

**AN APPLICATION OF NON-VIOLENT APPROACH TO INSURGENCY IN NIGER DELTA REGION, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*The problem of insurgency has been an aged long issue in the nation. This is because the Nigerian government thinks that the issue in contention will be solved and agitation handled with force and intimidation. Despite all the previous efforts implored by the government which is more or less violent, the issue of insurgency has continued to resurface with its attendant damages on the income of the nation. This is because the Niger Deltans are seen as the hen that lays the golden egg which has no benefit from it. Instead they are inhumanly and unfavourably treated due to exploration and exploitation. It is against this background that this work proposes a non-violent approach as a possible remedy to the long devastating issue. This study will be done using sociological approach and be framed with Marxian Model of Conflict Theory. The paper finds that there has been insurgency by the Niger Deltans which is because of the negligence of the people by the government. It also observes that the negligence has been long winding due to the uncaring attitude of the government. The paper finally observes that the non-violent approach could help solve the problem if the Federal government can adopt that as a measure in handling the issue. It is the interest of this paper to conclude that if the government will reconsider the sufferings that are imminent in Niger Delta and allow them some right in the oil exploitation and exploration, the insurgency will be a thing of the past. The paper therefore recommends that the government should give trial to non-violent approach which the paper is optimistic that it will yield a lasting result. It also recommends that the leaders should look at the condition of the Niger Deltans and listen to their issue for agitation which will give room for peace and harmony in the entire society.*

**Keywords:** Application, Non-Violent, Approach, Insurgency, Niger Delta, Region, Nigeria

### **Introduction**

Nigeria, the world's most populated African nation is also the largest producer of oil and gas in Africa. Whereas the oil produced in the Niger Delta according to kimiebi (2010) is the life blood of the Nigerian economy, oil has failed to translate to regional prosperity and development in the Niger Delta. Instead, the region has been rewarded with massive environmental degradation, political and economic marginalization. The violent repression of peaceful dissent exemplified by Ken Saro-wiwa and the Ogoni eight Saga, has been the preferred method of the Federal Government in addressing agitations from the Niger Delta over the years. This created an environment filled with anger, desperation and organized violence. The combination of the activities of the oil companies and the mute indifferences of government led to emergence of various armed groups operating under such names as Egbesu Boys, Movement for the survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality (MOSEIN), Joint Revolutionary Council, MENBUTU, Arogo freedom fighters, Niger Delta Volunteer force, Niger Delta Avengers and Movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). The activities of these groups which includes kidnapping of foreign nationals working with the oil companies have created a state of general insecurity, worry and concern to people, institutions and relationship in the region in particular and Nigeria in general.

In spite of these conflicting situations in the Niger Delta, the government has not really strived to ascertain the remote courses of these conflicts and the proper solution to them. This uncomplimentary attitude has led to the increased insurgents activities in Niger Delta region which has resorted to Insurgency. The increased rate of Insurgency according to Okolie (2012:256), has really threatened state stability and human security. It has been deduced to be the worst form of violence as it has to do with a faceless people. Sequel to the above, it is evident that individuals and groups in Niger Delta region in particular and Nigeria in general more often than not resort to acts of insurgency in pursuing their course. As the menace of Insurgency increases as a result of the unbalanced method, the prevention and elimination require a host of traditional means (Policing, military, economic sanctions, intelligence) and non-traditional means (cultural, social and development initiative including non-violent resolution options). The

Nigerian government is currently applying some of the above mentioned strategies, but non-violent option is yet to be adequately explored, hence there is need to use a modern non-violent approach to issues associated with insurgency in Niger Delta region. This is because violence begets violence and peaceful approach calls for collaborative efforts of man and woman of goodwill to reassess the prevailing issues associated with insurgency with a view to getting to the root of the matter. This will guarantee peaceful co-existence, harmony, love, and sustainable development in Niger Delta region in particular and Nigeria in general.

### **Theoretical framework**

This study adopts Marxian Model of Conflict Theory with emphases on class conflict as a theoretical framework. Marx and Engels (1977) posit that, the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Thus, the class analysis best explained the endemic struggle between the exploiters (the multinational oil companies and government) and exploited (the Niger Delta people, including the militant groups). Marxists according to Luckac (1968) held that the dominated, exploited and marginalized groups, which paradoxically generated the burden of creating resources which sought to change the status quo when it became conscious. Furthermore, conflict theory argues that society is not best understood as a complex system striving for equilibrium but rather as a composition, hence the society is made up of individuals competing for limited resources. This theory is appropriate in this work because there is a struggle between the federal government and the Niger Deltans on the control of limited resources which has given way to insurgency.

### **Understanding Non-violence and insurgency**

Non-violence has been defined by many scholars. According to Sharp (2012), he defines nonviolence as the personal practice of being harmless to self and others under every condition. It comes from the belief that hurting people, animals, or the environment is unnecessary to achieve an outcome and refers to a general philosophy of abstention from violence based on moral, religious or spiritual principles. Odey (2005) in his view sees it as not violent, free of violence, peacefully resistant, as in response to or protest against injustice, especially on moral or philosophical grounds. Insurgency on the other hand has been seen and observed by several sociological scholars. In the word of Peter (2004), insurgency is seen as a rebellion against authority when those taking part in the rebellion are not recognized as belligerents. Gray (2000) defines it as a deliberate creation of

terror by killing people, maiming others and injecting fear into the rest, in order to force and effect a change in the society to the tone or favour of the insurgent or their benefactors. The federal Bureau of investigation (FBI), cited by Valeria (2002:31) sees insurgency as the unlawful use or threatened use of violence by a group or individual committed against person or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives. Furthermore, Victoroff (2005) maintains that insurgency is aggression against innocents, aimed largely at influencing a target audience to achieve essentially political goals. Insurgency therefore is a tactic or technique by means of which a violent act or the threat thereof is used for the prime purpose of creating overwhelming fear for coercive purposes.

### **Historical Perspective of Niger Delta Region in Nigeria:**

The Niger Delta covers an area of well over 70,000 square kilometers, covering the greater part of the South- South region and some part of the South East region of Nigeria. Azaiki (2007) asserts that it derives its name from the River Niger and is one of the world's largest wetlands and Africa's largest delta. The Niger Delta is one of the largest deltas in the world, probably the third largest on earth. The region is regarded as one of the nine most difficult deltas of the world comparable to the Mekong, the Amazon and the Ganges. It is situated in the central part of southern Nigeria. It lies within latitudes 4 degrees north to 6 degrees north, and longitude 5 degrees east to 8 degrees east.

The area has a population of about twenty five million people, according to the 2006 national census figures (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006) and more than forty ethnic groups with links to the linguistic groups of Ijaw, Edo, Igbo, Efik, Ibibio and Oron. Brisibie (2001) asserts that it is rich in both renewable and non renewable natural resources such as oil, gas, bitumen, etc, accounting for 95% of the total revenue for the Nigerian government, generated from oil and gas exploration and 80% of national wealth. According to Kimiebi (2010), the NDDC ACT (2000) recognizes nine states, namely; Abia, Akwa-ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers as comprising the Niger Delta, but the focus of this paper shall be core Niger Delta states that is Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers states. These are the 'states geographically characterized predominantly to an extent with deltaic features'. Prior to the discovery and exploration of oil and gas resources in the Niger delta region, the primary occupation of the people was

fishing and farming. Unfortunately, years of oil exploration and exploitation by the Oil companies, according to Okonta and Oronto (2001), has destroyed the subsistence economy of the people. Reports from various quarters lend credence to the claim that environmental degradation occasioned by oil spillage has made life extremely difficult for the local people. The destruction of farmland, fishponds and rivers had radically altered the economic life of the once self reliant and productive region for the worst.

### **Causes of Insurgency in the Niger Delta Region**

There has been a high rate of Insurgency in the Niger delta starting from 2006. This can be attributable to several factors including the marginalization of the peoples of the Niger delta, environmental degradation, bad governance and inconsistent policy framework, and the divide and rule policy of the oil companies. In the following, we are going to examine these causes.

- a. **Marginalization, Abject Poverty and Massive Unemployment:** The Niger Delta communities have remained grossly socio-economically underdeveloped and pauperized amidst the immense oil wealth owing to systematic dis-equilibrium in the production exchange relationship between the state, the Trans-national companies and the people. According to Pegg (1999), enormous money had been derived from oil export but the area has been subjected to severe land degradation, socio-economic disorganization, increasing poverty, misery, military occupation and bloody violence. Oil extraction has impacted most disastrously on the socio-physical environment of the Niger Delta oil bearing communities massively threatening the fragile subsistent peasant economy and bio-diversity and hence their entire social livelihood and very survival. The oil producing communities have basically remained dependent and underdeveloped, persistently dis-empowered, socio-culturally marginalized and psychologically alienated.

According to Owabukeruyele (2000), the wealth derived from oil resource exploitation and exports benefit directly only the operators of the oil industry and the bureaucrats in government. Ejibunu (2007) posits that the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta region in 1957 triggered a chain of events that has led to the political and economic marginalization of the inhabitants. Despite over forty years of oil production in Nigeria and hundreds of billions of dollars of oil revenue, Oronto, Kemedt, Okonta and Walts (2003) assert that the inhabitants of the Niger delta region especially the riverine (creeks) remains in abject poverty.

Poverty level is about 80% while unemployment level is about 70%. Ibaba (2005) asserts that, they live without even the most basic amenities such as pipe-borne water and electricity. Purportedly, Mukagbo (2004) opines that in the Niger Delta, scenes of abject poverty pervade the area, very similar to what you find in a refugee camp.

Unemployment is very high among the people of the Niger Delta. The youth from the Niger delta do not benefit from the presence of the transnational corporations especially the oil companies operating in their communities. Ejibunu (2007) presents that, Less than 5% of the people from the Niger Delta work in the companies, while women from the region working with the oil companies are less than 1%. Those who benefit through employment by the oil companies are from the non oil producing parts of Nigeria.

- b. Environmental Degradation:** According to the World Bank, there are five great plagues of mankind: war, famine, pestilence, environmental pollution and death. The Niger Delta is at the verge of becoming an environmental wastebasket. From the oil spills to the round-the-clock gas flares and effluents from industrial wastes, the fragile ecosystem of the Niger Delta is under constant assault. However, Ile and Akukwe (2001) observe that it is still a mystery that no comprehensive study of oil exploration in Niger Delta and its effect on the environment exists. According to Azaiki (2003), the unbridled exploitation of crude oil and natural gas beneath the lands of the Niger Delta has caused indescribable and irredeemable ecological devastation of the Niger delta land. Okaba (2005) sums up the environmental impact of the oil industry in the Niger Delta of Nigeria as land deprivation, soil quality alteration, destruction of aquatic ecosystem and air pollution.
- c. Destruction of Aquatic Life and Ecosystem:** A major environmental tragedy in the Niger Delta is the waste of aquatic ecosystem. This aspect is quite significant to the people, being that it constitutes a grave threat to a hitherto economic hub of their lives-fishing. Nwaomah (2009) asserts that, it is a common sight that in the process of oil exploration and production, materials such as drill cuttings, drill mud and other fluids that are used to stimulate production are discharge into the environment and most end up in the streams and rivers. Okaba (2005) presents that these chemicals are not easily degradable and the skimming of oil on the water surface hardly solve the problem since most of the oil might have sunk to the bottom of the water surface leaving grave consequences such as: (a)

surface and ground water quality deterioration in terms of portability, aesthetic and recreation, (b) destruction and reduction of fish life and fisheries production of the waters, (c) destruction by acute and sublethal toxicity of aquatic flora and fauna of spills on water and benthic macro.

- d. Soil Quality Alteration:** Soil quality alteration is another environmental problem that Niger Deltans contend with as a result of the oil industry. Nwaomah (2009) asserts that it is an environmental condition that is caused by a collection of oil exploration and exploitation activities such as construction of flow lines and trunk line networks, terminals, digging of location waste pits and barrow pits, oil spillage either from equipment failure, human error, corrosion of pipes due to age and sabotag. Okaba (2005) says that it is estimated that as at 2002 about 8581 oil spills, involving nearly 28 million barrels of oil have occurred in the Niger Delta. Nwaomah (2009) asserts that other factors responsible for the soil quality alteration is the unceasing gas flares, drill cuttings, drill mud and refinery waste. The harmful effects of these elements on the soil are unquestionable. Owabukeruyele (2000) argues that the compounds from the numerous petroleum wastes contain organic chemicals such as phenol cyanide, sulphide-suspended solids, chromium and biological oxygen that leave destructive effects on the land and water.
- e. Air Pollution:** Gas flaring is a primary source of air pollution in the Niger Delta. The oil companies are wrecking the ecosystem of the Niger Delta through uncontrollable gas flaring. Gases flaring takes place twenty four hours and some are believed to be burning for over thirty years, thereby resulting in the release of hydrogen sulphide. The oil companies are not only destroying the Niger delta, but they are also contributing to global warming. The pollutions released and the noises from the vibration are injurious to human health. This is why Okaba (2005) posits that, it is argued that the chemical emissions from the flaring contribute to acid rain, trigger skin diseases and the quick corrosion of roofing sheets in the Niger Delta area, a common sight in this region. A secondary source of air pollution in the Niger Delta according to Nwaomah (2009) is the incidents of fire resulting from leakages from the exposed and corroded oil pipes that are scattered all over the region. Doran (1995) presents that the environmental degradation being carried out by the oil companies in the Niger Delta as a result of their non compliance with internationally recognized environmental standards are damages that their consequences cannot be limited by time.

Unfortunately, Ojomu (2002) views that available evidence shows that the trend is worsening as the government lack the political will to ensure compliance to rules by the oil companies.

### **The Nature of Insurgency**

The goal of Insurgency is to overturn real or perceived maladies endemic to particular conditions and situations by employing a wide range of violent, political, social, and economic means to achieve that goal. Each insurgency reflects unique conditions, characteristics and dynamics setting it apart and making simple solutions based on doctrinal formulas difficult if not impossible. Insurgencies are largely internal conflicts waged by indigenous movements for political, economic or social control of a particular state or region. While other states may support insurgents, the impetuous for change lies not with invasion from without, but uprising from within. In fact, able to draw from loosely connected networks often located outside the conflict zones, for expertise, clandestine funding and ideological support they have thus grown far less reliant on external states for material assistance than in the past. Additionally, insurgent movements motivated by radical ethno-nationalist and religious beliefs and sure of the righteousness of their causes, increasingly turn to subversion, violence and terrorism to intimidate highly vulnerable populations and gain a level of support more akin to that normally associated with local criminal gangs than populist movements. As the 21st Century progresses, tightly controlled insurgencies based on rural unrest are giving way to loosely organized networks of extremists hiding in ethnic and religious enclaves.

Like those of the past, today's insurgencies must employ asymmetric methods to achieve their goals. The existing regime or intervening power possesses the military, political, economic and social resources normally held by a state, even a weak one. The insurgency must form and grow, systematically weakening the state's grip on power. In contrast to interstate warfare, with its clear conceptual and legal separations (even if not always observed in practice) between military forces and civilian populations, insurgency makes few such distinctions. Insurgents survive by not being seen and by fighting in subversive and shadowy groups that only show themselves momentarily and then blend back into the surrounding physical or human terrain. Notably, however, if once insurgents took refuge in remote areas and relied on external support, they now hide virtually in plain sight in populated and urban areas. Remaining in the urban

shadows, operating in dispersed and compartmented cells, drawing sustenance and protection through the support, acquiescence or intimidation of the populace, and carefully, but visibly, directing violence at civil and military targets, they gain strength and wear down their enemies. Insurgencies need not gain decisive battlefield advantage for more than few seconds; they need only keep from being tactically overwhelmed. The longer they remain a threat, the greater their chance for success.

### **Previous Approaches to Insurgency in Niger Delta Region and the Outcome**

The escalation of the insurgency caught the government flat-footed. It initially believed the violence would help out. Sustained attacks however ushered in more sober responses. Since 2012, according to Daily Trust, 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2014, it has tried to address the challenge on multiple tracts but especially by increasing the defense budget from 100 billion naira in 2011 and 1trillion naira in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Much of these increases were to combat insurgency. Other measures includes strengthening anti-terrorism legislation, boosting the capacities of the military and other security agencies, exploring dialogue with the insurgents, and launching military offensives against the insurgents. The outcomes of these approaches have been limited.

- a. **Boosting the Capacities of Military and other Security Agencies:** The military had not anticipated the insurgency and was not prepared for its bombing campaign, as the Late National Security Adviser Owoeye Azazi admitted in August 2011 (punch, 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2011). Over the last few years, the government has sought to improve the capacities of the military and security services to respond to the challenge, particularly by improving training, equipment and coordination. The government employed military might against insurgency with the use of sophisticated ammunitions. This led to the death of many person both military and insurgents. Sequel to this, it is obvious that the approach has tried but is still limited as it has not totally curbed out insurgency in Niger Delta.
- b. **Implementation of Amnesty Programme for Ex-militants:** In 2009, the federal government introduced a programme of amnesty for all the militants in the Niger Delta, in which they were to return their arms and enter into the amnesty programme. This was adopted in order to ensure that the activities of the militants which had defied military action in the region did not lead to the

eventual collapse of the economy. The ex-militants were to receive ₦65, 000 each as monthly stipend while they were trained on various skills both at home and abroad, to enable them gain employment and become re-integrated into the society.

- c. **Divide and Rule Policy:** Over the years, the oil producing companies operating in the Niger delta have adopted a divide and rule method in which they identify for compensating people in the host communities they believe that they have the capability to influence the indigenes to ensure that they have a peaceful environment to operate in, at minimal cost. A minute part of the money that should have been spent on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the development of the host communities are paid to such individuals and groups. As such in some communities, Kemedi (2003) reveals that traditional rulers and local community leaders have become corrupt as they have become recipients of various contract awards and cash payments at the detriment of the communities they represent. Ile and Akukwe (2001) observe that the Shell petroleum development company (SPDC) ignored the traditional rulers and elders and accorded recognition, partnered and related with the youths, simply because the youths had more disruptive power on oil production. Therefore the youths emerged as community leaders. These youths became the power brokers, the liaison with the MNCs, and the object of MNCs patronage.

### **Impact of Niger Delta Insurgency on Nigeria**

The crises in the Niger delta region according to Ejibunu (2007) arising from the activities of the different militant groups operating in the region has brought about some negative implications, not only on oil production and other economic activities, but also on governance in general. The activities of the militants have impacted the Nigerian economy in various ways.

- a. **Kidnapping and Hostage Taking:** Kidnapping and hostage taking has been a major tactic of the militant groups with foreign nationals working in oil companies as primary targets. In January 2006, hostage taking of oil workers started in Bayelsa after the declaration of 'operation orido danger' by MEND with the kidnapping of four set of hostages. According to Amanyie (2006) over two hundred expatriates had been kidnapped, although most were released within weeks in exchange for ransoms, typically hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Though casualty figures from kidnapping by militants operating in the Niger delta has been low. However, the implication of the kidnappings which involved mainly foreign workers and development partner on Nigeria's economic development has been enormous. It succeeded in scaring away potential development partners and robbed the Nigerian state of the benefit of such development alliances and opportunities. The state of insecurity according to Akpan (2010) has led to a reduced volume of investments and capital flow to the region.

- b. Illegal Oil Breakage:** The operation of militants in the Niger delta and the insecurity has made it impossible for security agencies to adequately cover locations of various oil facilities. This has created a veritable ground according to Oudemans (2006) for illegal oil bunkering to thrive in the region. Illegal oil bunkering, an euphemism for oil theft, has assumed considerable dimensions in Niger Delta, estimates range from 30,000 to 200,000 bbl/day. Several of the militant groups are also believed to have been involved in illegal oil bunkering. It is believed that illegal oil bunkering has become a major source of funding for the operations of the militants in the Niger Delta. Militant warlords who engage in illegal oil bunkering justify their actions by claiming that it is a means of providing income for the impoverished residents of the oil producing communities. It is reported that one days worth of illegal oil bunkering in the Niger delta (at 100, 000 bbl at \$15bbl) will buy quality weapons to sustain a group of 1,500 youths for two months.
- c. Downsizing Oil Companies Employees and Disruption of Business Activities:** As a result of the activities of militants in the Niger Delta region, SPDC retrenched 3,500 workers in September 2007. Indorama Petrochemical Company shut down its operations thereby rendering over 3,000 youths jobless and aggravating the unemployment situation. Restiveness has reduced growth in the business sector. As a consequence of militant activity, Royal Dutch Shell has seen its production dropping from one million bpd to about 380,000 bpd at its Bonny terminal in the South of the delta. Exxon has also experienced increased insurgent activity in its Nigerian operations. According to Harper (2009), Nigeria is already suffering from production slow down due to militancy, currently the Niger Delta is only exporting 1.8 million bpd, compared with a targeted 2.2 million bpd. In Rivers state, Ejibunu (2007), posits that over 80% of the companies have stopped operations, as expatriates have either gone to their home countries or relocated to safer environments.

### **Suggested Approaches to Insurgency in Niger Delta Region, Nigeria**

- a. **The Non-violent Approach to Insurgency in Niger Delta Region:** Sequel to the investigation into the various approaches utilized by the Federal Government to curb insurgency in Niger Delta Region which are mainly violent in nature and a little peaceful approach, it has been discovered that violent approach has not done any good toward solving insurgency rather it has increased the rate of killing of innocent citizens and destroying of properties worth Billions of Naira. In respect to this, it is obvious that a better and result oriented approach is needed. To achieve this, Gandhi's ideology of applying non-violence is required. This is why Hayes (2003) contends that those who oppose insurgency should endeavor to engage in a broader set of dispute resolution strategies to ascertain the one workable and thus use it. Furthermore, Harik (2004) observes that there have been many occasions in which government and others engaged in conflict resolution strategies with insurgents including amnesties, treatment of arrested insurgents, and negotiations during insurgency event and campaigns. Gandhi in his own concept of nonviolence propounded the use of "ahimsa" and Satyagraha as a viable approach in curbing insurgency.

Ahimsa is an Indian word which Mayton and Burrows (2012:713) defined as a term meaning "to not injure". The word is derived from the samkrit root "himsa" which means to strike; "himsa" is to injure or harm and the opposite of this is cause no injury or do no harm". John (1997:392) explain Ahimsa as a multidimensional concept, inspired by the premise that all living being have the spark of the divine spiritual energy, to hurt another being is to hurt oneself. To Gandhi as presented by Williams (1986:11), Ahimsa is to preclude not only the act of inflicting a physical injury, but also harsh words, dishonesty and lying, all of which he saw as manifestation of violence incompatible with Ahimsa. Ahimsa therefore is a rule of conduct that bars the killing or the cause of injury to living beings.

However, in its comprehensive meaning, Ahimsa connotes entire abstinence from causing any pain; harm whatever to any living creature, by thought, word or deed. It therefore, requires harmless mind, harmless mouth and harmless hand. Okoro (2008) asserts that it does not only mean negative non-injury but also cosmic love. It is the development of mental attitude in which hatred is replaced by love. Ahimsa is true sacrifice, it is true forgiveness. Ahimsa is power, it is true strength. In practicing Ahimsa, Gandhi in Bhargave (1968:100) says that

if you practice Ahimsa, you should put up with insult, rebukes and assault; you never retaliate nor wish to offend anybody even under extreme provocation. You should not entertain any evil thought against anybody. You should not curse, should be prepared to lose joyfully even your life in the cause of truth. By implication, Ahimsa by practice is living selflessly in a selfish world. The government in applying this principle should in totality access the extent to which she has caused injury before insurgency and during insurgency. Before sincere peace can be achieved, wrongs must be corrected.

Satyagraha on the other hand is also an Indian word use by Gandhi to portray the root meaning of his nonviolence concept. Uma (2005:138) observes that it is loosely translated as 'Insistence on truth' or 'truth force'. It is a particular philosophy and practice within the broader overall category generally known as nonviolence or civil resistance. Satyagraha is a philosophy coined by Gandhi to describe the form of nonviolent technique he used and practiced. It is a philosophy and practice of absolute nonviolent resistance of injustice, oppression and dehumanization.

This concept of Satyagraha was conceived, developed and used by Mahatma Gandhi alongside Ahimsa to fight for the liberation and reformation of Indian society. It is a weapon of social change. Satyagraha is derived according to Gregg (2014:6) from two Sanskrit words- "satya" which means "truth" and "Agraha" which means to "grasp" or "holding fast". In the struggle for India Independence, Hardman (2003) describes the concept thus; its root meaning is holding unto truth, hence "truth force" or "soul-force". In the application of satyagraha, we discovered in the earliest stage that the pursuit of truth did not admit violence being inflicted on one's opponent but patience and sympathy, for what appears to be truth to one may appear to be error to others. Here patience means self-suffering. Therefore, the doctrine came to mean vindication of truth, not by inflicting of suffering on the opponent but on oneself. Satyagraha is a two-sided coin; the non-violent side and the non-cooperation side. Against the background of foregoing, peace and conflict resolution strategies advocated, as well as their weakness as identified, the strategy of nonviolence is strongly canvassed as an option that will complement that peace and conflict approaches already tried in solving the violence of Insurgency in Niger Delta. This nonviolence approach constitutes a most feasible means to end conflict situation in Niger Delta.

- b. Prayer and Peace Building:** The term peace refers to occurrence of harmony characterized by lack of violence, conflict behaviours and freedom from fear of violence. It is commonly understood as the absence of hostility, retribution and suggest sincere attempt at reconciliation, the existence of healthy or newly healed interpersonal relationship. Peace Building is an approach or asset of interrelated efforts that support peace. It addresses the underlying causes of violence and work to create societal change. Peace building includes pre-conflict interventions in practice; most peace building includes pre-conflict interventions.

The UN Secretary-generals policy committee (2007) explains peace-building as a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all level for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. It is an intervention that is designed to prevent the start or resumption of violence by creating a sustainable peace. Peace-Building includes a wide range of efforts by diverse actors in government and civil society at the community, national and international levels to address the root causes of violence and ensure civilians have freedom from fear, freedom from war and freedom from humiliation before, during and after violent conflict. The process of peace building stabilizes society politically and socio economically. Peace Building refers to direct work that intentionally focuses on addressing the factors driving or mitigating conflict. Here the root cause of the insurgency in Niger Delta is address. Again peace building efforts aim to manage, mitigate, resolve and transform central aspects of the conflict through official diplomacy as well as through civil society, peace processes and informal dialogue, negotiation and mediation. This will address economic, social and political root causes of Niger Delta Insurgency and foster reconciliation to prevent the return of structural and direct violence. Prayer in its own has a splendid role to play in changing beliefs, attitudes and behaviours to transform the short and long term dynamics between individuals and groups towards a more stable, peaceful coexistence.

- c. Dialogue:** Dialogue is one of the primary components within the broader definition of peace building. The goal of Dialogue is to develop joint approach to conflict resolution, as well as improve relationships, understanding and trust between individuals or groups in conflict with one another. This process according to Harold (1999) consist of bringing together actors from across the conflict divide with, in order to develop an improved understanding of the concerns, interests, and needs of the other side. This he stated must be done in

sincerity. According to Harold (1999), Dialogue is the art of active listening and the ability to respectfully articulate one's own perspective without increasing the acrimony as key elements of a dialogue process. Dialogue involves a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take the others' concern into his or her own picture, even when disagreement persists. No participant gives up his or her identity, but each recognizes enough of the others' valid human claims that he or she will act differently towards the other.

Dialogue implies that the two parties or group must have a common ground to meet and assess their grievances. In view of this, there is sincere need for the federal government to meet with the insurgent groups in Niger Delta Region to dialogue genuinely for peace to return in the region. It is important to note that in this process, dialogue issues agreed on must be implemented for peace to reign. Therefore, dialogue in this context must be done sincerely and with total commitment to achieving lasting peace in the region.

### **Conclusion**

The war against insurgency in Niger Delta Region is more than just the prevention of insurgent activities. It is usually comprehensive in nature, attacking the premises of insurgency itself, addressing the root cause. In combating insurgency in Niger Delta Region, it has usually taken a violent approach and has not yielded any meaningful success. Sequel to the edict of this work, non-violent approach has been pronounced through this work to be the most successful approach in curbing insurgency as violence has never been a best option to achieve peace. Nonviolent approach as propounded by Gandhi encourages pacifism which involves reliance on peacemaking and peace building. This will help in achieving a more permanent peace in the Niger Delta Region in particular and Nigeria in general. No meaningful progress will be made in any aspect of our socio-economic and political life while insurgency rages on like hammatern fire. Similarly, no developmental project or investment can thrive in an atmosphere of conflict. Insurgency calls for collaborative non-violent approaches to curb the excesses. Though it may tarry but the end will justify the means. The Government should have a listening ear to appreciate that violence begets violence; hence a non-violent approach is imperative.

### **Recommendations**

After carrying out this work, the researchers deemed it necessary to make the following recommendations;

The government should give trial to non-violent approach which the paper is optimistic that it will yield a lasting result to the struggle in the Niger Delta regions which is leading to insurgency.

It recommends that the leaders should look at the condition of the Niger Deltans and listen to their issue for agitation which will give room for peace and harmony in the entire society.

The paper also recommends that violence approach has not been of a helping hand in addressing this issue and as such the suggestions of this paper are necessary.

Also the political elements from the region should be active and alive in living up to their expectation. This is by using the available resources to better the lives of the masses.

The paper finally recommends that there is need for a visionary and sincere leader who will be ready to tackle this issue of agitation once by listening to the demand of the people and giving them what is due them.

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