

## **Restive Youths and the Challenges of Oil Theft in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria**

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DOI: 10.56201/ijssmr.v9.no10.2023.pg92.106

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study is one the first attempts that critically discussed; Restive Youth and the Challenges of Oil Theft in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. It relied on secondary data to establish the links between youth restiveness and the challenges of oil theft in the region of Niger Delta. Collier's theory of Greed (2001), Merton Social Strain theory (1968), and Atkinson and Atkinson (1975) theory of Frustration, form the theoretical background to this research.*

*The study revealed causes of youth restiveness to includes; unemployment, poverty, deprivation and denial of rights, underdevelopment of the region, proliferation of arms in the region, disputes of lands, lakes, creeks and rivers.' Other causes are; pollution of the environment, lack of access to quality education with the abundance mineral resources in the area, exclusion of the host community youth from involvement in the provision of services for the oil companies, and high rate of corruption in the Niger Delta Development Commission, these among other factors encouraged youth restiveness and oil theft in Niger Delta. Some possible remedies were also advanced for the study of youth restiveness and oil theft in the Niger Delta Region as follows; host community members to be allowed access to the benefits that accrues from oil, and contract to be regularly secured for host community members especially youths. Also, job should be created for the youth and there should be speedy development of the Niger Delta Region. The study recommends thus; provision of employment, extension of amnesty programme to other ethnic groups in the region, engagement of youths in oil companies and recruitment of more ex- militant to take charge of pipelines surveillance in the area. These among others.*

**Keywords:** *Youth Restiveness, Oil Theft, Pipelines Vandalization, Niger Delta, Conflict Management, Oil Sabotage.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is confronted with significant challenges, such as adolescent unrest and illicit oil bunkering, which is also referred to as oil theft. Due to the widespread nature of these challenges, they have an impact on all facets of existence in both the vicinity and Nigeria at large.

Youth restlessness is characterised by an individual's refusal to remain still and silent and their resistance to control, which is particularly pronounced if the individual is dissatisfied with anything that threatens their survival. Self-interested and deviant conduct, in addition to agitation for the restoration of their rights and dignity, are associated with this phenomenon (Akpokighe&Ejovi, 2020). Likewise, "youth restiveness" pertains to the constructive (positive) or destructive (negative) responses of young individuals towards the "use and dump" practises and mindsets of individuals deemed to be engaged in oppressive and repressive activities that pit the interests of youth against those of youth as they contend for societal survival (Ogbeifun, 2007).

The term "youth restiveness" has been extensively employed in Nigeria since the oil-bearing communities of the Niger Delta Region witnessed the emergence of youth activities. This is attributable to the term's place of origin, which is Nigeria. Because adolescents encounter a multitude of novel and challenging obstacles of adjustment and readjustment, which make it critical for them to find identification and a place in society, the phenomenon is invariably linked to this age group. Young disturbance can be classified into three distinct categories, according to the research of Omotola (2010): "authentic agitation by young individuals," "self-interested and unlawful undertakings," and "youth motivated by vengeance in response to oppression." Although the term has initially become prevalent in Nigeria and its environs, it has gradually garnered international recognition. However, this perspective challenges the absence of a precise and universally acknowledged definition.

The Niger Delta Region is currently grappling with a significant criminal crisis in the form of pipeline vandalism or sabotage, in addition to the unprecedented and massive incidents of oil theft or bunkering (Igbinovia, 2014). The aforementioned crimes have been identified as a paramount concern confronting the nation. On November 1, 2011, former Niger Delta legislator in the Nigerian National Assembly, Mr. Daniel Reyenieju, proclaimed that illicit oil bunkering along the Nigerian coast has increased dramatically. This is because "approximately 150,000 to 200,000 of crude oil are stolen almost every day in the country Nigeria.

Youth discontent and crude theft are pervasive to the extent that they impact each facet of Nigerian society. This is due to the fact that young people are not only the future leaders of society, but also the economic engine, and oil is an indispensable commodity for both the Nigerian government and economy. Oil serves as the fundamental building block of the Nigerian economy, and the nation places significant importance on the revenue generated from petroleum oil. Regrettably,

malcontented youth in Nigeria are participating in the unlawful practise of oil bunkering, thereby impeding the nation's advancement. Given the aforementioned context, this report conducts a comprehensive analysis of the peril presented by discontented adolescents and the challenges engendered by oil theft in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria.

### **Some Specifics Explanatory Theories to Youth Restiveness and Oil Theft in Nigeria**

#### **Strain Theory and the Frustration Theory**

The "Strain Theory of Deviance" and the "Frustration Theory" have both been regarded as feasible solutions to the problem of youth restlessness. These two concepts have gained prominence as the most logical reasons for the recurrence of young unrest in the Niger Delta region. The backdrop described above incorporates all of the causes typically given as explanations for the threat posed by youth upheaval. This is related to the fact that they all tie to the unsatisfied youth's unhappiness, oppression, and thwarted wants.

In 1968, Robert K. Merton proposed the Strain Theory, arguing that abnormal behaviour is not caused by disordered people, but rather by the culture and structure of society itself. According to Merton's view, deviant behaviour is a product of society's culture and structure. He explains that while everyone in society is assigned to a unique socioeconomic strata within the social system, they do not all have equal access to the means and goals that they share. Many groups of society share these cultural methods and purposes, but not all of them have access to them at the same time. Merton correctly observes that people sense tension when they are unable to achieve the cultural goals to which they have committed themselves. As a result, people have a proclivity to be imaginative and to engage in deviant behaviour in order to achieve their goals; as a result, they engaged in actions such as stealing, robbery, prostitution, and oil theft, among others.

An continuous or unresolved motivational conflict, according to the "Frustration" theory given by (Atkinson & Atkinson, 1975), is a cause of frustration that can lead to aggressive behaviour (Atkinson & Atkinson, 1975). According to this view, this form of confrontation might lead to aggressive behaviour. The idea emphasised that when a person's progress towards a desired objective is cruelly obstructed, delayed, or interfered with, the person will become annoyed. The pursuit of goals that can never be attained leads to mental anguish, anger, frustration, and hostility. This point of view is based on the notion that when a person is unable to make progress towards their goals, they may react by engaging in risky activity that has far-reaching consequences. This may assist to explain why violent activities by young people in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region have recently become so common.

The aforementioned concepts offer a lucid and compelling rationale for the actuality of the youth uprising in the Niger Delta Region. This article aims to present a comprehensive overview of the situation in which the Nigerian state, in collaboration with oil multinational corporations, demonstrates insensitivity and neglect. The focus is on the youth in the region who face severe limitations or complete lack of access to the environmental resources of their area. Consequently, the inability of young people to achieve their aspirations through established cultural channels, despite the ample options available in their community, has led to the emergence of social conflicts, disappointments, and a rise in youthful restlessness. This is due to the abundant array

of choices accessible to them beyond their immediate vicinity. The examination of dissatisfaction among young individuals in the Niger Delta Region has been influenced, to some extent, by Merton's social strain theory and Atkinso and Atkinson's frustration theory. Both of these ideas were conceived by Atkinso and Atkinson.

### **Collier's Theory of Greed**

The theory of Greed was used to explain the crime of oil theft in the Niger Delta Region.

Greed theory as propounded by Collier (2001), explain that, crime especially (oil theft and pipeline vandalization) are majorly encouraged by greed and economic opportunism. He maintain that criminal act is first and foremost motivated by grievance followed by failed opportunity structure which result to greed and develops into greed - drive of committing illegal oil bunkering and pipeline vandalization.. The theory suggests that a combination of economic deprivation/ poverty and greed will always metamorphose to grievance-agitation which then translates into aggressive display: vandalization, sabotage, oil theft/ illegal oil bunkering, rebellion, plundering of resources, terrorism, militancy, violence, war and other social vices.

Based on Collier's thesis, we can say that criminality in the form of oil theft and related crimes, are forms of organized crimes with partakers indulging in it as economic activities to maintain the group and the groups' illegal activities.

Using this theory, Nigerians have resorted to oil bunkering and pipeline vandalism because the Nigerian state and various oil companies have failed to capitalise on the opportunity structure that has allowed criminality to flourish and transform into a greed-driven deviance motive.

### **Youth Restiveness and Oil Theft in the Niger Delta Environment: Conceptual Explanation**

As to the National Youth Development Policy (2001), individuals aged 18 to 35 are considered young. They constitute more than 40% of Nigeria's population, which exceeds 200 million individuals. Based on the 2006 National Population Census, the aggregate population of individuals between the ages of 10 and 24 in Nigeria amounted to 45.4 million, accounting for a portion of the country's overall population. This constituted 34% of Nigeria's overall population. Juvenile restiveness, as defined by Ejumudo (2014), refers to a persistent and deliberate form of protest conducted by youngsters with the aim of compelling specific outcomes from established authorities. Such protests are typically marked by acts of violence and disruption of legal communal activities. "Youth restiveness" is a term used to describe the state in which young individuals exhibit restlessness and resistance to control, particularly when they are unsatisfied with a matter that has their interest. The phenomenon is associated with the agitation and protest of young individuals in response to several factors such as developments, deprivation, neglect, marginalisation, and other types of oppression (Eme&Anyadike, 2013). An alternative perspective on this phenomenon is examining the involvement of young individuals in activities such as agitation or protest to reclaim their rights and dignity, or engaging in self-serving and unlawful behaviours. Youth restiveness is a response from young people, which can be either positive or negative, to the mentality and behaviour of leaders who are perceived to be involved in oppressing and marginalising their interests. According to Eweten and Urhie (2014), the weapon

in question is deliberately planned and used by young people as a coordinated response to what they see is injustice and marginalisation in their society. This approach has the potential to escalate the likelihood of a catastrophic event occurring inside society. Restlessness exhibited by children and teenagers is a fundamental manifestation of anxiety. This symptom encompasses a broad spectrum of anxiety-induced maladaptive effects on the human body, together with an account of the psychological processes and responses that give rise to worry. Essentially, it is a protracted demonstration led by a collective of young individuals aiming to compel a governing body to fulfil their intended objectives. Ibeogu (2017) defines it as a form of criminal conduct characterised by acts of violence and the disturbance of lawful activities inside the society in which it occurs.

Following the turbulent and disruptive behaviour of young people in the oil-producing towns of the Niger Delta Region, the phrase "youth restiveness" has become widely used across Nigeria. This is a result of the repercussions of these behaviours. The occurrence of young restiveness is frequently linked to adolescents as they encounter numerous novel and challenging hurdles in adapting, hence necessitating their pursuit of self-acknowledgment and societal status. This is a contributing factor to the prevalence of adolescent restlessness. Omotola (2010) categorises adolescent restlessness into three distinct types: authentic agitation, youth engaged in self-serving and illicit pursuits, and youth driven by a desire for vengeance. Although a universally recognised and agreed-upon definition is still lacking, it has gradually gained global prominence. The term "youth restiveness" has become widely used, especially in Nigerian discourse, and it has earned a reputation for being notorious.

Every advanced society designates a distinct space for its young population. Young individuals constitute a larger population than middle-aged and old individuals in any community, and they are poised to become the future proprietors of companies and leaders in politics (Ogbeifun, 2007). Young individuals possess both a numerical advantage and a combination of energy and innovative technical ideas, making them the most valuable resource for societal advancement (Ogbeifun, 2007). According to the 2001 National Youth Development Policy, young individuals are considered the fundamental support system of a society and should be given priority accordingly. They ascertain a nation's pace of progress, together with its degree of safety, vitality, resourcefulness, nature, and direction. If a country effectively harnesses the potential of its young population, it has the capacity to attain substantial economic and sociopolitical achievements. Young individuals are recognised for their diligent effort and ingenuity. The essence and direction of a nation can be determined by aligning its motivation with the aspirations and vitality of its youth. The aspirations and objectives that young people hold make them the future prospects and fundamental support of a nation. Young individuals have a vital role in maintaining peace and security within a nation as they are the most actively engaged members of society.

These crucial concepts are also the main foundations of our research, hence they need to be assessed and defined. This study centres on the complexities associated with the illicit act of oil theft in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The following activities are considered crucial for



comprehending the research of Restive Youths and the Challenges of Oil Theft in Nigeria's Niger Delta Region: illegal oil bunkering/oil theft, pipeline destruction, and sabotage. Additional instances include pipeline damage, rupture, and acts of vandalism against pipelines.

Pipeline ruptures and oil spills are mostly caused by either damage or rupture. Occurrences of ruptures are inevitable as a result of the pipeline's declining structural soundness and the inherent process of the pipe's natural deterioration over time. Pipeline damage commonly occurs as a consequence of deliberate sabotage (Alawode and Ogunleye, 2011:566). Damage to a pipeline might incur significant costs.

Vandalization is derived from the word "vandal" that explains someone who wantonly causes damages or destroys personal and public properties. The verb, vandalize, therefore, connotes, to inflict willful and triggered senseless damage on personal or public properties (Igbinovia, 2014; 27).

In this context, "pipeline vandalism" refers to the criminal act of destroying oil pipelines with the goal to steal crude oil or other petroleum products. The destruction or piercing of oil pipelines for the purpose of illegally extracting crude and its other refined products for personal or selfish objectives, and for sale in the black or local markets, or any outlet serving as a point of sale, falls under this category of criminal activity. Bunkering oil, sabotaging pipelines to steal crude oil, stealing fuel from broken pipelines, and committing acts of oil terrorism in a targeted area are all examples of oil pipeline vandalism (Onuoha, 2007:96).

Illegal oil bunkering refers to the illicit practises involving the criminal provision of stolen petroleum products to a ship, vessel, or drums, as well as the unauthorised movement of oil from a pipeline or cargo to another ship, warehouse, or any other object or container. Illegal oil bunkering refers to the illicit activity of stealing or unlawfully extracting crude oil products.

### **The Root Cause of Youth Restiveness and Oil Theft in the Niger Delta Region: a Critical Discourse**

Nigeria's youth unrest and oil theft, especially in the Niger Delta Region, have clear origins. Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (2003) and Osaghae (2005) classified in detail the several factors that lead to youth unrest, including security, politics, economics, and social issues. The issue of security is connected to factors such as the widespread distribution of weapons within the country, the existence of armed vigilante organisations that lack proper training, and the inappropriate use of the military to quell civilian uprisings. Political causes arise from the competition for political authority, succession, and dethronement, which stem from conflicts over chieftaincy and territorial disputes, both within and between communities. The economic causes stem from elements such as the misallocation of profits derived from crude oil, as well as disputes over land and fishing settlements, including lakes, fish ponds, creeks, and rivers. The social causes, on the other hand, mostly pertain to factors such as youth unemployment, low educational achievement, the erosion of societal norms and values, and the unfair distribution of development projects among various areas. Additional social issues encompass the degradation of rural ecosystems caused by oil and gas corporations, resulting in adverse effects on the environment. Furthermore, local communities residing in oil-rich areas are marginalised and prevented from

participating in the extraction of natural resources within their own surroundings. The authorities' attitude toward the fundamental necessities of rural inhabitants, along with elevated poverty levels and social disparities, are also noteworthy :

Some specific causes of Youth Restiveness and Oil Theft in the Niger Delta Region are discussed below:

- i. There is a paucity of sustainable income generation options that are offered for the people by the oil and gas sectors in their areas of operation.
- ii. The unemployment rate is very high, particularly among the young people of the Niger Delta.
- iii. Providing job opportunities for non-indigenous people while barring natives from participation in the employment scheme at all levels on the basis of the fact that non-indigenous people will be employed,
- iv. The purposeful exclusion of the communities that are host to oil operations from the provision of services to oil firms that are operating on their territory.
- v. The lack of provision of social services and basic amenities to host towns where oil and gas companies are located, such as water, electricity, hospitals, schools, roads, and boats.
- vi. Pollution of the rural environment, which leads to the collapse of traditional activities like farming and fishing, thereby increasing the level of poverty.
- vii. Water, air, and land pollution pose a significant risk to human health, in addition to endangering people's ability to make a living.
- viii. There is a growing sense of disappointment within the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) due to the prevalence of corrupt practices within the commission.
- viii. The population of rural areas are constantly subjected to harassment by a military presence on the part of the government and oil firms.
- x. The region has a lower standard of living index than the national average, which contributes to the worsening poverty circumstances that are present here.

Studies have identified number of reasons as possible causes of the criminal activity of oil theft/bunkering and pipeline vandalization in Nigeria, especially, in the region of Niger Delta. Generally, the causes that have been adduced have tended to be likened to the specific type or dimension of oil pipeline theft\ sabotage that is involved. And clarification is needed here.

There are, as was indicated before, three levels of oil pipeline sabotage across the country. In the country, these include oil terrorism (Onuoha, 2008; Alawode and Ogunleye, 2011), oil theft and bunkering, and pipeline vandalism and gasoline scooping. Consequently, it has been explained that the crime of oil terrorism has been linked or is traceable to two major broad causes:

- (a) The operations of militants and other aggrieved groups in the Niger Delta region, led to the deliberate attack of oil pipeline system and killing/kidnapping of oil workers to registered their grievances which border on the marginalization and neglect of their region that produces the nation's wealth by successive Nigerian governments; and
- (b) Militants and other groups with grievances against the Nigerian government who use explosives to destroy oil pipelines, installations, and platforms in order to seize oil barges, support vessels, and other oil facilities and thereby thwart the extraction, refining, and distribution of crude oil and oil products.

Oil theft/bunkering and pipeline vandalism are two forms of sabotage against oil pipelines. Some further explanations have also been offered. One of the reasons that had been put forward is that poverty and greed are central to the root cause of this problem; also, that people resort or took to the crimes in order to make money. It has been argued that in a country where it is obvious that, over 70% citizens are poor; and 85% of oil revenue accrue to less than 1% of the entire population of over 200 million people, poverty is likely to predispose people to be engaged in crime in order to survive or make ends meet in such society.

For the poor and the marginalized citizens, the argument goes that, they takes to oil theft and pipeline vandalization to get their denied own share of the "national cake" which otherwise would continue to be embezzled or cornered by corrupt government leaders and their cohorts. Garuba (2010:17), commenting on this he said:

Having seen our "smart" public office holders and their cronies defile all words of caution to live a lifestyle of conspicuous consumption at the expense of helping to promote the interests of the greater populace (the "common good"), the people's resolved to avoid the state for their survival has snowballed into taking solace in crimes, with illegal oil bunkering at the centre of their hearts. There are serious risks and genuine worries about the future of Nigeria's economic reform effort because of the transnational nature brought about by the illicit bunkering of oil in the country. The reason for this is that oil is Nigeria's most lucrative industry.

According to Adow, "the crude that is syphoned from fuel company pipelines every day is one thing on which many people in oil-producing regions depend... Theft of oil from pipelines has essentially become a free-for-all in many sections of the Delta Region. It's not uncommon for entire communities or families to take part. His next and final thought is:

The business of oil bunkering has... grown into a sprawling commercial empire that has changed people into overnight millionaires and billionaires at the expense of the environment, their lives and posterity. It has grown to chains of cartel involving the old and the young. The restive youths are being recruited into the business as a quick fix to the poverty that ravages their lives in the region (Adow, 2012).



Although, the official position is that poverty is at the root cause of oil theft(Onuoha, 2007; 101-102), carefully argues that while this may be true to some extent, the fact is that the rich and some other powerful individuals and barons are the brains behind many of the incidents of pipeline vandalization and oil bunkering. He mentioned that there exist widespread poverty, discontent and failed expectation of enormously deprived and improvised Nigerian citizenry have relevant explanation in the upsurge of the crime, he believes that this position does not fully reflect the total picture of the phenomenon. The poor, he argues, accounts for a small proportion of the incidents while "a venomous dimension" to the phenomenon is perpetrated by the rich in society and the powerful with the connivance of equally powerful officials in corridors of power.

However, transnational criminal activity involving illegal oil bunkering allegedly seeks comprehension, as stated by Garuba (2010:10). According to his analysis, this has deeper implications for oil's political economy.

### **Management and Resolution of Youth Restiveness and the Legal Background of Oil Theft in Nigeria**

Teen violence prevention, containment, and resolution are all grouped under the umbrella phrase "youth restiveness management and resolution." This term was reinforced by Anderson (1996)'s arguments, which explained how conflict management must handle the resolution of disputes between parties in order to prevent a crisis from erupting. The goal of conflict resolution is to persuade people to change their behaviour so that conflicts do not escalate further and do not reoccur. A long-term agreement for regulating youth restiveness is built on institutionalised provision and regulatory procedures for dealing with juvenile hyperheaded conflicts wherever they occur. During the late Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's presidency, the Nigerian government took this method by providing amnesty to Niger Delta militants. The government reformed the militants and provided them with the resources they required to live more productive lives. The management and resolution of rural juvenile restiveness seeks to address the underlying causes of the problem in the hope of preventing more violence and fostering good behavioural adjustments among troublesome young people in the area. The most popular methods of conflict management and resolution are judicial, power-politics, conciliatory, and problem-solving techniques, all of which are applicable to stormy adolescence.

According to Anderson (1996), the judicial approach recognised the process of controlling and resolving teenage agitation within a legal framework. In this case, one of the disputing parties authorises another, usually a third party, to play a critical role in resolving the issue. As in Anderson's (1996) power politics strategy, a third party takes the initiative to manage a tense situation in order to further its own vested interests rather than those of the restive party. The third party uses its influence to counteract the disruptive young, but not to the youth's advantage. The Rivers State Government and Shell Petroleum Development Company employed military force against protesting youths in the Ogoni area in 1993. According to Garuba (2010), the aforementioned steps by these two groups were taken so that SPDC could continue its oil and gas exploration and exploitation in Ogoni nation with greater ease.

The conciliatory strategy works because it uses a third party to foster improved communication between opposing parties in order to bring the rowdy kids to an agreement. A neutral third party, according to Anderson (1996), can assist warring factions in better understanding the issues at hand and locating potential solutions to their conflict.

Working through these stages allows young people to replace negative sentiments with more productive ones, which may then be used to address the underlying causes of their dissatisfaction.

### **The Legal Background**

The government, and oil exploratory companies, the foreign communities, and those interested parties have all expressed concern over the increasing prevalence of illegal oil bunkering in recent years. In order to consistently support the growth and success of Nigeria's oil business, which undeniably contributes to over 95% of the nation export products which serves as the backbone of its economy, the government has implemented strong and unwavering legislative procedures. This is because the government places a high priority on oil production and wants to prevent the economy from imploding.

Punishments for pipeline damage and illegal oil bunkering (also known as oil theft) in Nigeria are more severe since they are deemed federal offences under the country's oil law. In Nigeria, sabotage is always deemed criminal and punishable by law if it involves pipeline damage or destruction. This is a felonious crime under the Act that regulates petroleum products and it is governed by the Decree of the Criminal Justice 1975 (Miscellaneous Provisions), according to Onuoha (2007).

Participation in oil theft is a capital offence punishable by death or 21 years in jail, as stated in this edict. Sabotage, defined as "interference distribution inherent with crude / petroleum products in the Nigerian economy," is one of the offences targeted by this order. Those responsible for such offences will be brought before a Military Tribunal Court for trial. Furthermore, the Leader of State has the power of punishing any trade organization involved in any essential service. If they take any actions that halt the free operation of that given service or induce an organizational crisis in Nigeria, as stated in the Trade Disputes (Essential Services) Decree (1976). Furthermore, in Nigerian society. In 1984, this directive was issued. Offences against the more lenient provisions of the 1969 Petroleum Decree, announced earlier by General Yakubu Gowon's military dictatorship, are subject to the Decree's more severe sanctions and penalties. Examples include death by firing squad, licence suspension, and confiscation of all possessions. Any obstruction with the normal flow of the product or distilled crude, or the obstruction, damage, or destruction of a crude oil or refined crude product pipeline, is illegal under Decree No. 20 (1984) (Amanze-Nwachukwu, 2011:19-21). If you're trying to stop the flow of crude oil or finished petroleum products, you're breaking this rule.

The Anti-Sabotage Act is Public Law No. 353. For the purposes of this Act, a saboteur is anyone who knowingly and maliciously takes any action that hinders or prevents the distribution of crude products or petroleum products in any part of the country, or who knowingly and maliciously takes any action that hinders or halts the purchase of the crude products intended for circulation to different parts of the country.

The Nigerian government has exclusive ownership of any and all natural resources found on Nigerian soil. Resources on, below, or above the surface of any given piece of land are included in this definition. Paragraph (3) of subsection 44 states that "notwithstanding the above provisions of this section, all property in and the control of all minerals/ mineral oils and natural gas in, under or upon any land in Nigeria territory or in, under or upon the territorial waters and are in the Economic Zone of Nigeria shall be vested in the Government of the Federation and shall be responsible to be managed in such manner as may be decided by the National Assembly" as stipulated by the 1999 Constitution. Having crude oil on your person or engaging in oil exploration without first securing permission from the government is unlawful. In Nigeria, oil facility vandalism and the theft of crude oil or other petroleum products are treated as two independent crimes (Onuoha, 2008:1000-101). These wrongdoings have long since been made illegal by statute.

### **Remedies for Youth Restiveness and Oil Theft in the Niger Delta Region**

- i. Igbinovia (2014) proposed a slew of ideas that could serve as a catalyst for preventing oil theft and resolving conflicts among restless young people in the Niger Delta Region. An outline of these proposals is provided below:
- ii. The Nigerian government should ensure that the benefits of oil in the region trickle down from the state to the community that hosts the oil, since this will help to calm the tensions of the region's furious youth.
- iii. Oil and gas companies should routinely negotiate contracts to host indigenous populations. This is because the oil and gas companies will make the youth feel taken along, which will help to reduce youth discontent and oil theft in the region.
- iv. Contracts with indigenous communities should be secured on a regular basis by the oil and gas companies. Contracts to host indigenous populations should be arranged on a regular basis.
- v. Both the Federal and State Governments should be committed to the region's rapid growth, and the problem of oil bunkering by restive young should be reduced.
- vi. Jobs for young people in the area should be actively sought for and promoted by local, state, and federal authorities. This would help mitigate young unrest in Niger's Niger Delta region and the problems that arise from it.
- vii. The government and oil companies' recruitment of militant youths to combat the persistent vandalism of pipelines in the area; 8. The creation of the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) to deal with oil spillage issues and create an agriculturally viable and pollution-free environment; The formation and deployment of a Joint Task Force (JTF), pipeline surveillance guards, and other security agencies, as well as local-community vigilant groups, to patrol and monitor pipeline routes in the region's various communities;
- viii. Communities, stakeholders, and international oil firms, among others, should launch an environmental awareness campaign to inform locals about the dangers of vandalism and oil spills and how to respond to them.
- ix. The Nigerian government has frequently used a carrot and stick method to handle the difficulties of illegal oil bunkering and vandalism perpetrated by restive youths:

- x. To all terrorists in the Niger Delta Region were offered amnesty in exchange for handing over their weapons and promising not to return to the creeks to engage in criminal activity; this "carrot" strategy was implemented. The stick strategy includes illegal bunkering and sabotage operations in addition to occasional military bombardment of regions suspected of militancy.
- xi. Since 2004, the government of Nigeria has used diplomacy to enlist the international body/community in the fight against the activities, particularly by lending its support to the Gulf of Guinea Energy Security Commission. Garuba, 2010, pp. 17-18.

## **SUMMARY**

This study was one of the first to objectively examine the topic of restless young and the challenges caused by oil theft in Nigeria's Niger Delta region. It shed light on the links between youth unrest and the issues involved with oil theft in Nigeria's Niger Delta region. This investigation's theoretical framework is built on three independent theories: Collier's theory of Greed (2001), Merton's Social Strain theory (1968), and Atkinson and Atkinson's theory of Frustration (1975).

The following elements, according to the study's conclusions, lead to young unrest: unemployment; poverty; deprivation and denial of rights; underdevelopment of the region; proliferation of weaponry in the region; and disputes over lands, lakes, creeks, and rivers. Other causes include pollution of the environment, a lack of access to quality education despite the abundance of mineral resources in the area, the exclusion of the host community's youth from involvement in the provision of services for oil companies, and a high rate of corruption within the Niger Delta Development Commission. These causes, along with a number of others, fueled young discontent and oil theft in the Niger Delta. This paper thoroughly outlines the management and resolution of young unrest, as well as some of the approaches that have been used. Several regulatory difficulties regarding oil theft were thoroughly investigated, including the Petroleum Act, which was handled by the Criminal Justices Decree of 1975, the Petroleum Decree of 1969, among other decrees.

Stated below are some potential remedies presented in response to study on youth unrest and oil theft in the Niger Delta Region: Host community members should have access to the benefits of oil; contracts should be negotiated on a regular basis for host community members, particularly youths; jobs should be generated for youths; and the Niger Delta Region should expand rapidly.

## **CONCLUSIVE REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The report provided a thorough analysis of youth unrest and the difficulties of oil theft in the Niger Delta Area. Related ideas are defined, and the legal and theoretical contexts, trends, potential causes, and potential solutions to youth unrest and the difficulties of oil theft in Nigeria's Niger Delta are explored. Some of the key causes of youth restiveness and oil theft in Niger Delta communities are poverty, unemployment, marginalisation, underdevelopment of the region, lack of formal education, and exclusion of host community youths from engagement in the oil and gas business.

Proposed solutions to address the issues of youth restiveness and oil theft in the region include granting host community members access to the natural crude oil deposits on their lands, as well as creating employment opportunities for the youth. In addition, it is crucial to provide scholarships and regular contracts to deserving individuals from the host communities. This approach will effectively reduce the level of youth restiveness and incidents of oil theft in the Niger Delta Region.

Flowing from the above, the study recommends as follows to curb the menace of youth restiveness and oil theft in the region;

- (a) Immediate and legitimate employment should be provided for the Niger Delta youths.
- (b) Federal Government to extend the amnesty programme that is currently being enjoyed by few ethnic groups like Ijaw and Itshekiri to other oil producing ethnic groups like Isoko, Urhobo and others.
- (c) Government should also help to resolve the political, economic and social problems of the region.
- (d) Oil companies should engage youths of the region to be part of their day to day activities in their areas of operations.
- (e) Recruitments of more ex -militants to help take charge of pipelines surveillance in the region to reduce oil bunkering.
- (f) Trust worthy people should take charge of NDDC management to check the high level of corruption in the commission for development to thrive in the region.
- (g) Government and oil companies should attract rapid development to the Niger Delta Region as this will help to reduce youth restiveness and oil theft.

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