

The Impact of Oil and Gas Activities in the Global South: Reflections on the Conflict in the Nigerian Niger Delta

Sammy Aniregu Edun, Titus K. Olaniyi, Kenneth Lawani
*School of Computing Engineering and Built Environment
Glasgow Caledonian University, United Kingdom*

Abstract

The Nigerian Niger Delta is used as a case study in this paper to examine the impact of oil and gas activities in the Global South that cause conflict. The Nigerian Oil and Gas Company has made basic amenities such as a hospital, employment, good roads, etc. Evidence from a literature analysis, however, showed that the host communities have been deprived of their traditional daily activities due to environmental degradation caused by exploitation of natural resources, deteriorated infrastructure, etc. In addition, the study focuses on a variety of impacts, such as the environmental, health-related, and social effects of oil spills and gas flares; the employment opportunities provided and the company's overall economic implications; the degree to which the oil industry has fostered conflict in oil-producing regions; and the extent and ramifications of pipeline vandalism. The Niger Delta conflict has implications that have drawn attention to militants to commit various unlawful acts that affect the economy of the nation and they are not ready to change unless their demands are addressed. The increase of conflict in the Nigerian Niger Delta triggered by militant groups because of extreme poverty, unemployment, unfair distribution of resources, etc. Therefore, the expected peace to the conflict has not yet been fully realised due to the ongoing concerns about the detrimental effects of oil and gas activities in the region. The article then reviews current efforts to mitigate some of these impacts through government approaches at various levels. This paper presents the argument that compensating victims of oil contamination with fair compensation is a crucial first step toward resolving the conflict in the Niger Delta. However, in order to arrive at such a settlement value, it is necessary to conclude with a list of recommendations focused on regulatory frameworks, technological advancements, creation of employment, and poverty alleviation.

Keywords - Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Global South, Niger Delta, Oil and Gas Activities

1. Introduction

Several oil-producing countries in the Global South (GS), including Nigeria, Angola, Sudan, etc., have considerably benefited in recent years from oil and gas activities (O&GA). The revenue raised by

(O&GA) employed to maintain fundamental social infrastructures and to manage the country's entire water and land resources [1]. As a result, the O&G industry is significant to the global economy. The activities related to oil and gas, however, have negative effects on the environment, human development, and socio-environmental development of individuals in the Global South.

The O&G sector's activities have a detrimental influence on the environment upstream and downstream, causing contamination of the environment through fire explosions, spillages, and gas flaring. These environmental pollutions are a threat to human well-being and their ecosystem, especially to communities closest to the operation sites (host communities). Furthermore, the overdependence of GS oil-producing countries on O&G production for economic growth can lead to overexploitation of natural resources. This has also contributed to environmental degradation in the Nigerian Niger Delta region, and claimed to be one of the main reasons of conflict in the region.

Oil and gas activities in the oil-producing region eventually result in unequal resource distribution, over-exploitation, and environmental degradation [2]. Health issues, food storage challenges, population displacement, and occupation have all resulted from these effects on oil-producing nations, particularly on the host communities near the oil and gas installations. Over the years, the federal government has struggled to discover an answer to this. For instance, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), established in 2000 to address unemployment and other environmental concerns in the area, was unable to do so because of other significant difficulties.

Given the aforementioned, the resource sharing formula, governmental organisations, and the use of force to resolve regional conflicts exacerbate the problems in the Nigerian Niger Delta [3]. These drawbacks lead to conflict between host communities and oil and gas companies in Nigeria's oil-producing region. This article seeks to reflect on the extent to which the oil and gas activities in the Nigerian Niger Delta have contributed to the protracted conflict and the effectiveness of the conflict resolution strategies utilised to do so.

2. Literature Review

The oil and gas industry is a high-risk industry for many African oil producers. Nigeria, Angola, Algeria, and other countries in the Global South all significantly rely on the oil and gas industry for their GDP. The income generated by rents obtained from access to the petroleum resource in the region supports the Nigeria economy and the countries of the Global South. As a result, Nigeria is now a rentier state. Naturally, as seen in Table 1, the Nigerian economy is heavily dependent on oil and gas, which provide 86% of the country's foreign earnings and 95.3% of the nation's tax revenue. This shows that, comparing many other oil-producing nations, Nigeria depends substantially more on oil as a source of revenue [4].

Despite the fact that the Republic of Congo and Gabon produce less oil than other countries in the area on a per capita basis, the oil business contributes significantly to both countries' GDPs (50% and 37%, respectively), underscoring its significance to both nations' economies. Only 6% and 4%, respectively, of the GDP in Cameroon and the DRC comes from oil.

Table 1. Oil Dependence Country

Country	Oil Contribute to GDP (%)	Governmental Revenue (%)	Oil Export (%)
Nigeria	10	95.3	86
Algeria	20	57.1	85
Norway	14	19.5	48.1
Venezuela	25	70	95%

In addition, with 48.4 billion barrels of proven reserves as of 2021, Libya was the oil-richest nation in Africa. Nigeria came in second with crude oil reserves of 36.9 billion barrels, while Algeria's reserves were 12.2 billion barrels [5]. One of the world's top oil producers is Nigeria with a daily oil output exceeded two million barrels in the start of 2020.

3. Overview of Nigeria and the Niger Delta Region

The people of Nigeria, a country on the western coast of Africa, are among the most varied in the world. They speak a variety of languages, including Yoruba, Igbo, Fula, Hausa, Edo, Ibibio, and English. The nation possesses a wealth of natural resources, including substantial reserves of natural gas and petroleum [6]. The Petroleum Act of 1969 grants the

federal government authority to manage the nation's oil resources, and the host communities are the land or locations where the oil wells are situated. This suggests that Nigeria's legislation granted the federal government complete authority to regulate natural resources across the country.

The Niger Delta Region in Nigeria is where oil and gas operations are most concentrated. This region (officially) consists of nine states, including Delta State, Rivers State, Bayelsa State, Cross River, Akwa-Ibom, Edo, Imo, Abia, and Ondo, as well as 185 local government areas. The region, which makes up 12% of Nigeria's landmass, has a population of over 30 million people living in about 13,000 rural communities over an area of about 75,000 km². There are approximately 600 oil fields with 5,000 wells producing oil, and there are about 10,000 km of pipelines in the region [7].

4. Nigerian Oil and Gas Activities

The formalisation of oil (exploration and production) agreements between international oil and gas companies and host governments normally occurs in one of three ways. These include contracts for risk-sharing, production-sharing, and concessionary arrangements. These are dynamic and do not conflict with one another. For the investing oil and gas Company, the overarching objective is to establish a long-term partnership to produce oil with the least amount of investment and maximum return. The most important considerations for the state party are rents, capital investments, and technical expertise. Oil and gas Companies acquire ownership of the resource through concessionary arrangements, such as those in use in the US and UK [8]. Oil and Gas Companies also own all corresponding exploration and production risks and costs as a result. Taxes and royalties are two sources of revenue for the governing party. Oil and gas production is allocated between the state parties (National Oil Companies) and the International Oil Companies under production-sharing agreements (PSAs) (private investor). The majority of the investment and risk goes to the investor, while the state retains ownership of the resource. The PSA approach is mostly utilised by Angola and Nigeria for their collaborations with major oil companies. The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), which is also an investor-required partner, is the NOC for Nigeria. Sonangol does same function in Angola. Oil and gas companies manage risks as investors by considering considerable impact, and in contractual administrations, this evaluation may be essential.

5. Socio-Environmental Impacts of Oil and Gas Activities in the Global South

Nigeria is perhaps the Global South country with the highest propensity for issues with oil production and oil companies. Because of this, the Niger Delta is a prominent concern of research into the impacts of the oil and gas industry in developing countries. Nigeria and the oil and gas companies that operate in the oil-producing region was brought into contempt internationally by the environmental and human rights issues, protests, and associated issues of the early 1990s, which culminated in the death of novelist and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995 [9]. The environment in Nigeria's oil-producing Niger Delta has drastically changed and evolved since the country's restoration to democracy in 1999, with social protests becoming violent, militancy, and criminality on the increase. The Niger Delta is a complex region with numerous competing interests, making it challenging to find impartial attempts to identify or resolve issues. There are more powerful dynamics at work in addition to the interaction of ethnic identity, problems with land tenure, and rivalry for resources at the community level, such as those involved in large-scale oil "bunkering" (stealing) as a multimillion-dollar business.

In addition to the Niger Delta, the consequences of oil and gas activities on the environment and human health also include the collapse of local fishing and farming, the loss of habitat and biodiversity, acid rain damage, and the health effects of air, noise, and light pollution as seen in Figure 1. Some of these effects cross borders; for instance, downstream riverine populations in surrounding countries depend on migratory fish from the Niger Delta oil region, and such chronic and cumulative damage jeopardised the lives and health of the region's poor people while also seriously harming the environment [10]. As result of this led to the ongoing oil and gas conflict in Nigeria Niger Delta.



Figure 1. Local Fisherman with Little Catch

6. The Oil and Gas Conflict in the Nigeria Niger Delta

The Nigerian federal government, oil and gas companies, and the armed militants (host communities) are the main players in the conflict in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The problems in the Nigerian Niger Delta caused by lack of cooperation between the local ethnic-minority militias and the oil companies, which resulted in a variety of protests and an escalation of conflict in the region [11]. This conflict is a result of little or no benefits for the indigenous population's wellbeing. The conflict over control for natural resources, particularly oil and gas, as well as ongoing concerns about environmental degradation have resulted in a variety of criminal activities, including the sabotage of oil pipelines, illegal oil bunkering, deaths, etc. The annual petroleum production of Nigeria has suffered as a result. Additionally, there are poor roads, no electricity, limited access to medical services, and low educational levels in the communities in the Niger Delta region. It can be evident that perhaps the oil discovery in the Niger Delta has seriously damaged regional development rather than boosting prosperity. However, due to environmental degradation, oil and gas activities in the region have led to intercommunal conflicts, and further disrupted and displaced the host communities' dependence on traditional occupations including farming and fishing [12]. Water supplies and extensive areas of land in the Nigerian Niger Delta has been destroyed by oil spills and gas flare-ups related to oil and gas operations. As a result, fisheries have degenerated, forests have lost fertility, and biodiversity has decreased. The majority of scholars have concluded that Nigeria will have a high prevalence of natural gas flaring.

Other challenges for the conflict in Nigeria's oil-producing regions include chronic poverty, hunger, and unemployment highlight the lack of commitment by the oil and gas companies and the governments' inability to offer social amenities (Niger Delta Region) [13]. As a result, there is animosity, disappointment, rage, and restlessness directed towards the oil & gas companies, the government, especially militant groups for the degradation of the region. However, there are still issues with oil spillage occurrences caused on by mechanical failure and other reasons such oil blowout from flow stations, vandalism, purposeful and unintentional discharges, etc. attributing to a lack of maintenance and corroded oil pipeline.

7. Delta Conflict Resolution Strategies

The federal government of Nigeria have made various efforts to resolve the conflict in the Niger-

Delta Region, which remain unresolved despite all the effort deployed. The Nigeria government adopted various conflict resolution approaches such as Nigerian Revenue Allocation Framework, Governmental Agencies, and Use of Force as discussed below:

The Nigerian Revenue distribution Framework, begins with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), which undertake the role of overseer for the federal account of all revenue received, and then in the allocation of funds is the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) for monitoring and review of revenue accruals and disbursements. The Federal Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) is responsible for the calculation the federal account's monthly disbursement of revenue to each state in Nigeria [14]. The RMAFC proposes the revenue sharing formula among the three levels of government such as federal, state, local and the nine oil states according to Table 2.

Table 2. Revenue Allocation Formula in Nigeria

S/N	Beneficiary	% of Revenue Allocated
1	Federal Government	48.50
2	State Government	26.72
3	Local Government	20.60
4	Centrally Control Special Funds	4.18
Total		100
5	Nine Oil Producing States	(13) Derivation

The fact that before crude oil, the revenue-sharing formula was 50% derivation and 50% equality, when cocoa, palm oil, and groundnut were produced by three ethnic groups, Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba, and this was the Nigerian economy's main source of revenue, further demonstrates the significant level of injustice in the oil-producing region [15] as shown in Figure 2. As oil became Nigeria's main source of revenue, the sharing formula was abandoned as seen in Figure in 2, which they consider to be less beneficial to the oil-producing region, thereby prompted an increase in militancy over conflicts over resource management. The government have not made any changes to the revenue allocation since it was increase from 3% to 13% as seen in Figure 2. This has limited the Government approach to resolve the prolong conflict in Niger Delta over development.

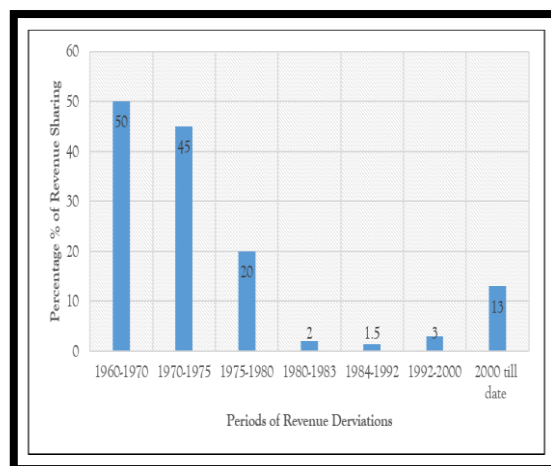


Figure 2. Changes in the Revenue Allocation Derivation in Nigeria

The government effort to address various conflict in the Nigerian Niger Delta by establishing commission such as the Niger-Delta Development Board (NDDDB), Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, and the Niger-Delta Amnesty Programme below:

The NDDDB founded in 1959 in response to the agricultural failure that caused by excessively politicised boards, poor management, and inadequate administrative practices. The NDDDB's activities hindered the absence of an administrative agency rather than an advisory body, which limited officials to oil projects for federal government approval [16]. As a result, the government of Nigeria only authorised 1.5% of the proposed funding, which had an impact on ongoing abandoned projects and impeded NDDDB performance. Because of this, the Nigerian military government established the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission in 1992 as a new development organisation (OMPADEC).

OMPADEC established in 1992 with clearly defined goals to promote development in oil producing regions, such as oil region rehabilitation, addressing environmental impacts, etc. [5]. OMPADEC's inability to realise its development plan, which based on the 3% of Derivation Principle Fund to develop the oil region, was due to its failure to implement strategies. The people's lifestyles in the oil-producing region have not influenced by the governmental commission's inability to implement its strategy effectively due to shortcomings such as corruption, nepotism, insufficient funding, and incompetent management. As a result, OMPADEC was unable to perform its duty to address the problems in the Nigerian Niger Delta. For instance, shoddy work of OMPADEC where out of 1,338 initiated projects only 200 projects were executed

[17]. This catastrophe prompted the Nigerian federal government to respond by founding the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2000 to address the Niger Delta's problems.

The NDDC was set up in 2000 with a mandate to facilitate the Niger Delta region in aspects of sustainable development such as environmental regeneration, stability and peaceful region [18]. However, the NDDC mandate had good funding mechanism than OMPADEC, but unsuccessful address the issues relating to scarcity, discrimination and downgrading in the oil region. Issues of inadequate funding crises, and unreleased budgetary funds by the federal government affected a lot of project executed by the NDDC. The NDDC was able address some of the unresolved issue by OMPADEC, but still a lot of issues remain unaddressed. The failure of NDDC to address the issues of the Niger Delta forces the federal government to reinforce the decision to create the Ministry of the Niger Delta Affairs in the year 2008.

MND established in 2008 to address issues with infrastructural development as well as grievance issues in the oil region and commenced operation in 2009 [19]. MND has the responsibility to manage several undertakings of the stakeholders, host communities and other engagement in the developing process in the oil region. MND has the duties of oversee the implementation of government policies on development and security of oil region, coordinate formulation, liaise with oil companies on environmental protection, unemployment issues, and to supervise the NDDC's activities [20]. The MND's failure is due to high level of corruption and monetary recklessness, which has reduced the development prospects in the Niger Delta region through several state governments. For instance, the federal government release 200 million naira to the MND and NDDC for the construction of hospital, Roads, and schools, etc., but this is yet to materialise any form of infrastructural development in the oil-producing region. Regrettably, Nigerian states have been collecting billions of naira for projects that have failed to demonstrate any progress despite the enormous sum. This has been a persistent problem in Nigeria.

The economy and security of the country threatened by the activities of militant groups in the Niger Delta. The country's daily crude oil production, before the militants took up weapons, was 2.6 million barrels, but this had dropped to 1.7 million barrels per day. As a result, the country's status as the top oil exporter was fast eroding, which prompted the establishment of the amnesty group and the presentation to the Nigerian government by the non-state militants in the region that their struggle was for a just cause [21]. Therefore, the government's decision to distinguish between the legitimate objectives and the criminal motives in the

Niger-Delta conflict made with good judgement. Former President Yar'Adua declared amnesty in the Niger Delta on June 25, 2009, in acknowledgment for the Nigerian government's financial assistance of the initiative by supporting 26,358 registered ex-militants. In addition, 12,000 former soldiers received training in a variety of occupations, including pipeline welding and crane operation, for which employment positions in domestic and international marine, welding, and fabrication businesses will be available. This indicates the degree of success achieved in the reintegration component of the amnesty programme, but regrettably, the extravagant costs of the programme have become a political liability for the Nigerian government among the host communities because they exceed the amount spent by the government on providing children with the most basic education [22]. The federal government forced to restart the negotiation process after five years of the amnesty programme when a group emerged and asserted a new set of claims. Since then, the government has had no choice but to resort to the use of force (military force) to resolve the conflict and stop the militant group's oil sabotage.

The use of military force has been a common conflict-resolution strategy deployed by the Federal Government in the Niger Delta region. This often involves conscripting security operatives from the entire spectrum of the country's armed forces (Army, Navy and Air Force) with the order to clamp down on any uprising in the region [23]. The ferocity of the militant operations caused extensive property damage, fatalities, and the displacement of residents as a result of the ongoing dissatisfaction with the oil and gas activities. Instances of state coercion include the 1990 Umnechem Bloodbath, the 1992 Bonny Tragedy, etc. The Federal Government continued to rely on the military to quell any unrest in the region. With the creation of a Joint Task Force, the civilian administration militarised the region [24]. The government given the mandate to prevent militants from engaging in criminal activity, to protect and restore law and order in the region, and this mandate necessitates the strategic use of force to protect the inhabitants while eradicating the militants. The emergence of these militant groups forced the government to spend billions on security operations, therefore this strategy did not succeed in bringing the militants under control; rather, it aggravated the situation [25]. This demonstrates the total failure of the government's use of force approach to defuse the conflict. However, because of the military's inability to prevent unnecessary conflicts without placing innocent people in danger and damaging property, there have been human rights infringements and the growth of militia movements. The militant activity significantly decreased oil production and revenue, which escalated the expense of maintaining military

operations locally. The militarization of the region as a strategy only contributed to exacerbate the conflict locally.

8. Methods

The purpose of this study is to reflect on the impact of oil and gas activities in the Global South on conflict in the Nigerian Niger Delta. According to the review of literature, aspects such as the impact of oil and gas activities on the economy of the Global South, Nigeria's oil and gas activities, the socio-environmental impact of oil and gas activities, etc., investigated. Furthermore, major issues such as environmental degradation, poverty, unemployment, and a lack of infrastructure all contributed to the cause of oil-related conflict. To realize the aforementioned aim, the study design focused on identifying the elements with specific occurrences by analysing previous events of already existing information to develop a knowledge of problems for oil related conflict by oil and gas activities from the mentioned literature review. This study's strategy is a case study from the Nigerian Niger Delta, and all data utilised in this study centred on the Niger Delta region as it relates to the issues with oil-related conflict. The quantitative mono approach selected since it allows the study to undertake in-depth investigation of specific occurrences in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the study. Since this study required data collection over several years in order to undertake its investigation, its reliance on secondary data was critical. Secondary data was obtained and reviewed from oil and gas companies and oil regulatory agencies in the Niger-Delta region. The data involving oil and gas companies, host communities and institutions acquired from journals, articles, newspapers, and other websites covering the Niger-Delta conflict. This contributes to providing a comprehensive explanation of the numerous oil and gas situations that have resulted in conflict over the years by various scholars. Secondary data on the frequency of oil spills, photographs of polluted regions, black market activity, and a composite measure of militancy were all utilised to demonstrate the impact of conflict in the oil-producing region of the Global South. To show each secondary piece of information with the problem description, the analysis divided into sections.

9. Results and Discussion

The results of the ten gas flaring countries in the world are summarised in Figure 3. The Figure 3 indicates that Nigeria's oil and gas activities continue to affect the environment, with more gas flaring (GHG Emission) than most other countries, making it the world's second most polluted country. This

increase in gas flaring in Nigeria might be the consequence of oil and gas companies taking advantage of the corruption and a lack of enforcement of environmental laws practice in the oil and gas production process in which caused most challenging for the rural peasant communities of the Niger Delta region.

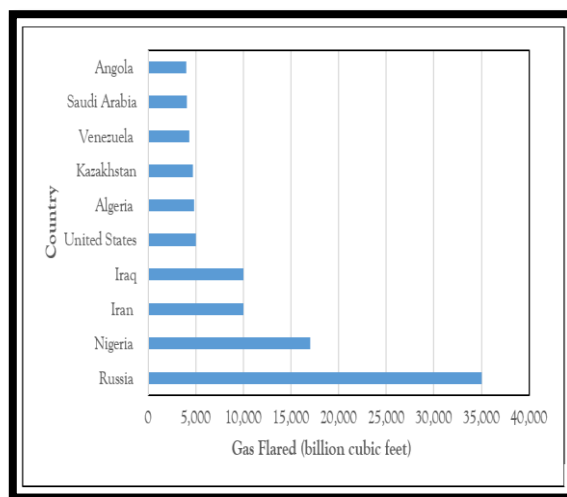


Figure 3. Top Ten Gas Flaring Countries in the World

Data on cases of oil related conflicts from the oil and gas companies and host communities in the Global South countries shown in Table 3. There are several situations that oil and gas companies have not performed well in engaging with the oil producing communities in which gas resulted in environmental impacts. The environmental Concerns caused by the oil and gas companies are responsible for conflict and social disturbance in host communities where they operate in Africa, such as Niger Delta of Nigeria. To add, the host communities are among the most influential, impacted stakeholders in the oil and gas value chain as their livelihoods, and environment is affected.

Table 3. Source of Oil- Related Conflicts in Global South

Country	Community	Petroleum Company Operating within the Region	Source of the Conflict
Angola	Cabinda	Chevron	Oil spills have a negative impact on the environment, and there is a perception of unjust revenue distribution.
Gabon	Obangue	Addax	Poor waste management practises have resulted in environmental damage.
Sudan	Dinka and Nuer	GNPOC	Politically forced community displacement to enable for oil and gas exploration and production.
Algeria	Ain Salah	Consortium made up of sonatrach, Total and Halliburton	Oil and gas activities in the region have both environmental and social consequences.
Ghana	Keta	Swiss Africa oil company	Oil and gas operations in the region have both environmental and social consequences.
Nigeria	Bodo and Ogoni	Shell	Spillage from oil installations in the region has harmed the environment.

Table 3 represents a cognitive map to demonstrate the perspectives in the understanding of how oil and gas activities have affected life of the Niger Delta people resulted to conflict on the oil and gas producing communities. The people are mainly peasant rural peasant communities with very limited economic opportunities, depending mainly on the environment for sustenance. According to the map, due to the constant environmental degradation caused by oil and gas activities in which has led to socio-environmental impacts of degradation on the oil-producing region. These socio-environmental impacts of degradation have caused health risk, low life expectancy, water and air pollution, low agricultural output, fishing degeneration, land degradation, and food storage. As a result of this complex issues, these oil producing region inhabitants are subjected to experienced cases of occupational displacement, insecurity issues, unemployment, abject poverty, and population migration, lack of Infrastructure and social services in which aggravated to oil related conflict as demonstrated in Figure 4. The oil-related conflict cases is due to the suffering in the midst of huge oil and gas revenue extracted from the oil and gas activities of the Niger Delta region.

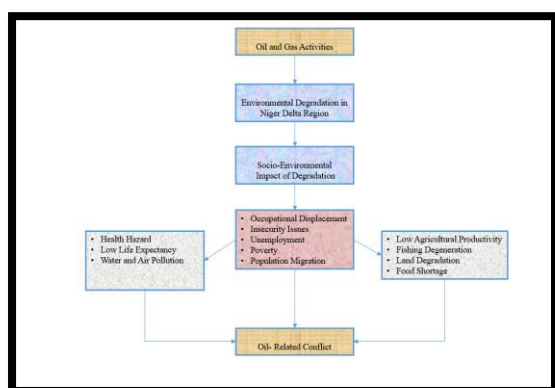


Figure 4. High Level Map of Oil and Gas Activities and Conflict in Nigeria

It is also of topical concern to the peasant rural communities to the oil and gas activities leading to multiplier effect of the oil related conflict in which the conflict resolution approach by government is ineffective as demonstrated in Figure 4. In order to address the poverty challenge, unemployment, the federal government of Nigeria have made various efforts to resolve the conflict, which remain unresolved despite all the effort deployed. The Nigeria government created various governmental agencies to resolve the issues relating to the oil and gas conflict over the years as indicated in the Figure 4. In Nigeria, most of conflict exist in the Nigeria Niger Delta and posed a serious threat to sustainable development such as killing, tensions for resources

control, kidnappings, etc. have become a major concerned for the Federal Government.

10. Recommendations and Conclusion

The performance of oil and gas development in the Global South is the most challenging for rural peasant communities in the Niger Delta region due to environmental degradation caused by oil-related conflict. The environmental problem for peasant rural communities has many impacts attributed to toxic chemicals utilised in oil and gas activities that might generate health risks such as cancer. Essentially, the government and oil and gas activities are attempting to enhance social infrastructure, build capacities, and provide new possibilities for the underprivileged in order to reconcile the broken relationship among stakeholders that is the root of violent conflict. The use of force by the government and government parastatals to resolve ongoing conflicts in the oil region is unsuccessful. As a result, there is a need to develop an independent environmental policy and governance with long-term interest, to respond to the socio-economic consequences of community residents, and to enforce and monitor compliance in order to minimize environmental degradation. Furthermore, environmental protection enhanced significantly in order to meet the best industry practises across the globe that affect socio-environmental circumstances for the long-term growth of oil and gas producing communities. This is especially crucial if current institutions are weak and have failed to use allotted resources to build development infrastructure for communities suffering from environmental degradation in Nigeria's oil-producing region. Furthermore, encouraging community engagement in any development endeavour, such as infrastructure projects designed exclusively for community use, increasing community ownership, and enhancing governance are highly recommended to minimise the ongoing conflict in the Niger Delta region.

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