Environmental Rights and Insecurity: Interrogating the Development Dynamics of the Niger Delta

Rufus, Anthony & Sinivie, Jonah
Department of Political Science, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State
Corresponding author: **rufusanthony50@gmail.com**

Abstract

This study interrogates the interconnection between environmental rights, insecurity and development. The Niger Delta region constitute its focus. Although, associated literature have highlighted the impacts of environmental rights on insecurity in the region, the analysis appears to have focused on oil companies' activities and its impact on insecurity/conflict on development while neglecting the impact of oil on communities caused by artisanal/local refining in the region. Thus, this study was set out to fill this gap. To achieve this, the study employed the application of two theoretical frameworks. The structural violence theory and the political economy framework. The structural violence theory sees the lopsided social structures, institutions and deprivation as conditions creating fertile grounds for insecurity/conflict while the political economy framework sees the environment as a productive force-social capital. Hence, its destruction creates a fertile ground for insecurity/conflict in the region. The study is purely qualitative relying mainly on documentary reports. Data was gathered through secondary source and analysis was done through qualitative and institutional processes. Findings of the study showed that lack of environmental rights and access to scarce resources create a fertile ground for insecurity/conflict and this impacts on development in the Niger Delta region. Environmental protection/conservation through legislative acts, promotion of environmental rights campaign through mass media, inclusion of environmental rights as part of human rights campaign through constitutional provisions are recommended as the most likely means to enhance environmental rights and by extension promotion of security. This in turn would enhance/promote development in the Niger Delta region.

Keywords: Environmental Rights, Environment, Insecurity, Development, Niger Delta.

Introduction

The right to a healthy, clean and safe environment became known at the wake of global occurrences of environmental degradation at the last quarter of the twentieth century (David, 2012). Basic human activities in the areas of farming, movement, shelter and road construction, industrial set ups and the consumption of goods and services have mouth so much pressure on the ecosystem of the earth. Environmental hazards have put the future of the universe at high risk (David, 2012). Research in development have clearly shown the role of nature in human nourishment and existence (Opukri and Ibaba, 2008). Logically, this implies that humans are reliant on a suitable and healthy environment for their survival (Hannaire, 2017). This is because, natural resources secure a fruitful harvest to man's livelihood activities. Thus, man's economic activities are dependent on a healthy, safe and clean environment (Opukri and Ibaba, 2008; Rufus, 2019).

However, the perpetual abuse of natural resources to meet up man's cumulative desires, societies have used different mechanisms of knowledge that have further degraded and harmed the environment. Its impacts are devastating and already affecting millions in the third world and is likely to severely affect human well-being all across the world (Lele, 1991).

Hence, human security conversation focuses on the natural environment in different aspects as it particularly concerns the relationship between people in a society which are both the victims and cause of environmental hazards universally (Brauch, 2005). Thus, severe nature's harm has become the primary responsibility of the universal community (Aery, 2016). The route between human rights, environment and security becomes more glaring as environmentalist continually argue that sustainable environment is needed for human existence. The beauty of nature and its nourishment of life and the passing of it from one generation to another is gradually fading away with the extermination of fossils, millions of years passed. Natural resource rating fell 30% below, showing signs of environmental depletion at a fast rate not previously recorded in human history between 1970 to 2007. By implication, weakening natures strength in the supply of its services (David, 2012). There have been evidences portraying threatening signs. For instance, there has been a large shortage of water resources facing the globe even when no shortage of water has been recorded in present times and even in the past. A large percentage of humans are unable to get a safe and clean consumable water (Hannaire, 2017). Internationally, there is an estimated cost running into trillions of dollars due to the loss of a large portion of our natural resource each year (David, 2012). The underprivileged people are largely affected in their desires and needs caused by ecological ruin. In countries like Sudan, there are serious resource wars ignited by natural resource depletion (Hannaire, 2017).

The 1970's came with it an awareness to people's right to a clean and healthy natural environment (Adulphus, 2019). The global environmental consciousness of societies came to limelight with a gathering of people and races to discuss the harm cause to the earth, our home. The 1972 Stockholm historic gathering became the first of its kind to address matters of the earth universally. It was mainly concerned with the harm done to the ecosystem (Weiss, 2011). This historic gathering came to conclusion that man's life can better be lived in a pollution free atmosphere and the conservation of nature became a fundamental task universally. The destruction of nature beyond its limit poses danger to human right to life. (Abdulkadir, 2014). In a special report, the natural environment in its present time considered a universal problem that demands collective actions/attention. This was conveyed by a special rapporteur of the

United Nation, Mrs Fatman Zohra Ksentini (Kaniye, 2003). The first organization to recognise and implement human right to a healthy natural environment was the African charter as a legal backbone. Later, the inter-American organization approved the agreement held in respect to human rights to a natural and healthy ecosystem explicitly (Aery, 2016, P:18).

Despite its contentiousness there is a world-wide recognition of societal right to a healthy environment particularly within the African Human Rights System. The African charter entrenched the right to a healthy environment which Nigeria is inclusive and part of its signature. Thus, it is domesticated within the Nigerian law by reasons of its recognition by the African charter (Ratification and Enforcement) Degree. Article 1, states that from the commencement of this Act, the Nigerian state shall recognize this act within its territory in full acknowledgement. Furthermore, Article 24, 4, 16 of the degree states that people are supposed to dwell in a safe and healthy natural pollution free environment in harmony with nature (Adulphus, 2019).

At present, there are over 100 constitutions globally that have provided access to environmental rights to a pollution free and sound ecology (Abdulkadir, 2014). The 1999 constitution of Nigeria made provisions for environmental rights in chapter two (2) as a matter of national policy of the federal Republic of Nigeria. The section 20 of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria under its sub-section expresses the environmental rights of water, air, land, forest and natural ecosystem of Nigeria. The primary goal of section 20, is to create a safe and secured natural system for all Nigerian populace (Abdulkadir, 2014 & Lugard, 2016).

The destructive contribution of the Nigerian oil industry is a source of worries in sub Saharan Africa posing a serious danger not only to the health of rural dwellers but also their source of economic survival undermining their occupation in which they depend on. Gas flaring is another serous environmental hazards commonly seen within the African environment with serous health consequences. Many cases of health issues engendered by poor environmental state like diseases of the lungs, breathing and skin rashes are acknowledged (Baumuller, Donnelly, Vines, Weimer & Chatham House, 2011).

Globally, the Niger Delta region is seen as one of the most sensitive ecological zones with harsh environmental hazards that is easily spread across its entire environment. The region has been labelled as the most harshly petroleum challenged environment due to series of multinational corporation that does not adhere to universal standards and norms (Babatunde, 2018). There is a high reliance on the environment by the people of the Niger Delta on their livelihood and productive activities which have been destroyed by the degrading ecosystem

(Uyigue & Agho, 2007). This has caused a global consciousness as the UN has openly commented on the state of its environment that the delta is been shifted towards more environmental distress in a speedy degree that is scary (UNDP, 2006 in Emoyan, Akpoborie & Akporhonor, 2008

What are the impacts/consequence of environmental degradation in the region? Available studies (Babantunde, 2017; Garmen, 2012 and Duru, 2011) identifies biodiversity loss, loss of livelihoods, loss of plant lives and diseases caused by gas flaring and oil spillage. This extensive environmental degradation has created a high tension and need for concern. Thus, an obsession for safety due to the challenges accruing from the economic, environmental and health concerns, dominant literatures in the region.

 Significantly however, the dominant literature (Babatunde, 2018; Babatunde, 2017; Jodo & Joko, 2017; Ayodeji & Iwebunor, 2016; Akeju, 2014; Garmen, 2012; Duru, 2011; Barry, 2010; Amnesty International, 2009; Shola, 2006; Aaron, 2006 & Brauch, 2005) on security and environment in the Niger Delta have focused on conversations relating to insecurity caused by oil companies, that is, conflicts arising due to oil exploration by multinational oil companies while neglecting that which has direct bearings on artisan communities. That is, conflicts and insecurity arising due to artisanal/local refining among oil producing community dwellers. Insecurity/conflicts among artisan communities (particularly oil producing communities) caused by environmental related sources especially oil-induced has been neglected by the literature/conversations in the Niger Delta. This has created a gap in literature. This prompted this study. In particular, this study intends to focus on the impact of environment especially oil-induced by artisanal oil refining on environmental rights and insecurity in the Niger Delta and by extension development in the region. Bayelsa State is used as case study. Niger Delta became a choice due to the devastating impact of the environment on their rights, security and by extension development. Hence, this study set outs to interrogate/investigate the impact of environmental rights violations on security and by extension development in the region (Rufus, A. 2019).

The Problem

The right to a healthy and clean environment as provided for in the African charter is binding on the Nigerian state by virtue of her being part of its charter. Hence, it is reflected in our domestic constitution (Ratification and Enforcement) Degree. Article one, states that from the commencement of this Act, it shall be identified within the Nigerian state and must be regarded as such. Furthermore, Article 24, 4, 16 of the degree, states that Nigerian people are eligible to

dwell in a non-polluted environment (Adulphus, 2019). The Niger Delta people are highly dependent on their environment for their source of living. However, these economic activities have been ruined as result of environmental degradation (Uyigue and Agho, 2007). There has been serous warning by the United Nations Human Development Report regarding the environmental condition of the Niger Delta due to the continuous environmental squalor pushing the Delta towards ecological disaster (Emoyan et al., 2008).

In 1995, the death of the famous environmental campaigner and human rights activists in Ogoni community in the Niger Delta region brought to limelight the challenges posed by oil industry to the ecosystem of the region. This includes food insecurity, health and occupational insecurity of people within the Ogoni axis (Amnesty International,2009). The late Ken Saro Wiwa was thus attributed for bringing this environmental consciousness to the fore of national and international discourse by advocating a peaceful crusade for ecosystem fairness in the 1990's through the platform of the movement for the survival of his people (Babantunde, 2018).

Ecosystem challenges within the Niger Delta region are grouped into oil and non-oil sources (Opukri and Ibaba, 2008). The region is known to have a fragile and very delicate environment globally. As such any harm done to one part of its environment quickly spread around its wholeness (Babatunde, 2018). Ecosystem discriminations have long been noticed, dating to about 50years ago in the region. However, experimental studies only began freshly to evaluate the level of harm engendered by the oil industry for the underprivileged people of the region (Shola, 2006). An example of environmental injustice (as evidenced in year 2005) was the case between Jonah Gbemre of Delta state and Shell multinational company operating within its domain (Addulkadir, 2014).

The major aspect of the gap in knowledge is the limited studies as it concerns the impact of the environment on insecurity/conflict as it directly concerns artisan communities in the region. Ecosystem research studies abound on the role of the environment on insecurity/conflict caused by oil companies in the region. Scholars (Babatunde, 2018; Babatunde, 2017; Jodo & Joko, 2017; Ayodeji &Iwebunor, 2016; Akeju, 2014; Garmen, 2012; Duru, 2011; Barry, 2010; Amnesty International, 2009; Shola, 2006; Aaron, 2006 & Brauch, 2005) have specifically laid emphasis on the impact of the environment (oil-induced causes) on insecurity/conflict relating to oil company's activities while that which concerns its impact directly on communities caused by artisanal refining are neglected by the literature in the Niger Delta. This has created a gap in literature. Thus, this study seeks to fill this gap. Niger Delta became a choice due to the

devastating impact of the environment on insecurity/conflict and by extension development in the region.

Study Questions

The research would provide answers to the questions below.

i. How is health security compromised by the violation of environmental rights in the Niger Delta region?

ii. How is food security compromised by the violation of environmental rights in the Niger Delta region?

iii. How is economic security compromised by the violation of environmental rights in the Niger Delta region?

iv. How does the lack of environmental rights create a fertile ground for violence/conflict in the Niger Delta region?

Study Objectives

The purpose of this research study is to determine how the lack of environmental rights create a fertile ground for insecurity/conflict and its impact on development in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

i. To explain how the violation of environmental rights have compromised health security in Niger Delta region

ii. To explain how the violation of environmental rights impact on food security in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

iii. To explain how economic security has been compromised by the violation of environmental rights in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

iv. To explain how violence/conflict erupts in the Niger Delta region on account of environmental rights violation.

Clarification of the Terms

Environmental Rights: This study defines environmental rights as the conservation of ecosystem goods and services, the right of the people to use such resources and how such usage impacts on both the environment and the populace.

Insecurity: This study sees insecurity as occurring where there are threats or fear arising due to the absence of jobs security, income security, health security and environmental security.

Development: This study defines development as the increase in different varieties of social and economic opportunities to promote the accessibility and expand its allocation of essential

goods and services to meet the basic needs of society (Todaro and Smith, 2005 cited in Ibaba, 2020).

Environment: This study sees the environment to constitute all natural attributes, circumstances and structures which include water, land, minerals that aid the development and growth of an organism (United Nations Environment Programme, law Division, 2018).

Niger Delta: The component units of the Niger Delta have been described from two perspectives. The first sees it as a geographical entity while the second considers it as oil producing region (Ibaba, 2020). This study pitch tent with the geographical/environmental definition of the Niger Delta structure (Ibaba, 2011, 2017, 2020 & Etekpe, 2017).

Theoretical Framework:

The research study is eclectic in nature involving the application of two theoretical models, the structural violence theory and political economy framework. The conversation proceeds with the structural violence theory.

The structural violence theory has its origin in the writing of a Norwegian sociologist, Johan in his 1969 classics. It is a term associated with peace studies. It refers to social circumstances, regular aspect of social structures or institutions that keeps individuals from meeting basic needs for a healthy existence (Galtung, 1969). The theory blames conflict/violence on the structure and organization of societies and human reactions to it. For example, people's response to injustice, marginalization, exploitation, poverty, etc. (Ibaba, 2011). John Galtung provided the structural violence model as an approach to comprehend organized subjugation. The genesis of such conflicts are not associated with specific matters but rather the cruel societal configurations that seem very harmful to a given set of group.

The theory is linked to social injustice in so far as it affects people differently in various social structures (Grauer & Buikstra, 2019). This mostly occurs when people finds conflicting interest between their mental and potential realizations. In a nutshell, the prohibition of people directly or indirectly by societal structures from realizing their potentials (Sorensen, 2014).

Here the emphasis is on basic structural/social policies of government or society that tends to negatively impact on a group/segment of a society, particularly as it frustrates their potentials to grow, develop and actualize their individual potentials or group potentials.

The relevance/application of the Structural Violence theory to the impact of environmental rights on insecurity and by extension development becomes glaring. Structural Violence theory argues that the introduction of certain laws/policies of government deprives the people of their basic rights and this results to insecurity. They include deliberate policies and structures that

cause human sufferings, harm and death, deprivation, exclusion and cruelty (Ibaba, 2011). This occurs due to heighten frustration which results from the inability of the people to realize their full potentials as it affects their survival and sustenance. In the context of the Niger Delta, most of such laws/policies (Petroleum Act, 1969 & land Use Act, 1978) concerns their environment. Literatures in development agrees that the ecosystem is the base in which humans fulfil their reproduction activities (Opukri and Ibaba, 2008). logically, this implies that policies that affects the environment, threatens their survival. This in turn breeds a preoccupation for security (Brauch, 2005).

By adopting this method, this study intends to show how the violation of environmental rights impacts on insecurity/conflict and by extension development in the Niger Delta. The focus here is on the cruel policies (Petroleum Act, 1969 & land Use Act, 1978) of the Nigerian State. Particularly how such policies affect the people of the Niger Delta, their environment and how it creates a fertile ground for violence/conflict in the region.

On the other hand, the political economy framework sees the development of society to be dependent on its productive force. The term political economy was first used by the French Economics, Antonie De Montchretien in the 16ᵗʰ century (Obi, 2005 and Ibaba, 2010). The use of the word was later strengthened by scholars such as Adams Smith, James Mill, etc (Ibaba, 2010). The society in which man lives which in many ways represents man's own creation, has turned a great puzzle, hard for man to unravel. There have been several changes within the society and the overall social production. Political economy offers a lens to understanding these processes and relationship. Political economy provides a pathway to the understanding of rules that guides the productive activities of humans. Political economy thus provides man with the clear pathway to find his way in the vast and dynamic material world (Nwaorgu, 2002).

As an analytical tool, the model looks at the complexity of matters, how interconnected are policies, with the aim of understanding their group genesis, features and configuration and the justification for their being (Anifowose & Enemuo, 2005 and Obi, 2005). The model stresses into the very heart of the interface between the substructure and superstructure, understand its dynamics and its impacts in daily human lives and interaction (Anifowose and Enemuo, 2005). Political economy makes known to us the knowledge of wealth, its creation, distribution and how destructive same can be (Henderson, 2015).

Political economy explains that productive activity is the condition for all other activities. Logically, this implies that productive forces are fundamental to political economy and development of society. The productive forces express the overall productive capabilities of

the society and what can be produced and reproduced at each point in time depends on the quality of the productive forces (Ogban, 2005). Consequently, development only occurs when the productive forces are mobilized. Where the productive forces fail to develop, the society also fails to develop, meaning that the destruction of productive forces blocks development. The productive forces include labour power-the physical, psychological and mental capabilities; means of labour- the instrument in which man labours which includes the tools which aids production. It mediates between man and nature (Ake, 1981; Obi, 2005 and Ibaba, 2010) and objects of labour (things to which labour power is applied which includes primarily natural resources (e.g., forest, land etc.).

The relevance/application of the political economy framework to the impact of environmental rights on insecurity and by extension development becomes glaring. Political economy argues that the development of a society at each point in time is dependent on its productive force. Research findings in development has confirmed that ecosystem provides the channel in which man's life can be prolonged and maintained (Opukri and Ibaba, 2008). Logically, this implies that the natural environment itself is a productive factor for man's development. By implication, man's development (survival and sustenance) is linked to his environment.

For instance, experimental proof clearly demonstrates how the ecosystem plays the role of providing a collection of goods and services to humanity. Both organic and inorganic goods are provided for which further multiplies man's effort to produce. For instance, goods like minerals and fossil fuels. Also, it helps in water and atmospheric cleansing, protection of man from floods and storms that is been visited by natural occurrences. Some of the above goods and services cannot be replaced and hence they serve as essential to all economic and social uses and importance (United Nations Environment Programme, Law Division, 2018).

Environmental Rights, Insecurity and Development: Contending Issues/Conversations in the Literature.

A review of the literature on environmental rights, insecurity and development presents a plethora of issues and conversations. The availability of a universal acknowledgement of human right or if there exist an environmental rights campaign have divided scholars to variants of thoughts. The first group of researchers (Pathat, 2014 & Abdulkadir, 2014) are of the opinion supporting the argument in favour of the existence of a universal environmental rights situating it within a global bill of rights. Antagonist like (Lugard, 2016) reject such campaign in support of the availability of a global ecosystem rights nothing that no such rights have arose. They

went further state categorically that none of such legal global rights exist. However, there is a plethora of judicial enactments in favour and against the existence of a universal ecosystem rights. This study considers both views but subscribes to the view supporting the existence of environmental rights.

Scholars (Ayesha, 2000 & Amnesty International, 2009) affirming the acknowledgment of the availability of such rights does so on the notion that there exist an abundance of the integration of about 60 countries stating such rights in their domestic constitutions (citing states such as the United States of America as one of such states that have incorporated these rights in her constitution in different sections).

Ayesha (2000) in her study explained that the conservation of ecosystem resources is tied to the existence of human rights entrenched in most national and global judicial enactments. Also stating further that the acknowledgment of such rights under different constitutions are meant to offer ecosystem conservation. There are cases where such national regulations are stipulated as part of countries obligation to pursue an ecosystem that encourages progress and growth, long use of ecosystem resources and the conservation of a clean and healthy surrounding and produces nature's goods and services (Abdulkadir, 2014). Also, there are cases where few methods are integrated.

For empirical purposes, there are few illustrations to portray the growing exercise among countries. Within the African setting, the judicial enactments of Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo are used as reference points to demonstrate the above assertions. Section 15 of the judicial enactments of Mali states clearly thus: *'all humans are entitled to live in a clean surrounding. The conservation and support of ecosystem of the advancement of life are the responsibilities of all countries'' (*Amnesty International, 2009, p 18). Also, some sections of the Democratic Republic of Congo's judicial enactment in 46 of its section is stated as thus:

> All people are entitled to live in a clean and healthy surrounding and are all obligated to support such. The conservation and protection of the ecosystem is under the watch of the state and all her people (Amnesty International, 2009, p 3).

This runs through several judicial enactments of countries in Asia. The Indian case is a good example worthy for reference purpose in this study. Its constitution in 1949 stipulates thus in article 51 subsection A (9): *"the conservation and advancement of all ecosystem goods and services constituting forests, rivers, lakes and bio-species and must show concern for all*

natural creatures. It shall be the obligation of all citizens of the country" (Amnesty International, 2009, p:4).

More so, the support for the existence of environmental rights both locally and internationally has been decided in several courts. Multiples of global human rights gatherings and tribunals are progressively acknowledging the use of the essential rights to a clean and supportive ecosystem to remedy life risks situations. The United Nations gatherings through its voluntary procedures have determined series of such environmental violations under its article on global agreements on civil and political matters and rights (ICCPR). The case of the people of Canada were her citizens queried the existence of a large amount of radioactive waste products causing damage to their health questioning the obligation of their government to protect the environment. The case was on the duty of both parties (the people and the government) in their obligation particularly the state in the protection of human life through environmental sanctity (Amnesty International, 2009, p:6).

Conflicting of the above view (Lugard, 2016), argues that the environment does not possess rights. Lugard (2016) argues thus, questioning the justification of the existence of ecosystem rights and equating such to humans. In his argument, he questions who bears the burden especially for man who is both the cause and victim of environmental degradation. In countries like Kenya, civil societies and the government are saddled with such environmental obligations on behalf of the ecosystem.

However, in Nigeria it is obvious that it is not whether environmental rights are recognized as human rights, but the degree of their justifiability or enforceability. Though these rights are not fundamental rights, they have found statutory expression on human and people's right under the platform of the African Charter and under other statutes. Thus a victim of environmental rights violation can seek redress under the auspices/platform of the African Charter. The African Charter clearly stipulates and gives directives to all states within its jurisdictions to take serous steps to avoid polluting their surroundings and causing harm to the ecosystem to support environmental sanctity and a long-term usage of ecosystem goods and services (Lugard, 2013).

However, in Niger Delta region of Nigeria, ecosystem unfairness has been a long-term issue more than 50years ago. Though it is only newly that experimental research studies have been done and documented to access the impacts of such ecosystem harm to the safety and progress of the people in the region (Barry, 2010). For communities in the region, ecosystem system sanctity and its long-term usage are very paramount to their overall well-being and growth. The

report of the UNDP clearly stipulates that 60% of people in the Niger Delta region are dependent on their natural environment for sustenance and survival. The environment has been a major source of their food security in areas of farming, fishing and myriads of other useful forest products. Thus, the contamination of their environment poses a serious risk to their rights to life, their survival and the very essence of their social and economic existence (Amnesty International, 2009).

The major aspect of the knowledge gap is limited studies on impacts of the environment on insecurity/conflict on direct bearing on communities caused by artisanal refining in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Available environmental research studies on environment insecurity/conflict interaction have been centred on oil companies in the region. Scholars (Babantunde, 2017; Ayodeji &Iwebunor, 2016; Garmen, 2012; Duru, 2011; Amnesty International, 2009 & Aaron, 2006) have specifically laid emphasis on the impact of the environment (oil-induced sources) on insecurity/conflict on oil companies while that which concerns its impact directly on communities caused by artisanal/local refining are neglected by the literature in the Niger Delta. This has created a gap in literature. Thus, this study seeks to fill this gap. In particular, this study intends to focus on the impact of the violation of environmental rights on insecurity/conflict in the region and by extension their progress, growth and development.

Research Design:

This is documentary research. The study is purely qualitative relying mainly on documentary reports. Secondary sources of data were mainly relied on. This was done through the collection of data from existing materials /documents (books, journal articles, conference proceedings etc.). Data on the variables of environmental rights, insecurity and development was therefore sourced from books, text, conference proceedings, journal articles, official publications, websites, reports etc. The justification for sourcing data from the secondary source, is due largely to the nature of the study. This was to enable the study establish facts, verify and synthesize evidence from past findings and reports to establish facts through the verification of findings to support the tentative answers guiding the study. Hence, previous studies relating to the subject was used to test hypothesis guiding the study.

Environmental Rights, Insecurity/Conflict and Development: The Discourse

The capacity for environmental change to completely undermine the sustainability of life on the planet justified its consideration as a security issue. The doubts of scientific knowledge as regards to the conditions of the world ecosystem to make available ways to tackle its threats to

human lives by its changes were pointed out by scholars such as Norman Myers (1989) and Westing (1989) respectively (Matt, n: d). Thus, since the mid-twentieth century, the environment and security debate have been the most dominate research studies on sustainable development and conflict resolution globally. Scholars and like minds have come to a reasonable agreement that environmental destruction is tied to insecurity (Ugo & Ukpere, 2012). Thus, this interface has pointed out at the dawn of the World commission on environment and development on its discourse on sustainable development in 1987 (Simon, 2008). Although, this relationship is intricate. This is because a large percentage of humans are highly dependent on their ability to access ecosystem goods and services and their exposure to rapid changes that comes with the environment (Williams et al., 2003).

Studies in security and conflict concludes that conflicts arising from natural resources are perpetual sources of war (Edward, 2000). Thus, the environment has emerged as a major area of concern as a potential cause of conflict (Simon, 2003). The root cause of most violent conflicts in human society is linked to the struggle over natural resources as reported by Ullman. The literature on environmental security argues thus that the strenuous use of ecosystem resources in developing countries, have led to violent conflicts and insecurity (Edward, 2000). Oil in the Persian Gulf is the classic example. Also, in 2002, Israel threatened Lebanon over the construction of water works on rivers that flow into Israel from southern Lebanon (Simon, 2003). The foregoing explains that there are two (2) ways to comprehending conflicts emanating from the environment and its security: there could be conflicts over natural resource scarcity that may undermine state security. Also, there could be instances where environmental destructions of the ecosystem could threaten to undermine states security and other similar entities (Edward, 2000). The above two perspectives on environment, security and development informs our understanding in this paper.

Thus, human security discourse should focus on the environmental dimension, specifically on interaction between the individual or human kind as major contributors of environmental destruction and sufferers of the same fate of environmental change. Human security must take into cognizance the conservation of the ecosystem from been destroyed in an irreversible way by fighting against hazards such as deforestation, desert encroachment, acid rain and contamination of the atmosphere (Brauch, 2005).

Studies claims that the contamination of water bodies destroys aquatic life and drives out wild life thus putting food security at risk. The General Assembly of UN has stressed people's right to life and their well-being stating thus: "The sanctity of one's physical environment helps to

guarantee the security and integrity of a people. In a degraded environment, there exist a consistent risk to human lives and healthiness. Hence, such rights are implicated" (Shelton, n: d, p.18).

Hence, the safeguarding of nature is a major requirement for the sanctity of human lives as declared by the UN General Assembly. Similarly, the American Convention Commission concluded that:

> Situations of serious ecosystem contamination which may lead to ailments and cause human sufferings are contradictory to human rights campaigns.The campaigns to protect humans against ecosystem conditions that act as a risk to human health entails people have access to basic information (Shelton, n: d, p.19).

Utulu, et al (2017) also argued similarly that environmental factors threaten the existence of man in areas of occupation, health, forceful migration, food accessibility and as well environmental stress. However, the conversation on environment, security and development have expanded to include national security.

Previous concerns of national security have been focused on state military defence from external aggression/invaders. However, human security is primarily concern with human preservation. The safety of human from live threats such as ill health, hunger, diseases, oppression and painful disturbances in everyday life have been noted by UNDP, 1996. Furthermore, the Global Environmental Change and Human Security Science Plan maintained that: "When humans have the ability to withstand and adjust to threats affecting them, have the choice to varieties of social and environmental options and actively take part in chasing these options then there is a guarantee of human security" (Chukuezi, n: d, p. 15).

Another dimension in which human security is guaranteed, is challenging human laws, rules and regulations that aids human insecurity in society. The United States of America was one of the first countries to clearly link environment and national security. In 1990, Mr Algore, then a senator, placed environmental destruction on the floor of the national security agenda with a comment stating that the neglect of the environment is a risk, no to just to the standard of living but to human life itself. As noted by Nunn:

> There is a new dimension to our national security threats. The destruction of our environment is one of such. As such, the department of national defence has the obligation to look into it and counter it. It is my humble opinion that one of our key national security purpose is to reverse the increasing speed of ecosystem destruction around the world that I am persuaded that this is also a new and different threat to our national security (Olanrewaju, n: d, p. 25).

Ecosystem destruction creates a major security threat, and that ecosystem destruction will cause harm to a society's core section of security by acting against its natural support system on which human lives relies on (Olanrewaju, n: d).

Studies in the Niger Delta region has shown that oil exploitation and exploration of oil and gas have contributed greatly to severe ecosystem destruction and heightened poverty and hunger leading to serious violence among such states by the United Nations Environment Programme. It's report also shows that the central factor for violent conflicts in the region is engendered by activities relating to oil exploitation and exploration. Thus, destroying livelihood activities in the rural areas, poses a major risk to their health, economic and environmental security (David, n: d). In a study carried out by Emuedo et al (2017) concluded from their findings that the Creek is dead and that there is a threat to food security in the region. Rural dwellers also explained that skin related diseases are recorded in their communities through their contact with oil and oil workers. Also, oil causes 60% reduction in household food security and reduces crop quality. Crude oil also reduced maize germination and yield by 50% and 92% respectively and acutely impacted height, stem girth, ear height, leaf area and length of primary roots of the plants. Similarly, crude oil impedes the growth of most common vegetables.

In addition, Utulu et al (2017) in their findings showed that hydrocarbons in the environment have been observed to have severe effects on human and livestock health. Oil spills also affects the markets of affected Niger Delta Communities. Fentiman and Zabby noted that most riverine communities in the Niger Delta use the waterfronts as markets. However, oil spills make it impossible for such markets to continue to thrive. This is because while oil spills poison the fishes and shrimps which account for over 80% of the articles of trade in such markets, presence of large deposits of oil on water fronts also make the waterfronts unappealing for trading activities. This is turn affects the people's economic well-being as their major source of livelihood-fishing and farming activities are destroyed by oil spills and leakages (Utulu, 2017).

Conclusively, the environment has occupied a central place in security discourse. The environment provides the basis for man's survival. And as such central to development discourse. Conflicts over environmental resource and the effects of environmental degradation on man, both are sources of insecurity in the Niger Delta region. Health security, food security, economic security, biodiversity security and environmental stress are some of the key environmental issues impacting negatively on the well-being of the people of the region.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

The study discussed environmental rights, insecurity and development. Niger Delta was its scope. The study argued that while literature abounds on the impact of environment on insecurity/conflict in the region, the literature seems not to cover the impact of artisanal/local refining process as it directly affects oil producing communities in the region. Thus, the study was set out to fill this gap.

The wide purpose of the study was to clarify the impact of environmental rights on insecurity/conflict and by extension development in the region. The violation of environmental rights is ineffectual on insecurity/conflict in the region and by extension their development was used as a tentative answer that guided the study. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected.

In conclusion, findings of the study showed that lack of environmental rights and access to its scarce resource creates a fertile ground for insecurity/conflict and this impacts on development in the region. The impact ranges from health security, economic security, food security, biodiversity security, environmental security/stress and security of livelihood. These creates fertile grounds for insecurity/conflict which impacts on development negatively in the region.

Recommendations

The following are recommended as the most like means to address the findings of the study.

1. Environmental protection/conservation through legislative acts.
2. Promotion of environmental rights campaign through mass media.
3. Inclusion of environmental rights as part of human rights through constitutional provisions.

These are recommended as the most likely means to enhance environmental rights and by extension promotion of security. This in turn would enhance/promote development in the Niger Delta region.

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