Class Conflict and the Development of the Niger Delta

By

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Abstract

The demand for genuine development by a segment of the Niger Delta as opposed to policies of Underdevelopment orchestrated by the privileged few in active collaboration with petty Bourgeois has often elicited swift reactions and created antagonistic relationship between the two main classes. This paper views the ongoing demand for desirable change in order to create a new social order based on the principles of equality, justice and fairness as part of class conflict. It averred that class consciousness, which is a precondition to all forms of class conflict is as old as recorded history in the Niger Delta following unabated resistance by proto-nationalists over European incursion, but varies significantly from one phase of our development history to another. The paper observed that class conflict in the Niger Delta is a product of deep-seated discontent arising from the realization that state resources produced from the area are misapplied to the exclusive benefit of the few privileged few. The work discovered that class conflict has created some sort of development in the form of reform measures as a way of avoiding class suicide in order to maintain the structural inequality in the area but always reproduced as an instrument of further exploitation and domination of the poor. By virtue of the nature of the variables under investigation, the study adopts conflict theory as its logical foundation to explain the link between the variables. It explores documentary evidence as its method of data collection and analysis, complemented by observation of major event, which is an integral part of the primary method. The work recommends massive and aggressive socialization as a way of reinforcing their mobilization capacity.

Keywords: Class, Conflict, Development, State and Class Conflict.

1. Introduction

The unabated quest and attendant struggle to acquire state power in order to determine favorable process of authoritative allocation of values has polarized society into two antagonistic classes. In every society, there are two classes, the rich and the poor, that owned the means of production, and the other that sold its labor. During different historical phases, these two classes were known by different legal statuses and privileges, but one thing was common, that in the course of all these phases, their relationship had been one of exploitation and domination (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, 2011:448; Sabine and Thorson, 1973:689, and Gauba, 2006:353.

One of the most obvious implications of modern state is gradual but steady polarization of the society into two main classes; one miserably poor and the other massively rich. Though this situation is not limited only to Nigeria, but what perhaps makes her case particularly worse is the growing amount of resentment and hatred that the overwhelming majority poor feel towards the microscopic minority rich in the society (Mbah, 2014). Class conflict as a social reality of Nigeria's economic development is here constructed from one view point: the current demand in the country for genuine development as opposed to the prevailing policies of underdevelopment which the ruling group has been pursuing in active collaboration with local capitalists forces is a manifest class struggle. The ongoing industrial unrest embarked upon by judiciary and legislative workers in Nigeria, demanding for, inter alia, the implementation of autonomy or independence of the two arms of government is a manifest case and an empirical indicator of class conflict.

An intriguing part of this now open, now hidden conflict is that because the ruling class is not willing to commit class suicide, the synthesis of the struggle results in the introduction and implementation of reform measures in the form of increased wages, and other middle-course approaches that are pivotal to an exponential increase in the quality of the life of the people involved. This underscores the fact that conflict is not only inevitable in society but also desirable in that it reconstructs society, as the post conflict phase is a better stage of human cognition, embodying the interest of the classes involved, which is another point of origin in the course of societal development.

More often than not, the conflict between classes is all part of the yearning of the dominated class for freedom, equality and justice in the process of production and distribution of the material well-being of the people. This conflict is a function of power and this can be understood within the context of the local situation, especially, the material conditions of majority of Nigerians (Nnoli, 2003:103; and Ake, 1981). It, therefore, shows that class conflict arises mostly from feeling of deep-seated marginalization and injustice, meted out to the hoi polloi by the ruling class in form of unfriendly policies and programmes that form the pivot of primitive accumulation. It follows logically that the state serves as a veritable instrument of exploitation and domination of one group by another.

It is pertinent to note that class conflict is ubiquitous, pervasive and dates back to antiquities. In Nigeria, it started from the pre-colonial era as proto-nationalists resisted imperial occupation and imposition of authoritarian policies to advance British interest. Therefore, it espouses the assertion that the history of all hitherto existing society is a history of class struggle (Marx, 1977b:109 cited in Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, 2011); Therefore, class antagonism is crucial to the development of all societies (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, 2011). Ironically, class antagonism increased exponentially after independence as the dominated class, in several occasions, resisted draconian policies by the ruling elites, which found expression in the form of protest and open agitations, such as political crises that bedeviled the activities of the first republic, the Ali must go riot, the anti-SAP riot, the political imbroglio that greeted the arbitrary hike in the prices of PMS, etc. It is also contend that the recent ENDSARS protest believed to have been undertaken by Lumpen proletariats to and police brutality and extra-judicial killings in Nigeria is part of the manifestations of class antagonism.

Therefore, this paper seeks to examine the antagonistic relationship between the two dominant classes in Nigeria, with particular reference to the effect on the development of the Niger Delta. It begins with an introduction which examines the historical part of class conflict in Nigeria, the second segment discusses the problem as it applies to the Niger Delta, which would be followed by a well determined effort to operationalize the concepts used in the work The fourth segment is to review extant literature in other to discover the gap in knowledge. The choice of a suitable theoretical framework will be carefully determined in

other to explicate the variables under investigation. Lastly, considerable degree of attention would be devoted to analyze the situation of class conflict in the Niger Delta and how it has affected the development trajectory of the aforesaid area.

2. Statement of Problem

The increasing demand for a genuine development in the Niger Delta as opposed to unfriendly policies initiated by the Nigerian State in active collaboration with the local bourgeois such as state governors, Ministers, Senators and other public office holders from the Niger Delta, which have bedeviled the swift realization of the dreams of the common man has created antagonistic relationship between the dominant classes in the area. Since the discovery of oil in commercial quantities in Nigeria in 1956, the area called Niger Delta has experienced avalanche of crises, occasioned largely by the near absence of basic necessities of life, believed to have been orchestrated by the ruling class through the enactment and formulation of agonizing policies, reinforced by manifest neglect, marginalization and injustice and the resultant deep-seated discontent among the people. At the face value, the crises have elicited some form of attention as the ruling class adopts some reform measures to abate the intensity of the crises as a way of eschewing class suicide in order to enjoy the structural inequality or maintain the status quo. Ironically, it is Instructive to note that every reform decision taken by the Nigerian State and its active collaborators serves as an instrument of domination and exploitation of one class by another. This explains why class Conflict remains unabated, pervasive and, in some cases, catastrophic (indulged by some lumpen proletariats) as every reconciled decision (synthesis) forms a new point of origin (thesis).

The foregoing analysis gives a lucid explanation of the terrible situation in the Niger Delta as it creates a vicious circle of underdevelopment, given the fact that every step taken to advance the interest of the common man creates insignificant and undesirable consequences. This is the thematic concern of this study as it seeks to examine the class character of the Nigerian State and its relationship with the common man as well as the effects it has created in the Niger Delta. It intends to provide satisfactory answers to the following research questions.

i. Does class Conflict exist in the Niger Delta?
ii. Has class Conflict produced any desirable change in the Niger Delta?

iii. What are the challenges besetting the people in their endless quest for a more equitable distribution of the available resources?

3. Conceptual Framework

In order to have broader and clearer understanding of the variables used in this paper, this segment is devoted to explicating the concepts with their manifestations and empirical indicators in the context adopted in this work. These terms include class, state, development and class Conflict.

i. **CLASS:** In this work, class is used to denote members of a group with similar attributes. A distinguishing characteristics of a class as used in this work is that the components are inherently united by a common desire to advance their collective interest such as either to maintain the existing status quo or obliterate the structural in balances. In its connotative sense, it embodies the penchant for ownership and attendant control of the means of production, distribution and exchange on one hand and the near absence of these productive forces on the other hand. Because classes are related only in the sense of domination and exploitation, inter-class Conflict is always inevitable. An obvious manifestation of a class as adopted in this study is the unending desire for the acquisition of state power and the resultant control of the available resources at the detriment of the other class Majorly, there are two dominant classes in this work, viz the ruling class on one side with its active collaborators with a natural propensity to acquire and control state power and the proletariats or the have nots on the other side. Because the structural inbalances are not in favour of the former, there is the constant struggle for change from below.

ii. **STATE**: In this study, state is used in the Marxian context as an instrument of domination, exploitation and coercion of one group by another as opposed to the liberal sense, which sees it as a community of people with a participatory government in modern times, at least, in theory, a clearly defined constitution that guide conduct and a territory. A defining attribute of the state as used in this work is the acquisition of Political power to dominate and exploit the other class. This study adopts the meaning of state defined by Igwe (2007) as a creature of the basis and most decisive clement of superstructure of society, with class and politics as its major attributes,

and government as it primary agency, the most comprehensive political organization of society, a culmination of man's struggle in settled life, embodying and expressing the common interests of the dominant class within the system, and of its derivative ruling class within the government, both of whom are able to attain and sustain such pre-eminence by various designs, including the ultimate application of authoritative forces.

iii. **DEVELOPMENT**: According to Rodney (2005), development is a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Some of these are virtually moral categories and are difficult to evaluate depending as they do on the age in which one lives, one's class origins and one's personal code of what is right and what is wrong. However, what is indisputable is that the achievements of any of those aspects of personal development is very much tied in with the state of the society as a whole. In this context, development denotes an increase in the general quality of life through the provision of basic necessities of life such as food, shelter and clothing as well as other social necessities that are essential to providing conducive environment. These Social amenities include provision of quality education system, a standard health system to address the challenges of Mother/infant mortality, standard road, uninterrupted electricity, increased per capita income, etc. These Social amenities always form the basis for an objective evaluation.

iv. **CLASS CONFLICT**: According to Wikipedia, class Conflict is also referred to as class struggle and class warfare, is the Political tension and economic antagonism that exists in society consequent to socio-economic competition among the social classes or between rich and poor The forms of class Conflict include direct violence such as wary for resources and cheap labour, assassinations or revolution, indirect violence such as deaths from poverty and starvation, illness and unsafe working conditions, and economic coercion such as threat of unemployment or the withdrawal of investment capital. In the Political and economic philosophies of Karl Marx and Mikhail Bakunin, class struggle is a central tenet and a political means of effecting radical social and political changes for the social majority.

From the foregoing, class Conflict is interchangeably used as class struggle, denoting antagonistic relationship between the ruling class and the common man. It encompasses the application of hard Political and economic measures on the part of the former with its concomitant excruciating consequences to perpetually cause underdevelopment in order to enjoy class advantage and maintain the existing structural inequality. On the contrary, such difficult measures are resisted either gradually or aggressively by the common man in form of protest and other ethical measures to register their displeasure with a view to assuaging the effects of such hard policy measures and the overall goal of upturning the unfriendly social order

4. Objectives of the Study

This study is set out to realize the following objectives:

i. to examine the class character of the Nigerian State as it applies to the Niger Delta;
ii. To evaluate the consequences resulting from class Conflict in the Niger Delta; and
iii. To assess the challenges inhibiting the desired outcomes from class struggle.

5. Theoretical Framework

In view of the nature of the variables under investigation, the choice of Conflict theory to explicate the link between the two dominant classes is considered most suitable The most justifiable ground for the adoption of Conflict theory as its explanatory foundation is better understood within the context of viewing the study as an assessment of the struggle between two dominant classes whose interests are diametrically opposed to one another. Conflict theory contends that society is in constant and unmitigated struggle for limited resources. The conflict theory, suggested by Karl Marx, claims society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources. It holds that social order is maintained by domination and power, rather than consensus and conformity. According to conflict theory, those with wealth and power try to hold on it by any means possible, chiefly by suppressing the poor and powerless The basic premise of conflict theory is that individuals and groups within society will work to maximize their own benefits (Chapperlow, 2019 cited in Micah, 2020: 104).

Conflict theory examines society with the following assumptions:

i. conflict theory focuses on the competition between groups within society over limited resources,
ii. Conflict theory views social and economic institutions as tools of the struggle between groups or classes, used to maintain inequality and the dominance of the ruling class; and
iii. Marxist conflict theory sees society as divided along lines of economic class between the proletarian working class and the bourgeois running class.

The foregoing analysis shows the usefulness and the suitability of the choice of the theory as it perfectly and succinctly describes the antagonistic nexus between the two variables. The study hinges on struggle of two opposites which conflict theory professes. A more fascinating account of the theory which underscores its appropriateness is the fact that the theory views all institutions and other agents of government as tools in the hands of the ruling class in order to maintain the tilting social order of inequality, exploitation and domination of the common man.

6. Methodology

This research exercise adopts qualitative method of data collection and analysis. An integral part of qualitative method of data collection and analysis is that It depends on secondary data in the process of obtaining information about the study. According to Chawla and Sondhi (2016), secondary data is that information which is not typical or research -specific and has been collected and compiled by some other researcher or investigative body. The said information is recorded and published in a structured format, and thus, is quicker to access and manage. Secondly, in most instances, unless it is a data product, it is not too expensive to collect.

In view of the above, this study explores the option of documentary evidence from text books, journals, periodicals, unpublished project works, seminar papers, etc. However, its major drawback is that it increases the crises of validity and reliability.

Similarly, the study critically examines and analysizes the documentary evidence obtained from the secondary sources as opposed to a rigorous process of

quantitative method of analysis that emphasizes the use of statistical models to interpret the findings.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the secondary data is complemented with primary data as we painstakingly observed some events in the Niger Delta. Observation is an important aspect of quantitative method of data collection and analysis. A good example of such process of observation is the issuance of one month ultimatum and organization of subsequent mother of all protest by ljaw Youths Council against the federal government over the delay in the reconstitution of substantive NDDC Board.

7. Analysis

In this segment, effort is made to critically examine the link between the two main classes in the Niger Delta and the impact it has created in improving the quality of life. It commences with a brief background of the Niger Delta crises.

7.1 Brief Background of the Niger Delta Crises

The discussion of the Niger Delta crises is preceded by a brief examination of the varying view about the region. According to Ibaba (2005), the definition of the Niger Delta has elicited different views. He stated that the World Bank describes the Niger Delta as one of the World's largest wet lands and Africa's largest Delta covering some 70,000km2 formed by the accumulation of sedimentary deposits transported by the Niger and Benue Rivers. He further noted that the widespread view which accepts the definition of the Willink Commission, largely congruent with the position of OMPADEC, sees the Niger Delta region as the South- South geopolitical zone, made up of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers States (with Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States classified as core Niger Delta States). The broader and widely refuted definition by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Act, which includes Abia, Imo and Ondo States, is not acceptable. The NDDC Act defines the Niger Delta as oil producing areas, which is arguably inconsistent with the reality on ground. The scope of the region is defined by geography as highlighted by OMPADEC and the Willink Commission Report.

In his groundbreaking research, Ibaba stated that the ethnic groups in the Niger Delta include Ijaw, Isoko, Itsekiri, Ogoni, Orhobo, Ikwerre, Ika, Ukwuani, etc. The Niger Delta is the heart of Nigeria's oil industry (with over 90 percent share of production). Oil production in Nigeria actually commenced in the Niger Delta. Having exhaustively looked at the prevailing views about the Niger Delta, it is crucial to briefly examine the crises that have engulfed the Niger Delta.

For some time now, the Niger Delta region has been engulfed by a largely violent pattern of conflict. These conflicts have been blamed on a plethora of factors land alienation, unfulfilled promises for compensation, political marginalization, socio-economic inequalities, dishonest leadership, communication gap, inadequate research input and cultural disorientation (Ibaba, 2005: 23). He, however, points at the oil industry as the most precipitating factor that should be examined. This brings to fore the contention that communal conflicts in the Niger Delta are largely attributable to the exploration and exploitation of oil resources in the area.

To buttress the foregoing analysis, it is contended that the communities in the Niger Delta, from whose land oil is produced, are excluded from the oil wealth. Worse still, the impact of the oil industry has stagnated their development. This, it is argued has created the objective conditions which throws up conflicts. Therefore, conflicts pervade communities due to the rise of consciousness on the part less privileged group which seeks to liberate itself from domination and exploitation, visited on them by the Nigerian State.

In reality however, the conflicts in the Niger Delta are attributable to the rise of consciousness, seen here as the ability of man to ideally reproduce in his mind the surrounding reality existing beyond and independent of him.

This consciousness involves a full awareness by members of the exploited class of the reality of their exploitation, a recognition of common interest, the identification of an opposing group with whom their interests are in conflict and a realization that only by collective action can that opponent (exploiter) be overthrown. It is enhanced by the movement of a class from a position of class-in-itself, an unconscious category, to a class-for-itself (a conscious class category).

This form of consciousness also includes an awareness that state resources are misapplied to the benefit of the dominant class (Ibaba, 2005). This has set in frustration, and deep-seated and pent-up anger which provides a fertile ground for conflicts. Perhaps, of more significance is the awareness that the development impotence of the region is mainly caused by enabling laws, which govern oil industry.

7.2 Class Consciousness in the Niger Delta

According to Marxist theory, class consciousness is an awareness of one's social class and/or economic class relative to others as well as an understanding of the social rank of the people to which you belong in the context of the larger society. In addition, class consciousness involves an understanding of the defining social and economic characteristics and collective interests of your own class within the constructs of the given socio-economic and political system (Mbah, 2012).

Class consciousness is a core facet of Marx's theory of class conflict, which focuses on the social, economic and political relations between workers and owners within a capitalist economy. The precept was developed in conjunction with his theory on how workers might over-throw the system capitalism and go on to create a new economic, social and political system based on equality rather than inequality and exploitation (Thomas, 2012).

Ibaba (2005) succinctly captures it as the ability of man to ideally reproduce in his mind the surrounding reality beyond and independent of him. This consciousness involves a full awareness by members of the exploited class of the reality of their exploitation, a recognition of common interest, the identification of an opposing group with whom their interests are in conflict and realization that only by collective action can that opponent (exploiter) be overthrown. It is enhanced by the transformation of a class from a position of class-in-itself, an unconscious phase, to a class-for-itself (a conscious class category). This form of consciousness also includes an awareness that state resources are misapplied to the benefit of the dominant class.

Class consciousness is as old as recorded history in the Niger Delta following early resistance by some proto-nationalists such as Nana of Itsekire, King Jaja of Opobo,

Oba of Benin, etc., who saw European incursion as a threat to survival. This may not comprehensively explain the level of class consciousness as their activities fell-short of the objective characteristics stated above. It only explains the fact that the level of class consciousness varies from one phase to another, depending on the capacity and mobilization power of the people.

It is Instructive to state that the evolution of the Nigerian State and the subsequent discovery of oil in large amount also precipitated, motivated and awaken class consciousness as the people became aware that state resources mainly coming from the Niger Delta are misapplied to the exclusive benefit of some Nigerians who do not suffer any adverse consequence associated with oil exploration.

7.3 The Role of the State in the Third World and Implications for the Niger Delta Crisis.

The Fourth Schedule of the Directive Principles of State Policy as indicated in section 14(2)(b) of the 1999 Constitution, as amended, describes the primary role of the state as the provision of security and welfare for its citizens. This description has created far-reaching impact on the role of the state. It has impliedly granted the state with the legal application of force so long as it is done in the guise of providing security for its citizens. The German sociologist, Max Weber, espouses the foregoing assertion when he correctly defines the state as a polity that maintains a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence (wikipedia). This definition provides an insight into the role of the state as an instrument in the hands of the privileged few, especially in third world countries where the conduct of state affairs is quite alien and misapplied as an offshoot of primordialism. It shows why the sit-tight syndrome is pervasive and endless in third world countries, especially in Africa.

The use of legitimate violence by the ruling class in the guise of consolidation of state power has always created undesirable consequences. This is the bane of the Niger Delta crises. It finds expression in the form of policies that do not consider the sum total of the yearnings and aspirations of the people. For instance, the land use Act alienated the people of Niger Delta from having access and control of their resources, but provided ample opportunity for the ruling class to own oil Wells and any attempt to draw deserving attention through protest is matched with state

violence. In other words, the application of legitimate force has influenced the ruling class to advance their inordinate ambition at the detriment of the common man. Therefore, the state serves as an instrument of coercion, exploitation and domination of one group by another.

The above viewpoint espouses the assertion by the American pamphleteer. Thomas Paines, who stated in 1796 that "government" is a necessary evil. It is necessary as it overtly maintains civil order; it is evil as it advances the interest of the ruling class at the detriment of the people.

It is worthy to note that the Nigerian case is peculiar in a sense that having access to state power gives one the opportunity to amass wealth primitively. This explains why there is pervasive corruption and electoral fraud in Nigeria. In short, elections in Nigeria are considered as a civil war (Ake, 1981; and Nnoli, 2005). The unrestrained use of state power by the ruling class has exacerbated the crises in the Niger Delta as it forms the pivot through which the ruling class in active collaboration with local bourgeois advances their personal interest. The crises increase when people express their disillusionment over such agonizing policies that do not take into account their own interests.

7.4 Class Conflict and Development of the Niger Delta

The paradox of class conflict and development of the Niger Delta manifests glaringly in the appreciation of the dialectical process of the struggle in the Niger Delta. The logic of the relationship is that the state serves as an instrument in the hands of the ruling class and its cohort This has always influenced them to arbitrarily formulate policies and programmes that substantially reflect the interest of the few. Because these policies do not take into consideration the yearnings and aspirations of the people, it is always greeted with stiff opposition in form of violence protests, riots, and in some cases, apply the use of lethal weapons by some lumpen proletarians to engage state forces. Depending on the intensity of the struggle and because the ruling class with its petty bourgeois is not prepared to commit class suicide, in most cases, it ends in form of addressing some of the concerns raised by the people in form of new policies and programmes that appear to embody the interest of the people, which is the beginning of another struggle for a better deal. It is imperative to note that more often than not, these

programmes are reproduced as instruments in the hands of the ruling class who dictates the outcome of events in these programmes.

It could be recalled that at the wake of Independence, which coincided with the discovery of oil in large quantities, the Nigerian State through some infamous policies drastically reduced the derivation principle in a manner that will always shortchange the people of Niger Delta. In short, Thomas (2010), contended that the Nigerian State has been preoccupied with how best they can come up with unpopular policies to control oil resources. This was resisted by the people of Niger Delta. It is Instructive to note that the climax of the resistance after some legal fireworks, culminated in arms struggles, in part, ignited the Twelve Days Revolution led by Isaac Boro. The synthesis of the struggle between the Nigerian State with its collaborators and the people of the Niger Delta, partly accounted for the creation of old Rivers State as a gradual and steady measure to maintain the structural inequality.

At the face value, the creation of a state for the people of Niger Delta is considered as part of development when we hold all other factors constant. The irony of this paper development compared to the totality of oil proceeds from the area is that the control of the state by local collaborators like governors, Senators, Ministers, etc. only did the bidding of the Nigerian State. especially, during the military interregnum.

This sordid experience was followed by a decision during the Nigerian civil war to relocate all the head offices of the major Oil companies to Lagos. This is the bane of Underdevelopment of the Niger Delta as the ruling class demonstrated its nepotistic proclivities by engaging the services of their people in order to dominate the oil industry at the expense of the people of Niger Delta. This explains why the oil industry is dominated by non Niger Deltans.

This unfortunate situation, exacerbated by the decision of the Nigerian State to expunge the derivation principle from the 1979 Constitution elicited graver reactions from the Niger Delta. A case in point was the nude protest organized by the women of Efurun community in Delta State to register their displeasure with the Nigerian State. These reactions lingered until the sum total of the protracted

reactions resulted in an insignificant increase in the derivation principle to three percent in 1993 and the creation of the interventionist agency, OMPADEC in 1993 Again, this development created no quantum leap on the lives of Niger Delta people, as the management and control as well as the working documents were determined arbitrarily by the Nigerian State and handed down to their local collaborators

The struggle continued unabated even after the interventionist agency was established since the impact created was marginal and insignificant. It is expedient to contend with some verifiable evidence that the creation of Bayelsa state is closely linked to the protracted reactions. However, the only worrisome trend was that the local collaborators like late DSP Alamieyeseigha and Chief Onanife Ebori, whose conviction by a competent court of jurisdiction is a verifiable evidence indicating that state resources were carted away.

The golden age of the struggle was the exponential increase in class consciousness among the various ethnic groups that make up the Niger Delta, occasioned largely by the identification of e common exploiter and the strong conviction that the struggle will make meaningful sense through a collective engagement all the various ethnic groups. This was followed by declarations made by youth groups, women groups, chiefs and elders such as the Kaiama Declaration in 1998. the Ogoni Bill of Rights, Itsekiri and Orhobo youths declaration, etc It is interesting to note that the result of all these declarations and other forms of agitations was an increase in the derivation principle to Thirteen percent and the establishment of another interventionist agency, the Niger Delta Development (NDDC) which were captured in the 1999 Constitution (as amended) of the Federal Republic Nigeria. Again the level of change is infinitesimal as local collaborators only protect the interest of their appointors, which is another beginning of the class struggle. Sadly the NDDC only specializes in the award of water hycinth contracts which does not have any significant link with the objective material conditions of the lives of the people. It is disheartening to note that in the recent past, the Nigerian State in collaboration with the local bourgeois has devised other illicit means by appointing a sole administrator to run the agency, which is part of measures to take back what had been allocated to the Niger Delta.

In view of the above, reinforced by the increased level of class consciousness, the Ijaw youth council in conjunction with other ethnic nationalities from the Niger Delta issued one month ultimatum and subsequently organized a well attended protest, urging the federal government to appoint a substantive Board for the NDDC. The protest made significant impact as the Nigerian State was compelled to make promises. Again, the only worry is that the local collaborators are working hard to occupy the juicy offices of the board, which another beginning altogether. The struggle took new dimensions from the enthronement of Democratic rule - this time more violent and radical, engaged by what I describe as lumpen proletarians such as Militant groups from the area, sea pirates, kidnappers, etc, decided to take up arms as an indication of violent protest against the Nigerian state. The activities of the lumpen proletariats created far-reaching impact as daily oil production drastically came down in 2010. Some reform measures were adopted at the verge of the struggle to maintain the structural inequality; the AMNESTY programme was created under the pretext of rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-agitators as well as the creation of the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs. The same fears are expressed as the management and control of these agencies are not under the control of the people.

8. Conclusion/ Recommendations

Having exhaustively looked at the antagonistic relationship between the Nigerian ruling class in conjunction with some local collaborators, this paper concludes that class conflict is a practical reality in the Niger Delta. Study discovered that the reform measures taken by the former has created some sort of development as a response to the agitations by the people of Niger Delta. It also find out that the reform measures have been reproduced as tools in the hand of the ruling class further the process of exploitation and domination of the people.

The study recommends that to achieve the desired development, the people must be involved in the management and control of their resources through massive socialization

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