

## **The State and Development Interventions in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria**

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### ***Abstract***

*The Niger Delta region of Nigeria presents a typical case of the juxtaposition of enormous wealth and acute underdevelopment. Several attempts have been made by successive administrations in Nigeria to stimulate development through direct state interventions in the region. However, none of the interventions has ameliorated the living conditions of the people.*

*This paper examines the forces that have made state interventions improbable in tackling the deepening development crisis in the region. Data collected from primary and secondary sources reveal that state attempts have been foundered by the same forces that precipitated underdevelopment in the region. The paper locates them within the locus of the character of the Nigerian State and those at the head of it at different levels.*

**Key Words:** Corruption, Crises, Development, Niger Delta, Oil, Poverty.

### ***1. Introduction***

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria accounts for more than 90 percent of earnings from oil and gas, 80 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and 95 percent of the national budget of Nigeria. The region also accounts for oil reserve of about thirty billion barrels and gas reserve of about one hundred and sixty trillion cubic feet (Chorkor, 2000;14 Usen, 2003:18). Beyond these, the region is blessed with good agricultural land and vast forest, outstanding fisheries and an immense labour force. With such abundant resources, the region should be one of the highly developed centres of the world. Paradoxically, there has been a tendency for an inverse relationship between development and natural resource abundance in the region.

The search for strategies that would utter this relationship and stimulate patterns and processes of development in the Region has led the Nigerian State to frame special development programmes, since the 1960s. Overall the region has had the following interventions: The Niger Delta Development Board, the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority, the Presidential Task Force, the Presidential Implementation Committee, Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission and the Niger Delta Development Commission.

Instead of state efforts engendering more humane conditions of life for the people of the region, they have become more susceptible to underdevelopment than they were five decades ago when the exploration of oil commenced in the region. The region has continued to rank very low in all the known indices of development. Life expectancy is low, infant mortality ranks among the highest in the world, malnutrition is widespread, infrastructure is in shambles and health prospects are poor. In addition, social institutions have collapsed, illiteracy level is high, unemployment is widespread, so also are ignorance and political apathy.

The deplorable conditions of life in the region have left a large part of the people of the region especially the youth with a siege mentality. The youth has virtually taken over the region as a formidable group and hostage taking and sea piracy have become a near daily occurrence. No doubt, the Niger Delta development issue has become one of the greatest single threats to the peace, stability and socio-political cohesion of the Nigerian State.

Consequently, the development crises in the region have engaged the attention of experts' policy makers and analysts. The unresolved question is; why have the several state interventions not translated the immense resources of the region into enhanced quality of live for the people?

This work represents an attempt to unravel the forces behind state development failures and contribute to the resolution of the Niger Delta development debacle. The study focuses on the forces behind the development crises in the region, the dilemma of state interventions and the fundamental challenge that must be surmounted in order to initiate and sustain the process of development in the region.

## ***2. The Concept of Development***

Broadly, development can be conceptualized as the sustained elevation of an entire society towards a better or more humane life. However, what constitute this life has tended to drift under certain context, as the process of development deepens and as new problems to be solved by development emerge (Todaro & Smith, 2003:21). Development is best conceived as a multi-dimensional concept. One of the attempts to reflect this nature has been captured by Goulet (1992). Goulet distinguishes three basic core values which serve as conceptual basis for development. These are Life Sustenance, Self Esteem and Freedom. Life sustenance is concerned with the provision of basic needs such as food, shelter and protection. Self-Esteem stands for the feeling of self respect and independence. Freedom refers to independence from the three evils of want, ignorance and squalor.

Development is both a physical reality and a state of mind in which society through some combination of social, economic and institutional processes, secure the means for obtaining a better life. Development in all societies must have at least three objectives: to increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life sustaining goods, to raise the level of living and to expand the range of economic and social choices (Torado & smith 2003:22). Sen (1989) defines development with the aid of three central concepts: functioning, capacities and freedom. Functioning refers to what a person does or can do with the commodity of given characteristics that he possesses or controls. Capacities imply the freedom that a person has in terms of functioning. They are determined by income, health and educational standards. Freedom means, freedom of choice or control of one's life. This include: political freedom, economic facilities and social opportunities.

From the foregoing backdrop, development can be conceived as the capacity to function. It is concerned with enhancing the lives people live and the freedom they enjoy. At the core of all development effort is freedom of choice by enhancing peoples capacities for attaining higher standards of health, knowledge, self-respect and the ability to participate actively in community life (Sen 1999). The human development index represents one of the latest attempts to frame a conception of development that covers all human capacities, the needs, aspirations and choice of the people. It defines development as the process of enlarging people's choices that are created by expanding human capacities (Benn, 2004:8).

What we can gauge from the above is that development has to do with an increased capacity of a people to harness the resources at their disposal to live more humane lives. It usually starts with an improvement in opportunities to meet the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing and shelter. However, it goes beyond these to encompass positive transformations and reorientation of economic, social, political and other institutional structures and functions. Development comes with an enlargement in human choices and considerable measure of internal and external sovereignty. This is reflected in increased opportunities for gainful employment, access to medical facilities and educational opportunities and an increased ability of a state to assert itself at the international scene.

## ***3. Perspectives of the Niger Delta Development Crisis and State Failures***

Several studies have been carried out on the Niger Delta development crisis and the forces that have subverted government efforts at development. Dike (1986), presents a historical account of the British merchants and how the colonial administrations through their activities and policies laid the foundation for the underdevelopment of the region. According to him, the British came to the Delta for three main reasons: the search for raw materials, the need for cheap labour and the need to secure the market for their finished goods. These activities were detrimental to the subsequent development of the region. Ikimi (1969) also locates the crises between the major ethnic groups in Western Delta in the policies of the colonial state.

His work reveals that before the advent of colonial rule, the major ethnic groups had mutual relations, the discord and acrimony between the major ethnic groups resulted from their quest to regulate the price of palm oil, the major export during this period. The unending crises have tremendously retarded the development efforts of the State.

Alagoa (1964) further reveals how the British disrupted the traditional, social and economic system of the region with its imperial forces. The British also subdued pocket of resistance in the region in a bid to protect its economic interest. This laid the foundation of the underdevelopment and poverty of the Niger Delta region.

The preceding works suggest that the British trading companies and colonial state laid the basis for the Niger Delta Development crisis and the failure of State efforts. However, all of the studies seem to neglect the internal make-up of the communities. None of them examined the role played by local traditional allies who for their selfish interest collaborated with the Europeans to exploit their communities and their roles in sustaining the structure of underdevelopment laid by the Europeans, despite State efforts.

It is from the foregoing background that Omoweh (2007) contends that although the colonial government as well as the trading companies put in place the modalities for capitalist exploitation and initiated the forces of underdevelopment, Shell Development Company and other multi-national companies concluded the process of the underdevelopment of the Niger Delta. He asserts that there is an intricate linkage between the relative reckless manner in which crude oil is explored and produced, the degradation of the environment of the Niger Delta host communities and the contemporary increasing incapacity of the people to reproduce themselves. This lies at the heart of the Niger Delta development crisis and failure of the State to initiate development in the region.

Chokor (2000) goes beyond the physical environment and attempts to integrate the environment with the social and economic forces in explaining the Niger Delta development crisis and state failures. He opines that in stratified societies there is likely to be a flow of surplus in favour of areas with political and economic power. He notes the existence of two fundamental structures which articulate the appropriation of the region's resources. First, there is the social structure defined by a set of federal rules and regulations which provides the basis for the exploitation of oil and gas resources and the physical structure consisting of the network of oil wells, pipelines, flow station and production terminal. These structures have been the bane of development efforts in the delta

Ekuerhareye (2004) in its contribution to the Niger Delta development issue and the State inability to initiate development gives a unique characterization of the Niger Delta region. To him the region has increasingly emerged as a distinct social, economic and political formation characterized by huge resource extraction from it to the rest of the world and recycled for the development of the Nigerian people and communities minus the people and communities of the Niger Delta Region. Ekuerhareye, also looks at the nature of the Nigerian federalism viz a viz the development crisis in the region and observed that the crude oil era has been marked by extreme concentration of fiscal resources in the hands of the federal government while the component unit including the oil producing state have been compelled to depend on the central government for financing. This approach has failed to address practical development policy issues. Therefore, the current deepening crisis of underdevelopment and poverty in the region has been a manifestation of the pattern of petroleum resource exploitation and the resultant, distorted and perverse, fiscal federalism in Nigeria.

The literature discussed, have identified some of the salient forces responsible for the Niger Delta development crisis and the State inability to initiate development in the Region. However, they were unable to trace the real cause of the problem. This work argues that the forces discussed by these authors' are mainly manifestations of a deep-seated problem. They all take root from the basic problematic of the Nigerian state and that is the antinomies of the Nigerian state and the character of her ruling elites. This work attempts to discuss the basic forces responsible for State inability to initiate the process development in the region within the locus of the inherent contradiction of the Nigerian state.

#### ***4. Development Interventions in the Niger Delta: An Overview***

The unique characteristics of the Niger Delta make special development efforts imperative. This need was first recommended by the Willink Commission instituted by the British Colonial Government in 1957. The Committee's report gave birth to the Niger Delta Development Board. Although the Commission drew up a programme of action, the political and electoral crises of the first republic, which culminated in the Nigerian Civil War made the board to die a natural death. In the post-civil war military administration, there were controversies about whether or not the board should be resuscitated.

What emerged from the controversies was that nothing was done during this era to tackle the Niger Delta unique developmental issue. Consequently, the agitations by the people of the region continued; this time accentuated by the increasing exploitation of oil and gas, their increasing profile in the revenue of the nation and the adverse effects on the Niger Delta environment. In 1980 the Shagari administration created the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority. The Authority which made no obvious impact on the lives of the people increased their frustrations and gave rise to serious agitations. This time, the exploration of oil had commenced on a very large scale with the government earning huge revenue from it. Thus the neglect of the region was becoming very glaring.

In response to the growing need for development, the Shagari administration established the Presidential Task Force. Mainly due to the protracted legal battles between the Nigerian Federal Government and the Government of the defunct Bendel State (one of the Niger Delta States), which prevented the disbursement of the 1.5 percent approved for the rehabilitation of the oil producing states, the Task Force was highly incapacitated all through its existence (Suberu, 1992:35-1). In 1987, the Babangida administration established the Presidential Implementation Committee to replace the Presidential Task Force. The Committee was unable to handle the complex ecological problems and deepening poverty in the region. By the 1990's a new wave of ethnic and regional nationalism began to sweep across the Niger Delta region. This was demonstrated in the form of ethnic mass mobilization. The various groups in the region became intensely mobilized in relation to the critical issue of neglect, disinheritance, environmental devastation, impoverishment and injustice. There were wide spread protest, tension, restiveness, violence and disruptions (Ikelegbe, 2004)

Following the discontent, the Babangida administration set up the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Commission. The Commission's functions include: to embark on development projects in the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta region and to compensate materially communities, local governments and states which have suffered damage or deprivations as a result of mineral prospecting activities. On the whole, the Commission's approach to development could best be described as palliative when compared to the depth of development problems in the region. Consequently, the people still remained poor and underdeveloped. It was against the foregoing background that they decided to take their destinies in their hands to demand a fair treatment from the Nigerian State. Massive revolts became almost a permanent feature of the region.

It was under this circumstance that the Niger Delta Development Commission was established in 2001; with a vision to offer lasting solution to the socio-economic difficulties of the Niger Delta region and a mission to facilitate the rapid and even development of the region, into a region that is economically prosperous and politically peaceful (Usen,2003:7). Like previous developmental agencies, the Commission has been highly incapacitated in tackling the daunting developmental challenges in the region.

### ***5. Theoretical Framework***

This study situates its arguments on those works which attempt to use the political economy theory as basis for explaining the nature of the post-colonial states and their inability to promote development.

In his work on the post-colonial states, Alavi (1982) anchors his basic argument on the basic premise that post-colonial states are product of societies that are systematically divided into antagonistic classes. This does not only preclude their autonomy but it makes the State incapable of initiating and pursuing programmes of development for the benefit of the whole society. This way, the problematic of the state cannot be reduced to inefficiency.

In his thesis, Ake (1981) conceives post colonial states as tools of capital, by the fact that the indigenous bourgeoisie, which took over government, lacked a secured material base; they therefore use the State as a base for primitive accumulation of capita. Like most post-colonial states, the Nigerian State reflects and caters for narrow interests. It is the interests that are institutionalized in the State apparatus and backed by the compulsions of power that get expressed. This reinforces underdevelopment and endangers development strategies (Ake, 1985).

Flowing from the above, the peculiar circumstance of the social group which controls State power in Nigeria is such that it cannot be interested basically in development. It may espouse a commitment to development and devise strategies of development. But the political class is only interested in adjustment, because it is only within this framework that it can reproduce its survival and dominance (Ihonvbare 1989).

Based on this framework, this work argues that the dismal performance of state development interventions in the region cannot be reduced to technical problems. The issues bordering on these are mainly epiphenomena. There are more fundamental issues at the heart of the failure of state interventions in the region. The theoretical foundation of this research provides a framework for exploring these issues

## **6. Method**

This study utilizes the primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary data were collected from a field observation conducted in the Niger Delta region. The primary data were substantiated by secondary data generated from textbooks, journal articles newspapers, internet sources etc.

## **7. Discussions**

### **7.1. Corruption and Development Interventions**

The capital dearth of the Nigerian political class and its quest to use access to State institutions to remedy this dearth has played a crucial role in subverting state development interventions in the region. What has emerged from state efforts at developing the oil rich region is a long chain of patron-client relationship; this chain stretches from the Federal Government, through the states, to Local and Community levels. This relationship allows mostly those who have direct access to state power and those sufficiently close to them to benefit from the funds allocated to the agencies of development through corrupt practices.

The assertion above is supported first, by physical realities of abandoned or poorly executed projects, project completion without usage and those that broke down soon after commissioning. For example, In Ebedie and Umutu communities in Ukwani Local Government Area of Delta State and Ologbo in Ikpoba Okhia Local Government Area of Edo State, as a result of poor execution, none of the facilities provided by the Niger Delta Development Commission has made any appreciable impact on the people's lives. Although there overhead water tanks with taps in different locations, the taps do not flow. In these Communities, the bulk of the people still depend on the streams for their main source of supply. Also a multimillion naira hospital project initiated by the same Commission at Ologbo, has been abandoned for several years. To the community this facility is more of a monument than a development project (Jack- Akhigbe, 2010).

Furthermore, there have been reports of a catalogue of outright cases of political corruption among the staff of the Niger Delta Development Commission. In 2007, a former legal officer and four others defrauded the agency of about N157.5 million and in 2008, the then Chairman of the Commission was arraigned before a Nigerian court for embezzling N800 million (Edem, 2007, Ugbegbe & Oretade 2008). Like the Niger Delta Development Commission the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission was also characterized by massive political corruption. In Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta State, a big water project scheme contract awarded at N16 million in 1993 was abandoned. In Uzere, Isoko South Local Government Area of Delta State, the Commission paid the sum of N20 million to build market stalls, the contract was never executed. In the same Local Government, the contract for the electrification of Ellu was awarded for N15 million, yet not even a pole was erected in the community. (Ofuoko, 1998; Omoweh 2005).

The Oil Mineral Development Commission was so clouded by the quest to amass wealth to the extent that even when funds were not coming in as expected, it continued to award contract running into several billions of naira that was not backed by funds but merely in anticipation of money yet to be released to the Commission. By 1999, when the Commission folded up, it was owing about N3 billion to members of the political class and their agents (Imobighe 2005: 107). The pervasive corruption that characterized state development interventions in the region is merely a reflection of the systemic and wide spread political corruption that has characterized the Nigerian State at all levels. This is why the 3.07 trillion channeled to the region between May 1999 and December 2006 through the Niger Delta states, their local councils and the Niger Delta Development Commission has not made even the modest impact in the lives of the people. (Jinadu, Abutudu & Egom 2007:11).

What is palpable is that State efforts in the region have benefited high ranking public officials and their allies through corrupt practices. The benefits of such interventions have eluded the poor in the region. Hence, a vicious circle of underdevelopment and misery in the region

## ***7.2. The Skewed Relationship Between the State /Oil companies and the Oil Producing Communities***

The failure of State development efforts in the Niger Delta is a manifestation of the exploitative relationship between the oil producing communities on the one hand and the oil companies and the State on the other hand. It is this relationship that provides the basis for the exploitation of oil and gas without the consent of the people of the region and to exploit oil in the region with utmost reckless abandon. In all the Niger Delta communities, oil companies still employ inadequate environmental standard and public health standard in oil related activities. Forests are cut down, streams are dredged and later blocked, gas is flared on a daily basis and oil spill still occurs regularly. A few instances will suffice here:

At Ologbo, Ikpoba Okhai Local Government Area of Edo State, the Nigerian Petroleum Development Company still flares gas on a daily basis. Also, in Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Shell Petroleum Development Company continuously flares gas at all its flow stations. In Kokodiagbene community, Warri South Local Government Area of Delta State, Chevron Nigeria Limited flares gas in all its flow stations. All these communities have also experienced oil spills with much of the oil not recovered back. In all of these communities the land where oil wells and flow stations are located and the vast adjoining lands are completely rendered unusable even after the oil has been drilled and the wells abandoned (Jack- Akhigbe, 2010)

What obtains in these communities is a reflection of what occurs in the entire Niger Delta. With respect to oil spills, the country recorded 1260 spills between August 2006 and August 2008. A breakdown shows that in 2006, the country recorded two hundred and fifty-three (253) oil spill incidents. In 2007 five hundred and eighty-eight (588) incidents were recorded. In the first quarter of 2008 four hundred and nineteen (419) oil spills were reported. This progressive trend simply suggests that the state and her agencies are not doing anything to enforce the laws relating to the environment. With respect to the flaring of gas, Nigeria currently flares 125 million cubic feet of gas, all of which occur in the Niger Delta (Yakubu et al 2008).

To further exacerbate the plight of the people of the oil communities, agencies such as Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA), the Department of Petroleum Resource (DPR) and the National Oil Spill Detection Response Agency (NOSDRA), established to implement legislation pertaining to oil exploration and environment have been highly ineffective. Thus, oil companies prospect and explore oil with utmost reckless abandon in the Niger Delta communities. The result is that over the years there has been unabated pollution and degradation of the Niger Delta land. Oil activities in the region have drastically reduced the amount of land available for agricultural purposes, polluted the eco-system, exposed the people to associated hazards and ultimately deepened the capacity of the people to reproduce themselves economically. This way, the state and its operating oil companies have not only shaped the underdevelopment and poverty of the oil rich region, but it has made the Niger Delta environment unwholesome for development which it purports to initiate through state interventions.

## ***7.3. Niger Delta Crises and State Interventions***

Over the years the Niger Delta region has been experiencing frequent oil related crises. The crises represent a long tradition of oil communities' resistance against neglect, deprivation, environmental degradation and the destruction of their means of livelihood. Thus, Isaac Boro's resistance, Ken Saro Wiwa's Movement, Kiama Declaration, Dokunbo's insurgence and the pockets of resistance by the oil producing communities in the nine Niger Delta states represent attempts by the exploited people of the region to have direct access to and control of their resources.

A number of factors have fueled the crises in the region. First, crises related activities have become a high income business. The gains from such engagements are much more than any public or private concern can offer. This account for why the bulk of the hitherto jobless youth have resorted to conflict related business. Widespread violence also represents apathy towards the federal government, sponsored by the ruling elites of the different states and communities in the region. In the attempt to bulk pass the blame of neglect on the federal government the regional elites have unnecessarily politicized and blown the agitation for resource control out of proportion. Most youth in the region see the federal government as an alien force that must be resisted at all cost. There have also been attempts by some indigenes of the region to cash on previous discontents in their communities and use their access to the state and the multinational oil companies to further their own interest.

Most often these corps of indigenes mobilizes the youths and sometimes women to disrupt activities of the state and oil companies in order to attract the attention of the government.

The implications of violent crises on State development interventions are myriad as well as formidable. They pose serious threat to human existence; unnecessarily increase the cost of development and have sometimes stalled, delayed or stopped the commissioning of state projects. A few cases will be referred to here:

The crisis between Ogbolomabiri and Basambiri both in Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa State has stopped the Niger Delta Development Commission's Unity bridge that was to link Nembe/Ogbia and Yanegoa. Also the Sagbama / Ekeremor conflict has stalled the Commission's sponsored road project that was to link both communities' (Jack- Akhigbe, 2010).

#### **7.4. Citizens Participation and State Interventions**

A fundamental flaw in state interventionist attempts in the region is that they exclude the recipients of development. Most often development projects are primarily designed to ensure that the spoils of electoral contest go round. They are mainly handled by urban elites who have completely lost touch with the people in the local communities and whose interests are completely at variance with the actual needs of the people. This is why the feeling of alienation and powerlessness is pervasive among the people. The major fallout of the foregoing is that the people see the state and its officials as enemies to be cheated or defeated. Thus, even when development is initiated by the state such development cannot be sustained by them.

In all the Niger Delta communities, contractors have to pay huge sums of money popularly called *deve* to community youths before they are allowed to execute projects. Even at this, they still need to protect their workers and facilities with heavily equipped state security agents. This has seriously constrained the capacity of development agencies to initiate and implement development projects

#### **5. Conclusion**

Attempts to develop Nigeria's Niger Delta oil communities through direct state interventions have not made any appreciable impact on the lives of the people. All through the communities, there are apparent catalogue of development failures. The region has continued to wallow in poverty and underdevelopment whether measured in quantitative or qualitative terms. State efforts at initiating development in the region have been subverted by the forces of corruption, the exploitative relationship between the state/ oil companies and the oil communities, violent socio-political crises and alienation. Paradoxically, these are the same forces that precipitated underdevelopment and poverty in the region.

The Niger Delta development debacle can be situated within the locus of the character of the Nigerian State and those at the head of it. Over the years, different factions of the Nigerian ruling elites have depended mainly on the control of state power and state agencies for access to primitive accumulation of capital. The oil from the Niger Delta provides the basis for this accumulation. In the struggle for access to state power and its attendant benefits, everything else, including the development of the oil bearing communities have been devalued. Years of neglect have precipitated violent pressures from the people of the region. At the peak of such pressures, successive administrations have invented its version of interventionist agencies. Their latent purpose being to guarantee that the exploration of oil continues unhindered. Expectedly, the major activities of state agencies of development have centered on this purpose. Within this ambit, all efforts have been directed at the conventional practice of treating the symptoms of underdevelopment and poverty instead of arresting the root cause. The agencies approach has been mainly palliative because those at the command of the Nigerian State are aware that it is only with such measures that the essential nature of the state can be preserved. Even at this state efforts have been undermined by the same forces that precipitated underdevelopment in the region. This way, the Niger Delta development crisis is reduced to the problematic of the state and until there is a change in the character of the Nigerian State and the mode of capital accumulation, the Niger Delta development remains a debacle.

#### **6. Recommendations**

This research recommends the retention of direct State intervention as a response to the Niger Delta development crisis. However, in order to make it more developmental oriented, the following measures should be implemented:

Deconcentration of power to local agencies through direct state interventions. With this arrangement state offices will be automatically eliminated. Such agencies will be more accessible, more sympathetic and quicker to respond to the needs of local communities.

This is likely to enhance the interaction between the communities and the Nigerian State, build up their confidence in the State and make them have personal stakes in the success of development programmes. The aforementioned political objective should also necessitate the economic objective of making adequate funds available to the local agencies. In this scheme, the functions of the Ministry of Niger Delta should be to set broad policy framework, monitoring and the coordination of Niger Delta development. The agencies should be staffed by indigenes of the local governments where they are serving. There should also be the institutionalization of functional democracy at all levels of government. History has shown that in cases where development has been dissociated from democracy, the result has been dismal. The kind of democracy that will stimulate development in the region is that which flows from a political environment where political authority is derived from and sustained by actual public opinion. An environment that guarantees human right and the rule of law will certainly be more conducive for development than the present state of arbitrariness that pervades the region and the entire Nigerian State.

With a functional democracy, the enormous amount squandered through the long chain of patron/client relationships and other forms of political corruption will be diverted to projects that will enhance the conditions of life of the people. The kind of democracy proposed here requires apprenticeship, an educated citizenry and the ability of the bulk of the people to understand public affairs. Based on the aforementioned, this work recommends massive investment in education and skill acquisition programmes and an unmitigated access to medical facilities for the people of the region.

The recommendations proffered here may be difficult to implement because the political class may not readily implement policies that radically alter the system they benefit from. This means that the class supporting state institution may have to be circumvented if the people of the Niger Delta must experience improvement in their wellbeing. Therefore, this work recommends the active involvement of civil society in the region's development process. The roles of civil society will be to effect changes in the character of the Nigerian State, resist some of the actions of the state and force her to implement policies that will improve the conditions of life of the people.



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