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Economy of the Niger delta, militancy and class struggle

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Abstract

This paper examined the economy of the Niger Delta, militancy, and class struggle. Taking a cue from the Marxian theory, the relationship between the avowed agitating stance of the people of the Niger Delta and the perceived economic sabotage by the ruling class that militate against regional development was examined. Sitting on the Gulf of Guinea is the sprawling coastline of the Niger Delta region, spanning 70,000 km² and gulping a total of 7.5% of Nigeria's land mass. Lodged within its terrain is a huge deposit of natural resources. Containing over 20 billion barrels of oil reserves and a staggering worth of over 3 trillion cubic meters of gas deposits, the Niger Delta region contributes about 95% of its reserves to Nigeria's foreign exchange index. Yet, the Region is disparaged and lacking in development. This has forged a cohesive bond between the growing rate of militancy and insecurity in the terrain, prompting a continuous struggle for regional control and discontinued resource racketeering. Utilizing secondary data and content analysis as a method of data collection and analysis as well as Frustration and Aggression theory, the paper observed that the 13% derivation fund allocated to the oil-producing states has not bridged the overwhelming gap between the impoverished region and the resources exploited from the terrain,. The paper recommends amongst others that The Government should review policies that are not in tandem with the dynamics of the region and set up structures that will provide the required economic dividends due to the region.

Keywords: Marginalization, Niger delta, militancy, economic sabotage, development, region

Introduction

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is flanked by gorgeous vegetation and rivers, paying tribute to the rich deposit of natural resources beneath its earth surfaces. Originally, it is composed by the six states from the Southern geopolitical zone in Nigeria namely Rivers, Delta, Bayelsa, Cross River, AkwaIbom, Edo. But Ondo, Abia and Imo State were also recognized through to the petro dollar business that led to the creation of the Niger Delta Development Commission. More than 95% of the country's GDP is derived from oil and gas resources accrued to the region but amidst the exploited resources lays flagrant impoverishment, corruption, and non-committal by the Federal Government toward the implementation of lofty promises made by past and present administrations. Indeed, "the Niger Delta region is the largest wetland in Africa and the nerve centre of oil and gas activities in Nigeria (Ejekie, Osai & Egobueze, 2020, p.1) [3].

The Niger Delta is the theatre where these repressive state institutions, using taxes from the multinational oil corporations, inflict their obscene brutalities on the helpless inhabitants of the oil-bearing communities (Owolabi & Okwechime, 2007) [15]. ("Militancy in the Niger Delta and the emergent categories - JSTOR") The region is plagued by monumental environmental pollution, poverty, economic and infrastructural deprivation, insecurity, and marginalization. In the wake of developmental deficit and widespread poverty, the birth of militants emerged, challenging the narrative by employing forceful means such as vandalization of oil pipelines, kidnapping of expatriates and oil workers in exchange for ransom, blowing up oil wells, and displaying an unrestrained level of youth restiveness thereby militating against the investment benefits emanating from oil exploration proceeds within the Niger Delta. Aggrieved militant groups such as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Niger Delta Revolutionary Crusaders, Reformed Egbesu Boys of the Niger Delta and several others revolted against the uneven resource allocation,

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questioned the neglect and untold hardship meted on the indigenes of the region hence leading to a conflict of interest bordering on resource control and territorial marking. Agbai & Ogbuku (2022)^[1] opined militancy in the oil-rich Niger Delta has not only hindered Nigeria's socio-economic development and political stability, but also has created the conditions that altered existing social order in the area.

This has snowballed into pockets of violence across the region, increasing insecurity and depriving the terrain of further investment opportunities. The Niger Delta is imbued with resources that have become a tool of conflict rather than development and aligning the causes of gross underdevelopment in the region with the spate of militant agitations fuels the conversation surrounding marginalization and uneven resource distribution in this paper. Although there has been a continuous introduction of amnesty initiatives and institutions such as the Niger Delta Development Commission by different administrations yet that step has only served as a balm instead of a curative measure because that can stem the tide of violence for a while but will not fix the marginalization prompted by these agitations. The acclaimed NDDC has become an avenue for self-enrichment and aggrandizement. The institution is unable to account for over 90.9 billion Naira worth of projects in the last ten years and this has further fueled the agitations as a call for a holistic overhaul of the commission has been made. Taking all these into account, it behooves the Federal Government to effect a structural plan and initiate a progressive agenda that will tackle the sprawling decadence in the region and stem the tide of violence by providing adequate development in the Niger Delta, instituting an economic framework clad by transparency and accountability to alleviate the plight of the people in the region. This will broker peace in the region, promote development and enhance the cohesive integration of interests.

Theoretical structure

The paper examines the relationship between aggressive behavior and deep-seated frustration. It asserts that emotional behaviors can be used to convey distaste for an unpleasant situation, especially one stemming from the frustration of goals or objectives. This is evident in the exploitation of emotional characterization toward the subsequent retaliation by aggrieved persons or individuals who utilize aggressive means to place their demands. Juxtaposing this analytical stance with the frustration-aggression theory, conflict ensues when goals are frustrated hence leading to violence or uncivil means of resolution. The lack of shared interest and pristine understanding between two parties might deteriorate into an aggressive form of settlement. Modified by the Yale Group in 1941, it postulates that instigated frustration tantamount to a series of emotional responses and aggression is undoubtedly one such emotional response. Bringing to bare the functionality of the frustration-aggression theory in intergroup relations, it was further discovered that sectional hostility, prejudice, societal oppression, and stereotyping could induce frustration which will eventually lead to aggressive tendencies or behaviors. The frustration-aggression theory was introduced by a group of psychologists at Yale University, John Dollard, Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Robert Sears, and O.H. Mowrer in 1939.

As postulated by the frustration-aggression theory, the Niger Delta region's continuous agitations for economic and

capital development are fueled by the gross lack of attention from the government who enjoys the proceed from the exploration of natural resources in the region. As one of the most endowed terrains in Nigeria, luxuriant and thriving in natural resources, spanning about six states, and embracing about 240 km on the Gulf of Guinea, the region has not felt the impact of the resources lodged in the terrain. Since oil was discovered in the region in commercial quantities in 1956, the Niger Delta region has had nothing but entrenched poverty which is obvious in every part of its states. All the states lying along the coastlines of the Niger Delta region has a population index of 25 million people, constituting about 25% of the Nigerian population according to the 2006 population census conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics and laden with over forty ethnic groups. For the past decades since the discovery of oil in Oloibiri in modern-day Bayelsa State, the region has recorded massive retrogression in terms of infrastructural development and human capital investments.

Although the economic deprivation was not a thing that stirred much controversy until 2005 when a series of communal meetings and regional conversations ensued between various militant groups to stop the exploitation of the region's resources through aggressive measures ranging from attacks on multinationals and their facilities and instilling widespread insecurity to forestall further exploitation of their natural resources. During the late 90s, tactical non-aggressive methods were employed by Ogoni born poet-turned activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa who sought ways to end the unfair exploitation of the region's resources through dialogue and peaceful conversation but was later executed on the ground of unfounded claims and false charges. Taking a detour from this path, the militants sought aggressive measures to push their demands.

The oil companies cannot pretend they do not know what is happening all around them. The Nigerian government obviously has the primary responsibility to stop human rights abuse but the oil companies are directly benefiting from these crude attempts to suppress dissent, and that means they have a duty to try and stop it (Kenneth Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch). The deterioration caused by oil exploration in the region has unleashed mayhem over the years. From the health risk posed by consistent air pollution through gas effluents to the land degradation prompted by oil spillage, the region has suffered unquantifiable neglect, one premised on neglect and destruction of their source of livelihood. Air pollution is increasing rapidly daily impacting the tropical evergreen natural environment of Niger Delta negatively thereby reducing air quality due to unlimited human activities (Udoeh, 2018; Ede & Edokpa, 2015; Raji & Abejide, 2013; Ubani & Onyejekwe, 2013)^[16-19].

Exploiting the natural resources within a region without providing economic development that commensurate with the carted-away resources can yield to aggression and further stripping the same of its source of livelihood can only incite nothing but violence and random acts which tends toward aggressive behaviors. "In this region, anthropogenic activities such as deforestation, urbanization, industrialization, transportation, oil exploration and exploitation, gas flaring, unlimited usage of pesticides and herbicides for livelihood have degraded the ambient air quality (Onuoha et al, 2018; Bayode et al, 2011; Roche, 2003)^[20-22].

Causes of militant agitations and class struggle in the Niger delta

The emergence of militancy and insurrection in the Niger Delta region dates to 2006 when the overwhelming presence of economic degradation and neglect by the ruling class became profound, throwing the indigenes of the region into a state of despair and frustration. When the push to change the narrative through peaceful delegations and engagements became futile, the emergence of militants and agitating groups became a tool utilized to garner attention from the government and relevant stakeholders. The major factors contributing to militant agitations and class struggle include the following:

Regional marginalization and abandonment

The exportation of petroleum products in 1957 set the ball rolling for the new phase of economic growth in Nigeria. Then the parlance ‘Oil boom’ was born. It became associated with the progressive leverage provided by the discovery of oil and its related benefits. Armed with this discovery, the country thrived on the proceeds gotten from oil exploration in the Niger Delta. “The oil boom in Nigeria has been driven by oil extracted from the Niger Delta region. Oil wealth, from the Niger Delta region, is largely responsible for sustaining the Nigerian Federation (UNDP, 2006, p. 62) [13]”. Though the region contributes to national development yet the level of underdevelopment bedeviling the region is monumental. The ratio of explored resources in the region to economic development is disproportionate and uneven.

An overview of the human development index in the region is low when compared with other oil-producing regions in other countries. According to a survey done by the Niger Delta Human Development Report, there is a huge gap between human capital development in oil-producing states and other non-oil-producing states. To further buttress this point, there is a localized uneven distribution of wealth and price distortions due to the presence of oil firms which has caused an escalation in the price of goods and commodities thus making affordability less easy for the ordinary people living within that vicinity. “The region’s human development index is 0.564 while this is slightly higher than the Nigerian HDI of 0.448, the area rates far below regions or countries with similar gas or oil reserves (Venezuela is 0.772 and Indonesia is 0.697) (UNDP, 2006, P, 15) [13]”. The clamor for developmental attention in the Niger Delta has been reiterated the umpteenth time, urging governmental agencies and relevant stakeholders to work toward bridging the economic deficit prevalent in the terrain. Shanties and slums pervade several communities within the region. Poor access to developmental infrastructures alienates the indigenes from participating in societal adaptation to emerging technologies and infrastructures. The lack of investment in human capital development and gross marginalization in the region has spurred the economic decadence thriving in the region today.

The miserly attention given to the region ignited a fresh agitation for recognition thus leading to the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 1999 to serve as a vehicle of conveyance, one that will mediate between the people of the region and the government. The body was instituted to proffer remedy to the ailing region suffering from a gross socio-economic deficit. There is disjointed reconciliation between the allocated resources given to NDDC and the acclaimed implemented projects

carried out in the region thus exposing a staggering list of misappropriated funds and economic sabotage. UNDP, (2006) [13] noted:

The NDDC clearly aims to have a redistributory function, with nearly a quarter of the funding coming from the Federal Government, with additional contributions expected from oil companies operating in the Niger Delta, the Ecological Fund and States of the delta. Unfortunately, States have yet to contribute to the commission, and oil companies are still wrangling over how much they should contribute (pp. 31-32).

Though it has been purported that huge financial allocations are allocated toward the development of the Niger Delta region by past and present administrations, yet the terrain has nothing to show for these records. The regional marginalization of the Niger Delta people is also obvious in the revenue allocation received by States from the Federal Government. The distribution of resources from the federation account has been another source of marginalization for the Delta. Prior to 1999, the allocation to the Niger Delta from the federation account of revenues from oil, decreased progressively as Nigeria became more dependent on oil. In 1960, the allocation was 50%, then down to 45% in 1970, declining to 20% in 1982, down to 3% in 1992. It was raised to 13% following persistent agitations from the Niger Deltans (Ikelegbe, 2006) [23]. Unemployment takes the top spot as most of the people from the region are jobless and would rather resort to farming or fishing for their livelihood. It is no surprise that the majority of workers employed by these oil firms are from non-oil producing parts while the people from the region wallow in poverty and penury. The people of the Niger Delta feel excluded from the wealth generated by their resource rich region - substantiated by the region having the highest rate of unemployment in Nigeria (World Bank, 2007b).

Protracted decadence and economic neglect

For over six decades, the Niger Delta region has lounged on the arm of misery, basking in underdevelopment and infrastructural deficit. Famous for its sprawling creeks and dense forest vegetation, the Niger Delta region can be referred to as the Amazon of Nigeria. From the creeks to the swamps, the furrowed brows of the indigenes are akin to the protracted decadence that permeates the environment. A tour through the various communities in the region will present heartbreakingly scenarios that will melt your heart. There are areas where the children huddle together under a tree to learn, access to healthcare facilities is a luxury and the dream of a better future becomes more of an illusion than a reality for them. “The general neglect of infrastructure, often rationalized by the difficult terrain of the region, has worsened the population’s access to fundamental services (UNDP, 2016) [13].

A flee from this web of economic deprivation enforced the frustration-aggression theory. Some indigenes of the region vexed by the marginalization decided to adopt an aggressive approach in lieu of peaceful engagements which had consistently failed repeatedly. The road networks are deplorable and there is an alarming rate of poverty in the region. Pockets of clustered slums welcome tourists and visitors. Children who ought to be in school are seen loitering about, stripped of access to education, social amenities, security, and their dreams. “Remote rural communities have extremely limited economic opportunities

and often cannot tap directly into the employment benefits of the oil industry because they lack capital resources or skills (UNDP, 2006)^[13].

The presence of multinationals is conspicuous as the erected flare stacks burn with inconsiderable intensity, distorting the quality of air in circulation and causing profound air pollution. Sometimes the sky is adorned with a cloudy hue not caused by rain but by the accumulation of pollutants and discharge of toxic gases. The emission of these gases disrupts the ecosystem, releasing hydrogen sulfide and other toxins. Rusty-corrugated roofing sheets are stacked side by side when viewed from the top. These are peculiar features of roofing sheets in the region as they have been altered by the contribution of acid rain thus creating a phenomenon called the greenhouse effect. Here in this region, the idea of an idyllic society is alien to several of the indigenes as many have resigned to fate.

Economic sabotage and deprivation

Thriving on the accrued revenue generated from oil exploration in the Niger Delta region has put Nigeria on the list of top oil-producing countries globally. Nigeria has over 18 operating oil pipelines crisscrossing various communities in the region and produces an average estimate of 1.8 billion barrels of oil daily thus making the country the 11th largest oil-producing nation in the world. Surrounded by so much yet nothing to show for it, the region has become a tragic irony. The region is likened to a goldsmith who crafts gold yet has none for himself. From the grappling deplorable state of the region to the disjointed symmetry between the huge natural deposits in the terrain and grandiose impoverishment, the level of economic sabotage and deprivation has continued to skyrocket, leaving a bland taste in the mouth. ‘Essentially, while the Niger Delta produces oil wealth that accounts for the bulk of Nigeria’s foreign earnings, these vast revenues have not translated into improved human development outcomes for the Niger Delta population (UNDP, 2006)^[13].

The establishment of institutions to oversee the region further deepened the infrastructural deficit prominent in the region through the untoward behavior of corrupt individuals who have done nothing but amass wealth by stealing funds allocated to projects and diverting the same for their personal gains. Although the Federal Government asserts to have provided the much-needed assistance required by the region yet the state of affairs in the terrain still remains very appalling. The challenge is that this federal government support for development in the Niger Delta - both politically and financially - is problematic in itself. A key criticism of the NDDC (and the development planning institutions that have failed in the past) is that it is an imposition from the federal government and a top down approach to development planning and implementation. Local communities had no say in determining the composition of the NDDC and it primarily comprises Federal Government representatives. It is therefore perceived by local communities-who have experienced political marginalization historically- as existing to facilitate the political goals of the ruling party (Osuoka, 2007; UNDP, 2006)^[24, 13]. The oil exploitation in the Niger Delta region generates about 40% of GDP, 80% of government revenue and 95% of foreign exchange earnings. These figures constitute an in-depth analysis of the surplus economic dividends gotten from the region. Although that statistic contributes to national development yet the support given to

the region is in no way compared to the resources being explored. This renewed agitations across the region caused a depletion of economic resources worth billions of dollars. In 2016, pockets of notable attacks began to happen, putting the major source of income for the country on the line of fire. The Bonny Soku Gas Plant was targeted by the NDA militant and was blown up on 10 February 2016 without ado went ahead to blow up the Trans Forcados Pipeline (TFP), a major channel for the transportation of water, oil, and other related gaseous products. Ten days later, the Niger Delta Avengers reiterated their stance, giving the federal government days to heed their call or face more vandalization of oil facilities. Then on 4th May 2016, the militants blew up the Chevron Valve Platform situated in Delta State, one of the oil-producing states.

The group feeling deprived and economically bereft launched a series of attacks causing havoc and sabotaging the economy. Although the attacks on oil facilities were inimical to progress yet the militants threw caution to the wind, using aggressive methods to convey their grievances.

Environmental degradation and truncated source of livelihood

Famously known for the production of palm oil during the pre-colonial era, the Niger Delta indigenes thrived on agriculture and fishing as their main source of livelihood. The landscape is a jungle of bliss with towering trees and nourished vegetation. The impact of oil exploration in the region has unleashed mayhem on the environment, stripping many people of their source of income. ‘There is evidence that the biodiversity characteristics of the Niger Delta transcend national importance - as the Delta is the most extensive and complex lowland forest and aquatic ecosystem in West Africa, its biodiversity is regarded to be of regional and global importance (IUCN, 1992). The exploration of oil involves seismic activities such as the clearing of seismic pathways, utilization of dynamites for excavations, and drilling explorations. These activities distort the flora and fauna present in the ecosystem, reducing the chance of breeding among species and causing the extinction of existing rare species within an ecosystem. Oil spillage and pipeline leakages are regular sights in the region, and effluent discharges from oil wastes are also visible. These are not just happenstances or activities occurring periodically, these are situations that take place periodically, stifling the source of livelihood and distorting the economic activities within the region. ‘In 2004, the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) pipeline traversing the Kala-Akama and Okrika mangrove swamps (in the Niger Delta) leaked and caught fire. The fire burned uncontrollably for three days (Zabbey, 2004)^[14].

It is without measure and in unfair proportion the amount of damage done by oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta. In a flare stack, the amount of discharged toxins present in a flared gas is over 250 toxins, contaminating the air and polluting the environment. The presence of oil spillage on the water surface interferes with the amount of oxygen available to aquatic life thus causing suffocation and death. The Ogoni land in Rivers State has been reported to be one of the most polluted places on earth. In this place, there are outstretched lands, bare and entrenched with pathways flowing with oil spills. The once green landscape that permeates the vegetation is now replaced with muddy brown mingled with ash and tar. The frail sight of burnt crops and water surfaces smothered with oil spills imbues

the ecosystem. Displacing many from their natural habitats and taking away the people's source of livelihood, Ogoniland has suffered immensely due to these oil spillages from the oil multinational, Shell. The United Nations maintains that cleaning up the Ogoniland mess will take 30 years, and most of the affected indigenes who lived through the horror might not experience the aftermath of the clean-up exercise.

The oil pollution act that was enacted to curb the menace of oil spillage has been stifled through non-implementation. Most of the submissions in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 were provided to curtail the number of oil spills and consequently reduce their impact on the livelihood of the people. With respect to this stance, several agencies such as NOSDRA and NOSCP were also established to enhance the enforcement and monitoring of oil and gas regulations "The Federal Executive Council of Nigeria has approved a National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA). The Ministry of Environment, which initiated the Agency, has also forwarded the revised draft National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP) to the Federal Executive Council for approval; this contingency would be managed by NOSDRA (Alexander's Gas and Oil Connections, 2006). As lofty as these plans and programs seem, not one of the initiatives has been able to address the menace of oil spills with the vigor it deserves. This is because of poor coordination, a lack of implementation initiatives, and a disjointed feedback mechanism.

Poor implementation of developmental initiatives and bad governance

On the heels of the various issues plaguing the region, there has been a heated conversation surrounding the provision of developmental initiatives that will alleviate the suffering of the indigenes within the region. Going beyond the rhetoric of promises and embracing actions that will support the implementation of development initiatives in the Niger Delta is key to addressing the infrastructural deficit in the region. The region is bedeviled with a gross infrastructural deficit, insecurity, abject poverty, a polluted environment, and unemployment. Following the reiterated pleas by indigenes of the region for intervention measures, the Federal Government instituted agencies such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) which was established in 2000 to address the menace of underdevelopment prevalent in the region.

The agency has become a platform for peddling the implementation of phony projects, siphoning allocated funds, and diversion of accrued revenues for personal gains and self-aggrandizement. The corruption-laden system was uncovered when President Muhammadu Buhari requested a forensic audit to ascertain the utilization of disbursed funds and acclaimed implemented projects. Hearings began to probe the deficit of 143 billion Naira in the commission's 2019 budget. Investigations by the Senate began in May 2020 and a lot of dirt was uncovered. From the barrage of allegations exposed during the auditing sessions to the fainting scenario displayed by the Acting Managing Director of the commission, Kemebradikumo Pondei, it goes to reveal that the situation with the Niger Delta region might require a more tactical-direct approach as opposed to establishing institutions clad in corruption, deceit, and morally bankrupt individuals.

Furthermore, the issue of providing an amnesty programme for repentant militants has been perceived to be laden with

unwholesome motives. Some agitating militants have been swayed with lofty promises of mouth-watering contracts, scholarships for their wards, and generous financial packages. Utilizing the divide and conquer method, the government has been able to stifle further agitations by some of these groups by isolating the commanders in charge and doing them special favors. These were temporary measures utilized to broker peace and restore further exploitation of the region's natural resources. Although most of these promises seemed to work, many were short-circuited and never seen to fruition. This spurred aggression and further agitated the perceived calm nerves. The divide-and-conquer method derailed the goals of the militants, isolated some for personal favors, and dampened the efforts geared toward dispelling the resource curse engulfing the region.

It is no news that most of the self-made millionaires in the region were never reposed with the financial wit to amass tremendous wealth but are people who have struck shady deals with greedy politicians and community leaders, negotiating for paltry benefits in reward for their silence over unscrupulous oil businesses from multinationals thus granting them unfettered access to continuous exploitation and marginalization of their indigenes.

As earlier mentioned, fixing the decadence and lack of development in the Niger Delta region requires a more tactical approach. Curbing the vicious cycle of poverty which permeates the terrain will need a pragmatic step, one that will mitigate the pain of the people, provide succor, and implement long-term plans that will enhance the development and human capital investments.

Concluding remarks

The economy of the Niger Delta has been a supporting beam for Nigeria, putting the country on a pedestal as the 11th largest oil-producing country in the world and providing 95% of the nation's foreign exchange earnings. Regional marginalization and the economic deficit in the Niger Delta have spurred aggravated response thus giving birth to militancy. The impact of these can best be described as counter-productive as the militants through their tactical-aggressive methods have caused insecurity thereby stifling investment opportunities while the country's GDP suffers an economic crunch and shrinking financial revenue. Having a win-win situation is necessary for growth and economic prosperity. Striking a balance that will see to the development of the Niger Delta region without subtle attempts at departing from providing the desired results should be pursued. To enforce a balance, the paper makes the following submissions.

The Government should review policies that are not in tandem with the dynamics of the region and set up structures that will provide the required economic dividends due to the region. In recent times, we have witnessed the collapse of structures and agencies established to handle the affairs of the region, and sometimes, the change of board members and restructuring of these agencies has not yielded the anticipated results. There should be an overhaul of these institutions, one imbued with the responsibility of discharging their duties and producing reasonable outcomes. Long-term plans should be implemented for the development of the region to forestall the use of dismissive approaches by incoming administrations. There is a need for dialogue and conversations with relevant stakeholders in the region to address issues plaguing the region to promote

peaceful coexistence and prevent the breakdown of law and order. The Oil Pollution Act should be enforced without breaching the terms and conditions stipulated in its submission to compel the multinationals to comply with their corporate responsibility toward host communities. The Federal Government should also checkmate greedy leaders, politicians, and relevant stakeholders in the corridors of power who indulge in siphoning and embezzling allocated funds by having a periodic financial audit to spur transparency and accountability. There should be proper conflict-management measures put in place to handle issues such as regional marginalization, development deficit, militancy, localized multinational oppression, inequality, and economic sabotage to prevent unaligned interests and aggressive tendencies.

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