

CORRUPTION AND ITS ADVERSE EFFECTS ON SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF THE NIGER DELTA

Felix Okpako OROGUNFERE¹, Francis Ayegbunam IKENGA²

^{1,2}Delta State University Abraka

ABSTRACT

The study is a critical investigation into corruption and its adverse effects on sustainable environment in Nigeria, with focus on the Niger Delta. The research is intended majorly to evaluate how corruption has adversely affected the attainment of a sustainable environment in the Niger Delta Region. The researcher adopted the Historical research design in assessing corruption and its effects on sustainable environment in Nigeria. Findings show that corruption by the government and its officials has led to corrupt practices by all and sundry in Nigeria, and thus adversely affected the country in security, economy and environment. That because corrupt practices are tolerated in Nigeria, the country gives less attention to environmental matters and its consequences on human. Therefore, achieving a sustainable environment in the Niger Delta is almost unrealizable. The researcher recommended that there should be a strong environmental constitutional framework and the fight against corruption should be total without any form of favoritism. This research work concluded that corruption by the political class has denied the country from achieving a sustainable environment in the Niger Delta.

Keywords: Corruption, Adverse Effects, Sustainable Environment, Niger Delta

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, humans, animals and other forms of biodiversity have being faced with existential threats as a result of the climatic changes and a warmer temperature. The uncontrollable human quest for economic growth, development, increased standard of living and improved social life has led to environmental degradation in various forms (Robins, 2016). As observed by Christopher, (2016), from the beginning of the industrial revolution, the world usage of fossil fuels (Crude Oil, Gas and, Coal) has increased geometrically, the usage of this fossil fuels causes greenhouse gases (GHGs) which are primarily Carbon dioxide (CO₂) and Methane (CH₄) which when released into the atmosphere, prevents the atmosphere from absorbing heat from the earth surface, thus causing a warmer temperature otherwise called global warming. In the view of Yosef, (2006), gas flaring, oil spillages and general usage of fossil fuels for energy, industrial purposes and transportation remain the major pollutant of the global environment, making the Ozone layer to be unable to protect humans and the environment, thus the existential threat.

As noted by Yosef, (2006), the unsafe environment or the extinction of life support system, has made human existence threatened, and as such the world, in a move to curtail the situation, called for several environmental conferences known as United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and took decisions that global temperature must and should be reduced to 1.5° Celsius by the end of 2030 and to near Zero by the year 2050. As opined by Olusola, (2020), the major reason for the Paris Conference (COP21) in the year 2015 and others world environmental conferences was to reduce global warming or manage the change in Climate occasioned by emission of Carbon dioxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄) and other greenhouse gases which are the major factors of global warming and climate change. That gas flaring, unregulated dumping of hazardous waste, Oil spillages and the general usage of fossil fuels for power generation, industry, and transportation has damaged the Ozone layer and renders it inefficacious, thus the Ultraviolet Rays (UVs) emitting dangerous heat from the sun during the day, and its inability to absorb heat from the earth during the night and its resultant effects of a warmer global temperature above 2.0° Celsius (Olusola, 2020). Robins, (2016), argued that, the global complaint about the harsh weather conditions, incessant natural disasters and the general global Climate Change, the need for global environmental sustainability becomes imperative, thus the world (States, States' Actors, Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations, Environmentalists, and Researchers) reached agreements in various United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) from Rio 1992, Kyoto 1997, Paris 2015 down to Bonn 2023 in Germany, set targets for States and States' Actors on how to reduce the causes of greenhouse gases (GHGs) emission into the atmosphere, which is the principal factor of global warming and climate change.

However, as espoused by Hannah, Max, and Rosado, (2020), and Ana and Jose, (2018), in adhering to the various UNFCCC agreements, many countries like England, China and Nicaragua have developed new models of power generation and transportation system to reduce the usage of fossil fuels and the emission of Carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. In the opinion of Amy, (2008), despite the adverse effects of the use of fossil fuels on humans and the environment, most oil wells, refineries, and flow stations operating in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria burns ranging flames twenty four hours every day, reaching hundreds of feet into the sky, therefore leading to the extinction

of the surrounding vegetation, aquatic life, and other forms of life support system. Gas flaring sites brings searing heat, emitting a deafening roar and belching a cocktail of smoke, soot and toxic chemicals into the atmosphere with its potent mixture of Carbon dioxide (CO₂) which is the major contributor to global warming and climate change (Amy, 2008).

As posited by Olusola, (2020), various constitutional provisions in Nigeria that supposed to regulate the activities of the Oil Multinationals and the government on oil exploration and exploitation are very weak and ineffective (Ipogah and Ikenga, 2023; Edo, Etemike and Clark, 2022), that environmental issues are treated with levity, that there are no stringent laws or sanctions against violation of environmental rules and standards, and that environmental degradation is of little or no concern to the Nigerian elites as long as their economic interest is protected. This is true, that laws against treason, assassination, Kidnapping, Armed Robbery that threatens the Elite's interest have severe consequences (Olusola, 2020). In the view of Ogbewere, (2015) and Ikenga (2018), corruption has clogged the wheel of Nigeria's development and her quest for economic survival, security and sustainable environment. Asuni, (2009), opined that the accusations and counter accusations on money laundering, pipeline vandalization, abuse of power and criminality among Nigeria's leaders prove that corruption has become a way of life. Corruption has also affected efforts by the government to address the problems of the Niger Delta region. The creation of interventionist agencies have not been effective in handling the many problems that the exploration and production of oil has caused in the region (Ikenga, Edo and Ighoshemu, 2022)

Nigeria's political class or leaders intentionally formulated laws that denies the citizens environmental right and justice, that the provision of the constitution in section 20 (6c) barred the citizens from seeking for environmental right, that environmental degradation of the Niger Delta Region is of no interest to the political class as long as they accumulate wealth to themselves and cronies (Eneyo, 2017). In countries like England, United States of America, Canada and other European countries, citizens can sue the Oil Multinationals, the government and even sometimes compel them to act on issues of environmental degradation (Alan, 2007). In Nigeria, due to corruption, even if the government or the oil multinational fails to comply with environmental regulations and standards, the citizens cannot seek for redress or compensation in competent law court, particularly if such environmental pollution does not personally affects the complainant (Eneyo, 2017).

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Global warming as occasioned by climate change has become a focal point of discussion among States, Environmental Non-Government Organizations, and Environments, trying to find solutions to reduce global temperature below 1.5° Celsius by the end of 2030. While such countries like England, United States of America, Canada and China have developed alternative to the usage of fossil fuels which is a major contributor to global warming, Nigeria is foot dragging in the quest for alternative sources of energy and transportation (Olusola, 2020). While in countries like England, United States of America and Canada, gas flaring is totally controlled, such that flares only occur when it is unavailable, because its negative effects on both humans and the environment are grievous, in Nigeria, the reverse is the case, as gas flaring is a normal as to "drink water" This makes the researcher to state as follows;

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to examine how corruption and its adverse effects have impeded on the attainment of a sustainable environment in the Niger Delta. The specific objective are to;

- i. Examine why political leaders intentionally make environmental degradation a non-justiciable matter in Nigeria
- ii. Examine why political leaders encourage the uncontrollable gas flaring in the Niger Delta

4. CONCEPTS CLARIFICATIONS

Environment. The environment is the entire earth and everything in it, either physical or chemical, the environment consists of all biotic and abiotic factors that have a role in the survival, evolution, and the development of humans, animals and plants inhabiting it (Biologyonline Dictionary 2022). The environment includes all naturally occurring things, living and non-living, for example, weather, climate, marine, atmosphere, rock, humans, forest and all other life support systems. The environment is of immense importance to humans, such that the pollution of the marine and ocean acidification, warming and the deforestation have negatively affected the environment (Biologyonline Dictionary 2022).

Environmental Degradation. In the view of Clark, (2012), the human interaction with the environment has become a threat to human existence today and the generation to come, that environmental degradation is gradually leading to human extinction due its effects on human health. According to Ratcliffe, (2019), environmental degradation is the depletion of the earth natural resources like quality air, water, soil, medicinal herbs, forest and other forms of life

support system, without adequate measures to replenish them. As espoused by Opukri and Ibaba, (2008), oil spillages, gas flaring, deforestation, waste disposal and all activities involved in the oil exploration and exploitation have adversely affected the people of the immediate community particularly and the world in general. With weak constitutional framework to regulate the activities of the oil multinationals operating in the Niger Delta Region, Olusola, (2020) noted that unpredictable illnesses, hunger, polluted food and water, displacement and natural disasters has befall the people of the Niger Delta, due to the varying degrees of environmental pollution occasioned by oil spillages, dumping of hazardous waste materials and gas's flaring. In the view of Uwem and Akpan, (2017), the unpredictable climate change caused by unregulated environmental degradation has globally caused an estimated one hundred thousand death and over five million illnesses annually, the World Health Organisation (WHO) predicted the above mentioned figures to double by the end of the year 2030. As posited by Otoabasi, (2011), environmental degradation or the incessant environmental pollution occasioned by the activities of man is causing serious dangers to man's existence. Okpo and Eze, (2012), tens of million of humans, animals, plants and other biodiversity are internally displaced, as this was witnessed in the Niger Delta between the year 2012 and 2022.

Niger Delta. The Niger Delta as opined by Okpo and Eze, (2012), is the Nigeria's source of oil wealth and the largest mangrove forest in Africa, it has a beautiful network of creeks and aquatic splendor. Ubleble and Gbenemene, (2017), averred that the Niger Delta Region consist of the coastal areas of Nigeria, produces over ninety percent of Nigeria's income though with little or nothing developmental by the federal government or the oil multinational to show for its massive contribution to the national economy, the area is desolated, polluted, degraded, its inhabitants are displaced, faced with various chronic illnesses, poverty and existential threat, due to the unregulated activities of oil multinationals operating in the region. Okpo and Eze, (2012), posited that the struggle to free the Niger Delta to get fair share of revenue accruing from the crude oil and gas from the Federal government met with various forms of resistance, sometimes through parliamentary process or executive fiat. The request for environmental sustainability by the people of the Niger Delta also met with resistance, as oil multinationals with the backing of the Federal government, continued with its nefarious activity of oil spillages, gas flaring, and dumping of hazardous waste into creeks and rivers (Edo, 2012). Oil exploration and exploitation in the Niger Delta has negatively affected the development process of the area and its people are wallowing in penury, displacement, chronic illnesses and loss of lives and properties, oil spills flowing into farmlands, rivers and creeks have cloaked the soil and prevent the former fertile land from bringing good yield, thus causing poverty and hunger, flared gas made the air polluted with sooth and causing different kinds of life threatening illnesses (Lawrence and Victor, 2009).

Sustainable environment: In the view of Johan and Richard, (2019), society must develop to meet economic needs and improve the standard of living of the citizens, however, such attempt to develop to meeting the socio-economic needs of this generation, the opportunities for the generation to come to develop, should and must not be jeopardized. Ibaba, (2010) opined that sustainable environment means no part of the environment or any form of life support system is destroyed or depleted in the quest to develop to meet the economic needs of the people or the state. In the view of Olumide and Okoroigwe, (2018), exploring a non-replenishable resources for development threatens human existence, and such cannot be seen as a sustainable development,, that such development does not consider the interest and means to develop by the future generations. Hannah, Max and Rosado, (2020), averred that the emission of Carbon dioxide (CO₂) methane (CH₄) and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) into the environment is rendering the environment non sustainable, as it kills various organisms, humans and animals inhabiting it, that a sustainable environment is one in which there is clean air, water, atmosphere, protection and safety of all biotic and abiotic factors living in it is guaranteed, and that the potentiality of the generation to come to harness the usefulness of the environment is also secured.

Corruption; As asserted by Ogbewere (2015), what makes the development and growth of many countries including Nigeria stagnated today is corruption, that corruption has stand in the way of economic, political, security, environment, and social development, that the deliberate abuse of power and privileges one occupies, nepotism, election rigging, giving and accepting bribe, unauthorized giving of official information, negligence to duty are all forms of corrupt practices stagnating states or societies intending to develop. In the word of Asuni, (2009), the Nigerian political class, intentionally formulated weak laws to control the behaviours of citizens or institutions within the state, such that environmental laws are weak, that violation of it only attracts inconsequential financial sanctions, thus making the violation becomes incessant and the environment destroyed.

According to Ojo, (2016), Nigeria's commitments to environmental issues is almost zero, such that, some persons took the advantage of the weak environmental institutions to perpetuate environmental degradation of the Niger Delta Region and thus make illicit wealth for themselves and cronies. In the view of Olusola, (2020), corruption will become a way of life as violation of laws and orders becomes the order of the day because those at the political helms

of affairs in the state are fantastically corrupt, and appears in both local and international news channels on daily bases of allegations of corrupt practices.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory of primitive accumulation of capital by Karl Marx, a political economist was used to analyze this study. Major proponents of this theory includes Karl Marx, Adam Smith and David Ricardo. In the view of Marx in Harvey, (2005), capital accumulation is process of corrupt practices or fraud, while Adam Smith and David Ricardo hold the view of diligent and fervent work as a source of wealth, Marx argued that wealth accumulation is a process where the powerful, fraudulently dispossessed the weak of his capital (land) and thus accumulate the proceeds without the weaker benefiting from the proceeds in which he has been dispossessed. According to Harvey, (2005), the land owners or those that worked for the bourgeoisie are been excluded from the excess profit they make and the proceeds of their dispossessed land. As averred by Eneyo, (2017), the Nigerian political class, even after the various military regimes, deliberately refused to amend section 20, (6c) of the 1999 constitution as amended, such that the people or the citizens have no say about the degradation or pollution of the Niger Delta environment, so that they (elites) can perpetuate the accumulation of capital.

6. MAIN ASSUMPTIONS OF THE THEORY

In the view of Karl Marx in Harvey (2005), wealthy people are usually corrupt, they care less about the consequences of their actions on their victims (humans and the environment). Wealth are not accumulated as a result of diligence in one's work but, rather through corrupt practices, such as oppression, dispossession, subjugation, enclosure, violation of rights in all areas of ones life. As argued by Eneyo (2017), the main reason for that clause in section 20 (6c) in the Nigerian 1999 constitution as amended, is not that the elite are unaware of the negative consequences of the uncontrolled gas flaring, dumping of hazardous wastes and oil spillages have on humans and the environment, but so much that they accumulate wealth from this process of making environmental issues non "justiciable" is to enclose the people of the Niger Delta from preventing them (elites) from accumulation of capital. Adherence to environmental rights or making the violation of environmental rights adjudicable will adversely affect the elites interest of capital accumulation, as the cost of controlling gas flaring to its barest minimum or the cost of remediation of an area affected by oil spillages are far higher than the cost of subjugating voices of environmental protection and rights, thus the elites preferred the perpetuation of environmental degradation through gas flaring, dumping of harmful waste and oil spillages in the Niger Delta so as to accumulate wealth (Olusola, 2020).

7. RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher employed the historical research design. In the opinion of Sanubi, (2014), the historical research design is considered appropriate due to its objectivity, completeness of coverage, and its efficiency in accuracy in decision making and the presentation of findings can be generalized. According to Bhandari, (2023), the usage of historical secondary existing data and the findings of various research works in journals, newspapers, periodicals, and textbooks is considered appropriate, as it saves time, cheaper in terms of money, it gives the researcher wider range of data, scope of coverage, and more varied samples that the researcher could not have collected adopting primary sources of data collection. This research work covers between the period of 2016 to 2022. In the view of Kingsley, (2021), 2016 is the first year of litmus test to the Paris Conference (COP21) while data beyond 2022 on important subjects and concepts under study were not yet available.

8. LITERATURE REVIEW

Corruption and Sustainable Environment

In the view of Opukri and Ibaba (2008), Nigerian government interventionally neglect environmental warning from the Nigerian Metrological Agency (NiMet) and other environmental agencies on the dangers of the occurrence of flooding. The government do little or nothing on issues of environmental degradation, in fact, natural disasters caused by the changing climate serve as a "Cash Cow" to the Nigerian political elites, hence they are less concerned about the continuous gas flaring, damaging the nearby vegetation with its searing heat, the dumping of harmful waste in the rivers such as that of Koko in Warri North Local Government Headquarters in Delta State, the ever increasing Oil spills into creeks, farmlands, forest, and ocean, contaminating ground waters and cloaking the very fertile arable land, causing incurable illnesses to the inhabitants of the environment.

Oladosu (2024), averred that in some days before now, NiMet warned the Nigerian government about flood and heavy rainfall across states in the country. In different times, Nigeria has been faced with flood crisis, and its adverse effects on humans, like loss of properties of the affected communities or States cannot be overemphasized, such that should not be taken or treated with levity, if not that the political class are benefiting from the incidence of flood by

quoting outrageous cost of donating relief materials, and diverting relief materials from foreign countries and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to the flood affected victims to personal usage. What has Nigeria put in place to combat the reoccurring incidence of flood, or are there no solutions to the problems, or is the government benefiting from this, through corrupt practices? (Ojo, 2016). This reoccurring incidence of flood is occasioned by climate change, resulting from increase use of fossil fuels. Nigeria need to address this issue or we risk more than just flooded states or communities, however, the loss of lives of humans and the environment, are meaningless to the political class. Climate change is a threat to human existence. For a developing state like Nigeria, climate change have placed the country into severe economic quagmire, since economic and environmental loss, worth millions of dollars have been wasted. Nigerian political leaders are beclouded with corruption, and soon forgot the popular saying "prevention is better than cure" (Oladosu, 2024).

Corruption as opined by Gozie, (2010), is a global antisocial behavior considered to be a moral wrong, it is being practiced everywhere in the world, though it is very minimal in some countries witnessing economic growth, development, advance security system, and social security, however, corruption is very pronounced in some countries with the testaments of infrastructural decadence, poor standard of living, violation of human rights, high level of insecurity, and unemployment, Omolulu, (2007), espoused that the nonchalant behavior and the lack of commitment of the Nigerian government to fighting corruption to a logical conclusion, makes the evil act of corrupt practices becoming a way of life in the country and among the citizens. Chi-Chi and Naill, (2020), posited that sustainable environment means the adequate protection of the environment by the citizens and the government, and the environment that has the potentiality to guarantee the future generations the opportunity to develop. In the word of Uwem and Akpan, (2017), in Nigeria, there is no defined stringent constitutional framework guiding against the indescribable, indiscriminate gas flaring, as it is observed in other parts of the western world or Europe where corruption is fought to it logical conclusion. Due to the corrupt mindset in the heart of the Nigerian political class, the dangers of thick smook, soot, and the polluted air has on human health, animals, plants and other biodiversity in the Niger Delta Region mean nothing to them (political class) as long as economic interest is met (Agah & Ikenga, 2019). Corruption as opined by Willis, (2014), is becoming a culture in Nigeria, as the rate at which public office holders are being prosecuted, convicted and jailed in both home and in foreign countries has made many other citizens to imbibe the culture of corrupt practices, thus leading to the everyday increase in corruption cases and profile in the country, that leaders are seen by the people as roles models, and may behave like their leaders. Today in Nigeria, the rate of corruption is increasing on a daily bases as averred by Transparency International (TI) (2022). Those in position of authority "milked" the nation dry, not minding the socio-economic consequences on the people and the environment. For emphasis, see Corruption Perception Index of Nigeria as released by Transparency International (TI) (2022) in table 1: below.

Table 1 Title: Corruption Perception Index (PCI) from 2016 -2022 on two years intervals

Year	CPI
2016	27.8
2018	27.4
2020	27.4
2022	24

Source: Transparency International (2022)

From table 1 above, corruption is thriving in Nigeria and the government has not shown serious commitment to mitigate the menace of corruption in Nigeria. Corruption manifests in various forms in Nigeria, such as looting of public funds for personal or sectional gratification, amending constitution not for the good of the public but for personal or group interest, encouraging mediocrity over meritocracy in recruitment and promotion of employees, falsification and alteration of official documents, vote buying, manipulation of electoral processes, buying and selling of justice and many more anti moral attitude have hampered the sustainable development and growth of Nigeria in the economy, security, environment, infrastructure and democratic institutions (Ogbewere, 2015). The thriving corrupt practices among the political leaders in Nigeria has reached international public ridicules and leading to the increased yearly prosecution, incarceration and conviction of various public office holders as shown in the table 2 below.

Table 2. Title. Prosecuted, Convicted and incarcerated political office holders in Nigeria between 2016 to 2023 by EFCC

Table 2.

Year	Name	State	Position	Punishment
2016	James Bala Ngilari	Adamawa	Governor	Jailed and released
2017	Nse Ekpeyong	Akwa- Ibom	House of Reps	Jailed
2018	Joshua Dariye	Platue	Governor	Jailed and released
2019	Orji Uzor Kalu	Abia	Governor	Jailed and released
2020	John Yakubu Yusuf	Police Pension Fund	Asst. Director	Jailed
2021	Farouk Lawan	Kano State	House of Representatives	Jailed
2022	Peter Nwaboshi	Delta	Senator	Jailed and released
2023	Abdurasheed Bawa Kebbi	Chairman EFCC		Detention

Source. Saharareporters 2023.

Table 2 above shows the level at which Nigerian Leaders are being prosecuted and jailed for corruption, though the arrested, prosecuted and jailed public office holders in Nigeria for corruption were made, they were not prosecuted and jailed for diverting monies meant for the clean up of Oil Spill sites or to maintain a sustainable and clean environment, but rather, knowing what to do and not doing it, its corruption, not following due process in governance is corruption and have impeded on the growth and development of Nigeria in economy, political, social and including the environment (Ogbewere, 2015). In the view of Eneyo (2017), No arrest or prosecution have been made on environmental degradation, because environmental issues are not adjudicable in Nigeria, which is corruption in itself. Using legislation to barred the citizens of their environmental right is the highest form of corruption, and also the reason why Nigerian public office holders are being arrested, prosecuted and jailed on daily bases by the antigrift agencies.

This ugly act of corruption in Nigeria is inextricable because, even the law enforcement agencies are being manned by people of questionable characters, such that the agency becomes ineffective in combating corruption for the government to attain its objectives of economic and environmental sustainability (Gozie, 2010). As posited by Ogbewere, (2015), corruption has impeded on the wheel of development of Nigeria in all spheres of life, that with acute and progressive corruption observable in Nigeria, that achieving meaningful development or progress becomes an uphill task. In the opinion of Willis, (2014), the prosecution and incarceration of the political class is just for a mere academic exercise, that the only time the antigrift agency truly enforce law is when it is either involved a non public figures, or a member of the opposition political party at the centre, or a non loyal party member, that sometimes the acclaimed incarcerated persons still enjoys his or her life while serving prison term, they are not kept in such prisons (Ikoyi maximum prison, Kuje Prison) where the ordinary criminals are kept, they are also soon released after being sentenced to serve some jail terms such as the case of James Bala Ngilari, former governor of Adamawa state, Joshua Dariye former governor Platue State and many others. The act of treating our corrupt public office holders with "kids gloves" and those that have defrauded the state and causing undue hardship, pains and loss of lives and properties to the people is the major reason why corruption has become a way of life, and the everyday increase in the number of corruption cases in Nigeria (Ikenga and Agah, 2020). Dennis, (2022) opined that for the officials of the Nigerian law enforcement agencies to be on daily bases embroidered in corrupt practices, and are prosecuted and jailed is embarrassing the nation among the comity of nations, and also has exposed to the world at large that the Nigerian security architecture is incapacitated or incapable of securing lives and properties of the citizens, and protecting the country against both internal and external aggression. As at the beginning of the year 2023 as released by Transparency International (TI), Nigeria is ranked number one hundred and fifty (150th) position out of the one hundred and eighty (180) countries assessed on corruption by Transparency International. That in the year 2016 on corruption ranking by Transparency International, Nigeria took number one hundred and twenty seven (127th) position out of the one hundred and eighty (180) countries, though this position was still very poor of Nigeria, however successive years experienced poorer performance on corruption ranking. The other model of assessment of corruption by Transparency International (TI) is the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) which rates country's performance from zero percent (0%) to one hundred (100%) Zero percent means that such a country is very corruption, while one hundred percent means that the country is very clean on corruption.

From the table 1 earlier, as at the year 2016, Nigeria was scored 27.8% which shows that Nigeria is very corrupt and shows lesser commitment to end corruption in the country. From the table 1, successive years show further decline, that in the year 2022, Nigeria scored 24% in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) as released by Transparency International in January 2023. In the opinion of Asuni, (2009), corruption by the political class has also encouraged the general people to be involved in crime, criminality and other forms of corruption which undermined the attainment of the country's objectives in many spheres of life. That in the Niger Delta today, both the men, youths and women are involved in oil bunkering and sometimes vandalizing oil pipelines thus leading to oil spillages causing existential threat to human beings and other biodiversity in the Niger Delta region in particular and the world at large. Ibaba and John, (2009), espoused that over 75% of the oil spillages occurring in the Niger Delta are caused by sabourteur of the indigenous people, despite being most hit by the effects of the environmental pollution caused by the oil spills and the death to life support system, but corruption has engrossed their mind, and would do everything legal or illegal to accumulate wealth (Ikenga, 2015). Though people have been prosecuted and committed to prison for pipeline vandalization and crude oil theft, however, it should be noted that these persons committed to prison are not being punished for environmental degradation, but for theft of public properties and the destruction of public assets, this has encouraged so many people in the Niger Delta to get involved either in aiding and abetting pipeline vandalization leading to oil spillages, or vandalizing the oil facilities themselves (Asuni,2009). This act of pipeline vandalization has increased the number of crude oil spillages into farmlands, rivers and creeks leading to the extinction of the environment, due to corruption, Nigeria is doing little or nothing to curb the menace of oil spillages in the Niger Delta, thereby the reoccurrence of oil spillages in every successive years (Bunmi, 2022). **Table 3** below showing cases of Oil spillages and their volumes in barrels.

Table 3. Title: Cases of Oil spills and Volumes in barrels into farmlands, rivers, forests, swamps and the ocean in the Niger Delta using two (2) years interval

Year	Cases of Spills	Volume in Barrels
2016	686	42,741
2018	730	29,054
2020	554	25,207
2022	789	47,721

Source: Nigerian Oil Spill Monitor, (2023).

Table 3 above shows that Nigeria is not interested in ending oil spillages in the Niger Delta, thereby seeing the increase of oil spill in the year 2022, therefore the attainment of a sustainable environment in the region in particular and Nigeria in general may not be easy (Ayodele, 2020). Outside oil spillages killing the people and the environment, gas flaring is a major contributor to global warming and climate change. According to Friends of the Earth, (2023), flaring has being occurring in Nigeria for the past thirty good (30) years, burning day and night, with its negative effects on the people and the environment, and with the government doing nothing to control it as it is done in other countries like United States of America, Canada and Wales.

9. CONCLUSION

It was observed that gas flares contains over 250 toxins, and also emits particulate matter into the atmosphere, including sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxides and carcinogenic substances and many other unburned fuel components, like benzene, toluene, xylene, and hydrogen sulfide, The exposure of humans and the environment to these substances causes various illnesses such as cancer and other blood-related disorders The smoke from flares can aggravate asthma, increases in respiratory sickness, like coughing and difficulty in breathing, chronic bronchitis, decreased lung functions, and untimely death. Flaring causes acid rain, which corrodes the roofs in the Niger Delta. The rain also acidifies lakes, rivers, farmlands, and streams and kills the vegetation. flaring in Niger Delta alone has emitted more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere more than all other sources in all the sub-Saharan Africa, and greenhouse gases are the major contributor to global warming and Climate Change (Friends of the Earth, 2023).

If not corruption, why are the laws against gas flaring not be obeyed by the oil multinational operating in the Niger Delta? Even with adverse effects on the people and the environment, gas flaring still takes place twenty four hours everyday in a every year in flow stations and refineries operating in the Niger Delta. Though there are laws, but they are weak, with weak institutions to implement the weak laws which only gives financial sanctions to perpetuate gas flaring, while the environment and the people are in jeopardy (Ejide, Onome, and Vivian, 2020). With corruption, as opined by Ogbewere, (2015), no nation can achieve it's objectives either in economy, security, environment. That the Nigerian government is not committed to the attainment of a sustainable environment because its officials are

engrossed in corrupt practices, encouraged the non bureaucrats into corruption, therefore the attainment of a sustainable environment cannot be achieved (Ojo, 2026) and (Asuni, 2009).

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. For the Nigerian state to achieve its objectives in all areas of life, the fight against corruption must be total, no matter "whose Ox is gored".
- ii. The people of the Niger Delta should be reoriented on the effects of Oil spillages on their health and the environment.
- iii. Laws against any form of environmental degradation should be stringent, financial sanctions on gas flaring encouraged the oil multinational to continue flaring, because the cost of the sanctions is cheaper in terms of money compare to the cost of reducing the flares, and that with corruption, the corrupt minded person, does not consider the consequences of his actions on whose actions are carried on (Olusola, 2020).

11. REFERENCES

- [1]. Agah, B. E. & Ikenga, F.A (2019) The state control of economic resources, its distribution and electoral violence in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, Ife Journal of Public Administration (IJOPA), Obafemi Awolowo University, Vol.1(2) Pages: 197-212
- [2]. Alan, B. (2007). Human rights or environmental rights? A reassessment. Fordham Environmental Law Review, 471-511.
- [3]. Amy, S. (2008). An emerging human right to security from climate change: The case against gas flaring in Nigeria. Adjudicating Climate Change.
- [4]. Ana, C. Rodriguez, T. and Jose, R. (2018). The Impacts of Replacement of Engine Powered Vehicles by Electric Vehicles on Energy Consumption and Co2 Emissions. Transportation Research part D. Transport and Environment 59, 375-384.
- [5]. Asuni, J. B. (2009). Understanding the armed groups of the Niger Delta. Council on Foreign Relations.
- [6]. Ayodele, A., Jonathan, O., & Ohodayo, T. (2020). Oil theft in Arepo, Nigeria: Women in organized crime of pipeline vandalism. International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences, 15(2), 216-229.
- [7]. Bhandari, P. (2023). What is research design, types, guides, and examples. Scribbr. Retrieved June 2023, from <https://scribbr.com/methodology/research-design>.
- [8]. Biology Online Dictionary. (2022). Environment. <https://www.biologyonline.com/dictionary/environment#:~:text=Theatmospheric>. Retrieved May 2023.
- [9]. Bunmi, A. (2022). Insight: How sabotage, equipment failure caused over 4,000 cases of oil spills in six years. The Capable. Retrieved from <https://www.thecapable.ng/insight-how-sabotage-equipment-failure-caused-over-4000-cases-of-oil-spills-in-six-years/amp>.
- [10]. Chi-Chi, W., & Naill, H. (2000). Development of environmental policy objective and targets. International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology, 7(4), 357-361.
- [11]. Christopher, J. R. (2016). U.S Withdrawal from the cop21 Paris climate change summit: conference of parties 21 (COP21) Paris 2015. A Journal of Public Health Policy, 37(2), 149-132.
- [12]. Clark, E. V. (2012). The environment and you. Journal of Social and Management Sciences, Delta State University, Abraka, 7(2), 107-110.
- [13]. Dennis, E. (2022). US accuses Nigerian police, military and DSS of corruption, violation of human rights, and impunity. The Guardian. Retrieved July 2023, from <https://guardian.ng/news/united-states-indicts-nigeria-police-military-dss-of-corruption-impunity/>
- [14]. Edo, Z. (2012). The challenges of effective environmental enforcement and compliance in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. Journal of Sustainable development in Africa, 14 (6), pp. 261-276
- [15]. Edo, Z., Etemike, L. and Clark, E. (2022). Exploring barriers to environmental law enforcement and compliance in Nigeria Niger Delta Region. Journal of Danubian Studies and Research, 12 (1), pp. 229-250
- [16]. Ejide, S., Onome, I. O., & Vivian, C. N. (2020). Environmental laws and practices in Nigeria: Overview. Retrieved April 2023, from <https://ukpracticallawthomsonreuters.com>.
- [17]. Eneyo, G. (2017). Environmental objectives of Nigeria, a legal quagmire.
- [18]. Friends of the Earth. (2023). Gas flaring in Nigeria and environmental health nightmare. Friends of the Earth. <https://foe.org/blog/2009-05/gas-flaring-in-Nigeria>.
- [19]. Gozie, S. O. (2010). The paradox of the concept of sustainable development under Nigeria's environmental laws. Journal of Sustainable Development, 3(3), 201-210.

- [20]. Hannah, R., Max, R., & Pablo, R. (2020). CO2 and greenhouse gas emissions. Our World in Data. <https://www.macro Trends.net/countries/NGA/nigeria/carbon-co2-emissions>.
- [21]. Harvey, D. (2005). CH4 accumulation by dispossession. In *The New Imperialism* (p. 149). Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-9262431-7. Retrieved March 2023 from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primitive_accumulation_of_capital.
- [22]. Ibaba, S. I. (2010). Environmental protection laws and sustainable development in the Niger Delta. *Journal Africana*, 4(1), 45-77.
- [23]. Ibaba, S. I., & John, O. (2009). Sabotage-induced oil spillages and human rights violations in Nigeria's Niger Delta. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 11(4).
- [24]. Ikenga, F.A (2018) Political Party and Corruption in Nigeria: Assessment of the APC's Anti- Crusade, *Journal of Management Science (FMS)*, University of Maiduguri, https://saheljournalonline.org.ng/testuploadc/Sahel_16_2_9.pdf Vol.16/2 Pages: 138-164
- [25]. Ikenga, F.A (2015). Oil theft in Nigeria: A new wave of Militancy in the Niger Delta, *State and society: An Interdisciplinary Journal of the Nigerian Sociological Society* Vol.2(2) Pages: 46-58.
- [26]. Ikenga, F.A. & Agah, Benjamin (2020) Insecurity and the State of the Nation, *Hampstead Psychological Associates, United Kingdom* <https://www.psychosocial.com/article/PR271129/36734/> Vol.24 (7) Pages: 11222-11236
- [27]. Ikenga, F. A., Edo, Z., & Ighoshemu, B. O. (2022) Good Governance and the Sustainable Development of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: Assessing the Impact of Government Interventionist Agencies., *Journal of Danubian Studies and Research*, 12 (1) Pp 251-274
- [28]. Ipogah, D. and Ikenga F. A (2023) Oil Spills and Fish Farming in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria, *Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal (SHE Journal)*, Universitas PGRI Madiun, Madiun City, East Java Province, Indonesia <http://e-journal.unipma.ac.id/index.php/SHE/article/view/18139> Vol.4(3) Pages: 616-630
- [29]. Johan, H., & Richard, S. (2019). Sustainable development: What is to become? Policies for a small planet.
- [30]. Kingsley, E. U., Hassan, A., Choice, A. O., Uyiosa, O. A., Robert, O. B., & Olufemi, A. (2021). Environmental implications of petroleum spillages in the Niger Delta.
- [31]. Lawrence, A., & Victor, O. (2009). The Niger Delta crisis: Issues, challenges, and prospects. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 3(5), 191.
- [32]. Nigerian Oil Spill Monitor. (2023). GIS web application for monitoring Nigerian oil spillages. <https://nosdra.oilspillagemonitor.ng>
- [33]. Ogbewere, B. (2015). Anatomy of corruption in the Nigerian sector: The original perspective and some empirical explanation.
- [34]. Ojo, G. (2016). Nigerian government's commitment to Paris Agreement "almost zero." *Premium Times*. Retrieved March 2023 from <https://premiumtimesng.com/news/Nigeria/s/government>.
- [35]. Okpo, O. C., & Eze, R. C. (2012). Vandalisation of oil pipelines in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria and poverty: An overview. *Studies in Sociology of Science*, 3(2), 13-21.
- [36]. Oladosu A. (2024). Flood Prediction by NiMet - A reality of the climate crisis in Nigeria
- [37]. Olumide, O., & Okoroigwe, E. C. (2018). Concentrating solar power technologies for solar thermal grid electricity in Nigeria: A review. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy*, 90, 104-119.
- [38]. Olusola, J. O. (2020). Analysis of the legal framework governing gas flaring in Nigeria's upstream petroleum sector and the need for overhauling. *Business Management Department, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria*.
- [39]. Omolulu, F. (2007). Corruption, governance, and political instability in Nigeria. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 1(2), 28.
- [40]. Opukri, C. O., & Ibaba, S. I. (2008). Oil-induced environmental degradation and internal population displacement in Nigeria's Niger Delta. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 10(1), 173-193.
- [41]. Otoabasi, A. (2011). *The Niger Delta question and the people plan*. Spectrum Books.
- [42]. Ratcliffe, R. (2019). 'This place used to be green': The brutal impact of oil in the Niger Delta.

-
- [43]. Robbins, A. (2016). How to understand the results of the climate change summit: Conference of Parties 21 (COP21) Paris 15. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 37(2), 129-132.
- [44]. Sanubi, A. F. (2014). *The science of politics: An introductory methodological and statistical approach*. Ibadan University Press Publishing House.
- [45]. Sahara Reporters. (2022). Ex-naval director on wanted list for corruption sneaks back to Nigeria, assaults woman in military. <https://saharareporters.com/2021/10/14/ex-naval-director-wanted-list-corruption-sneaks-back-nigeria-assaults-woman-military>.
- [46]. Transparency International. (2022). CPI. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022>.
- [47]. Ubleble, B. A., & Gbenemene, K. (2017). A critique of Nigeria National Policy on Environment: Reasons for policy review. *IIARD International Journal of Geography and Environmental Management*, 3(3), 22-36.
- [48]. Uwem, U., & Akpan, E. B. (2017). Gas flaring in Nigeria: Problems and prospects. *Global Journal of Politics and Law Research*, 5(1), 16-28.
- [49]. Willis, M. W. (2014). Relational principles for effective church leadership. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 13(2), 125-139.
- [50]. Yosef, J. (2006). *A new conceptual framework for sustainable development*. Springer Science Business Media B.V.