

## **Ethnic Militancy and Democracy in Nigeria: The Question of Resource Control in Niger Delta**

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### **Abstract**

*The proliferation of ethnic organizations and its mobilization has been a political instrument of the Nigerian elite since post-independence, the same way nationalism was in the decolonization battle. The basic issue of contention in Niger delta and among other federating units is the rights of the 'people' to determine their own destiny in the Nigerian federal system. This has been compounded by the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian state, its weak nature, formula and politics of resource sharing, and leadership challenge. However, the agitation for resource self-determination is justified in a true federal structure, and it is on this background that ethnic militancy in the Nigeria oil bearing Niger delta is examined. Resources play a significant role of peaceful co-existence in the lives of any human social organization. When properly managed, it present and serves as a means of livelihood to man. If man does not have resources, he would face extinction of life. To this length, for human to live, he must garner resources, control and distribute them within the society for the betterment and development of the society. This paper examines the contentious nature of resource control and its distribution under the present Nigeria democratic federation. It argues that agitation for resource control either political or economic has a direct correlation with ethnic militancy. The paper submits that, the operation of true federalism and good governance in Nigeria has to be accomplished by meaningful devolution of powers at the local levels to ensure that the federating units have better control over the wealth derived from the natural resources in their territories.*

**Keywords:** ethnic militancy; democracy; Nigeria; resource control; and niger delta

### **Background of the study**

Nigeria is the most populous black nation in the world with over 150 million populations; it is located in the western region of sub-Sahara Africa. Nigeria is a heterogeneous society with over 400 ethnic nationalities, 250 languages, 3 major religion, many cultural belief and practices, and blessed with many natural resources among which is petroleum that has drawn the world attention to the country. Like many other African countries, colonization has adverse effects on the structure, cultural belief, language, and autonomous of the various ethnic nationalities that constitute the Nigerian state.

Hence, Nigeria has not been able to fashion a generally agreed system by all federating units that can eliminate the havoc done to the country by through the 1914 amalgamation which indiscriminately put the various autonomous ethnic groups under the same government. Rather, nepotism has dominated political, economic, and administrative activities of the country against the supposed inherent advantages imbedded in a multi-ethnic society. This paradoxical development and practice has prompted protracted agitations for resource control for over five decades without meaningful and sustainable solution yet on sight.

The agitations has manifested in militarization and violence conflicts among the people in the region, violent attacks on the multinational corporations, theft of oil by syndicates and destruction of oil installations on one hand, intra and inter-ethnic conflict, community and militia conflict, conflicts between militants and government agents on the other hand. Therefore, oil exploitation in niger delta has become a curse rather than blessing to the people in the region in that, individuals and communities that have peacefully co-existed before the discovery of oil suddenly began to suspect one another and further engage in violent conflict because of the oil wealth in the region.

The oil revenue from Niger delta region had made Nigerian government abandon other sectors particularly agriculture which was the main source of revenue for the country before the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in the region in the 1950s. This development has made the region economic bedrock of the nation, and subsequently elevates Nigeria to the seventh largest oil producing nation in the world, and the largest in the continent of Africa respectively. The first discovery of oil in commercial quantity was on 3rd of august, 1956 in tertiary deposits at 12,000 feet below, in Oloibiri a creek town near Yanogoa, the present capital of Bayelsa state in Nigeria.

On February 17th, 1958, the first batch of Nigeria's crude oil left the borders of the country for commercial purpose to Europe for the international oil market for foreign exchange. Hence, with this development Nigeria became part of oil producing countries in the world and a major player in the global oil market. The internationalization of Nigeria through exploration of oil concurrently marked the beginning of suffering, marginalization and underdevelopment of the oil producing region that is sustaining the country's economy through the revenue from the natural resource from the region.

The ethnic problem in Nigeria is perhaps one of the most complicated in the world, with over 400 ethnic formations and 250 different languages spoken in the country. It is interesting to note that, none of the three main ethnic groups Yoruba, Hausa/Fulani and Igbo constitute a majority of the country's population in that there are also many sub-ethnic groups within the major once that also claiming autonomy. Beside the ethnic divide, there is also religious divide among Christians, Muslims and traditional worshipers on one hand, and on the other hand political and status divide.

However, Niger delta region has now been officially defined by the Nigerian government to cover an area of 70,000 kilometer square that make up 7.5% of Nigeria's land mass. Historically, the Niger delta region consists of the present Bayelsa, delta and river states, but in 2000 the chief Olusegun obasanjo democratic regime include six other oil producing states to the region. The states are: Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Edo, Imo and Ondo states, hence the total oil producing states in the country increased to nine.

### **Significance of the study**

This study is significant in that, democracy which should ordinarily be a government of mutual understanding that will encourage majority participation in the process of governance. A system that should allow for peaceful co-existence of the diverse ethnic nationalities in the country has become a system of government that persistently fans the embers of discord among and between the ethnic groups in the country. this development has led to loss of lives, destruction of properties worth billions of naira, psychological depression, many rendered homeless and disabled. In spite of the numerous challenges posed by ethnic militancy, the nigerian government is yet to fashion out a strategy of containing it.

There is correlation between underdevelopment, poverty, resource control and ethnic militancy in the Niger delta region of Nigeria. It seems irony, and lacks a justifiable explanation that the source of revenue that is sustaining over 150 million people is wallowing in abject poverty. The study is also significant in that democracy and federalism should be instrument for redressing the inequalities created by colonial administration and the various military regimes in the country have been passive to the problem.

### **Theoretical explanations**

In respect of the peculiarity of the Niger delta problem, we shall be exploring the concept of frustration aggression theory to explain the reasons for violent conflicts in the niger delta region. The centrality of oil as the source of the nation's revenue for social, economic, political and infrastructural development creates the condition which has made oil rents transcends both power and authority in the process of the country's development. Therefore, whichever unit that controls political power spontaneously controls the oil rents and determines its allocations. These have made it difficult for a shared political culture and common interest that will facilitate socio-political development and peaceful co-existence to evolve among the federating units in the country.

The preferred framework of analysis for this study as earlier stated is "frustration aggression theory". Dollard et al. (1939) posited "that the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression". Nicky (1998:50-53) alluding to Dollard et al. When he submits that frustration implies 'encountering an obstacle to some desired goal' while aggression means behavior intended to injure the person at whom it is directed'. The opinion of Gurr as cited by Dowse and Hughes (1983:411) states that,

Individuals and groups have goals of some sort, that much of their goal is purposive in the sense of goal-seeking and that if this behavior is not prevented in some ways the groups or individuals are likely to behave quite rationally

Frustration, in this context, was specified as the thwarting of a goal response, and a goal response, in turn, was taken to mean the reinforcing final operation in an ongoing behavior sequence. At times, however, the term 'frustration' is used to refer not only to the process of blocking a person's attainment but also to the reaction to such blocking. The main trust of this hypothesis is that frustration always leads to aggression but while reviewing the hypothesis, Zillmann, (1979) cited in Johan <http://www.rechten.eldoc.uu.rug.nl> when he submits as follows: (i) frustration instigates behavior that may or may not be hostile or aggressive. (ii) that, any hostile or aggressive behavior that occurs is caused by frustration.

That frustration is not a sufficient, but a necessary condition for hostile and aggression; a frustrated person may be not necessarily be hostile when dejected and tired of the process of goal attainment and decides to discontinue agitating for a believed goal. This may be as a result of lack of encouragement from the society or non-availability of needed resources to advance the agitation. Therefore, militarization of the Niger delta region is a product of deprivation from their land and natural resources, and neglect by the government that is using the region's resources to develop other units of the country.

This is directly results to abject poverty of the people of the region. While the failure of government to institute and implement a peaceful resolution in managing the resource conflict in the Niger delta caused their aggressive, hostile, antagonistic and violent behavior against all their perceived enemies. Deprivation of the region from controlling their resources or having a good share of its revenue in a federal arrangement has caused their aggression and subsequent taking laws into their hands for self-defense.

### ***Conceptual clarification***

#### **Resource control**

"the practice of true federalism and natural law in which the federating units express their rights to primarily control the natural resources within their borders and make agreed contribution towards maintenance of common services of sovereign nation state to which they belong. In the case of Nigeria, the federating units are the 36 states and the sovereign nation is the federal republic of Nigeria" Ojameruaye (2009). Resource control is one of the important features of federalism; it is a process by which each of the federating units controls the exploitation and revenue of the resources within their geographical boundary against the present practice that the federating units are at the mercy of the federal government for share of their god-given resources.

#### **Ethnic militia**

Is a group of people who are not professional and constitutionally recognized soldiers but who have military training and act as an army to defend their ethnic group. Akaruese (2003:218) submits that a militia is a properly armed group with overt or covert command structures, enjoying same forms of legitimacy and permanency; and capable of resorting to the use of arms in pursuance of their objectives.

#### **Federalism**

Federalism as a concept lacks a generally agreed definition. The fact remains that environment factors and origin of the system in the various states practicing federalism as their system of government might be similar but are totally different (Abegunde, 2013: 3). The further submits that environmental factor; proximity of the units, available natural resources plays crucial role in determining the practicability of federalism in any society. Based on the difficulty in having a consensus definition, elazer (1965: 354) submits that the problem of having a general definition is because of the difficulties in relating theoretical formulations to the evidence gathered from observing the actual operations of federal systems.

Another difficulty according to Omotoso (2000: 5) arises from difficulty in distinguishing between federation and confederation which are two classic but different concepts of federalism. He argues that "federalism has been thought of as a means of uniting a people already united by bonds of nationality through distribution of political power among the nation's constituent units. Therefore, the practice of federalism can be similar in two countries, but cannot be the same because of different determinant factors that are peculiar to each of the state practicing the system.

Federalism as a concept can be viewed from a complex system of government that strives for unity and equality among the various autonomous federating states bound together by a central government for the promotion of their common good such as political, socioeconomic and security of all the federating units (Abegunde, 2013: 3). The awareness of the discussion of contemporary federalism starts with Wheare who submits that “federal government divides law making powers and functions between two levels of government”. He further argues that, the constitutional form of federalism is brought about by circumstances where people are prepared to give up only certain limited powers and wish to retain other limited powers, both sets of powers to be exercised by coordinate authorities.

In Wheare’s view of federalism the federal principle includes: (a) division of powers among levels of government (b) written constitution showing the division of powers (Wheare, 1943: 34). The institutionalization of this two will guide the operations and interactions of the levels of governments while performing their roles as stipulated in the constitution for peaceful co-existence. According to Hague and Harrop (2004: 228) “federalism is a method for sharing sovereignty and not just power between governments within a single state. It is a constitutional device, presupposing a formal political agreement establishing both the levels of government and their spheres of authority”.

Federalism can also be viewed as a system of government that consists of autonomous units that are tied together within one sovereignty that is politically organized in a way that the activities of government are divided between state governments and central government or among local governments, state governments and central government as the case may be in a way that each level of government will have some jurisdictions on which it makes final decisions. Devolution of powers in a federal system of government is necessary for all the federating units to have input in all issues that directly or indirectly affect them as a people; it will also allow people of the same fate to consistently retain their common bond for common identity as a people of the same history.

## **Democracy**

The term democracy originates from Greek in the 15<sup>th</sup> century to denote a system of government that is predicated on “rule of the people”. In the contemporary world, there are several variants of democracy but there are two basic forms of democracy, the two forms are concerned with how the whole body of all the eligible citizens executes their voting rights. The forms are direct and representative democracy – the direct democracy is a process that allows all eligible citizens to directly and actively participate in the decision making process of government. In direct democracy, the whole body of all eligible citizens remains the sovereign power while political power is exercised indirectly through elected representative in a representative democracy.

It is a government by the people in which the supreme power is vested in the people, exercised by the people or their elected representatives under a free and fair electoral process. It is important to note that there has never been a consensus on the definition of democracy, but equality, freedom and rule of law have been important features of the system since its inception in the ancient times. Therefore, democracy contrasts with the forms of government where power is either concentrated on a single authority, as in the case of monarchy, or where power is held by a few individuals as in an oligarchy. It is paradoxical that because the operators of nascent and modern democracy have mixed the elements of democracy, monarchy and oligarchy to represent democracy.

### ***Reasons for militancy in Niger delta***

The discovery of oil in commercial quantity and good quality in Niger delta region in 1957 is directly responsible for events that have led to the political and economic marginalization of the inhabitants of Niger delta. In spite of over 40 years of oil production and hundreds of billions of dollars generated by the federal government from oil revenue, the oil bearing communities have remain in abject poverty without basic amenities. The following factors are considered to be responsible for the militancy of the inhabitant of niger delta:

**Deprivation of the means of livelihood:** the government of Nigeria and oil multinationals have deprived the inhabitants of niger delta region their means of livelihood through oil exploration activities and forcing them to abandon agriculture as their primary occupation and forcing poverty on them. Despite the huge amount of money derived from the oil revenue, the local people of the oil bearing communities remain in abject poverty and deprivation as they lack basic and natural things of life like water and unpolluted air after their environment has become artificial.

**Environmental damage:** the social, economic and environmental costs of oil production have been very far-reaching. 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 in developing nations due to the lack of power, wealth and equity of the affected communities on one hand, and the unlimited powers of the central government on the other hand.

As a result, oil companies often evacuate oil bearing communities from their homelands, further marginalizing them. The system of oil production in Nigeria is twisted in favor of the multi-nationals and federal government 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 among others are common phenomenon in the region (Ejibunu, 2007: 13-14). He further submits that 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.

**Unemployment:** as a result of environmental damage caused by oil spillage, gas flaring and oil pipeline explosions, the niger delta people have been deprived of farming and fishing which are their major and primary occupation before oil exploration in commercial quantity in the region. As a result of this, unemployment is very high among the people of the region. Another concern is that the oil companies in most cases do not hire their employees from the region that produce oil, but from the non-oil producing region of the country. This has remained a major concern to the people of the region because it is difficult to find a justification for this despite the destruction and distortion of agriculture and fishing as their primary occupation.

**Human rights violation:** In spite of unquantifiable hardship brought on the Niger delta people through exploration of oil, the government has constantly been suppressing all kind of protest or demonstration by the people of the region to draw the attention of the world to their plight. Examples of these include the killing of ken saro wiwa and others in 1995 without fair hearing during general sannu abacha regime, the January 11, 1999, ijaw women peaceful demonstration against marginalization of their people in port harcourt were violently tear-gassed, beaten, stripped, and detained by a combined team of policemen and soldiers, the warri war of 2003 was allegedly instigated by the activities of some oil companies and nigerian naval officers. Therefore, 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.

**Underdevelopment:** an idle hand is the one that is always readily available for all kinds of job. As a result of unemployment and lack of hope for job in the region, able body adult tend to go for any job that can guarantee food on their table. The elite are taking this advantage to manipulate the poor and unemployed youth into militancy. On the other hand, those individuals with relatives in the city preferred relocating and starting life afresh.

### ***Ethnicity and party politics in Nigeria***

Militancy in Nigerian politics subtly began with the pre independence political parties which were formed along ethnic nationalities because the ethnic groups do not want to renounce their sovereignty for the sake of unity at the national level. To them, ethnicity takes precedence over nationalism. Hence, political parties in Nigeria were from inception designed for ethnic and self-serving purposes along different ethnic groups with conflicting loyalties. Following the introduction of elective principles by the clifford constitution, on june 24, 1923 the first political party Nigerian national democratic party (nndp) was established under the leadership of herbert macaulay, but its activities were restricted to contesting elections for lagos city council.

The victory of NNDDP in all the elective positions in Lagos led to the formation of Lagos youth movement (LYM) which later changed to the Nigerian youth movement (NYM) to give the party a national outlook.

The domination of NNDDP in elective positions for years in Nigeria led to the formation of three major political parties that metamorphosed from ethnic association, northern peoples' congress (NPC) was supported by northern Nigerians dominated by the hausa/fulanis under the leadership of ahmadu bello. Action group (ag) was dominated by the yorubas in the west under the leadership of chief obafemi awolowo, while the national council of Nigerian and cameroons (ncnc) which later changed to national congress of nigeria citizens (ncnc) was led by dr nnamdi azikwe, and dominated by ibo.

However, the only political party that had the semblance of a national political party was the NCNC for having followers and representatives in the 3 regional assemblies in the country. The reason for this is that the Nigeria is not structurally balance, therefore causing its political and economic inequality. The view of mwakikagile (2000: 3) reflects this when he submits "Nigeria was plagued with deep seated imbalance in its political structure, stemming from the inequalities of its components units which placed one of the regions (the north) in a dominant position in the federation. The failure of the Nigeria constitution at independence in 1960 to recognize the strong desire of minorities and other communities for self-determination affected the balance of power at the center"

The first republic was brought to an end through a military coup in 1966. The military interregnum lasted between 1966 and 1979 and during this period political activities were outlawed. The second republic (1979-1983) witnessed the emergence of more ethnically based political parties, which were much similar to those established in the first republic. To a large extent the political parties is second republic was the re-creation of parties of the first republic under different taxonomies. The parties included the national party of Nigeria (NPN), the unity party of Nigeria (UPN), and the Nigerian people's party (NPP), were political parties that replaced NPC, AG, AND NCNC, respectively.

Others were the peoples redemption party (PRP) and the great Nigerian people's party (GNPP), and later the Nigerian advance party (NAP), which was registered in 1982, after failing the first round of registration in 1978 (Osaghae, 1998: 53). In the second republic, the only political party that cut across all the ethnic units in the country and therefore with a national outlook was NPN, but had its strong hold in the northern part of the country.

Following the lifting of ban on political activities imposed after the December 31, 1983 coup, the military government, by executive fiat, established two political parties after the dissolution of the thirteen political associations that applied for registration as political parties. The imposed political parties are national republican convention (nrc) and social democratic party (sdp). The involvement of military in midwifing democracy was a fundamental challenge that brought a fundamental change in the mode of party formation in the country.

The establishments of two political parties in the Nigerian ethnically diverse polity is expected to ordinarily serve as a melting pot for incubating two different political ideologies by fusing into two the over 400 ethnic units in the country, but the political parties are two parties of the same orientation with different nomenclature barren of ideology. Omotola (2009: 635) put this in perspective as “ordinarily, the existence of two political parties should represent two different ideological camps, as has been the case between the labour and conservative parties in Britain and Democrat and Republican in the USA”.

In 1999, General Abdulsalam Abubakar successfully completed his transition to civil rule by handing over reins of power to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo a retired general on May 29, 1999. At the inception of the fourth republic, only three political associations were registered as political parties to contest the 1999 general elections. The political parties that were registered by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) are: People's Democratic Party (PDP), All People's Party (APP), the party later changed its name to All Nigerian People Party (ANPP) and Alliance for Democracy (AD). The only political party with national outlook is PDP that has membership and offices in all the states in the country, while others were at best regional parties.

Today Nigeria has well over sixty registered political parties; only five are prominent with elected officials but still maintain their regional bases. The opportunities associated with political parties are yet to manifest and positively exploited for national development. The ethnic composition and beliefs of the political parties has been the substructure upon which their ideologies were erected. The trend in party formation in Nigeria since introduction of elective positions has been ethnic association metamorphosing into political parties. This has affected composition and ideologies of parties by defending ethnic agenda rather than initiating and executing national programmes.

### ***Implications of militant agitation***

Militant agitation can as well be referred to as violent agitation for the perceived once entitlement. The implications shall be discussed as follows:

**Security:** this can be viewed from two main aspects. First is safety from such chronic threats as hunger, diseases and repression. The region is afflicted with hunger and diseases as a result of poverty on one hand and repression by the government and its agents by not allowing the people in the region freedom of expression and association to exercise their fundamental human rights. Second, is the protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of their daily lives. The region has been synonymous to conflict as a result of the continuous violent agitations in the region.

Hence, one of the biggest security challenges facing the region is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. This calls for serious attention from government and its security institutions as it increases tension, and insecurity of lives and properties in the region. In view of the insecurity in the region, many industries have closed; relocate to a safe region or country; rendered thousands of able youth unemployed; subjecting them to poverty in the midst of plenty and therefore making them accessible for manipulation by the political players for the selfish interest.

**Economic:** the discovery of oil in commercial quantity has made the government to abandoned agriculture which was the major means of revenue for the country, and therefore making the people and the government concentrates attention on the oil revenue. This process has made the country a mono economy state despite the availability of many unexploited natural resources in different units of the country. The danger of this is that any negative effect on the global oil price will automatically affect the economy of the county. In another way, the violent agitation resulting into destruction of oil installation had resulted into low production and reduction in the revenue generated from oil.

**Political:** The fact remains that in Nigeria, whoever controls political power controls economic power, hence the need to violently struggle for political power, employed all means including legitimate and illegitimate to protect and retain the acquired power in other to continue to cut the shots. Politics in Nigeria has become an investment for the political players in the country, rather a call to service as it is the practice in the developed democracy where the institutions of government regulates the actions and inactions of the players.

Due to the inordinate conducts of the political players in the country, most of the citizens with track records have distanced themselves from the game, hence leaving it for the demagogue that will use the state resources to better their lots and that of their cronies. This scenario has adversely affected the leadership of the country in taking decisions in the general interest of the citizens rather decisions are taken without putting the public into consideration. In Niger delta display and use of arms during political campaigns have become part of political game, and not exemption to the rule of the game in the region.

**Psychological:** The people in the region have been traumatized with the sequences of violence in the region in that their safety cannot be guarantee in any form by any security agent. The famers in the region have been rendered jobless through oil spillage, pollution, dredging, among other havocs done on their land and water. These women that had lost their husband; girls raped; maimed youth; displaced families will for a long period have the memory of militancy fresh in their memories due largely to its direct effect on them.

**Socio-culturally:** No doubt, militancy have affected the cultural values of the people in the region, to the level that militant approach has almost become the norm to resolving issues of concern. The culture of traditional structure and institution being the umbrella body for ethnic groups has been replaced by ethnic militant groups which are confrontational and violent in their agitations. It is important to note here that, culture can only be practice and imbibed in a peaceful environment, but where there is no peace cultural value and its practice will go to extinction.

### ***Resolution***

Conflict is an unavoidable phenomenon in any human society, but it should be managed not to degenerate to violent. The key element of conflict prevention in the region is to ensure that the wealth generated through resource (oil) extraction is utilize to improve living conditions of the natural resource producing communities. This necessitates transparent and equitable distribution of revenues from the resource sector (Stiftung, 2012:3).

Despite the afflictions of the violence surrounding competition for natural resources in niger delta, all hope is not lost for its prevention and resolution in a country that peacefully co-existed before the discovery and subsequent exploration of oil in commercial quantity. The first step is the establishment of agreements, and efforts at cooperation, co-management, and conservation of the natural resources.

This implies that all the stakeholders – government, oil bearing communities, and multinational corporations have to be in agreement over the terms of their interactions in oil exploration such that will benefit all in a way that will guard against preventable natural resource conflict. In an attempt to do this, the oil bearing communities are to be adequately represented in all decision-making process that affects their lives directly or indirectly.

Secondly, there is need to ensure that the wealth generated through oil extraction is utilized to improve the living conditions of communities that are endowed with oil in the region. This can include the following but not limited to provision of portable water, good road, electricity, hospital among others. If these are provided for the oil endowed communities it will prevent undue tension, frustration, agitation/aggressions, which will make the communities view the revenue from oil sector as transparently and equitably utilized and distributed among stakeholders.

Third is the need for democratic peace building institution. It has now become evidence that Niger delta like other countries endowed with natural resources in Africa are more prone to violent conflicts that have potential of degenerating to war if not properly managed like the case of Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone and others, hence the need for peace institute. The purpose of this institute is to investigate issues that normally propel conflict in Niger delta and any other natural resource community; formulate policies on how to resolve and prevent such from future occurrence; and recommend practicable policies for revenue sharing formula that will be embraced and acceptable by the stakeholders.

The institute is to actively investigate the appalling conditions under which communities near cite of oil exploration live; and strive to reduce the number of slum areas in line with millennium development goal (bench mark foundation, 2012:2).Fourth is the need for transparency and accountability. The leadership failure in the country has made resource revenue utilization and management the most contentious issues in the country, because of the issues like national question, functionality of the institutions of government, leadership greed, conflict and violent between and among resource bearing communities and adherent to principles of democratic which will guarantee its sustainability.

Fifth is the diversification of the economy of the affected communities and the country in general in a way that the country will no longer rely on only one source of revenue for the economic development of various communities. The revenue generated from oil are to be re-invest in other sectors, such as agriculture, education, manufacturing industries that can use local resources for its production and sustainability. Hence, this will create more employment, reduce unnecessary tension and conflict on oil and its revenue, encourage peaceful co-existence among the federating units, stakeholders, and guarantee stable and focused government.

### ***Conclusion***

Nigeria as a democratic federal state is only in theory, hence the unending agitation for resource control in a federal system under a democratic administration, where agitation for resource control should not be an issue. However, with the lopsidedness of the Nigerian federalism, there is need for a national conference where all the federating units and ethnic nationalities will be adequately represented to discuss their mode of interaction if the unholy marriage of 1914 should still continue.

As argued elsewhere, parties were formed along ethnic composition in Nigeria, therefore providing Nigeria as a standard laboratory for ethnic politics with ethnically focused ideology. This has contributed in no small measure to political instability, political merger, unending reform and perpetual transition in the country.

Therefore, it is the submission of this study that the only visible and enduring solution to the Niger delta crisis is the adoption of true federalism where the federating units will be autonomous for self-determination without any supper imposed programmes and policies by the federal and state governments. When this is done each unit will be forced to look inward to explore and make good use of the available resources within their geographical territory and make the country economically diverse and viable rather than the present mono-economy that is causing tension and friction in all sectors and among the federating units in the country.

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