

Transformation Theory and Peacebuilding: Evaluating Strategies for Addressing the Niger Delta Conflict

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Abstract - The conflict in the Niger Delta has become endemic, deep-rooted, and intractable, making it difficult to resolve. This study assesses peacebuilding as a strategy for addressing the Niger Delta's intractable conflict. The paper adopts transformation theory as its theoretical framework and employs a quantitative method of data analysis, using a questionnaire to gather the necessary information. The study finds that inadequate funding, the government's haphazard response, lack of implementation of commission recommendations, incorrect resolution approaches, and disempowering legislation, among other factors, hinder the effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts in the region. The paper concludes by recommending adequate funding for the commission, coordinated consistency and cohesive planning, appropriate and thorough implementation of the commission's recommended policy frameworks, and a peaceful resolution approach to address the identified challenges. Additionally, fiscal federalism is deemed necessary.

Keywords: Injustice, Instability, Intractable Conflict, Peacebuilding

I. INTRODUCTION

The conflict in the Niger Delta is characterized by a dual battle for supremacy among the different kingdoms in the region (Human Rights Watch, 2005) and the exploitation of oil without consideration for the rightful owners of the resources (Adedeji, 2021). The Niger Delta is the cornerstone of Nigeria's economy; despite this fact, it remains extremely underdeveloped in terms of infrastructure, impoverished, neglected, and largely marginalized. The tragic poverty amid prosperity for the local populace is a testament to the region's neglect. The intractability of the conflict is attributed to several causes, including the Land Use Act, which places all land in Nigeria under the control of the federal government, further exacerbating the issue (Human Rights Watch, 2005). The fierce rivalry for political power, viewed as the gateway to transferring resources from the public to the private sector and ultimately to community control, is closely tied to the absolute power of the federal government over the region's oil economy. This situation has sparked agitation among the local populace, who have demanded resource control, adequate political representation, infrastructure development, and job opportunities for the region's many unemployed individuals. The federal government's approach to resolving the crisis has been coercive, relying on forceful suppression (Adedeji, 2023). In response to the Nigerian Federation's resistance to the demand for resource

control, numerous armed groups have been formed to address the issues, often employing violent tactics. Moreover, the region is becoming increasingly militarized due to the growing availability of lethal weapons, which intensifies the violence and empowers young people to defend what they perceive as their inalienable rights. Poverty, deprivation, greed, and selfishness are still widely believed to be the primary drivers of the Niger Delta crisis (Dike, 2007).

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study interrogates in comprehensive manner the effort of peacebuilding in addressing the intractable conflict in the Niger Delta.

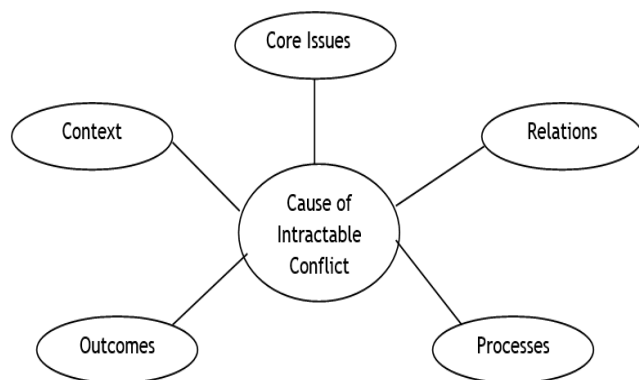
III. STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

- H_0 : The standard of living of an average Niger Deltan is not low.
 H_1 : The standard of living of an average Niger Deltan is low.
- H_0 : The Niger Delta oil conflict will not come to an end with fiscal federalism in place.
 H_1 : The Niger Delta oil conflict will come to an end with fiscal federalism in place.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarification: An intractable conflict is one that has persisted for a long period and has resisted resolution, even with the involvement of a third party (Peterson, 2011). Intractable conflict does not imply that the conflict is irresolvable but rather that it has resisted resolution. Conflicts can be more or less intractable, but not entirely unresolvable. The causes of intractable conflicts vary depending on their nature.

Burgess & Burgess (1996) identified intolerable moral differences, high-stakes distributional issues, and status or order disputes as possible causes of intractable conflicts. Additionally, Coleman (2006) provided a broader analysis of the causes of intractable conflicts, attributing them to factors such as context, core issues, relationships, processes, and outcomes. He argued that the interaction of these multiple factors can lead to intractable conflicts.



Source: Peter Coleman (2006)

Fig. 1 Diagrammatically Representation of Intractable Conflict

Crocker, Hampson, & Aall (2009) expanded Coleman's categorization by including geography and geopolitics, warlords who prey on vulnerable populations, and the failure of earlier resolution attempts. On the other hand, peacebuilding is a post-conflict activity aimed at addressing the anomalies and damage caused during conflict (Aliff, 2014). It can also be seen as a pre-conflict activity designed to address potential causes of conflict within society (Olu-Adeyemi & Shaibu, 2019). Peacebuilding involves creating conditions that enable social groups with potentially conflicting interests to coexist peacefully. Additionally, peacebuilding entails constructing a society that ensures human security or one that is free from structural violence (Stephen & Donald, 1996). It also involves the process of transforming a violent, conflict-ridden society into one that is peaceful and allows people to live in freedom.

The Economy and the Niger Delta Frustration: Given that Nigeria primarily depends on revenue from the sale of crude oil, oil wealth has been a blessing for nations globally. Unfortunately, Nigeria's oil wealth has turned into a curse rather than a blessing due to manipulative practices, corruption, mismanagement of oil proceeds, and a challenging and costly business environment (Atojoko, 2008).

The deep-rooted conflict in the region centres primarily around a few key fundamental problems, as noted by Adedeji (2021), such as policies of marginalization and exclusion, laws of disempowerment and subjugation, widespread poverty, underdevelopment, skewed distribution of funds from the federation account, a high rate of youth unemployment, environmental degradation, and the divide-and-rule policy implemented by the federal government and oil-producing companies. The operational policies of petro-businesses and the government's pursuit of financial advantages have resulted in undesirable social effects for both the region and Nigeria at large. Significant changes have occurred in the social lives of the people, with local indigenous groups steadfastly defending their human and environmental rights, even resorting to violence when necessary. Adedeji (2023) claimed that militant activities have had a detrimental effect on the Nigerian economy in

several areas, including, but not limited to, the loss of national income, kidnapping and hostage-taking, illegal oil bunkering, security challenges, a reduction in the personnel of oil firms, and the sabotage of commercial operations. Other effects of militancy include the disruption of individual peace, dwindling foreign direct investment, persistent intra- and inter-communal conflicts, and the weakening of national unity.

V. PEACEBUILDING EFFORTS IN THE NIGER DELTA

There have been several strategies used in the Niger Delta to promote peace in the region which include government and unofficial initiatives respectively.

A. Track 1: Government

The federal government made significant efforts to resolve the issues faced by minority groups, notably the Niger Delta, through the Henry Willink Commission of 1957. The panel was established to address the demands of ethnic minority groups for greater recognition in national affairs. The report of the commission led to the creation of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) by the Tafawa Balewa administration in 1961, with the responsibility of addressing the region's developmental needs. However, the Nigerian government neglected the commission's comprehensive recommendations (Ikporukpo, 2001). The Niger Delta Basin and Development Authority (NDBDA) was established in 1976 to replace the failed NDDDB (Bassey, 2022). Unfortunately, the NDBDA was also hampered by a lack of government commitment and internal issues. Notably, there were no board members from the region, and the federation account provided very little funding for regional development.

In 1992, Ibrahim Babangida founded the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) (Bassey, 2022). As with previous initiatives, mismanagement and inadequate funding from the federal government prevented OMPADEC from achieving its goals. These developments significantly contributed to the high levels of advocacy for resource control and unrest among Niger Delta leaders and youth. In response to the agitation, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was established by the Olusegun Obasanjo administration in 2000 with the task of bringing development to the region (Bassey, 2022). Regrettably, several issues hindered the commission's effectiveness, including insufficient funding, widespread corruption, the employment of politicians instead of qualified personnel, and low community involvement in development initiatives. Furthermore, the NDDC adopted an ad hoc, disorganized, and inconsistent approach to its objectives.

It should be noted that in 1999, the federation account's allocation to the states in the region was increased from 3% to 13% to prevent the economy from collapsing abruptly

due to militant activities. Additionally, the federal government, under the leadership of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, established an amnesty program in 2008 to address the needs of repentant militants in the region (Adedeji, 2021). The amnesty program included scholarships and skill development initiatives both domestically and internationally (Awosiyani, 2011). However, the program has not successfully created a completely peaceful and progressive community, indicating that more work must be done to address the legitimate concerns of the people.

B. Track 2: Unofficial

Track II diplomacy is an informal initiative carried out by non-governmental actors who work to reduce violent conflicts. Numerous players have participated in the Niger Delta, often in collaboration with others but occasionally acting independently. The Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU), adopted by Chevron, places the responsibility for local development squarely on those who will benefit from it, marking a significant shift in approach. In 2011, the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and the NDDC collaborated to expand a youth enterprise development program that provides start-up capital, business development services, and entrepreneurship training to support the creation and growth of youth-owned businesses across the Niger Delta, with a focus on empowering young women. Chevron benefited host communities by launching the \$50 million Niger Delta Partnership Initiative and the \$5 million Western Niger Delta Development Program - both five-year community development initiatives in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH).

Additionally, Statoil Nigeria and Pro-Natura (Nigeria) collaborated to create a participatory development, peace, and stability model for the Akassa Kingdom, which has since been extended to other parts of the region. Chevron also established the nonprofit Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) to promote socioeconomic development in collaboration with local organizations. Unofficial actors have been at the forefront of advocating for equality and gender parity in areas such as politics, community development, environmental remediation, healthcare, and conservation. These actors swiftly address issues of underdevelopment, human rights, rural health, and environmental challenges in the Niger Delta. Niger Delta Professionals for Development (NIDPRODEV) focuses on livelihoods, capacity building, good governance, and the relationship between development and security at the community level. Similarly, the Catholic Dioceses established a non-governmental organization to address social issues, aiming to achieve social justice, promote development, and protect human rights and dignity in society. International NGOs, such as the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), have also contributed to

peacebuilding efforts in Nigeria. USIP conducted multiple training sessions on conflict analysis and management for community groups in the Niger Delta to enhance their capacity for fostering peace. Additionally, USIP provided funding for training traditional leaders in effective peace-making.

VI. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The work adopted conflict transformation theory as its theoretical framework, a concept propounded by John Paul Lederach and his contemporaries (Lederach, 2003). The essence of the theory revolves around the well-known principles of conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict generation, which have been redefined to make them more applicable to modern conflict scenarios (Miall, 2004). Conflict transformation transcends the basic steps of reframing arguments and recognizing the benefits of conflict management and resolution. It goes beyond merely ending undesirable conflict and seeks to establish desirable outcomes (Lederach, 2003). The theory embodies a concern for the interests of all parties involved, offering opportunities for positive change. It is both crisis-responsive and integrated into a system of constructive transformation. Conflict transformation holds the potential for constructive change, beginning with the recognition, understanding, and correction of historical wrongs, while moving forward with openness to new forms of communication and future-oriented solutions (Lederach, 2003).

The theory focuses on peacebuilding and the processes that transform violent conflict into a peaceful state acceptable to all actors. Like conflict transformation, peacebuilding is both a process and an outcome (Laue & Cormick, 1978, as cited in Okonofua, 2011). As a process, peacebuilding involves a series of responsibilities and functions, rather than just the actions of a peacemaker. According to Lederach (1997), in divided societies like Nigeria, a succession of intermediary actions is carried out by different actors at various points in the peace process, each addressing different aspects of the conflict. Conflict transformation is a system of change that modifies not only the conflict itself but also the deep-rooted components of the political and socio-historical framework, the personalities of the conflicting parties, and the relationships between the rivals (Okonofua, 2011). For this transformation to lead to peace, the structural causes of the Niger Delta conflict must be thoroughly examined and addressed.

These include oppressive socio-economic conditions, environmental insecurity, injustice, inequality, illegal economic activities, poverty, ethnic disparities, forced federalism, intra-state conflicts, state/corporate enclave politics, and petrol-capitalism enclave economies (Foran, 2005; Robinson, 2006). The theory advocates for the reorganization of the federal structure, transformation of the economic landscape, redress of ecological damage, and a shift in how militants and society perceive one another. For

the indivisibility of the Nigerian federation to be maintained, the Niger Delta conflict must be transformed through the active engagement of all parties involved, including militants, oil companies, local, state, and federal governments, communities, traditional institutions, and peace activists. The theory is undoubtedly appropriate for understanding the emergence of the conflict in the Niger Delta and predicting its transformative process.

VII. METHODOLOGY

The paper adopted a qualitative method of data analysis, making the research design primarily analytical. A random sampling technique was used to select Delta State and two local governments - Warri Central and Isoko South - as the population and sampling sizes for the study, respectively. Both primary and secondary sources of data were employed. To achieve the research objectives, the study used questionnaires to obtain adequate information from respondents. Government publications, journals, periodicals, documents, and works by notable scholars on the subject matter were also utilized.

One hundred and twenty (120) people from the two targeted local governments were randomly selected, with sixty (60) respondents from each area. The Inferential Statistics version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), specifically the chi-square test, was used to analyze the data collected through the questionnaires. The chi-square test was employed to test the stated hypotheses and to either support or refute the assumptions.

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum (O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where X^2 – Chi-Square

\sum = Summation

O = Observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

VIII. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This section focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data obtained through the administration of questionnaires. The information was collected from a sample of one hundred and twenty (120) individuals from Warri Central and Isoko South.

TABLE I ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Returned	108	120
Unreturned	12	10
Total	120	100

Source: Author Field Survey, 2024

One hundred and eight (108) out of the one hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires distributed were returned, while twelve (12) were not. Therefore, the analysis is based on the one hundred and eight (108) returned questionnaires.

A. Distribution of Responses According to Bio-Data Information

This subsection presents the bio-data of the respondents, including sex, age, marital status, academic qualification, and occupational distribution.

TABLE II BIO-DATA INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	68	63
Female	40	37
Total	108	100
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18-30	30	13.9
31-40	25	23.1
41-50	38	35.2
51-60	20	18.5
61 and Above	10	9.3
Total	108	100
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	30	27.8
Married	43	39.8
Divorced	20	18.5
Widow/Widower	15	13.9
Total	185	100
Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary Education	40	37
Tertiary Education	50	46.3
Post Graduate Education	18	16.7
Total	185	100
Occupation Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
Civil/ Public Service	30	27.8
Student	25	23.1
Business	25	23.1
Applicant	28	25.9
Total	108	(99.9) 100

Source: Author Field Survey, 2024

Regarding the bio-data of respondents, the table above shows that 63% of the respondents were male, while 37% were female. Age bracket statistics revealed that 13.9% were between the ages of 18 and 30, 23.1% were between 31 and 40, 35.2% were between 41 and 50, 18.5% were between 51 and 60, and 9.3% were 61 or older.

In terms of marital status, 27.8% were single, 39.8% were married, 18.5% were divorced, and 13.9% were widowed. As also depicted above, 37% of the respondents had secondary education, 46.3% had tertiary education, and

16.7% had postgraduate education. Additionally, 27.8% of the respondents were civil servants, 23.1% were students, 23.1% were engaged in business, and 25.9% were job applicants.

B. Presentation of Data According to Research Variables

This subsection focuses on the analysis of data gathered through the administration of the questionnaire. It provides

empirical insight into peacebuilding as a strategy for resolving the deep-rooted conflict in the Niger Delta, which is the core of the paper. The study used a 5-point Likert scale to analyze Tables III, IV, and V.

Related Causes of Oil Conflict in the Niger Delta Region: The result of related causes of oil conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is reported in the table below.

TABLE III RELATED CAUSES OF OIL CONFLICT IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION

Sl. No.	Related Causes of Oil Conflict in the Niger Delta Region	SA	A	SD	D	U	Mean	Rank
1	The politics of exclusion created by colonialist and perfected by successive Nigeria administrations is one of the core reasons for crisis in the Niger Delta	27.8	33.3	13.9	21.3	3.7	2.6	2
2	The lopsided federal system in Nigeria tends to jeopardize the economic interest of Niger Delta region.	23.1	35.2	9.3	25.9	6.5	2.42	3
3	The standard of living of an average Niger Deltan is low compare to other regions in Nigeria	25.9	27.8	13.9	23.1	9.3	2.24	4
4	The activities of various militant groups in the Niger Delta have had detrimental impacts on Nigeria’s economy and resulted in flagrant violations of human rights	37	30.6	18.5	8.3	5.6	2.85	1
Grand Mean							10.11	
Criterion Mean							2.53	

Source: Author Field Survey, 2024

According to the Table III, 61.1% of the respondents affirmed that the politics of exclusion created by colonialists and perfected by successive Nigerian administrations is one of the core reasons for the crisis in the Niger Delta, while 35.2% refuted this statement. However, 3.7% were neutral. Similarly, among those surveyed, 23.1% strongly agreed, 35.2% agreed, 9.3% strongly disagreed, 25.9% disagreed, and 6.5% remained neutral regarding the statement that Nigeria’s lopsided federal system tends to jeopardize the economic interests of the Niger Delta region.

compared to other regions in Nigeria. Conversely, 13.9% and 23.1% strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, with this statement, while 9.3% neither supported nor opposed it. According to Table 3, 37% and 30.6% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that the activities of various militant groups in the Niger Delta have had detrimental impacts on Nigeria’s economy and resulted in flagrant violations of human rights. However, 8.3% strongly disagreed, 18.5% disagreed, and 5.6% were neutral regarding this assertion.

Additionally, the table indicates that 25.9% and 37% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that the standard of living for an average Niger Deltan is lower

The Effects of Oil Conflict in the Niger Delta Region: The result of associated effects of oil conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is stated in the table below.

TABLE IV EFFECTS OF OIL CONFLICT ON THE NIGER DELTA REGION

Sl. No.	Effects of Oil Conflict on the Niger Delta Region	SA	A	SD	D	U	Mean	Rank
5	One of the main reasons investors are fleeing Nigeria’s Niger Delta region for other African nations is the region’s lack of security.	32.4	18.5	16.7	21.3	8.3	2.4	3
6	Small arms and light weapons have been essential in increasing the intensity of the crises in the Niger Delta.	23.1	46.3	12	18.5	1.9	2.74	1
7	The majority of militants in the Niger Delta have switched from their original goal of agitation to being recruited as political thugs to frighten political rivals and rig elections	25.1	37.8	16.5	15	5.6	2.62	2
8	The military’s armed assault on the Niger Delta people has effectively brought the situation to a controllable level.	16.7	18.5	37	23.1	4.6	2.19	4
Grand Mean							9.93	
Criterion Mean							2.49	

Source: Author Field Survey, 2024

The Table IV indicates that 32.4% and 18.5% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that one of the main reasons investors are fleeing Nigeria’s

Niger Delta region for other African nations is the region’s lack of security. However, 16.7% strongly disagreed, 21.3% disagreed with the statement, and 8.3% were neutral.

Additionally, 69.4% of respondents upheld the assertion that small arms and light weapons have been crucial in escalating the intensity of the crises in the Niger Delta, while 12% and 18.5%, respectively, opposed this view. Furthermore, 1.9% of the respondents were neutral.

Furthermore, 25.1% and 37.8% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that the majority of militants in the Niger Delta have shifted from their original goal of agitation to being recruited as political thugs to intimidate political rivals and rig elections. Meanwhile,

31.5% disagreed with this assertion, and 5.6% were undecided. Similarly, 16.7% and 18.5% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that the military's armed assault on the Niger Delta people has effectively brought the situation under control. Conversely, 60.1% disagreed with this view, while 4.6% were indifferent.

Approach to Resolve Deep-Rooted Oil Conflict in Niger Delta Region: The response of the respondents on the approach to resolve deep-rooted oil conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria is reported below accordingly.

TABLE V APPROACH TO RESOLVE DEEP-ROOTED OIL CONFLICT IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION

Sl. No.	Approach to Resolve Deep-Rooted Oil Conflict in Niger Delta Region	SA	A	SD	D	U	Mean	Rank
9	The end of the conflict's fundamental components portends the end of the Niger Delta's never-ending turmoil.	23.1	30.6	19.4	17.6	9.3	2.41	3
10	The Niger Delta region's communities are living better lives as a result of the activity of the international oil firms operating in the region.	18.5	21.3	32.4	23.1	4.6	2.26	4
11	The Niger Delta oil conflict will come to an end with fiscal federalism in place.	28.7	34.3	13	15.7	8.3	2.59	1
12	The Niger Delta region is rather peaceful, courtesy of the amnesty program.	25	29.6	20.4	17.6	7.4	2.47	2
Grand Mean							9.73	
Criterion Mean							2.43	

Source: Author Field Survey, 2024

Regarding the approach to resolving the Niger Delta's deep-rooted conflict, the table above shows that 23.1% and 30.6% of respondents, respectively, affirmed that addressing the fundamental components of the conflict could lead to the end of the Niger Delta's ongoing turmoil. Meanwhile, 37% negated this proposition, and 9.3% were indifferent. Similarly, it was indicated that 18.5% of respondents strongly agreed, 21.3% agreed, 32.4% strongly disagreed, and 23.1% disagreed that the communities in the Niger Delta region are living better lives as a result of the activities of international oil firms operating in the region, while 4.6% were neutral.

The table also revealed that 28.7% and 34.3% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that the Niger Delta oil conflict would end with the implementation of fiscal federalism.

In contrast, 13% and 15.7% strongly disagreed and disagreed, respectively, while 8.3% were indifferent. Additionally, the table reported that 54.6% of respondents affirmed and 38% refuted the claim that the Niger Delta region is more peaceful due to the amnesty program, with 7.4% remaining neutral.

TABLE VI SUMMARY OF THE RESULT ACCORDING TO THE ABOVE TABLES OF RESEARCH STATEMENTS

Variables	SA(4)	A(3)	SD(2)	D(1)	N(0)	Mean	Rank
(%)							
1	27.8	33.3	13.9	21.3	3.7	2.6	4
2	23.1	35.2	9.3	25.9	6.5	2.42	7
3	25.9	27.8	13.9	23.1	9.3	2.24	11
4	37	30.6	18.5	8.3	5.6	2.85	1
5	32.4	18.5	16.7	21.3	8.3	2.4	9
6	23.1	46.3	12	18.5	1.9	2.74	2
7	25.1	37.8	16.5	15	5.6	2.62	3
8	16.7	18.5	37	23.1	4.6	2.19	12
9	23.1	30.6	19.4	17.6	9.3	2.41	8
10	18.5	21.3	32.4	23.1	4.6	2.26	10
11	28.7	34.3	13	15.7	8.3	2.59	5
12	25	29.6	20.4	17.6	7.4	2.47	6
Grand Mean						29.79	
Criterion Mean						2.48	

Source: Author Field Survey, 2024

C. Testing of the Hypothesis

This section tests the previously stated hypotheses. H_0 represents the null hypothesis while H_1 stands for the alternative hypothesis in testing the formulated hypotheses. The alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted if the computed X^2 is less than the critical (X^2 value from the table), and vice versa.

Hypothesis 1: Based on Statement 3

H_0 : The standard of living of an average Niger Deltan is not low.

H_1 : The standard of living of an average Niger Deltan is low.

TABLE VII ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS ON RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS I

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	25.9
Agree	30	27.8
Strongly Disagree	15	13.9
Disagree	25	23.1
Neutral	10	9.3
Total	108	100

Expected Frequency
 = $\frac{\text{No of Observed Frequency}}{\text{No of Variable}}$
 $108/5 = 21.6$

TABLE VIII ANALYSIS OF CHI-SQUARE (X^2)

Variables	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
Strongly Agree	28	21.6	6.4	40.96	1.89
Agree	30	21.6	8.4	70.56	3.27
Strongly Disagree	15	21.6	-6.6	43.56	2.02
Disagree	25	21.6	3.4	11.56	0.54
Neutral	10	21.6	-11.6	134.56	6.23
Total	108				13.95

Formula for degree of freedom = $r-1$
 $= 5 - 1 = 4$

Decision: The alternative hypothesis (H_1), which states that “the standard of living of an average Niger Deltan is low” should be accepted in place of the null hypothesis (H_0), since the chi-square estimate X^2 is 13.95, which is greater than critical value: X^2 of 9.448.

Hypothesis II Based on Statement 11

H_0 : The Niger Delta oil conflict will not come to an end with fiscal federalism in place.

H_1 : The Niger Delta oil conflict will come to an end with fiscal federalism in place.

TABLE IX ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS ON RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS II

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	31	28.7
Agree	37	34.3
Strongly Disagree	14	13
Disagree	17	15.7
Neutral	09	8.3
Total	108	100

Expected Frequency
 = $\frac{\text{No of Observed Frequency}}{\text{No of Variable}}$
 $108/5 = 21.6$

TABLE X ANALYSIS OF CHI-SQUARE (X^2)

Variables	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
Strongly Agree	31	21.6	9.4	88.36	4.09
Agree	37	21.6	15.4	237.16	10.98
Strongly Disagree	14	21.6	-7.6	57.76	2.67
Disagree	17	21.6	-4.6	21.16	0.98
Neutral	09	21.6	-12.6	158.76	7.35
Total	108				26.07

Formula for degree of freedom = $r-1$
 $= 5 - 1 = 4$

Decision: The alternative hypothesis (H_1), which states that “The Niger Delta oil conflict will come to an end with Fiscal federalism in place”, is accepted in place of the null hypothesis (H_0), since the calculated value (26.07) is higher than the table value (9.844).

Based on the statistical testing of stated hypotheses, the study holds that the standard of living of an average Niger Deltan is low. However, the Niger Delta oil conflict will come to an end with fiscal federalism in place.

IX. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Challenges Confronting Peacebuilding Efforts in the Niger Delta Region

Several factors have been found to hinder the effectiveness and efficiency of peacebuilding efforts at both Track I and Track II levels. Among the salient factors are highlighted below:

1. *Inadequate Funding:* The paucity of funds from the federation account is one of the main obstacles impeding peacebuilding efforts at Track I. As a result, the activities of the numerous commissions established for the region’s development are not adequately supported.

2. *Disorganized Response*: The federal government's disorganized response has hindered many commissions from offering solutions to the Niger Delta issue. The government's approach to fulfilling its development mandate has been patchy, inconsistent, and, at best, minimally cohesive.
3. *Lack of Political Will*: The creation of numerous technical committees on the Niger Delta, such as the NDDC and OMPADEC, lacks the political will to carry out their core mandates. These examples demonstrate weak and ineffective commissions.
4. *Implementation Failures*: Despite the excellent recommendations made by commissions, the governments that established them have been unable to implement the suggested policy frameworks.
5. *Risky Methods*: The federal government adopted a risky and complex approach to addressing the Niger Delta problem, relying on coercion and forceful suppression of the local population to maintain oil flow. This approach transformed local agitation into militancy, with the federal government's violent actions serving as justification for the militants.
6. *Corruption and Misconduct*: Widespread misconduct and corruption among commission employees and board members have impeded development. The funds allocated to various commissions did not align with the region's development needs, and the employment of politicians rather than qualified professionals compromised the quality of the workforce.
7. *Lack of Unity*: A lack of unity of purpose between Track I (official) and Track II (unofficial) efforts is another obstacle to the progress of peacebuilding in the Niger Delta. Most government policies do not favor unofficial movements, which are seen as competitors rather than partners. Consequently, the government often employs actions of frustration against these unofficial movements.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

Given these circumstances and the results of this investigation, the following recommendations are provided:

1. The real solution to the issue of youth restlessness in the area is genuine funding for the organizations and agencies tasked with developing the region, not the establishment of vague ministries or other superficial measures that have become the Nigerian state's diversionary strategies.
2. All government approaches to addressing Niger Delta challenges should be carefully planned, coordinated, methodical, consistent, and cohesive. There must also be a sincerity of purpose on the part of the government and the commission to develop the region.
3. Beyond focusing on a people-centered government, the Nigerian state needs to grant the Niger Delta Development Commission and the Ministry of the Niger Delta the required authority to deliver good governance to the people. Coupled with political will,

role conflicts between the ministry and the commission should be avoided.

4. The federal government, along with the state governments of the region, should make it a priority to implement the recommendations of the commissions to address the region's problems. Implementation of these recommendations is crucial to the development of the region.
5. The federal government should recognize that violence cannot resolve violence, just as darkness cannot dispel darkness. There should be continuous involvement of all stakeholders in roundtable discussions. The people must be involved in negotiations, and particularly the disaffected youth must not be ignored. The government and oil companies should also prioritize peace in the region over military approaches.
6. The total eradication of corruption is essential for ensuring the development of the region. The federal government should urgently empower institutions responsible for combating corrupt practices. Those found guilty should face the full force of the law, free from any sentiment.
7. Unity of purpose between official and unofficial movements in peacebuilding efforts in the Niger Delta is crucial. The government should view unofficial movements as partners in progress rather than competitors. Therefore, the government should formulate favorable policies to support unofficial operations and provide the necessary backing.

XI. CONCLUSION

The Niger Delta region has been at the epicenter of conflict over several issues pertinent to the people. The deep-rooted conflict in the Niger Delta is seen as an inescapable result of neglect, environmental devastation, military crackdowns, massive looting of oil revenue, and unbearable poverty amidst immense wealth. The paper found that successive regimes have implemented a series of peacebuilding programs, none of which have produced the desired results. The insincerity of previous administrations, who exploited the Niger Delta crises for political gain and colluded with their associates to deprive the region of its natural economic blessings, has also been established. Track II initiatives for peacebuilding, on the other hand, appear to be more successful than Track I initiatives in promoting closer collaboration among the populace. To maintain calm in the area and efficiently utilize the resources extracted from the Niger Delta, it would be prudent to adopt a comprehensive strategy for resolving the situation.

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