

BANE OF CRUDE OIL EXPLORATION IN THE NIGER DELTA: THE EXAMPLE OF OSSY OKEKE'S *LIQUID BLACK GOLD*

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Abstract

Crude oil is a major source of foreign exchange and revenue generation for the Nigerian economy. It is one of Nigeria's numerous natural resources found in communities in the Niger Delta region. While its exploration has yielded significant growth in the Nigerian economy, the seeming unabated grievances and recurrent outbursts of agitations and crises that translate into militancy and other forms of civil disturbances among host communities have raised serious problem in destroying mutual relationship between oil companies, host communities and government. The resultant effect is the depletion of production and its negative consequences on the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country. This study attempted to improve relationship between the concerned stakeholders by investigating causes and effects of grievances, agitations and civil disturbances in Niger Delta. It was guided by Frustration-Aggression Theory as a framework to qualitatively analyse a purposively sampled film, *Liquid Black Gold* by Ossy Okeke Junior. A critical textual autopsy of the film revealed that these unending agitations are predominantly caused by external and internal factors, vis-a-vis the neglect and irresponsibility of government on one side and the corrupt and fraudulent penchants of most Niger Delta leaders on the other side. This study recommended the legislation and implementation of policies on improved corporate social responsibility (CSR) to host communities in Niger Delta and the deterrence of corrupt practices by government agencies and leadership class in the area.

Keywords: Agitations, Crude oil, CSR, Exploration, GDP, Grievances, Niger Delta.

Introduction

Niger Delta, a geographical landscape dominantly situated in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria is endowed with abundant crude oil, a natural resource that accounts for more than ninety per cent of the foreign exchange earnings for the country and eighty per cent of federal revenue in Nigeria (HRW qtd. in Dede 31). According to Lucas, Vakkai and Targema: the area which is described as the Niger Delta region of Nigeria lies between the latitudes of 40 and 60 north of the equator and 40 and 80 east of the Greenwich. It comprises nine out of the thirty-six states that make up the Federal Republic of Nigeria (4). The region that is known to have established a reputation for peace and hospitality has in recent times been bedevilled with grievances which have metamorphosed into different forms of agitations and violent activities targeted at oil installations, foreign and local expatriates and even the populace.

The devastating impact of this to the immediate environment, socio-political and economic lives of the people and the nation at large is overwhelming. The havoc-

wrecking atmospheric conditions of war, civil unrest, crossfire of explosive devices, killings, turbulence, kidnappings, maiming and insecurity of lives and properties perpetrated by the militant activities in the Niger Delta environment invoke the feeling of a people in an acute condition of warfare and a nation in a depleted state of economy. The imperatives of proffering sustainable solution to the Niger Delta problem, therefore, lead quite logically to the question of understanding the causes and effects of the problem in the area. Using a textual analysis of Ossy Okeke's *Liquid Black Gold* (2009), this study investigates critically the causes and effects of grievances and agitations in the Niger Delta region with the view to proffering an enduring solution to the menace. By so doing, the study would have raised a template for a peaceful conflict resolution between critical stakeholders in the crude oil business in the Niger Delta region and the oil-bearing communities. Recommendations made from this study could yield significant results to the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta through an improved standard of living and adequate developmental attention from the concerned authorities. The study would also address the concern of the multi-national oil companies whose activities would enjoy hitch-free operations. Furthermore, the government would enjoy the necessary civil stability and robust economy to escalate national growth and development.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this study was the Frustration-Aggression Theory (FAT). Originally proposed in 1939 by John Dollard, Neale Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer and Robert Sears as a hypothesis, FAT was later developed in 1941 by Neal Miller and revised in 1969 by Leonard Berkowitz. The theory believes that frustration often paves the way for aggression and aggression is a stimulant of frustration. Accordingly, "frustration can create aggressive inclinations even when they are not arbitrarily aimed at the subject personally (Berkowitz 59). This theory is believed to be relevant in explaining riots and revolutions usually caused by the deprived section of society that may express the accumulated frustrations and anger of individuals through violence. This theory was used to analyse the impact of frustration among the oil-bearing communities of Niger Delta in stimulating aggression and crises in the area.

Research Methodology

Methodologically, the research design adopted for this study is qualitative in which some variables were investigated to ascertain real causes and effects of agitations and aggressions among oil-bearing host communities of Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The study is limited to a population of one film: Ossy Okeke's *Liquid Black Gold* (2009). The sampling technique adopted for this study is purposive in which, the researcher purposely selected the film under review due to its relevance to the issue of discourse. This is consistent with the view of Ofo who posits that purposive sampling is a method in which the researcher simply handpicks the sample because he or she considers them typical to what he/she wants (65). Data collection for this study included the primary and secondary sources, which translates to the study of a film at the primary level and

the study of other library materials at the secondary level. For the method of data analysis, the researcher adopted a textual evaluation and close reading of Ossy Okeke's *Liquid Black Gold* (2009) to investigate its main subject of discourse.

Review of Literature

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has become a critical subject of focus in Nigeria and beyond, unarguably, for its major stake in the Nigerian economy. HRW (qtd in Dede 31) claims that the Niger Delta contributes to more than 90 per cent foreign exchange earnings and eighty per cent of federal revenue in Nigeria. The rich natural crude oil deposits in its geographical environment are the major source of wealth that drives the economy of Nigeria. One of the major issues of concern among scholars is the ill treatment of the goose that lays the golden egg in a land where milk and honey flow. Several authors, such as: Anyanwu, Iloma, Ebekwue, Omoera, Adjeketa shed some lights.

In his article, "*Black November: Interrogating the Niger Delta Questions*," Anyanwu describes the Niger Delta region as the heart of Nigeria's oil dependent economy and argues that the wealth derived from this region had sustained the nation's economy and stabilized her political system for over fifty years now (152). He explains how the resources got from the Niger Delta region was systematically plundered by politically dominant sections of the country to build more roads, bridges, schools modern communication system, real estates, industries and generations of billionaires for themselves at the peril of the Niger Delta states. Anyanwu further laments how Niger Delta states have suffered in unquantifiable terms and measures in human, material, environmental, economic, social political, spiritual and other forms of atrocious experiences. He believes that without the faults of the Niger Delta people, their rich natural resources have attracted a lot of enemies to the region than friends. This situation, he likens to be epitomizing the quintessential example of the fate of the goose that lays the golden egg which in her case, the egg had become an albatross (153).

Citing Bazunu and Ekong, Anyanwu claims that the exploitation of crude oil in Niger Delta has come with various environmental challenges archetypal of such natural extractions. He, therefore, posits that oil exploration is the major problem that gave birth to virtually all the problems found in the region: degradation, environmental pollution, underdevelopment, neglect and abuse of human rights, therefore, become recurrent qualifiers and decimals in describing the Niger Delta. Given this situation, Anyanwu argues that the Niger Delta question revolves around the desire of the Niger Delta states to free themselves and their people from the evil and oppressive policies of the multi-national oil companies that dot the region in a bid to live better lives and get the dividends of the crude oil that nature blessed them with. Using Jeta Amata's *Black November*, which revolves around the Niger Delta people of Nigeria and the Western Oil Company, Anyanwu describes the narrative of the film as a tale of plundering and grabbing of the oppressors at various levels and the oppressed (160). He traces the problem in the region to failed corporate social responsibility (CSR) on the part of the oil company with the connivance of the inhuman and insensitive

government on one hand and then, the ignorant masses and a few corrupt elite classes on the other hand.

Omoera uses selected Nollywood films, *October 1* and *Black November* as templates to pinpoint and articulate the complex issues of human rights violation in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta area (237). He argues that the films depict the pervasive ills and both have elements of protest aesthetics, which underscores the potential of Nollywood film narratives to help lift the Nigerian masses out of the socioeconomic and the sociopolitical torpor to which the state authorities and their colluders (both local and international) have perennially tried to reduce them (240). In another study, “Crude Oil Crises in the Niger Delta: Prospecting a Theorization of Militancy Subgenre of Action Film in a Selected Nollywood Narrative,” Iloma observes that there is a surge of a new dimension to insecurity around Niger Delta region which has caused great tension and severe unrest in the area (98). He explains how disgruntled youths of the region organized themselves into militia groups and wreck havocs, undertaking coordinated attacks on crude oil facilities, indiscriminate hostage taking of foreigners and causing other related social problems. Iloma explains how the discovery of crude oil in Oloibiri in present day Bayelsa State has been characterized with mixed feelings of happiness and sadness between stakeholders and beneficiaries of the oil and gas business against the impoverished members of the host communities. He, therefore, submits that despite the huge economic impact of the crude oil economy in Nigeria, it is generally associated with a lot of poverty, impoverishment and crises in the Niger Delta region.

Emuedo and Abam assert that the Niger Delta has been the epicentre of hydrocarbon resources exploitation from which Nigeria, has earned huge revenues since 1958. However, despite its abundant hydrocarbon resources, the Niger Delta remains bisected by pervasive poverty (18). Using Jeta Amata’s *Black November* (2012) for contextual evaluation, Iloma claims that the film is sustained on the thematic thrust of militancy and agitation against a system of exploitation, neglect and forceful degradation of the Niger Delta environment by the Nigerian government. He explains how the Niger Delta youths become restive and resort to kidnap, assassinations, bombings, violence and other forms of militant activities with the view of forcing relevant authorities to save their community from environmental degradation. This idea of youth restiveness in the Niger Delta region as further corroborated by Adjeketa and Ebekue is triggered by various factors. Using Jeta Amata’s *Black November* as a critical lens, the following factors are identified as causes of the crisis in the region: victimization arising from economic exploitation, lack of good governance, government poor attitude to the Niger Delta people, corrupt practices of government officials. (Adjeketa 115; Ebekue 164).

Udengwu believes that Niger Delta people are a marginalized group that cannot be left alone because they are naturally endowed with what the rest of the nation and in fact, the world needs, the crude oil (66). She argues that the presence of oil in the area should necessitate empowerment and total regional transformation (68). Regrettably, however, Udengwu decries how this enviable natural resource of the Niger Delta has ironically translated to developmental degradation instead of

sustainable development. She maintains that the people are not just denied access to their God-given riches, they also suffer destruction of their major source of livelihood: Poor agrarian lives of farming and fishing due to the activities of the multi-national oil companies which has caused oil spillage and environmental pollution and degradation. Even more disturbing is the gross failure of the Federal Government of Nigeria to adequately compensate them for their loss of major sources of livelihood.

Irobi Esiaba's *Hangmen Also Die* reveals another conflicting part of the Niger Delta struggles in which, corruption among the leadership class in the area leads to the diversion of the people's common wealth for self-aggrandizement. The play reveals how a group of Niger Delta youths from the Izon ethnic group who have been unemployed for several years after acquiring different levels of university degrees vent their frustrations and disillusionment on society by becoming 'outlaws'. These people who formed themselves into a criminal gang called 'suicide squad' take to crime for survival since their university degrees cannot put food on their table. They kill, maim, murder and massacre. They describe themselves as "small time thieves who have graduated into armed robbers and outlaws" (16). Tamara tells members of the suicide squad to channel their grievances to the real enemies of progress instead of the general masses who are also victims of similar circumstances. This prompts the suicide squad to attempt to end the history of squandering by storming into the palace of Chief Isokipiri Erokosima, a top government functionary who has stolen community funds meant for compensation from government. After torturing him to confess how the fund is selfishly stolen and squandered, they decide to hang him by the neck until death.

Daniel Kpodo's *The Struggles* (a play performed at University of Port Harcourt Theatre in July 2022) focuses on the mishaps that occur in Opuloama, a Niger Delta community, considered to be extremely poor and deteriorated on all fronts. Like other Niger Delta communities, Opuloama is endowed with rich mineral resources that can produce stable income for the people, the greed of King Ikiriko and his cabinet who continue to divert the people's commonwealth for self-aggrandizement would leave the people with crumbs. The youth consider the people at the helm of community affairs as being responsible for their retrogression, thereby prompting them to venture into innumerable criminal activities. The demand for a better living condition from state and the multi-national oil companies operating in Niger Delta area has, therefore, remained a recurrent issue among the indigenous peoples of the Niger Delta. Over the years, several groups such as the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Volunteer Force, among others, have been organized to pressure relevant authorities to the plights of the people. Udengwu reiterates how Ken Saro-Wiwa, a renowned Niger Delta environmental activist championed MOSOP in the 1990s to demand that oil money should be used to improve the deplorable condition of the Ogoni people (72), Inarguably, Ogoni is one of the most vocal ethnic nationalities in Niger Delta as regards the demands for improved living conditions.

Comparatively, the activities of crude oil exploration by the multi-national oil companies in Niger Delta, its consequential effects and reactions by the host communities constitute a major crux in Ayakoroma's *Trends in Nollywood X-rays* this

idea taking the paradigm of some Niger Delta communities (185). Ayakoroma describes the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) as an organization which represents the Ogoni people of Rivers State in the struggle for ethnic and environmental rights. He explains that the federal government of Nigeria and Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) are the primary antagonists of MOSOP. He believes that the former are flagrantly ignoring the developmental needs of the people despite the abundant crude oil and gas wealth obtained from the area (138). The Ogoni struggles were emboldened by a declaration of the Ogoni Bill of Rights which was addressed to the federal government of Nigeria in 1990. Ayakoroma explains that this bill enumerated some of the problems of the Ogoni as including; Oil related suffering of the people, neglect by the government, lack of social amenities and political marginalization. Ayakoroma further clarifies that the above concerns were placed on the basis of self-definition of the Ogoni as a separate and distinct ethnic nationality, hence, the seeking of autonomy, environmental protection and control of a fair share of the revenues derived from the crude oil extracted from their land and cultural rights among others by MOSOP.

A Critical Analysis of Grievances and Agitations among Niger Delta Citizens in Ossy Okeke's *Liquid Black Gold*

Ossy Okeke's *Liquid Black Gold* (2009) tells the story of resistance of some aggrieved youths of Zeide, community of Niger Delta against the environmental pollution, degradation, neglect and poverty in the land. The GMP Oil Company, a global oil company which is engaged in serious crude oil exploration in Zeide has enjoyed uninterrupted exploration activities for years. Some youths led by Ebimpade (Sam Dede) feel aggrieved and cheated over the suffering which the presence of the oil company in their land has translated to: No potable water, no employment, no compensation for damage caused, sexual abuse of their sisters, wives and mothers, no alternative sources of livelihood after their only source have been destroyed by the oil exploration activities. The dialogue below, in which the protesting youths outline their grievances to their King sheds light on this notion:

Laifa: Our people are suffering. Look at us, with our kegs but no clean water to drink because of oil pollution. Here are our youths with their nets but no fish to catch. All the creeks have been poisoned by oil pollution. Our old ones are dying of dehydration and our younger ones, dying of different forms of malnutrition and disease. Even the youths can no longer cope in their schools. We are asking that what have we done to the oil companies and our representatives before them to deserve this kind of neglect?

In the above dialogue, some of the fundamental causes of the problems enumerated border on the immense impact of oil pollution and spillage on their environment which has negative effect on their major source of drinking water, aquatic and agrarian lives. The youth leader laments the absence of drinking water in the land and absence of fishes in their waters due to crude oil spillage. It suffices that these are basic essentials of life in Zeide which have now been lost to the activities of crude oil exploration. The people are now subjected to different health issues and sudden deaths owing to the environmental pollution. Hence, the aggrieved youths, represent a

frustrated and disillusioned set of indigenes whose basic means of living have been destroyed without provision for an alternative source.

Another perspective to the problem of the Zeide people as revealed by Ebimpade, another youth leader is what can be described in this study as *self-exploitation*, an exploitative method where indigenes of the same community exploit fellow indigenes. Ebimpade decries the role of those who represent them to the relevant authorities as contact persons to the white men who sexually exploit their sisters, wives and even mothers in exchange for bright opportunities. These indigent representatives are those who one must pass through to get enrolled in the company's scholarship scheme, training opportunities and the likes. Instead of showing patriotism to communal development in their little corners, they use the little portion of authority at their disposal to exploit fellow community people. This is what Ebimpade complains about in the statement below:

Ebimpade: Our sisters and mothers have become objects of sexual abuse in the hands of those who represent us before the white man simply because, they determine who gets enrolled in the white man's trainings and jobs. What about our lands, our farmlands that have been put to use by the white man and his oil company, are we not going to be compensated for that? We want answers your majesty, we want answers.

Beyond the wanton sexual gratification indulged in by the community's representatives as established above, other corrupt practices abound. While the generality of the people lurches in abject poverty, the chiefs selected to represent them live visible life of wealth and affluence after diverting communal compensation money to personal use. After all efforts of the aggrieved youths to dialogue directly with the oil company had been frustrated by the greedy chiefs in connivance with the military, the youths decide to take their destiny in their hands as they resolve to fight to be emancipated from the looming reality of extinction.

The film explores the issue of agitations and terrorism. The aggrieved youths of Zeide take to assassination, kidnapping, intimidation, radicalism and bombing, amid other forms of militant activities, to force the authorities concerned with the crude oil exploration in their land to rescue their community from extinction. A community that had once thrived on its rich agricultural resources in which plenty of food and fishes were the mainstay of their economy, the advent of the oil exploration activities has devastated the only source of livelihood without any form of relief material or alternative means of livelihood provided. The people have suffered to an unbearable point. The leader of the aggrieved youths, Ebimpade speaks further:

Ebimpade: My people have suffered and are still suffering. We've tasted anguish; we've seen despair, hopelessness, intimidation, humiliation. My people have cried for solace, but it never comes. A one-time happy, happy and peaceful people, the lifestyle of every Zeide man was free of violence, free of stress. You know, we never depended on anybody or any people for our daily lives. We were great farmers, great fishermen. Great masters of the hoes and cutlasses, and then the white man came with his oil companies. But for the oil companies and their greed for the treasures that God gave us in our land, we still would have been living in peace till now.

Wife: Ebimpade, if only you can get rid of this life consuming (pointing at his gun).

The terrorist activities represented in this film are instigated by remote and immediate causes. While the deplorable conditions of the community and its lack of social amenities are objectionable, they only constitute the remote causes of the 'violence' in the film. The people, understanding the usefulness of non-violent means to conflict resolution had resorted to peaceful measures where their grievances would be tabled and dialogued upon, but the greedy activities of the chiefs who had formed and initiated a parallel youth group against the agitating youths would not allow their voices to be heard. Even more provoking is the connivance of this set of greedy chiefs with the military administrator of the state to randomly shoot, arrest, and unilaterally execute law-abiding members of the community. This incident, however, triggers the immediate cause of the war:

Ebimpade: We cannot take this anymore; they attack and arrest us for no crime. How much more of this can we take? They brought lies, we took it, they brought betrayal, we took it, deprivation, we took it. All this madness we have taken from the white man. How much more of this can we take? No, we would not take it. We would fight; we would fight to stay alive. Imagine this! Humiliation, incarceration and finally, death. We would not take this anymore. We would fight to stay alive.

Others: Yes

Biokpo: Yes! We must fight to stay alive. We have sought for negotiation; we did not get it. We sought for dialogue; we did not get it. Brothers, this is violence and it must be taken by force. We will fight.

The war which puts Ebimpade, his second in command, Biokpo (Gentle Jack), and other militants in a life-threatening condition is fought multidimensionally. While the aggrieved militants are fighting to defend themselves against a factional group created and sponsored by the greedy chiefs against them, they are also fighting against the military, the federal government, the oil company and the greedy chiefs. The major weapons of warfare used are sophisticated Ak 47 assault rifles and other explosive devices. The methods of warfare typically involve exchange of fire arms and guerrilla fighting in which such activities as surprised attack, kidnapping and killing dominantly play out. Another benchmark used for the investigation of grievances and agitations in the *Liquid Black Gold* is found through character analysis. *Liquid Black Gold* represents a binary interaction between good and the bad characters. The film reveals different categories of characters pursuing two distinct motifs that border on what is morally good and bad. Ebimpade identifies their enemies in this dialogue with his wife:

Let me tell you something, my dear wife, our real enemies are the government and those that we have sent to represent us before the oil company. Our perceived enemies are the oil companies who out of naivety or ignorance or maybe sheer greed have connived with these two enemies to rip us off.

One of the most significant character categorizations in the film is the Ebimpade led youths of Zeide who engage relevant authorities on the need to improve the living conditions of the people. The community has suffered all forms of neglect and deplorable conditions, including lack of drinkable water and scarcity of food, among others, due to environmental pollution occasioned by the activities of the oil company operating in the community. As previously noted, the people have become

frustrated over failure of relevant authorities to respond to their needs. They have also been subjected to a series of offensive attitudes by the authorities, hence, they resort to violence as a last option to stay alive.

Ebimpade: (Talking to his wife). What do you take us for? You think we are cannibals and scavengers. You think we kill just for the sake of it? No, listen, we fight just to stay alive. We fight to defend ourselves, so if anyone dies in the process, it merely completes that definition of history, because, a few must die for many others to live.

The need to ensure a better living condition for the Zeide is the major reason why the aggrieved youths have taken to violent agitations and as a result, put their lives on the line. They choose to fight with the last drop of their blood not for self but for the sake of the community. Ebipade restates this position as he declares: "Beware, my life is in the struggle and the struggle is in the emancipation of my people." The management of the GMP Oil Company represents a category of greedy and selfish characters in the film. This group of characters are predominantly driven by the need to explore and exploit the rich crude oil resources available in Zeide community. Even though the company makes so much money from the multi-billion-dollar natural resources deposited in the land, they cannot boast of any genuine effort at improving the living condition of the host community, both in the areas of infrastructural development and human capital development. Instead of developing the community, the company engages in sponsoring crises with the aim of amassing wealth out of it. As one of the company's executives tells Mr Sunny:

Because when they are fighting, we are making a lot of money. Look at it this way, the government will concentrate in dousing the crisis and they pay less attention to our bunkering business. Put it this way, they're killing each other, we make the big Naira, you know what am saying.

The chiefs representing Zeide in the company and the agents of the federal military government represent another category of characters. Their high level of greed in siphoning the proceeds of the crude, especially the diversion of community benefits to personal coffers, plays significantly to the problem of Zeide. Ebimpade has claims that: there are just a lucky few that the community vested with the power to represent us before the oil company, and to bring before the oil company, the several hardships that oil exploration has brought on our people. Chief Ebi, Chief Zeite and Paul, the retired school teacher. These are people that are so rich, they are even richer than the king, and they saw this assignment as an opportunity to enrich themselves while shutting their ears to the plight of our people.

The chiefs are very influential in the film. In the scene where some community youths are to be employed into the company, the chiefs decide to discriminate against deserving youths that pass the company's test for selfish reasons. "You see, we have to be very careful the way we recruit these people. You see, some of them that are too big, if we take them, they will confront us, they will conspire against us. We need boys that are loyal that we can control," says Chief Ebi. For this reason, duly qualified youths who by the company's standard had passed the test for the job are flagrantly dropped while the perceived loyalists are employed, even though they do not pass the test. The

draining off of the relief materials due the community and presenting only a piecemeal by these same chiefs, the illicit deductions and diversions of the employees' monthly wages for self-enrichment, the siphoning of ecological funds due the community, among others, as contained in various scenes of the film validate their greedy and selfish dispositions. On the part of the military government, their primary concern was how to amass wealth and increase their personal gains as could be justified in various scenes of the film. In a meeting between Mr. Philip of the GMP Oil, representatives of Zeide community and the Ministry of Youth Development, the greedy disposition of the government's representatives is brought to the fore.

Ogbeifi: Thank you Mr, Philips, Hon. Chiefs. You've just heard what Mr Philip said. We represent powerful interest from above, I think it has become imperative that we take over the settlement of our youths and all the necessary funds that are due to it and in doing that, we will be entitled to fifty percent of the total fund.

Alhaji: Chiefs, you know we are the agents of the ruling military government as such, we have been mandated to supervise the final settlement of the youths along the oil producing areas in order to curb restiveness.

It should be emphasized that 'the powerful interest' highlighted above represents the selfish interests of some top government functionaries who use their high-ranking positions to divert legitimate benefits of the oil producing communities for personal aggrandisements. As can be recalled from the film, the provision of arms for the militants by the same government functionaries whose duty it is to secure the land is not genuinely targeted at the good of the militants but to create an atmosphere of civil unrest in order to attract greater financial deal as security operatives.

The setting of the film at Zeide community epitomizes the level of gross underdevelopment suffered by the average oil producing communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Plate one below reveals how impoverished Zeide Community is irrespective of the abundant natural crude extracted from its land on a daily basis: Dilapidated mud houses suggestive of leaking thatched roofs. The community which plays host to a multi-billion-dollar multinational oil company ironically has nothing to show for the huge sum of money milked from it. No good road, no infrastructural development and no bridges. The community is revealed as still being in its primitive state of development. All the frames in the film as contained in the photos below reveal different aspects of the communities' setting. In all of them, the issue of underdevelopment is underscored throughout.

Another aspect of setting prominently used in the film is the aquatics. Creeks are intrinsic to the geographical topology of the Niger Delta region. In the film under study, the creek is used as the major source of transportation for the people. The conveyance of people and commodities from one point to another predominantly depends on water transportation. The creek as used in this film also facilitate the movements and combatant activities for the aggrieved militants



Plate 1. Shot revealing the level of Zeide's underdevelopment.



Plate 2. Aggrieved Niger Delta militants from Zeide at the shore of a crude oil polluted river.



Plate 3. Sporadic shooting by a militant in Zeide



Plate 4. Kidnap scene of an expatriate working in GMP Oil Company in Zeide

Conclusion

This article examined grievances and agitations among crude oil-bearing communities in Niger Delta with the view to identifying the causes while also attempting to proffer solutions. From the available evidence in the film examined, the study discovered the problem to be emanating from external and internal forces viz-a-viz the negligible attitude of government and multinational oil companies to improve quality of life in the affected communities and the congenital corrupt practices of Niger Delta leaders who take advantage of their positions as representatives of the communities to exploit the people. This study further established that all attempts by the concerned citizens of the host communities to have the problems peacefully resolved proved abortive. Whereas, the problems were biting hard on a people whose source of livelihood was seriously threatened, failure of concerned authorities to mitigate these effects brought frustration to the people who consequently got aggrieved and became agitated.

The study, therefore, concludes that the grievances and agitations in the Niger Delta region can be resolved through genuine developmental commitment on the host communities by relevant authorities and a patriotic disposition on the side of community leaders in Niger Delta. From the foregoing, the following recommendations are proffered for the resolution of the crude oil related crises in the Niger Delta region. A legislation and implementation of improved policies on corporate social

responsibility of government and oil companies on the oil-bearing communities in the area. A policy of inclusion of host communities in the scheme of affairs. Provision of alternative means of livelihood for the host communities is also strongly advocated since environmental pollution and its sweeping effects on climate has negatively affected the people. Strict punitive measures to discourage corrupt practices of diversion of community fund for personal use should be put in place by critical stakeholders.

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