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Natural - Resource Curse, Niger Delta Crisis and Oil Exploration in Nigeria: A Theoretical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This investigation inspects the contemporary Niger Delta crisis and its socioeconomic problems, as well as the underdevelopment status in the region from one hand and the nation on the other hand to the discovery cum exploration of raw petroleum stores in huge amounts utilizing the Resource Curse hypothesis as a core interest. The investigation contended that the discovery of oil and its exploration in huge amount throughout the years has produced clashes as opposed to harmony between the host communities, the multinational corporations as well as the Government on the on hand, and has generated intra and inter-communal crisis on the other hand. The study addresses these substances and relates same to the exercises of the Federal Government of Nigeria and the act of Quasi-federalism in the nation since her freedom. The study embraces the recorded and scientific structure as its methodological part. This means that relevant data for the study were derived from secondary sources via; textbooks, journal articles, official documents, *and* web materials. Above all, the investigation proffers valuable suggestions to be embraced by the government of the league to take out blended emotions and crisis in the host communities just as that between the worldwide companies, government and the oil rich communities in the Niger Delta. Likewise of significance, is an extreme way to deal with crisis is for the Government to dispense with the underdevelopment status of the nation in the global financial cum political field?

Keywords: Resource Curse, Natural Resources, Oil Exploration, Niger Delta Crisis, Socioeconomic Development, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

The discovering of oil store in huge amount in Niger Delta area in the mid 1950s, first in Oloibiri town in the present day Bayelsa state by Shell British Petroleum and later in different networks in the district, is named in certain quarters and by certain researchers as a curse as opposed to a gift to the individuals of the locale specifically and the nation as a rule. To this regard, Tumbo (2011) contended that the Nigeria's Niger Delta was the wellspring of early contact between the nation and European mercantilist merchants; a relationship which later prompted the foundation of European ports incorporating the exchanging ports Forcados, Koko, Burutu, Port-Harcourt and Calabar, yet, the district till date is minimized in the sharing of what is today labeled our national cake which among local people connotes participating in the increases from the surpluses from oil income from the area. He noticed that the Central Government's consideration, however, moved to different regions outside the district when the nation accomplished her freedom, yet the disclosure of unrefined petroleum and its exploration just as abuse in business amount in 1958, brought back the residential government and worldwide considerations to the area. Instead of profiting enormously from the rich oil store and consistent exploration of the asset blessing, the locale keep on encountering unmanageable natural corruption and contamination event by the disregard from the Federal Government and the Multinational Companies which further intensified the issues of poverty, underestimation and joblessness in the area (Tumbo, 2011; Ogbonna & Appah, 2012).

Prior to the approach of oil exploration, the area was honored with rich farming condition beneficial for broad horticultural practices like angling and harvest creation, however the revelation and exploration of oil has changed every one of these procedures to all the more irritating circumstance prompting absence of rich streams and waters, just as fruitful soil for development or developing of yields (Obi, 2009). Dode (2012) contended that the issue of the individuals of the locale was entangled by appropriate ceaseless oil spillage event by harm oil pipelines everywhere throughout the district prompting the streams and waters in the area void of amphibian and marine life which was the significant wellspring of pay to the indigenous individuals when the disclosure of raw petroleum in huge amount. Additionally irritating is the redirection of interests from horticulture to white cola employments offered by the oil organizations, however not adequate to oblige the indigenous individuals but rather adequate to suit the outside ostracizes and contracting firms possessed by outsiders (Nwoba & Abah, 2017).

Tumbo (2011: 51), in this way, contended "underneath the structures, ranches, waterways, streams, and lakes in the Niger Delta, are areas of one of the world biggest oil and gas stores, and that which constrained the accessibility of fruitful grounds for crop cultivating and angling which is the significant control of the individuals of the district. As it were, the significant mineral that was assumes to give corporate occupation to the individuals has amusingly kept on causing savagery, strife, doubt and underdevelopment in the locale and keeps on compromising the monetary and political ideals of the individuals". This is a normal case of the outlook of the individuals who trust in the thought of the asset curse, asset trap or Dutch disease suffering.

Akpotor, Orubu, Egbo, Olabaniyi, Ohwona and Olomo (2012) repeated this point of view when they opine that the larger issue of oil exploration and abuse shows in the environmental obliteration and disequilibrium of the host network; an outcome of the ruinous exercises of the oil organizations through contaminations emerging from gas flaring and oil spillage, and the

resultant marvels, for example, loss of farmlands, waterways, corrosive downpour, debased air, otherworldly despoiling and the destruction of the greenery just as fauna. Asika (2012) contends that the hard and uncalled for circumstance in the Nigeria's Niger Delta has activated arrangement of brutality, common turmoil, fight, guerrilla war and different types of insurgency, and has likewise killed some unmistakable indigenes of the district, for example, the execution of the Ogoni Nine; Ken Saro Wiwa and eight others. He went further to express that the nation rich mineral store didn't assist the nation with sustaining greatest harmony and security in light of the fact that numerous lives have been lost and their blood the economy blast. He emphasized this point of view when he opines that the Niger Delta has appreciate a notoriety of the least fortunate, generally disregarded and bedraggled zone in the nation in spite of the way that it produces the most elevated extent of the abundance of the district. Their streams, ranch terrains and condition are in genuine ruin in view of the exercises of the oil global organizations in the area (Asika, 2012).

This tricky and annoying circumstance is the thing that Darah (2010) saw as the underlying driver of the few progressive gatherings (activists) or the eminent aggressor bunches who are head twisted in protecting and maintaining the holiness of the individuals of the district and their condition. Ohwofasa, Nana, Igbako and Aiyedogbon, (2012) contended that in spite of a few activities by the Federal Government to address issue of poverty, struggle and underdevelopment in the Niger Delta district through the foundation of a few government offices, for example, the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA) built up in 1976; the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) set up in 1992; and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), the government is yet to completely or totally address her expressed target and objectives as a result of absence of responsibility, corruption and blunder by government authorities (Ohwofasa *et al.*, 2012).

Akpotor (2016) contended that notwithstanding the way that unrefined petroleum represents 90% of the nation's fares, 70% of Federal Government income and 15% of GDP, oil appear to be a curse and a squandering advantage for the nation. In a related way Duruji and Dibia (2017) while referring to Tamuno (2011) contended that in spite of the district's situation as the host to oil organizations, and oil store as a wellspring of the country's income from send out, a little measure of 13 % is shared to the oil delivering Niger Delta expresses, a circumstance the individuals get with discontent and most extreme animosity as militancy, pipeline vandalism, grabbing of outside ostracizes and different types of against social indecencies. Since the 13% induction isn't sufficient to build up the territory, the individuals of the area consider it to be out of line treatment from the Federal Government. The result of this was the periodic interest for asset control; financial federalism and self-assurance (Duruji and Dibia, 2017). It is even with these issues that this examination arranges the natural curse or asset trap or Dutch disease hypothesis to Niger Delta improvement just as the Nigerian issues.

1. 1. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The primary point of this examination is to look at the connection between the contention of underdevelopment in Nigeria, and the revelation and exploration of oil, a circumstance a few researchers and political investigators depicted as a curse instead of a gift to the individuals. While the particular targets are to:

- a) Ascertain if the disclosure of raw petroleum store in the Niger Delta territories of the nation is a curse or a gift to the locale specifically and the country in general.

- b) Suggest ways that will make a harmony between oil exploration and monetary improvement, just as supported harmony and security in the Niger Delta specifically and the country in general.

1. 2. Research Questions

The accompanying inquiries are raised to direct this examination:

- (i) Are the discovery and the subsequent exploration of oil in the Niger Delta a curse or blessing to the people of the region in particular and the country as a whole?
- (ii) What are the possible solutions to the Nigeria's Niger Delta conflict and the problem of underdevelopment in the country?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1. The Resource Curse Theory

Considering the principle of this examination which is to learn whether the disclosure and the consequent exploration of oil in the Niger Delta district of the nation is a curse or a gift to the individuals of the area specifically and the nation as a rule, and to legitimize the realities of this examination, it gets important for us to give experimental and hypothetical survey of the Resource Curse Theory which was initially begat by Richard Auty, an Economist and Geographer in 1993 while researching the motivation behind why some asset rich nations failed to meet expectations other than creating despite the plenitude of natural resources, similar to the instance of Nigeria. As it were, Auty characterized the term Natural asset curse as the unreasonable impacts of a nation's natural asset riches on the nation's monetary, social, or political prosperity (Rose, 2012; 2014 Cited in Mehrdad, 2017).

Azarhoushang and Kukavina (2014), and Mellissa (2017) in their separate investigations of the asset curse hypothesis lumped the term with the Dutch Disease, a term utilized in relationship with a 1960s emergency in Netherlands after the disclosure of natural gas in the North Sea locale of the nation. They considered it to be as the proper word to depict what happens when an occasion like a ware blast makes a nation's money progressively costly and its different products less focused. Akpotor (2016) opines that the Dutch Disease or Resource Curse hypothesis is utilized to look at the negative impact rich resources have on the financial development of the asset rich nation. To him, it is a dumbfounding circumstance in nations with plenitude of non-inexhaustible natural resources however experience stale monetary development and withdrawal frequently connected with strife or emergency of minimization of the host network. Duruji and Dibia (2017) Resource curse otherwise called the Paradox of Plenty portrays the disappointment of numerous natural asset rich countries to profit completely from the abundance of their rich natural gift and the powerlessness of their governments to react well and adequately to open welfares and requirements.

In an increasingly detailed way, Azarhoushang and Rukavina (2014) and Polus, Dominik and Wojciech (2015) contended that rich natural resources, for example, oil store and huge others in plenitude in certain nations as opposed to a gift is a curse or trap to these nations in view of the habits wherein the resources are removed by the worldwide organizations, and the exercises of the exclusive class regularly impact by outer powers from the created countries of the world. The activities of these people and organizations have much of the time came about to standard week financial execution, dependable inadequate establishments and political

backwardness, they contended. Ibaba (2009) and Anthony (2016) contended that the vast majority of these oil rich countries as opposed to developing the way of life of enhancing their monetary framework to a large scale financial based framework, grasp a mono-monetary arrangement which has come about to over dependence on oil sends out, obvious on account of Nigeria which is hindering to her financial development.

Undeniably, the disclosure of a portion of these natural resources, especially oil store in a portion of these nations made them to give less consideration to different parts of their economies. For example, horticulture which was the pillar of the economy before the revelation of oil in enormous amount in Nigeria has pulled in little consideration from the past organizations in the nation up to this point when the President Buhari drove government embraced a protectionist strategy to support the development of homestead deliver and debilitate extreme imports of ranch produce, for example, rice and huge others into the nation (Frederick, Asmuni, Idris & Othman, 2013). Stewart (2012) and McFerson (2009) contended that among the numerous disappointments in creating nations, similar to Nigeria, none increasingly poses a threat than the asset curse which is a purposeful endeavor by the multinationals and their nearby allies to undermine the enthusiasm of the individuals for childish additions.

Nonetheless, notwithstanding the plenitude of natural resources; poverty, disparity, and deprivation, just as corruption win in these nations. Also, instead of contributing opportunity, comprehensively shared development, and social harmony, rich stores of oil and minerals have brought oppression, wretchedness, and insecurity to these countries. Like Stewart (2012) and noteworthy others, Akpotor (2016) contended that those countries tormented by the curse of oil thought that it was exceptionally hard to escape from it. This he represented with the instance of Nigeria which as indicated by him has experience the ill effects of oil exploration in spite of the way that unrefined petroleum represents over 90% of the nation's fares, 70% of the Federal Government income and 15% of GDP.

2. 2. The Contemporary Niger Delta and the Nigeria's Resource curse Conflict

The Nigeria's Niger Delta like different deltas, for example, the Amazon in Brazil, Orinoco in Venezuela, Mississippi in the United State of America and Mahakarn in Indonesia, is popular for its wealth natural oil and gas resources and is positioned the 6th biggest exporter of raw petroleum on the planet. Since the pre-provincial days and till date this area has been assuming urgent jobs in the Nigeria economy. Its ports and streams have given the British interlopers access to palm produce, timber, elastic, groundnut and cotton from the far off northern locale of the nation (Agbegbedia, 2012). Without question the Niger Delta territory has been key, monetarily and strategically, to the nation both in the pilgrim and post-frontier times. In spite of this mass preferred position, the locale is politically minimized, monetarily in reverse and immature (Collins, 2018).

Researchers and political examiners contended that the quandaries of the district expanded with the revelation and exploration of raw petroleum resources which is the nation's principle wellspring of income throughout the years. Ecological debasement through oil exploration, abuse, contamination and spillage, just as poverty, joblessness, savagery and social lowlifes keep on being their offer culture and standards since oil was found in huge amount in the district (Akinbi, 2012). Dode (2012) contended that the desires for the individuals of the oil rich Niger Delta was high after the disclosure of oil first at Oloibiri in 1956 and later in huge amount in 1958, and that according to their observation, the outside trade to be earned from the

fare of the dark gold (petro-dollars) would change their live for better, lamentably the turn-around was the situation.

Agbagbedia (2012) opines that the underestimation, natural corruption and impoverishment have prompted expanding influxes of savagery in the locale. Shell, Chevron, Mobil, Elf, Agip and Taxaco in joint endeavors with the Federal Government harmed the earth in the district. As opposed to a gift to the individuals, oil has become a curse to them. Prisoner taking, abducting, militancy and other criminal indecencies turned into the final hotel to the individuals of the district. Akpotor (2016) contended that the plenitude of oil in the nation has transformed the pioneers into greedy poor people who share the national cake, the outcome of which has gotten impoverishment and untold hardship to the individuals living in oil rich networks of the Niger Delta. This circumstance he contended was what the asset curse hypothesis sees as a curse to the individuals instead of a gift.

Tumbo (2011) noticed that the oil organizations working in the locale acquired the entrepreneur arrangement of the pilgrim government that likewise met their advantage. Shell Petroleum Development Company, a backup of the Royal Dutch/Shell Group which started full exploration and generation of oil in Nigeria in 1948 after her underlying contact with the nation in 1937, drove in the inheritance of the pilgrim government in her dealings with the individuals of Nigeria. Furthermore, the establishment of the 1914 Act by the British pilgrim government didn't help the nation in any way. The result of this advancement is that Shell turned into the main oil organization permitted to investigate unrefined petroleum in the nation until the development of other oil organizations in the later days. With her first fruitful drill in Oloibiri in 1958, the disclosure of unrefined petroleum in seaward field-Okon in Western Niger-Delta by Chevron Nigeria Limited, just as the rise of Nigerian AGIP Oil Company situated in Brass and Omoku in Rivers state; and Forcados and Kwale in Ndokwa territory of Delta state; and other significant oil organizations that spread over the Niger Delta locale, the narrative of the area changed to a woeful one (Tumbo, 2011). The ongoing advancement and rise of indigenous oil exploration organizations, that is, organizations possessed and constrained by Nigerians and their outside accomplices acquired a similar European industrialist, settler and domineering heritage or societies.

With these improvements the area turned into the focal point of showdowns between have networks and the government from one perspective, and host networks, oil organizations cum security offices then again. Notwithstanding this advancement, the government of the state in collusion with the oil organizations arranged intra and bury collective clash in the district so as to build up gap and rule framework between the positions of the instigators to support their tyrannical control of the resources of the individuals of the area, and to keep away from their corporate social duty to the host networks (Shaxson, 2007; Raymond, 1997). The emergency in the locale was additionally fortified by criminal minimization, abuse and disregard of the individuals by the government and the oil organizations in the zone of improvement and strengthening in spite of the riches acknowledged from the area's oil store, thus the asset curse (Aghlino, 20110).

With Nigeria as a significant exporter of unrefined petroleum however endures more as far as monetary and infrastructural improvement from one viewpoint, and then again experience underperformance in its horticultural and assembling segments, just as mass joblessness rate, the side effect in the Dutch Disease which is the major financial sickness that baffles monetary advancement turns into the case in the nation (Watts, 2004). To put it plainly, the nation has been burdened by Dutch disease which has similarly enthrone a destabilized monetary system

and hinders financial improvement in the nation since the times of oil exploration in the nation's Niger Delta (Duruji and Dibia, 2017). Unquestionably, discoveries uncovered that the nation has for quite a while contaminated by Dutch disease and will keep on experiencing this suffering if radical or proactive measures are not taking by the administrative, state and nearby government (Mingcong, 2013). Presently, vulnerability runs in the capacity of the governments and the exploration organizations in the nation to control this hazard of asset curse or trap thought, henceforth the proposals in the examination beneath

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the discoveries or survey of literary works above, it is obvious that a large portion of the contentions throughout the entire existence of the asset rich Niger Delta and some in the nation are followed to the bounty and exploration of the rich asset enrichment in the Niger Delta area. Nigeria no uncertainty has recorded a great deal of contentions that were related to the circulation of oil riches and its power throughout the years. The nation's polite war of 1960-1970 was credited to the mission, voracity and the urgency of the Northern elites to hold onto Federal force from one viewpoint, and to get a greater portion of what they called the National Cake then again. There was additionally the Ogoni emergency which prompted the executions of Chief Ken Saro Wiwa and eight different children of the rich oil Niger Delta on the 10 November 1995 by the Federal Government drove by Late General Sani Abacha, and which incited universal shock and suspension of the nation from the Common Wealth of Nations for more than three years.

Likewise deserving of notice are the rates of pipeline vandalism and the rise of aggressor bunches equipped with present day and complex weapons battling for the advancement of the area with the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger-Delta (MEND) drove by Okah and Ekpomupolo Government nom de plume "Tompson"; the Niger-Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) drove by Asari Dokubo; the Guard Brigade Movement for the Survival of the Ijaws in the Niger-Delta (MOSEND) (Tumbo,2011); and in the ongoing years as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDV) and its other subsidiary gatherings.

Likewise of relevance is the explanation behind the heightening of the contention in the Niger Delta to its present level as political minimization of the host networks in the oil rich area by the progressive governments at the three levels of government in the nation; the failure of the government to wipe out the separation and rule approach embraced by the oil organizations working in the locale; and generally irritating of all is the idea of the government reaction to these contentions when they began. The refusal to respect the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) marked between the host networks and the oil organizations has likewise been distinguished as an issue. As opposed to making palliative and enduring measures to the fomentations of the individuals of the locale, the government disregarded the individuals and further underestimated them and threatens the individuals with the nearness of military work force in the host networks in the area.

The striking poverty, hunger, starvation, joblessness, and high demise rate that struck the individuals in their faces additionally raised the contention in the locale. The elites in the nation likewise confounded these issues of the locale specifically and the nation by and large by consuming administration and the significant methods for generation and dispersion for narrow minded reasons through privatization of open firms or partnerships. It tends to be contended

that one of the perceptible deterrents to the nation's financial development and infrastructural advancement is absence of information and comprehension of the administration of the state's foundations and firms strategically obtained by these exclusive class and their outside allies.

There is along these lines most likely that the nation has consistently have all it requires to change its economy and social foundation into one of the main economies and industrialized countries of the world, yet the narrow minded wants of the pioneers and the exclusive class the nation over has in no little measure ruin the nation's financial and political development and progress, henceforth the natural asset curse, trap and Dutch disease coinage of Richard Auty despite the nation. To achieve a long lasting solution to the Niger Delta issues and the country's problems, there should be a synergy between the host communities, the government and the oil companies operating in the Niger Delta region. In other words, the Federal Government should collaborate with the oil companies operating in the country to ensure:

- (1) That there is constitutional amendment or political restructuring which the leading agitators have been requesting for over the years should be considered by the Federal Government. In other words, there should be political restructuring to ensure true federalism where equity and justice prevails. Issue of resource control should be seriously reconsidered by the Federal Government.
- (2) Job opportunities should be made available to compliment the amnesty programme in Nigerian universities. That is, successful graduate beneficiaries of the amnesty programme should be provided jobs to avoid the graduates returning to the creak to continue with anti-social vices.
- (3) Since the government and the oil companies operating in the region do not have sufficient space to accommodate the teaming population in the region, there should be Niger Delta Development Bank in all the states in the Niger Delta empower to give out short and long term loans to the indigenes to invest in other sectors of the economy. Areas of emphasis should be rural crop farmers, and fishermen and women, as well as small and medium entrepreneurs.
- (4) That the amnesty programme initiated by Late President Umaru Musa Yar'Dua and inherited by the succeeding administrations should be sustained and programmes effectively implemented to avoid resurgence of militancy and conflict between the former militant leaders and the Federal Government. This will no doubt promote social cohesion and understanding between the former militant leaders, their former members and the Federal Government.
- (5) That the Federal Government rather than conniving with the oil companies operating in the country to exploit the people of the region of their resources should instead cooperate with both the oil companies and the host communities to ensure compliance to the MOUs signed by the oil companies and the host communities. This will no doubt encourage the oil companies to perform their corporate social responsibilities to the people. When this is done satisfactorily there wouldn't be need for conflict between the oil companies and the host communities on the on hand, and the host communities and the government on the other hand.
- (6) That the Government and the oil companies should also ensure that the indigenes are part of the business of the oil exploration and production. If the indigenes are partners in their own affairs and control of their resources the issue of vandalization of oil pipelines and other facilities will reduce to a reasonable extent.

- (7) That there is a well planned and coordinated programme for socio-infrastructural development across the region. This will enable the government to provide the needed social infrastructures such as schools, health care facilities, public water supply facilities, bridges and good road networks across the region. Provision of employment opportunities for the youths and qualified people of the region is also necessary. This will address some of the security challenges in the region.
- (8) That there is equitable sharing of revenue from the sales of oil, particularly by the Federal Government. In addition, the Federal Government derivation principle in the revenue sharing from the federation account should be increased above the 13 percent derivation principle already in place. This will definitely increase execution of project in the region and enable the regional or state governments to have sufficient fund to accommodate eligible and qualified indigenes into the civil services in their respective states. If this is achieved it may reduce anti-social vices among the youths in the Niger Delta region. Militancy and piracy will be a thing of the past in the region in particular and the country in general.
- (9) That there is no oil spill and other forms of hazards but if there is by accident, they should ensure adequate and prompt clean-up exercise and proper compensation to the affected communities. This should not be politicized.

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