

Public Accountability and Moral Ethics: The Quest for Niger Delta Development

Ozy B. Orluwene*

Department of Political Science
Rivers State University of Education, Port Harcourt – Nigeria
E-mail: ozywene@yahoo.com,

Abstract

The paper examines the underdevelopment in the Niger Delta and posits lack of public accountability and moral ethics (endemic corruption) as one of the major causes of the underdevelopment. In spite of being a region of gigantic economic reservoir of national and international importance with rich endowment of oil and gas resources that feeds methodologically into international economic system in exchange for massive revenue that carry the promise of rapid socio-economic transformation. The region in reality is suffering from crumbling social infrastructure, services and administrative neglect among others. The methodology adopted for this paper is the use of secondary data. However, personal observations have equally been employed to examine how endemic corruption has withered development in the region. The paper reveals that endemic corruption has heightened poverty, unemployment, social deprivation, filth and squalor and endemic conflicts. It recommends that corruption reduction measures should be emphasized and strengthened, while addressing the issue of infrastructural decay in order to arrest decline in development policies.

Key words: Public accountability, moral ethics, corruption, development and Niger Delta.

PAPER/ARTICLE INFO

RECEIVED ON: 23/07/2013

ACCEPTED ON: 16/12/2013

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Ozy B. Orluwene (2013)
“Public Accountability and Moral Ethics: The Quest for Niger Delta Development”
Int. J. of Trade and Commerce-IIARTC, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 278-289

1. INTRODUCTION

Several factors that are interlocking combined and contributed to make the quest for the development of Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the world's largest wetland and Africa's largest delta of some 70,000km, a festering sore to both the Nigerian State and International Community (World Bank cited in **Ibaba, 2008**;193). These include but not restricted to the systemic or indeed lack of public accountability and moral ethics (endemic corruption) in practice in the country especially in the Nigeria's Niger Delta region that has been playing host to international community since the colonial period especially during the palm oil trade era, before crude oil was discovered in great quantity in 1956 in Oloibiri, a community in Niger Delta region of present day Bayelsa State where it continue to playing host to some Multinational Oil Companies (MNO) from the Europe and Asians countries whose interest is to maximize profit (**Tombofa, 2008**).

The quest for the development of the region dates back to the colonial period when the minority agitations based on the fear of ethnic based political domination, brought to the fore, the need to give the area a special development attention. The colonial government responds gave birth to Willink's Commission of 1956 that in its recommendations to the Her Majesty government in 1958 opted out of state creation as demanded by the people but recognized the development quagmire imposed on the people by the hash geographical terrain and the misplaced perception of the development needs of the area by the then regional and central governments recommended an interventionist agency to be established through which the fear of the people could adequately be addressed (**Otite, 2008**).

As part of the implementing the Willink's Commission report, in 1960, the Federal Government of Nigeria established the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB), as an intervention agency which in 1976 metamorphosed to become the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA). When the then military government used River Basin Commission as the principal tool for rural development, it renamed (NDBA) to Niger Delta Basin Rural Development Authority (NDBRDA). Since then other efforts included the special fund created by the 1981 Revenue Act for Oil Producing Area and the special Presidential Taskforce created 1.5% Committee was established to manage the Mineral Producing Area Development Funds. Similarly, the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) was created in 1992 as a principal intervention agency, when the Gen. Ibrahim B. Babangida (IBB) led military government by Decree No. 23 of that year and committed 3 percent of oil revenue to it (OMPADEC, 1991:12).

The latest special development intervention by government is the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) that took off in January 2001 with revenue profile as good as its predecessor, OMPADEC projected to be at least 40 billion naira annually. The NDDC is to be funded from 15% of Federal allocation to the nine states of the political Niger Delta, 50% of ecological funds due to the nine states and 3 percent of annual budget of oil companies operating in Nigeria.

The agencies were given the mandate to bring development to the area but have achieved poor results. The studies of the poor results recorded by these agencies were attributed to misplaced projects, faulty implementation strategy, underfunding and lack of political will. The literature appears to have ignored lack of public accountability and moral ethics (corruption) in these

interventionist agencies and governments of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as their inability to promote Niger Delta Development. Sequel to the above, the paper, therefore, argues that lack of proper public accountability and moral ethics called corruption is bane of the Niger Delta underdevelopment. To say the least we intend to explain how genuine development of Niger Delta is halted and mass poverty, disease and exacerbated conflict entrenched as a result of corruption in Niger Delta. The rest of the paper deal with the following: conceptual clarification, public accountability and development of Niger Delta, Conclusion and recommendations.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

To have a clear understanding of the contending issues, a brief clarification of the following concepts as applied in this study shall be attempted.

(i) Public Accountability

It is not a surprise that over the years there has emerged diverse definitions of the concept, therefore, no universally acceptable definition of accountability because it is a fundamental but underdeveloped concept in Public Administration (**Zek and Dubnick cited in Ezeani, 2008:2**). Accountability requires prudent expenditure of money and the existence of appropriate fiscal records. In other words, Smarth and Haque cited in Ezeani (ibid) opine that the principle of accountability specifically requires "that the government must have the assurance that the public funds are spent for the purpose specified and without personal gain to any private individual beyond fair compensation for his service". That was why **Robertson (1993:3)** typical definition of accountability as concerns the process by which those who exercise power, whether as governments, as elected representatives or as appointed officials must be able to show that they have exercised their powers and discharged their duties properly. Such a broad definition is necessary as the detailed nature of accountability varies greatly with form of government.

It is important to state that the concept of accountability as applied to modern government and public administration represents a basic democratic ideal. "It is linked to government obligation to some external force or an acceptable standard or conduct" (**Abdulsalami, 1999:72**). For the purpose of this study, public accountability is defined simply as answerability for one's action or behaviour before a person or group of person entitled to it. Both the government administrators and agencies are required to answer for their actions before a person or a group of persons. Public accountability is based on the premise that all public servants (i.e. lesser persons or authority) own and hold their positions and everything associated with these positions, as trust for the people, who are their masters (higher persons of authority). Those who are expected to render service must account to the people for their successes and failures, and those who are entrusted with the custody and disbursement of public funds must appropriately account to the people for their use (**Akpan, 1982:43**).

(ii) Niger Delta

We cannot be dogmatic about the meaning of Niger Delta as no consensus can be presupposed, whether amongst scholars and discussants in Niger Delta affairs, with regard to what exactly it is. However, a proper understanding of Niger Delta is best done by looking at the political, geographic, linguistic and economical definitions.

Niger Delta region of Nigeria is of international importance that is richly endowed with both renewable and non-renewable natural resources. It contains billions of Africans proven 66 billion

barrels of oil resources and more than billion cubic meters of gas resources. Oil and gas resources of the region accounts for over 85% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP), over 95% of the nation's budget and over 80% the nation's wealth (Akinbuwa, 2008:300). Historically, it is a region that was at centre of trans-Atlantic trade (in slaves and later palm produce) (Jaja 2008:175). While Isoun (cited in Jaja, 2005) states that the Niger Delta refers to the conglomeration of people who in 1958 canvassed for special attention that led to the inauguration of Willinks Commission. Geographically, Niger Delta climatic presentation of the region reveals that the rainfall is usually heavy with variations within the region. Azaiki (2003) volunteered that between 1948 and 1980, the "average rainfall ranged between 200mm at Port Harcourt to over 400mm on the south west coast of Bonny Island". It is within this reason, therefore, to affirm that the relative nearness and proximity of the region to the Atlantic Ocean influences the depth of rainfall. The region could be classified as a humid, semi-hot equatorial type with very heavy rainfall conforms to the manifest pattern of the equatorial belt known with movement of the sun. It, therefore, covers a total area of 70,000 square kilometers comprising a mix of swamps and luxuriant rainforest with lush vegetation. It lies between latitude 4^o, 14¹ and 5^o 33¹ North longitude 5^o 48¹ and 7^o 4¹ East. The location extends to the Atlantic coastline from Benin Rivers, West of River Niger, all in the geographical zone of southern Nigeria.

The Niger Delta constitutes a number of ethnic nationalities but by far the earliest to inhabit the creeks were the Ijaw (Izon). Other nationalities include but are not limited to the Ndokwa, Isoko, Andoni, Itsekiri, Urhobo and Ibos but the core Niger Delta lies between Forcados, Rivers on the West and the Brass River to the East. According to the Willinks Commission reports of 1958, Niger Delta region lies within the Ibo Plateau and Cross River valley and Niger Delta Basin and Rural Development Authority (NDBRDA) which is a product of Willinks Commission report recommendations areas of jurisdiction covers all the local Government Areas in Bayelsa, and Rivers States but only 14 Local Government Areas in Delta State.

For geographic delineation of the core Niger Delta include Rivers State, Bayelsa State and Delta State which in the 1991 Census recorded an approximate population of 10 million people but in contemporary reasoning, the meandering creeks, rivers, similar topography, common history and ancestry climate and culture appear to have made the inclusion of such states as Edo, Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers State inevitable into the core Niger Delta States.

Politically, the Nigerian government has made Niger Delta states to be synonymous with oil production or oil producing states. This assumption has lumped all oil producing states into Niger Delta. They include Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers States.

Thus, the Niger Delta is now associated with the operation of Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) and latter Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). It, therefore, now includes three states (Akwa Ibom, Cross River and Edo States) located outside the core swampy territory. Whereas Abia and Imo State constituted the hinterland territories from where the slaves and palm oil (Martin cited in Ukaogo 2009) were taken to the seaports in the slave epoch and connected to the core Niger Delta by maze of intermingling seas. Ondo State is in part peopled by the Ijaw of the core Niger State. Moreover, the three states have beneath their sub-soil the new resources-crude oil that presently differentiates the Niger Delta

from other geographic zones. This explained why government has from time to time created economic zones made up of these areas listed above. The most recent being OMPADEC and latter NDDC, for the NDDC, the Act establishing it defined the Niger Delta in terms of those states that produces crude oil. According, section 2(1) (b) of the enabling Act impliedly defined the region by adding the two hinterland states of Abia and Imo as well as Ondo State to Core States.

The aforementioned definition is not without criticism. However, Rev. Dedikumo Odondiri here volunteered thus: "there is a specific geographical location referred to as the Niger Delta with a peculiar terrain and peculiar development needs. These states are basically Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, Akwa Ibom and part of Edo State, not even Ondo. We have a rural area in Cross Rivers but the Niger Delta is a specific area inhabited principally by the Ijaws, Isokos, the Urhobos, Itsekoris, the Ogoni as well as some kwale areas. These are the areas that ought to benefit (Guardian cited in Akaogo, 2009: 055). In addition, the position of Bayelsa Leaders of Thought, the Moment of Concerned People of the Niger Delta, Major Isaac Boro's papers and World Environmental Movement for Africa (WEMFA) report among others all are of the opinion and agreement that Niger Delta as a matter of truth, historically and cartographically is the present Rivers, Bayelsa, and Delta States. (Azaiki, 2003:50).

Linguistically, the various ethnic nationalities and cultural groups can be safely be grouped into two. The Ijaw dominated culture groups, Nembe Akassa, Kalabari, Wakarike, Ibani, Nkoro, Isoko, Kwale, Iteshekiri and the Igbo-influence culture group: Ogba, Etche, Ikwerre etc (Jaja, 2008:176). The ecology of the Niger Delta according to Jaja (2008) is subdivided into four broad identifiable physical and vegetation characteristics. The fresh water swamps with rain forest vegetation, found at the extreme North, the South water swamp with predominantly mangrove vegetation now greatly threatened by nypa palm, the coastal sand beaches with rain forest vegetation and the off-shore zones.

The Niger Delta is richly endowed with marine resources such as sea foods, from the coastal waters, petroleum and natural gas which are the greatest revenue-yielding export in Nigeria accounting for about 95% of the country's foreign exchange economy. This make the region the most strategic in Nigeria. As strategic as it is, it is also the most tormented, tortuous and turbulent region in Nigeria. The reason for this state of affair is not far-fetched. The discovery of crude oil in the area has paradoxically made the region the poorest, due to largely ecologically unfriendly exploration of oil and gas and state policies that expropriated the indigenous people of Niger Delta of their rights to the natural resources. These have made the present crisis and disquiet in the region to become a symbol of identity. For now two descriptive meaning dominates our understanding of the region from the perspective of oil production and geographical location. For purpose of this study, the political and geographical meanings are used interchangeably.

(iii) Moral Ethics

The word "ethics" is derived from Greek word "ethos" which means customs, tradition or ways of doing things. And "morality" is derived from the Latin word "mores" which means customs or rules of behaviour in society. Echekwube (2005) notes that "while morality is a system of justification of condemnation of human action as right or wrong, good or bad etc". Ethics applies a reflective process, elucidating the principles or norms which guide human behaviour. It is

important to state however, that both morality and ethics are closely related and often are used interchangeably.

Therefore, in a common usage, ethics is associated with morality, which deals with matters of right and wrong (Babbie, 1979:59). It manifest as behavioural pattern defined by environmental, political, ideological, religions, economic, cultural and social factors. It is predicated on national behaviour which is always in tandem with rules of conduct, and therefore promotes individual aspirations and collective interests. What is ethical or unethical is measured with behavioural pattern that are either in or out of sync with agreed practice of society or organization.

For purpose of this study, moral ethics is discernible as the standard conduct of a people, society, government, profession or organization. Obedience to moral ethics promotes organizational goals, for example the standard of conduct in the public service include; anonymity, impartiality, political neutrality, obedience to rules and regulations, respect for senior official by subordinates, and the exhibition of national behaviour by members (Adebayo, 2000, Henry, 1999).

The efficient service delivery is promoted in the public service through the strict adherence of the ethics. For in both politics and governance, ethical norms include obedience to the rule of law, probity and national interest, fair play, justice, hard work, respect for other people's rights and responsibility and impartiality (King, 2006:61). These ethical norms shape and define the law and order and the promotion of social welfare. Behaviours that conform to ethical norms are ethical and desirable, promotes individual aspirations and the collective interest of society while the converse is unethical and undesirable hence destructive to the society but may enhance individual interest. Therefore, in governance unethical behaviour which includes corruption, lack of respect for the rule of law, and nepotism undermines development and peaceful existence.

(iv) Development

The concept of development has a litany of interpretations by various scholars over the years. However, the South Commission Reports (1993:13) sees development as "a process of self-reliant growth achieved through the participation of people acting in their own interest as they see them, and under their control. Its first objective must be to end poverty, provide productive employment and satisfy the basic needs of all the people fairly shared". What can be discernible from the above is that development is man-centered and can be seen as a multi-dimensional process involving the fundamental transformation of society in its totality- economic, polity, culture, etc.

Also writing on development, Walter Rodney similarly opines that development is many sided process, at the level of the individual level, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being; and at the level of the social group, it implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationship. Development, therefore, to Rodney, is when members of the society jointly increase their capacity for dealing with the environment (Rodney; 2005).

In other words, development implies growing self-reliance both individual and collectively. The bases for a nation's development must be its own resources both human and materials fully used to meet its own needs. That is, it involves a process of growth which is a movement essentially springing from within the society that is developing. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) conceptualized development as an increasing reduction or elimination of poverty and

hunger, educating all children ensuring gender equality, control and eradication of infant and maternal mortality and disease, using resources wisely and sustaining the environmental and implementation of the ideals of global links or working together for development globally. An important deduction from the foregoing conceptualization sees development as the capacity to secure and sustain a better life for humankind in the society. For this study, development is striving to elevate human life and comfort from a given level considered unsatisfactory to a better and perhaps more comfortable level.

3. PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF NIGER DELTA

Niger Delta is a victim of its history and is largely perceived by the Nigerian state and international community as hostile, corrupt and enemy which must be avoided, subverted, resisted and cheated without any qualms, despite the presence of oil and the pains it brings to the states that have it, appear to be a good confirmation of how oil wealth induce corruption and compromise good governance; creating a “vicious circle of corruption and patronage among the political class and popular discontent among the population and also a more intense destabilizing intra-elite competition, a determination by other marginalized actors (using more younger elements) to challenge, in an increasing violent manner, the ruling elite’s monopoly of oil rents.

A close observer of development in the Niger Delta points to these obstacles as a bane to the successful design and implementation of the adopted policies, projects and programmes in the region, including the character of leadership, corruption in project implementation and lack of political will.

In attempts to address the problem of underdevelopment of Niger Delta region the following interventions agencies were established. They are the colonial government NDDDB in 1960; the military government established the NDBRDA in 1976 and the Shehu Shagari’s led government 1.5 percent Committee for Development Oil Producing area in 1981. The IBB administration in 1992 established OMPADEC through Decree No. 23 of the same year. OMPADEC was allocated 3 percent of the federal – collected oil revenue with the mandate to address the developmental need of the Niger Delta equally failed to address the developmental needs of the people and unable to abate discontent and restiveness in the region. According to observers; “OMPADEC became inefficient and corrupt and ended up as great disappointment between 1992 and 1999 when it was scrapped, OMPADEC completed few projects but bequeathed very many abandoned/unfinished projects and a huge debt, most of which were dubious” (Urhobo National Association of North America cited in Ibodje, 2008:164).

OMPADEC as an Intervention agency for development of Niger Delta region was woe in corruption and its dimension of corruption as documented by its founding Board Chairman, Chief A.K. Horsfall thus “OMPADEC took off fully in 1993. By December 1997, it has expended 870 million US dollars for its activities. For that huge expenditure, there was appreciably nothing on ground to show”. Corruption in high places was alleged to be responsible for the sad state of affairs. Billions of Naira were said to have been officially siphoned and payment running into hundreds of millions of Naira were made for projects that were never executed, including those awarded to community indigenes supposedly to address community problems (Horsefall, 1999:66).

The problem of under-funding was equally stressed; alleging that much of the money expected from government under 3 percent arrangement was not released due to inter-ministerial intrigues and the diverse political calculations in government. For instance, according to A.K. Horsefall "governments- civil or military never stopped eyeing out funds with a view to either poaching them or indirectly controlling or sharing in them". Unfortunately, OMPADEC became in the popular consciousness of the people of Niger Delta another ruse designed to enrich families and friends of the military government while pretending to be investing in the region (Horsefall, 1999:66).

The Inaugural Board Chairman by his own account further accepted some shortcomings in the financial management of OMPADEC finance. He gave instances- in March 1993; 2 billion naira was taken from OMPADEC account by Federal Ministry of Works for project which according to him never took place. In addition, the management of OMPADEC made advance payments to contractors, sometimes counting to over 50 percent of project cost even before projects were executive. This led to the loss of 275 million naira over disputed water project in 1993 (Horsefall, 1999:68). Thus; OMPADEC lasted until 1996 when its board was dissolved without accountability and without result. This situation become even more so under Eric Opia who was appointed by Sani Abacha to operate the Commission as sole administrator. It is, therefore, not supposing that when OMPADEC was finally scrapped, it owed billions of naira to its contractors and hundreds of abandoned projects.

In 1999, the then military government requested the National Economic Intelligence Committee to evaluate OMPADEC debts to its contractors by assessing the extent of work on abandoned projects. Its report reveals that there were over 300 abandoned projects in Bayelsa state and the extent of work done on them was overestimated internally by OMPADEC staff and others. Thus, contractors received huge sums of money for work they did not carry out.

Furthermore, in many communities, projects were unnecessarily duplicated. For instance in one community there were three jetties two by oil companies and one by OMPADEC. The one by OMPADEC is not completed but that by oil companies were already operational. Yet, this community lacked many other basic facilities like schools, healthcare and clean water (Ibeanu, 2005:31).

The latest special development intervention by government in the Niger Delta is the NDDC. The commission took off in January 2001 after many disputations over many things including the definition of true Niger Delta, the composition, the sources of funding and the controversial issue of the offshore and onshore dichotomy in calculating the accrual of oil revenue introduced by former president Obasanjo himself. With an annual revenue profile as good as its predecessor, OMPADEC, projected to be at least 40 billion naira only, so far, things have started going the way of the OMPADEC. Chief Timi Alaibe, former MD of the commission complained that only 47% of the expected funds had been released while it (NDDC) was being owed up to the tune of 261 billion naira. While complain about the non-release of funds, the ones so far released have not made any visible impact, thanks to corruption (Okonkwo, 2007). These points to the fact that already a Director in the commission has been removed from office for financial malpractices and a former Chairman of the Commission among others were removed from office in alleged circumstances of corruption. All these are giving credence to the concern of many citizens and

civil society organizations alike who have been expressing concern about the commission and feeling that it is another patronage system, an avenue for enriching business associates and party loyalists given the level of corruption that has characterized government development interventions in the Niger Delta.

In addition to the foregoing, even the oil companies have been critical of the NDDC performance and threatened to withhold their remittance until the commission shows what it has done with the monies already contributed or paid to it. Despite the foregoing, the Niger Delta states governments have also displayed their due share of showing nothing for money received and have no visible impact on development of Niger Delta. Thanks to corruption. According to the 44 pages document that showed detailed breakdown of allocation to the states, federal and local governments from June 1999 to May 2007, the states in South- south zone of the country got the highest share of over 2.2 trillion naira. The allocation to the states revealed that Rivers State received the highest share of over 622 billion naira (a yearly average of 78 billion naira). Bayelsa and, Delta States received over 561.4 billion naira respectively within the same period from the Federation Account only. There was also spiraling revenue from tax, which include Petroleum Profit Tax (PPT), Company Income Tax (CIT), VAT and Consolidated and Education Taxes not inclusive of billions of money from internal generated and the so-called recovery from Abacha "loot" which have not been accounted for. It is sad fact of life that instead of lifting millions of citizens out of poverty, national resources endowment, gains from crude oil sales and revenue generated by the various tiers of governments in Nigeria by extension and Niger Delta region in particular that ordinarily should have improve the welfare of Nigerians but this seems not have impacted positively on the citizens in terms of standard of living, which has gone down, as more than 70 percent of the population are living below one dollar per day while average life expectancy in Nigeria has slipped to 43 years according to UN Human Development Report (Ikpeze, 2008:91).

According to the report, only 34 percent of Nigeria household now have electricity and 70 percent of the poor are female. The distance between majority poor and few rich has increased from 100 kilometers to 1000kilometres. In this kind of situation, it is apparent that a very small proportion of the population lived in opulence reflects the gross inequalities of our interpersonal distribution of income and adds insult to the injury of the poor and that those who govern have forgotten the developmental agenda (Ikpeze, 2008:92).

Again, a visit to Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State by extension that of Niger Delta region and its state of roads and other decayed infrastructure would make the visitor wonder where all the money has gone. This is perhaps one of the most outrageous example of the failure of government in recent time to use the wealth of the Niger Delta for the people is the case of Rivers State, as documented in the Human Right Watch Report in 2007. According to the Report:

Rivers State had a budget of 1.3 billion dollars in 2006, larger than those of many West African countries, with a smaller population. But the State government has done little to alleviate poverty or improve the delivery of basic services, and has not lived up to its responsibilities under State law to rein in corrupt local government officials. At the same time, the Governor of Rivers State budgeted tens of millions of dollars that year alone on questionable, priorities like foreign travels,

“gifts” and “souvenirs” to unspecified recipients and the purchase of Jet aircraft and fleets of new cars for his office.

While Peter Odili, the former Governor of Rivers State has gone to court to prevent Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) from investigating and trying him for his malfeasance on extensive network of kleptomaniac clientelist redistribution of the States resources for political survival employing a combination of bribery and gift giving to sway both friends and adversaries to his side. James Ibori was in court fighting the battle of his life with EFCC to prove his innocence, he has not denied that he alone doled out a whooping sum of about 9 billion naira for the presidential election of Late Umaru YarÁdua. Obasanjo admitted that such money was received, but characteristically wondered how he would have been expected by people to know that he (Ibori) stole the money. That this statement come from a former President who spent eight years in office claiming to be fighting corruption shows his hallow level of commitment to that crusade and the Nigeria project. Unfortunately, this was coming from Obasanjo at a time when most Nigerian were already wondering if his regime was not more corrupt than that of the much condemned Sani Abacha in the history of the country (Ibodje, 2008:172).

Former Bayelsa State Governor, Deprieye Alamiesiegha, was convicted for corruption and money laundering. His asset confiscated in London and in July 2006, British authorities returned about 1 million pounds (1.9 million dollars) of the illicit gains that he stashed in British Banks ((Pogoson, 2009:72). From the above, several reasons and factors have been given and responsible for failure of developmental needs in Niger Delta, including the following: corruption in high places, including contracts awarded to traditional chiefs, community leaders and youth organization that were paid for well in advance without being executed. Contracts were also awarded to relatives, friends and cronies who had no ideas of what to do.

Above all, money allocated for developmental needs of the region was inadequate; much of it was not released for the services of the region. In spite of the fact that the development projects have been patently exclusionary of vulnerable groups like women, children and the disabled hence unsustainable. Niger Delta region is a tragedy because corruption is quite amorphous. According to Ibodje (2008) “there are external internal hands in the cauldron involved in the act of poaching. Those who talk are more involved than those who do not”.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has focused in detail the failures of public accountability in Nigeria and the problems of development in Niger Delta. It identified lack of proper public accountability, moral ethics and of political will among others as some of the major factors that hampered the quest for the development of Niger Delta. From the above, we recommend the following as panacea to lack of public accountability in Nigeria:

- That the judiciary should not be politicized so that it can deliver impartial judgments when it comes to corruption cases or offences. For a decline in corruption, the laws must be used to change the socio-economic condition and institutions that perpetuate corruption. The biggest challenge for Nigeria is not just to punish corrupt behaviour, but also to reverse the previous culture in which corruption is viewed. The Nigeria government and civil society must seize the opportunities offered by “democratic rule” to push for institutional and economic reforms

to induce the behavioural changes necessary to overcome years of problematic, corrupt behaviour.

- Adequate funding of the intervention agency like NDDC and faithful implementation of the Niger Delta Regional Master Plan. In this regard, a new social formation is therefore imperative to implement this radical transformation. We therefore, need purposeful and visionary leadership, development partnership, economic diversification and rural industrialization and value re-orientation of our populace.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Abdulsalami, A. (1988). Accountability and Policy Making in Local Government System. in I.N. Obasi and N.O. Yaqub (eds) Local Government Policy Making and Execution in Nigeria. Ibadan: Sam Bookman Publishers.
- [2]. Adebayo, A. (2000). Principles and Practices of Public Administration (2nd edition). Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- [3]. Akinbuwa, A.A. (2008). Alternative Dispute Resolution: A Key to Peace Building in the Niger Delta Area. In Proceedings of International Conference on Nigeria State, Oil Industry and the Niger Delta, organized by the Department of Political Science, NDU, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, 11-13, March.
- [4]. Akpan, N.U. (1982). Public Administration in Nigeria. Lagos: Longman Nigeria Ltd.
- [5]. Azaiki, S. (2003). Inequalities in Nigeria Politics: The Niger Delta, Resources Control, Underdevelopment and Youth Restiveness. Yenagoa: Treasure Communication Resource Ltd.
- [6]. Babbie, E.R. (1979). The Practice of Social Research (2nd edition). Belmont California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- [7]. Echekwube, A.O. (2000). What in Ethics. In P. Iroegba and A. Echekwube (eds) Kpim of Morality, Ethics: General Special and Professional. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.
- [8]. Ezeani, E.O. (2003). Public Accountability: A Conceptual Analysis. In E.O. Ezeani (ed) Public Accountability in Nigeria: Perspectives and Issues. Enugu: Academic Publishing Coy.
- [9]. Heny, N. (1999). Public Administration and Public Affairs (8th edition). New Delhi: Prentice Hall.
- [10]. Horsefall, A.K. (1999). The OMPADEC Dream. London: Imprint Publishers.
- [11]. Ibaba, I.S. (2008). Promoting Peace in the Niger Delta: Some Critical Issues. In Proceedings of International Conference on Nigeria State, Oil Industry and the Niger Delta, organized by the Department of Political Science, NDU, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, 11-13, March.
- [12]. Ibeanu, O. (2008). Doves, Hawks and Vultures, Oil Politics in Niger Delta. In Sam Oyovibaire (ed) Governance and Politics in Nigeria: The IBB and OBJ Years. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- [13]. Ibodje, S.W.E. (2008). Oil and the Niger Delta. In Sam Oyovibaire (ed) Governance and Politics in Nigeria: The IBB and OBJ Years. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- [14]. Ikpeze, N. (2008). Issues of the Economy. in Elo Amucheazi and Okey Ibeanu (eds) Between the Theory and Practice of Democracy in Nigeria: An Assessment of Obasanjo's First Term in Office by Academics and Practitioners. London: Adoni and Abbey Publishers Ltd.

- [15]. Jaja, J.M. (2008). Underdevelopment and Conflicts in the Niger Delta: The Tragedy of Oil Exploration. In A.A. Derefaku and A.M. Okorobia (eds) *The Feature of the Niger Delta: The Search for a Relevant Narrative*. Port Harcourt: Onyoma Research Publications.
- [16]. King, O.I. (2006). Ethical Norms and Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. In *Journal of Social Policy and Society* 1 (1).
- [17]. Okonkwo, A. (2007). Niger Delta Master Plan to Culp over \$50 Billion. *Business Day News Paper* Nov. 8.
- [18]. Otite, A. (2008). The Nigerian State and the Niger Delta Crisis. In *Proceedings of International Conference on Nigeria State, Oil Industry and the Niger Delta*, organized by the Department of Political Science, NDU, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, 11-13, March.
- [19]. Pogoson, A.I. (2009). Globalization and Anti-Corruption Reform in Nigeria 2003-2007. In D.U. Enweremadu and E.E. Okafor (eds) *Anti-Corruption Reforms in Nigeria since 1999: Issues, Challenges and the Way forward*. Ibadan: IFRA.
- [20]. Robertson, D. (1993). *Dictionary of Politics*. London: Europe Publications Ltd.
- [21]. Rodney, W. (2005). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Abuja: Panaf Publishing Inc.
- [22]. *The Challenge of the South* (1993). *The Report of South Commission*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- [23]. Tombofa, S. (2008). Politics of Oil and Underdevelopment of Niger Delta. In *Proceedings of International Conference on Nigeria State, Oil Industry and the Niger Delta*, organized by the Department of Political Science, NDU, Bayelsa State, Nigeria, 11-13, March.
- [24]. Ukaogo, V. (2009). Strangled Federalism: Resource Rights Agitation and the Deepening Crisis in Niger Delta. In *African Journal of History and Culture (AJHC)* 1 (3) pp. 54-59.