

ILLICIT OIL TRADE: IMPLICATIONS ON SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: This research looked at the effect of illicit oil trade on security and development in Nigeria with a focus on the Niger Delta region. Specifically, the study aimed to examine the nature of the illicit oil trade, the impact of illicit oil trade on the security of the Niger-Delta and the impact of illicit oil trade on the development of the Niger-Delta region. Data were collected through documentary method with the use of journals, newspapers, etc. The analysis was done qualitatively with thematic analysis. This paper revealed that illicit oil activities in the Niger-Delta region has over the years posed a great challenge to the development of the region leading to loss of government revenue; facilitation of unemployment; discouragement of foreign direct investment; threat to health and food insecurity among others. Furthermore, it showed that the issue of illicit oil trade promotes insecurity in the region. This is because these armed groups engage in illegal sale of oil to maintain their militant operations. However, this research observed that illicit oil trade only promotes employment in the activities in the informal sector. The study recommended the need to address the high rate of poverty and unemployment, blockage of the international market for stolen oil; promotion/establishment of modular refinery; effective utilization of modern technology for pipeline surveillance and adequate prosecution of arrested participants in illicit oil trade.

Keywords: Illicit Trade, Illicit Oil Trade, Development, Security, Niger-Delta.

INTRODUCTION

The abundance of natural resources in any society or country is crucial for its development. The presence of these in any nation that they are blessed with presents a great challenge as they attract illicit actors. Among the challenges is that the high rate of illicit trade on these natural resources pose a threat to the revenue generation of the state and all-round development. Nigeria provides a key example of one the states endowed with several natural resources that are beneficial to its citizens and the state at large. Among all these natural resources is crude oil that in the recent past served as the mainstay of the Nigerian economy. The implication is that illicit trade in oil or oil theft, it will go a long way to undermine economic growth and development of Nigeria.

For over five decades, oil has been serving as the major base of Nigerian economy, oil does not only account for 90% of its foreign exchange earnings, Nigeria is the eight largest exporter of crude oil globally and the Niger Delta region account for over 37.4 billion barrels of the nation's crude oil reserve (Bebeteidoh et al, 2020). The Niger Delta which plays host to most oil companies is endowed with oil and gas and involves over 90% of the Nigerian export (Moses, 2023). The oil generates about 5.9% to 9% of Nigeria's GDP and over 95% of its export revenue and the leading oil exporting country in Africa and 8th in the world as earlier

said (Moses, 2023). Furthermore, it also noted that more than 75% of the country's national income is generated from oil exports (Soremi, 2020).

Crude oil in Nigeria was discovered in 1956 and found in commercial quantity in Oloibiri, Bayelsa State in Niger Delta. The region currently houses oil fields, consisting of 355 located onshore and 251 offshore (NNPC 2019 as cited in Soremi, 2020). Before then, Nigeria was an agrarian economy which accounted mostly for its exports earning from 1950s to 1970s. It was observed that the role of agriculture to GDP was 63% in 1960 and gone down to 34% in 1988 which was mainly because of neglect in agriculture and more emphasis on crude oil (Anyio, 2015).

The issue of oil theft and illicit oil trade is globally pervasive and happens in many countries (both developing and developed) and as the global supply chain of oil has a global spread/reach, so did actors in organized oil theft or illicit trade has reached global scale (Romsom, 2022). This shows that the issue of illicit trade on oil has degenerated into a well-organized business with the participation of organized crime groups that engage in oil exploitation, creating an economy of illicit rackets and a crude enterprise (Balogun & Adesanya, 2022). To Anyio (2015) oil theft has become an unaccepted norm of militant activities and there has been an increasing report of illicit oil trade, bunkering and unauthorized local refineries in the Niger Delta.

The issue of oil theft and illicit oil trade in Nigeria started in late 1970 mainly carried out by top military personnel. The illicit oil trade has later turned a new dimension with the emergence of agitation for resource control by Niger Delta indigenes and militancy (Soremi, 2020). It is further observed that the Niger Delta oil crime is one of the most serious natural resource crimes globally where theft, sale and illegal refining is up to 20% of Nigeria's oil output (Cartwright & Atampugre, 2020). Therefore, this research is specifically aimed to:

- i. explain the nature of illicit oil trade in Nigeria
- ii. ascertain the impact of illicit oil trade in Nigeria's security
- iii. examine the impacts of illicit oil trade on the development of Nigeria and;
- iv. recommend solutions or strategies to solve the problem of illicit oil trade in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Illicit Trade

According to World Health Organization (WHO) (cited in Mashiri & Sebele-Mpofu, 2015, p. 40) "illicit trade is any practice or conduct prohibited by law and which relates to the production, shipment, possession, distribution, sale or purchase of goods and services including any practice or conduct intended to facilitate such activity." The Illicit Trade Group (n.d) defined illicit trade as any commercial practices or transaction related to the production, acquisition, sale, purchase, shipment, movement, transfer, receipt, possession, or distribution of any illicit product defined as such by international law." Illicit trade includes are both in goods and services deemed illegal as they are considered to be dangerous, morally, socially or politically inappropriate or not in line with existing market regulations (Illicit Trade Group, n.d). According to World Customs Organization (WCO):

Illicit trade involves money, goods or value gained from illegal and otherwise unethical activity. It encompasses a variety of illegal trading activities including human trafficking, environmental crime, illegal trade in natural resources, intellectual property infringements, trade in certain substances that cause health and safety risks, smuggling of excisable goods, trade in illegal drugs and a variety of illicit financial flow (cited in Shelley, 2020, p. 9).

Illicit Oil Trade

Illicit trade in oil means the illegal production or refining, sale and distribution of oil or crude oil within a country and across national borders. It involves the practice prohibited by law in relation to the production, shipment, possession, distribution, sale and purchase of crude oil or refined oil within a country or across the nation-state.

Security

Security means where individuals, organizations, and states are protected from various threats and risks that may lead to harm or damage. To Ijioma et al (2022, p. 108) “security is the state of being safe and secure from danger; it could also be protection from recurring threats such as hunger, disease and repression.” According to Okolie and Nnamani, (2017, p. 305) security means “safety from threats, anxiety, and danger. It is also subjective and psychological to the extent that it can be measured by the absence of fear that threat, anxiety, or danger will occur.” Furthermore, it shows that security is physical, psychological, objective, and subjective as well as multi-dimensional, social, economic, political and environmental (Okolie & Nnamani, 2017). Nwolise (2006 as cited in Austin-Eyole et al, 2022, p. 43)

security is a comprehensive condition that recommends: the safety of a territory by a network of armed forces, the sovereignty of the state which must be assured by a democratic and nationalistic government and protected by the military, police and the people themselves; safety of the people from not only external attacks but also from catastrophic consequences of domestic disruptions such as hunger, unemployment, starvation, homelessness, ignorance, diseases, environmental degradation, pollution and other socio-economic injustice.

The above definitions indicate that the concept of security has different approaches including traditional and non-traditional approaches. Traditional approaches focus on the use of military force and the protection of borders, while non-traditional approaches involve addressing the root causes of insecurity, such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. Security also includes threats like cyber security, climate change, and pandemics (Alison, 2013; Brenner, 2018). Therefore, the concept of security can be

interrogated from different perspectives namely: physical security, cyber security, information security, financial security, national security, economic security etc.

Development

Todaro and Smith (2006, cited in Mensah *et al*, 2019) argued that development is a multi-dimensional process that involves changes in social structures, attitudes, and institutions. Also, major changes in economic growth, reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty. According to Seers:

The questions to ask about a country's development are three; what has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all these three have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned (cited in Okolie, 2016, p. 29).

Ekundayo (2015, cited in Ogidi, 2019, p. 104) noted that development refers to “an encompassing process involving steady and systematic changes in the cultural, economic and political spheres of a society in a way that increases production, empowers the people and their communities, protects the environment, strengthens institutions, grows quality of life and promote good governance.” To Okolie (2016, p. 26):

Development should better be projected as man-stimulated phenomenal socio-economic political transformations, and automation of self and entire structure of a given polity. These involve acquisition of new and relevant ideas, skills, drive, propensities, preferences, predispositions, and psychic motor which are directed toward transformation of the existential and material conditions of the given people. These subsequently translate into improvement in man's potentials and capabilities, elimination or rather, reduction of poverty, inequality, unemployment and thus improvement in life sustenance, self-esteem, freedom, and value orientations. Development is therefore largely a process and dynamic enterprise. This process must first and foremost make room for an awakening of the inner potential of human beings who are both initial protagonists and its ultimate target.

According to Dele and Ukeaja (2019, p. 212)

Development does not only mean capital accumulation and economic growth but also the condition in which citizens have adequate food and job and income inequality among them is greatly reduced. It is the process of bringing fundamental and

sustainable changes in the society. Development is now more applied to the improvement of the human condition constituted by the alleviation of unemployment, poverty, misery, and social inequality. It is providing opportunities, empowerment, and security... Development is therefore a complex process. It implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well-being.

So, this research will see development as involving improvement in access to basic needs of life, employment opportunity, business growth, government revenue, physical environment etc.

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected through documentary methods, using secondary sources like journals, textbooks, newspapers etc. The data were analysed with qualitative method, using the thematic method. The scope of this research is restricted to illicit trade in oil in the Niger Delta region by focusing on the nature of illicit oil trade and its implications on the security and development of the Niger Delta.

Nature of Illicit Oil Trade/Oil Theft in Nigeria

The issue of illicit oil activities can take three types. The types are as follows:

1. The first type involves where oil is siphoned from pipelines that had been punctured or cut and the crude oil is collected for refining and sold locally (Soremi, 2020; Asuni, 2009). This type of bunkering is conducted by the local population.
2. The second type or mode involves where plastic hoses are attached to wellheads or manifold points to divert the direction of the crude oil into barges, ships or canoes and the crude oil is transported and offloaded into tankers at the coastal rivers. The crude oil is further transfer into larger tankers or ships on the high seas (Soremi, 2020). This is seen as the process of hacking into pipeline directly or by tapping the wellhead (Asuni, 2009). In return for the oil, the bunkers receive money and weapons (Asuni, 2009). To Asuni (2009) this type of illicit oil activities is much more significant – not because of money but because of what the crude is being used for exchange: illegal drugs and weapons.
3. The third type involves excess lifting of crude oil beyond the licensed amount, and this is done using forged bills of lading that shows fake receipt of goods or oil for transport and specifying terms of delivery. This type involves oil companies and top government officials (Asuni, 2009). This falsification of bill of lading is meant to cover up the actual quantity of oil being shipped out of Nigeria.

The SDN (2020) identified the mechanics of illegal oil refining which include five parts: tap installation, operating the tapping point; supply of stolen crude for export and local refining; local refining into products; and distribution and sale of refined products. The first tap installation is where illegal taps are installed to divert crude oil to another direction. This second

stage (operating the tapping point) which normally made up of at least three key players that will guard and operate the tap by making use of oil pressure and rubber hose to siphon crude oil from the tap into a boat (SDN, 2020). The third stage deals with the supply of stolen crude for export and local refining. Once the crude oil siphoned got to the boat or vessel, the crude is distributed to various camps and to oil workers waiting off the coast for national, regional, and international market (SDN, 2020). The fourth stage involves the refining of stolen crude into products. That is stolen oil that is not smuggled out of Niger Delta is refined locally in camps and the fifth stage involves distribution and sale of refined products. The distribution and sale of the illegal refined product are done in the following ways: shipment by sea to large domestic and regional markets; diesel sales to nearby towns and cities; supply of surplus kerosene within communities; gift of kerosene to local communities and personal use of diesel (SDN, 2020).

Illicit Oil Trade and Development in Nigeria

The illicit oil activities have gone a long way to undermine the development of Niger Delta and Nigeria at large. The illicit oil trade has more impact on economic growth and development.

i. Loss of Revenue: Nigerian government has lost a lot of revenue due to issue of oil theft and illicit trading of oil. This is because Nigeria depends heavily on revenue from crude oil, like 80% of the federal government's revenue, 95% of the export's receipts and 90% of foreign exchange earnings come from oil export (Moses, 2023; Soremi, 2020). To Asuni (2009) the trade in stolen oil per day in the Niger Delta is unknown, but somewhere between 30,000 and 300,000 barrels and the loss of about 100 billion dollars between 2003 and 2008. The study by Transparency International (2019) indicated that the lucrative and organized illicit oil trade loses Nigeria 200,000 barrels of oil every day and cost the Nigerian government 3.8 trillion naira in 2016 and 2017. Based on the report by TVC News, it shows that in April 2023, the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative revealed that Nigeria lost 619.7 million barrels of crude oil valued at 16.28 trillion naira to oil theft between 2009 and 2020 (TVC News, 2023). Furthermore, it shows that oil production fell from 2.5 million barrels per day in 2011 to just a million in July 2022 and more than \$3.3 billion has been lost to crude oil theft since 2021 (Orjinmo, 2022). Nigeria's oil regulator revealed that the country lost 141 million barrels of crude oil, an equivalent of \$1 billion worth of revenue in the 1st quarter of 2022 which went up to \$10.24 billion by the first half of 2022 (Igwe, 2022). In addition, it shows that between January to July 2022, Nigeria lost average 437,000 barrels of oil a day to criminals which is worth more than \$10 billion equivalent of N4.3 trillion (at N430 to a dollar) (Igwe, 2022). According to the report by stakeholders Democratic Network (SDN) (2020)

An estimated 150,000 barrels of crude oil are stolen every day in Nigeria. The vast majority of this is sold internationally, but approximately 25% stays in the Niger Delta for refining and consumption. Illegal oil refining in the region comes with steep economic and social costs... only five years ago, billions of dollars in oil revenue were effectively locked in because of instability and crime in the Niger Delta (p. 4).

Furthermore, the findings of Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) revealed that the total volume of crude oil lost by SPDC, Chevron and NAOC from theft and sabotage between 2009-2011 was about 11 billion dollars (N1.737 trillion) and if such loses are shared based on joint ventures equity holdings, the federal government lost the total of N6.3 billion from 2009-2011 (SDN, 2020). In addition, a 10-year study conducted by NEITI again revealed that 41.8 billion dollars in revenue for government was lost because of oil crime and the scale of oil crime is a major operational challenge for the NNPC and oil industry which contributes to production challenge (Cartwright & Atampugre, 2020). Evidence from Dr. Ngozi Okonjo -Iweala put the figure of oil theft at 400,000 barrels per day, while Shell Petroleum estimates put the loss to be between 150,000 and 180,000 barrels per day. Nigerian government and operating partners have been losing a cumulative estimate of 40 million dollars per day at a flat price of 100 dollars per barrel of crude oil (Akpan, 2016). Another report shows that Nigeria lost about 1.29 million naira at exchange rate of N165 per dollar in 2014 to illicit oil trade or theft (Anyio, 2015).

Chatham House report provides another example of illicit activities in Nigeria's oil sector when it showed that oil theft in Nigeria account for estimated 400,000 barrels per day which had led to loss of 1 billion dollars per month and 1 million barrels per day of oil production capacity is locked, leading to additional tax deferment loss of 20 billion dollars per year (Romsom, 2022).

ii. Unemployment in the Formal Sector: The activities of illicit trade in oil also contribute to unemployment rate in the Niger Delta and Nigeria at large. The issue of oil theft and illicit sale of oil had frustrated the operation of most of the oil companies' businesses. This has led to retrenchment of workforce and extinction or closure of some of their businesses (Moses, 2023; Soremi, 2020; Anyio, 2015). The works of Anyio (2015) noted that militant activities in oil illicit trade had led to retrenchment of 3500 workers of SPDC in 2007. Also, Indorama Petrochemical Company shut down its operations by rendering over 3000 youth jobless in 2007. According to Soremi (2020, p. 6) oil theft in Niger Delta had led most of the prominent MNCs operating in Nigeria to exit from many of their onshore venture, threatening job loss and increase in unemployment rate.

iii. Reduction of Foreign Direct Investment: This is another key problem arising from this problem of illicit oil trade. The glaring loss of revenue associated with illicit oil trade among the multinational oil corporations operating in Nigeria, discourages prospective foreign oil companies from coming to invest more Nigeria especially in the Niger Delta region (Anyio, 2015; Cartwright & Atampugre, 2020). It revealed that illicit oil trade and theft had made oil companies to withhold investments in billions of dollars and about 28 billion dollars that ought to have been invested in the sector has been lost since 2010 as a result of theft/illegal oil export (Anyio, 2015). The issue of oil theft and illegal export or trade in oil has reduced or undermined investment confidence in the oil sector (Cartwright & Atampugre, 2020). To Cartwright and Atampugre (2020) the artisanal sector remains a major negative factor in terms of investor confidence in Nigeria and the situation in Niger Delta is not helping Nigeria's ability to attract investment.

iv. Environmental Hazard/Threat: Illicit oil trade also contributed to environmental hazard and threat in the Niger Delta region. How does this contribute to environmental hazard? Illicit

oil trade cannot occur without the actors engaging in oil theft. The activities of actors in oil theft with intention to illegally sale crude oil within and outside Nigeria most times leads to oil spill and pollution that has an adversely affected the physical environment and human health. To Moses (2023) the issue of incessant oil spills is due to unprofessional handling of oil pipelines. It has been reported that oil spills are twenty times those in United States onshore crude production, its negative effect on health, fishing and farming is significant (Cartwright & Atampugre, 2020). This environmental impact is also reported by Bayelsa State Oil and Environmental Commission that revealed that the spillage has brought higher levels of metals in inhabitants' blood, more malnutrition and food contamination (Cartwright & Atampugre, 2020). Environmental degradation is the most visible and direct impact of illegal refining and oil theft, and vegetation is affected by the resulting pollution, crude saturates the mangroves and oil disturbs the surface water (SDN, 2020). The illegal oil refining has a significant health risk, it further indicated that communities are constantly exposed to inhalation of poisonous gasses, leading to coughing and challenge of breathing (SDN, 2020). According to a respondent interviewed: "some of the refiners have persisted coughs and rashes all over their body. Crude is not something that someone should joke with. Some of them (the refiners) had bad coughs, they were taken to hospital and treated" (SDN, 2020). Another respondent noted that "bunkering has affected our environment negatively for us who go into the camps to buy; we see the way they pour the waste in a very shallow pit. But we have also built houses with the money from this business" (SDN, 2020). That is why Romsom (2022, p.17) stated that "in the Niger Delta, environmental damage from leaking oil wells and pipelines spoil the natural swamplands and fishing waters at such a scale and frequency that it has gained significant international attention." Furthermore, the study conducted by Bebetadoh et al (2020) revealed where most of the respondents confirmed that their source of water supply is affected by crude oil waste from nonstandard refining sites.

v. Challenge to Food Security/Agricultural Development in the Niger Delta Region: The oil spillage caused by oil theft and illicit oil trade did not only lead to environmental degradation, it also led to shortage in food supply/food security crisis in the region. The damage in the environment contributed to threat on the survival of fishes, source of water and the people's farm lands (Cartwright & Atampugre, 2020; Bebetadoh et al, 2020; Romsom, 2022). Reports show that oil spill severally impact the delicate ecosystem of the wetlands that are traditionally mangrove and cassava producing (Cartwright & Atampugre, 2020). Therefore, the damages will make harvesting of fish and cassava in large quantity difficult in the Niger Delta region. Based on the study conducted by Cartwright and Atampugre (2020, p. 18) it revealed that "oil spills kill both mangrove plants and animals. The oil also gets buried in the sediments. It takes years for recovery and restoration through natural processes." Furthermore, the issue of spill caused by oil theft, illicit oil trade, etc., has led to decline of fish and other water-borne species. It has been reported that in Nigeria (Niger Delta to be precise) the increasing levels of oil production negatively impact fish production (Cartwright & Atampugre, 2020). The interview conducted by Cartwright and Atampugre (2020) revealed that there was "consensus that illegal oil bunkering and refining had had an overwhelmingly negative effect on the environment, people were not able to fish, farm or use river water owing to pollution" (p. 19).

vi. Facilitation of Employment in the Informal Economy: Despite the negative effect of illicit oil trade on economic, security and environmental development in the region, illicit oil trade or activities have promoted employees' opportunities to people in the local communities.

Reports show that artisanal refining sector is a major employer of labour where 1000 workers in Bayelsa and about 4600 in Rivers State were employed in 2018. The workers in artisanal refining or illicit oil activities to a large extent earn more than teachers, police, military personnel, and farmers (Cartwright & Atampugre, 2020).

Illicit Oil Trade and Security in the Niger Delta Region

The issue of oil theft and illicit oil trade has contributed to continued conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region. This is because the leaders of the militant or armed groups engage in oil theft and illicit trade in oil to source funds to facilitate their militant operations in the regions. It has shown that the militant organizations engage in illicit oil trade to get in return weapons and other technologies needed for armed group operations (Soremi, 2020; Moses, 2023; Cartwright & Atampugre, 2020; Bish et al, 2022). According to Cartwright and Atampugre (2020, p.7) “over time militant groups have become involved in refining crude oil to finance and fuel their operations.” That is why Bish et al (2022) argued that illicit market contributes to the proliferation of violence. Criminal economies are a source of revenue for armed groups in Nigeria which threaten stability and erode good governance. Asuni (2009, p. 2) added that the “proceeds from oil theft are used to buy weapons and ammunitions helping to sustain the armed groups that are fighting the federal government.” Also, these proceeds from illicit oil trade can be used to train and recruit more members in the militancy (Soremi, 2020). Furthermore, Soremi (2020) noted that the acquisitions of weapons and reinforcement through illicit oil trade provide the armed groups the resources to perpetrate their engagement in the illegal activity. It also revealed that the armed groups also engage in hostilities among themselves over distribution of resources and this contributed to protracted conflict and restiveness (Soremi, 2020). According to Balogun and Adesanya (2022, p. 13) “the illegal enterprise empowers the youths financially such that they are able to buy better weaponry and build up a formidable arsenal in what is known as crude for arms deal.” This encourages the emergence or rise in criminal gangs or armed groups that do not only intend to fight the government rather also have the intention to remain in business. In addition, beyond the Niger Delta, the issue of illegal oil trade has helped facilitate an environment of criminals in Nigeria like armed robbery, kidnapping and inter-ethnic, or inter-communal clashes (Balogun & Adesanya, 2022). This situation shows that there is a mutual-reinforcing relationship between illegal oil activities and weapons proliferation in the Niger Delta (Balogun & Adesanya, 2022). Badmus (2010, as cited in Balogun & Adesanya, 2022, p. 13) describe this relationship as case of “gunning for oil and oiling the guns.”

Conclusion

Illicit oil trade cannot take place without the issue of oil bunkering or theft and illegal refining. These illicit oil activities involve coordinated and organized criminal activity which requires sophisticated measures or strategies to tackle. The illicit trade in oil in the Niger Delta has a significant effect on the security and development of the region and Nigeria at large. In terms of security, it revealed that illicit oil trade has continue to fuel insecurity in the Niger Delta because the militant or armed groups engage in oil theft and illicit oil trade for exchange of weapons and other logistics for their successful operations. Furthermore, illicit oil trade posed a challenge to general development in terms of loss of government revenue, increase in unemployment in formal sector, reduction of foreign direct investment, challenge of food

security and threat to health and physical environment. However, the positive effect of illicit oil trade was in the area of creation of employment in informal sector mainly for the people in locality. Therefore, the government and other stakeholders should adopt adequate strategies to eliminate or reduce the issue of illicit oil activities in the Niger Delta regions.

Recommendations

The research made the following recommendations:

1. There is a need for government to cut off or block any local/national, regional and international markets for stolen crude oil. Most especially attention should be given on how to reduce or stop the international market of illicit oil trade because illegal oil refining relies mainly on the international trade in stolen crude oil. There cannot illicit oil trade across the border if there is no ready buyer waiting in Nigeria seas to evacuate them with vessels. The report of recent interceptions in this 2023 by Nigeria Navy and some private security companies within the region is a step in the right direction and must be encouraged by Federal Government of Nigeria
2. Addressing the issue of poverty and unemployment in the Niger Delta region is very key for reduction or control of illicit oil trade. Since data from studies and reports suggests that poverty and unemployment are some of the major drivers of illicit oil activities in the region. The government must therefore adopt deliberate measures to provide employment opportunities for its citizens in these areas and beyond with a view to lifting them out of poverty.
3. There is need to address the infrastructural deficit in the region by both Government and Oil companies operating in the area. provision of basic needs. Infrastructural amenities like power supply, water, transport, road, and communication services are essential for the rural areas in Niger Delta region.
4. The promotion of modular refinery program is necessary. The simpler modular refineries may be more affordable to local investors, and it will encourage more participation of local citizens, most especially in terms of employment, thereby helping in bridging the employment gap in the area.
5. Modern technological approach in pipeline surveillance must be encouraged by all key players. Effective utilization of technological surveillance is needed by oil companies to monitor activities of oil theft and illicit sale of oil in the region.
6. The oil companies must take their corporate social responsibilities serious by providing employment opportunities, support in providing infrastructural development, scholarship, etc. in their host communities this will help in reducing illicit oil trade.
7. There is a need to take adequate steps to continue arresting and prosecuting individuals caught in the act. It should also be given publicity as deterrence to future offenders with the communities.
8. The government should strengthen the security agencies charged with the responsibility of monitoring illicit oil trade/activities with incentives like promotions and special allowances. There must be constant training, provision adequate equipment's, discipline of corrupt ones among them. If the above measures and many others are put in place, the menace of illicit oil trade in the Niger Delta region will be reduced to the barest minimum.

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