



## The Challenges of Environmental Degradation: The Role of Desopadec in Delta State

<sup>1</sup>*Idibra, Pius Omofowoarobor Morrister;* <sup>2</sup>*Professor Akpomuvire Mukoro;* <sup>3</sup>*Dr. Sokoh Gbosien Chris*

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

### ABSTRACT

Environmental degradation due to climate change and pollution has worrying consequences for oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta region. To address this predicament in oil-producing communities, two research objectives and questions were set forth to guide the study. Relevant documents have been consulted. The Elite Theory was adopted as the theoretical framework for the study. A cross-sectional study design was used. The questionnaire was used as a primary tool for data collection. The research questions were answered using simple percentage descriptive statistics. Based on the analysis, it was revealed that an intervention organization called DESOPADEC, which was established to provide adequate social protection programs for oil host communities have not done enough due to corruption and political interference from the state government. The study therefore recommended among others that DESOPADEC, as an interventionist agency established by the Delta State government to provide the welfare of oil bearing communities, should strictly adhered to the constitutional provision that established it. The aim of the commission is to provide social amenities in oil host communities and, therefore, should avoid acts of corruption, political interference and should take proactive measures to provide socially necessary amenities in the oil host communities of the Delta State.

**Keywords:** Environmental Degradation, Deforestation, DESOPADEC, Climate Change, Pollutions, Communities Development

### INTRODUCTION

Since nascent democracy in Nigeria, the considerate attention given to interventionist agencies is shrouded with maladministration. The persistent underdevelopment of areas where these interventionist's agencies are located is partly due to the poor governance environment. The underlying litany of Nigerians underdevelopment issues is the crisis of bad governance. There is no political will to manage the Nation's wealth for equitable distribution. This is not unconnected to the lack of countervailing power of state officials in many ministries who service their personal interest without being called to account (Adelagan & Oriavwote, 2021). Hitherto, politics have become personalized and patronage becomes essential to maintain power. The leadership of these government agencies assumes broad discretionary authority to allocate resources hence loses its legitimacy. This un-lucid government environment cannot support a broad dynamic economy and social development.

The Niger Delta is one of the largest wetlands in West Africa and Africa in general, covering an area of about 70,000 square kilometers. It should be noted that it is a sandy ridge, black or salty mangrove, freshwater, permanent and seasonal swamp forest as well as lowland rainforest. All these areas are traversed and crossed by a large number of rivers, tributaries, streams, channels and streams. The coastline of this region is fluctuated year-round by the tides of the Atlantic Ocean while the continent is subjected to a flood regime by various rivers, especially the Niger River. These distinctive geographical factors and its rich natural wealth attracted colonial masters to the area. Long before crude oil was discovered in 1956 in Oloibiri, palm oil was the region's greatest wealth. This attracted trading but also the beginning of resistance. It is a long struggle for survival and political fit (Akpezi, 2020)

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) is an interventionist agency that has grown so big that it loose contact or isolated from the oil communities. It has become so insensitive to the needs and sufferings of the people that it can no longer be influenced by public opinion. Citizens have little or no mechanism by which they can control the arbitrary actions of interventional authorities in Nigeria. Ombusman was not effective in Nigeria. It operates selective justice. The concept of political neutrality, professionalism in the development characterized by democratic ethos are long been forgotten. Interventions are socially monopolistic (Oyedele, 2021:12). In fact, the Niger Delta as a geopolitical region of Nigeria evokes many painful memories as a virgin woman raped by people, leaders and organizations has nothing to offer than personal gain, leaving the region in perpetual poverty. This view is strongly shared by the inhabitants who make up the area known as the Niger Delta. On the other hand, those accused of exploiting this young girl's virginity may have other more valuable reasons in the national or corporate interests to commit criminal exploitation in the region (Egbon, 2019). However, despite differing opinions, what is indisputable is the wealth of the people in the Niger Delta region. The area known as the core of the Niger Delta is mainly inhabited by minorities from the south-south political regions of Nigeria. The key states are Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States. However, other contiguous states were added to make them nine oil-producing states. The new States are Abia, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Edo, Imo and Ondo (Akpezi, 2020).

The firm moribund incomes in the region have enlarged turbulence. The derivative formula was abridged from 100% in 1953 to 50% in 1960. It was the Binns Commission in 1964 that proposed a new revenue sharing formula of 50% for the regions and 15% for the central government. This formula was maintained until 1970 when it was reduced to 45% and the military government of General Olusegun Obasanjo further reduced to 20% (Central Bank of Nigeria (1979-1983). Further spiky diminutions were followed. Hence in 1982: 2%, 1984: 1.5%, 1992: 3.0% and the government of Sanni Abacha increased it to 13%. But, it must be said that when cocoa, peanuts and coal are the mainstays of the economy come from western, northern and eastern regions of the country respectively, derivation was 100%. These instances of adjustment and misalignment are not considered probable by the indigenous peoples of the Niger Delta (Isoko National Youth Movement, 1998).

Isaac Adaka Boro, a young revolutionary from Kaima who served as the student union president of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, led a group claiming succession to the Niger Delta. Isaac Adaka Boro, a graduate student in industrial chemistry and Nigerian police inspector, led others to found the Delta Volunteer service. Young, competent and vibrant youth have been recruited and wired at various wellhead oil flow stations. Well equipped, they launched bombardments at Oloibiri and elsewhere to disrupt production and claim succession to the Niger Delta. However, this struggle was short-lived as Isaac Adaka Boro and his groups were arrested, tried, and convicted of treason. However, this sentence was set aside by General Odumegwu Ojukwu, leader of the Republic of Biafra. Adaka Boro later joined the army and died on the battlefield with the rank of major. In any case, the struggle is not over for Adaka Boro as the environment continues to deteriorate and the unbalanced revenue sharing formula is said to have created a fertile atmosphere for further protests. (Ebenezer, 2019).

The issue of agitation for social amenities in the Niger Delta could be classified into many stages. The first stage was in the 1960's when the federal government established the Niger Delta Development Board, (NDDDB) due to the recommendation of the Willinks Commission. Though the Nigerian Civil war disputed the NDDDB activities, after the civil war another body christened the Rivers basin Development Authority was setup, incidentally this Board was for the whole country. The agitation from Niger Delta in accordance with the Willinks commission did not end for the need for the federal government to pay special attention to the developmental needs of this area. This later led to the setting up of a presidential task force, which devoted 1.5% of the federation account to the development of the region. This decision endured in the Alhaji Shehu Shagari to General Ibrahim Babangida regimes in the 1979 to 1980s (CBN, 1979).

Also, the Belgore Commission was set-up as a result of the increased agitation by stake holders during the Babangida administration. The target was to adequately identify the causes of communal crisis and disaffection among the oil producing communities and the commission recommended the establishment of a development agency for the area. This led to the establishment of the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1993. A lack of master plan, inadequate funding, official profligacy, inferable political climate was some of the problems that led to its untimely death. The present Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) is a child of President Olusegun Obasanjo, though this time move were fortified to avoid past mistakes. This first phase as enunciated above was just for the provision of social amenities in area long neglected. It should however be noted that the provision of social amenities that make life more comfortable and enjoyable in Lagos and Abuja present enviable position did not required setting up of Boards as been done in Niger Delta that is still unattended to ( Federal Ministry of Information and petroleum Resources, 2001).

In the second phase, from the mid-70s to the early 80s, Nigeria experienced an oil sales boom that made the country truly wealthy, but as the country grew richer, the golden egg-laying bird continued to be ignored. Nonetheless, people in the Niger Delta still have some trust in the Nigerian state, especially the judiciary. This segment was obvious by demands for compensation, damages, employment, infrastructure development, and a better life for the Niger Delta people. However, nothing practical was done to alleviate the people's plight. People became more restless, more prepared, and more articulated in their demands for better conditions. This period saw a more aggressive move to strengthen demands for compensation and provision of basic social benefits to oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta region. Oil-producing communities frequently hold protests and demonstrations, which later lead to seizures of oil facilities and suspension of exploration and production activities. However, it is believed that this was due to the government's lack of sensitivity and its failure to meet the needs and desires of the people.

---

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A new phenomenon is emerging, especially in parts of Africa and the Middle East, and similar to Nigeria. It is the establishment of intervention agencies in the oil bearing communities to improve the socio-economic well-being of the inhabitants through the provision of social services. This new phenomenon led to the establishment of the Delta State Oil Producing Area Development Commission (DESOPADEC) in 2006 by Delta government to manage 50% of the state's 13% derivation and provide other resources to the state's oil host communities. The dilemma of providing essential and basic social amenities such as drivable roads, clean drinking water, markets, leisure centres, schools and hospitals are often budgeted and their implementation and execution have been problematic in recent years.

Sokoh (2018) notes that the current situation of oil communities in terms of commensurate level of development is dire as people cannot access basic necessities of life such as clean water, health care, etc. health, power supply, roads, housing, etc. The governance practice in Delta State shows the state of government and multinational oil and gas companies continuing to extract from the environment without any commitment to the development and welfare of the people (Sokoh, 2018). Ikenga. and Oluka. (2023) states that proceed from fuel subsidy removal should be focused on providing satisfactory development that is appropriate and acceptable to oil host communities. The authors complain that some government officials divert development funds from oil bearing communities to personal gain giving the people a sense of ownership and commitment.

Oil bearing communities and contractors mobilized at project sites, funds provided are sometimes misappropriated by DESOPADEC staff, thus resulting in the aforementioned contractors abandoning such projects by the contractors. An important question to be carefully considered is: are the DESOPADEC funds devoted to the provision of social services allocated by the state government? Do funds embezzled by DESOPADEC employees and contractors affect the provision of social amenities and the abandonment of projects? If the answer is no, how do the various social amenities offered by DESOPADEC to the oil host communities in the Delta State benefit the indigenes? The statement of problem would result in filling the gap created by existing literature on 'DESOPADEC and Provision of Social Amenities in Oil Host Communities in Delta State'. It is against this backdrop that this study intends to address

---

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to examine impact of environmental degradation on Oil Host Communities: The role of DESOPADEC in Delta State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the impact of environmental degradation on Oil host communities in Delta State
- ii. identify the challenges faced by DESOPADEC in the provision of Social Amenities in Oil Host Communities in Delta State

---

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were designed to guide the study:

- i. What are the impacts of environmental degradation on Oil Host Communities in Delta State?
- ii. What are the Challenges faced by DESOPADEC in the Provision of Social Amenities in Oil Host Communities in Delta State?

---

## REVIW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Environmental Degradation and Oil Host Communities in Delta State

Over the years, the oil-producing communities in Delta State, where oil exploration and production take place, have mostly been contaminated (Penz et al., 2021). The level of pollution is accompanied by severe degradation of the environment. This scenario has adverse consequences such as endocrine disruption on the lives of the people in the oil host communities. Some of the resources affected include drinking water, rivers, and farmland. This has caused poverty and also spawned violence among young people. Meanwhile, risk analysis is one factor used to explain the health consequences of environmental degradation (Adekola et al., 2020). Currently, every part of the world is facing environmental degradation, so environmental degradation is common. Global society has proposed practical solutions to solve environmental problems, especially environmental degradation caused by human activities. In some part of the world where industrial activities span from exploration, extraction, production, refining, etc. These activities have caused many environmental problems by affecting humans, plants, animals and aquatic life due to environmental pollution (Adekola et al., 2020). Environmental degradation is the distortion of the environment through ecosystem decline and the extinction or extinction of wildlife (Caro et al., 2022). Industries and socioeconomic activities, as well as natural factors, contribute to environmental pollution that affects human health through contaminating drinking water, agricultural land and the atmosphere gas in which oil host communities have suffered from neglect, marginalization and deprivation.

Over the years, multinational oil companies' activities such as petroleum exploration, oil drainage, water pollution in oil bearing communities have led to extinct of aquatic and agricultural elements that service as the people's livelihood has been destroyed. In addition, it damages their air and drinking water, leading to starvation and widespread health problems. In response, youth in the area resorted to murders, pipeline sabotage, kidnapping of oil professionals for payment, oil extraction, armed robbery, and general criminal offenses. Oil was discovered in large quantities in Nigeria in 1956 and exploration began that same year. Before oil, agriculture and fishing ensured a bright future for the inhabitants of the Niger Delta. Since 1956, oil has been extracted from the Niger Delta, especially the oil host communities in the Delta State, with devastating consequences for the environment, leading to environmental degradation and destruction which destroy the main livelihood of the people. Land and water are seriously polluted; people's healths are affected by leaking oil pipelines, gas explosion and acid rain. Several petitions and nonviolent protests by Delta State oil bearing communities in demand of a pollution-free environment has not been taking seriously by the Nigerian federal government and oil companies operating in the areas. In contrast, opposition to peaceful protests has resulted in people being invaded by the military in their communities, persecuted, and imprisoned. The rise of militarism and terrorism in the Niger Delta is as a result of federal government and oil companies' neglect and crackdowns syndromes on nonviolent protests for environmental justice in the Niger River Delta.

Environmental degradation can occur naturally through avalanches, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, wildfires; or due to human activities such as oil spills, thermal power plants, fossil fuel burning, emissions, burning and deforestation, desertification and leakage of nuclear, gas and vehicle emissions (Anifowose et al., 2020). Man-made efforts such as stealing oil, vandalizing tunnels and pipelines are often the cause of people expressing frustration with oil companies for not developing their land. The Niger Delta region is the highest concentration of these industrial activities, which suffers from the greatest impact of environmental degradation in Nigeria. According to Stewart-Koster et al. (2019), this incredibly well-endowed ecosystem contains one of the highest concentrations of biodiversity on the planet, flora and fauna, arable land that can support a wide variety of crops, labor for timber or agricultural crops and more freshwater fish species than any other ecosystem in West Africa. Despite the potential of this area, mining activities along

with other natural and human factors have contributed to the environmental degradation of the area, thereby endangering the flora, fauna, aquatic life and human life (Amnesty International, 2013).

The extinction of aquatic species also makes fishing unprofitable (Anifowose et al., 2020). Awajiusuk and Lomo-David (2021) reported the impact of gas burning and oil spills on aquatic life and agricultural yields are alarming. These have resulted in providing people with limited options for finding favorable habitats. Some live in asbestos and zinc houses and in very unsanitary conditions. This leads to loss of agricultural land, industrial crops, underdeveloped economic crops, polluted rivers and houses. The prolonged refusal by governments and contracting organizations to clean up contaminated areas is best described as corruption (Leitao, 2019). The people of the Niger Delta are known to be very vocal and restless over accusations of their natural resources being ravaged by chronic poverty, poor infrastructure and poor condition of social services. There are many reports that oil and gas extraction has destroyed their source of income along with other social and health consequences. A series of unrest and violent conflicts have been reported in the regions following accusations of social and environmental injustice done to the people by the federal government.

The unique nature of environmental degradation is global in nature. Indeed, pollution generated in one country has an impact on another. For example, the destruction of part of the ozone layer by one country affects all countries. This explains why environmental degradation has become everyone's concern. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, tax regulations and government complicity are also among the problems associated with the high degree of depletion of the delta ecosystem. Sustainable development, management and improvement of the environment play an important role in the prosperity or decline of a society. For example, it is well known that barren land leads to poor farming and poor living. On the contrary, good soil produces good agriculture and good living conditions.

Akpoborie & Akpohonor (2021:12) maintained that since the beginning of oil and gas exploration in the region, the experience has been one of unspeakable hardship in terms of the social, health and economic aspects of life, along with the loss of ecological stability. In another book, Owakeruyle (2020:12) argues that although oil has contributed to the country's foreign currency, its negative impact on the socioeconomic life of the immediate oil communities and its inhabitants has left a record of ecological, social and physical disaster. Youth from Warri North's Aja-Omaetan community demonstrated to register their protest against environmental pollution caused by the activities of oil companies. They gave the American petroleum company Chevron Nigeria thirty days ultimatums to conduct an environmental impact study and adequately compensate the community for the destruction of their riverbanks and coastlines (Harris, 2011). The Ogoigbe (2020) report also revealed that 64 Itsekiri communities in the Warri South West and Warri North Local Government Areas of Delta State were affected by the devastating oil spill at the Bonga field. According to them, this disrupts their fishing and economic activities as oil spills into their village's fishing grounds, disrupting fishing operations, contaminating fishing gear, vegetation and killing aquatic life. The spill was estimated at around one thousand barrels. In another community, a spill of more than one thousand five hundred (1500) barrels from the Chevron Abiteye traffic station left ten Ijaw communities homeless. About five hundred people in the Kingdom of Gbaramatu in Warri The Southwest Local Government Area of Delta State was also affected by the oil spill (Arubi, 2017)

### **Challenges of DESOPADEC and Development in Oil Host Communities of Delta State**

The formation of DESOPADEC followed the relentless violence that besieged Delta State in 2003. The commission was re-established. on October 21, 2007 under the leadership of Sheriff Wellington Okirika with the task of managing 50% of the diversion funds accumulated for the Delta State from the union account in the development of Delta's oil production areas. (Vanguard 16, December 2007: 4). Since it's founding in 2007, its activities have been marred by accusations of poor performance, corruption, mismanagement of funds and fostering competition among communities through the distribution of funds and unfair development projects. These issues will be discussed below:

#### **Corruption**

The organization of the Delta Oil and Gas Community under the umbrella of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Producers Community, HOSTCOM, took it to court in early 2012. DESOPADEC was accused of "embezzlement of funds intended for Itsekiri". devastated "community for the construction and renovation of the Nigeria Police Barracks in Warri and the provision of facilities in the Warri Club, a private hotel club" (Vanguard, 27 January 2012). Interviewees seem to share the feeling that the first board of directors of DESOPADEC, which ended its term in July 2010, was seriously corrupt (Youth, 2015). One focus group discussion (TLN) participant lamented that several months after the commission was formed, the contracts they awarded were worth millions of naira, and they were for exotic cars, not utility vehicles; is it an intervention? (Oghène, 2021). Likewise, contract disputes led to the overthrow of the king of the Uzère community, who had ruled for 27 years before the incident in July 2012. According to the President of Uzère, their king (HRM Isaac Udogeri 1), "did not provide drinking water to his people even though he is said to have been awarded a contract of 25 million naira by DESOPADEC" (The Leadership, July 30, 2012). This seems to explain why participants believed that "DESOPADEC is a reservoir for massive corruption, administrative incompetence, extravagant financial recklessness, and looting" (A.M-O), Homme, CL, Warn, Interview; December 2007).

Similarly, the Aja-Omaetan community in the state's Warri North Council area in 2007 petitioned the former governor of the state, Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan, about their designated representative, Mr Johnson Toritsemotse and former chairman of DESOPADEC, Chief Wellington Okrika. They claim that both (Toritsemotse and the chairman) do not know the people they represent and the relationship that exists between the oil producing communities of Itsekiri and are therefore trying to incite one community against the others. This is because they have been deprived of the legal right to distribute projects and are mostly seasonal on the grounds that their community is not recognized in the Dibi field. Their community (Aja Omaetan) is considered not independent from the community of Tisun, another neighboring community (Vanguard, 7 January 2008). Participant views and secondary data on DESOPADEC seem to explain why Okowa disbanded DESOPADEC's board (Vanguard, July 14, 2015). Since its inception, the agency has faced numerous charges, leading to outrage and violence against it. However, the state governor denied the allegations and in February 2008 announced that

DESOPADEC was not excluded from the crisis. DESOPADEC is for peace, and that we should not engage in actions that could undermine existing peace (Vanguard Newspaper, February 13, 2008).

Interestingly, the government's position has changed since then following statements made by the same governor, Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan, at a public meeting on the committee's activities. He told the town hall meeting that some people brought home 2.5 million naira per month as a monthly salary. Your superiors go around the city with the sirens blaring in a long convoy using dozens of thugs and mobile policemen who receive monthly meals exceeding their salaries. He said has plans to closely monitor the committee from now on are top gear (The Nation, September 1, 2009). However, despite HOSTCOM's accusations and the king's recent impeachment, the government is still struggling to deliver on its promise as the agency appears to be polarizing the oil communities, promoting inequality and violence among oil communities and groups.

### **Political Interference**

The Center for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged People (CENTREP) in Warri, Delta State, says political intervention, not restructuring, is DESOPADEC's problem. Responding to the recent passage of the Delta State Assembly to the DESOPADIEC Amendment Bill, the group said: "We know that excessive political interference is responsible for high levels of corruption, greed and governance inadequacies. CENTREP CEO Oghenejaborkimi said in a statement that DESOPADEC's mission is to develop oil communities with 50% of 13% of the diverted funds going to the state from the federal government. Therefore, the restructuring of DESOPADEC into the NDDC will not be able to change the position of the committee, as the NDDC, even with its current structure, is still rife with corruption, greed and mismanagement. There is excessive political interference in the day-to-day management and financial operations of the NDDC from the Chairman and Members of Parliament under the supervision of former President Good Luck Jonathan, Therefore, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa urgently needs granting isolation of DESOPADEC from politics by appointing proven technocrats to ensure that the committee achieves its mandate. It can be deduced that as long as the day-to-day operations and finances of DESOPADEC are subject to excessive political interference, whether structured like the NDDC or not, the commission will remain a reservoir for corruption (Vanguard) News Paper, August 10, 2015).

### **Poor Remuneration**

Pandemonium erupted in the state of Warn-Delta on Tuesday when DESOPADEC workers overthrew all members of the commission set up by the former state governor to examine commission agents. The committee is appointed to review the salaries of its commissioners, workers and harmonize its workforce. The members consisted mainly of permanent secretaries drawn from the state civil service who were kicked out by workers acting on the information that the commission had been tasked with reducing four thousand (4,000) workforces. Furthermore, the workers were quoted as saying that the exercise was useless as wages and allowances were reduced by 30% in August 2000. One of the workers pressingly said: "We have to act because we don't belong to the civilian services, where the government may periodically develop new rules of engagement. We are in the oil and gas industry and our terms of service are unrelated to the civil service, we sent them out and informed those who sent them that we would resist any attempt to raise wages and demeaning our humanity" (Niger best forum July 28, 2010).

### **Constitution of the DESOPADEC Board Membership:**

The Debri Youth Council, (DYC) Delta State argued that the Kingdom of Diebri, as the leading oil-producing Ijaw kingdom, should elect the new incoming Ijaw Commissioner to the council of the Delta State Oil Production Area Development Commission Delta State, (DESOPADEC), according to the agency, permitted by law. DYC Secretary Bob Collins has warned that the youth of Diebri will resist appointing anyone else who violates the law allowing DESOPADEC by closing oil facilities on its territory. He said that Gbaramatu Kingdom and Ogulagha Kingdom are not currently producing oil due to damaged pipelines, adding that even if they do, they will enjoy the positions of management and commissioner of 'Ijaw were respectively Chief Wellington Okirika and Francis Temewei on the last DESOPADEC board attained. With the Kingdom of Ogbe-Ijoh electing the current Delta State Environment Commissioner Frank Omare, it is only fair that the "Diebri Kingdom lacking in secondary facilities and health has gained a commissioner position [Ijaw DESOPADEC], he added (Vanguard Newspaper, 30 August 2015).

### **Security Challenges**

Insecurity is a serious threat to the development of local communities in Delta State. Ogunbawo (2021) asserts that security is not just military security or resistance to outside attacks. For most of the 4 billion inhabitants of the developing world, security is seen as the basic level of the struggle for survival. Therefore, to provide an integrated assessment of African security, non-military aspects of security must be added. It should come as no surprise that McNamara (2020) warns any society that seeks to achieve adequate military security amid severe food shortages, overpopulation, production levels and per capita incomes, low population, low level of technology and inefficient public services, and chronic unemployment have fake security formation. He goes even further by warning against poverty in a nation because it is a harbinger of unrest, internal upheaval, violence, and an escalation of extremism. He also pointed out that leaders of developing countries or societies should note that without development there can be no national security. To him, a modernized society sees security as synonymous with development, although it may include military equipment and traditional military operations, security is development and without development it is not there will be no security. From the previous research, we find that the safety of life and property is a major challenge in oil communities. Robbery, kidnapping and rape are common in the communities. There are cases of vandalism of government property, most of them are the DESOPADEC control panel indicates that the projects have been vandalized. Even school assets such as ceiling fans and classroom chairs are not left unattended. However, the commission seems to have achieved commendable success when local police and equipment are used.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Elite Theory

Elite theory is the model of analysis. Elite theory in the social sciences is generally a state theory that helps identify and explain the balance of power in today's world, and in this study it takes place between central, state and local governments. Early proponents of this theory were Gaetano Mosca (1858-1936), Vilfredo Pareto (1948-1925) and Roberto Michel (1876-1936). Among their various hypotheses, they emphasized the elite's influence over the masses. Mosca argues that elites have distinctive characteristics such as intellectual ability and moral superiority over their subjects. Wilfredo argues that the elite in any society is the group of the most talented and deserving individuals, and the one who best exploits two forms of political control: violence and persuasion. They usually enjoy important benefits such as inheritance and family ties (Marshall, 2007).

The elite principle is that it is a minority of the population who make important decisions that affect society as a whole, and these decisions have a large impact and therefore affect most aspects of society. This highlights the dominance and hierarchy that Nigeria's states have embedded in the local government system. These decisions are usually considered political decisions, even if the minority is not a politician. In its early stages, the study of elite theory received little attention in the field of political science until St. Simon attempted to study the nature and character of the elite in his late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Ikeregbe (2019: 35), also points out that public policy reflects the values, aspirations and preferences of the elite rather than the demands of the masses. It is based on self-interest of wanting to maintain the status quo. As they owe their position to the management of the productive resources of society, they can be said to be military elites, religious elites, business elites, bureaucratic elites, political elites, governmental elites. Elite theory emphasizes the role of political and economic power, but until now proponents have argued that political and economic power were two types of elites for controlling resources and administration at the time. It was seen as a means, thereby contributing to protection and leadership, and thus profitable. Both the political elite and the business elite can speak. Ikenga (2018) finds the role of elites in society to be alarming, especially the accumulation of political and economic power over the masses. He further explained that the Niger Delta region, especially the Delta State elite, is not left behind in this respect. But Delta leaders must be held accountable to the oil-producing masses. The elite theory adopted in this study therefore clearly explains the reason for this ugly frequency found in rural communities in Delta State. Most of the elite are military heads of state, presidents and current governors, who continue to manipulate the constitution to serve their own interests and to allow the public to perform their duties for personal expansion involved in fabricating funds under the guise of a flawed constitution to Their decision-making and arbitrary execution of those decisions helps make local governments permanent adjuncts to their offices, rather than another hierarchy of government.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The study is a quantitative research method which is sometime a reflection of a cross-sectional survey design was adopted or used to collect data from the three communities selected for this study. The primary purpose of this design is to measure existing conditions and common practices based on data collected through questionnaires. Data from collected from instrument are analyzed using descriptive statistics of simple percentage count. The instrument was measured with a response of 4-Likert scales such as "strongly agree", "strongly disagree", "strongly disagree", and "disagree". This analytical technique helps researchers understand the nature of the topic based on the responses from the interviewees.

## RESULT AND ANALYSIS

### Descriptive analysis on the Challenges Faced by DESOPADEC in Provision of Social Amenities in Oil Host Communities in Delta State

S/N	Statements	SA %	A %	SD %	D %
1	Diversion of funds meant for the building and renovation of police Barrack in Warri	50 16.66%	100 33.33%	140 46.66%	10 3.33%
2	Political interferences and lack of restructuring of DESOPADEC membership	40 13.33%	50 16.66%	150 50%	60 20%
3	Inadequate revenue generation and reduction of workers' salaries	10 3.33%	40 13.33%	200 66.66%	50 16.66%
4	Selective appointments and marginalization of some ethnic nationalities in the scheme of things in DESOPADEC	40 13.33%	60 20%	150 50%	50 16.66%
5	Lack of adequate security to protest DESOPADEC infrastructures	10 3.33%	30 10%	200 66.66%	60 20%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>230</b>

Source: Author Computation 2023

Table 15 above shows the descriptive analysis of the challenges faced by DESOPADEC in the provision of social amenities in oil host communities in Delta State. 50 of the respondents representing 16.66% strongly agree that DESOPADEC is faced with diversion of funds meant for the building and renovation of police Barrack in Warri, 100 of the respondents representing 33.33% agree while 140 of the respondents representing 46.66% strongly disagree and 10 respondents representing 3.33% disagree. 40 of the respondents representing 13.33% strongly agree that is political interferences and lack of restructuring of DESOPADEC membership, 50 of the respondents representing 16.66% agree while 150 of the respondents representing 50% strongly disagree and 60 of the respondents representing 20% disagree. 10 of the respondents representing 3.33% strongly agree that DESOPADEC is faced with inadequate revenue generation and reduction of workers' salaries, 40 of the respondents representing 13.33% agree while 200 of the respondents representing 66.66% strongly disagree and 50 of the respondents representing 16.66% disagree. 40 of the respondents representing 13.33% strongly agree that DESOPADEC is faced with selective appointments and marginalization of some ethnic nationalities in the scheme of things in DESOPADEC, 60 of the respondents representing 20% agree while 150 of the respondents representing 50% strongly disagree and 50 of the respondents representing 16.66% disagree. 10 of the respondents representing 3.33% strongly agree that DESOPADEC is faced with lack of adequate security to protest DESOPADEC infrastructures, 30 respondent representing 10% agree while 200 of the respondents representing 66.66% strongly disagree and 60 of the respondents representing 20% disagree.

#### Descriptive analysis on the Challenges Faced by DESOPADEC in Provision of Social Amenities in Oil Host Communities in Delta State

S/N	Statements	SA %	A %	SD %	D %
1	Diversion of funds meant for the building and renovation of police Barrack in Warri	50 16.66%	100 33.33%	140 46.66%	10 3.33%
2	Political interferences and lack of restructuring of DESOPADEC membership	40 13.33%	50 16.66%	150 50%	60 20%
3	Inadequate revenue generation and reduction of workers' salaries	10 3.33%	40 13.33%	200 66.66%	50 16.66%
4	Selective appointments and marginalization of some ethnic nationalities in the scheme of things in DESOPADEC	40 13.33%	60 20%	150 50%	50 16.66%
5	Lack of adequate security to protest DESOPADEC infrastructures	10 3.33%	30 10%	200 66.66%	60 20%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>230</b>

Source: Author Computation 2023

The table 15 above shows the descriptive analysis of the challenges faced by DESOPADEC in the provision of social amenities in oil host communities in Delta State. 50 of the respondents representing 16.66% strongly agree that DESOPADEC is faced with diversion of funds meant for the building and renovation of police Barrack in Warri, 100 of the respondents representing 33.33% agree while 140 of the respondents representing 46.66% strongly disagree and 10 of the respondents representing 3.33% disagree. 40 of the respondents representing 13.33% strongly agree that is political interferences and lack of restructuring of DESOPADEC membership, 50 of the respondents representing 16.66% agree while 150 of the respondents representing 50% strongly disagree and 60 of the respondents representing 20% disagree. 10 of the respondents representing 3.33% strongly agree that DESOPADEC is faced with inadequate revenue generation and reduction of workers' salaries, 40 of the respondents representing 13.33% agree while 200 of the respondents representing 66.66% strongly disagree and 50 of the respondents representing 16.66% disagree. 40 of the respondents representing 13.33% strongly agree that DESOPADEC is faced with selective appointments and marginalization of some ethnic nationalities in the scheme of things in DESOPADEC, 60 of the respondents representing 20% agree while 150 of the respondents representing 50% strongly disagree and 50 of the respondents representing 16.66% disagree. 10 of the respondents representing 3.33% strongly agree that DESOPADEC is faced with lack of adequate security to protest DESOPADEC infrastructures, 30 of the respondent representing 10% agree while 200 of the respondents representing 66.66% strongly disagree and 60 respondents representing 20% disagree.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examined DESOPADEC and the provision of social amenities iin HOSCOM communities and emphasizes that it is undeniable that DESOPADEC was created to bring about the idea of government intervention for those who are suffering from all forms of marginalization, deprivation and environmental degradation through continued exploration of petroleum product. This mission has its niche in creating a common NDDC on a national scale. DESOPADEC was created to bring about the idea of a domesticated house or in-house machinery needed for local development. It is all too clear that the commission, as an organization, is actually grappling with the challenges of carrying out its responsibilities under the statutes.

The system itself did not really have the privilege of mobilizing its human and material resources to act quickly. There is much evidence of interference, embezzlement known as systemic corruption in the system. Powerful individuals and state actors have always appropriated enacted laws and overturned them under the guise of amending the constitution to serve self-interest and self-glorification, so these are the promulgated legislation that the commission may rely on to implement is said to have been distorted. This study identified that many self-imposed challenges have continued to win back the state's development wheel.

---

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Based on findings and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made:
- ii. DESOPADEC should not hesitate to save the HOSTCOM oil-producing communities from environmental degradation. Therefore, it is necessary to pursue effective cooperation with other multinational oil and gas companies in the state and the idea of corporate social responsibility should be celebrated immediately.
- iii. The purpose of establishing DESOPADEC as a commission was to provide social conveniences to oil host communities and, therefore, it should always be emphasized, redefined and revived; therefore, everyone must be present to ensure that the committee is always aware of its responsibilities. It is necessary to remove deviant workers and political elements or officials in the system quickly to allow the system to purge itself of acts of internal sabotage.
- iv. The law establishing DESOPADEC is good and does not need any amendment of any kind. Sticking with it will bring harmony and peace among the peace-loving people of the Delta State. Laws must be made and enforced to provide social amenities to oil-owner communities etc.
- v. Challenges identified in the committee must be eliminated. Government interference, systemic corruption, public insecurity issues, worker dissatisfaction and many other negative issues need to be considered. In fact, corrupt officials should be purged from the system and agencies responsible for investigating and punishing corrupt officials should be established to eradicate the corruption worm.

---

## REFERENCES

- Aawondola, A. (1997). Drought and desertification in Nigeria. *23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the Social Science Society of Nigeria. Sokoto.*
- Adekola, J., Fischbacher-Smith, M., Fischbacher-Smith, D., & Adekola, O. (2020). Health risks from environmental degradation in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space, 35(2), 334-354.*
- Adelegan, A. E. & Oriavwote, V.E. (2021). Oil Theft, Environmental Degradation and Economic Growth in Nigeria. In C. Ewhrudjakpor, A. Atubi & L. Etemike (Ed.) Oil Theft, Environmental Degradation and The Reciprocal Responsibilities of Host Communities and Government in Nigeria. *A Book of Reading. Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University, Abraka.*
- Akpezi, O. (2020), Causes of Youth Restiveness and the way forward: *Niger Delta Peace Coalition Seminar, Warri.*
- Akpoborie, I. & Akporonor, E (2020). The oil and gas industry and the Niger Delta: Implication for the environment. *Journal of applied management science, 3 (12)*
- Anifowose, B., Lawler, D. M., Van der Horst, D., & Chapman, L. (2020). Attacks on oil transport pipelines in Nigeria: *A quantitative exploration and possible explanation of observed patterns. Applied Geography, 32(2), 636-651.*
- Arubi, E. (2017). Nigeria: Oil spill displaces 10 Ijaw communities. Retrieved February 13, 2007, from <http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=14356>
- Awajiusuk, F. J., & Ewuok, L. D. (2021). Deployment of the four way test in the discourse of oil exploitation in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. *In Fourth Annual General Business Conference (Vol. 3, pp. 95-96).*
- Caro, T., Rowe, Z., Berger, J., Wholey, P., & Dobson, A. (2022). An inconvenient misconception: *Climate change is not the principal driver of biodiversity loss. Conservation Letters, e12868.*
- Egbon, P. C. E. (2019), Environmental degradation and corporate social responsibilities: products of market and state failure. In C. Ewhrudjakpor, A. Atubi & L. Etemike (Ed.) oil theft, environmental degradation and the reciprocal responsibilities of host communities and government in Nigeria. *A book of reading. Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University, Abraka.*
- Ikelegbe, Augustine O. (2019) Oil, Resource Conflicts and the Post-conflict Transition in the Niger Delta Region: Beyond the Amnesty, Benin City: Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CEPED).
- Ikenga, F.A. and Oluka, N.L. (2023). An Examination of the Benefits and Challenges of Fuel Subsidy Removal on the Nigerian Economy in the Fourth Republic. *International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences. Vol. 5 issue 6. Pp. 128-142*
- Leitao, A. (2019). Corruption and the environment. *Journal Socialom., 5: 173-173. DOI: 10.4172/2167- 0358.1000173.*
- Penz, P., Drydyk, J., & Bose, P. S. (2021). Displacement by development: *ethics, rights and responsibilities. Cambridge University Press.*
- Stewart-Koster, B., Olden, J. D., & Johnson, P. T. (2019). Integrating landscape connectivity and habitat suitability to guide offensive and defensive invasive species management. *Journal of Applied Ecology, 52(2), 366-378.*
- ThisDay (2022, April 18). Contractor Laments Corruption in Delta State Oil Commission. Retrieved from <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/04/18/contractor-laments-corruption-idelta-state-oil-commission/>



Vanguard (2008, December 10). Developing oil-bearing communities with Vanguard (2015, November 15). Confusion beclouds two abandoned DESOPADEC road projects. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/11/confusionbeclouds-two-abandoned-desopadec-road-projects/amp/>

Vanguard (2017, September 1). Edo oil producing communities hail Obaseki for new focus of EDSOGPADEC. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/09/edo-oil-producing-communities-hailobaseki-for-new-focus-of-edsogpadec/amp/>

Sokoh, G.C (2018) Tax payers attitude and government revenue generation in Delta Central District of Delta State, Nigeria. , IOSR Journal if Humanities and Social Sciences (IOSR –JHSS)<http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosrjhss/papers/Vol.%2023%20Issue4/Version-7/K2304077083.pdf> Vol.23 (4) Pages: 70 – 83

Ikenga, F.A (2018) Elite and the Sustenance of Democratic Governance in Nigeria, Journal of Management and Social Sciences, Kwararafa University, Wukari Vol.4/1 Pages: 10-24