiri, Ogoni and Warri).A year after production and export began, the figures had doubled. Consequently, crude oil continued its determined assault on the previously unassailable position of agriculture in the country's export ladder. By 1966, agriculture contributed only about 60% of the country's total exports, which compared badly with its former contribution of over 80%. By1971, the importance of the oil to the national economy was no longer contestable as it accounted for 74.4% of total exports, valued at £476.5 million, while agriculture contributed 22% (Igiebor, 1987:21). Oil production brought about the discovery of associated gas during the crude oil processing. The natural gas resources became an alternative source of income to the government, the incentive that positively led to the growth of both crude oil reserves and gas.

The inexorable decline of agriculture seemed to have been finally sealed in 1973 by an event that occurred beyond the country's borders. The Yom Kippur war broke out between the Arabs and Israelis. Following the war, oil producing Arab countries decided to wield their enormous oil power to try to force oil consuming western nations to rethink their policy of uncritical support for Israel. Being the most influential member of the OPEC, they subsequently persuaded the organization to triple the price of oil. By October 16, 1973, the new price was fixed at more than \$10 per barrel. Nigeria's immense benefit [country's revenue from exports] was calculated in billions of naira(Igiebor, 1987:21).

In the long run, it sounds magically incredible that in 1958, the contribution of oil to Nigeria's export was 1% (Olaifa, 2003: 22-23). By 1970, it accounted for about 70% of all government earnings. Ogbogbo (2017) attests that "in the last three decades, income from crude oil has become the pivot of Nigeria economy and by implication, its development." By the early 1970s, oil boom had begun to replace agriculture as the mainstay of the economy. By 1971, the importance of oil to the nation's economy was no longer contestable, it accounted for 74.4% of the total exports valued at £476.5, while agriculture contributed only 22%. And as money could be got cheaply from oil, there was little need to expend so much labour on the farms. Consequently, the oil boom encouraged rapid rural-urban migration and development. As they flocked to the cities in

search of jobs, they depleted the labour available for the farms. The old and the infirm left behind could not engage in serious production. With the oil boom, commerce developed and Nigeria became a dumping ground for all sorts of western products (food and material importation). Success in commerce meant increasing set-back for agriculture and the rural economy generally.

Regrettably, the era of oil boom was too good to last. As the industrialized nations began to stock-pile oil, they created glut in the oil market. Simultaneously, they began to develop synthetic alternatives to oil, thus reducing their dependence on oil. This resulted in a sharp decline in export of oil and other primary products from Nigeria. By 1978, export values had fallen by 20% leading to a trade deficit of 2.1 billion naira. In the same year, the import bill had reached 1.2 billion naira and the external reserve which stood at 5.6 billion naira in 1980 had dropped to 4.5 billion naira. Nigeria became an importer of food even when her land was so naturally endowed.

In spite of the concerted efforts made by different administrations to remedy the ugly trends to revitalize agriculture i.e. the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) in the mid-70s; Agricultural Development Programme (ADP); Babangida's Directorate for Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI); Obasanjo's Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1977; Shagari's Green Revolution (GR) in 1980; etc; much is yet to be achieved till date to significantly reverse the continuing slide in agricultural production and revive people's interest in farming. No doubt, according to World Bank report, 'crude oil has in the 20th century attained a level of global importance as a major source of energy (see 'Oil in Nigeria', African Mail).

Crude Oil Economy –A Blessing or Curse?

There are always two sides of a coin as it is to any argument. On the one hand at the national perspective, even though oil economy gave a dead blow on the agricultural sector as earlier noted; the value of Nigerian oil potentials both in the domestic and international levels became an important resource in the national revenue and annual budget over the years. According to IMEG [international and Engineering Group],

The demand for Nigerian crude in the international market occurred as a result of its excellent and quality low surplus content and Nigeria's closeness to the western market of North and South America. The country has also been rated as the 6th largest oil producing country in the world, which explains how much crude oil has replaced the exportation of food and cash crops. Evidence shows that that Nigeria has earned about \$350 billion from crude oil between 1960s and 2019 (Abejide, 2017:139).

'That Nigeria is rich through revenue is incontrovertible' (Madujibeya 1976:288) is in consonance with Aghalino(2007:3) that:

The Nigerian oil industry has continued to play a significant role in the nation's drive towards economic growth and development. Nigeria remains Africa's leading oil producer and sixth largest crude oil exportation in the world... The sector has become the mainstay of the economy, pivoting other sectors and accounting for about 90% of the country's foreign exchange earnings.

On the other hand, in most countries that discovered oil, that was never a problem. It is a God-given wealth which needed to be harnessed, by the right leadership, to alleviate the problems of its people. The paradox in the Niger Delta region vis-à-vis the enormous benefit of the 'black gold' to the nation's coffers has always been a great concern to interested researchers in the region. In the Niger Delta of Nigeria, it is known that poverty amidst plenty is one of the major causal factors for the conflict economy that has characterized the region over the years. This accounts for the number of youths involved in the conflict economy and magnitude as well as the dimensions of such conflicts. Much energy needs not be dissipated on the nature and adverse effect of the crude oil exploitation, exploration and the consequent anti-oil protests and reforms that many authors have extensively documented. Rather, matters arising from the different submissions shall influence the author's position in the tripartite relationship among the Oil bearing states, Oil companies and the Federal Government of Nigeria. On the whole development however, inequalities (uneven distribution of resources), conflict economy and/or paradoxes are evidently central in the itemized facts in the cases.

i. Foremost, the prime place of the Niger Delta region in the Nigerian politics brings inequalities of states, natural resources and power politics to play. Generally, one of the great paradoxes of international politics is the fact of inequality of states in the midst of their professed equality in as enshrined in countries' constitutions or organisations' charters. All states within a country or in the world cannot be treated as equal in respect of their geographical, economic, social, political and power compositions. If some become great, even super, few remain of a medium range, while many live in the position of 'small' powers. This aptly describes the situation in the Niger Delta region among the other Nigerian states. According to CPED, "the majority of oil and gas extraction in Nigeria occurs in the region which hosts most of the country's notable multinational corporations (CPED: Building Peace in the Niger Delta). It is on this premise, Nigeria is Africa's leading producer of oil and gas and the 13th largest producer of oil in the world. The country depends on crude exports for nearly 80% of government revenue and more than 90% of exports earnings. It is on this note one reasons that to whom much is given, much is expected. The Oliver Twist stance of the oil bearing states/communities can therefore not be out rightly condemned.

ii. The progress in the agricultural sector and toward food security [production that marched the growth of the population] was however halted by the neglect of the sector by successive governments following the discovery of oil and government economic policies which turned out to be counter-productive (Oboreh & Aghalino, 2010:224).

iii. The land question and tripartite relationship involving legal issues came to play among the oil bearing communities, the oil companies and the federal government. Constitutionally, a community may own a land, all mineral resources inclusive of crude oil are owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Section 44 (3)0 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) states thus: "The entire property in and control of all mineral oil and gas, in, under or upon any land in Nigeria or in, under or upon the territorial waters and the exclusive economic zone of Nigeria shall be managed in such manners, as may be prescribed by the National Assembly." Hence, all production activities which include: the management and control of oil spills in the process of production, the disposal of salty water known as 'produced water', and flaring of 'produced gas' generated alongside the crude, etc within the geographical boundaries of Nigeria must conform with the laws of the land as found inscattered sources under the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA), and National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA). Several companies are involved in oil exploration, exploitation, production and exports in Nigeria today because the Federal Government grants exploration license, oil prospecting license and oil mining license to both indigenous and foreign companies(Petroleum Act of 1990 chapter 350, Law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria).By doing this, the FG had laid a strong foundation for the development of petro-business in the country and for maximum profits(NNPC Act CAP 320- Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1990, Part II, Section 10 [1], [2a-c]).

iv. What the people of the region get by the way of compensation does not correlate with the stupendous revenue that is garnered from it. Revenue from this region has fueled socio-economic and political transformation of the geo-political zones in Nigeria (Aghalino, 2004:12).

v. Since exploitation and exploration of oil in the region; "it has suffered from environmental degradation and deprivations. The traditional means of livelihood have been destroyed and truncated, while the area and its people have not been able to enjoy adequate means of livelihood"(Oboreh & Aghalino, 2010:223).Oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta have impacted adversely on the lives of the people. As more oil is exploited and taken away, more devastation is left behind. The petrodollars earned do not benefit the people where lives have been shattered by oil (Oyebade, 2000).

vi. Following every action or inaction is a reaction. Protests and agitations (via militant groups i.e. MOSOP, Niger Delta Avengers, MEND) are inevitable if "petroleum operators have engendered massive environmental pollution in the oil producing areas. Specifically, there have been pipeline leakages, well blowouts and spillages which have had severe effects on the land, water resources, the micro-climate and the residents" (Peel, 2009). In other words, most of the conflicts have arisen from complex environmental problems and a long history of basic neglect and social development of peoples who have seemed helpless watching their land and water resources continually devastated by intensive exploitation for petroleum and gases without deriving any appreciable benefits by way of investments in their own development (Toyo, 2002).

vii. As every reaction is prone to a counter-reaction, prodded into action by the restiveness of the oil producing communities, the oil firms like Shell have evidently made efforts such as the CNA-Clean Nigeria Association, SED- Safety and Environment Department, NDES- Niger Delta Environmental Survey, remediation programmes, etc (See Aghalino, 2001:105-111). Likewise the federal government has evidently put some measures and reforms in place such as the creations of the FEPA, 1988 NOSDRA-2006, Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs-2008, Niger Delta Development Commission-2008, Amnesty Programme 2009, FEPA, etc in order to redress the grievances of the people.

viii. Perhaps the inability of the Nigerian government to compel MOCs operating in the Niger Delta to comply with the regulations and provisions can be adduced to seeming incurable level of corruption in the country and probable collaborations (Ayemga & Fidelis, 2020:27-28).

ix. Beyond the Niger Delta region, "in spite of the huge revenues from crude oil over the years, the high rate of corruption, and mismanagement of such oil proceeds had truncated the process of social and economic development of the country. Thus, Nigeria's abundant oil resource potentials have not been effectively utilized by the central government to generate employment, quality education and reduce the poverty trend (Abejide, 2017:137). That the federal government benefits so much from oil and the economy of the country still remains in shambles has been traced to corruption, mismanagement, poor leadership and other vices. Akintokunbo (2009:32) justifiably posits thus:

In Nigeria, it became a curse simply because we had poor leadership all our history. These leaders, military or democratic were selfish, greedy, corrupt, murderous and parasitic, devoid of ideas, unfocused, visionless and lacking in foresight. But it is no surprise that they were all these. Most of them either forced their way into power through the barrel of a gun or rigged elections to get to power all because they want control of these natural resources.

In a similar vein, Aghalino (2007:4) collaborates thus:

The Nigerian economy blossomed in the 1970s... Then of course came the years of the locust! The successive military regimes in Nigeria had a different agenda as they set out to plunder and loot the commonwealth. Corruption was institutionalized. Oil blocks, licenses to lift oil, appointment of directors and employment in the oil companies generally were allotted to cronies; merit was thrown to the wind.

Suggestions

From all said and done, it's obvious that solution does not lie in folding of hands and awaiting the arrival of the economic downturn before government embarks on interventionist policies that will safeguard jobs and ensure that teeming army of unemployed is not swelled further through massive retrenchments, pay cuts, depression, famine, increased crime rate and other possible vices that are bound to rear their ugly heads. Economists, political analysts and laymen alike worldwide are agreed that the world is suffering from an unprecedented economic crunch. Economic predictions amidst covid-19 lockdowns and its unprecedented crashing oil prices do not seem to favour Nigeria, as the economy is expected to slow down much more than ever before.

i. On the one hand, much political goodwill is needed to effectively tackle the problems of the region as poverty is not a blessing but a curse. 'Poverty is very good in poems' says Henry Ward Beecher, but 'it is very bad in a house. It is very good in maxim and sermons, but it is very bad in practical life'. As the companies pay royalties and taxes to the FG, it is government's responsibility to develop the oil producing communities significantly while the oil companies should be principally made responsible for maintaining a pollution-free environment. Oil firms should ensure prompt and adequate payment of compensations should there be eventual oil spillage and government should ensure all operational rules and regulations are strictly adhered to without fear or favour.

ii. As a matter of urgency and priority, Nigerian government must encourage the diversification of its mono-cultural dependence on the oil sector as it is the only way to survive the current environment of global uncertainty with the volatility of oil price worsened by the ongoing covid-19 pandemic lockdowns. Agriculture sector is suggested as possible options for diversification. To this end, Ohunyeye, Agbaeze, Solomon & Obamen (2019:98) suggests that "some strategies identified for economic diversification include: regional mix, proper strong supportive structure (political dependability, inner security, solid education framework), attitudinal change, openness, macroeconomic policy and institutional matter, changing and boosting of the agricultural sector, strengthening the manufacturing sector and anti-corruption campaign.

iii. In furtherance to the above, a re-orientation is needed on the colonial mentality of consumption rather than production whereas 'work involving manual labour, agriculture in particular, was looked down upon as menial and *infra dig*, because it was not done by the white man in Africa: it was regarded as work meant for the educated, only for the lower, illiterate classes, "the wretched of the earth" (Nwabueze, 2002:260).

iii. Nigeria's descent from riches to rags was swift and sudden as it came as a result of the country's failure to husband its wealth wisely and to make it multiply many times over. Accountability, sincere anti-corruption fights, political will, good governance with clear visions, proper monitoring and supervisions would go a long way to checkmate the cankerworms that have eaten deep into the country's economy and polity.

Conclusion

It is often said that the climb to the top of the tree is usually fraught with difficulties and dangers; but to stay at the top and not be toppled by the strong gale of competition is even tougher than to get there. This paper has examined that Nigeria has known both good and bad times, times when it was wallowing in wealth and times when it was/is pinning away in poverty. It is one country that failed to convert its reaches into good account and once it lost its grip, once it stepped on the banana peel of economic depression, it went down the dusty road of stagflation. However, economic observers in Nigeria have not been unmindful of the adverse impact of the state of affair and the need to accord greater priority to the problems of economic growth and development in the national calculations of the country. It is on this note that the author examines the trends of the transition from the agrarian to the crude oil economy; makes a critique of the matters at stake on the development since then; calls for a more proactive and diplomatic means to respond to the Niger Delta question and re-echoes the reality of the non-negotiable diversification of the country economy in order to prevent total collapse.

References

- Abejide, T.S. (2017). Nigeria's petroleum resources management and its impact on the economy, 1960-2010. *Ilorin Journal of Historical and International Studies*, 7 (2).
- Aghalino, S.O. (2000) British colonial policies and the oil palm industry in the niger delta region of Nigeria, 1900-1960. *African Monograph*, 2 (1).
- Aghalino, S.O. (2004) Combating the niger delta crisis: An appraisal of federal government response to anti-oil protests in the niger delta, 1958-2002. *Maiduguri Journal*, 2 (1).
- Aghalino, S.O. (2007) An appraisal of the oil sector reforms. In H. Saliu, E. Amali & R. Olawepo (Eds.), *Nigeria's reform programme: Issues and challenges*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Vantage Publisher.
- A history of niger delta : <https://www.stakeholderdemocracy.org/the-niger-delta-history/>
- Akintokunbo, A. (2009, August). The niger delta and Nigeria. *Timeless Newspaper*.
- Ayemga, T. & Fidelis, E. (2020) Crude oil exploration and environmental conflict in the niger delta. In M.A. Abdullahi M.A., J. Gaius, T. Ayemga (Eds.), *Perspectives on Nigeria's challenges in nation-building*. 1 (1) Kaduna: Nigeria, Department of History.
- CPED: Building peace in the niger delta <http://www.thinktankinitiative.org/cped-building-peace-niger-delta>. Accessed 6.57pm, 29/04/20
- Dike, K.O. (1956). *Trade and politics in niger delta*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*.
- Gbadegesin, A. (1998). The impact of oil exploration and production activities on the environment: implication for peasant agriculture. In A., Adewunmi, (ed.), *Oil exploration in Nigeria oil bearing*. Lagos: Enclave
- Helldiver, G.K., (1966), Peasant agriculture, government and economic growth in Nigeria. Illinois 97.
- Igiebor Nosa (1987, October 5), agriculture: harvest of failure, *Newswatch*, October 5, p21.
- IMEG cited in Abejide, T.S. (2017). Nigeria's petroleum resources management and its impact on the economy. *Ilorin Journal of History and International Studies*, 7(2).
- Madujibeya S.A., 1976., 'Oil and Nigeria's Economic Development' *African Affairs*, 75, No. 300, 288.
- Nwabueze Ben., 2002, *Colonialism in Africa: Ancient and Modern Volume 2 Africa's Inheritance from Colonialism*, Gold Press Limited, Ibadan, 2002, 260.
- [NNPC Act CAP 320- Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1990, Part II, Section 10 [1], [2a-c].

- Oboreh J.S. & Aghalino S. 2010, "Economic Activities of the Niger Delta People of Nigeria: A Historical Comparison and Lessons to Learn" Conference proceedings Northeast Business and Economics Association, 37th Annual Meeting, Sept 30 to October 2, 2010.
- Ogbogbo, C.B.N. (2016), A history of petroleum industry in Nigeria, 1960-1979 quoted in F. Egbe (2017). The spatial nature of oil conflict in the niger delta, 1970-2009" PhD thesis, University of Ibadan.
- Ohunye, F.C., Agbaeze, E.K., Solomon O. & Obamen J. (2019). Economic diversification and national development in nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *International Journal of mechanical Engineering and Technology*, 10 (8).
- 'Oil in nigeria', (1963, December 18) *African Mail*.
- Olaiya, F.E. (2003). Impact of oil on the fisheries resources of cross river and akwa ibom states, Nigeria. *Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Management*, University of Ibadan, PhD Thesis.
- Oyebade, A. (2000). The legal framework of oil exploration in nigeria-A critique. In W.A. Raji & E. Akiosola (Eds.), *Boiling point*. Lagos: CDHR Publications.
- Peel, M. (2009). Crisis in the niger delta: how failures of transparency and accountability are destroying the region. Chatain House, Royal Institute of International Affairs.
- Petroleum Act of 1990 chapter 350, *Law of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*.
- Nwabueze, B. (2002). *Colonialism in Africa: Ancient and modern volume 2 Africa's inheritance from colonialism*, Ibadan, Nigeria: Gold Press Limited.
- Toyo, E. (2002). Chairman's opening comments. In W.A. Raji & E. Akiosola (eds.) A cdhr publication on the crisis in the oil producing communities in Nigeria. Lagos, Nigeria: Committee for the Defence of Human Rights.