

NIGER DELTA MINORITIES AND THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

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ABSTRACT

The perceived inequitable distribution of economic and social resources remains a perennial feature of Nigeria's political history. The rise of ethnic minority organisations and the concomitant violent struggles for justice has continued to militate against economic growth and political stability of Nigeria. Although, there are several studies on the conflicts and intervention programmes in the Niger Delta, these have not been done from the perspective of a Theory of Justice. This study, examined the agitation in the Niger Delta region as a quest for social justice.

Rawls's theory of 'justice as fairness' provided the analytical framework for this study. Four out of the six States of the Niger Delta were purposively selected. Questionnaire was administered to proportionate to size cross-section of youths and community leaders, purposively selected from three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in each of the four States: Rivers 250 (190:60), Delta 250 (190:60), Bayelsa 150 (100:50) and Edo 150 (100:50). Data were collected on the socio-demographic characteristics; perceptions of economic marginalisation, social amenities, resource control, unemployment, corruption and government policy on Niger Delta demands. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted among three of each political office holders; academics; leaders of ethnic associations and Directors of Minority Rights non-governmental organisations. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and ANOVA while qualitative data were content analysed.

Age of the respondents was 34.2 ± 12.1 years and 67.7% were males. Seventy-one percent were youths, while 44.8% had tertiary education. Perceptions of youths and community leaders on economic marginalisation varied from 125:31 (63.4%) in Rivers to 97:37 (91.2%) in Bayelsa State; scarce social amenities varied from 74:21 (69.4%) in Edo to 158:38 (83.7%) in Delta States as major factors for persistent agitations for justice. Factors identified for violent agitation in the Niger Delta included: inability to control resources which varied from 83:22 (76.6%) in Edo to 174:38 (90.6%) in Delta; and a high level of unemployment from 61:23 (61.3%) in Edo to 97:26 (89.8%) in Bayelsa State. Perception of corruption among the elites, which varied from 148:49 (80.1%) in Rivers to 170:32 (86.3%) in Delta State, was identified as a major factor for government's failure to address Niger Delta demands. There was a significant difference among the States regarding implementation of government policy on economic control of resources. Most respondents (93.6%) agreed to the need to promote a fair socio-economic distribution of resources among ethnic groups. There were significant differences regarding trust in government affirmative programmes and minority quest for justice. Infrastructural development and employment of youths were cited by most respondents (90.7%) as means of reducing the tendency for violent struggles. The KIIs indicated that inadequate premium on derivation principle and oppressive state policies led to socio-economic marginalisation of minority groups. Fair treatment of all groups would facilitate ethno-regional growth, while compensation, environmental and participatory justice would encourage equity and promote justice.

Perceived marginalisation is central to the persistent quest and struggles for social justice in the Niger Delta region. Pragmatic approach should be taken to ensure equity in the distribution of resources.

Keywords: Ethnic minority, Resource control, Social justice, Niger Delta.

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Zainab Emitareye **Atiri** (Matric No: 41983) under my supervision in the Department of Political Science, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the utmost glory of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; to the memory of my late parents Mr Joseph and Mrs Ajala Omokhabi who did all their best to see us through school, and my children for their patience and encouragement.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

ABBREVIATIONS

AG: Action Group
AMOS: Association of Minority Oil States
ANOVA: Analysis of Variance
BDPP: Benin Delta Political Party
BOR: Ogoni Bill of Rights
CARIA: Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Imo and Anambra
CE: Centre for Environment
CEHRD: Centre for Environment, Human Right and Development
CDHR: Committee for the Defense of Human Right
CM: Chicoco Movement
CRP: Constitutional Right Project
CWA: Community Wome Association
CWOPA: Common Wealth of Oil Producing Areas
EBB: Egbesu Boys of Bayelsa
EEC: Egi Ethnic Coalition
EMIROAF: Ethnic Minority Right Organisation
ENU: Edo National Union
ERA: Environmental Rights Action
FAT: Frustration Aggression Theory
FOWA: Federation of Ogoni Women Association
GET: Group Entitlement Theory
HRWA: Human Rights Watch Action
HNT: Human Need Theory
INYM: Isoko National Youth Movement
IC: Ijaw Communities
INC: Ijaw National Congress
IHMB: Institute for Home Benin Improvement
IRPL: Ijaw Rivers Peoples League
IYC: Ijaw Youth Council
JIIN: Justice in Nigeria Now
KIIs: Key Informant Interviews
JMA: Jamiyya Mutanen Arewa
MEND: Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MF: Miideekor's Frames
MSM: Mid-WestState Movement

MOSOP: Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
NCNC: National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons
ND: Niger Delta
NDCSC: Niger Delta Civil Society Coalition
NDDDB: Niger Delta Development Board
NDHD: Niger Delta Human Development
NDW: Niger Delta Women
NDWJ: Niger Delta Women for Justice
NDVF: Niger Delta Volunteer Force
NPC: Northern Peoples Congress
OCC: Operation Climate Change
OF: Ogboni Fraternity
OL: Operation Launch
OOM: Oppressive Order Master
OCC: Operation Climate Change
OL: Operation Launch
ORO: Operation Reach Out
OW: Operation Warfare
OT: Otu-Edo
RDT: Relative Deprivation Theory
SCT: Social Conflict Theory
SDN: Stakeholders Democracy Network
SNC: Sovereign National Conference
WAEA: Warri Accord Ethnic Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgement	iv
Certification	vi
Dedication	vii
Abbreviation	viii
Table of Contents	x
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Hypothesis	5
1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study	6
1.5 Methodology	6
1.6 Scope of the Study	10
1.7 Justification of the Study	10
1.8 Limitation of the Study	13
1.9 Definition of Terms: Autonomy	14
1.10 Resource Control	15
1.11 Self-determination	17
1.12 Youth Restiveness	18
1.13 The Outline of the Chapters	19
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	21
2.1 Introduction	21
2.2 Conceptualising Ethnic Minority	22
2.3 Conceptualising Justice: The Idea of Justice	23
2.4 The Concept of Justice	25
2.4.1 Concept of Justice as Equality	25
2.4.2 Concept of Justice as Right	26
2.4.3 Concept of Justice as Fairness	28
2.4.4 The Concept of Justice as Equity	28

2.4.5 Concept of Justice as Reciprocity or Compensatory	29
2.4.6 Concept of Justice as Impartiality	29
2.4.7 Concept of Justice as Participatory	30
2.5 Environmental Justice	30
2.6 Historical Clarification of Justice	33
2.7 The Principle of Social Justice	35
2.8 Principle of Distributive Justice	37
2.9 Ethnic Minorities and Distributive Justice in Nigeria	41
2.10 Conceptualising Conflict	44
2.11 Ethnic Agitation in the Niger Delta Region	46
2.12 Ethnicity, Niger Delta Minorities and the Quest for Justice in Nigeria	48
2.13 Conceptual Clarification: Ethnicity and Ethnic Group	53
2.14 Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups: Theoretical Approaches	57
2.14.1 Theory of Primordial Ethnicity	58
2.14.2 Theory of Constructive Ethnicity	59
2.14.3 Theory of Instrumental Ethnicity	61
2.14.4 Theories of Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Group Formation	63
2.15 Theories of Ethnic Minority Agitations in Nigeria	66
2.15.1 Social Conflict Theory	67
2.15.2 Relative Deprivation Theory	68
2.15.3 Frustration Aggression Theory	69
2.15.4 Group Entitlement Theory	70
2.15.5 Human Need Theory	70
2.16 Conflict Theories and Ethnic Minority Agitation for Justice	71
2.17 Theoretical Framework: Rawls's Theory of Justice as Fairness	72
2.17.1 The Original Position	73
2.17.2 Rawls 'Veil of Ignorance'	74
2.17.3 Rawls Two Principles of Justice	75
2.18 Robert Nozick's Theory of Entitlement or Right	77
2.19 Ronald Dworkin's theory of justice: equal concern and due process	79
2.20 Conclusion	81

CHAPTER THREE: Ethnic Minority Quest for Justice in Nigeria: An Overview	83
3.1 Introduction	83
3.2 Contributory Factors to Ethnic Minority Quest for Justice in Nigeria	83
3.3 Colonialism, Regionalisation and Ethnic Agitations in Nigeria	84
3.4 Ethnic Marginalisation and Concept of Domination	86
3.5 Colonialism, Ethnic Domination and Injustice in Nigeria	88
3.6 Ethnic Minorities in Post-colonial Nigeria	90
3.7 Elite, Ethnic Minority Agitation and the Quest for Justice in Nigeria	91
3.8: The Failure of State Creation	93
3.9 Policy Framework in Nigeria	95
3.9.1 Principle of Federalism	95
3.9.2 The Federal Character Principle and Federal Character Commission	98
3.9.3 Power Sharing and Rotation/Zoning System	99
3.9.4 Ethnic Minorities' Agitations and Constitutional Reforms in Nigeria	101
3.10 Conclusion	104
CHAPTER FOUR: Accommodation Struggle: The Case of Mid West Minorities (1940-1980)	106
4.1 Introduction	106
4.2 Ethnic Identity Formation and the Quest for Justice in Nigeria	107
4.3 Fear of Domination and Minority Group Formation in Nigeria	109
4.5 Ethnic Structures and Mid West Agitation for Autonomy	112
4.6 Constitutional Conferences: Demand for Mid West Autonomy	116
4.7 Creation of Mid – West Region (1963)	117
4.8 Significance of Mid West Minority Struggle for Autonomy	119
4.9 Conclusion	120
CHAPTER FIVE: Niger Delta Minorities: Quest for Self Determination and Resource Control (1980 - 2000)	122
5.1 Introduction	122
5.2 Quest for Social Justice: The Case of the Niger Delta Minorities	122
5.3 The Niger Delta Minorities: Historical Overview	123
5.4 Niger Delta Minorities: Allegation of Injustice	126

5.5 Niger Delta Minorities: Government Policy and Quest for Social Justice	129
5.6 Niger Delta Quest for Justice: Government Response	131
5.7 Ethnic Structures and the Quest for Social Justice in the Niger Delta Region	133
5.8 Background to Ethnic Minority Struggles in the Niger Delta Region	134
5.8.1 The Ogoni Ethnic Group: Quest for Environmental Justice	136
5.8.2 Ijaw National Congress (INC) and the Quest for Self-determination	138
5.8.3 Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND): Strategy of Violent Attack	140
5.8.4 Niger Delta Women Association (NDWA): Quest for Social Amenities and Human Right	142
5.8.5 The Quest for Justice: Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)	144
5.9 Persistent Ethnic Agitations in the Niger Delta Region	145
5.10 Conclusion	146
CHAPTER SIX: Discussion of Findings and Conclusion	148
6.1 Introduction	148
6.2 Findings	148
6.3 Results and Discussions	158
6.4 Recommendations of Findings	172
6.5 Summary of Result and Findings	185
6.6 Recommendation: Ethnic Minority Quest for Justice in Nigeria	188
6.7 Contribution of this study to knowledge	191
6.8 Suggestions for further study	192
6.9 Conclusion	192
References	197
Questionnaire	228

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Justice is one of the oldest concepts in existence, and also an essential feature for ensuring a stable society. Justice is not only real and an objective concept, but also rooted in the nature of man and society (Waterfield, 1984; Sen, 1996). According to Rawls (1973), justice occupies a central place in the basic structure of society, and exerts significant influence on the individual, as well as a groups' life's prospects, desires, aspirations and self-esteem; the effect which is present at birth and continues throughout the individual and groups' lifetime. Because people have no control or power over where they are to be located in life and since justice is a characteristic of society, it behooves on the State or major social institutions of the society to determine how to distribute rights and duties, benefits and burdens that may arise from social cooperation.

Although the concept of justice has several times been described as an expression of right (Nozick, 2001; Mill, 1991); as equality for all people (Dworkin, 1981; Baker, 2001); as equity and fairness among unequal groups (Rawls, 1973; Irele, 1998); and as compensation and rectification of historical injustice for deprived groups (Nozick, 2001), nevertheless, justice can be described as a concept that commands the maintenance of relevant equalities and the eradication of unjustified inequalities (Brandt, 1962; Sampson, 1975; Kane, 1996; Baker, 2001); and in another sense, justice, requires that public policies actively compensate for disadvantages and deprivation that some members or groups of people in the society may suffer or might have suffered.

It is an inevitable fact that in every society, inequality of birth, historical circumstances and natural endowment among groups exist. These forms of inequality affect individuals as well as groups' initial chances and potential for growth and development of which ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria are victims (Rawls, 1973). Historically and sociologically, ethnic minorities are groups that occupy a subordinate position either in status or number to a dominant majority ethnic group with the power to control state apparatus (Thornbery, 1980). Given the one-sided relation between minority and majority groups, it behooves on the State or society to devise "corrective measures" to ameliorate the consequences of inequality and address

allegations of injustice among people and groups in a society. It is in this sense that the application of justice becomes expedient.

In all regions of the world, minorities and indigenous people have suffered marginalisation, exclusion, repression and in some cases, war and genocide (IRIN, 2001). Despite claims that the world has entered into a new era of human rights and democratic representation, the process of discrimination, marginalisation, domination, poverty and attrition continues; thus, increasing the agitations for justice by deprived and oppressed groups. Globally, particularly in countries where ethnic antagonism exists, the right to exercising self-determination is well respected. For instance, nations such as United States of America (USA), Canada and Malaysia have at various times acknowledged the plight of minorities, and have preferred priority policies (direct and indirect) such as regional equalisation and social inclusion programmes to reduce consequences of inequality and provide equivalent social services (Heath, 2002; Stewart, 2007). However, African nations, instead of providing platform for the consolidation of justice, have approached minority demands and ethnic protest as youth restiveness and acts of insurgency and/or as a direct attack on the government, and have most often, responded to minority demands for justice with military attacks and repression. Thus, the failure of political institutions to effectively address ethnic minority demands and balance the interest of different groups has continued to be the bane of incessant violent protests and instability in many African states (Mbaku et al, 2001).

Allegations of inequality and differential treatment against the state by ethnic minorities, demands and struggles for autonomy, equity and good governance, the depressing distributional formula, successive administration's aversion to the practice of true federalism (Ojo, 2009), the proliferation of ethnic and social structures in the struggle for self-determination and resource control by minorities of the Niger Delta have brought to the fore the question of justice and persistent ethno-socio-economic agitations and conflicts in the quest for justice in Nigeria. To show therefore that ethnic minorities in Nigeria, and in particular, the Niger Delta minorities are recognised as equal participants in the state, there is need for a common conception of justice, one acceptable and beneficial to all the ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, because many, including the State, have failed to recognise the ethnic dimension of minority agitations as a quest for

justice, this study, therefore, attempts a critical investigation of ethnic minority agitations in the Niger Delta region as a quest for social justice. This is because there is need for the State to urgently address the socio-economic needs and demands of the people from this region as a quest for justice.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The perceived inequitable distribution of socio-economic amenities and the persistent agitations for justice remains a perennial feature of Nigeria's political history, and has been of increasing concern to the economic growth and political stability of the State. Thus, this study is informed by the following problems. First, the influence of colonialism cannot be overlooked in the emergence of ethnic group formations, and the persistent ethnic protests and agitations for recognition by ethnic minorities in Nigeria. The colonial regionalisation of Nigeria into three dominant regions of Hausa/Fulani group to the North, Igbo group to the East and Yoruba group to the West, and the classification and perceived marginalisation of other groups as 'minorities' have continued to influence violent agitations for recognition and justice. The centralisation of the country's economy, the concomitant structural imbalances and deep inequality between the majority and minority ethnic groups, and the fear of domination have further created a conflict-ridden political system militating against a harmonious relationship and sustainable development. Put in another way, mutual distrust, competition for scarce resources, discriminatory government policies, conflict over distribution of resources and unjustified inequality have become increasingly rampant between the State (led by ethnic majority groups) and minority groups in Nigeria. In consequence and in the quest for justice, ethnic minorities within the regions began to emerge in ethnic formations and socio-political organisation to demand for separate regions of their own which will cater for their interest and to counter the politics of marginalisation and domination as practiced by ethnic majority groups. This has been one of the major sources for persistent ethnic minority demands and agitation for social justice in Nigeria.

Despite affirmative action by the State to integrate the more than two hundred and fifty ethno-linguistic groups through policies of fiscal federalism, creation of an

additional region and more States, federal character principle, quota system and the establishment of the Federal Character Commission to ensure fair distribution and allocation of resources, particularly for the Niger Delta minorities, it is worthy of note that the underlying principle behind these policies have been grossly ignored by successive Nigerian governments. This conduces to widening the socio-economic inequality and the conflict that exist between the State and the Niger Delta minorities (Mustapha, 2007). In consequence, conflicts over revenue allocation, centralisation of fiscal relations and agitation over resource control have persisted.

Second, the problems of the high level of corruption and lack of accountability of government expenditure, non-implementation of government policies, absence of biological and psychological needs of identity, security, recognition and participation that relates to growth and development, and the constant fear of not getting one's fair share of economic benefits have continued to influence minorities in Nigeria to agitate for greater opportunity to participate in the central government in order to pursue an equitable distribution of resources for all. For the Niger Delta minorities particularly, the discovery and exploitation of petroleum resources without the appropriate benefit; the lack of compensation and the fear of extinction, consequent upon land degradation and environmental pollution has not only heightened cultural differences, but has remained a reference point for the struggle for self-determination and resource control as a means of bringing significant development to the Niger Delta region.

Lastly, the problem of loose essence and interpretation of the principles of justice in terms of population size, ethnic and religious inclination, and also the determinant of economic resources available from a particular region, as a means of revenue allocation has continued to characterise persistent ethnic protest and demand for social justice by ethnic minorities in Nigeria. These are contrary standards to the distributional principles of fairness, equality and equity, and have made difficult the application of the appropriate justice system for Nigeria's heterogeneous state; thus, the persistent ethnic struggles (Rawls, 1973; Nwabueze, 1993; Nozick, 2001). There is need to revisit these principles to prevent continuous agitations in the region. Although, there are several studies on the conflicts and intervention programmes in the Niger Delta, these have not been done from the perspective of a theory of justice.

Even though inequality exists amongst the various ethnic groups in Nigeria, it is significant to say that at the level of State policy, psychological fears of domination and the proliferation of ethnic structures and persistent agitation for socio-economic benefits by the Niger Delta minorities have often been misconstrued as cultural and acts of insurgency rather than as a quest for social justice. And because it has been of increasing concern to the stability of the State, this has to be re-visited and re-addressed. Thus, the study hopes to fill these gaps, by unveiling a critical philosophical analysis of the importunate agitations in the Niger Delta region as a quest for social justice. And because many studies have overlooked the ethnic dimension of the agitations as a quest for justice, the study also examined the manipulation of ethnicity as an effective tool by youth and ethnic minority associations and organisation for assessing issues of injustice. The study, therefore, provides answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent can we say that the recurrent ethnic minority agitations are product of the prevailing social injustice of the Nigerian state?
2. What are the perceived issues for persistent ethnic minority demands and violent agitations for social justice in the Niger Delta region?
3. Why has it become so difficult to address perceived issues of injustice in the Niger Delta region despite State intervention policies?
4. What are the ways or means of addressing ethnic minority demands and violent agitations in the Niger Delta region, and in Nigeria generally?
5. What is the appropriate justice system for Nigeria's heterogenous State?

1.3 Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. Perceptions of socio-economic inequity among groups do not influence persistent agitation for justice in Nigeria
2. There will be consensus among ethnic groups in Nigeria on the means and ways of addressing persistent ethnic minority agitations for justice.
3. Agitations by the Niger Delta minorities are not responses to social injustice in Nigeria?

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The specific aim of this study is to investigate the correlation between recurrent ethnic minority agitations and the prevalence of social injustice in Nigeria.

Generally, the objectives of the study are;

1. To review the concepts and theories of justice as it relates to persistent ethnic minority agitations and the quest for justice in Nigeria.
2. To examine the perceived dynamics in the ethnic minority agitations in the Niger Delta quest for social justice and in Nigeria generally.
3. To review factors responsible for the State's failure in addressing the Niger Delta demands for social justice and ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria.
4. To interrogate the paradigm shift in the Mid West minority agitations for accommodation and the ongoing struggle for resource control by Niger Delta minorities.

1.5 Methodology

The study is a philosophical exploration of justice, as it relates to ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria; and the attendant proliferation of social structures and ethnic group formations in the quest for social justice by the Niger Delta minorities. As a result, the descriptive research method was used for the study; first, to explain respondent's perception of the factors responsible for the perennial ethnic minority agitations in the Niger Delta region and Nigeria in terms of the allegations of marginalisation, underdevelopment, unemployment, corruption and poverty against the State by minorities of the Niger Delta region; second, to establish a relationship between the allegations of perceived injustice and the persistent agitations and quest for justice by the Niger Delta minorities; third, to elucidate the effect of these allegations on the socio-economic development of the region and the people's psychological make-up; and finally, to assist the researcher that firsthand experience of the region, so as to draw necessary conclusion and inferences from respondents' views and opinions about the struggle, and in particular, about their demands for justice. According to Igwebuike (2009), in descriptive research method, the researcher does not manipulate or control the situation; the situation was only presented the way the researcher found it.

The study adopted the multi stage area sample because it involves developing a sample to reflect a large unit of the Niger delta region and no list of the population especially as regards some key variables like unemployment, population of the youth etc. are available. A purposive sampling technique was used to select four, out of the six States in the Niger Delta region. The four States purposively selected include Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa and Edo State. These States were selected because they are the core States of the Niger Delta region. Also, the fact that there has been an increase in the formation of ethnic and youth organisation, and the attendant occurrence of ethnic and youth violence in the the agitation for justice influenced the selection of these States. Furthermore, in each of the four States, three Local Government Areas (LGAs) was randomly selected, and from each of the LGAs, a community. For instance, in Delta State, Uvwie, Warri and Burutu Local Government Areas were selected, while for River State, Port-Harcourt, Okrika and Degema Local Government Areas were selected. For Bayelsa State, Yenagoa, Ekeremor and Ogbia Local Government Areas were selected, while for Edo States, Oredo, Etsako West and East Local Government Areas were selected.

Stratified random and quota sampling technique was used to select and to administer questionnaire on respondents, to get information on socio-demographic characteristics of respondents; factors responsible for persistent ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria, particularly, in the violent agitations for justice in the Niger Delta region; perception of economic marginalization, political domination, underdevelopment, unemployment, poverty, corruption and other factors perceived for the continuous protest in the Niger Delta region and Nigeria generally; aspect related to the inability of the state government to address relentless ethnic minority agitations for justice by the Niger Delta minorities, decades after regionalization of Nigeria. Questionnaire also included suggestions as to the means and ways of addressing incessant and violent agitation in the quest for justice by minorities in the Niger Delta region and Nigeria. The total number of questionnaire administered was in the ratio of 580:220 among a cross-section of youth and community leaders. Five hundred and seventy-six and one hundred and eighty-eight 576:188 questionnaire were correctly and properly retrieved and analysed, while two (2%) percent could not be retrieved and two

(2%) could not be accessed. Finally, distribution of questionnaire was also based on the intensity of ethnic and youth upheavals, and the consequent violent protest in some of the state in the Niger Delta region. Questionnaire was administered to a total number of eight hundred (800) respondents from among a cross-section of youths (employed, unemployed and under-employed) and community leaders, selected from the LGAs of each of the four States in the following ratio of youths and community leaders: Rivers 250 (190:60); Delta 250 (190:60); Bayelsa 150 (100:50) and Edo 150 (100:50). Among the cross-section of youths, the distribution of questionnaire for Rivers and Delta States was in the following ratio: unemployed: seventy (70), under-employed: sixty (60) and employed sixty (60); and for Bayelsa and Edo States was unemployed forty (40), under-employed thirty (30) and employed thirty (30). The distribution was done to minimise any form of bias from any of the respondent in each of the category of youth.

The study made use of questionnaire and Key informant interviews (KIIs) to gather information from respondents from each of the four States under study. Questionnaire was proportionately distributed, according to population size and the number of the Local Government Areas (LGAs) from each State. First instance, the 2006 population census figure for each State is as follows: Rivers (5,185,400); Delta (4,098,391); Edo (3,218,332); and Bayelsa (1,703,358) (Gbadamosi, 2006, 2010); the number of local government areas from each of the states which is as follows: Delta, twenty five (25); Rivers, twenty three (23); Edo, eighteen (18) and Bayelsa, eight (8) (2010). The questions were unstructured, open-ended and divided into five sections. In this manner, respondents were also given the opportunity to share their views without being constrained into the researcher's or any formalised ideas or views. Opportunity was also given to respondent to express their views after each section. The first section is about information on the socio-demographic data of respondent; second section elicited knowledge on the factor for persistent ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria and agitations in the Niger Delta region; third section looked at factors responsible for the government inability to address and resolve the Niger Delta demands; fourth section educate the role of the state vis-à-vis ethnic minority struggles in the Niger Delta region and in Nigeria and the final section obtained respondent's suggestions and recommendations to address the demands of the Niger Delta minorities, and persistent

ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria.

Also, KIIs included three each of key political office holders, leaders of youth and ethnic group associations, the academics and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). For the Key informant interviews, respondents includes a former Federal Minister of information, secretary to Uvwie Local Government Area of Delta State, the leaders of Itsekiri National Youth Council (INYC) and the President of Egeni Youth Council (EYC), politicians, the academics and Directors of non-governmental organisations (NGOs); Environmental Right Action (ERA), Justice in Nigeria Now (JINN) and Stakeholders Democracy Network (SDN) were also consulted through electronic mail. The pre-occupation of these NGOs centred more on the development of the environment and the promotion of human right agenda for the people of the Niger Delta region. Questions were structured in line with study objectives, but were also subject to respondent's responses to previous questions raised. Respondents were allowed to answer questions freely, and from responses given, more questions were generated. Each interview session lasted between twenty and thirty minutes.

For a clearer explanation of ideas and opinion, data was subjected to two analytical methods: descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). For descriptive statistics, tabular presentation, frequency percentage count, pie and bar charts were used to explain result, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test for any significant difference in respondents' response across the four States under study. Content analysis and secondary sources were also used to buttress findings and results of the study. Results and findings were revealed in seven tabular presentation: factors for recurrent ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria; contributory factors for persistent demands and agitations in the Niger Delta region; factors responsible for failure to resolve ethnic agitations in Nigeria and in the Niger Delta region; government role vis-a-vis ethnic minority demands and struggles for justice in Nigeria, and the Niger Delta region; means of minimising violent ethnic minority struggles in Niger Delta region and Nigeria; steps to addressing Niger Delta demands; appropriate justice principles for a stable political system, and the way forward in ethnic group relation.

For the purpose of theoretical description of concepts and historical emergence of ethnic identity formation and minority group associations in Nigeria, particularly in the

struggle for accommodation and autonomy by the Mid West minorities, and in the ongoing quest for power to control resource resources of the region and the quest for social justice in the Niger Delta region, the study made use of archival documents, libraries, official gazettes, textbooks, monographs, journals, newspapers, magazines, and the internet to source for secondary information.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study period is from the mid 1940s when Nigeria was regionalised, and extends to the 1990s when ethnic demands were accompanied with protest and violent attacks. The Macpherson constitution of 1945, which regionalised Nigeria into three ethnic regions of Yoruba, Hausa/Fulani and Igbo, marked the beginning of identity group formation and the need to organise along ethnic lines in the struggle for justice. The struggle, however, became more profound from the 1990s and is still ongoing. The study, therefore, examined ethnic minority demands for justice from two perspectives: the perspective of the politics of accommodation as exemplified in the struggle by the Mid West minority for a separate region to address and cater for their peculiar need. This study period spanned between the period of 1940 and 1980 because of the subsequent demand for more states to promote ethnic minority status in Nigeria. The second perspective is expressed in the Niger Delta ongoing quest for self-determination and the right and power to resource control (economic empowerment or social justice). This study period (1990 to 2000) marked an important element in ethnic minorities' progress towards recognition and justice. It also emphasised the ethnic dimension of the struggle, as well as the importance of ethnicity, identity formation and organisations in the struggle for justice by minorities of Nigeria.

1.7 Justification of the Study

The public sphere of Nigeria and public discourse has been well immersed with the question of whether ethnic minority agitations are responses to social injustice, and for the fact that, ethnic minority demands and violent struggles have become intensified, assuming a national question in Nigeria particularly, in the persistent agitation for justice by the Niger Delta minority, it becomes imperative as an area of study. Thus, there is need to give scholarly expression to this wide spread allegation of injustice by carrying

out a theoretical and critical analysis of the connection between minority agitations and the dearth of social justice in Nigeria. This study is a response to this need.

Although, many scholars have taken issues with the term ethnic conflicts, alternately, ethnic war or ethnic violence (Osaghae, 1992; Ibrahim, 1993; Lake and Rothchild, 1998; Idowu, 1999; Otite, 2000) and others have viewed the ethnic dimension of ethnic minority agitations as clear evidence and consequences of economic, social and political inequality, this study is carried out as a complementary research to previous studies by revealing that minority demand for accommodation in Nigeria and incessant minority agitations for self-determination and resource control in Niger Delta region, are clear historical evidences of injustice within the Nigerian system which must be revisited and addressed, with the implementation and the appropriate application of justice system for all ethnic groups. For this reason, persistent ethnic agitations in Nigeria need rigorous investigation that is beyond mere background study or contributory factors to ethnic minority conflict, to a more critical study of the concept of justice as it relates to ethnic agitations in Nigeria and in the Niger Delta minority region as quest for social justice. Moreover, a more comprehensive and theoretical understanding of injustice and its influence on the emergence of ethnic and social groups as a means of addressing social, political and economic inequality through a fair distributive and institutional arrangement is required.

Scholars, who are interested in issues of nationalism, political parties, military intervention, economic development, political stability, democracy, ethnic protest and violent conflict, have all considered the ethnicity variable more from the political and sociological aspect of ethnic minority struggles (Okpu, 198; Ake, 1993; Landa, 1994, 1997; Osaghae, 1996, 2001; Markarkis, 1999; Vickers 2000), while other scholarly studies on ethnicity and nationalism in Nigeria have tilted to the areas of political science, history and anthropology. However, critical analysis and research in the area of political theory, particularly, in the light of minority quest for justice is yet to be fully explored. There is therefore the need for more rigorous and significant research studies in the area of political theory to justify the persistent quest for justice by the Niger Delta minorities.

It is also an important area of study, because it provokes a deeper understanding of ethnic minority need for recognition, and the need for a fair distributive mechanism, especially in societies where inequality abound, and in nations that strive in treating the various ethnic groups differently. The fact that the concept of justice is not an absolute term, static or given, but contextual and always evolving means that people and groups can employ it to address their particular needs at different times. Given the conception that justice is a dynamic concept with changes in issues and circumstances globally makes it an imperative area of study. The increasing global uprising against dictatorship, corruption and tyrannical government are also motivating factors for the investigation of the dynamic nature of justice. It is in situations like this that justice can be manipulated to suit changing circumstances and issues, as it affects people, especially the marginalised, the deprived and oppressed people in any society.

The study can also be justified in the sense that ethnicity has become a major element not only in the study of justice for deprived groups in Nigeria, and Africa generally, but also a weapon to fight forms of oppression and injustice. Ethnicity and ethnic group formation has become more visible in the quest for justice in many societies and cannot be ignored. In Nigeria for instance, the apathetic character of the State to Niger Delta demands for resource control and self-determination has awakened the group's consciousness to the socio-economic imbalance and unfair revenue allocation to the region. It is for this cause that the study has attempted an academic investigation and research on the effective manipulation of ethnicity by the Niger Delta minorities to demand for socio-economic justice. In other words, there is need to understand the employment of ethnicity by the Niger Delta minorities in the quest for justice. Thus, ethnicity can be a tool for attracting the appropriate justice system for the oppressed in any society.

Ethnic agitations, mostly, questions about the distribution of goods and services between persons or groups of persons, and allegations of marginalisation or domination by one group against another are definitely questions about justice that need to be thoroughly investigated and addressed. It is of note for both students and scholars of ethnicity and justice that, ethnic minority demands, protests and agitations for socio-economic provisions or resources are an inexhaustible topic of discourse that must be

researched into from different theoretical perspectives, and since the state is yet to recognise and essentially address ethnic minority demands from the perspective of injustice, ethnic protest and violent agitations and conflict will most likely persist.

This study has, in essence, explored the effective manipulation of ethnicity by the Niger Delta minorities to demand for social justice in Nigeria. The study is not only important for studying minorities of this region, it also relevant for examining allegation of perceived acts of injustice for groups of people in any region or society. The study has attempted to fill in the gap by unveiling a systematic investigation of ethnic minority quest for social justice in the Niger Delta region from a political theory perspective, and also suggested a theoretical framework for understanding the concept of justice for the disadvantaged and aggrieved groups in the Nigerian society.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

Limitations were encountered in the course of the study. First, getting information through available archival materials was quite challenging. Some of the materials were torn and tattered; others were incomplete and the letters were faded and the needed information could not be retrieved as a result of their many years of neglect on the shelf. However, the study made use of what was available. Second, some of the nationalist leaders selected for interview were always busy and unavailable, and for that purpose appointments that were made could not be kept. Leedum Mitee, the leader of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), was always unavailable; Anthony Enahoro, one of the leaders that fought for the creation of the Mid-West region, kept re-scheduling appointments that were never honoured until he eventually died in 2010. The Oba of Benin, the researcher was informed, will take months to fix an appointment.

Third, the nature of violence, kidnapping and going on motorbikes from one village to the other round the Niger-Delta region was scary, and was a hindrance for a comprehensive study. The fourth limitation was inadequate fund. The study is about minorities in the Niger Delta region with a very wide geographical land mass and water space. Assessing this expanse of land and water was a herculean task, hence the need to reduce cost. A study on minorities is a very huge academic venture that requires a lot of

funds, and great deal of travelling from one minority area to the other. This step could not be taken, because the Niger Delta is a large region coupled with the fact that it will take months to achieve an all inclusive study.

Moreover, people were very skeptical and afraid to assist or answer questions. The researcher also found it difficult locating any of the leaders of the militant groups, and nobody was ready to divulge information on where they could be located. Not many were enthusiastic or ready for any form of interview. The few who were ready to be interviewed were very hostile, because according to them, nothing positive has ever come out of previous interviews granted. Getting responses from and retrieving the questionnaires was not easy either. Many times, the research had to beg, as well as cajole many to answer the questions.

Definition of Terms: Autonomy

Autonomy is a concept found in moral, political, and ethical philosophy. Within these contexts, it is the capacity of a rational individual to make an informed, and an uncoerced decision. In moral and political philosophy, autonomy is often used as the basis for determining moral responsibility and accountability for one's actions. Personal autonomy is the capacity to decide for oneself and pursue a course of action in one's life, often regardless of any particular moral content. Thus, autonomy is described as the individual's capacity for self-determination or self-governance. Put most simply, to be autonomous is to be one's own person, to be directed by considerations, desires, conditions, and characteristics that are not simply imposed externally upon one, but are part of what can somehow be considered one's authentic self. The idea of self-rule contains two components: the independence of one's deliberation and choice from manipulation by others and the capacity to rule oneself. It is also immunity from arbitrary exercise of authority (Sagay, 2005). By contrast, a person or group of people of diminished autonomy, by contrast, is in at least some respects controlled by others or is incapable of deliberating or acting on the basis of its or their own plans.

Political autonomy on the other hand is the property of having one's decisions respected, honoured, and heeded within a political context. In other words, political

autonomy concerns the right to participate in a collective self-rule, exercised with the other members of the relevant community (Gregor, 1996; May, 1994; Benson, 1991). One of the best known philosophical theories of autonomy was developed by Immanuel Kant. According to him, autonomy is the capacity to deliberate and to give oneself the moral law, rather than merely heeding the injunctions of others. Kant described the protection of autonomy at the political level as encapsulated in the principle of right; that each person had the right to any action that can coexist with the freedom of every other person in accordance with universal law. Kant believed that any moral law motivated by the desire to fulfil some other interest would deny the categorical imperative. According to Kant, the principle of autonomy requires people to recognise the right of others to act autonomously and means that, as moral laws must be universalisable, what is required of one person is required of all (Kant 1996, 387; Gregor, 1996). A test of autonomy is the recognition that the group may make rules governing its internal affairs which is frequently based on cultural and ethnic differences. On the other hand, regional autonomy for ethnic minorities enables them to bring to full play their regional advantages and promote exchange and cooperation between minority areas and other areas. Consequently, this quickens the pace of modernisation both in minority areas and the country as a whole, and helps to achieve common development of all regions and properties of all groups (Osaghae, 2000).

2.3 Resource Control

The question of local control over resources is an established constitutional principle in a federal system. Though there is no definite definition of the term, Sagay (2005; Igbuzor and Bamidele, 2002), defined resource control simply as the means by which sustainable development can be achieved in a deprived area or region of society. Resource control, Sagay (2005) argued, has three major components: first, is the power and right of a community or state to raise funds by way of taxation on persons, matters, services, and materials within its territory. Second, is the exclusive right to ownership and control of resources both natural and created within its territory, and third, is the right to custom duties on goods, destined for its territory and excise duties on goods manufactured in its territory. The most important issue with regard to resource control is the ownership and control of mineral resources. Anything contrary to it is injustice.

Dafinone (2001) explained that it is a basic economic theory grounded in the fact that land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship are factors of production. In other words, whoever owns a land expects some form of compensation. Implicated in Dafinone's (2001) view is the idea that resource control means that a fixed proportion of the revenue collected in a local area should be retained in that area for development. Dafinone avers that apart from the negative externalities from oil exploitation and gross poverty in the Niger Delta, resource control is a basic political theory grounded, and the fact that land, capital and entrepreneur are factors of production owned by individuals should be controlled by them. In doing so, the reward derived from such factors of production should be passed to those who own them. He further asserted that whosoever owns land for example, expects same form of compensation from those hiring this very important factor of production. The Southern Governors of Nigeria, in a communiqué, defined resource control as the practice of true federalism and natural law in which the federating units express their right to primarily control the natural resources within their borders, and make agreed contributions toward maintenance of common services of the sovereign nation state to which they belong (Sagay, 2005; Alamiaseigha, 2005).

According to Ako (2012), there are three broad notions of resource control that may be distilled from numerous definitions proffered since the Ijaw Youth Council's (IYC) Kaiama Declaration that expressly employed the phrase in connection with oil resources and the Niger Delta. First is the absolute and principal resource control as well as increased derivation. This perspective of absolute resource control take the stance proffered by the Kaiama Declaration that every region should control its resources hundred percent. The principal resource control emphasised the need for the Niger Delta minorities to have a direct and decisive role in the exploration for, the exploitation and disposal of, including sales of the harvested resources. Resource control is therefore defined in terms of the right to control or manage the revenue accruing from oil and other natural resources in line with the tenets of true federalism. The governors of the southern states in Nigeria also refer to this notion of 'true federalism' in the discourse of resource control to promote the agenda that states ought to control their resources and contribute, a smaller percentage of such revenues to the central purse of the federation.

The demand for resource control by the Niger Delta minorities is only the latest in the many struggles by the people from this region to protect and sustain their environment and resources for survival. For the Niger Delta region, the demand for resource control is the need to put an end to a situation where the central or federal government controls tax revenue from oil production, and re-allocate the same to the thirty-six states of the federation, using criteria unfavorable to the oil producing state. To have control over resources, as the case may be, is to ensure sufficient financial resources for addressing the environmental deterioration which is currently plaguing the region (Sagay, 2001; Ikporukpo, 2004).

2.4 Self-determination

Self-determination can be defined as the right of every nation-state or people to their existence, economic development and national security. It is the right of ethnic or racial minorities to preserve their culture, promotes freedom from discrimination, and even affirmative action programmes (Sistare, Larry and Leslie, 2001). It can also be referred to as the choice of a nationality to live together in their own way, determine its own political fate, preserve its own affairs and develop itself or even democratise as it may deem it (Okwu-Okafor 1994: 89). In a sense, it refers to the right or freedom of a people that are subordinated, oppressed, dominated, colonised or even marginalised to assert and constitute itself into a separate state. This right is guaranteed by the United Nations Charter and the African Charter on Human Rights, to all cultural, religious and linguistic minorities and peoples as part of the human strive for liberation.

Self-determination, according to Osaghae (2001), involves a whole range of empowering and emancipatory group rights; the right to separate existence, local political autonomy within a larger territory, right to language, culture, religion, and other elements of group identity essential to the preservation of the group and held clearly by its members. Self-determination is the right to power and resource sharing in the state to which the group belongs, and lastly to equity and justice in relation to other groups and the state (Abubakar and Ajetumobi, 2002).

The act of self-determination seeks to protect members of the group, and preserve their identities. All people have the right to self-determination by virtue of the

fact that they can freely determine their political status, and freely pursue their economic and cultural development (Osaghae, 2001). For Ntalaja (2001), self-determination is the right of minorities to self-assertion, and the right to exercise their full citizenship and democratic rights. According to him, in asserting their dignity as a people, the minorities reject what they perceive as the imposition of the majority or dominant groups of its language, and/or culture on them and treatment as second class citizens. The right to self-determination is believed to reduce tension and conflict arising from diversity. It can therefore be surmised that self-determination is important for special protection and treatment of discrimination against the weaker groups in order to guarantee the continued existence of such a group and subjugation by other groups is prevented (Osaghae, 1996).

1.9 Youth Restiveness

Youth restiveness is the unwillingness to be controlled by the youths, because they feel bored and unsatisfied with the current status of things involving them specifically and the society to which they belong in general. It is a situation of the inability of youths to be still or quiet over issues of deprivation, neglect, marginalisation, and other feelings of dissatisfaction in the Niger Delta region. Several cases of youth restiveness have taken place in the Niger Delta region. For the youth of the Niger Delta region, agitations in the Niger Delta region are geared towards the restoration of their rights and dignity. Thus, youth restiveness in the Niger Delta is protest sustained by violence embarked upon by youths to enforce desired outcome from a constituted authority. Political violence can therefore be describe as a common means used by people, groups and governments around the world to achieve political goals and objectives. Many groups and individuals believe that their political systems will never respond to their political demands. As a result they believe that violence is not only justified, but also necessary in order to achieve their political objectives (Ross, 2003; Ejumudo, 2012; Nlerum, 2012).

1.10 The Outline of the Chapters

Chapter one discussed the general introduction, statement of the problem, aims and objectives of the study, method of the study, scope of study, justification of study, limitation of the study and delineation of chapters. The chapter also defined conceptual terms such as “autonomy”, “self determination” and “resource control” and youth restiveness.

Chapter two discussed the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. The chapter concentrated on the conceptual and historical analysis of ethnicity and ethnic group formation in the quest for justice in Nigeria. Theoretical explanations of ethnicity from the primordial, instrumental and constructive perspectives were discussed to explain the emergence of ethnic group formation. Theoretical explanation and factors responsible for ethnic agitations by oppressed groups, particularly in respect to the persistent ethnic minority protests in Nigeria were also discussed using five conflict theories namely, social conflict, relative deprivation, group entitlement, frustration aggression and human need theories to explain the persistent protest in the Niger Delta region. The chapter also discussed the conceptual, historical and theoretical analysis of justice. Emphasis was placed on Rawls’ (1973) theory of justice as fairness, Ronald Dworkin’s (1981) theory of equal right and concern and Robert Nozick’s (2001) theory of property right to discuss the important place of justice in any society. Other theories of justice were discussed to emphasise the need for an appropriate justice system for all groups in society. An attempt was made to explain the importance and use of ethnicity as a weapon by oppressed and deprived groups to actualise their demands for justice in Nigeria.

Chapter three presented an overview of ethnic minority demands and quest for justice in Nigeria. It discussed the background, processes, and phases of ethnic politics in Nigeria; colonial and post-colonial contribution to ethnic division and emergence of identity group formation in the quest for accommodation through the creation of additional region and states. The chapter also discussed the different ways the State had attempted to respond to ethnic demands. It suffices to say that chapter three is a prelude to the next two chapters: chapters four and five of this study.

Chapter four focused on ethnic minority demands and agitation for accommodation in regional Nigeria. The chapter examined the struggle for autonomy by the Mid West ethnic minorities of the old Western region of Nigeria, as the first successful and constitutionally created region in Nigeria. The formation of ethnic structures and the different stages of the struggles for autonomy were highlighted. The strategic approaches of ethnicity/ethnic group formation, party politics, and constitutional stages to the successful creation of the Mid West region were also discussed. Also, the chapter emphasised the importance of ethnicity and ethnic identity group formation in the process of agitating for the creation of the fourth region in Nigeria.

Chapter five concentrated on the paradigm shift in demands from politics of accommodation to agitations for self-determination and power to control resources by ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta region. The chapter also focused attention on some of the different social and ethnic group structures that emerged in the struggle since the discovery of petroleum oil in the Niger Delta region. The study examined the abandonment of the derivation formula as a procedure of revenue distribution and the concomitant marginalisation of the Niger Delta region. The different strategic approaches and stages adopted in the struggle for justice by minorities from the region were discussed. Exposed in the study was government's repressive disposition to any form of uprising, through state-managed military suppression of the people of the Niger Delta region.

The concern of chapter six was a discussion of findings and conclusion on the ramified implications of persistent ethnic agitations in the quest for justice in Nigeria, and the need to revisit that all-too-important demand for fiscal federalism in the Nigerian polity.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The study examined the factors responsible for recurrent ethnic minority agitations in the Niger Delta region and in Nigeria generally. The study discussed the persistent agitations by ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta. This chapter therefore discussed a review of literature. The study reviewed conceptual, historical and theoretical explanation of ethnicity and ethnic group formation in the quest for social justice by the Niger Delta minorities and in Nigeria generally. The primordial, instrumental and constructivist theories of ethnic identity formation were discussed. Emphasis, is however, placed on the instrumentalist theory of ethnicity to explain the proliferation of ethnic identity formation in the Niger Delta minorities' quest for justice. Five conflict theories, namely Social Conflict (SC), Relative Deprivation (RD), Frustration Aggression (FA), Group Entitlement (GE) and Human Need (HN) theories were identified in this chapter to discuss the reasons for militancy and violent agitations in the Niger Delta region, particularly, to explain some of the factors responsible for the continuation of ethnic minority protestations in the Nigerian polity.

The chapter also reviewed related literatures on the concepts and theories of justice to justify the persistent agitations in the Niger Delta region and struggles in Nigeria as a quest for justice. For the purpose of theoretical explanation, Rawls's theory of 'justice as fairness', Nozick's entitlement theory (theory of right) and rectification of past injustice and Dworkin's theory of equal due and concern for all groups were sufficiently discussed, to explain the significance of certain characteristic elements in the discussion of justice as it affects the least advantaged in any society, and to explain the need for major social institutions to ensure the application of an appropriate justice system among the different ethnic groupings in Nigeria. The strategic use of ethnicity as a weapon of the struggle for justice rather than as a cause of conflict by minorities in the Niger Delta region was also discussed with the view of explaining ethnic group formation as a strategy for realising their demands for justice.

2.2 Conceptualising Ethnic Minority

Conceptually, ethnic minority can be classified into two types: the sociological and historically dominant minorities. The sociological minorities, for instance, have little to do with the numerical strength of the group. Despite the number of such group, they have the power to control the political system and state apparatus. Examples include the Jews in Palestine and the Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi. Also, the numerical majority can be further reduced to the status of a sociological minority, in the sense that it is economically dominated, as well as politically and socially oppressed by the numerical minority that holds economic and political power. There are also the 'minority proper' who are isolated and have no affiliation with any majority group either within or outside their region but live on the periphery of the dominant society. The 'marginal minorities' are those who had ethnic affiliation with one of the major groups and are therefore subject to them; an example is the Yoruba of Kogi State (cited in Amuwo & George, 1998). There is also the 'political minority' which is a political creation of culturally and historically disadvantaged groups as is the case of the Ogonis of the Niger Delta region and the Tiv people of Benue state. The 'historically dominant' minorities are those which from the outset had been dominated by majority ethnic groups, examples of these are the Efik, Ijaw, Itsekiri and so on. Thus, in understanding the concept of minority, the term must be treated in relation with its antonym: majority. In other words, majority is synonymous to dominance and minority as a synonym for subordinate (Yetman, 1991).

Generally, the term minority is often used for groups that occupy a subordinate position both in status and number to a dominant majority. Thornbery (1980) considers minorities as those who are numerically inferior to the rest of the population; in a state in a non-dominant position, whose members possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics different from the rest of the population and who have, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their culture (resources), tradition, religion and languages. In this instance, the relationship between ethnic groups becomes one in which a dominant group enjoys more than a proportionate share of wealth, power, and social status (Farley, 1995) over a minority group that is assigned an inferior status in society. In another sense, minorities are referred to as a group of people who have

been assigned to an inferior status in the society and excluded from the equitable accommodation and distribution of resources, (Farley, 1995; Osaghae, 2001) and whose members' have been subjected to and singled out for differential and unequal treatment (Benn & Peter, 1996).

Historically, since the 1930s, the term minority has been used to designate social groups that are oppressed, stigmatised and discriminated against based on ethnic, biological, racial, religious and other characteristics. However, there are few cases such as the Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi where the dominant is the numerically less. This leaves us with the understanding that the world over, minority group is the same and shares a parallel but unique experience. In Nigeria, there are over two hundred and fifty distinct ethnic groups (Osaghae, 1986), each having its own language, culture, value systems and ideas, and are all shaped by the interactions of institutions that make up the ethnic groups. The historically dominant of these groups are the Yoruba in the West, Igbo in the West and Hausa-Fulani in the North. The remaining groups of Efik, Ibibio, Etuno, Edo, Urhobo, Idoma, Igala, Kanuri, Nupe, and Ogoni are generally referred to as minorities and mostly found in the Middle Belt, and the South-South regions of Nigeria. These minorities are defined in contradistinction to the three major groups' linguistically, territorially and culturally, and have been subjected to a subordinate position politically, socially and economically (Owolabi, 1994). In Nigeria, the minority groups have been antagonistic to the majority ethnic groups, as well as the state.

In summary, ethnic minorities are groups of people living in their isolated way of life, who had on their own invented a language, a culture, a civilisation and the inner will to be; the creative power to succeed; and the life-force to control, predominate and rule over the blind forces of nature (Yeros, 1999).

2.3 Conceptualising Justice: The Idea of Justice

In understanding the concept of justice, one must first acknowledge the root cause of this idea. Justice is one of the oldest concepts in existence, and occupies a central place in philosophy, sociology and politics. In fact, no systematic study or account of political idea can omit a discussion of justice. Lerner (1975) alluded to the

fact that justice is one of the most highly respected notions in our spiritual universe, and all men, religious believers and non-believers invoke the justice idea, and none dares to disavow it. Justice is a tool implemented by humankind in an attempt to protect society from the “wrongs” committed against members of a society. Justice, according to Rawls (1973), is used to protect individuals and groups, “making their secure association possible; establishing bond of civic friendship”, and the smooth working relationships between individuals and groups in society. For individuals and groups, justice is the idea that entails living in accordance with the moral order of society, which invariably, could lead to the good life. It is for this reason that some see justice as a by-product of the individual, as well as the group’s attempt to maximise its outcomes, and the ideological support for exercise of power.

The idea of justice also involves the totality of the human experience. Every day, and in all walks of life, justice principles play an important part in human reflections, judgment, sentiments, and how people generally responds, and act in particular situations and circumstances. Justice, then, is about the basic structure of society. Rawls (1973) argued that the basic structure exerts so much influence on individuals, as well as the group’s life prospect, desires, aspirations, self-image and dignity. To be precise, justice is the summary expression of the good ideal of human society (Offor, 2005). Since all society have come to realise, and accept the idea as to ‘what is just and fair’, and because men have what Rawls (1973) refers to as a “sense of justice”, they will choose a concept of justice which will regulate their social cooperation. In other words, justice is the basis on which society co-exists for mutual advantage. It then follows that any form of unequal arrangement in the distribution of goods and services results in injustice, conducting into tension and conflict. Generally, the idea of justice is a social reference point. This is because it is concerned with the order of society as a whole, and serves as the standard through which the advantages of social life are given out, including material goods, rights of participation, opportunities and liberties, as well as standards through which punishment and benefit are meted out. Rules or system of laws constitute grounds upon which persons can rely on one another, and rightly object when their expectations, as far as these rules, are concerned are not fulfilled. A breach of the system consequently attracts penalties or punishment (Raphael, 1976).

2.4 The Concept of Justice

Conceptualising justice is a complex task. It is one of the oldest concepts in existence, and occupies a central place in sociology, philosophy, and political study. In sociology, justice is defined as the fair and proper administration of laws, one that conforms to the natural law that all persons, irrespective of ethnic origin, gender, possessions, race, religion or any other factor are to be treated equally and without prejudice. As an economic strategy, justice as a concept is used in eradicating poverty, inequality and exclusion of the most impoverished strata of society. Also, in philosophy, justice is defined as the concept of a proper proportion between what a person deserves (what is merited), and the good and bad things that befall or are allotted to him or her. In other words, justice involves benefits and burdens, reward and punishment. Finally, in political study, justice is defined as the protection of a citizen's right of ownership to state resources and against government infringement to social, cultural and economic benefits. Political justice, therefore, seeks to protect and preserve individual/group liberties and human dignity. In whatever form the concept of justice is conceptualised, people and emancipatory movements use the language of justice to denounce certain inequalities. Justice has within it some benefits that accrue to the individual and group of people in the society.

2.4.1 Concept of Justice as Equality

The principle of equality demands that people must be treated as equals in a political community, and in their position as citizens. As citizens, they must have equal political, legal and social rights (Miller, 1999; Akpabio and Akpan, 2010). The equality principles are mostly entrenched in the constitution of a country. Generally, when it is said that certain things are equal, what is meant is that they have the same features or that they are identical in all respect or that they are uniform and this uniformity resides in certain features that they share (Irele, 1998). Barker (2001), quoting the American Declaration of Independence argued that it is a self-evident truth that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". And for that reason, differential investments do not provide a legitimate basis for making claims to differential outcomes;

that all persons deserve much the same, and morally defensible to treat all human beings equally (Sampson, 1975).

From this perspective, justice demands that people should be treated equally, and the principle of equality entails an equitable consideration of people's interest. Brandt (1962: 9) posited that the "law of moral equity" holds that no rule of action is right except one which is right in all instances, and therefore right for and to everyone. In other words, all rules of justice must be equal, universalised and adhered to with strict "consistency of treatment". Thus, justice commands the maintenance of relevant equalities and eradication of unjustified inequalities or arbitrary discrimination ((Irele, 1998; Sampson, 1975). The equality principle is most entrenched in the constitutional provisions of any state, and it is necessary for the minority question or demands to be effectively addressed in development and resource allocation.

The Western philosophical accounts conceptualised justice as a consistent notion, "consisting in actions that are governed by reason, where like cases are treated alike, and different cases differently"; "equals are treated equally, and unequals are treated in the proportion of their inequality" (Sen, 1996: 398; Miller, 1999). In this instance, justice is defined as equality. As a popular political ideal of Western conceptions, justice as equality is anchored on the factual statement that all human beings are equal, and for that reason, should be treated as equals.

2.4.2 Concept of Justice as Right

Justice has also been conceptualised as an expression of right for the individual, as well as for groups of people. The concept of justice as right is at times expressed as a synonym of "interest". To say that something or a situation is in one's interest is to presuppose that one can make a rightful claim to it. Advocates of justice as right include John Stuart Mill utilitarianism (cited in Craig, 1981), John Locke's property right (Clark & Elliot, 2001) and Robert Nozick's (2001) entitlement theory. Mill (1981), for instance, contended that every claim of justice is a claim to individual or group rights, and that individual or groups are fairly treated when their rights are respected. Nozick (2001), taking a cue from John Locke's theory of property right, insisted that people are entitled and have a right to their properties which are inalienable and inviolable, and it would be morally indefensible for such properties to be taken away through any means.

According to William (1980), although right is never the ultimate appeal, but it invariably affects the bearer of the right if violated. Feinberg (cited in Sistare et al, 1994: 18) also agreed with the fact that justice as right is a valid claim “consisting in a system of liberties, claims, power and immunities that ...confers dominion on the right holder”. For Gould (1989), justice as right entails the principle of equal right, what she also referred to as “equal positive freedom” of individuals to the condition of their self-development. Accordingly, group rights, she argued, are rights derived from the rights of constituent individuals who are members of the group, and who have these group rights in so far as they are members of the group, and not apart from the relation of each other. These group rights are rights to the cultural conditions for the development of its members.

The justice as right claim has been rejected as an unacceptable principle. According to the argument, to be able to make a claim, one must be in a position to make such demand as one’s due. For instance, babies, imbeciles and uninformed groups are incapable of making demands concerning their due, and therefore, have no moral right to anything that is due to them. In this case, justice is denied. However, Shivji (cited in Osaghae, 1996: 182) in favour of justice as right pointed out that “rights are not simply a matter of legality, which implies a static and an absolute paradigm in the sense of an entitlement or a claim, but as a means of struggle.... Rights are not standard granted as charity from above, but as standard bearer around which people rally for struggle below....”

In summary, the concept of justice as right, (civil or political) seeks to protect the individual and groups’ liberties; preserves the human dignity in its relationship and interaction with others, and the state; and more importantly is the need to protect citizen’s right of ownership to the state resources, and to protect against government infringement to social, economic and cultural affiliations. Nherere and Ansah (cited in Osaghae, 2003) avered that group rights are expected to serve as survival rights, protection rights, empowering rights and collective right. These different forms of rights are not just there waiting to be claimed but to be struggled for.

2.4.3 Concept of Justice as Fairness

Justice as fairness is intended as a political conception of justice. As a political conception of justice (moral conception), it is worked out for a specific kind of subject, namely, for political, social, and economic institutions. In particular, justice as fairness is framed to apply to what is called the "basic structure" of a modern constitutional democracy. To ensure fairness, people must be given and exposed to the same condition and equal opportunity to start on the same level, and whatever the outcome may be, the process would be deemed fair. Fairness, usually involves coordinating diverse goods and interests with the perpetual will to give every man his due (Young, 2000).

2.4.4 The Concept of Justice as Equity

Equity questions are always framed around the broader question of social justice. As a feature of equality, it demands that people should be treated equally (Falk et al, 1993; Engeset, 2007; Akpabio and Akpan, 2010; Ikporukpo, 2011). Although, equity as a concept of justice allows for differences in outcome, but, at the same time, enables the members of the society to maintain a unit relation of interdependence and essential similarities. The application of the principle of equity within a community means that everyone should have equal access to community resources and opportunities, and that no one group of people or individual should be asked to carry a greater environmental burden than the rest of the community as a result of government actions. It is generally agreed that equity implies a need for fairness (not necessarily equality) in the distribution of gains and losses, and the entitlement of everyone to an acceptable quality and standard of living. Fairness in this sense ensures that order, cohesion, and justice prevail.

Issues of equity are broadly located in resource management and development. As a concept of justice, equity is fundamental to sustainable development; development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Bullard, 1990). Equity can also be applied across communities and nations, and across generations. To conceive of a just society is to conceive of two important features of need and equality. The need question represents a belief that there are some things which people should have; and that their basic and inexcusable needs should be fulfilled; that burdens and rewards should not be spread too divergently across the community, and that policy should be directed with impartiality,

fairness and justice towards these ends. Conceptually, justice as equity is the naturally preferred state of human relationships, because it allows and requires the allocation of greater resources to those whose inputs in a relationship are greater, relative to others. In the narrowest terms, it means that there should be a minimum level of income and environmental quality below which nobody falls.

2.4.5 Concept of Justice as Reciprocity or Compensatory

Another conceptualisation of justice is reciprocity and it is considered one of the most appropriate forms of justice in matters of exchange. Justice as reciprocity is concerned with the idea of appropriate returns that is, the idea of “like for like” “good for good” and the traditional “evil for evil” or “an eye for an eye”. The general idea of justice as reciprocity is that of mutual, fair or proportional contribution. Reciprocity entails that within the context of cooperative endeavour, if people should receive what they deserve, they should also contribute their fair share. In other words, there should be a reciprocal relationship in justice.

Compensatory justice on the other hand refers to the extent to which people are fairly compensated for their injuries or past injustice by those who have injured them. Put differently, just compensation is expected to be proportional to the loss inflicted upon them. Another form of justice is reformatory or rectificatory justice which calls for the revision of the social order and a redistribution of rights to suit current ideas of fairness (Nozick, 2001). From the different meaning of justice, there is a consideration for the welfare of individual and group in the process of creating a stable society.

2.4.6 Concept of Justice as Impartiality

According to Craig (1981), justice demands that the rules and regulations which make up a given society or activity should be consistently applied to, and enforced against all parties subject to the rules and regulations guiding them. Justice as impartiality demands an unbiased and impartial enforcement, and adjudication of those rules and procedures for all parties. This implies that impartiality, fairness and equity must be ensured at all times. Goldwin (cited in Kane, 1996) maintained that to avoid impartiality in justice, familiarities must be disregarded and preference must be given to all people equally. Ross (cited in Raphael: 1976) therefore noted that justice is conformity with existing laws and the exclusion of arbitrary inequalities.

2.4.7 Concept of Justice as Participatory

Participatory justice is the approach that engages everyone affected by differences to engage in finding a satisfactory resolution. It is the right to live in the world that entails not only physical access to areas of public accommodation, but also to participation in community, a substantive right, to which all are fully and equally entitled (Tenbroek, 2008). Participatory justice includes the methods that encourage collaboration, consensus and prevention of conflicts, because the methods are cheaper, faster and include mediation, reconciliation and negotiation. A central premise of participatory justice is that the circumstances, participants and the impact of every disagreement or conflict is exclusive and therefore, it requires that individuals and groups of individuals participate voluntarily, and have sufficient capacity to engage fully in dialogue and negotiation

To achieve participatory justice, Tenbroek (1998) explained that the government must commit to 'integrationism' system wide policy, entitling the oppressed to full participation in the life of the community, encouraging and enabling them to do so, to the same degree as the others. Such approach according to him was necessary for basic moral, social and political tenets of our system as well as for the dignity of independence, the pride of self-reliance, and the sense of self achievement of the oppressed population.

Also, the idea of the participation model is that it involves a fair procedure and affords those who are affected, the opportunity to participate in the making of the decision and the full knowledge that they have to live with the consequences of their decision for as long as it entails (Shaughnessy, 1992). According to Stein (1998), participatory justice opens the possibility for the individual and group to participate in society's decision making on the one hand, and requires the individual to take responsibility for the outcome, on the other hand. The purpose is that the society's member is able to organise their lives and contribute as a responsible member to a more humane and sustainable development of society.

2.5 Environmental Justice

Environment literally connotes the surrounding. It is the total planetary inheritance and the totality of all resources (Karpagam, 2009). Conceptually, the

environment can be referred to as the total physical space, lumen and other resources contained therein (Langley, 1999). The environment is undoubtedly indispensable to human's survival and sustainable development. At any given stage of human's life, they acquire a certain level of capacity such as talent, skills, knowledge and other capacity for sustenance. This capacity, to a large extent, enables them to fashion out tools from the environment through which they harness the resources for their survival and development (Onwugah, 1999). Ajomo (2010) contends that the environment affects the social, cultural, economic, and aesthetic existence of man within it and ultimately determines his survival.

As humans rely on the environment for sustenance, they not only transform the environment to satisfy their purpose, they also undergo mental changes in attitude, perception and consciousness. It is this consciousness that enables them to draw the inevitable conclusion that the environment is the axis on which their survival and continued development is anchored. According to Marx, (cited in Onwugah, 1999), for humanity to ensure an inalienable condition for the existence of human generation or sustainable development, they must adopt a conscious or rational treatment of the lands as permanent communal property.

For this purpose, a balance between exploiting the environment to satisfy man's immediate need on the one hand, and ensuring protection of the environment for the need of future generations on the other hand, must be pursued. Every environment is endowed with opportunities and confronted with threats. While the opportunities may be potential (dormant) or actualized (activated), the threats are more often than not man-made. This position derives from the fact that environmental resources in their natural state do not pose any threats to man; rather, it is the utilization of the resources through their use or misuse that generates threats (Ejumudo, 2012). Any threat to the environment and its sustenance is a threat to their right for survival and the right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life in an atmosphere that permits a life of dignity and well being. Thus, the natural ecosystems must be safeguarded for the benefit of present and future generation through careful planning and appropriate management (Langley, 1999).

Environmental justice is one of the newer concepts in the study of justice in recent times. To Hallows and Butler (2002), environmental justice is the social transformation of the environment directed towards meeting the basic human needs, and for enhancing the quality of human life, economic security, health care, housing, human rights, environmental protection and democracy. A positive definition of environmental justice obtains where relations within and between groups of people, and between people and their environment are fair and equal. Environmental justice allows all to define and achieve their aspirations without imposing unfair and excessive or irreparable burdens or externalities on others or their environments now and in the future (Hallows and Butler, 2002). For Ikporukpo (2004, 2011), environmental justice involves the distribution of environmental costs, fairly among people or areas, and where possible between the present and future generations. In other words, where some areas and people are disproportionately exposed to environmentally destructive diseconomy which benefits all areas and people, environmental injustice exists (Mennis, 1995; Hartley, 1995).

In the case of the Niger Delta environment, it is the treasure base of the entity called Nigeria. This is because the Nigerian economy is largely dependent on the petroleum sector that accounts for approximately eighty percent of government revenues, ninety percent of foreign exchange earnings, and ninety percent of export receipts (Ejimudo, 2012). The Niger Delta environment from which the petroleum natural resource is extracted is therefore the mainspring of the economy and the energising force of the sustainability of the Nigerian state. This same environmental resource has also created significant empowerment.

Although the opportunities accruable from the exploitation of the environment of the Niger Delta region are sufficient to transform the environment, however, the use and misuse of the environmental resources of the region, the concomitant devastation of the productive capacity of the land and pollution of the waters, complete neglect and deliberate underdevelopment of the environment and the pauperisation of the people of the Niger Delta remain a source of agitation and the basis of the restiveness among the Niger Delta youths (Osaghae, 1997; Ikelegbe, 2001; Ojatoratu, 2006; Obi, 2007).

2.6 Historical Clarification of Justice

Prior to Rawls popular theory of justice as fairness, the concept of justice was one of the main concerns of the Greeks. Cephalus (cited in Bhandari, 2011), one of the representatives of traditional theory of justice, propounded the justice of right conduct. Justice, according to Cephalus, consists in “speaking the truth and paying back whatever debt one has contracted or owed”. Polemachus, alluding to the same view, added that justice consists in “giving what is proper to him”. Though the concept of justice involves the idea of honesty and doing that which is proper, the theories of Cephalus and Polemachus were, however, faulted in the sense that it is difficult to determine what the right conduct is, and the fact that definition of “right conduct” is subjective makes it an unacceptable theory. What the “truth” and “proper” entail are also not often verifiable nor can it be measured. Plato (cited in Mukherjee & Ramaswamy, 2004) maintained that Cephalus’s formula violates the spirit of right and does not admit of being taken as a sound universal principle of life.

Thrasymachus, however, came up with a new and radical theory of justice. He asserted that justice is simply the interest of the stronger group within society. In other words, “might is right” for while every man acts for himself, and tries to get what he can, the strongest is sure to get what he wants. According to him, the State (government) is considered to be the strongest, and tries to exercise its power of authority to get and often gets whatever it wants for itself. Thus, justice means making laws by the ruling group for its personal interest in any state. Those who violate the laws are punished, because the violation of such laws is the violation of justice.

However, this theory of justice has been faulted, in the sense that it does not provide means of addressing a situation of persistent oppression of the weak by the strong within society and this may eventually lead to anarchy and struggles for recognition and justice. Socrates (cited in Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, 2004) drew attention to the fact that unlimited self-assertion is not strength for any group organised for common purpose, stressing that unlimited desire and claims lead to anarchy. Socrates concluded that a conception of justice is that in which the government of any kind shall do what is good for the people for whom it exercises its arts (Bhandari, 2011). Glaucon,

in a different light, proposes a related form of social contract theory, arguing that we are only moral because it pays us to be so. He described the historical evolution of the society where justice is a necessity to shield the weak. According to him, in the primitive stage of society, the stronger enjoyed all the necessity of life at the expense of the weak. The weak realising their suffering and injustice agreed to institute laws and government through a form of social contract and a just society for the benefit of all. It has, however, been argued that justice in this way is artificial, unnatural and a product of “human convention”. In this manner, justice is subject to manipulation for personal selfish benefit.

The Western philosophical tradition was the first to uphold the formal theory of justice. Plato, one of the earliest theorists of the Western tradition, dismissed many other formulations particularly those of Cephalus, Trasymachus and Glaucon. Realising the inadequacy of these theories, Plato stated that justice does not depend on chance, convention or upon any external force. Justice is not mere strength but harmonious strength; it is not only real and objective, it is also rooted in the nature of man and society (Rawls, 1973; Irele, 1998). Justice is the right condition of the human soul by the very nature of man when seen in the fullness of its environment. It is the quality of the soul and is internal; it resides in the human soul by virtue of which men set aside the irrational desire to taste every pleasure and to get selfish satisfaction out of every object. Plato (cited in Rawls, 1973) argued that one of the tripartite components of human motivation is “reason”, and it is by reason that knowledge of the good is revealed, the moral order is, hence, maintained and sustained. He therefore concluded that justice is a human virtue, that which consists in actions that are governed by reasons, a social consciousness that makes a society internally harmonious and good.

Aristotle (1976), dismissing Plato’s theory, insisted on a justice that is consistent. For Aristotle, “like cases must be treated alike and different cases differently”. Invariably, “equals should be treated equally and unequals should be treated in the proportion of their inequality” (principle of proportionality or the formal principle). This way, equality is maintained and inequality is avoided. In other words, whatever the consideration, persons are equal, and in that respect should be treated alike (Sogolo,

1995). Baker (2001: 36), agreed that justice as equality principle "... consists in treating persons equally... for what is right or just for one case must also be right and just for all relevantly similar cases".

Equality as a concept of justice has been argued to be a popular, but mysterious political ideal of many Western conceptions of justice. The 'justice as equality' is anchored on the factual statement that all human beings are equal, and for that reason should be treated as equals. According to Rawls (1973), all men are created equal; no matter how badly or well-behaved a man is, he is entitled to the same treatment. The argument is that differential investments do not provide any legitimate basis for making claims to differential outcomes. All persons deserve much the same. It is morally defensible to treat all human beings equally.

2.7 The Principle of Social Justice

Social justice is a multidimensional concept. It has such terminologies as "liberty", "solidarity", "autonomy", "citizenship", the right to be different, and many other terms such as "fairness", "human right" and "equality" associated with it. It is mostly used in academic, politics and popular discourse (Pierre, 2007). Social justice has been defined in a variety of ways. Amongst them are such concepts of basic rights, the realisation of human potential, social benefit, a healthy planet, an equitable distribution of resources, equal opportunities and obligations, security, and freedom from discrimination. Social justice means equal rights for all, regardless of gender, race, class, ethnicity, citizenship, religion, age or sexual orientation. It implies equal rights for women and girls in workplaces, homes and public life and economic justice. As a feature of economics, it seeks the equitable distribution of world's natural and intellectual wealth so that everyone is able to gain a fair share. This, in essence, means that governments must take active steps to alleviate poverty, and redress past injustices. In a world where millions starve and minorities are discriminated against, such goals are still a long way off.

Economic and social development is a fundamental aspect of the history of humankind. Most nation-states strive, and make efforts towards rapid development. The principle behind this effort constitutes what is generally referred to as the concern for

social justice in the distributional processes of any nation. Conceptually, social justice is the distribution and redistribution of social goods by valid or acceptable moral principles. It is a principle that offers standards through which the distributive aspect of the basic structure of society can be assessed, as it applies to individuals, groups, organisations and territories, as well as the mechanisms that are used to accomplish this distribution (Nwabueze, 1993).

Social justice, according to Harvey (1973), applies to the division of benefits and the allocation of burdens arising out of the process of undertaking just labour. The principle of social justice is based on social and institutional arrangements associated with the activities of production and distribution. It therefore calls to question the evaluation of the distribution, as it applies to individuals, groups, organisations and territories as well as the mechanism that are employed in accomplishing the distribution. In other words, it deals strictly with how people should be treated as members of society having common needs and values.

Ideologically, social justice is used as a social, political and economic strategy for eradicating poverty, inequality and exclusion to the most impoverished strata of society. It is not only appropriate in terms of addressing the problems of ethnic minorities, but also encompasses the struggle against exclusion and poverty; the promotion and recognition of the rights of those less off and the development of solution that will allow the oppressed to improve their living condition. It is a principle that sanctions unequal or discriminatory treatment of citizens with a view to protecting the privileges of the disadvantaged through redressing of existing inequalities (Nwabueze, 1993; Pierre, 2007). Social justice is therefore a counter cultural ideology of protest, and an intellectual means by which dissatisfied people could criticise the luxury, selfishness, and corruption of established governments. Social justice principle is not merely a call for a “national solution”, but also a reflection on the need for a responsible government capable of “... guaranteeing the fundamental right of ethnic minorities through real redistribution of collective wealth and the establishment of mechanism that enable them to take part in decision making process” (Pierre, 2007: 4).

Moreover, the implementation of social justice principles serves as corrective measures of injustice and inequality. It facilitates the exercise of the full rights and

enjoyment of the privileges associated with democracy for all its citizens, regardless of gender, class, ethnic or racial origin, political or religious convictions (Nwabueze, 1993). It is an ideal of equality which renders imperative the protection of minority citizens to equal access to power and material resources. It is a concept that is closely related with the notion of social, economic and cultural rights, giving rise to an improved articulation between equal citizenship status and the political form of legitimate protection. The pursuit for social justice is geared towards the satisfaction of needs; the mobilisation to alter the structures that generate inequalities and demands for the right to a full role in building a nation, and to full citizenship (Nwabueze, 1993; Pierre, 2007).

Social justice is concerned with the distribution of rights, duties, and advantages, particularly, with what people value in society (Rawls, 1973). For Rawls, the perspective of social justice “brings the social, political and the economic into choice association..., to weaken the classic antagonism between full enjoyment of individuals’ rights and freedom and the public promotion of equality”. Social justice is interested in the way people are treated within a social arrangement. It is assumed, therefore, that a society is just if its citizens are fairly treated and respected. To engendered social justice therefore, marginalised sections of the society need to be promoted and protected by measures against discrimination for both access to economic and just treatment within the system.

2.8 Principle of Distributive Justice

Throughout history, people have been born into a kind of rigid economic position. The distribution of economic benefits and burdens was seen as fixed either by nature or by God. The realisation that distribution of economic, political and social benefits, and burdens could be manipulated by government prompted the need for distributive principles of justice (Maiese, 2003). As a matter of fact, when people or groups constantly monitor and evaluate distribution of materials, and symbolic social goods or when resources or benefits seem not to have been meted out or shared properly, issues of distributive justice or equity arise. Conceptually, distributive justice is defined as the fair allocation of resources among diverse members of a community or society. It is a principle of justice concerned with the fair, just and equitable distribution of benefits and burdens, that is, with the nature of a socially just allocation of goods in a society. In

the distribution of amenities, for example, distributive justice is concerned with the available quantities of goods (the total amount of goods to be distributed), the process by which goods are to be distributed (the distributing procedure), and the resulting allocation of the goods to the members of the society (the pattern of distribution that may eventually result in fair outcome). It is a concept designed to allocate resources or goods that are in limited supply, and/or when there is competition for it (Nozick, 2001; Maiese, 2003). Also, the distribution of benefits and burdens span all dimension of social life, and assumes all forms, including income, economic wealth, power, shelter, health care to mention but a few. Thus, principles of distributive justice take into account the idea of treating people fairly, and giving people what they deserve. Expressed differently, people deserve to be compensated for their effort, productivity and contributions, and punished for their transgressions where necessary. A society in which incidental inequalities in outcome do not arise would be considered a society guided by the principles of distributive justice. The following describe the tenets of distributive justice and widely accepted as the just ways of distributing benefits and burdens:

To each, an equal share: This is also referred to as “strict egalitarianism” or “radical equality”. This form of distributive justice states that every person should have the same level of material goods and services. The justification of this principle is hinged on the fact that all human beings are equal, and should be treated equally with equal respect and treatment. Louis Pojman (cited in Pierre, 2003: 9) notes that “... we have equal right to life’s prospect, resources, happiness and welfare”.

To each, according to need: Distributive share on the basis of need is an egalitarian principle. In other words, when a person is said to be in need of something, then s/he lacks or is deficient with respect to that thing. Distributive justice according to need suggests that it is of necessity for a person in need to have its need. This maxim suggests that persons of equal need would be treated equally, but will allow people of unequal need to be treated differently. Public policies involving distributive justice are most often built on material principles of need. While internal wars are often thought to be based on need, need alone is not sufficient to cause conflict; conflict occurs when provision according to need is unevenly and unfairly distributed, allowing deprived groups to identify, mobilise and compete for scarce resources.

To each, according to effort: This distributive maxim is typically and pragmatically connected with action. In other words, it rests on what we voluntarily do or produce. According to Sher (cited in Pierre, 2003), of all the bases of deserving, perhaps the most familiar and compelling is diligent and sustained effort. Whatever may be the case, most people agree that persons and group of persons deserve reward for things done by sheer hard work.

To each, according to contribution: The main thrust of this maxim is that a person should be treated in accordance to what s/he deserves. Generally, when it is said that someone deserves something, it means that s/he ought to have been treated in a specific way either because s/he has done something or s/he possesses some qualities which requires appropriate reward or punishments. Invariably, people are to be rewarded according to the value of their contribution to the social product, or according to the effort they have expended in the activity. Thus, individual and groups deserve benefit/reward for their productive labour, effort and contribution.

To each according to merit: Merit is an attribute of praise, reward and prizes on one hand, and penalties and punishment on the other hand. It requires that total distributive share vary directly with merit, and that no person should have a greater share than anyone whose merit is greater.

To each, according to free market enterprise or exchange: This maxim argues that the market will be just, not as a means to some pattern, but as a means of the market exchange permitted and satisfied by the conditions of just exchange, as described by the principle. Nozick (2001) proposed the entitlement theory that a distribution is just if everyone is entitled to the holdings s/he possess under the distribution. This principle also includes the principle of justice in acquisition and transfer.

The main thrust of distributive justice is that it recognises equity, equality, and need as the most relevant in the context of distribution (Nozick, 2001; Maiese, 2003; Steiner and Bertolino, 2006). The principle of equity recognises a fair economic system, one that distributes goods to individuals in proportion to their input or the award of reward in the proportion to effort and contribution. The proportionality is then evaluated by comparing one's own ratio to that constructed in comparison to others. In other words, for a distribution to be just the ratio must be equivalent (Steiner & Bertolino,

2006). The principle of equality also states that people deserve to be treated as equals without discrimination. In this instance, race or ethnicity, religion, cultural background or any other factor has no impact or influence in the distribution of resources available, or on how people are treated. Finally, distributive justice imposes on society the duty of meeting the basic needs of individuals and groups, just as individuals and groups have it as a duty to help others in need, especially the need for equal respect. The only possible way to this, according to Maiese (2003), is through equality and fairness in the provision and distribution of goods and services.

The principle of distributive justice has been rejected on the ground that it is a one-dimensional theory of justice; the idea being that all goods should be distributed according to some unique criterion. Pluralists hold the view that goods which are normally distributed in any society are too different to be distributed according to only one criterion or some kind of criteria. The pluralist argued that to almost every one of the various kinds of goods to be distributed, a criterion that is characteristic to it should be applied. Implicitly, there are diverse spheres of justice in which there are different criteria that tell us which distributions are morally right. And if the outcome is to be just, a criterion which holds in one aspect or sphere should not be applied in another one. For instance, rewards and punishments should be distributed according to what is deserving, jobs according to ability, political positions according to the wishes of citizens as expressed at the elections, medical care according to needs, income according to success on the market, and the like.

It suffices to argue that while the principles of social justice and distributive justice hold different views of justice both encourage the idea of a fair and just approach to distribution of goods and services. While social justice is interested in the development and general wellbeing of the least advantaged; distributive justice emphasised on the moral justification and the fairness of outcome of distribution of social goods through the appropriate distributive mechanism among the populace. From both point of views, the essence of justice is to promote the greatest aggregate of happiness for the populace.

2.9 Ethnic Minorities and Distributive Justice in Nigeria

History has shown that injustice often leads to war and countries that lack fair and effective political, economic and legal institutions are prone to conflict. Ethnic differences and unequal access to social, political and economic resources reduce the welfare of the individual and that of the marginalised groups over and above what the individual deserves. Such marginalisation conduces into conflict situations since their self-esteem is bound up with the progress of the group (Stewart, 2004). Beyond the issues of fairness of outcome in the distribution of resources, is the fairness of the procedures that determine the outcomes.

Essentially, fair treatment and procedure are a more pervasive concern to most people than fair outcomes. Fair procedures are psychologically important in the distributive mechanism because they encourage the assumption that they give rise to fair outcomes in the present and also in the future. In some situations, where it is not clear what "fair outcomes" should be, fair procedures are considered the best guarantee that the decision about outcomes will be fairly addressed (Nozick, 2001). Deutch (2005) insisted that one is less apt to feel committed to authorities, organisations, social policies, and governmental rules and regulations if the procedures associated within them are considered unfair. Also, people feel affirmed, if the procedures, to which they are subjected to, treat them with the respect and dignity that is due to them. And if so treated, it is easier for them to accept a disappointing outcome.

In essence, individuals as well as groups of people are likely to accept procedures that generate relevant, unbiased, accurate, consistent, reliable, competent, and valid information and decisions, as well as dignified and respectful behaviour in carrying out the procedures. However, when resource access and outcome coincides with ethnic differences, ethnic group formation can be a powerful mobilising factor that can lead to agitations for justice. It is worth noting that when there are conflicts among people, it is not always over cultural differences alone. However, across ethnic lines, it is often over some fundamental issues concerning procedure of distribution and exercise of power, whether political, economic or both Cohen (1974).

In Nigeria, allegations of unfair distributive procedures and outcome and discriminatory policies in political and socio-economic distribution against the state by

ethnic minority groups, woven around cultural and religious prejudice and structural and constitutional imbalances of government institutions have resulted in persistent ethnic politics and minority struggles. The discovery of petroleum in the Niger Delta region, and the subsequent abandonment of the distributional formula of derivation compounded allegations of injustice against the government. The principle of derivation as a criterion afforded each region in Nigeria the opportunity to receive from the central government the proportion to its contribution (input) to the centrally collected revenue. This was informed by the need to promote fiscal discipline in the region, and also to favour equity consideration (Onwudiwe and Osaghae, 2001). However, the derivation principle was objected to after the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta region on the ground that it promoted regional hostility and disunity, and uneven development. The reduction in revenue allocation, particularly, with the discovery of petroleum in the Niger Delta region and the state's inability to provide basic human needs and necessities of life from the profit of petroleum in the minority region, have been considered by Niger Delta minorities as an act of injustice which cannot be overlooked.

The abolition of the derivation principle as a procedure of allocating revenue, according to Ikporukpo (2004), is an act of injustice and discrimination to a whole region of underprivileged people in the Niger Delta region. Furthering his position, Ikporukpo (1998) argued that when the majority ethnic groups were in control of sources of revenue, derivation was held as a principle of justice, then equity was asserted, but now that the sources of revenue are from the minorities, derivation was reduced and abandoned when it was the turn of minorities to develop their area. Moreover, if economic input to the central purse is a consideration for fifty percent revenue allocation, as it was for ethnic majority groups in the region in the era of cocoa, groundnuts and other agricultural and mineral resources, then to avoid injustice and impartiality, rules and principle of fair play should be consistently applied at all times to all groups as it was in regional Nigeria; except there is a consensus among the various groups to change the rules for the benefit of a larger percentage of people. Rawls (1973) maintained that the principles of fair distribution are the ones people would agree to in a choice situation designed to reflect their equal recognition of one another as free and equal beings.

The domination of majority ethnic groups has been alleged to have created distributional imbalances, and unfair political procedures between the ethnic majority and minority groups. While the political position of the majority groups allows them a voice and representation in the institutions of government and state's affair, ethnic minorities are subordinated under them. This particular relationship has not only become the source of intense social, economic and political conflicts between ethnic majority and minority groups in Nigeria, it has also become detrimental to development and peaceful co-existence. Thus, the emergence of ethnic consciousness is the only way to address consequences of unfair distributive procedures, particularly when there are no affirmative policies to correct these anomalies.

For a state like Nigeria, the multiplicity of ethnic groups has continued to influence ethnic differences and tensions. There is therefore need for common and acceptable principles and procedures to address consequences of inequalities and ethnic differences in the Nigerian state. There is a need for laid down principles specifying the just distribution of benefits and burdens, the outcome of which all receive equal treatment and due, except in cases where there are reasons for inequality. Ikporukpo (2004: 334), referring to the Niger Delta minority struggles, suggested that if there are reasons for inequality, that is, "... if a polluting activity is to be allowed to continue on the ground that its benefits outweigh its costs (including its polluting costs), then those who benefit actually should compensate those upon whom the pollution cost are initially thrown". And since the principle of distributive justice addresses the burdens and benefits to some norm of equality, then systemic ethnic injustices should be compensated. Rawls (1973) stated categorically in his second principle of justice that if distribution must be fair, then it should be to the benefit of the least advantage, and the maximisation of their wellbeing. According to Mills (cited in Gray, 1991), the allocation of amenities will be just, if those allocations maximise utility, that is, happiness, satisfaction and pleasure of the people involved.

Equity, equality and need as standards to correcting injustice have been considered as necessary principles to addressing and re-ordering the basic institution of laws, politics and policies, and constitutional essentials of allocating resources for groups that have been deprived of basic socio-economic amenities (Maiese, 2003;

Rawls, 1971; Nozick, 2001). In addressing distributional policies in Nigeria, the state and government should ensure that political and socio-economic disparity are avoided through fair and equal allocation of right and privileges, benefits and burdens between ethnic majority and minority groups. Aristotle (cited in Nichomachean, 1976) proposed proportionality as the foundation of justice, one in which fair outcomes are in proportion to the input. The realisation and promotion of a fair and equal distribution of resources for individuals and groups is a means to reducing ethnic antagonism among groups, especially in Nigeria.

Finally, it is worthy to note that questions of justice are not simply about what should be distributed, and to whom it should be distributed, but more importantly, about the how of distribution, and those who have the power to make decisions and determine the standards by which justice is assessed. Justice is not just about the proper distribution of amenities and resources or procedures of distribution, but also about the participation of all groups in the decision making process of distribution.

2.10 Conceptualising Conflict

Conflict has been defined by Burton (1990) as those behaviours of individuals or groups that go beyond disagreement; that cause serious injury to physical, security and future development of individuals, groups and nations. As in Omeje (2006:17), Fisher (2000) defines conflict as “uneasy relationship between two or more parties who have, or think they have incompatible goals.” These incompatible goals are largely associated with deep-human needs characterised by interest, desires and aspirations. Conflict has also been described as an essential creative element in human relation, the means to change and the means by which some social values of welfare, security, justice and opportunities for personal development can be achieved (Burton, 1987).

Conflict is in essence referred to as the contradictions arising from differences in interest, ideas, ideologies, orientations and perspicuous tendencies of the people concerned. These contradictions are inherent at all levels of social and economic interactions of the human race. Conflict can also be described as disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns; a situation in which there is breakdown in relationships at the individual, group,

institutional, regional, national and international levels (Nnoli, 1993). Whether the tension, conflict or violence has origins in class, status, ethnicity, sex, religion, or nationalism, it is a fundamental issue of frustration based on protests against lack of opportunities for development, and against lack of recognition and identity for group interest (Cunningham, 1998). Conflict is argued to be a “tragedy and impediment to development” (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000). Conflict is an interruption of development as no development project will ever take place in a state of conflict. Of course, this has been acknowledged by late President Yar’Adua that conflict is “threatening peace, security, order and good governance and jeopardising the economy of the nation” (Yar’Adua, 2009).

Most often, the perception of threat to a group’s need and existence, the fear of domination as a consequence of differences and disagreement and the inability or failure to accommodate and resolve contradictions among groups often inform conflict (Smith, 2004). It argued that when a cultural group’s shared grievances about unfair treatment are combined with a strong sense of group identity, there is a tendency for the outbreak of violent responses against the source of their deprivation, either real or imagined (Omotola, 2006; Gurr, 1994; Osaghae, 2005). Ethnic conflict seems to be common in all countries of the world where people are divided into separate ethnic groups, that may have a racial, national, linguistic, tribal, religious or caste basis. The members of an ethnic group tend to favour their group members over non-members because they are more related to their group members than to outsiders. This disposition to favour kin over non-kin becomes important in social life and politics when people and groups of people have to compete for scarce resources.

Odunuga (1998) posits that ethnic pluralism and cleavages are central factors in African politics, and where there are large ethnic groups, and their interactions are a constant theme of politics at the centre, there are likely to be allegations of marginalisation from minor ethnic groups. This is given that the more dispersed ethnic groups are, the greater the spread of conflict to different points, because of the multiplicity of small groups. Odunuga (1998), citing Harff, proposed that in all societies characterised by pre-existing internal cleavages, such upheavals tend to intensify conflict

between state and national minorities, often with an exaggerated emphasis on (ethnic) identity.

In Nigeria, there has been a growing wave of mobilisation and opposition against the State, consequent upon the perceived marginalisation, exploitation and subjugation of the Niger Delta minorities (Suberu, 1996; Agbibo and Maiangwa, 2012). According to conflict theory, society or organisations function so that an individual participant and its group struggle to maximise their benefit which inevitably contributes to social and political change and development. Conflict theories are therefore perspectives which emphasise the social, political, material and structural inequality of a particular group and the larger socio-political system. Ethnic minority domination and questions of rights and justice have constantly characterised ethnic politics in Nigeria.

The different historical evolutions, linguistic and cultural heritage, social disparities, disproportionate population size, uneven economic resources, educational imbalances, administrative systems and religions have continued to exemplify the perennial debates as to how to order relations between the different ethnic, linguistic and cultural groupings in Nigeria, in such a manner that all the ethnic groups can have the same rights and privilege access to power and equitable share of the national resources in Nigeria (Yeros, 1999; Ade Ajayi, 2002). Awolowo (cited in Osaghae, 2006) argued that the imbalances in the Nigerian federation in which one region is more than equal to the other is the continued generation of tension, mutual suspicion, distrust, intolerance, and conflict among the various ethnic groups. These structural and systematic imbalances have continued to threaten the corporate existence of the nation on account of the persistent agitations in the Niger Delta region.

2.11 Ethnic Agitation in the Niger Delta Region

The significance of the Niger Delta region to Nigeria's economy is indisputable. This is because it produces the oil that presently sustained the Nigerian economy. Unfortunately, in recent times, it has become a centre for violent protests with destructive consequences on the Nigerian economy and the socio-political stability of the State. The perception of utter neglect, corruption and endemic poverty has given rise to persistent and the resent violent agitations in the Niger Delta region. Ethnic agitations have since the early 1990s erupted over allegations of injustice and tension between the

State, foreign oil corporations and the Niger Delta's minority ethnic groups who feel they are being exploited and neglected.

The discovery of oil in the Niger Delta region in commercial quantity triggered a chain of events that has led to the perception of political and socio-economic marginalisation, unemployment and underdevelopment of the region. Apart from the exclusion from mainstream politics in Nigeria, the problem of the Niger Delta has been located in the realm of environmental pollutions as a result of oil exploitation. As oil production intensified, so also did oil spills and environmental deterioration. This has impacted on the people negatively as their sources of livelihood were seriously undermined (Ibeanu, 2000; Aghalino, 2007; Alamiseigha, 2005). Despite many decades of oil production and hundreds of billions of dollars of oil revenue, about ninety six percent of the country's foreign earnings (Okonjo-Iweala, Soludo and Mukhtar, 2003; Omotola, 2006), the people of the region remain in abject poverty without the most basic amenities such as water and electricity. Oil, as expected, has not brought the desired prosperity, better living condition, government attention and development. According to Ikelegbe (2004), rather than attract development, oil has not only devastated and underdeveloped the land, but led to intra communal and inter ethnic conflicts and wars, and widespread neglect, social and economic underdevelopment instability, insecurity, conflict, violence, crimes and social tension. This has made many to conclude that oil has been more of a 'curse' (Watts, 2005; Tarr, 2011) than a blessing to the people who have been at the receiving end of the government and oil companies' neglect and oppression. It is in this sense that Azaiki (2003) surmised that the political, economic and social dynamics of the region is better understood in the context of this age-long neglect and underdevelopment of the region, occasioned by the exploitation and exploration of its rich oil and gas reserves.

Despite the return to democracy and democratic rule in 1999, the Niger Delta region has become a centre of major confrontation between host communities in the Niger Delta region and the government security forces and oil companies. Growing youth unemployment, extreme poverty, perceived discriminatory employment practices against indigenes by oil companies and socio-economic inequality, corruption and underdevelopment have deepened the existing tensions in the Niger Delta region and

political instability of Nigerian State. Thus, competition for oil wealth and demand for justice has continued to influence youth restiveness and violence between the many ethnic group associations and the state, causing the militarisation of nearly the entire region by ethnic militia groups as well as Nigerian military and police forces (Osaghae et al, 2007; Ejumudo, 2012).

The history of the agitation for justice (self determination and local autonomy) by ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta cannot be overemphasised. It is important to note is that it had its roots in the creation of Nigeria as a colonial state in 1914; an act that relegated the people of the region to minority status in relation to the numerically superior ethnic groups in Nigeria. Thus, ethnic minorities tended to lose out, while the dominant ethnic groups asserted power both at the regional and national levels. The successive institutionalisation of revenue sharing and power distribution along regional lines, the economic crises and reforms which had deepened the exploitation and impoverishment of the Niger Delta has continued to reinforce the politicisation of ethnic identity, and its mobilisation in the struggle for justice (Osaghae, 1997; Suberu, 1996; Aghalino, 2012; Obi, 2007).

The crisis engendered by the ethnic minority agitation, especially violent agitations, for the control of oil resources in the Niger Delta has affected Nigeria's development in many ways. The violent confrontations have constituted serious threat to personal freedom and security of lives and property. Persistent violence in the Delta has been a huge loss of national revenue due to large-scale vandalism of oil installations, disruption of oil exploration and widespread oil bunkering. These have had adverse effect on the economy of Nigeria. The activities of ethnic militias have caused widespread killings and destruction of property, while government's responses to the crisis through military operations led to civilian deaths and the destruction of many communities with its attendant socio - economic consequences (Saliu, 2008).

2.12 Ethnicity, Niger Delta Minorities and the Quest for Justice in Nigeria

Historical experiences have revealed that injustice has always been a part of human processes of development. It is also a fact that indigenous people have always resisted conquest and exploitation, particularly, where ethnic differences overlap with

political and economic ones. Since the human spirit resists pain and wickedness, it nevertheless insists on freedom, equality and justice, (Kukar, 2004; Stewart, 2004), for in the words of Martin Luther King, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (Reiter, 2001).

Justice is a "cold virtue" that evokes no feeling; injustice or unfairness, conversely, arouses intense fury in us and oppressed groups get heated up and indignant about it" (Nwabueze, 1993: 138). Thus, there can be no justice without peace or peace without justice. Stewart (2000) emphasises the important point that where there is a sense of inequality in access to power and resources and a collective deprivation due to discrimination and marginalisation, the disadvantaged groups are likely to mobilised in group or ethnic identities to challenge the unsatisfactory status quo. It is for the reason of injustice that the concept of ethnicity, as a binding element in the lives of people and in the community, becomes a significant power tool for justice (Nnoli, 1995). Nnoli argued further that ethnicity gives people a sense of internal cohesion, encourages them to provide natural security for each other, and promotes their sense of identity, direction, and the need for justice. Still alluding to motivation for ethno-regional struggles, Nnoli argued that ethnicity offers a personal solution to the problems of exploitation, oppressions, deprivation, alienation and injustice. Wallerstein (1979) insisted that ethnic consciousness and conflict often occur when groups feel threatened with loss of previously acquired privileges, or conversely, feel that it is an opportuned moment politically to overcome a longstanding denial of privileges. He disagreed with the notion that ethnicity creates tension and conflict, but he maintained that it is the mechanisms, and machinations through which oppressed groups advance their aims for justice.

To a large extent, ethnicity has been a mobilising factor for addressing issues of deprivation, as well as quest for justice by ethnic minorities in Nigeria. For instance, the principle of social justice has been argued to be a counter cultural ideology of protest by dissatisfied people to criticise the selfishness, and corruption of established government. This is usually done by emphasising the need for responsible government to ensure the fundamental right of ethnic minorities through real redistribution of collective wealth, and the establishment of mechanism that enable them to take part in decision making processes of the state ((Nwabueze, 1993; Pierre, 2003). Distributive justice also

emphasises the right of oppressed groups to fair and equal distribution and redistribution of social goods by valid moral principles, particularly, in a diversified society like Nigeria, irrespective of gender, race or ethno-religious or cultural inclination, among others (Rawls, 1973; Pierre, 2003).

It is not enough for people to have a right or to make a claim to whatever they are entitled to, justice demands that rules and regulations must be consistently applied and enforced against all parties and groups to avoid allegations of impartiality, injustice and ethnic conflicts. Whilst ethnicity has been said to produce social conflict and threatened social cohesion through the realities of cultural differences, particularly, in multi-ethnic states; as conflict takes an ethnic form; it is not always the cause. Rather, ethnic conflict, according to Markakis (1999), is the outcome of prolonged acts of political and socio-economic deprivation and unequal distribution of resources. Markakis (1999) is of the opinion that exclusion from power and relative deprivation serves to heighten cultural identity, and solidarity of subordinate groups, serving as a major factor for the marginalised and oppressed in adopting the same means as the dominant group's view that they equally deserve fair treatment. In furthering Markakis's (1999) position, Stewart (2004), contended that an intrinsic part of human life is the group membership. Group membership makes up the identity of the individual, through family affiliation or cultural affinities. These affiliations and affinities fundamentally influence the behaviour and values of the individual, and the group's wellbeing, as well as the way they are treated by others within society.

As Gellner (1964) stated, there is a universal human need to "belong, to identify and hence to exclude". Thus, rather than being a weapon of disintegration, ethnicity has become a source, and a strategic instrument for assessing issues of political and socio-economic inequality in Nigeria, and particularly for the Niger Delta minorities. Ethnicity is not only useful for providing legitimacy to struggles against socio-economic marginalisation, it is also a pillar upon which persistent ethnic minority demands and agitations for political recognition, cultural emancipation and a fair share of material and social resources from the state can be understood, built and justified for deprived and oppressed groups (Markakis, 1999). For Lijphart (1977), therefore, there is the need for institutional designer to recognise the importance of ethnicity in the political process,

and make ethnic groups the building blocks of politics by accommodating them in some sort of “grand coalition” or power-sharing government.

The emergence of ethnic group organisation reveals a necessary moment in human’s progress towards their consciousness for freedom. Ethnicity was a major instrument employed in the anti-colonial struggle to gain freedom, and independence from European oppression, and has continued to be an effective means of political mobilisation in recent times (Leuan, 1995). This is particularly true for the Niger Delta people in their struggle to gain access to state power in order to change the existing pattern of economic and resource distribution. Markakis (1999: 75) argued strongly that: “when ... the struggle to redistribute power begins, the political ripening of ethnicity; that is, political mobilisation along ethnic lines is inevitable”. Osaghae (1999) also acknowledged the power source of ethnicity being the vehicle through which social organisation, ethnic and kinship associations are formed, and where individuals and groups in society receive protection, freedom and economic power. Implicated in Osaghae’s position is the notion that belonging to these associations was a statement of “exit and disengagement” from a state that has failed to meet their expectations.

Mbaku (2001) stated that when the State becomes unconcerned and absent from the lives of citizens, people have need to protect themselves, and in the face of hostile and inadequate security, institute their own forms of justice. The need to survive, together with the history of domination and exclusion force people to identify with smaller ethnic, racial and other networks in their everyday life for recognition. The aspirations of any deprived group are for political, economic as well as social equality. Belonging to this type of cultural, ethnic and social group is therefore, a primary good that justice needs to be secure. It is against this background that ethnicity as a weapon becomes a potent political and socio-economic tool in the struggles against injustice, and demand for accommodation, self determination and resource control in Nigeria.

Rawls (1973: 3) avered, that human beings have a desire to express their nature as free and equal moral persons and “upon any sign of contempt to undervaluing immediately recognise the right to self-defense and a right to self preservation”. He argued that if a person or group of people desire something and there is no law against acting to satisfy that desire, the person has a right to satisfy it. In addition, whoever has a

right to an end also has a right to the means to that end. It is in this respect that minorities in Nigeria become loyal to ethnic, national or other imagined communities, not because they were born into them, but because such foci of loyalty promise to offer something deemed meaningful, valuable, useful and beneficial (Markakis, 1999; Mbaku, 2001). Reflecting on post colonial African States, Atkinson (1999) wrote that the jubilant crowds celebrating independence were not inspired by a national consciousness, but the hope of better life. However, when groups (ethnic minority) become dissatisfied with their condition, it serves as a catalyst for struggle. Ethnic actors therefore hold the key to the survival or defeat of an unconcerned political state in that they either “live a lie” by parroting the propaganda of the State, or they “live the “truth” by revealing its deliberate mystifications (Nnoli, 1980: 5).

The proliferation of ethnic and social structures, persistent demands and agitations by ethnic minorities is not only to propagate their unique identity, but also a struggle for recognition, the application of equal access and opportunity to programmes, notwithstanding, the ethnic origin, population size, geographical location, economic resources or any other factor. It is the elimination of entrenched structures of domination, the correction of unequal access to power and resources; the reallocation of resources for ethnic minorities through fair and equal distributive mechanism, and the restoration of reasonable autonomy to the constituent units and ethnic regions of Nigeria (Haberson, 1994). Ethnic minorities in Nigeria are entitled to equal treatment and procedures of distribution and benefits as ethnic majority no matter how large (Awolowo, 1947; Osaghae, 2001).

The spread of frustration, underdevelopment and poverty, the deep imbalance between the majority and minority ethnic groups in power, and resource sharing have been the bane of ethnic minority struggle in the Niger Delta region and in Nigeria generally. It follows therefore that the legitimacy of ethnicity as an instrument for fighting injustice is rooted in the revival and transformation of the struggle for the principle of self-determination. In fact, recourse to ethnicity by ethnic minorities in the struggle for justice in contemporary times has become the basis of new organisations for political action, an alternative to class action. For ethnic minorities in Nigeria, appropriate distributive justice system requires that institutional arrangements should be

available to guarantee and ensure the rights of every ethnic group to maintain their identity while at the same time freely choosing to form associations with others for the purposes of accomplishing common ends.

It should be noted that ethnicity and ethnic struggles are not peculiar to any group, neither is it a monopoly of any historical culture. Rather, struggles for justice have imperative for groups that have been oppressed, deprived, dominated, excluded, alienated, and systematically discriminated against to seek alternative means of relevance in the State. Likewise, the relatively privileged ethnic groups in society have also employed ethnicity as a tool to attack the underprivileged by demanding for independence, essentially, when they are geographically and economically located to protect their resource position (Stewart, 2004).

In Nnoli (1980) words, ethnicity as a means of struggles for justice “is not a novelty”; it has long been one of the determining factors for political choice in Africa, and it is bound to remain so. This is not because Nigerians are threatened by ethnicity, but because of the failure of institutions of government to recognise and accommodate ethnic differences and interest. Rodney citing Fanon (1976) stated that when we face injustice and steer it in the face, we have a choice: we can either live on our knees or die on our feet, and if men living in a democratic country had no right and no inclination to associate for political purposes, their independence would be in great jeopardy.

In a corollary, anyone who has a right to justice has a right to the means of achieving it. It can be surmised that ethnicity and ethnic group formation are required to enhance the accommodation of diversity, guarantee and preserve ethnic identities, and differences of the various groups, as well as allow equitable sharing of power, resources and benefits.

2.13 Conceptual Clarification: Ethnicity and Ethnic Group

To fully understand ethnicity, its potency, influence and effect in the struggle for justice in an ethnically diverse society like Nigeria, a comprehensive explanation, and understanding of the meaning of ethnicity and ethnic group is necessary. This is intended to give meaning to ethnic identity formation and loyalty as the fundamental basis of individual and group behavior in the quest for justice in Nigeria. Although, scholars have

identified the difficulty of defining ethnicity, because of its complexity and elusive nature; Baumann (2004; Hamilton, 1991), for instance, argued that there is no single definition or theory of how ethnic groups are formed. Hutchinson and Smith (1996) also noted that the term “ethnicity” is relatively new, even though, the sense of kinship, group solidarity and common culture to which it refers is as old as historical record. To Hutchinson and Smith (1996), ethnic communities have been present in every period, and in every continent; and have played significant role in all societies. Nevertheless, the few attempts at describing the concept of ethnicity have concentrated mostly on individual’s physical features: as in dark, white or pale skin, and at some other period, in terms of one’s origin or culture. Ethnicity has also been defined in terms of economic and political power that the group wields. In some other situations, it is attributed to one’s religion: as in Judaism versus Christianity, Islam versus Hindu, and in some other cases, ethnicity is emphasised from the perspective of history or race (Horowitz, 1985; Osaghae, 1998; Mbaku, Agbese & Mwangi, 2001; Irobi, 2005). In simple term, ethnicity is self-defined, and is subject to change over time. As a social phenomenon and function of multiplicity of ‘ethnic groups’, it describes the ingroup (Us) and outgroup (Them) relations (Horowitz, 1985; Osaghae, 1998).

Conceptually, ethnic group is described as categories of people who are characterised by cultural criteria of symbols such as language, value system and normative behaviour, whose members are anchored in a particular part of the new state territory (Otite, 2000; Badmus, 2009). Weber (1968:389) defined an ethnic group as primarily a political community ... that inspires the belief in common identity. Other scholars have defined ethnic groups as consisting of people who conceive of themselves as being of a kind; are united by emotional bond and concerned with preservation of their type of culture and heritage (Shibutani and Kwan, 1965; Markakis, 1999). With very few exceptions, ethnic groups speak the same language and share a common heritage. From yet another perspective, ethnic group is defined as “informal groups organised for, and not by disengaging from each other, but by interaction between them within the context of new political situation..., integrate internally on the basis of common interest and have acquired political coherence to serve as the building block of a stable political system” (Markakis, 1999: 65). Thus, ethnic groups are viewed as

human groups which cherish a belief in their common origin by providing a basis for the creation of a community. For Hutchinson and Smith (1996), an ethnic group can be summarised in six main features: a common proper name to identify and express the “essence” of the community; a myth of common ancestry that gives a people a sense of fictive kinship; shared historical memories; one or more elements of common culture; a link with homeland that gives a symbolic attachment to the ancestral land; and a sense of solidarity on the part of some sections of the larger population.

Historically, the terms ethnicity and ethnic group are derived from the Greek word “ethnos”, meaning “pagan” or “heathen”, and at other times translated as “nation”. (Bacik, 2002: 27). Herodotus (cited in Esman, 1994), the first to mention the main characteristics of ethnicity identified kinship (same blood), language (use of same language), cults and customs (same habits or life style) as qualities of ethnicity. Viewed from the above mentioned characteristics, Nnoli’s (1980: 270) definition will suffice, that ethnicity is “... a community of people who have common identity and common fate based on issues of origin, kinship ties, traditions, cultural uniqueness, a shared history and possibly a shared language”. Ethnic group is expressed as “a distinct group” of the population within the larger society whose culture is different from the mainstream culture (Bacik, 2002; Van & Wanderwerf, 2009). An ethnic group can, therefore, be defined as the organised activities by people who are linked by a consciousness of special identity, who jointly seek to maximise their political, economic and social interest.

However, the term “ethnicity” took a different meaning with the emergence of modernisation to express the notion of “a people” or “a nation”, for groups of people thought to have common ancestry who shares a distinctive culture. Gellner and Anderson (1999) identified nations and nationalism emerging with the rise of modern state system in which the presumptive boundaries of the nation coincide with State boundaries. Also, as a result of the different kinds of encounter developed States have had with external groups (such as immigrants and indigenous people) further reveal ethnic group as a people with distinct cultural identities who, through migration or conquest, had become subject to a state or nation with a different cultural mainstream. Although culture, according to Gellner and Anderson (1999), does not invariably mean

that members of an ethnic group must always share one and the same culture to the exclusion of any other, yet, persons who include themselves in an ethnic group would have had relation to a group who either now or at some point in the past had shared a unique culture (Isajiw, 1992). Thus, according to Goldman & Mckenny (1993), ethnicity is a fundamental factor in human life, a phenomenon inherent in human experience.

Within the social sciences, ethnicity has assumed a more generalised term to refer to all human groups that explicitly regard themselves, and are regarded by others as culturally distinct. Introducing the term “ethnic group” into social studies, Weber (cited in Van and Wanderwerf, 2009; Hamilton, 1991) defined it as “those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent, because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonisation and migration”. This belief, according to Weber, is very important for group formation, whether or not, an objective blood relationship exists. Ethnic groups are therefore groups with ascribed membership, usually but not always based on claims or myth of common history, ancestry, language, race, religion, culture and territory. While all these variables need not be present before a group is so defined, the important thing argues Ukiwo (2005), is that such a group is so classified or categorised as having a common identity that distinguishes it from others; a group of people whose concern for growth and development in the aftermath of marginalization and oppressive tendencies of the dominant group have evolved to protect and preserve their heritage from extinction (Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov, 2004).

Although, there are contextual differences in the characterisation of ethnic groups in different societies, it should however be noted that ethnicity is not something an individual rationally decides to assume, it is natural and the individual has no choice in the matter, because, it is an unchanging legacy of one’s birth. The character of ethnicity is also a voluntary, rational, situational, functional and pragmatic response to socio-economic and political inequality as well as a basis for group action (Geertz, 1963; Osaghae, 1994). The character of the present day ethnicity, ethnic groups and ethnic group relations, argued Osaghae (1994), evolved with the modern political structures, and is best understood within the context of the political structures created by colonial rule. The colonial policy of indirect rule which consolidated through extended

dominance relation, pristine ethnic differences created large group domination and unequal access to power and control to and over resources and competition with others for scarce resources. Thus, colonialism brought not only changes, but also, a dislocation of state-society relation and persistent conflicts amongst the different ethnic groups in Nigeria and Africa generally (Young, 1976, 1994). Finally, for the State, ethnicity is dysfunctional, but for the individual and the group, ethnicity is an effective resource in the competition with others socio-economic benefits.

2.14 Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups: Theoretical Approaches

Different approaches to understanding the concept of ethnicity and ethnic groups have been proffered by theorists in the process of identifying with the nature of ethnicity as a factor in human life and society. Some of such theories include primordialism that believed ethnicity has always existed at all time of human history (Isajiw, 1993; Geertz, 1963); constructivism held to the belief that ethnic groups are only products of human social interaction and construction (Anderson, 1983); instrumentalism which explained ethnicity as a mechanism of social stratification for political gains (Entessar, 2001; Banton, 1980); essentialism argued that ethnicity is an a priori fact of human existence preceding any human social interaction, and is basically unchanged by it (Keesing, 1994; Friedman, 1994); modernism explained that the emergence of ethnicity correlated with the movement to nation-state beginning from the early modern period; and perennialism with the view that ethnicity has always existed, and is ever changing, and that though ethnic groups are short lived, ethnic boundaries re-align in new patterns (Smith, 1986; Gellner, 1999).

In fact, scholars of social sciences view the content and symbols of ethnicity in various ways. While some consider it as an objective entity that has its own distinct boundaries, others view it as a subjective phenomenon that is condemned to change through inter-ethnic interaction. Anthropological theoretical study of ethnicity can be grouped into three basic categories namely; primordialist, instrumentalist and the constructivist theories, and these are the three basic theories this study will be concerned with in this chapter.

2.14.1 Theory of Primordial Ethnicity

Primordialists approach is the oldest in sociological and anthropological studies. In relation to ethnicity, primordialists argued that ethnic groups and nationalities emerged because there are tradition of beliefs and actions toward primordial objects, such as biological factors, and most importantly, territorial location (Gryosby, 1994). The argument is that ethnicity is something given, ascribe at birth, mostly deriving from the kin and clan structure of human society, where members of an ethnic group feel they share certain characteristics and qualities of origin, blood ties, language, territories and cultural affinity. It is from this objective viewpoint that primordial theorists believe that ethnicity has existed at all times of human history, and that modern ethnic groups evolved from the historical past (Shills, 1957; Geertz, 1963). The primordialists perceive ethnic ties collectively, as an externally 'given' coercive social bond (Isajiw, 1993). Thus, as a theory of ethnicity, it relies on the concept of kinship between members of an ethnic group.

In the words of Horowitz (1985), kinship makes it possible for people to think in terms of family resemblance, and Geertz (1973) believed that some forms of attachment seem to flow virtually from every person to others in the society, more from a sense of natural or spiritual affinity and social interaction. The implication of Geertz's postulations is that primordial attachment stems from the "givens" of social existence, congruities of blood, speech and custom, which are seen to have ineffable, and at times, overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves. He argued that through the "givens" of social interaction, one is bound to one's kinsmen, one's neighbour, one's belief not merely of personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself.

Although Geertz's (1973) maintained that ethnicity is not in itself primordial, but people perceive it as such, because it is embedded in their experience of the world. Ethnicity, he argues is a natural phenomenon, a given and an unchangeable fact that determines the formation of an ethnic group. For instance, the genocide and horrific violence against the Tutsi ethnic groups by the dominant Hutu ethnic group has been argued to be a primordialist view due to established differences in kinship and beliefs of

the two ethnic groups (Joireman, 2003). To a large extent, it was the belief in the primordial argument of kinship, historical tradition and homeland of these ethnic groups that encouraged the Hutu to feel their actions were justified. Thus, primordialism believes that ethnicity and ethnic identities are the category of human population that shares a number of attributes such as common origin, history, culture, language, territory and among others, and these are the attributes that bind them together. In other words, it is something more or less fixed and permanent, and once it is constructed, the attributes continually define the identity of the ethnic group (Wan and Vanderwerf, 2009; Bayar, 2009; Entessar, 2001; Isajiw, 1992). Hence, ethnic identities are formed through deeply rooted historical experiences and cultural formation which are intrinsic, and essential for individual, as well as group identity.

Primordial theory of ethnicity, though, has been criticised in the sense that the Cold War influenced and instigated the belief in ethnicity and ethnic conflict, primordialism disagreed and argued that ethnicity existed long before the Cold War which merely gave way to ideological issues. Primordialism has also been criticised for failing to explain the emergence of new ethnic groups and/or the increased importance of ethnic identities in recent years. The primordialists however believe that ethnicity had always existed, and that modern ethnic groups took their form from the historical past through the constantly changing identities. That notwithstanding, primordialism, according to Joireman (2003), is influential in identifying the enduring strength of ethnic ties, and its member's commitment to it. An ethnic group without the memory of its cultural past and without some continuity with that past into the present behaviour or identity or ideology is, by definition, unthinkable (Eller, 1999).

2.14.2 Theory of Constructive Ethnicity

The assertion that "ethnicity is socially constructed" is common place among Social scientists. It is a widely held belief that anyone who fails to realise this fact may not be able to explain or understand ethnic war and violence. Constructivism sees both primordialist and instrumentalist views as basically flawed, and rejects the notion of ethnicity as a basic human condition and the presumed existence of a communal consciousness either as a weapon for collective advantage or as an inner essence.

Constructivist theorists believe that ethnic identities are the product of history, and that ethnic identity is not something people “possess” or “given”, but something they “construct” in specific social and historical contexts to further their own particular interest. According to constructivism, there is no such thing as an ethnic, cultural or natural essence or formation which appears as ethnic groups, culture, or nations, instead, they should be considered as outcome of history, motivated by people’s interest. Constructivism argued that ethnic identities are not pre-ordained like primordialism will have us believe, rather, ethnic identities are deliberately constructed, and constantly modified to meet the needs and expectations of groups in society. It is therefore fluid and subjective (Hans-Rudolf Wicker, 1977; Osinubi and Osinubi, 2006; Wan and Wandawerf, 2009).

Among the flood of literature that emerged in the 1980s to counter the “givens” of primordialism was Benedict Anderson (1983) “Imagined Community”. For Anderson (1983), nations emerged alongside the historical conjunction of capitalism, and print technology. Thus, ethnicity is purely a modern invention in the modern period of world history, and therefore, ethnic groups are only consequence of human social interaction, maintained only as valid social constructs in society. In Anderson’s view, all communities were imagined and individuals, through the processes of accommodation and assimilation, construct new knowledge from their experiences. Through the process of assimilation, individuals incorporate the new experience into an already existing framework without changing that framework. Put differently, ethnic identities are in a continual process of construction and redefinition of their identity, depending on a number of different factors at any particular time. For the constructivists, therefore, the emergence of ethnicity coincided with the movement towards nation-state in the early modern period (Hobsbawn and Rangers, 1983).

To buttress this allusion, Weber (cited in Banton, 2007) pointed out three characteristics of ethnicity. First, ethnic groups were artificial construction; they are social construct, because they were based on a subjective belief in shared community. Second, is the fact that the belief in shared community did not create the group; the group created the belief. Third, that contrary to the prevailing naturalist belief of the time

that socio-cultural and behavioral differences between peoples stemmed from inherited traits and tendencies of common descent, called race, the fact, according to Weber, is that group formation emanated from the drive to monopolise power and status, because humans wanted more of economic and social privileges and benefits for themselves and for their allies (Banton, 2007; Cohen, 1978). A scholar of ethnicity, Fredrik Barth (1969) went a step further than Weber by stressing the constructed nature of ethnicity. He rejects the anthropological notions of cultures as bounded entities or as primordial bonds and focused on the interface between groups. Ethnicity was perpetually negotiated and renegotiated by both external ascription and internal self-identification. Barth argued (1969) that ethnic groups are not discontinuous cultural isolates to which people naturally belong. Categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation, whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories (Vincent, 1974).

2.14.3 Theory of Instrumental Ethnicity

The instrumentalist believes that “ethnicity is socially constructed and people have the ability to cut and mix from a variety of ethnic heritages and cultures to form their own individual or group identities” (Hutchinson and Smith, 1996: 16). Instrumental ethnicity, according to Jones (1997), is concerned particularly with the role of mediating social relations and negotiation of access to resources, primarily economic and political resources. Thus, nation and nationalism were viewed as artificial modern phenomena, invented by the elites and actions of community leaders who used their cultural groups as sites of mass mobilization and constituencies in their competition for power and resources, because they found them more effective for demanding socio-economic resources than social classes (Gellner, 1964; Young, 1983; Smith, 2001). The instrumentalist argues that no matter what one’s origin or ‘given’ features and characteristics are, it is one’s right to choose the group to belong and participate. Implicitly, the instrumentalist rejects the alleged role of race, origin and even, language as attributes of ethnic formations and organisation (Bacik, 2002).

For the instrumental theory, ethnicity and nationhood are ideological modern phenomenon (Wan and Vanderwerf, 2009), extremely flexible, primarily as an ad-hoc element, something that can be changed, constructed or even manipulated to gain specific political and/or economic end, such as an increase in wealth, power or status. Conversely, ethnicity and race are viewed as instrumental identities, organised by the oppressed as means to particular ends (Cornell and Hartmann, 1998). Thus, ethnicity is a voluntary situation, functional and pragmatic response to socio-economic and political pressure, as well as basis for group action for the deprived in society. Ethnicity for these groups of people, particularly the oppressed, is more of convenience. According to Gellner (1964), nationalists are constructors, importers and rebuilders of nationalism aiming to improve their own position, while they argue they are working for their groups' interest. Hence, "ethnicity is a sense of ethnic identity that consists of the subjective, symbolic and emblematic use of a group of people or any aspect of culture, in order to differentiate themselves from others. Instrumentalism is therefore more about the subjective choice, rather than the determining hard 'givens', and like nationalism, ethnicity is propagated and manipulated by elites aiming at either material resources or political power or both. For the instrumentalist, the main source of ethnic conflicts is through modernisation, economic factor and elites' ambition.

Modernisation, for instance, increases social interaction, awareness and integration which makes the difference between members of an ethnic group obvious, and increases the possibility of elite creating or stimulating an ethnic identity. Being disadvantaged or discriminated against by the dominant group creates ethnic grievances among the group members, and increases the possibility of ethnic conflicts. Implicated in the above summarisation is the idea that ethnic elites manipulate the ethnic and nationalist sentiments of their group to provoke group awareness and to mobilise ethnic followers through mostly economic and political interest (Eriten and Romine, 2008). It is the apparent group differences and domination in modern society that ethnic elites manipulate as nationalist ideologies to create conflicts out of those differences for their own interests (Gellner, 1983; Hechter, 1999). Instrumentalism views economic development as one of the fundamental causes and motives of group's grievances

(Boswell & Dixon, 1990). Economic development brings change to society, decreases the socio-economic linkage and increases competition over resources, thus, contributing to ethnic rivalry.

The competition for scarce resources consequently contributes to economic grievances, and alters the instrumentality of group membership and strengthens identification within an ethnic group, particularly, when individuals perceive the group as an effective means for accessing goods (Eriten and Romine, 2008). The competition also serves as motivating condition for aggressive ethnic mobilisation and struggle for access to economic benefits. The collective identification of the group provides the solidarity necessary for its organisation and mobilisation. In the context of struggles for resources, the use of ethnic symbols, the enhancement of ethnic identities and the reworking of historical memories, are often used as powerful mechanisms for the mobilisation of support (Glazer and Moynihan, 1975; Steinberg, 1981; Brass, 1985; Rothchild, 1986). Consequently, ethnic identification, ethnicity and race are viewed as instrumental identities, organised as a means by deprived and oppressed groups for particular ends (Cornell and Hartmann, 1998). However, for the instrumentalists, ethnic ties are not strong and steady, but “flexible and transient” form of social interaction to which people has recourse particularly because it serves their interest to attain political power or economic gains and benefits or both (Yeros, 1999; Stewart, 2004). In this sense, ethnicity is rational, instrumental, deeply emotional and expressive.

2.14.4 Theories of Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Group Formation

There have been arguments among different theoretical perspectives on ethnicity. The instrumentalist and constructivist theories, for instance, attacked the position of the primordialist for insisting that ethnic conflicts between two groups are inevitable, because of the unchanging and essential characteristics of members of these categories. The two theories are particularly opposed to the belief that violent ethnic conflicts result from hatred, resentment and antagonism that are enduring properties of ethnic groups. Constructivism argued that the primordial argument is a weak theory to justify courses of action as ancient hatred or historical facts. The fact, according to constructivism, is

that the content of social categories not only changes over time, but so do boundaries between them (Cohen, 1969; Fearon and Laitin, 2000). Thus, ethnic boundaries were psychological ones, established through mutual perceptions and not by means of any objectively distinct culture.

Constructivism argues that ethnicity is an ever changing, socially constructed and subjective construct, contrary to the belief that ethnic groups are culture bearing units constructed for crisis. They are actually forms of social organisations; a communal entity possessing certain common objective factors such as language, myth of common descent, culture, socio-political organisation and a home land, all of which provide the basis for a subjective separatist definition as an in-group vis-a-vis an out-group. Thus, instrumentalists and constructivists see the forces of political and socio-economic development as a source of change and competition among ethnic groups for power and resources. For Boswell and Dixon (1990), economic development brings contextual change to society, decreases the socio-economic linkages, and increases competition over resources hence, contributing to ethnic rivalry.

For the instrumentalists, ethnicity is not fixed, but situational, and a process which continues to unfold as the need arises. Instrumentalism reiterated that ethnic groups use traditional beliefs, symbols and ceremonies in order to develop an informal political organisation as it competes for power and scarce resources. As such, it is less permanent and may vary in terms of time, place and situations as these groups (ethnic groups) have the luxury of claiming ethnic identity when needed or desired, and are usually only so self-identified (Gellner, 1964; Eriten and Romine, 2008; Young, 1993). Ethnicity for groups is more of a convenience. For the constructivist and instrumentalist therefore, ethnicity and identity is a socially constructed, functional, self-serving concept for political and economic benefits of the individuals, as well as for groups of people in some situation and circumstances (Cohen, 1969; Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

Although theories of constructivist and instrumentalist ethnicity encouraged us to shift attention from cultural ties to the socio-economic aspect of ethnicity and the benefits to be derived, the perspective of the primordial ethnicity and ethnic group

formation is also important for understanding ethnic demands and struggles for recognition and relevance. Worthy of note is the fact that ethno-national emergence of a people for social and economic benefits cannot be studied in isolation of their historical and cultural attachment to primordial past (Entessar, 2001). In fact, primordial ethnicity provides background understanding of traditional or cultural attachment of a group to primordial objects, and the emergence of modern ethno-national formation in the struggles basic social needs. It should be noted that historical facts and traditional beliefs of a group cannot be detached from the ultimate emergence and re-definition of the group as an ethno-national group in the struggle for socio-economic benefits. Osaghae (2001) emphasises this view when he defined ethnicity as the employment or mobilisation of ethnic identity and differences to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict and cooperation. For Osaghae (2001), ethnicity does not only manifest in conflictive or competitive relations, but can also be advantageous in the context of cooperation; it is a creatively active concept particularly, when the economy is controlled by the government.

Viewed from this perspective, ethnicity is neither natural nor accidental. It is rather a product of a conscious effort by social actors or national elites or a group of oppressed groups to gain recognition and perceived ethnic and political interest. Individuals may decide to be, and may be regarded as members of an ethnic group if they find it to be to their advantage. To Banton (1980), it is the rational choice option of an individual and particularly, for groups in situations of marginalisation and economic domination. Ethnicity is the “product of human agency, a creative social act through which such commonalities as cultural practice and political organisation become woven into the consciousness of shared identity and struggles for resources” (Mbaku, 2001: 62). Ethnicity is the character, quality and condition of an ethnic group membership, based on an identity and/or consciousness of group belonging which is differentiated from others by symbolic markers such as cultural, biological and territorial qualities (Nagel, 1995). Since ethnic group formations persist in the wider society because of such factors of cultural heritage, situational and circumstantial experiences, it is important, therefore, that any theory or empirical study of ethnicity should take into account not just the

instrumental function of ethnicity in the pursuit of social interest, but also the cultural formulation and the shared sense of descent that people derive from their ethnic identities. It is in this sense that Seol (2008) insisted that ethnic expression changes and primordial ties of ethnicity can be transformed into rational and instrumental interest.

2.15 Theories of Ethnic Minority Agitations in Nigeria

In recent times, scholarly research and literature on the causes of armed struggles since 1990 have concentrated mostly on internal conflicts, paying close attention to ethnic, environmental, political and economic factors (Irobi, 2005; Cunningham, 1998). In Nigeria, much of the agitation and conflict related issues have concentrated on ethnic, environmental, as well as socio-economic factors, as exemplified in the following conflict theories: Karl Marx's (1980) Social Conflict theory (SC), Ted Gurr's (1970) Relative Deprivation theory (RD), Lake and Rothschild's (1996), Frustration Aggression theory (FA), Horowitz's Group Entitlement theory (GE) and John Burton's (1991) Human Need theory (HN). Before discussing the conflict theories, a definition of conflict is necessary at this time.

Ethnic demands and agitations for social justice are argued to be unavoidable; particularly where institutions of government are unjust and the grievances of aggrieved people are ignored. Grievances which are linked to injustice and insecurity have contributed in many ways to minorities adopting violence as a means through which their demands can be realized (Obi, 2009; Reno, 2003). Maiese (2003) holds the view that where people have the knowledge that they suffer serious injustice, they are not likely to cooperate with government, making conflict intractable. Poverty, corruption, severe economic, political and social injustices are some of the recognised factors that create war and armed conflicts. Ethnic conflict is more frequent in states that lack fair and effective political and legal institutions to address questions of injustice (Deutsch, 2000; Maiese, 2003; Reno, 2003). Consequently, where you have injustice, there will be rebellion. Oppression (or perceived oppression) is one of the most common factors driving violence and intractable conflicts today, and many oppressed people are also rising up against oppression. In another sense, conflict can also be driven by unfulfilled needs of the people be it in terms of autonomy, sense of justice, identity, basic needs,

rights of individuals (some of which) are provoked by official neglect, persecution, and denial of human rights, insecurity as well as arrogance of power by some leaders (Ribadu, 2009; Smith, 2004).

Nigeria is identified as the third ethnically and linguistically diverse country in the world, after Guinea and Indonesia (Blench, 2003). Ethnic diversity, according to Ahlerup (2009), is endogenous to economic development in the long run. The ethno-linguistic diversity has been linked to the various economic and social underdevelopments in Nigeria. For instance, the pattern of dominance of major ethnic groups in certain sectors of the economy, particularly, in the administrative and economic subsystems to the exclusion of the minorities has had important implications for access to justice and equitable resource-sharing. Consequent upon this, ethnic agitations and struggles for justice have become a perennial feature of the Nigerian political society since pre-colonial times. There are different theories that have been developed by scholars in the fields of psychology and social psychology to explain the process of ethnic minority struggles. Some of the theories responsible for ethnic agitations are thus examined in the following.

2.15.1 Social Conflict Theory

Marx's (1980) Social Conflict theory (SC) pursued the view that the division of society into two major social groups (ruling class and subject class) informs conflicts. The ruling class (dominant group) which owns and derives its power from the control of the forces of production uses its power to exploit and oppress the subject class (subordinate group). As owners of production, the dominant group uses their economic power to gain control of the state, and for its own personal interest and gain. Consequently, a basic conflict of interest between the two classes or groups ensues, as the more powerful dominant group uses power to exploit groups with less power. Marx further contends that, there occurs in the capitalist mode of production an economic surplus for which different interest groups in the society scramble. That scramble usually generates conflict. Political conflict is therefore an extension of economic conflict into the realm of politics. The conflict takes place between classes which are also the products of the mode of economic production. Each class tries to dominate and exploit

one another. The differences in economic conditions therefore define both the parameters and the nature of politics in a society (cited in Ake, 1981). Deutch (2005) is of the opinion that culturally subordinated groups often react to the dominant culture with mockery and hostility which is fueled by their sense of injustice and victimisation. Thus, economic exploitation by the dominant group leads directly or indirectly to political oppression of the dominated group. To maintain control, the dominant group makes use of security agencies to enforce property rights, and guarantee unfair contracts between the two groups. In the process, the various institutions of society (legal and political) become instruments of ruling class domination, and serve to further its interests which invariably results in conflict between the dominant group and the dominated group(s). Marx, therefore, concludes that any stage of history based on exploitative economic arrangements generates within it the seeds of its own conflict and destruction. In Nigeria, centralisation of and control of the economy by the three dominant ethnic groups has remained a major source of agitation and conflict for a more participatory political system. The economic exploitation of petroleum oil in the Niger Delta region is one of the many factors for struggle by minorities of the region for control of resources.

2.15.2 Relative Deprivation Theory

The domination of a group over another does not generate conflict within itself; it is complemented by what Gurr's (1971) referred to as Relative Deprivation theory (RD). Relative deprivation is defined as the discontent that results from the perceived discrepancy between a group's expectations for its conditions in life and its ability to obtain those conditions. In actual sense, the distinction between groups' expected and actual access to power and economic resources influence conflict. When a group begins to see and compare itself with another group which is economically, culturally and politically more successful, the less successful or deprived group feels discriminated against, and begin to initiate means to elevate its political status (Soeters, 2005). Stewart (2002) was of the view that disparities across culturally defined groups within society, that is, horizontal inequality, can fuel resentment and violent struggles

The uneven distribution of the benefits of modernity among the groups indicates a relative deprivation and increases the groups' tension, and the desire to organise

themselves to gain some measure of control (Brass, 1976; Melson and Wolpe, 1970; Bates, 1974; Horowitz, 1985). The denial and neglect of economic rights such as unmet human needs and basic necessities of life like water, good road network and electricity, education and health facilities are common factors for many of Nigeria's ethnic conflicts. Ethnic communities such as minorities of the Niger Delta region, violently compete for property, rights, jobs, education, language, social amenities, good health care facilities among others (Irobi, 2005). Nnoli (1980), in one of his studies, produced empirical examples that link socio-economic factors to ethnic conflict in Nigeria. The working of economic forces makes for tension between groups with competing interests.

2.15.3 Frustration Aggression Theory

Closely connected to the Relative Deprivation theory is the basic assumption of the Frustration-Aggression theory (FA) (Cunningham, 1998). The theory accounts for how aggression among groups is connected to the frustration of groups' inability to achieve their goals and objectives. Gurr (1971) posited that psychological frustration-aggression theory explains the primary source of the human capacity for violence and frustration-aggression mechanism. Frustration does not necessarily lead to violence, but when it is sufficiently prolonged and sharply felt, it often does result in anger and eventually violence. Frustration leads to some form of aggression, while aggression is a consequence of frustration. The socio-economic hardship, perceived marginalization and inequity in the distribution of the nation's wealth which a large proportion comes from the Niger Delta region and yet poverty is everywhere in the region are some of the issues expressed in violent activities by militia groups in the region (Hewstone & Stroebe, 2001). The basic tenet of Frustration Aggression (FA) theory is that since demands for basic human needs have always exceeded supply, all human conflict can be traced to the group's failure to obtain its needs. Ethnic conflict occurs when there is competition for scarce resources, and when government acts with bias to favour a particular ethnic group or region to the disadvantage of others; such behaviours of preferential treatment fuel ethnic conflicts (Lake and Rothschild, 1996).

2.15.4 Group Entitlement Theory

For Group Entitlement (GE) theory, ethnic factors accompanied by economic and political disparity serves as a source of conflict, although in the views of Gurr (1995), ethnic diversity is not in itself a cause of war. Because every ethnic group and identity is unique, the combination of poor economic conditions, lack of political recognition and opening function as double injustice to a deprived group act as sources of agitation and conflict among groups (Horowitz, 1985). In critical political situations, the effectiveness of governance is dependent on its ability to address social issues and human needs. One of the key objectives of ethnic conflict is to seek control of the state itself. Control of the state and exemption from control by others are among the main goals of ethnic conflict. Groups seek control of the state in order to ensure that their needs are met, usually to the detriment of opposing groups.

2.15.5 Human Need Theory

Burton's (1991) theory is exemplified in the provision of basic needs for members of society in order to maintain peaceful co-existence and stable societies. Encapsulated in the human need theory is the notion that the human participants in conflict situations are compulsively struggling in their respective institutional environments and at all social levels to satisfy primordial, as well as universal needs: security, identity, recognition, and development. They strive increasingly to gain control of their environment and that which is necessary for the satisfaction of these needs; and this struggle, cannot be curbed because it is primordial (Burton, 1991).

For Burton (1991), these are fundamental universal values that must be met, if societies are to be stable. In as much as provisional needs of identity, sense of control, prospects and distributive mechanism for the pursuit of all other human societal developmental needs, particularly in multi-ethnic societies are absent; then, demands and struggles for these needs are inevitable. The failure to satisfy these needs and the accompanying frustration consequently leads to aggression and the eventual demands, protest and struggles to realise these needs. The ethicist theory, for instance, emphasised that the conflict of interest in the distribution of basic human needs and services in

society necessitated the need for principles of justice as reasonable and acceptable standards for determining what people deserve.

2.16 Conflict Theories and Ethnic Minority Agitation for Justice

Each and any of these theories are perfect theories to explain the constant protests in the Niger Delta region, and why the youths of the Niger Delta have resulted to arms against the Nigerian state. The level of frustration in the region, occasioned by the underdevelopment, unemployment and deprivation from benefiting from the natural endowment of crude oil, had led to the aggression and the resultant violent protest in the region. According to Afinotan and Ojakorotu (2009) the quest for emancipation lies at the heart of the Niger Delta struggle; it is not as yet directed towards secession or excision from the Nigerian State, but merely a protest against criminal neglect, marginalization, oppression and environmental degradation as well as economic and socio-political hopelessness, and in one word, frustration, in the Niger Delta.

It should be noted that ethnic agitations, particularly minority struggle for recognition of their right, have become a source of serious concern in Nigeria's politics throughout its five decades of independence. Allegations of marginalisation, domination, exclusion, poverty, underdevelopment and deliberate effort to suppress the minorities to the advantage of ethnic majority groups in Nigeria have been influential variables to ethnic relation and national growth. Other allegations include lack of basic amenities, the accommodation of minorities as subordinates of major ethnic groups rather than equals; unequity and unfair treatment in political power representation; unjust economic benefit and underdevelopment of minority areas or region; the sudden change in the derivation formula to favour ethnic majority with the discovery of petroleum in the minority area; inadequate compensation for environmental degradation and human right abuses have all contributed to persistent ethnic protest and struggles.

Indeed, many of the ethnically induced conflicts and wars in Nigeria and particularly, in the Niger Delta region have been adduced to the consequent frustration arising from poverty and inadequate compensatory programme arising from both the State and multinational oil companies' negligence and destruction of the region's ecosystem, the very essence and structure that supports life in the region. Nwabueze

(1993) was categorical in his postulation and argued that when a group in any society feels they are subject of unequal treatment and inadequate basic social needs, the foundation for social unrest, disturbance and strife have been laid. According to him, there can be no peace under the present federal system for those groups and communities in Nigeria on whose land oil is being extracted, unless fair share of the oil wealth is channeled back to the region.

For Nwabueze (1993: 140), the “foundation of good government is justice ..., and there can be no development without justice, for justice is the basis of all progress ..., the bond of society and the cornerstone of human togetherness”. Justice is an important and instrumental concept for securing societal values for the wellbeing of mankind, as well as a means to an enduring state. To ensure a fair and equitable distribution of resources among diverse groups for a stable society, a theory of justice is needed; one that will ensure that everyone and groups are fairly treated. Thus, the following theories of justice: Rawls (1973) theory of ‘justice as fairness’, Nozick’s (2001) entitlement theory of right and Dworkin’s (1981) equal concern for all.

2.17 Theoretical Framework: Rawls’s Theory of Justice as Fairness

Rawls (1973) is popularly known for his theory of “justice as fairness”. In his formulation, Rawls did not set out to construct a general theory that covers all kinds of justice; his intention was to formulate principles that will govern social order. Rawls compartmentalised society into three significant tenets. First, it consist of free and equal persons within the basic structure of society; second, in political and personal liberties of equal opportunities; and third, in cooperative or distributive arrangement that benefit both the more and the less advantaged members of society. He urged us to conceive of society “as a fair system of cooperation ..., from one generation to the next” (1973: 5). A society, he argued, is an association of persons who have an idea of what is just, and also understand the need for a set of principles to be put in place for mutual and cooperative advantages. Since society is typically marked by conflict of interest, as well as identity of interests between members about distribution of the benefits produced by social co-operation, principles are needed to choose among the various social

arrangements that will determine the division of advantages and proper distributive share. This requirement according to Rawls, defines the role of justice.

Rawls'(1973) his theory of justice is not only concerned with the justice of particular laws, policies and decisions, but also with the major institution of society and how it distributes fundamental rights and duties, and division of advantages, and benefits from social cooperation. According to him, society is a dynamic institution and any society whose laws and institution(s), no matter how efficient and well arranged, if unjust must be reformed or abolished. In his theory of justice, Rawls moved a step further than the familiar social contract theory. Although Rawls' (1973, 1993) view is different from those of the social contract theorists, his intention is to provide principles of justice for the basic structure of society to regulate all further agreements; to specify the kind of social cooperation that can be entered into; and the forms of government that can be established. A theory of justice for the basic structure of society is the object of the original agreement and the appropriate theory of justice is fairness in accordance with the idea of a well ordered society. How did Rawls arrive at this theory?

2.17.1 The Original Position

To arrive at the theory of justice as fairness and a position of equality, Rawls (1973) imagined a hypothetical situation where men in a hypothetical contract known as the "original position" would make hypothetical choices. In his modeling device of the original position along the line of the classical social contract model, Rawls compared the original position with the "state of nature", that is, the pre-political state where human beings were not under any organised society or any established government and laws. He wanted to know what motivated organised societies, and what principles were chosen in the pre-political state to guide their interactions in the society under an established government.

Basing the "original position" on the background of the state of nature, Rawls constructed an abstract mental device or a hypothetical model where representatives with limited information about the interest they represent gathered together to decide how society should be ordered for the benefit of all. The original position is a position of equality, a position where everyone is given the same opportunity to act and contribute

to issues affecting all. Original position, gives room for people or anyone who did not know their own position in society to be absolutely impartial in realizing, and ensuring that the position of the worst off in the society would always be improved, irrespective of what they deserve. In the “original position”, everybody will have to decide on how to create such a good society, one in which everyone is fairly treated, and each person’s place or situation, job, class, position and status is secured. To ensure that each person’s position, status and class are decided fairly, Rawls asked us to step behind a “veil of ignorance”. What does Rawls’ veil of ignorance signify?

2.17.2 Rawls ‘Veil of Ignorance’

The “veil of ignorance” simply means that none of the representatives in the “original position” or the pre-political state has knowledge of his/her special circumstances in life. It is assumed that each real person in the social order has a representative in the original position to represent every human being that belongs to the political association of free and equal persons. It is also assumed that these representatives are rational, in the sense that they wish to secure for those they represent the good that would enable them work out, (and to revise if necessary) their own concept of the good. To arrive at this “good” is to withdraw behind the “veil of ignorance” or a land of blindfold (Rawls, 1973)

Behind the veil, it is assumed that the representatives in the original position are unlike persons in the ideal society. This is because they are deprived and denied any reference to their own and fellow’s particular needs, desires, capacities or beliefs and conception of the good. The representative in the “original position is also denied knowledge of his/her future in the distribution of natural assets, abilities and strength, conception of the good and plan of life. This is because these are contingencies which set people at odds, and allow them to be guided by their prejudices. Thus, representatives in the “original position” are to be deprived knowledge of the sort of information that would make them adopt methods or principles that will favour them.

Behind the veil of ignorance discrimination on the basis of race/ethnicity, gender, religion and/or on any other basis is ruled out. For if they are permitted, it would affect a specific group of people, ethnic region, gender and religious groups and these groups of

people would be at a disadvantage. The only knowledge known to representatives in the “original position” is the general fact about the human society, political affairs, principles of economic theory, and the law of human psychology. The capacity for a sense of justice is, therefore, reflected in the operation behind the “veil of ignorance”, making the institutions of justice necessary by the fact that everyone’s overriding needs and desires are for what others can grant or withhold so that “...everyone’s wellbeing is dependent upon a scheme of co-operation without which no one could have a satisfactory life” (Rawls, 1973: 7). From the “original position” and behind the “veil of ignorance”, he concludes, the two principles of justice will be arrived at.

2.17.3 Rawls’ ‘Two Principle of Justice’

Rawls’s (1973) argument is that with the type of hypothetical construct of the “original position,” representatives from behind the “veil of ignorance” would choose two principles of justice that would ensure a fair distribution of society’s primary goods. The first principle states that: “each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others”. Rawls referred to this as the “equal liberty principle or equal opportunity principle”. This principle allows every member of the society to have an equal opportunity to the basic needs of society. Also, the principle presents a standard for a constitutional convention, and is concerned with protecting and maintaining political autonomy, fundamental rights of persons, conscience and freedom of thought. The constitution so established from the equal liberty principle secures a common equal citizenship and realises political justice for all.

The second principle states that “social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to the benefit of the least advantage, and (b) attached to position and offices open to all”. Rawls referred to this as “difference principle”. The principle which comes at the legislative, dictates that social and economic policy be aimed at maximising the long term expectations and benefit of the least advantaged under the conditions of fair equality of opportunity, and maintained by equal liberties principle. Once these principles have been adopted in the “original position,” the next level is to move to the “constitutional convention”.

At the constitutional convention, the justice of political forms are made where delegates design a system of constitutional powers of government, basic rights of citizen,

and the justice procedures for coping with diverse political principles is determined. It is also at this convention that information about the circumstances of justice, the theoretical knowledge and the appropriate general facts about the society is revealed; and the most effective just constitution is adopted. It is within the constitution that the principles of justice are satisfied, where a just and effective legislation becomes operational. It is at this stage that the “veil of ignorance” is partially lifted for understanding society’s natural circumstances and resources; its level of economic advancement, and the political culture of that society are revealed. Rawls believes that if the process of an appropriate justice procedure is to be arrived at, they should be devoid of race/ethnicity, ethnic region and background, population size, gender, religion or culture or anything that can create inequality among people. Rawls is basically concerned with the need and position of the disadvantaged in society, and proposed a theory which will ensure that the interest of the least advantaged are well catered for. His intention was not to impoverish the advantaged, but most importantly to bridge the gap of inequality between the advantaged and the disadvantaged.

A recent literature on equality and differences has also affirmed Rawls theory of justice as fairness and equality. For instance, from the viewpoint of the democratic theorist committed to the idea of equality, freedom and impartiality, justice needs to be defined through a process of reasoning that avoids particular or personal political interest. This way, according to democratic theorists, the perspectives or concern of marginalised groups is incorporated into the process of justice. Though Young (1997) did not agree to Rawls fictional/hypothetical contract theory, she nevertheless suggested real participatory structure in which disadvantaged groups with their geographical, ethnic, gender and occupational differences assert their perspectives on social issues and political power. Encapsulated in her postulation is the idea that justice must proceed from the political, as well as a philosophical process of reasoning. In other words, she stated that: justice should be defined prior to politics. In her own words; “as the right is prior to the good, so also is the just prior to the political” (1997: 54). Young’s argument is that reducing the definition of justice to a procedure makes it impossible for the person who constructs the procedure to avoid personal interest of its social location.

The liberal theorists also argued for equality, fairness and justice among the diverse groups in society. These theorists hold the view that civil and political rights, and basic social goods, such as education, health facilities and good roads, and other amenities should not be distributed on the basis of ascribed characteristics, rather, that rights and benefits, privileges and power should be distributed in a manner that is blind to social differences (Gutmann, 1994). For the liberal theorists, the state must remain neutral on the good life, and restrict itself to ensuring that however they see things, citizens' deal fairly with each other; and the state deals equally with all. The liberalists proposed the principle of non-discrimination as the key to justice in ethno and multi-cultural relations. Groups, like ethnic groups and identities should be protected from discrimination by encouraging the different ethnic groups to fully develop their potential for the expression of their democratic ideals of freedom and equality. (Gutmann, 1994)

Gould (1995) based his theory on "equal positive freedom". He noted that justice requires not the same conditions for each one and group, but equivalent conditions determined by differentiated needs. Justice entails recognition and considerations of relevant differences, and sees equal treatment as inherently responsive to and defined by differences. Invariably, justice requires more than a reformulated principle of justice, but a radical increase in opportunities and an equal right to participation in the context of common activity, like in the discourse and association of the public sphere, and the institutions of economic, social and political life.

2.18 Robert Nozick's Theory of Entitlement or Right

Nozick (2001) has remained one of the most influential attackers of Rawls's theory of justice. To be entitled to a claim is to have a right to make that claim. Nozick (2001) formulated the idea that people are entitled, and have a right to their properties which are inalienable and inviolable. With the entitlement theory, Nozick queried the primacy of Rawls' (1973) two basic principles of justice, more especially, the second principle which emphasises the arrangement of social inequalities to the benefit of the least advantaged. Taking a cue from the Lockean state of nature (1988), where the law of nature exists to govern it, and from the "Kantian imperative" (1993) that individuals are

ends and not merely means, Nozick argues that individuals and groups have a right to appropriate what they are entitled to or acquired legitimately.

Most theories of justice, argued Nozick, are patterned, because they tend to justify conception of justice that corresponds to some 'natural dimensions'. In other words, it expects that people are to be rewarded according to their needs or labour or merit, deserving and some other factors. Nozick criticised Rawls theory for being an "end-result" principle, because it seeks to justify that "the justice of a distribution should be determined and judged by some structural principles of just distribution" behind the "veil of ignorance". This is drawn from the calculations that people are likely to end up with some principles under the various possible sets of principles. This, he stressed, renders any theory of justice in accordance with principles of historical entitlement incorrect.

For Nozick (2001), therefore, a theory of justice is historical and unpatterned, because it recognises that past circumstances and actions of people can create differential entitlement or differential deserving to things (goods and distribution). Consequent upon this, any distribution will be just if it is in accordance with the 'principles of entitlement'. The principles of entitlement states that a person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principle of justice in acquisition is entitled to, and have a right to that holding, if it is a consequence of fair and historical acquisition of it (which does not involve fraud or force). Also, a person who acquires a holding in accordance with the principles of justice in transfer from someone else is entitled to the holding. No one is therefore entitled to a holding except by (repeated) applications of the first and the second principles above.

The law of nature imposes moral constraints on the society to protect individual and group rights, particularly rights to life, liberty and to the proceeds of labour. To have a right, then, is to have a right to possess something, dispose of it, and to determine what may be done with it. A person has a right to own what s/he makes and produced, and to appropriate anything not already owned provided s/he leaves "enough and as good" for others, and his/her appropriation leaves them no worse off. Thus, distribution resulting from acquisitions, transfer and/or rectifications cannot be patterned or correlated with anything else such as merit, need, usefulness in the society or any other property.

Nozick's (2001) argument, however, is that any distribution irrespective of any pattern it may have is just, provided it has the appropriate history, and is indeed in accordance with the rules of acquisitions, transfer and rectification.

In his argument for the principle of fairness, Nozick (2001) held the view that when a number of people or persons engage in a just mutually advantageous and cooperative ventures according to rules, and have restrained their liberty in a way necessary to yield advantages for all, then, those who have submitted to this restriction have a right to similar acquiescence on the part of those who have benefited from their submission.

2.19 Ronald Dworkin's theory of justice: equal concern and due process

Ronald Dworkin (1977) also questioned Rawls' hypothetical construction of the "original position" where individuals are deprived of important knowledge of themselves, and their circumstances, to arrive at the two principles of justice to structure a fair society. Dworkin (cited in Kelly, 1996) contended that the "original position" cannot provide reasons for accepting the two principles of justice because an agreement made in such a condition of ignorance could have no binding force whatsoever. He stressed that such a hypothetical contract is not simply a pale form of contract; it is no contract at all as the "original position" cannot be a constructive model for public justification of moral or political principles in circumstances where individuals differ in their conviction.

For Dworkin (1981), however, a theory of justice is one that views each and every individual and groups of people as rational beings, entitled to the same rights and duties, benefits and burdens we would ascribe to ourselves; one that gives individuals and groups of people in society equal concern and respect. He argues that what the 'original position' does is to mould a situation of choice, characterised by equality of concern and respect; a situation where equal individuals choose the principle which characterised their association (cited in Kelly, 1996). Even when Rawls' theory is right based, and served as protection of certain basic human interests against the coercive power of the state, to have a right, Dworkin notes, is to enjoy protection against the coercive power of the state or community. This is even when the exercise of right

offends the public's sense of what is the right thing to do. Benhabib (cited in Baker, 1996: 279) formulated a theory she called the "generalised other". In her view, we have a mutual obligation to listen to other people's experiences and needs and act accordingly, rather than treating all in the same way. Regard for others' as pursued in her theory can be realised in a discursive process in which every group exercises their capacity for the "reversibility of perspectives".

From the theoretical explanation of Rawls' justice as fairness, Nozick's theory of right, Dworkin's equal due and concern for all and, other philosophical contributions to the study of justice for deprived groups, it is evident that from that oppressed groups, especially those whose identity have been ignored, glossed over and/or assimilated to a dominant identity need to be addressed, respected, and accorded equal recognition for their unique identity. It is not enough to acknowledge the plight of these marginalised groups, there is need for the application of appropriate justice principles or procedures that protect the dignity and integrity of not only the individual, but the entire group's life context in which its identity is formed.

Principles have been defined as having the quality of being the source of other things. A principle is a standard that is to be observed not solely because it will advance or secure a desirable economic, political or social situation, but also because it is a requirement of justice as fairness (Dworkin, 1981). Principles of justice are, therefore, basic ethical principles involving the principles of respect for persons, beneficence and justice. To say that government acts are unprincipled is to condemn such acts of government as unjust, as well as to accuse it of having no uniform policy to serve as foundations for its acts. For an individual or government to avoid such allegations of injustice, a set of principles is required to choose among the various social arrangements that will determine the division of advantages, and for determining the proper distributive share. The principles of justice therefore demands harmony and mutual respect for peaceful co-existence. There is therefore the need to work towards a theory that is capable of explaining ethnic minority quest and agitations for social justice in Nigeria.

2.20 Conclusion

The desire for justice is an innate characteristic of the human condition. For this reason, theorists such as Rawls (1973) emphasised justice as fairness in a position of equality; Nozick's (1991) proposed justice as an expression of right and rectification of past injustice; Dworkin's (1977) posited equal due and concern for people and groups; Gould's (1995) reiterated equal positive freedom for all groups; and Benhabib's (2011) "generalised others" revealed that injustice among groups is an aberration that must be acknowledged and addressed for society to be stable. In the views of these theorists, equality as a feature of justice was emphasised, presupposing that irrespective of one's geographical location or natural endowment, background, race, ethnicity, religion and culture or any other characteristics, individuals and groups of people should not be denied access to any form of benefit be it political powers, social and economic resources. In ensuring a stable society, fairness as an appropriate form of justice in the distribution of resources and access to power and opportunities, the promotion of equal political representation, recognition and concern will afford every group the expected respect and dignity and a sense of belonging. Provision of social amenities is not enough, but more importantly is the provision of the appropriate need necessary for growth and development of a people.

It should also be noted that political and socio-economic struggles and quest for justice cannot overlook history. Nozick (2001) upheld the view that justice must be correlated with the appropriate history. The history of a people or group defines their past, influences their present position, and how they are viewed, which ultimately determine their future growth and development as a people; and their interaction and relationship with other groups in the society. Injustice from our historical past must be corrected and rectified if society must develop. All people and groups should be treated if not equally with a degree of fairness and with the utmost respect and dignity by allocating to them the right to own and control resources from their property or land. This is provided it is in accordance with the constitution and right to appropriate such.

It is in this sense that the ideological struggle for justice in Nigeria needs to be seen beyond the mere noise making by ethnic minorities. Ethnic agitations, particularly minority agitations in Nigeria, encompass the struggle against economic domination,

social exclusion, poverty and underdevelopment to include the need to promote and recognise the rights of the oppressed, and the development of a solution to improve the living conditions of the marginalised groups. The struggle for social justice by any group, especially ethnic minorities from the Niger Delta in Nigeria, is a means to sanctioning unequal or discriminatory treatment of citizens with a view to protecting the privileges of the disadvantaged through redressing existing inequalities (Pierre, 2003). It is an ideal of equality which renders imperative the protection of minority groups to equal access to power and material resources. Therefore, ethnic agitations is a principle adopted by minorities in Nigeria towards the satisfaction of basic human needs; the mobilisation to correct the structure that generates inequalities and guarantees the full right and participation of all ethnic groups in Nigeria a role in building a stable nation. Fundamentally, justice serves as a means of encouraging mutual respect amongst members of a society.

CHAPTER THREE

ETHNIC MINORITY QUEST FOR JUSTICE IN NIGERIA: AN OVERVIEW

3.1 Introduction

There is a plethora of views on the nature and cases of ethnic struggles in Nigeria and Africa in general. In Africa, the spread of great wave of tensions and conflicts that have continued to reveal themselves in ethnic forms, is already threatening the stability and survival of some nations. In Nigeria, ethnic demands and struggles for recognition and social justice by minorities have remained one of the many crises bedeviling the Nigerian state. In Osinubi and Osinubu's (2006) view, these crises are not just reflections of traditional sentiments that stubbornly refuse to die, but also stem in part from the success of modernisation which has equipped ethnic communities with new political resources and aspirations.

This chapter discussed an overview of persistent ethnic minority agitations and quest for justice in Nigeria. The chapter also discussed contributory factors to ethnic minority demands, emergence of identity and ethnic identity formation and association in the quest for recognition and justice. The strategic movement of the struggle for accommodation in the three regions of Nigeria and the paradigm shift in demand and struggles for self-determination and resource control by minorities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria will be examined in the next two chapters.

3.2 Contributory Factors to Ethnic Minority Quest for Justice in Nigeria

“Man, argued Aristotle (cited in Benn and Peter, 1966: 11), is a political animal”. He lives in a society, and is therefore able to survive, to talk and to develop a culture of interaction with other members of society. That notwithstanding, man is still separated from man in society, not only by real or assumed physiological traits, but also by differences of group traditions and culture that may not be associated with biological distinctions. These distinctions and differences which are not biologically induced or physiologically related have continued to influence ethnic relations, ethnic politics and the quest for justice in Nigeria.

Many factors have been adduced to have contributed to the emergence and the exacerbation of ethnic minority formations and quest for social justice. A major factor is

the effect of colonialism and regionalisation of Nigeria by the colonialists. According to Ekeh (cited in Igbuzor and Bamidele, 1999), the impact of colonial rule was so profound that it cannot be dismissed as “a mere episode”, because it set forth a new epoch in the history of Nigerian politics. The subsequent agitations for the creation of states, ethnic nationalism, self-determination, and resource control have helped to accentuate ethnic struggles and violent conflicts in Nigeria. This study cannot exhaust all these factors, but those that were mostly relevant to the study were discussed.

3.3 Colonialism, Regionalisation and Ethnic Agitations in Nigeria

The emergence of modern African states, which to a large extent disrupted the traditional African way of life, is largely the result of a number of events. The most important of these events are the slave trade, the spread of Islam, and more importantly, the imposition of colonial rule. Colonialism or the “scramble for Africa” (Igbuzor & Bamidele, 1999; Osaghae and Onwudiwe, 2001), which is the violent usurpation of the sovereignty of a nation, and the implantation of a metropolitan state apparatus in the conquered territory, brought the African continent under European control and exploitation. This process adversely affected African institutions, and has continued to be a recurring decimal in Africa’s current political system. Nwosu (1999) averred that the colonisation of Africa and several other third World States ensured that peoples of diverse cultures were brought together under one country. In his view, because of the mission of colonialism, most of these peoples were not well integrated into the new States. Instead, some of the imperial powers keyed in on the cultural divergence of these countries to ensure the attainment of their objectives. Arguing further, Nwosu (1999) said it was not surprising that many years after colonial rule these states remained lowly integrated and antagonistic to one another. Thus, the low level of integration has continued to precipitate crises in many of these African countries. The African continent, including Nigeria, has witnessed many conflict situations leading to violent protest and wars, political and economic instability, as well as social disequilibrium. In an earlier postulation, Sogolo (1993:188) asserts that colonisation; “a manifestation of the ever-present truth that the strong dominates the weak”, has become the basis of ethnic majority domination and the quest for right and justice, particularly by minorities of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria. Hembe quoting

Rodney, (1999:26) viewed the effect of colonialism on national integration from the Marxist perspective. According to him, although, colonialism did not create a capital or factory owning class of Africans anywhere nor did it create any urbanised proletariat of any significance, but the capitalism was the dependent (periphery) type. Such systems often display, as the Nigerian type does, evidence of uneven development, distortion or disarticulation in economic development, social inequalities, leading to the situation where different modes of production co-exist. Under such conditions, what might be regarded as national progress tends to affect certain groups adversely. In the Nigerian case, such uneven development with its adverse effect came to be perceived along regional lines (Akwen and Gever, 2011).

The regionalisation of Nigeria into three major regions of Hausa/Fulani in the North, Igbo in the East and Yoruba in the West by the colonial administration did not only worsened the already tensed atmosphere, it also created a vague awareness of differences, and a feeling of superiority and subordinate status between the “big three” and the other ethnic groups in the three newly created regions. While the North exerted some substantial political control as the overall majority, the economic life of the nation revolved around the whims and caprices of the three major dominant groups and the beginning of ethnic suspicion, sentiment, consciousness and loyalty among the diverse ethnic groups, thus, the subsequent emergence of ethnic associations and social group organisation and minority agitations for autonomy in the three regions of Nigeria. In the process of imposing its hegemony, the colonial states went further to apply ‘divide and rule’ (Osaghae, 2001) policy of administration not only to subjugate the various groups, but also to promote the spirit of political, socio-economic and educational dichotomy between the Southern and Northern regions.

In Osaghae’s (1986) view, most African States are not only ‘artificial’ colonial creation; they have all been faced with problems arising from the deep cleavages which existed between the various people who make up the States. To him, these cleavages are often marked by strong sectional loyalties that compete with the much desired loyalty to the nation or nation to be. In consequence, a major problem in Nigeria and many African States, he argued, has to do with creating overarching loyalties to the nation over and above the primordial and sub-national loyalties. For Nnoli (1980), the colonialist made

use of this sectional commitment and every available opportunity to propagate the myth that Africans were different from one another, and nothing was revealed of the similarities between them, thereby creating conflict of interest.

Rather than see the colonial purpose of exploitation, manipulation, domination and oppression, Africans were more concerned with the relation among themselves, interpreting them to be inherently conflictual because of the assumed differences among them. In the process, members of the various communities began to look towards their parochial local and cultural group for spiritual, social, ethical and linguistic satisfaction, and at times create new socio-cultural group and structure for that purpose. The feeling of exclusiveness and the perception of social distance separating one group from other groups' inadvertently heightened the conflict of interests in socio-economic affairs, security and political behaviour. The effect was the emergence of the ethno-centric component of ethnicity, ethnic consciousness, protest and conflict. By the close of the colonialist regime and independence, African countries, including Nigeria, had reached the threshold of irreversible ethnic tension. Ethnicity had virtually become part of the modern culture of the people (Walter, 1976), and cultural solidarity became a method of securing tangible political power and economic advantage from the colonialists.

In Nigeria, for example, new social structures, social classes, categories and associations along ethnic lines of major ethnic groups of Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba began to emerge. The emergence of these three major ethnic groups became the basis through which political, social and economic inequality and uneven development began, and became entrenched in Nigeria. The minorities within this structure had no region of their own to cater for their interest, but were subsumed within the three dominant groups in the regions, and were subjected to exploitation, discrimination, oppression, and all forms of deprivation and injustice. This built the foundation for "future disunity, fear of domination and instability in the country" (Osaghae, 2001: 239).

3.4 Ethnic Marginalisation and Concept of Domination

It is a widely held opinion that there is an "innate" propensity that moves human groups to distinguish between an "insider" and an "outsider". The same instinct could also make the human group to delineate social boundaries, and to develop a stereotype

about the “other” in order to sustain and justify those boundaries (Yeros, 1999). Jean Jacques Rousseau in the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (cited in Cranston, 1985) argued that immediately man came in contact with other men and animals in his solitary state, he became aware of his environment, and began to invent the best rules of conduct suitable to observe towards the “other” for the sake of his own advantage and safety.

In the history of any given society, it is an inevitable fact that some group(s) attempt to marginalise or dominate others either by virtue of numbers or by social privileges and opportunities, and many (individuals and groups) have been subject to domination (Lovette, 2010). A person or group of persons is said to be dominated when such is socially, culturally, politically and economically deprived of or oppressed from life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. A group dominated or oppressed is subjected to discriminatory or exploitative treatment; excluded in some systematic and effective way from whatever forms of equality is prevailing in the society, which severely affects the freedom and/or wellbeing of its members (Sistare, Larry and Leslie, 1994). Marginalisation is also a process whereby something or someone is pushed to the edge of a group or accorded lesser importance. This is predominantly a social phenomenon by which a minority or sub-group is excluded and their needs or desires denied. Politics of domination on the other hand is a situation in which ‘a group who either in number, advantages or social privileges, decides to control power, wealth and resources to its advantage over other groups, or when a group is hegemonic over others. In this case, the hegemonic group identity assumes a dominant status, while the dominated group assumes a marginal (minority) status. For instance, the transfer of resources from the numerically weaker group to the numerically stronger ones always creates a process of “an economically advantaged powerful core and an impoverished weak periphery” (Igbuzor and Bamidele, 2002: 178).

Language, religion, culture and ethnicity have often been used as the defining variables of marginalisation, oppression and domination in periods of conflict. In Nigeria, with its ethnic diversity, language and culture, ethnicity and religion have continued to be the defining parameters of discrimination, domination, as well as the means through which justice is sought (Nagel, 1995). Any of these variables can serve as

the basis for ethnic identification, the rationale for inter-ethnic agitations and conflict, as well as the logic for ethnic collective action.

3.5 Colonialism, Ethnic Domination and Injustice in Nigeria

Colonial regionalisation of Nigeria into three major groups of Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba has remained a reference point for many of Nigeria's ethnic agitations and conflicts. The superiority of the three major groups over other groups referred to as ethnic minorities encouraged the politics of domination in the regional and national context. The tripartite federation had the majority ethnic groups playing the role of leading actors, while minorities became subservient members under the majority group in the regions (Osaghae, 1986). The existence of a central assembly and effective devolution of power and autonomy in the hands of regional elites gave undue advantage to them (elite) to determine the pace and direction of development at the federal and regional levels. Systematically, ethnic minorities were removed from political, economic and social composition of government, and from any involvement in regional politics and decision making processes.

In the executive council of twelve ministers at the central level for example, only two ministers were allowed from the minority area. Also, at this level, only ministers from the majority ethnic groups were allowed to take decisions and determine state affairs particularly, in the decision for regional autonomy from which the 1953-54 Federal constitution emerged (Osaghae, 1986). Moreover, sensitive ministerial portfolios considered sensitive in nature were not allocated to any person from the minority area, except for late Chief S. O. Ighodalo who was the Attorney General and Minister of Justice in the Western region and Dr S. E Imoke from Ogoja, who was the minister for Finance in the Eastern region.

Economically, ethnic minorities were excluded from benefits that accrue from resources, from their minority area. Through the contribution from agriculture and mineral resources for example, the early Northern and Southern protectorates benefited from the profit and revenue accruing from these products both at the central (federal) and regional (state) levels through the sharing formula of derivation. Historically, the principle of derivation as a criterion affords each of the region the opportunity to receive

revenue from the central government in proportion to its contribution to the centrally constituted revenue. This principle was informed by the need to promote fiscal discipline in the region and to favour equity consideration (Amuwo and Georges, 1998; Ikporukpo, 2001, 2004; Onwudiwe and Osaghae, 2001).

However, the principle of derivation changed when oil (a major source of revenue) was discovered in Oloibiri in present day Bayelsa State in the minority area of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Amuwo & Georges, 1998; Ikporukpo, 2001, 2004). In this instance, the objection was on the ground that the principle of derivation promoted regional hostility, disunity and uneven development. It was also expressed as favouring wealthy regions at the expense of poor ones and so was anti-redistribution. Ikporukpo (2001) however, countered this argument. He argued that the major reason for the change in formula was the fear that power may invariably shift from the powerful majority groups to the powerless minority, as they become more influential and economically powerful.

Consequently, the fear of a shift in political power to the minorities made for a persistent drop in derivation formula. As a result of the gradual drop in revenue allocation, provision of basic amenities, and infrastructural development of the minority area were negatively affected. This is despite the huge contribution of resources from petroleum oil to the economy. For the minorities, it is an injustice because when the majority ethnic groups were the source of revenue generation, derivation was held as a principle of justice. The principle was based on equity, in which case, the region from which the bulk of the revenue is obtained receives an extra share beyond what other states received. Then, derivation earned them one hundred percent of the revenue derived. When, however, the minority states came in to the revenue scene through oil, derivation was reduced. Ikporukpo (2004) further avered, that while the oil producing minorities are the de jure economic majority, and the majority the defacto minority, emphasis on population size has made the major ethnic groups in Nigeria the beneficiary of much of the revenue allocation, leaving the minorities impoverished. It then follows that the Niger Delta minorities have been neglected and deliberately forgotten in the sharing of dividends in a limited liability company in which all are shareholders (Obi, 1999).

In a colorally, ethnic majority domination of other groups, neglect and underdevelopment of the minority areas created an overwhelming fear of domination in the minorities to the extent that they began to agitate for separate regions (states) of their own, and some form of autonomy to cater for their needs, thus, the beginning of identity construction. Put differently, ethnic minority protests in Nigeria had always centered on issues of accommodation, self-determination, equity, representative bureaucracy and accelerated development (Akinyele, 1992). Although, ethnic minority agitation appeared uncoordinated, it nevertheless had an early regional character with the emergence of three important movements to champion the interest of the minorities just before the 1960 independence. These are the Calabar-Ogoja River (COR) State movement in the Eastern region, the Benin Delta State Movement (later changed to Mid-West Movement, MWM) and the Middle Belt Movement of the Northern region (Osaghae, 1996; Mustapha, 2001).

The increasing tempo of demand and protest in the regions eventually led to the setting up of the Willink Commission in 1958 to inquire into the fears of the minorities. In its report, the Willink Commission affirmed the fear of domination, but doubted whether the creation of States could resolve the minority question. The report, however, suggested the entrenchment of a bill of right which should guarantee equality, liberty and non discrimination in the constitution. According to the report, this would go a long way to allay the fear of domination and reduce the scope of discrimination against the minorities (Willink Commission, 1958; Osaghae, 1996).

3.6 Ethnic Minorities in Post-colonial Nigeria

The 1960 constitution under which Nigeria gained political independence expressly forbade any discrimination against any particular community, tribe or place of origin, religion or political opinion (Bach, 1997). There was therefore no formal constitutional restriction on minority political right. To Mustapha (2003), the general constitutional principle of non-discrimination was however operational within the context of intense competition and conflict over political and economic resources by the three ethnic regional blocs of Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba. Even in the context of an open and competitive political system, and constitutional provision, minorities suffered

from different degrees of discrimination and neglect, largely because of majoritarian tendencies of a political and social system with scarce economic and social resources. Jobs, scholarships, political appointments, government infrastructure and contracts and social amenities all became the focus of intense competition, often structured around competing ethnic and regional demands. Post-independent Nigeria did not only increase ethnic competition, but also aggravated the agitation for resource distribution between majority and minority ethnic groups (Odonuga, 1998). The constitutional imbalance of power sharing, social and economic relation between the ethnic majority and minority groups had been and has continued to be a source of conflict with negative effect on the development of the Nigerian society.

At independence, for instance, the three regions maintained its administrative structure with power still concentrated at the centre and regional levels. All resources came under state ownership and control of the dominant groups (Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa/Fulani), with the elite exercising governmental powers in ways that denied their people basic political rights and social amenities, thus, increasing ethnic discontent that was already existing within the regions. According to Ihonvbere (cited in Osaghae and Onwudiwe, 2001), the state at independence became an instrument for accumulation as against legitimation purposes. Its structures and institutions were easily employed by the dominant forces to repress, exploit, suppress and marginalise the masses. He argues further that distribution of resources in the post-colonial state became 'iniquitous', and maintained through the use of state power, and 'power' according to Breuilly (1993) is about the control of state.

3.7 Elite, Ethnic Minority Agitation and the Quest for Justice in Nigeria

The possession and control of power was an important determinant in the agitations for autonomy by minorities in regional Nigeria. To capture power in the regions, party politics emerged among the various groups and mostly along ethnic lines. For Simon (1962), a political party is defined as 'a system of interdependent activities characterised by a high degree of rational direction of behavior towards end that are objects of common acknowledgment and expectation'. Thus, to achieve political power

in the region, the various ethnic groups began to emerge in one form of political party or another in the regions.

In the organisation of political parties, the major ethnic groups of Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa/Fulani were not only dominant, but also attracted many minority groups in the region to affiliate with them for the purpose of capturing power. Accordingly, minorities in the regions began to align with the party most sympathetic to their plight and demands. Till date, party politics has remained a determining factor in the particular ethnic group that controls power in Nigeria. It is worth saying that party politics was emphasised by the emerging elite in the regions. The elites, through sentiments, created false consciousness of the various groups, and encouraged the mobilisation of groups along ethnic lines. For the purpose of championing and propagating the interest of their respective ethnic regions, ethnic antagonism intensified within, and between the ethnic majority and minority groups.

The emergent elites, particularly politicians and bureaucrats in post-independence Nigeria, have not only contributed greatly to widening the ethnic disparity that holds between the majority and minority ethnic groups, but resorted to atavistic ethnic loyalties and solidarity, as a way of strengthening and safeguarding their political interest and positions. Brass (1991) upheld the notion that elites contributed immensely to the widening of ethnic disparity and minority domination. Elites used ethnic sentiments to draw upon, distort, and at times fabricate material from the cultures of the groups they wish to represent in order to protect their well-being or existence or to gain political and economic advantage for their groups, as well as for themselves. Connor (1972) also argued that ethnic elites take advantage of the differences created by modernisation in order to institute ethnically based political movements with the aim of improving the economic and political wellbeing of their group or region. This is the argument of the instrumental theory of ethnicity that ethnic elite made use of the benefits of modernisation to mobilise the masses to compete with the other groups for instrumental personal concerns or group benefits.

The Nigerian elites have a long history of promoting sectionalist ideologies and threats and most often, they have engaged in populist propaganda among their people, drawing more attention to differences rather than similarities (Osaghae, 1991). They

emphasised more ways they have suffered or are being dominated politically and economically by the majority ethnic groups. For that reason, ethnic minorities tend to identify more with their home towns, sub-group and other ethnic groups sympathetic to their plight. For instance, the Yoruba are identified by various sub-groups as the Ekiti, Oyo and Egba, and so on.

Moreover, the elites saw the national economy as wealth to be exploited for the benefits of their own kinsmen or ethnic group or individual interest. Rather than seeking ways of building a new nation where all groups will be united, the elites whip up emotions among their members to vote as members of an ethnic community whose party choice is determined not by existing cleavages and sentiments, but by competition among rival elites of other groups (Osaghae, 2001; Mbaku, 2001). Political elite of the major ethnic groups hold tightly to ethnic strategy as a major tool for laying claim to power, and at the same time using the same apparatus to re-distribute resources in favour of its ethnic group members at the expense of other groups (ethnic minorities). This way, ethnic minorities continue to live in abject poverty and socio-economic deprivation.

As a result, ethno-regional mobilisation intensified. As the group controlling power thought to retain it, the marginalised and excluded group equally struggled to gain entry through the capture of power; after all, control of government power at the centre affords desired benefits and privileges. The thought of not belonging to anywhere, and hanging everywhere propelled the minorities to demand for separate region, and later, states of their own where they can fully participate in the affairs of the nation (Osaghae, 1991).

3.8: The Failure of State Creation

The creation of the Mid-West region in 1963, and twelve states in 1967 by the military government of General Yakubu Gowon was essentially to cater for ethnic minority's demand for separate State for minorities in the Northern region, and the alleged Southern anxiety about the disproportionate size of the North (Osaghae, 1998; Badmus, 2009). To improve on the condition of minorities and their relative position from regional minorities to national minorities with access to federal power, especially, governmental appointment, the military regimes of Generals Murtala and Obasanjo

created seven additional states in 1976, dividing Nigeria into twelve majority states, and seven minority states. Despite the fact that Nigeria is made up of thirty six states at present, the absence of legitimacy, the authoritarian nature of military rule, and the absence of accountability by the military regime further widened ethnic cleavage; and has continued to call to question the status of ethnic minorities in Nigeria. Although, the military regime doused ethnic tension through the creation of more states for the minority areas, it failed to stem ethnic consciousness among the populace (Ake, 2000; Osinubi and Osinubi, 2006; Badmus, 2009). In other words, state creation has failed to meet ethnic minority demands, as distributions of federal amenities are still very few, and the problem of marginalisation and domination has not been reduced. Rather, it has increased ethnic tension, clamour and mass mobilisation and agitation for justice (Mustapha, 2001).

In Mbaku's (2001) argument, State creation is only a political device to increase the economic and political base, and benefits of the major ethnic groups. Tamuno (2000) also argued that State creation has failed to correct the perceived problems of marginalisation and domination amongst other injustices. According to him, the major ethnic groups were more interested in satisfying and consolidating their political interest and power base. In an oral interview, Oghaghare (oral interview, 2007) posited that State creation has become an instrument in the hands of the major ethnic groups to further dominate the minorities, and to hold on to power permanently. For Suberu (2001), State creation cannot decentralise power, because as states increases in number, the weaker and less viable the individual state would become, and the more government at the centre acquires power.

Regrettably, agitations for new States have become a process through which some sections or a few people crave for easy access to central resources, and not by a desire to seek for genuine economic and political self-governance. State creation has remained a strategy for distributing and redistributing the "national patronage pie". The failure of new States to meet minority demands for socio-economic development has increased the need for minorities in Nigeria to look for alternative means of realising their demands (Osaghae and Onwudiwe, 2001; Suberu, 2001).

3.9 Policy Framework in Nigeria

While attempts have been made by the State at integrating the various ethnic groups in Nigeria through policies of accommodation, reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation, some of these policies have also contributed to exacerbate ethnic minority politics in Nigeria (Adeyemi, 2006). In Osaghae (1999) summation, the state is expected to be a neutral, autonomous and secular entity for all citizens, and not supposed to involve itself in conflict among individuals, classes or groups. The State being an autonomous one is required to grant fundamental human rights, respect and dignity, and to protect the interest of all groups and citizens. But this is not the case with Nigeria, as government's policies have contributed to escalating ethnic tensions and conflicts. Government policies have directly and indirectly affected ethnic minority group's view of themselves, and their interaction with major ethnic groups in terms of political power, distribution of resources and allocation of revenue. Brown and Ganguly (1997) affirmed that government policies almost always have a significant impact on the course and trajectory of ethnic relation.

These policies, which are contained in the constitution of a nation, have had profound impact on individual and group relations. The constitution is a crucial device for managing group relation, because it establishes the institutions, parameters, and processes through which government can operate effectively and ensure the welfare of its citizens. Constitutions are equally important to group relations, as they reflect how issues that affect the future are formulated in the context of contemporary political and social conflict. In Nigeria, policies such as federalism, quota system and federal character have been thought to accommodate and address ethnic minorities demand for justice. Conversely, these policies have also been argued to encourage injustice.

3.9.1 Principle of Federalism

There are diverse definitions of federalism (Odion, 2011). The principle of federalism is, however, said to be associated with the "virtues" of justice, equity and equality, justice and stability, freedom, self-determination and democracy. It is a "constitutional devise by which power is shared among the two tiers of government within a country rather than among geographical entities comprising different peoples"

(Onyeoziri, 2005: 3), and a means for resolving conflicts in divided societies (Watts, 1970; Osaghae, 2001).

In Wheare's (1980) account, the basic tenets of federalism, among others include; first, there must be at least two levels of governments and there must be constitutional division of powers among the levels of governments; second, each levels of government must be co-ordinate and independent; each levels of governments must be financially independent affording each level the opportunity to function without depending on the others for financial assistance; a Supreme Court of independent judiciary, and third, in terms of the amendment of constitution, no levels of government should have undue power over the amendment process (Odion, 2011).

In essence, federalism can be defined as an arrangement whereby powers within a multi-national country are shared between a federal or central authority, and a number of regionalised governments, in such a way that each unit, including the central authority, exists as a government separately and independently from others, operating directly on persons and property within its territorial area with a will of its own and its own apparatus for the conduct of the affairs, and with an authority in some matters exclusive from all others (Sagay, 2011; Ugor and Ukpere, 2012). It is assumed that a country able to satisfy these conditions is practising federalism. In another words, the principle of fiscal federalism requires that the respective tiers of government are not only autonomous in their resources, but that such resources should be enough for them to be able to carry out their autonomous functions (MOSOP Report, 2005). It is also one of the policies for gaining integration of diverse groups in a country.

Watts (2002) referred to federalism as the basic notion of involving the combination of shared rules for some purposes and regional self-rules for others within a single political system so that neither is subordinate to the other. He notes that the function of federalism is not to eliminate internal differences, but to preserve regional identities within a united framework in such a way that conflict is properly managed, and regional differences well accommodated. It is on this ground that federalism becomes a formal arrangement or structure to look after the common affairs of the group, while leaving the individual units to look after such matters as have not been placed on the level of common concern (Uma, 1997).

Federalism is a globally accepted principle, and a better option for unifying diverse people and nations in a polity. As a system of opportunities, federalism does not only preserve the identities and differences of the various groups, it also allows the equitable sharing of power, resources and benefits of all groups. It offers room for self-expression and relative autonomy of the groups, while also guaranteeing group access to and participation in power structures at the centre (Osaghae, 2001). In Nigeria, the adoption of federalism as a tenet was for the accommodation of diversity, self-expression, equity and justice for all groups which, other things being equal, should ensure stability and survival of the multi-ethnic state (Mbaku, Agbese and Mwangi, 2001). In its full application, harmony is guaranteed in a system where territorially concentrated minorities are able to exercise autonomy on matters crucial to their identity and continued existence without the fears of being over-ridden by the majority groups. It is a principle where each ethnic group is entitled to the same treatment as other ethnic groups no matter how big or small (Osaghae, 1996).

Regrettably, federalism as a policy has failed to address Nigeria's complex ethnic, regional, religious and historical differences and ethnic minority demand for autonomy, a result of the misapplication of the policy. For instance, from 1954 when Nigeria embraced federalism, the polity has wallowed from one problem to the other: instability, backwardness, corruption, poverty, violent struggles have characterised the State, thereby making national cohesion a mirage. In the conference of 1954, when federalism was adopted, minorities were not well represented and their wishes were not taken into account (Osaghae, 1999). Factors such as consultation, reciprocity, compromise, all elements of federal political culture are, according to Osaghae (2001), in short supply. In fact, there has continued to be unequal relationship in the political and socio-economic distribution of resources. According to Agbese (2001), the resulting federal constitution was more or less designed to accommodate the major ethnic groups and contain the minorities. Lijphart (1977) reiterated that the federation appears to have been designed in such a way as to virtually guarantee its failure, because the smaller but still sizeable segments were not given their own states. The centralisation of federal system was more or less a reflection of a unitary arrangement than a federal one, thus, over-centralisation of power made financial autonomy unachievable. Coleman (cited in

Peil, 1976: 115) insisted that, excessive centralisation of developing nations not only means vulnerability, a result of the unfulfilled populist expectation, it also means heightened inefficiency.

The increase in local government areas aimed at strengthening and empowering the minorities within the states has not been very successful either. This is because local government autonomy which the constitution guaranteed has remained increasingly circumscribed by the much more powerful federal and state governments (Mbaku, Agbese and Mwangi, 2001). Again, the Nigerian constitution did not make provision for rights that belong to ethnic groups as such, because group rights and privileges were appropriated to the individual state of the federation, but not ethnic groups. Notwithstanding, federalism still has within it the legal and institutional framework for reconciling differences, reducing conflict, and protecting the interest of groups, especially ethnic minorities (Osaghae, 1999).

3.9.2 The Federal Character Principle and Federal Character Commission

The policy of the federal character principle was unavoidably introduced to Nigerians by ethnic affiliations and inequalities that existed in the polity. It was essentially designed to ensure representation and power sharing in the presence of salient fear of domination and exclusion of some ethnic groups in Nigeria. It was enshrined in the constitution to prevent tribal or regional domination by any government or its agency. It was also designed to protect the minorities by ensuring the overall participation of the people of the country and states of the nation. In operational term, it requires that social amenities and political appointments should be fairly distributed among the states. Thus, the Federal Character Commission was established to monitor and enforce its application for proportional representation and to promote a federal system for the country despite its diversity.

However, federal character has been criticised for being effective only on paper and not in real terms. Oyovbaire (1983) called it 'tribal character', while Suberu (2001) argued that it is 'geographical apartheid'; others argued that it is inherently discriminatory and counter-productive. Ayode (1998) opined that the federal character principle has only turned out to be a mere substitute for substance. He expressed the idea

that subjecting appointments and promotions to federal character discriminate against merit, and is therefore unfair to certain sections of the country to the advantage of others. Its inappropriate application has only created inequalities, competition, and all tribal dominance by major ethnic groups (Haruna, 2008).

Suberu (2004) also argues that both the revenue allocation system and the federal character principle have focused Nigeria's politics corruptly, inefficiently and even explosively around the distribution of centralised economic and political opportunities, thereby undermining genuine federalism, unity, democracy and development in the country. Accordingly, over-centralisation of revenue at the federal level has made the sub-units of the federation to be overwhelmingly dependent on the centrally collected revenues, and since the unit of allocation is the state, pressure is consistently being mounted by the powerful elite interest and not ordinary people. In other words, a situation in which state budget is tied to allocations from the federation account is neither realistic nor healthy for the growth of federalism (Osaghae, 2001).

The State is expected to exist for the common good of all groups, because it is within the state that the fundamental human right is granted, protected and respected. However, the Nigerian government has failed in this respect. The argument is that all institutions of government have been used to control the apparatus of power to promote, and protect sectional interest. The fact that the State is being used as an instrument of domination has also encouraged the minorities to adopt the state as an arena through which they can secure dominant influence and power for the control of government institutions. The flaws in Nigeria's federal system and politics has contributed immensely to the rising ethnic violence that is being witnessed in recent times, threatening the corporate existence of the nation. It is in this sense that there is a call for constitutional reforms that will truly reflect the wishes of the people (Osaghae, 2001; Suberu; 2004).

3.9.3 Power Sharing and Rotation/Zoning System

Power sharing is a "set of principle that when carried out through practices and institutions, provide every significant identity group or segment in a society representation and decision making abilities on common issues and a degree of

autonomy over issues of importance to the group” (Sisk, 1996: 5). Power sharing principle ensures a balance of power among competing ethnic groups by specifying not only how the group are to share power, but also by allocating power in such a way that it will be exceedingly difficult for any group to dominate others (Lijphart, 1977; Nordlinger, 1972; Nwachukwu, 2012). Universally, zoning has to do with choosing areas to be developed for particular purpose. In Nigeria, the zoning arrangement was adopted for the purpose of sharing benefits and political positions along the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria; and by extension to the whole structures of the three tiers of government.

Rotation and zoning system was considered an option for ensuring equity and justice; and for the equitable diffusion of power to various states and ethnic groups and to ensure that no one ethnic group will have more than its fair share of the resources. The promulgation of the zoning policy was done so that control of political power will shift from one geographical zone, to another and be given an opportunity to rule one after the other. According to Aku (cited in Onwudiwe and Osaghae, 2001), zoning system was aimed at rescuing minorities from political obscurity, and at the same time guarantee majorities’ interests. It is a deliberate effort to ensure access to that powerful position [presidency] by all sections of the country, as a means of achieving long-term political stability in Nigeria. In a way, zoning formula was a way of ensuring fairness among all groups.

That notwithstanding, zoning or rotational policy has been described as the panacea to the nation’s numerous challenges. First, it has become an attractive tool in the hands of political chalatans to seize control of the affairs of the people for their selfish interest, making it difficult to provide the required benefits. Just before the 2011 presidential election for example, there was a lot of rancour about zoning the presidency outside the northern region. Goodluck Jonathan, the proposed presidential candidate for the Peoples Democratic Party openly denied, and said that the position of president of Nigeria was never zoned (Alaimo, 2010) creating a lot of tension and controversy. To Achebe (cited in Njoku, 2002), unlike the affirmative action policies of the Americans, zoning system in Nigeria reinforced nepotism and tribalism. The failure of these policies has been attributed to leadership problems, and the consequences of corruption. Zoning

till date, remains a truce with mediocrity, incompetency, idiocy, and the inanities of false cum spurious stability which functions under the absurd principle of infinite instability as a form of infinitesimal or hiatus stability. And this charade is achieved at the expense of true nation-building (Okah, 2010).

3.9.4 Ethnic Minorities' Agitations and Constitutional Reforms in Nigeria

Even though scholars and practitioners of democracy differ on the definition, content and form of democracy, the world over, democracy has been established as the best form of government. Government in every democratic setting derives its powers from the people through the electoral system. It is from people-propelled transfer of power that democracy, as a form of government developed. The practice of democracy requires a legitimate constitutional framework. Constitutional making is a process by which a nation births, and writes itself, its past, present and future (Adekilekun, 2005). The constitution of a country is one of the most fundamental instruments of governance. As the primary law of the land, it contains the rules, conventions, and other practices by which a society governs itself. Any other law or policy that is inconsistent with the provisions of the constitution is null and void and of no effect (Adekilekun, 2005; Igbuzor, 2007; Aku, 2011).

Nations elect to federate for one or a combination of reasons; socio-economic, political, and security. For socio-economic reason: a nation decides to federate because of possessed shared values with other independent federating units; wants access to a larger domestic market, and seeks access to a higher standard of living that would enhance its welfare policies. Politically, a nation decides to federate in order to strengthen existing relations with its co-federating units, and to possess a stronger voice internationally, and finally, a nation decides to enter into a federation to protect itself from real or an imagined threat to its national security. Constitutionalism and constitutional reform, therefore, has to do with all aspects of democracy which is very important to any nation.

In Nigeria, the choice of federalism as the preferred system of government was not accidental. Given the heterogeneity of the Nigerian polity, Nigeria's nationalist leaders adopted the federal system as the most viable option of protecting the core

interest of the federating units. All the above factors were demonstrated in the federal constitution of Nigeria, especially in the 1963 Federal Republican Constitution that clearly defined the jurisdictions of the federating units. Each of the federating units had its own constitution, one of the key properties of federalism. Before the attainment of independence by Nigeria in 1960, the federating units of Eastern, Western and Northern Nigeria were in all intents and purpose independent entities after the attainment of regional independence in 1957 in Eastern and Western Nigeria, and 1959 for Northern Nigeria. While the North managed its natural resources (hides and skins and groundnuts) without any intrusion from the federal government, the West did the same with its cocoa and the East and Midwest with their palm oil and so on. The various levels of government respected the basic tenets of federalism. It was such that none of the federating units was an administrative arm or a dependent of the federal government. If they had wanted, there was nothing preventing any of them to go their separate ways as independent states in the international community. However, that the constituent units of Nigerian federation opted to federate did not in any way obliterate their respective jurisdictions in key areas of their relations with the central government. (Adekilekun, 2005; Okpe Union, 2005)

The series of political disturbances that engulfed Nigeria in the 1963-1965 period, the controversy of the federal elections of 1964, the crisis of legitimacy in Western Nigeria, and the debacle of its regional election in 1965, saw the military staging a military coup against the federal government of Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in 1966. Though the military coup was aborted and General Aguiyi Ironsi became the head of a military government, the incursion of the military into power has proved costly for Nigeria, as it set in motion a process of the systematic dismantlement of the structures of Nigerian federalism (Okpe Union, 2005; Igbuzor, 2007). The heterogeneity of the Nigerian polity and the conflicting realities of governance in Nigeria made the military government under General Ironsi to abrogate the federal system, and proclaimed a unitary system of government.

All through the period of military rule, the environment was hostile and intolerant of any debate and dialogue process. Military rule eroded democratic culture and consensus building and militarised institutions of family, educational system,

community relations, religion, the judiciary and the economy. The erosion of Nigerian federalism attained constitutional maturation with the systematic militarisation of federalism until 1998, when Abdulsalami Abubakar regime decided to hand over to a civilian government. Even the transmutation of President Obasanjo, a former military head of state of Nigeria (1976-1979), as a civilian president (1999-2007) could not advance the concept of federalism. Since 1999, every move by either the National Assembly or the Presidency to meaningfully amend the Constitution has been aborted (Igbuzor, 2007).

The 1999 Constitution has been characterised by problems and controversies right from the moment of its release in May 1999. To the Niger Delta minorities, the document is insensitive, fraudulent and antagonistic to the aspirations of the people of this region. For the generality of Nigerians, the requirements of the document failed in all the requirement of the plural democracy and fiscal federalism (Oronto, 2001). From inception of the Constitution, it has been criticised on the ground that it is the product of the military, and an imposition from the military (Igbuzor, 2007; Sagay, 2008). Most critics hold the view that the dialogue process for the constitutional reform started even before the formal inauguration of the civilian administration, and this makes it an illegal and unacceptable document. First, aspirants for election in the 1998/1999 were contesting for positions for which they did not have the legal basis, and second, the Constitution was only enacted into law few days to inauguration of the new civilian administration through Decree No 24 of 5, May, 1999 (Adekilekun, 2005; Igbuzor, 2007; Sagay, 2008). It is also the expectations of Nigerians that, under a democratic government, the country, through broader participatory assembly, shall fashion out a constitution that would truly flow, and unequivocally reflect the aspiration of the people. However, the key actors in the dialogue process for constitutional reforms have been civil society organisations, inter-governmental organisations, international organizations, and government which are not a true reflection of the wishes of the Nigerian people (Aku, 2007; Igbuzor, 2007).

As pointed out by Sagay (2001), the 1999 constitution opens with the very fraudulent assertion: “We the people...” when the people were, in fact, not involved in making the document. It is interesting to note also that the decline of the amount due

each state of the federation which coincided with the growing significance of oil as the main stimulant of the Nigerian economy, and the current revenue allocation formula, as defined in Section 162 (2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, which discriminates against the minority ethnic groups, whose oil sustain the Nigerian economy have transformed the Niger Delta people into a beggar region, pleading for its rightful share of its own resources; and has remained an issue of contention and a negation of the tenets of federalism (Sagay, 2005). Hence, the inadequacy of the 1999 Constitution and issues of states' rights to control minerals resources, state police, local control of revenues, and the autonomy of states and local governments, have received persistent attack from public opinion leaders against the political class. The fact that Nigerians neither respect nor trust their legislators to fashion a constitution that reflects their aspirations has led to the present demand and clamour for a Sovereign National Conference (Adekilekun, 2005; Igbuzor, 2007; Avwode, 2012).

According to Sagay (2001), there is an urgent need for a constitutional reform, because the present unitary nature of the supposedly federal polity is hampering development and healthy competition by vesting the centre with the sole authority over minerals, railways and police, thereby engendering hostility and injustice. The only means to addressing this issue is to convene a constituent assembly that can make a truly federal constitution to reflect the nation's diversity. The ongoing moves by federal legislators to review the 1999 constitution has been argued as a mere continuation of a pattern of dubious value. Instead of addressing the weighty issues of articulating a real federation, legislators have concerned themselves with creating more states. So, rather than heed calls for a constitutional conference to make a new constitution to replace the military-imposed one, successive political leaders should take steps to repair the fundamental defects in the constitution with an aim to improve on it in the interest of all ethnic groups.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, we discussed the colonial administrative framework, its contribution and how its legacy sharpened ethnic factor, as a basis for the struggle for political and social-economic resources in Nigeria. The chapter revealed the influence of colonial

policy of regionalisation as the bane of ethnic differences and sectional disparity between ethnic majority and minority groups in Nigeria: first, in the context of colonial states, and second, in the context of multinational Nigerian state. By the changing circumstances of history, ethnic groups began to emerge politically in defense of their perceived interest, and in relation to the interest of others in the region, and post-independent Nigerian state. The demand for autonomy, additional states to cater for the interest of ethnic minorities in regional and post-independent Nigeria, and the recent struggles for resource control by the Niger Delta minorities can be traced to the colonial imposition of its ideology on the Nigerian State. Ethnic minority agitations, particularly, the fears of domination and the pursuit for recognition, accommodation, self-determination and resource control has remained a part of Nigerian political history and a source of tension, agitation, conflict and violent ethnic minority agitations for social justice in Nigeria. The violent dimension of arms carrying by the Niger Delta minorities has further revealed that inequities still exist between the majority and minority ethnic groups in Nigeria. And until minorities' demands are recognised and sufficiently addressed and compensated for, ethnic minority agitation will continue to be more violent.

CHAPTER FOUR
ACCOMMODATION STRUGGLE: THE CASE OF MID WEST MINORITIES
(1940-1980)

4.1 Introduction

The place of ethnicity cannot be overlooked in the quest and agitation for justice in a multi-ethnic society, and particularly, where some ethnic groups are marginalised and deprived of the society's goods and services. It is argued that, in societies where inequality exists among groups and in the distribution of resources, conflict is unavoidable. In such societies, people are motivated to seek ways to obliterate acts of injustice arising from inequality and to choose distributive principles that will elevate their status from that of a subservient group to a recognised group. On the other hand, if the society's principles of distributing resources remain the same, and all are treated equally, members will accept the existing standards of justice. However, a marked shift in standard or principle of distribution, the affected groups will be motivated to push for a new and more profitable definition of justice. In fact, people will essentially want to select, and if necessary, create ways of getting what they deserve, what meet their needs and produce their desired result in the society. It is against this background that people create forums or identity groups to deal with issues of injustice and select those forums that work for them (Lerner, 1975).

In many countries and periods, a person's identity has profound consequence for his/her physical safety, political status, economic prospect and advancement. The emotions associated with ethnic identity are usually very strong and powerful; such that violent confrontation along ethnic lines has been the most apparent form of addressing ethnic injustice. In Nigeria, the fear of domination of minorities by the majority ethnic groups, and the perceived deprivation of socio-economic benefits experienced by these minorities has continued to influence and motivate the organisation of ethnic identity and ethno-cultural association in the pursuit of social justice and promotion of their identity. In colonial Nigeria, for instance, many identity groups and ethnic associations emerged at different times to demand for regions of their own and separate States to cater for their own needs and interest.

This and the next chapter therefore, discuss ethnic minority struggles for autonomy and resource control in the quest for social justice in Nigeria. The first case study which is discussed in chapter four, involves the strategic approach by Mid West minorities in their struggle for accommodation in the old Western region of Nigeria. Chapter five discusses the second case study which emphasises the paradigm shift in demands and struggles for self determination and resource control by minorities of the Niger Delta region. The chapters will examine the strategic dimension of ethnic identity formation in the quest for justice by ethnic minorities in Nigeria.

4.2 Ethnic Identity Formation and the Quest for Justice in Nigeria

Identity is considered to be an intrinsic element of the 'self'. It is said to encompass the psychological, physical, social and spiritual sense of a person's existence. According to Rupensinghe (1998), identity is a sense of security, based on a distinctive wider social recognition and the effective participation in social and political processes, which is a basic need of all humanity. Ethnic identities are political resources just like money and/or votes. Instrumentalists like Banton (1994) and Hechter (1995) argue that ethnic identities are not inherent in group or social formations of people, but are social capital brought to bear on the political negotiation table by different groups at different times. Hutchinson and Smith (1998) also argue that ethnic identities are important resources that political elites employ in securing the support of the masses, as a strategy for gaining a desired good (power and status).

Ethnic identity is a strong term and it is particularly relevant in circumstances in which individuals have no control. In most cases, it has influenced how individuals relate with the social, political and economic sphere of society. It is one of the ways in which an individual may engage other members of the society. It has the potentiality of becoming a group or collectivity, particularly when such groups are singled out for differential treatment (Peter, 1984). In divided societies, ethnic affiliations are essentially powerful, passionate and pervasive (Cunningham, 1994). Most ethno-regional identities are also fundamentally a function of the character of the state vis-à-vis the manner it articulates and relates with historically entrenched modes of consciousness. Ethnic

identities, as noted in Atkinson (1999) are products of specific situations, thus, they can be socially defined and historically determined.

Much of the demands for ethnic or cultural identification start from the concern for recognition. For instance, Gutmann (1994) argues that identity is partly shaped by recognition, or absence of it, and misrecognition of others, that mirrored back to them a confining, demeaning or contemptible picture of them. The group so identified suffers real damage, a distortion of itself which can be a form of oppression, a false, distorted and reduced mode of being. In fact, some groups have been so traumatised to the extent that the image they have of themselves is a depreciatory image, a picture of their own inferiority. In essence, such groups seek for alternative means of identification and recognition, to confront the perceived discrimination.

For Peter and Cook (2003), belonging to an identity group is said to provide a sense of belongingness, facilitate mutual intelligibility, promote mutual solidarity and trust, reinforce intergenerational bonds, and contribute to human wellbeing. To this extent, “man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognised by him” (Peter & Cook, 2003: 117). It is in this sense that ethnic identity is expressed as a ‘baseline identity’ for recognising another group. According to Nnoli (1974), ethnic identification offers a convenient basis for political and social organisation, and in a situation of deprivation, serves as a vehicle for groups and regional advancement. Ethnicity does not only define the totality of the individual existence, (his/her hopes, fears and the sense of the future), thoughts and actions perceived to undermine ethnic groups, but it also evokes very hostile and sometimes violent response. Ethnicity can therefore express, as well as distort common descent; expand and contract ethnic boundaries; benefit as well as neglect the mass of ethnically defined political groupings (Kandeh, 1983).

Mustapha (2000: 6) maintains that it is impossible to liberalise ethnically plural societies under economic decline without ethnicity becoming a major feature of political organisations. The demand for justice that is devoid of ethnicity, according to him, is a dream. Put differently, ethnic politics has often been a strategy for social and political emancipation and justice for the oppressed and deprived groups. Since the period 1940s, which revealed the beginning and expansion of competitive politics and the politicisation

of ethnic identities, political ethnicity has primarily and significantly become an instrumental phenomenon in the demand and agitation for justice in Nigeria.

4.3 Fear of Domination and Minority Group Formation in Nigeria

Ethnic minority agitations and minority demand for autonomy were influenced by many issues in the three regions of Nigeria. A major issue that triggered the protest for a separate region for minorities to cater for their welfare was the fear of domination of minority ethnic groups by the ethnic majority groups. Fear is concerned with the security of a group as well as assimilation or domination of another. A pervasive sense of threat, uncertainty and fear of the future strongly shape a people or group's expectation and behaviour. Domination on the other hand is a condition or experience suffered by a person or group of persons to the extent that they are dependent on a social relationship in which some other persons or group wields power over another (Lovette, 2010). Any form of domination of another is an act of injustice. As a matter of justice, social and political institutions should endeavour to minimise avoidable domination, what Lovett (2010) referred to as justice minimising domination.

In fundamental terms, the Richard's Constitution of 1946, which formally regionalised Nigeria into a tripartite political system (Igbuzor and Bamidele, 1999), actually facilitated the emergence of ethnic "minority" identity, overlapping with the extant ethnic identity to demand separate regions for minority areas in the three regions of Nigeria (Mustapha, 1999). The 1946 Constitution was not only profound; it promoted, for instance, the interest of the people of the three regions of the North, South and West of Nigeria to the disadvantage of the minority. It also provided a central legislative council and regional houses of assembly with powers to make laws without necessarily seeking approval of the Federal Government. Each region had its own judicial system, and was equally empowered to create its own public service and commodity marketing board and other services. This way, major ethnic entrepreneurs capitalised on and exploited the political advantage conferred on them, and with the concomitant economic power, proceeded to mobilise big group cohesion and consciousness for the capture of power in the new region and ultimately the country (Osaghae, 2001). The politics of population size conferred on the ethnic majority a

superior status over other groups in the regions. In the Western Region (where the Mid-West minorities were subsumed), the Yoruba tribe had an overwhelming population of over four million people and the highest number of provinces, as against the Mid-West area with just two provinces: Benin and Delta (NAI/CE:/W3, 1958). For the Yoruba group, it was both an advantage and opportunity to dominate other groups in the region.

In social and economic terms, ethnic minorities in the regions were allegedly discriminated against, dominated and oppressed. In the area of social development, for example, the Mid West minorities complained of discrimination in government appointment in public boards and in scholarship allocation, with the claim that it went predominantly to Yoruba speaking applicants (NAI/CE/W3A, 1959). In matters of appointment to the finance cooperation, minorities in the Western region complained of lack of representation. This seems to be a cogent point as out of the eight board members, six were Yoruba, and only one Ibo chief from Asaba division of the Mid-West area. In the marketing board, the chairman and six other people were said to be Yoruba, with only one member from the Afemai division of the Mid West area (NAI/CE/W3A, 1959).

There were also allegations that the regional government neglected the development of infrastructure in the minority area. For instance, it was alleged that while large sums of money had been made available for the production of cocoa in the Western region, no such funds had been earmarked for the development of (rubber and timber) agricultural products of the Benin-Delta division (NAI/CE/W3A, 1959). There was also the allegation that the police force was filled with Yoruba people and was being controlled and used as an instrument for rigging elections for the Yoruba tribe. The fear was that the police may eventually come under the control of the regional government after independence in 1960.

In cultural terms, the Yoruba tribe had an added advantage over the other ethnic groups in the Western Region. The language, religion, handcraft and the construction of houses and tools (NAI/CJ:/W3, 1959) of the Yoruba were basically the same; while in the Mid West area of the Western Region, there were cultural differences and the people were composed of Edo and non-Edo speaking groups. Even though the same language was said to be spoken by the Edo speaking people of Benin, Ishan, Afenmai and Urhobo

division, with slight differences, the same was not the case for the non-Edo speaking people of Asaba and Aboh divisions (NAI/CJ:/W3, 1959). Thus, the cultural differences among the minorities of this region worked against a common and unified alliance.

Also, Benin-Delta minorities affirmed the deliberate intention of the regional government to fashion out a separate culture, language and institution for the Mid-West area with no intention of preserving the Benin culture and Empire. The imposition of the Ogboni fraternity and Yoruba language as the lingua franca on and over the Benin Culture became a source of resistance against Yoruba domination of the Western Region (Vickers, 2000). The Mace presented to the Parliament House in Ibadan in 1957 was also alleged to have a symbol of the authority of Chiefs in Yorubaland, with references to other Yoruba cultural traditions, giving the impression that the Yoruba tribe was synonymous with the Western Region (NAI/CE/WE). The statement "On my right sits the Oni of Ife; on my left, the leader of our government, Obafemi Awolowo, the voice of the West is complete" which was said to be made by the Alake of Egbaland was viewed as a statement of dominance against other ethnic groups in the Western region (Omoruyi, 2002).

The fear of domination of minority area by major ethnic groups of Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo led to the setting up of the Willink Commission to look into the fears of ethnic minority groups. In giving evidence at the Willink commission, Chief Arala, a Benin traditional council member said among other statements that "...Benin kingdom had never been under the domination of other tribes in the past and should similarly be independent of them in the future"...., the people of Benin Delta provinces had for centuries been independent of Yoruba paramount Oba in the Western region, and had no wish to be placed under Yoruba government when the British must have left Nigeria" (NAI/CE/W3A, 1959). In view of the above issues, and the fear of domination, minorities in the region began to form identity groups and ethnic associations to demand for separate regions of their own with the purpose of preserving the custom, traditions and culture of the Benin people, and to secure enough societal resources for possible development.

4.5 Ethnic Structures and Mid West Agitation for Autonomy

The importance and influence of identity formation and ethnic group associations cannot be overlooked in the agitation for recognition and justice in a society where some groups are marginalised and deprived of their basic rights. Although many have criticised the means and others have objected to the ends, it is nearly impossible to deny that the use of ethnicity does make men to rally to the cause of domination and injustice, and that it hastens change. Ethnicity is a weapon of justice, not only because it works, but also, because it provides the most fertile ground for group mobilisation (Yeros, 1999; Ojokoratu, 2005). Ethnicity has helped in the appreciation of one's social root in the community. Cultural groups have also remained a creative tool for obtaining the desired demand at the bargaining table for the oppressed. Ethnicity has continued to be a beneficial element for creating a shift in the distribution of power and resources as well as to stimulate changes in all facets of the social order (Haberson, 1994; Onwudiwe, 1998). Indeed, factors contributing to preference for ethnicity as the basis for political organisation and justice include a common language, culture, and the existence of ethnic structures.

The organisation of ethnic groups into ethno-political formations was very instrumental to the successful creation of the Mid West region. For instance, the first Pan-Edo tribal group to emerge in the process of the struggle for a separate region and self-rule for Mid West minorities, which was initiated and inaugurated by the Oba of Bini, Eweka II in 1932, was the Institute for the Home-Benin Improvement (IHBM). This ethnic or tribal organisation set in motion the process for the creation of a Mid-West Region. Although, Oba Eweka died in 1933 before the actualisation of this demand, the struggle however, continued under his successor, Oba Akenzua. Immediately, he took over the leadership of IHBM, Akenzua set the following as objectives to be achieved: first, to represent all Edo-speaking people of Kukuruku, Ora, Agbor, Igbanke, Sobe; second, to pursue through constitutional means the election through popular suffrage of an indigenous representative in the Nigerian legislative council; third, to promote liberty and private right of ownership, fight tyranny, reform repugnant customary laws and also to provide adequate and higher educational facilities for the Mid West minorities (Vickers, 2000; Omoigui, 2002).

Although not much was achieved, IHBM protested against domination of Agbor Sub-native Authority by Asaba-Igbo indigenes and other non-Agbor people. The Institute of Home-Benin Movement (IHBM) also called for the replacement of I. T Palmer, (a Yoruba trader resident in Sapele) in the Edo dominated Benin Province of the legislative Council. IHBM also requested for a drastic reduction of European officers in the Benin Native Authority Forestry Department and their replacement with indigenes as well as employment of educated indigenes (Omoigui, 2002). Though, these demands were not completely met, I. T Palmer, a Yoruba man, was replaced with Messer G. I. Obaseki, a Benin man, in the legislative council of the Benin Province. The IHBM also encouraged the emergence of other ethnic groups and encouraged the emergence of groups' to protest against the politics of domination. The Institute for the Home Benin Movement (IHBM) later transformed into Edo National Union which continued to champion the cause of representative democracy as well as preservation of wholesome tradition in the administration of Edo (ENU) (Omoigui, 2002; Skylar, 2004).

A second socio-cultural group that emerged at this time was the Otu-Edo ethnic group. The formation of this group, which was one of the most influential ethnic associations to emerge in the struggle for the creation of the Mid West region, was actually a protest against the introduction, infiltration, domination and oppressive nature of members of the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity (ROF) in Benin kingdom. The Reformed Ogboni Fraternity which had virtually become an instrument for the interest, control and domination of Gaius Obaseki in Benin Divisional Council (Omoigui, 2002) was seen as a sort of mechanism to entrench Yoruba domination in Benin City. Otu Edo, though, was a cultural organisation for upholding customs, traditions and the protection of the Oba's position, it soon assumed a political significance in the politics of Benin and the struggle for the creation of Mid-West Region (Oronsaye, 1977; Ogbemudia, 1991, Omoigui, 2002).

The transformation of Otu Edo into a strong political base for the Benin-Delta Province was informed by the emergence and transformation of regional cultural associations into strong political groups to protect the interest of their people. For instance, the Igbo State Union transformed into National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) in the Eastern region; Egbe Omo Oduduwa cultural group into

Action Group (AG) political party in the West (NAI/CE/WE), and the Jamiyya Mutanen Arewa into Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in the North (Oronsaye, 1977). The transformation of these cultural groups into political parties increased the fear of domination of minorities, and encouraged the transformation of Otu-Edo Cultural Group into a socio-political organisation in the Mid West area to demand for the autonomy of the Mid West region (Osaghae, 2001).

Through massive electioneering campaign, Otu Edo ethnic group became popular, winning majority of the seats in the District Council election as against non members of Otu Edo in the N.C.N.C. (Vickers, 2000). In Benin City, for example, it gained control of all the twelve wards, giving victory to Otu-Edo over the Ogboni group. At the elections to the Western House of Assembly, Otu-Edo's candidates won six of the seats allocated to Benin Division in the Western House (Usuanlele, 2000). Also, in the general election of 1956, 1960 and particularly the 1964 election, the N.C.N.C/Otu-Edo alliance won the majority seat, fifty-four out of the sixty-four legislative seats at the federal election. Otu-Edo was so overwhelmed with these victories that it soon set aside the purpose for its transformation, that is, the Mid-West agitation for autonomy.

By mid 1953, the agitation for the Mid-West region had suffered serious set back. There were no serious cultural, political or any of her solid platform through which the struggle could continue. In fact, at the 1953 conference where changes to the 1951 constitution were discussed, there was no strong political party to represent the interest of the minorities for a separate region, unlike other regional political parties such as Action Group (AG) and the National Council for Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) which were represented by separate delegations. These delegates refused to discuss any issue pertaining to the minority demands. They were rather more concerned about gaining maximum power for regional government than promoting the creation of separate regions for the minorities (Vickers, 2000; Usuanlele, 2001). Despite the fact that the two parties had agreed in principle to the creation of a Mid-West State, they conspicuously set aside any discussion on the Mid West demand for a separate region at the Conference.

The abandonment of the Mid West minority demands at the 1953 Constitutional Conference prompted Oba Akenzua II to resuscitate the struggle by encouraging traditional and political leaders of Benin and Delta provinces to get freedom from ethnic majority domination at all cost, not only from the white man, but also from foreign African leaders. He stated "... I hope everyone will pull his weight in this struggle, (because) at this critical time when all the nations of this country called Nigeria are fighting hard to assert their national status, it will be unwise for Benin-Delta to do nothing about asserting its own" (Vickers, 2000; Usuanlele, 2001). The Oba impressed it strongly that Edo identity must not be allowed to go into extinction and the wrong impression that there are several Edo nations or state must be removed. Through a proposed political party to represent the Benin/Delta interest, he encouraged and emphasised the need for more regions or at least a fourth region with greater autonomy to be created for the Mid West (Onwudiwe and Osaghae, 2001; Omoigui, 2002). Omo-Osagie (Vickers, 2000) also buttressed the need to have a party that is independent of other parties based in the region, one which will serve as the vanguard in the battle for the Mid West Region. According to him, no one is going to hand over autonomy on a silver platter. Immediately, a political party called the Benin Delta Political Party (BDPP) was formed with the sole aim of fighting through all constitutional means the establishment of the Benin/Delta state. Oba Akenzua insists that the Benin Delta state can succeed very well without being tied to the apron strings of the Yoruba state (Vicker, 2000; Omoigui, 2002).

There were other issues that informed the agitation for a Mid-West region and necessitated the need for a reorganisation of Benin Delta Peoples Party (BDPP), to transform into the Mid West State Movement (MSM). One of such was the disappointing declaration of Awolowo on the motion for a separate region for the Mid-West that "... the government adopts no official attitude whatsoever towards it..." He went further to say that though, members of government and opposition who wished to support it can do so without any restriction whatsoever, however, many dissociated themselves and their parties from it (NAI/PRIA/7, 1960). Another issue was the fact that despite the Otu Edo/N.C.N.C alliance and the Oba's active participation in campaigning for the Action Group party (NAI/CE/W3, 1958), the party could not

implement the Mid-West Bill for the creation of the Mid-West Region before regional elections. Also, the 1953 Constitutional Conference stipulation that self government will be granted, after a representation of all shades of political opinion, to the effect that regional self-government would in no way make the continuance of federation impossible. All of these factors necessitated for the transformation of the BDPP into Mid West State Movement (MSM). Moreover, there was the need to pursue the creation of the Mid West region to its logical conclusion, through the pressure which Mid West leaders had brought to bear on the controlling authorities (Vickers, 2000). The reorganisation of the Mid-West State Movement was significant in the sense that it encouraged leaders of the Mid West struggle to shift their demand for a separate region from the local to the international level, that is, the London Constitutional Conference.

4.6 Constitutional Conferences: Demand for Mid West Autonomy

The 1957 London Constitutional Conference which was expected to address minority demands for a separate region did little to fulfill this expectation, particularly the Mid-West minorities' agitation for autonomy. At the early stage of the conference, debates were in favour of separate regions to be created for minorities, however, delegates from major political parties moved away from Mid West demand and began to assert for self-government for their respective region. After much debate on the creation of a fourth region, a communiqué was released setting up a commission of enquiry to ascertain the fears of minorities and means of allaying them (Vickers, 2000; NAI/CE/W3, 1958).

Despite the allegations of underdevelopment in the minority areas and marginalisation of Mid West minorities from top political positions and affairs of the State generally (Akinyele, 1996), the Willink Commission rejected minority proposal for a separate region. According to the Willink's report: first, the demand for a separate region did not represent any "discernible minority interest; second, it would initiate fresh minority problems and encourage the creation of state along ethnic lines; and third, with particular reference to the Mid-West proposal, the commission judged that its creation would "accelerate and underline tribal divisions which a wiser statesmanship would seek to gradually obliterate (NAI/CE/W3E, 1958; Akinyele, 1996; Omoigui, 2002).

Nevertheless, the Commission recommended that areas with distinguished cultures within the region should be allowed to preserve the elements of their culture and also be given access to political power within the country such that a majority may be less tempted to use power solely to its advantage. Other recommendations included the need to appoint a candidate from minority areas to governmental agencies to promote loyalty; the development of minority areas should be devoid of economic consideration; and the creation of marketing boards for the major produce of minority areas (NAI/CE/WE). The commission concluded that the creation of a separate region would not provide a remedy for the fears expressed (Usuanlele, 2000), but recommended the establishment of the Ministry of Mid-West affairs.

Despite this setback, the zeal and aspiration pushing the demand for separate regions within the three regions of the North, East and West did not slow down on their demands. At the 1958 London Constitutional Conference, the Mid West State Movement asserted again the issue for a separate region for the Mid West minorities. Representatives from the Mid West State Movement maintained in a memorandum that the fear, grievances and abuses experienced under the existing system, and for which the people of the Mid-West had failed to obtain "remedy or redress" were "utterly unlikely to be allayed or remedied under any future system of government" (Vickers, 2000). It was therefore concluded that in the absence of a Mid West region, a provincial Assembly with a commission be created for the Benin and Delta provinces; that the Assembly should have deliberative and executive control over local government, customary courts, chieftaincy, finance and budget-share funds allocated to the population and/or other basis from the revenue of the existing Western Region among others.

4.7 Creation of Mid – West Region (1963)

The process leading to the creation of the Mid-West Region was filled with controversies, betrayal and disappointment, particularly from delegates of the majority ethnic groups at the Constitutional Conferences. Although, there was an agreement between the majority and minority ethnic groups to suspend agitation for new regions for the purpose of independence for Nigeria from colonial masters (Omoigui, 2000,

Vickers, 2000), but the process to the independence of Nigeria in October 1960 were filled with series of actions for and against Mid-West state. False and real hopes and intrigue played themselves out.

For instance, there were high expectations among the Mid West minorities that Chief Festus Okotie Eboh's position as the next in command to the Prime Minister and leader of the parliamentary party at the time would influence and accelerate motions for the creation of the Mid-West Region (Vickers, 2000). However, Okotie-Eboh failed to mention the Mid West issue at any of the meetings of the House of Representatives or at any of the London Independence Constitutional Conferences. The Sauduana of Sokoto, Tafawa Balewa, for instance, stated categorically that the "question of more regions and the adjustment of our boundaries is already closed" (Vickers, 2000).

Secondly, the appointment of the Oni of Ife, Oba Aderemi Adesoji, as the Governor of the Western region and the Alake of Abeokuta, as the Chairman House of Chiefs dashed the hopes of the Mid West State Movement for a new region. Oba Akenzua's resignation, as a Minister in Chief Awolowo's cabinet was a consequence of the inability of the Western region to meet the demands for the creation of Mid West Region which was completely "relegated to the background" (Omoigui, 2000), thus making presentation of minority demands less and less important. Also, the replacement of Osadebey as the opposition leader in the West, (the campaigners of the Mid West cause) with Chief Fani Kayode, a Yoruba man, revealed that Mid West agitation was far from being a reality. The overwhelming success of the Action Group party with a majority of seventy eight seats, out of the one hundred and twenty-four seats at the federal level also suggested that no referendum on the creation of a new state could be made without majority support from the Action Group members in the House. Notwithstanding, the Mid-West State Movement continued to agitate and present Mid West demands before the House of Representatives. By 1961, the motion for the Mid West Region was moved for the first time at the Federal House of Representatives. By 1962, the second motion for the creation of the Mid West Region which would cover Akoko-Edo, Warri and Western Ijaw areas was passed into a Parliamentary Bill (Omoigui, 2000; Usuanlele, 2001).

It suffices to say that without the internal conflicts within the leadership of the Action Group party in 1962, the Bill for the creation of a Mid West Region wouldn't have been possible. Also, the creation of the Mid-West Region would not have passed through without the majority support of the people of the Benin-Delta provinces. Also, the new administration that emerged in the Western Region also assisted in hastening the approval of Mid West referendum to proceed and be created as a fourth region. Moreover, the resilient stand of the Oba of Bini, the persistent pressure of the elite for Mid West Region, the unrelenting support of tribal group associations, and the persuasive power to achieve set goals and objectives for a new region for minorities in the Western Region all contributed to make the Mid West Region the first to be so created through administrative and constitutional process in August, 1963 (Suberu, 1988).

The creation of the Mid West region brought about the power of self rule and some measure of development. Since, the creation of the Mid West region, demands for more states have intensified and become part of Nigeria's political history and structural means through which a considerable proportion of national wealth is made available to regions/states and groups in the form of opportunities and amenities (Oyovbaire, 1983). With the creation of the Mid West Region, minorities from other regions were encouraged to demand for separate regions of their own. By 1967, the government of Gowon went further to create additional states from the previous four regions to make up twelve states in Nigeria. This was done as a way to compensate the minorities and to elevate their political status from regional minorities to national minorities. Between 1967 and 1976, the number of states and local governments were increased from twelve to nineteen, ostensibly to meet minority demands and to create new centres of growth in the minority areas for structural equilibrium. According to Oyovbaire (1983), it was a deliberate national attempt to broaden the base of national cohesion and to deepen loyalties.

4.8 Significance of Mid West Minority Struggle for Autonomy

The struggle for the creation of the Mid West Region was more pronounced with the approach of independence in Nigeria. The realisation that ethnic marginalisation and

domination in independent Nigeria will increase tribal fears and apprehension, and thus, increase in the organisation of tribal and ethnic group associations in the struggle for separate region for minorities in the three regions. Belonging to one or more of such ethnic associations was expected to accelerate the process of a separate region for minorities. These new tribal groups and ethnic associations, particularly in the Western Region, were not only articulate, but also played a central and very important role in the struggle for autonomy, progress, unity and cultural heritage, as a vital aspect for the development and homogeneity of the people of Benin-Delta region (Oronsaye, 1977).

In many ways, minority agitations were very significant for many reasons. For the Mid West minority agitation, first, it was a struggle that was passionately pursued not only by ordinary people but more importantly, by the paramount ruler, the Oba of Benin. He did not only participate and supervised the progress of the struggle, but also through relentless effort, ensure that the creation of the Mid-West Region became achievable. It was a struggle that was committed to set goals and objectives. It was a struggle devoid of sentiments but directed against ethnic marginalisation, domination and exclusion of the Mid-West minorities. Second, it was a struggle devoid of deceit, personal benefit and selfish interests. It was a struggle pursued with sincere effort to succeed. Third, it was the first region to be so created in Nigeria through all the necessary constitutional and democratic processes (Ogbemudia, 1991). Fourth, it was a struggle that has facilitated a stronger voice for the articulation of minority rights in Nigerian politics. As Omoigui (2002) maintained, it was a struggle of determined nationalist agitation, confident in its historical heritage, pure in its strategic formulation, complex in its operational implementation, but persistent nonetheless, complete, with promises and betrayals that characterise all sustained human endeavours. Finally, it was a struggle that revealed the importance and power of ethnicity and ethnic group associations in fostering a feeling of belongingness, cultural identity and existential solidarity, by providing a source of explanation and a basis for political and social organisation in the struggle for justice.

4.9 Conclusion

Although state creation has increased from nineteen to thirty six states and local government areas to seven hundred and seventy-four, the major ethnic groups of Hausa/

Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo still maintain dominance, with much political power and influence at their disposal. Colonialism, with its practice of indirect rule, did not only promote the root of "... unifying force to political divisiveness" (Oyovbaire, 1983: 25), but also shielded for decades some communities, regions and administrations from participating in the mainstream processes of the state. The initial allegation of marginalisation and domination of minorities which led to the creation of the Mid West Region and the creation of more states have not only remained decades after independence of Nigeria in 1960, but have indeed exacerbated ethnic tension, protest and demand for recognition and justice in Nigeria.

The disjunction in the structural composition of Nigeria, as a social force has continued to be the root of communal consciousness and ethnicity in Nigeria (Oyovbaire, 1983; Vickers, 2000). The fears and facts of predominance of one administrative or political region, one community, one locality or a group of individuals over others in the struggle for opportunity, resources and power, gave rise to the formation and emergence of ethno-cultural and linguistic organisations out of which Otu-Edo, Mid-West State Movement, Reformed Benin Community, and others became a force to reckon with in the struggle for accommodation. The Mid West minorities were able to succeed because they made use of multiple options such as ethnicity, party politics, constitutional processes and the pursuit of unified goals at different times to achieve their objectives.

Even though, there has been an elevation of the status of minorities through states creation, perception of marginalisation persist and ethnic agitation continues to be an instrument for gaining the desired amenities. The inability of state creation to meet minority demands has encouraged agitation for self-determination and resource control by Niger Delta minorities in recent times. In fact, the persistent ethnic group agitation in the region has revealed that minorities are still marginalised as a group in the power politics of Nigeria. The proliferation of ethnic group associations and strategic posture of arms carrying by the youths has given effect to the importance of ethnicity as a political weapon of agitation and a more potent tool in the struggle for justice in Nigeria.

CHAPTER FIVE
NIGER DELTA MINORITIES: QUEST FOR SELF DETERMINATION AND
RESOURCE CONTROL
(1980 - 2000)

5.1 Introduction

In recent times, ethnic identity and minority politics in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have become more volatile and wide-spread to the extent of threatening the stability of the country. The volatile nature of the Niger Delta agitation has been traced to a number of factors, some of which include alienation and disempowerment, dislocation of the traditional economy and brazen inequity in revenue allocation (Okoko and Nna, 1997; Nna, 2001; Joab-Peterside, 2005); the militarisation of democracy (HRW, 2005); human rights violation (Aaron, 2006; Ibeanu, 2008); the failure of corporate social responsibility by oil multinationals (Ikelegbe, 2008; Aaron, 2008); corruption and accountability failures in governance (Enweremadu, 2008; Peel, 2005); the country's federalism that is characterised by inter-segmental imbalance and ethnicity-based political domination (Naanen, 1995; Ibaba, 2005) and in recent times, the state's repressive approach to minority demands and protest as youth restiveness and acts of insurgency. Regrettably, all of these have encouraged antagonism, hostility and persistent agitations for control of resources in the Niger Delta region. This chapter discusses the Niger Delta agitation for justice through the organisation of ethnic and youth uprising.

5.2 Quest for Social Justice: The Case of the Niger Delta Minorities

The return to democratic rule in 1999 actually encouraged and provided the golden opportunity for the Niger Delta minorities to resume and present afresh their demands and right to a reasonable share of the State's resources. It encouraged a new era of demand for self-determination and the economic power to control the resources from the Niger Delta region (Obi, 2007; Metumera, 2010). However, issues of economic crisis which have deepened exploitation and impoverished the Niger Delta people; environmental degradation and land pollution threatening the survival of the people; discriminatory and oppressive military response by the State to crush Ogoni resistance;

the massacre of the people of Odi, Gbatoru and other communities in the region by government troops have continued to encourage the use of arms and violent conflicts by youth and socio-ethnic formations in the quest for justice in the Niger Delta region (MOSOP, 2005; Ibaba, 2005; Obi, 2007; Ikelegbe, 2008). In summary and for the Niger Delta minorities, the contentious issue has always been what should constitute a fair and adequate compensation to the individual groups and communities whose natural resources of oil and land have been forcefully acquired and destroyed by oil companies in the process of oil exploration and production in collaboration with the state government.

This chapter in essence, discusses the Niger Delta ethnic minority agitation in the light of the above issues. The strategic approach of the Niger Delta struggles in four phases, since the inception of the region's demand for justice, will also be discussed. The first phase (early and mid 1980) discusses the legal actions adopted by the communities of the region against the oil companies to adequately compensate them for damages associated with land pollution and their property. The second strategic approach involved the peaceful demonstrations and occupation of flow stations to get the oil companies to pay a satisfactory compensation or to fulfil their promises of providing certain amenities to the communities and also to employ indigenes of the community as oil workers. The third approach assumed a desperately militant form (1990's to 1998), characterised by forceful occupation and shutting down of oil flow stations, kidnapping of oil workers, seizure of tug boats and other vessels belonging to the oil companies. The fourth phase is the ongoing demand and protest for resource ownership and control (Owugah, 1999).

5.3 The Niger Delta Minorities: Historical Overview

Long before the invasion of Africa by colonialists, the history of the Niger Delta ethnic groups has been a long history of injustice, sustained by violence. The struggle against exploitation dates back to the slave trade era, where for centuries, communities of the Niger Delta were a trading ground for European slave merchants (NAI/CE/WZ, 1958). The Europeans continued to exploit people of the region through palm oil trading when it became obvious that slave trading was no longer bringing in the desired gain,

thereby denying the Niger Delta people the economic benefits of the palm oil they produced. This period became the beginning of the tendency toward self-assertion and a desire not to be dominated by any “foreign” group or government. King William Koko of Nembe, Nana Olomu of Itsekiriland and king Jaja of Opobo put up a resistance against the lack of participation and control in the palm oil trade eventually. Although, the struggle failed due to a number of developments, including British indirect rule, revocation of the charter of the Royal Niger company and military conquests; as well as Christianity, and western education which led to the emergence of a new traditional elite (Douglas, 2001).

With the advent of colonialism, Europeans increased their policy of exploitation and accumulation, entrenching violence as a state policy “to exploit the resources without the consent or even with the knowledge of indigenous people” (Sagay, 2001: 8). Unfortunately, at independence, the policy of accumulation and exploitation continued, and has remained a practice for successive governments to dispossess local communities of their right to ownership and control of lands and mineral resources, particularly those of the Niger Delta region. The Federal Government and its counterparts (the oil companies) have not only denied the right of ownership but have also posed a threat to the very existence of the Niger Delta as a people.

Historically and cartographically, Niger-Delta is a region of strategic importance to both domestic and international economies. It is also a region of environmental wealth and inhuman poverty (Okeke, 2010; Inokoba and Imbua, 2010). The Niger Delta region consist of present Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers states until President Olusegun Obasanjo’s regime politically redefined and enlarged the region to include all the nine contiguous states of Abia, Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers, Edo, Imo and Ondo states in year 2000 (Alamieseigha, 2005, Akpabio and Akpan, 2010; Ikporupko, 2011). It is mainly populated by the Ijaws, Ogonis, Ikwerres, Ekpeyes, Ogba and other communities with majority of the people living in rural Delta. Fishing, farming, trading, and forest product gathering constitute the primary occupations and means of income for the people. It is a region blessed with vast reserves of non-renewable natural resources, particularly high level hydrocarbon deposit in oil and gas, accounting “for more than ninety percent of

Nigeria's foreign earnings and eighty percent of the Federal Government's revenue (NAI/CE/WZ, Alamielseigha, 2005).

Despite the wealth and economic benefits of natural resources, the region is beset with monumental problems of environmental pollution and degradation, low and flat terrain, high level flooding and erosion resulting in contamination of water and water borne diseases and absence of adequate and appropriate infrastructural facilities (Aregbeyan and Adeoye, 2004; Akpabio and Akpan, 2010; Ikporupko, 2011). Because of the indiscriminate dumping of toxic waste, non bio-degradable by-products of oil refining, the flora and fauna on land and waters have become endangered with ramified implication for the people of the region (Ibeanu, 1999). For the Niger Delta people, life has become unbearable through gas emissions of pollutants and oil spillage. The continuous pollution of the environment through gas emissions and oil spillages has destroyed marine life and rendered many hectares of land unsuitable for crop production. Moreover, acid rain which is caused by gas flaring and air pollution has contributed to deforestation and destruction of wildlife, depriving the Niger Delta people the use of arable land for profitable agricultural activities, leading to loss of income to farmers (Ibeanu, 1999; Alamielseigha, 2005). This is corroborated by Ayoade (2011) who posits that the Niger Delta has been complaining about environmental damages from oil exploration and rising unemployment and poverty in the region, but the successive government and the multi-national oil corporations have been insensitive to the plight of the people. Madubuike quoting Eteng (1998) emphasised that the oil economy created an environmental crisis and consequently disorganized the peasant communities in which oil was found. Owen Wiwa (2007), a human right activist summarised the Niger Delta situation, thus "we cannot drink the water from the streams, we can't drink rain water and there is no pipe borne water. Our right to drinking water has been taken away by the company, and our right to clean water has also been taken away."

Despite the high revenue income that flows from oil exploration and production from the region, Niger Delta minorities, the possessors of the land from which oil is exploited, have had to contend with lack of basic infrastructural facilities such as good roads, schools, hospitals, housing units and other social amenities. The absence of government presence and developmental project to improve the condition of this region

has continued to be a source of conflict in the region. Edwin Clark (KIIs, 2007), for instance, lamented the neglect of the region by successive governments. He made reference to the dual carriageway between Benin and Warri which he argued took a longer time for it to be completed compared to other regions like the Abuja/Kaduna and Ibadan/Ile-Ife whose construction were promptly completed and commissioned in due time. Clark (2007) also draw attention to the road between Warri and Portharcourt as being the most economically important road in the country, yet so narrow, creating long queues of vehicles waiting in turns to pass through the road. According to him, this is not the type of road that a region that provides the bulk of the revenue that sustains the economy should have. He lamented the rate and increase in the number of death as a consequence of the narrow road.

The Niger Delta minorities also alleged that the central government has continued to create disaffection among the people and communities. The socio-cultural relations among the different communities and groups in the region has been characterised by deceit, suspicion and internal conflicts. For instance, it was alleged that the presence of oil companies brought the emergence of class structure. The elites and traditional rulers who are in some collaboration with oil companies either as representatives of the people for compensation or as the spoke persons of the communities are often more interested in their personal benefit and interest rather than the interest of the communities they represent (Mustapha, 2000). At times, to achieve their goals, the representative help to diffuse any form of social consciousness that may lead to protest among the people, and out of personal gains, will often rationalise and justify both the activities of the oil companies and that of the state governments. Moreover, the level of poverty among the people and high level unemployment among the youths is quite alarming. All of these act as a catalyst to protest and conflict in the region (Sagay, 2000; Obi, 2007).

5.4 Niger Delta Minorities: Allegation of Injustice

Although, the society is a cooperative venture for mutual benefit, conflicts still exists, because individuals and groups are not indifferent to the greater benefits that will accrue to them in their collaboration with others in the society. In order to pursue their

end, individuals and groups would prefer a larger portion of the benefits to a lesser share. Rawls (1973) avows that members of a society know that they are subject to circumstances of justice, and each has a conception of their good in the light of which they press for claims against the rest. Undeserved inequalities, according to Rawls, calls for redress; and since inequalities of birth and natural endowment are undeserved; they are to be compensated for. It is therefore necessary to understand the need for compensatory justice for those who have been denied benefits that should rightly belong to them. Compensatory justice stipulates that resources should be allocated to indemnity costs unduly inflicted upon a party in the past and the present. This is the justice that allows those who are benefiting from the resources of the society to compensate those disadvantaged by it, or for the disadvantages imposed upon them by being denied their right (Ikporukpo, 2011).

Historically, the Niger Delta region was described as economically unviable by the colonial government, thus, little interest or attention was shown in developing the area before oil was discovered (Adewuyi, 2004). Before then, agricultural resources (including cultivated pieces of land, food and cash crops) provided food and raw materials for domestic consumption and export. Through agricultural products, foreign exchange was earned and was used to finance development projects and programmes, including provision of infrastructure and social amenities that promote economic activities and enhance the quality of life and the physical environment (Odia, 1999, Adewuyi, 2004). All through this period, derivation was held as a principle of sharing revenue and fifty percent of the tax revenue derived from that region was retained there. However, immediately oil was discovered in Oloibiri of Niger Delta region in 1956 and exploration of oil began and produced in 1958 in commercial quantity, revenue in the form of foreign exchange receipt increased (Adewuyi, 2004; Alamiseigha, 2005) and the federal government budget became increasingly dependent on oil revenues. In consequence, the principle of revenue sharing reduced from fifty percent to forty five percent, until it was finally set aside with a specially fixed account of 1.5% for the oil producing areas by the government (Aregbeyen, 2004).

Although there has been an increase of thirteen percent for oil producing communities in recent times, Sagay (2005) insists that this is still a far cry from the

condition under which the Niger Deltans agreed to form a federation. He stresses that it is not the prerogative of the Federal Government to determine the allocation of thirteen percent and the Niger Deltans will be satisfied. For Akiri (2004), it is an injustice to peg the destiny of a group of people at a particular point. According to him, in the days when products like groundnut, cocoa and palm oil and mineral products like tin, columbite and coal meant everything to the economy of the country, derivation was the most reasonable system of revenue allocation in the federal set up, but when the motherland of the enslaved minorities of the Niger Delta oozed out petroleum, the big three quickly agreed to remove the system of revenue allocation from derivation to self-serving principle of population-size, area extent, need and equality of state. Sagay (2005) reason that this only reveals that the fate of the mineral resources of the Niger Delta minorities, particularly the trend from derivation to federal government absolutism is itself a function of majority control of the Federal Government apparatus. He proclaimed that this has only brought to the fore the mentality of the oppressor that they never give up on their oppression, no matter how compelling is the injustice involved. The victimisers never see any reason to stop the victimisation, unless force is applied to set free the enslaved minorities.

For the Niger Delta minorities, the significance of oil to the economy has reduced the revenue accruing to them, and instead of the expected benefits of such an important resource, it has rather brought them the environmental burdens associated with oil production and hazards arising from it. Thus, Niger Delta situation as captured by Rowell (1994) is that oil and environmental conflicts are rooted in the inequitable relation that undergird the production and distribution of profit from oil, and its adverse impact on the fragile ecosystem of the Niger Delta.

It suffices to conclude therefore, that in spite of the immense wealth generated by oil production in the Niger Delta, it has remained one of the most impoverished parts of Nigeria. The findings of the Niger Delta Human Development (NDHD) Report for instance, indicate the “inadequate, unavailable and poor quality infrastructure”. This unstable social, economic and political situation has not only increased unemployment rates among the youth but also high levels of poverty, estimated at an average of 69 per cent (NDHD, 2006: 57–58). This poverty in the midst of wealth is a contributory factor

to the violence that has engulfed the region as people seek to win back resources for their survival and development.

5.5 Niger Delta Minorities: Government Policy and Quest for Social Justice

The goal of any country's natural resources is the use of the resources in a way to generate benefits that will improve the quality of human life. It is also expected that the revenue so generated from the production of mineral resources such as foreign exchange earnings from crude oil export or any other resources would be used to effectively provide social amenities and uplifting general well-being of members of the society. In Nigeria, despite the contribution of crude oil to economic activities and government revenue, the developmental impact of crude oil endowment remains a mirage, an illusion to the Niger Delta communities. Economic growth has not been sustainable neither has there been any developmental growth in the economic and political life of the Niger Delta people (Aregbeyen and Adeoye, 2004). Politically, according to Dafinone (2007), the Niger Delta people, more than any other group, have suffered undue political manipulation, intimidation, victimisation, oppression and injustice without due regard to their loyalty, support and contribution to the Nigerian nation. The utter neglect and widespread poverty has in turn bred a frustrated population, ethnic polarisation, communal suspicion, anti-establishment agitation and hostility all of which, he argues, create instability and impede development.

All citizens, insists Rawls (1973), should have the means to be informed about political and government policies. They should be in a position to assess how proposals presented affect their well-being and which policies advance their conception of justice or the public good. He further states that there should be a fair chance to the alternative proposal of issues to the agenda for political discussion; for people have a right to contribute to decisions that importantly affect their lives. Anything contrary will deny those who are less privileged in society or the disadvantaged to lose their liberties, as those who have the greater means use their advantages to control the course of public debate and eventually exercise a larger influence over the development of legislation.

Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, public policies have not been participatory. Ikelegbe (2005) averred that citizens at the local level have rarely been given an opportunity to participate in the design and implementation of policies affecting

their lives. Douglas of the Environmental Right Action (ERA), (cited in Ibiba, 1999) also argues that the people of the Niger Delta were not at any time part of the decision making process before laws were promulgated. The laws were never debated and passed by elected representatives of the people, but by military regimes that had simply seized power. Most often, the non-participatory approach had resulted in public policies which do not reflect the demands and aspirations of the many diverse communities and people of Nigeria. Frynas (2001) also notes that the surge of oil resources in the early 1970s coincided with increased centralisation of political power in Nigeria and the gradual elimination of local people from decision-making processes of oil industries and issues that affected them. He argues that oil companies with the support of the government worked freely without any molestation, influence or participation of the local people.

Land constitutes a sociological foundation of the people. The people's relationship with land determines what they are socially, economically and politically. However, with the Mineral Act of 1912, the people of the Niger Delta region became tenants under British rule as they had no say on how natural and mineral resources are exploited or have an idea of how much revenue accrue to the colonial government from the export of agricultural products and minerals (Dafinone, 2007). Moreover, contrary to the right of ownership to property including land and all that is within it, the Land Use Act of 1978 which vested ownership of all landed property to the state government and empowered the government to acquire any private or public land holdings for oil operation are perceived by Niger Delta minorities as oppressive and alienating and naturally deprives the Niger Delta communities any right to land and the power to question the right of entry of Oil Companies in its communal land (Osaghae, 2001).

The main issue in the Niger Delta region is the Land Use Act 1978 and has become "a contentious piece of legislation" robbing them of land benefits (Ibiba, 1999; Ogon, 2006: 12). Ibeanu (2003) affirms that the land issue is "mirrored in the various protests and demands by ethno-nationalist, community groups and social movements in Nigeria's oil belt". Indeed, the Ogoni Bill of Rights (BOR) and the Kaiama Declaration made strong displeasure for this Act. According to the Constitutional Right Project (CRP) (Ibiba, 1999), there is "nowhere else in Nigeria where the impact for land use decree manifested in all imperfection and inequities as in the Niger Delta region."

The deliberate act of policy implementation to transfer control of mineral oil found in the Niger Delta to the Federal Government meant a transfer of control to the major ethnic groups.

Beyond this anomaly, compensation was never made to the people and communities, and where compensation was paid, it was neither fair nor adequate. At other times, payment is made to the governor of the state and not to the community or the land owner who is directly affected (Ibiba, 1999; Frynas, 2001; Osaghae, 2001). As a result, compensation has not been proportionate to environmental damage and the compounding sense of injustice arising from it. There has been constant disagreements and disaffection between communities, oil companies and the government. For the Niger Delta minorities, the oppressive measures imposed on them is not the result of accidents or error, but deliberate act of policy implementation founded on the belief that owners of petroleum resources can be deprived of their resources without any consequences (Igbuzor and Bamidele, 1999).

5.6 Niger Delta Quest for Justice: Government Response

The government which ideally should mediate the inequality among groups, according to Omeje (2004), is itself a major contributor of the existing disparity. For instance, the Federal Government's concern is first with the economic and material wealth of the major ethnic groups and second, the interest of the elite within the major group. Any attempt to change or protest against the status quo has often been approached with military violence and repression. Rather than dialogue, negotiation, development and more importantly, implementation of policies to address grievances, the state through the apparatus of security forces have chosen to ban, oppress, suppress and intimidate individuals, ethnic group associations and any other organisation that are opposed to the state (Ibiba, 1999; Ikelegbe, 2005; Dafinone, 2007).

In the case of the Niger Delta minority agitation, the government has applied the "carrot and stick" approach (Osaghae, 2000) either to placate and/or quench any uprising from the region. For instance, the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB), in response to the Willink Commission of Enquiry recommendation that special attention should be given to the Niger Delta minorities, is one of the many carrot

approaches adopted to placate the people of the Niger Delta region. Unfortunately, the Board had, at different times, failed to meet ethnic minority demands for a change and sustainable development due to inadequate funding, delay in releasing funds for project implementation, misappropriation and embezzlement of funds, allegation of inefficiency, corruption and wasteful use of oil resources against the management of the Commission (Akinyele, 1996). Even when the Board was set up to develop and provide infrastructural facilities and to secure a healthy environment and relationship between government, communities and oil producing companies, Ikporukpo (2004) sustains that the approach was not an act of benevolence, but an attempt to pacify the people of the oil producing areas, a case of appeasement and intent to quieten the minorities.

At other times, instead of dialogue, government have had to use the 'stick' approach to quell anti-oil protests, using military violence to antagonise the people of the Niger Delta whose legitimate demands for environmental justice, resource control and participatory development have been scarcely addressed. The Human Rights Watch reports (1999) that day after day, protests and repression are the order of the day in the Niger Delta region. Many of the protests and demands for compensation for oil activities have been met with indiscriminate battering, killings, arrests and detention, after which the protest is abandoned (Osaghae, 2000). Many reports from Human Right Watch indicate that communities in Obagi, Brass, Nembe, Creek and Rumu-Obiokani, Odi in Bayelsa state have continued to suffer systematic repression and violence (HRW, 1999). Decrees have also been promulgated to deal with any acts of protest. For instance, through Decree No 21 of May 1999, the executive President is empowered to "dissolve and proscribe any association of individuals of three or more persons... which in the President's opinion is formed for the purposes of furthering the political, religious, ethnic, tribal, cultural or social interest of a group of persons or individuals contrary to the peace, order and good governance of the Federation" (Mustapha, 2000: 6). Ken Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni eight were the first set of people to be killed under the Treason and Treasonable Offences Decree of 1993 which imposed the death penalty on "advocates of ethnic autonomy ... to undermine the sovereignty of Nigeria". Organisations such as Association of Minority Oil States (AMOS), Common Wealth of Oil Producing Areas, (CWOPA) CrossRiver, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Imo and Anambra, (CARIA) sympathetic to

or in support of the minority issue have also been proscribed and dissolved at one time or the other.

As a consequence of the repressive approach of the government to ethnic demand for justice, minorities, particularly those of the Niger Delta region have had to exit into alternative identities to continue their protest for the right to control resources from the region. According to Osaghae (1999), 'exiting' into alternative identities amount to a renunciation of the state's responsibility for one's welfare and security and is in effect a renunciation of its claim over the citizen's loyalty.

5.7 Ethnic Structures and the Quest for Social Justice in the Niger Delta Region

According to Nnoli (1983), heightened socio-economic frustration is a crucial element in motivational complex, leading to ethnic identification and conflict. Rawls (1973) also argues that contrary to the idea that ethnicity breeds conflicts; there are three conditions that encourage hostility and outbreaks of conflict. First is the psychological condition, which is a situation where people are made to lack confidence in their own value and worth; second, the painful and humiliating reality or discrepancy of oneself and the others by the social structure and style of life of one's society. In this instance, the disadvantaged is often forcibly reminded of their situation, leading them to an even lower estimation of themselves and their mode of living. The third and last condition is how the disadvantaged see their position as allowing no constructive alternative to opposing the favoured circumstances of the more advantaged. To alleviate this feeling of inferiority therefore, the disadvantaged believes and insist that the imposition of a loss on the better placed even at some cost to them is a better choice. It is the limit imposed on the individual or group by his biological traits and the presence of other competitors that propels him to seek allies in order to attain some of his goals. It is believed that only in such alliances does he feel confident of mutual trust, useful communication and mutual aid.

Ethnic group formation, 'identity loyalty and support' has become a mechanism through which pervasive inferiority and insecurity is overcome (Nnoli, 2000). It is a site for "seeking access to social amenities, empowerment, self-worth, security and defense against the ineffective state" (Osaghae, 1999). Though, many have been quick to dismiss

and condemn the emergence of these oppressed groups as a sudden glorification of ethnic biases over national imperatives, however, for ethnic minorities, it is a rise of a people against injustice; it is a call for action (Alamieseigha, 1985). It is a necessary moment in man's progress towards his consciousness of freedom. Most often, its engagement has to do with struggle, protest and mass action (Ikelegbe, 2005; Onwudiwe, 1998).

For decades, various political movements and ethnic activists have emerged in protest against perceived injustice perpetrated against minorities in Nigeria. For the Niger Delta minorities, protest against injustice has been towards the government and their partners, the oil companies, who have continued with oil exploration in the region with government support. Over time, ethnic agitations in the Niger Delta region has graduated from non-violent protest of Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) to the strategic sabotage of oil installation of the Ijaw National Congress (INC) and to the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) who, having seen the government's reaction to non-violent activism, advocated violence as a means of resistance to what is regarded as the enslavement of the Niger Delta people. In spite of the fact that other ethnic group organisations exist, the emergence of MOSOP, INC and MEND reveals the dynamic strategy of the struggle for justice by ethnic minorities in the Niger Delta region.

Non-governmental Organisations have also been active in the fight against injustice in the Niger Delta region. Non-governmental organizations such as the Environmental Rights Action, (ERA), Human Rights Watch Action (HRWA), and Committee for the Defense of Human Right (CDHR) have lent their voices to the need for environmental justice and the promotion of human rights for the people of the Niger Delta. The activities and strategic approach of these major ethnic group associations will be discussed next.

5.8 Background to Ethnic Minority Struggles in the Niger Delta Region

One of the most important generations of rights is the right to an environment. This is because the environment is not only life sustaining, but also make possible the full enjoyment of all other rights recognised in the human rights instruments (HRW,

1999). The environment has been one area Ogoni people and other communities of the Niger Delta region have suffered discrimination in the sense that the right to a secure, clean and healthy environment have been denied. Nwobike (2005: 133) citing the African Commission's report (1981), reveals that the "... pollution and environmental degradation in Ogoni was to a level humanly unacceptable and has made living in the Ogoni land a nightmare". The argument is that while the government has invested so much in anti-desertification programmes (a natural environmental disaster) to address the problems faced by the Hausa/Fulani (a majority region), the same cannot be said for the degradation of Ogoni land, where environmental degradation and poverty have become a vicious circle of underdevelopment. For the Niger Delta minorities, it is an act of discrimination to treat people from a major group preferentially because they are in the minority, and are not in any position to influence government policies (Nwobiko, 2005). It is against this background that MOSOP emerged as an ethnic organisation to protest against acts of injustice meted out to the region.

The emergence of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) against environmental degradation was, however, preceded by agitation by the Ijaw Rivers Peoples League (IRPL) which eventually led to the creation by the British of Rivers Province in 1947. It was also about this period that the Niger Delta Congress (NDC) was founded by the young Harold Dappa-Biriye to fight for equality for the disadvantaged people of the Niger Delta. He later represented the Niger Delta people in the London Conference of the Minorities, where the report of the Willinks Commission in 1958 described the Niger Delta as a "poor, backward and neglected region" (Onduku, 2001). Isaac Adaka Boro's Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) was later to lead a protest against the government in 1966, making resource control a central theme of the twelve day uprising (Darah, 2001).

Adaka Boro, an Ijaw Warrior, with a troop of one hundred and fifty nine officers protested against the Federal Government of Nigeria by declaring the Republic of the Niger Delta. According to him, people of the Niger Delta region deserve a better share of proceeds from oil wealth (Oronto, 2007). In his speech, he enjoined the NDVF to "... remember your seventy year's old grandmother who farms to eat, remember also your poverty stricken people, and then remember too your petroleum which is being pumped

daily out of your veins and then fight for your freedom” (Oronto, 1999). Though, the struggle did not last more than twelve days, NDVF under the leadership of Adaka Boro was able to attract national attention and some measure of autonomy for the Niger Delta communities. There was a period of lull, but, the 1990s saw the revival of the Niger Delta agitation through the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People.

5.8.1 The Ogoni Ethnic Group: Quest for Environmental Justice

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) is an organisation representing the Ogoni people of the Niger Delta. The Ogoni, though the smallest minority group of about 500,000 people in Rivers State of Nigeria, has through the formation of the Movement for the Survival the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and non-violent protest become one of the most recognised and effective ethnic formations in the struggle for justice in the Niger Delta region. Under the internationally recognised leadership of late Ken Saro Wiwa, MOSOP has long been advancing environmental and human right agenda within the context of Nigerian federalism (Osaghae, 2000; Adewuyi, 2004; Aregbeyen, 2004; Owen, 2007). Among the allegations levelled against the State government are regional marginalisation, discrimination, exploitation and impoverishment of land, pollution of water and human rights abuses.

For effective mobilisation of people, MOSOP employed grassroots or village strategy. Appealing to the emotions of people in the rural communities, MOSOP made use of the Oppressive Order Master (OOM) and Miideekor’s Frames (MF) to stir the emotion of the people to rise up against injustice. The OOM depicts that the Ogoni are a powerless minority group at the mercy of the State and their multinational oil partners while the MF explains the lack of benefits to the Ogoni as land owners from the multinational (tenant) thereby denying the Ogoni their due. Saro Wiwa through OOM and MF made the people realise that unless the people rise up against internal colonialism, Ogoni people will continue to be subjected to exploitative and unjust situations as well as being denied their rightful benefits (Osaghae, 2010).

Through grassroots mobilisation, the religious definition of the Ogoni situation as ungodly and the undoubted belief in the gods of their land to liberate them, many were spurred to action (Obi, 2007; Osaghae, 2010). In addition to the above strategy, MOSOP

equally aligned the struggle with global discourses and symbols, timing it to coincide with the UN celebration of World Indigenous People's day, focusing on the rights of indigenous people and minorities, environmental justice, human rights, self-determination and resource control (Obi, 2007; Osaghae, 2010). MOSOP also deliberately targeted Shell Oil Company, thus, launching Ogoni campaign and struggles into the global world system (Obi, 2007).

By the late 1990s, when great opposition mounted against the leadership of MOSOP, the organisation presented the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) and demanded for the control of Ogoni resources for Ogoni development, political autonomy, compensation for decades of exploitation of Ogoni oil and oil pollution, protection of the Ogoni environment, promotion of social, economic and physical development for the region and provision of appropriate rights to self-determination for the Ogoni people (NDWL Conference Paper, 1999; Obi, 2007).

Among other issues, MOSOP through the Bill of Rights, stated that increased exploration and extraction of oil in Ogoni and other communities of the Niger Delta region amounted to giving up their land for multinational operations without consultation, meaningful compensation or free and informed consent being obtained prior to the transfer (HRW, 1999). The content of this bill was copied to the Federal Government of Nigeria, Shell Company, Human Rights Organisations on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Human Rights Commission and several other international agencies in Europe. With the Ogoni Bill of Rights, attention, sympathy and support from both national and the international Press were focused on the dilemma of the Ogoni minorities in the Niger Delta region.

Despite government's ban on any form of protest and gathering, together with describing MOSOP's protest as disturbances to oil production and acts of treason, MOSOP continued with the struggle; and for the next six months, there was massive public mobilisation of people with threat to disrupt oil production. Through these protests, MOSOP was able to draw international attention to the Ogoni plight, prompting Shell Oil Company to undertake a major review of its attitude towards the Niger Delta communities, human rights policies and sustainable development. That notwithstanding, in November of 1995, nine MOSOP activists, including Saro Wiwa were hung by the

Nigerian Government on charges of "incitement to murder". Although, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) has not been involved in much activity, it has remained a leading advocate for dialogue, justice, democratic and non-violent change. It has continued to strive for a future where all "stakeholders" in Ogoni's human and natural wealth can experience peace and prosperity as equal partners in the Nigerian state (NDWL, 1999; Obi, 2007).

5.8.2 Ijaw National Congress (INC) and the Quest for Self-determination

Protests and agitations that were hitherto peaceful degenerated to militancy, violence and hostage taking, due to violent state repression to the activities of the Movement for the survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP) and the militarisation of the Niger Delta (Osaghae, 1995; Human Rights watch, 1999; Ibaba, 2001; Douglas and Okonta, 2003; Aaron 2005; Frynas, 2006). The repressive nature of the government gave rise to the emergence of many other ethnic group associations and youth organisations. These include the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), Isoko National Youth Movement (INYM), Egi Ethnic Coalition (EEC), Egbesu Boys of Bayelsa (EBB), Chicoco Movement (CM), Ijaw Communities (IC), Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) and many other groups. These ethnic group associations comprising mainly of youths, demanded for the control of land, natural and environmental resources in their land, in accordance with the tenets of the 1999 Constitutional principles of federalism. Resource control has remained one of the vital aspects of the struggle, even the right of the state and communities most directly concerned to have a decisive role in the exploration for, and exploitation and disposal and sale of petroleum oil resources.

Ijaw ethnic nationality, of more than fourteen million people, is the most populous indigenous inhabitants of the Niger Delta region. They constitute the fourth largest ethnic group within the borders of Nigeria (NDWL, 1999; Obi, 2007). The Ijaw National Congress which eventually became the umbrella body of all Ijaw ethnic formations comprised mainly of youths. Adopting a two way strategy, based on their right as an oil producing ethnic minority and indigenous people in an oil rich but impoverished region, INC began to mobilise the Ijaw people under the slogan of Operation Climate Change, using rallies and cultural processions known as Ogele, and at

the same time appealing to the local deity and Ijaw god of war and justice (Egbesu) to bless their cause (Obi, 2007).

Some of the grievances directed at the Federal Government and oil companies include the damaging activities of oil exploration on land, natural resources and the environment. According to INC, the damaging effect of land adversely tells on the ability of the people from the region to fend for their daily needs (NDWL Conference Paper, 1999). Other complaints include the destruction of the region's waters and pollution which have severely polluted the quality of water, air, farms, and land, and other resources essential to the survival of life in the region.

The complete absence of social infrastructure, high level unemployment especially among the youth, perceived discriminatory employment against rural inhabitants and poverty were some of the allegations against the Federal Government and oil companies, part of which became the basis of their protest (Obi, 2007). To actualise their objectives, INC presented a ten point declaration popularly referred to as the Kaiama declaration. Part of the declaration involves the struggle to achieve cultural change and free the people of the Niger Delta, and the Ijaws in particular, from decades of environmental pollution, corporate violence, unjust socio-economic structure and political oppression. Some of their demands include the immediate withdrawal and repression of all military occupation from their land; putting an end to all exploration, oil spillage and exploitation activities in the Ijaw area; and finally, the demand for self-determination hinged on resource control for the people of Niger Delta region. After the declaration, the INC went on a peaceful protest to the office of the State Government. However, security forces retaliated with violent attack leading to the death of three people, while several others were injured.

The state military offensive reaction to the INC's peaceful rallies and protest influenced the launching of Operation Warfare, thus, four strategic approaches were adopted to confront the State. First strategy was the Operation Climate Change (OCC); that is, self-action to change their destiny through dancing and making public announcements in Yenagoa. Second approach was the Operation Launch (OL), which was to shut down oil installations and gas flaring in the region. Third approach was the Operation Reach Out (ORO), targeted at reconciliation and seeking support from other

ethnic nationalities in the Niger Delta, and finally, the Operation Warfare (OW), which entailed resistance and war, should the federal government undertake military action and reprisal (NDWL, 1999; Alamieseigha, 2005).

It should be noted that the Bill of Right (BOR) by Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and Ijaw National Council (INC) is an expression of the depth of grievances from the adverse environmental effects of oil exploration. It is also a consequence of inequity in the distribution of associated negative externalities and international political economy of oil and gas. According to Azibola (cited in Abidde, 2001), the BOR are not simply about environmental or economic benefits, but also about the dignity of the Ogoni, Kaiama, Ikwere, and other peoples of the Niger Delta region. It is a comprehensive approach that takes into accounts the fears, needs and aspirations of all people groups in the Niger Delta region whose lives have been touched by the extractive industry, political imbalance and the economic infidelity. It was in the aftermath of the above events that Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) emerged with a strategy completely different from other ethnic group associations.

5.8.3 Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND): Strategy of Violent Attack

For Douglas and Okonta (2003) the shift from non-violent protest to militancy, and ultimately to armed struggle, was in many respects the inevitable result of the Nigerian government's brutal repression of the Ogoni movement and the murder of its influential and charismatic leader Ken Saro-Wiwa in November 1995. Protests and agitations that were hitherto peaceful degenerated to militancy, violence and hostage taking, due to violent state repression and the militarization of the Niger Delta (Ibaba, 2001). Thus, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) emerged in the international scene in 2006 as one of the largest militant groups from the Niger Delta region, and claimed responsibility for the capture of four foreign oil workers (2010). According to MEND, its emergence and purpose is to expose the sufferings, exploitation and oppression of the people of the region and the devastation associated with extraction of oil and exploitation of the natural environment by public-private

partnerships between the Federal Government and foreign oil corporations in the Niger Delta region. MEND has remained one of the most relevant protest groups in the struggle for justice in the Niger Delta region (Merari, 1993; Watts, 2007).

Among MEND's other grievances, like the larger population in the Niger Delta region, are: environmental degradation, underdevelopment and lack of beneficial resources for the burdens the community have suffered from oil exploitation. It alleged that while there is a revenue-sharing plan in which the federal government distributes roughly half of the country's oil revenues among state governors, these funds do not trickle down to the over 30 million people and communities in the region. According to MEND and its supporters, the people of the Niger Delta have suffered an unprecedented degradation of the environment due to unchecked pollution produced by the oil industry. As a result of the policy of dispossessing people from their lands in favour of foreign oil interests, within a single generation, many now have no ability to fish or farm. MEND further reiterates that people living in the Niger Delta have found themselves in a situation where their government and the international oil companies own all the oil resources and the revenues generated from them, which are rarely seen by the people who suffer from the consequences of oil exploration (Council of Foreign Relation, 2007; Amnesty International, 2009).

Since its inception, MEND has articulated the following demands: the release of Asari Dokubo from prison; the receipt of fifty percent of revenues from oil pumped out of the Delta, the local control of Nigeria's oil and reparations by the Federal Government for pollution caused by the oil industry and degradation of the environment, and the withdrawal of government troops from the Delta region. According to one of the group's leaders, alias Major-General Godswill Akpabio, MEND is fighting for "total control" of the Niger Delta's oil wealth, saying local people had not gained from the riches under the ground and the region's creeks and swamps (2009). To achieve their goal, MEND adopted series of strategies: sabotage, theft, property destruction, guerrilla warfare, kidnapping and recently bombing of oil installation and strategic places. In one of MEND's attacks, Chevron's Oloibiri floating production, storage and offloading vessel off the coast of the Southern part of Bayelsa State were destroyed, with ten people dying in that attack. In another instance, MEND, in a face-off with security forces, abducted

six expatriate workers, four Italians, an American and a Croat (2007). At other times, nine officials of the Italian petrol company (Eni SpA) were killed in a MEND attack against Eni SpA's security forces in Port Harcourt (2010). Another instance is the bombing of Abuja on Independence Day celebration ceremony of October 2010, where twelve people were killed and seventeen injured. The spate of attacks, kidnappings and killings invariably reduced oil output in the Niger Delta. The oil companies have also relocated their staff to other residential areas. In fact, MEND disruption of global oil supply has become a source of concern to the oil companies, the Nigerian government and the United States (Nigeria's largest supplier of U.S. crude imports).

In response to MEND violent attacks, the Federal Government has increasingly sent police and military troops, and sometimes, deadly security forces to suppress civil unrest and inter-ethnic violence in the Niger Delta region. The Nigerian government has also entered into dialogue with the militant groups by extending amnesty to those who were ready to give up arms. Unfortunately, violent attacks have not ceased. In fact, those who gave up their arms have taken up arms. Sabotage, kidnapping and violence have continued.

5.8.4 Niger Delta Women Association (NDWA): Quest for Social Amenities and Human

Right

Women organisations have also been very committed to the struggle against social injustice and human right abuses in the Niger Delta region. A major source of protest for the women is the lack of adequate provision of basic amenities which is considered one of the major sources of progress and development for any area or group of people. Niger Delta women organisations and ethnic associations are also against human right abuses meted out against the women of the region in general. For instance, the earliest women's groups to emerge in protest against social injustice against women and their children are the Community Women Association (CWA) and the Warri Accord Ethnic Associations (WAEA) (NDWL conference paper, 1999). According to these ethnic women's groups, they are the ones to look for water and other social amenities for the daily running of the home. For that reason, they demanded the urgent provision of

basic amenities such as constant electricity, portable water, good roads and dredging of riverine waterways.

In relating with issues of poverty, neglect, local development, unemployment and economic empowerment, CWA and WAEA demanded for benefits and compensation on problems that relate directly to their local environment, the Niger Delta region. Other demands relate to the restoration of the derivative formula that will ensure the direct allocation in foreign currency, and which is to be paid into an eschew account for the benefit of the Warri host communities (NDWL conference paper, 1999). According to one of the leaders, Karaki (1999: 7), we "... are totally disappointed at the manner in which ten communities in Warri were being marginalized ..., neglected and treated as if we do not exist, yet we are part of the host communities." For this reason, the women requested for the recognition of women's rights, since, it is a fundamental human right principle to be committed to the right of others, by respecting and providing them with the necessary civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.

The Niger Delta Women for Justice (NDWJ), in conjunction with the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), therefore organised a thousand women protest in 1999, to deliver a protest letter to the River State Government House against military occupation, human right abuses, rape and assault of women in Bayelsa State. The NDWJ (1999) among other things called for the developmental projects, employment and scholarship programmes for their children in all the ten communities in Warri, the immediate repeal of all laws which are targeted against the Niger Delta people, and the amendment of the 1999 constitution to include the right to self-determination; the repeal of section 44 (3) of the 1999 constitution which vests all property and the control of mineral resources and natural gas in and under, or upon any land in Nigeria on the federal government. NDWJ and IYC also demanded for the repeal of the Land Use Act of 1978 which vests all land within the territory of a state on the governor of the state (NDWJ, 1999). They also appealed for the creation of job opportunities and employment for the youth and women in the region. In another instance, the Ogoni women, through the Federation of Ogoni Women Association (FOWA) made their grievances of underdevelopment and land degradation known. Through a protest march on the first Ogoni day (January 1993), FOWA shut down the Shell production facilities, thereby putting a hold on oil

production. They have also gone naked as a form of protest to emphasise their demands (NDWJ Conference paper, 1999).

5.8.5 The Quest for Justice: Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Many Non-Governmental Organisations have emerged in support and defense of social justice for minorities in the Niger Delta region, and in Nigeria generally. In the Niger Delta region, for example, many of the NGOs include the Association of Minority Oil States (AMOS), the Ethnic Minorities Right Organisation (EMIROAF), N'Delta (ND), Niger Delta Women (NDW), Environmental Right Action (ERA), Niger Delta Civil Society Coalition (NDCSC), Niger Delta Women for Justice (NDWJ), Centre for Environment, Human Right and Development (CEHRD), Justice in Nigeria Now (JINN) Stakeholder Democracy of Network (SDN) and many others. Many of the NGOs have protested against environmental pollution, destruction of land, human right abuses and government insensitivity and insincerity to the Niger Delta demands and protests.

For many of the NGOs, government has a track record of making significant vague promises to suspend conflict, and then failing to follow up with the right approach to addressing allegations of injustice. Moreover, reconciliatory initiatives have always been treated as an opportunity for those at the core of implementation to enrich themselves. These NGOs have also protested against environmental risk from petroleum exploration and have asked that fiscal federalism regime must sufficiently emphasise the principle of derivation in order to make funds available for environmental management and development of the producing areas. They also argued for all on shore mineral resources to be the property of the unit in which they are found, and for all off shore resources to be protected by the federal government and be jointly owned with the state, and for the right and revenue of state immediately adjoining the shores should be guaranteed (Osaghae, 1995, Onduku, 2009).

The NGOs have continued to request for broader community based programmes that take care of unemployment and social service delivery. They have taken up some of the challenges affecting the people of this region such as environmental issues and human right abuses, violent military attack against people of the Niger Delta region through conflict resolutions, capacity building, rural infrastructural development and entrepreneurial programmes to reduce poverty by promoting peace. They have also

facilitated development and maintenance of human rights and dignity among others contributions.

5.9 Persistent Ethnic Agitations in the Niger Delta Region

For over four decades (Ojokoratu, 2008), particularly since Adaka Boro's protest, individuals, communities, ethnic group associations, NGOs and others social groups have emerged at one time or the other in the fight for social justice for the Niger Delta minorities. Although, the Niger Delta struggle has attracted much attention, through the activities of MOSOP, INC, MEND and others ethnic group organisations, to the plight of the people in the region, both nationally and internationally, the struggle has recorded little success. The fact that there is an increase of thirteen percent revenue allocation for the region, and some form of social amenities, justice is yet to be done as the minorities from the region have complained that they are inadequate compared to the benefits of petroleum resources to the economy of the Nigerian state. Many reasons can be identified for the little achievement so far recorded in the Niger Delta minority struggle.

First, it can be argued that the absence of structures in terms of goals and objectives and organisational leadership provided in the Mid-West struggle that had the Oba as a clear motivator and rallying point for the agitation, have continued to hamper the successful achievement of the Niger Delta struggles. Many of the ethnic protest groups, for example, are all working individually with different ideologies, each fighting its own wars. The Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) which is the largest armed group has led several attacks on foreign oil workers without carrying other ethnic organisations along (Donovan, 2007; Okeke, 2010). There is internal rancour, misunderstanding, disagreement among the groups and counter shifting of blames from one group to another. There is need for an organisational structure, an agreed leader with clear goals and objectives. The second factor is the fact that the people and communities in the Niger Delta region are not informed and carried along or involved in the struggles. The third factor is the complete diversion from the major issue of marginalisation and demand for social justice, to the violent and confrontational attack against the state and innocent individuals. The destruction of oil installations in recent times has continued to infringe on its success. The pursuit for personal gain and fame by the ethnic group associations, the dishonest attitude of the elites and betrayal of community leaders has

robbed the struggle of its success. Oil bunkering for selfish enrichment is the order of the day, thus, a shift of focus from the essence of the struggle for personal gain.

Many other individuals have through the Niger Delta struggle hijacked the process to perpetrate evils such as kidnapping of innocent citizens for selfish gains. Some have taken the struggle also as a means of personal gains while others have exploited the struggle to enrich themselves. For the Niger Delta struggle to succeed there is need for an articulated leader that will determine the process, strategies and approach for the struggle. There is also the need for clear goals and objectives to be set for the struggle, and lastly, personal interest, which works against any form of struggle, must be avoided.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the grim reality of poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment and human rights abuses in the Niger Delta region. The failure of the state government to address the issues of social injustice, and meet up with the needs of the people from this region has continued to induce political consciousness, proliferation of ethnic group formations in the ongoing struggles for justice and violent confrontation of the state by youth organisations, ethnic group associations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The chapter also argued that oil exploitation, which to a large extent has affected land, waters and other means of livelihood and survival of the people has been the constant experience and source of agitations in the Niger Delta region. Incidentally, the federal government has through systematic and successive federal government policy on oil revenue and derivation principle entrenched regional domination of the people and continued impoverisation of the region.

It is also significant to state that the Niger Delta minority struggle is more than the demand for self-determination or resource control; it is also a struggle against economic and social marginalisation, political exclusion and environmental injustice. There is therefore the need to address and rectify this anomaly. It is a struggle for human right as entrenched in the Willink's report of the enactment of the Bill of Rights, with its guarantee of equality, liberty and non-discriminatory policies in the constitution, to allay the fears of ethnic minority. Moreover, the Niger Delta struggle is about distributive inequality of oil revenue and development. In Oronto's (1999) summation, the Niger

Delta struggle is not about mere demands; it is about reclaiming their “primitive integrity” within the region. It is a struggle rooted in culture, in history and in tradition. Thus, ethnic minority agitation in the Niger Delta region is a struggle against inequality, marginalisation and injustice. It is a struggle for democracy, true federalism and the control of the region’s resources. It is a struggle for people’s right to their culture and tradition. It is a struggle for recognition, growth and socio-economic development of the Niger Delta people.

It is right to say here that it is an effort in futility to deny, overlook or suppress the place of ethnicity or ethnic group formation in the struggle for social justice among diverse and competing groups of people for resource distribution in society. In Nigeria and in the African continent, and probably, other parts of the world, ethnicity has continued to be a major player in the social, political and economic relationship and interaction among people. It is not only an instrument of protest among people of differentiated needs; it is also a weapon of self-esteem for individual/groups that have been denied their rights, because of their colour, sex, religion, ethnic descent or background in the society. Conclusively, ethnicity cannot be ignored or disregarded, it may be played down, but cannot be wished away in African politics; it is Africa’s past shaped in the present, for a more stable society in the future.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The study discussed the incessant ethnic minority demands and agitations in Nigeria, particularly, the persistent protest and quest for social justice by the Niger Delta minorities. The study was carried out with the aim of assessing allegations of perceived injustice by minorities of the Niger Delta region against the State. The study also examined the connection between allegations of injustice and the proliferation of social and ethnic minority group formations in the violent agitations for social justice by minorities from the region. The study also attempted a review of the State's policy approach and procedures for resolving perceived injustice in the Niger Delta region. This chapter therefore, discusses the findings, results and recommendations of the study and drew necessary conclusions.

Data was collected using the questionnaire and Key informant interviews (KIIs). Section A of each set of questionnaire collected information on demographic characteristic of the respondents which include the sex, age, educational qualification, State of origin, Local Government Area (LGA), community (rural or urban) and the leadership position previously or presently occupied. Section B of the instrument obtained information on the perception of respondents on the factors responsible for persistent ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria generally. Section C elucidates responses on the agitations in the Niger Delta region; Section D includes respondent view on government's role in Niger Delta minority agitations and the means of addressing the violent struggles in the region. Section E reflects the suggestions and recommendations on the means of ensuring a fair relationship among the different groups in Nigeria.

6.2: Findings

An observable and perceived phenomenon among the people of the Niger Delta region is the deep sense of frustration, hopelessness, helplessness and anger over the continued neglect of the plight of the Niger Delta region. It is also noteworthy to state that because of the lack of urgency in addressing the demands of the people of this region, the quest for recognition and justice has gradually advanced from regular

demands for justice, to peaceful protest and violent attacks against the State over time. For instance, infrastructural decay, narrow and bad roads, shanty, mud and dilapidated buildings, inadequate educational facilities, unequipped hospitals and poverty were evident in many of the communities and local government areas under study.

From the sampled questionnaire and Key informant interviews (KIIs), data revealed perception of inequity and unfair treatment in terms of access to benefits accruing from exploitation of petroleum; discriminatory revenue allocation, social and economic marginalisation of the Niger Delta minorities, environmental degradation and poverty. Data also revealed military attack and repression to the people's demands for social justice. Data further showed corruption, insincerity and dishonesty as major factors for the State's failure to address ethnic minority demands and hence, persistent ethnic minority agitations in the region and Nigeria.

To resolve perennial ethnic minority agitations in the Niger Delta region and in Nigeria generally, there is need to provide appropriate distributive principles, that is, equity as a means of ensuring fairness for all the ethnic groups in Nigeria. The study also shows that, for a stable political system, sincere and appropriate compensatory policies should be guaranteed to assuage the frustration and deprivation suffered by the ethnic minorities in Nigeria, with particular attention to minorities of the Niger Delta region. Participatory justice should be encouraged among ethnic groups in Nigeria, particularly in relation to policies that promote the overall interest of all the ethnic groups. In addition, some measure of control should be given to the Niger Delta minorities and any other minority ethnic group to manage the resources from their locale. It is worthy of note, as discovered in this study, that the State must show some level of sincerity and honesty in its approach to address ethnic group demands. This, according to the recommendations from respondent, will go a long way to minimise the tendency for violent protests in Nigeria. State policies, resolutions and recommendations must take into consideration ethnic minority demands without discrimination or ethnic sentiments. Thus, chapter six presents the discussion of the findings and result.

6.2.1: Demographic Data: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents by Sex

Table 6.2.1: Sex distribution of respondent

S/N	State	Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Delta	150 (64.1%)	84 (35.9%)	234 (30.6%)
2	Rivers	158 (64.2%)	88 (35.8%)	246 (32.2%)
3	Bayelsa	107 (72.8%)	40 (27.2%)	147 (19.2%)
4	Edo	102 (74.5%)	35 (25.5%)	137 (18.0%)
Total		517 (67.7%)	247 (32.3%)	764 (100.0%)

Fig 6.2.1: Bar chart

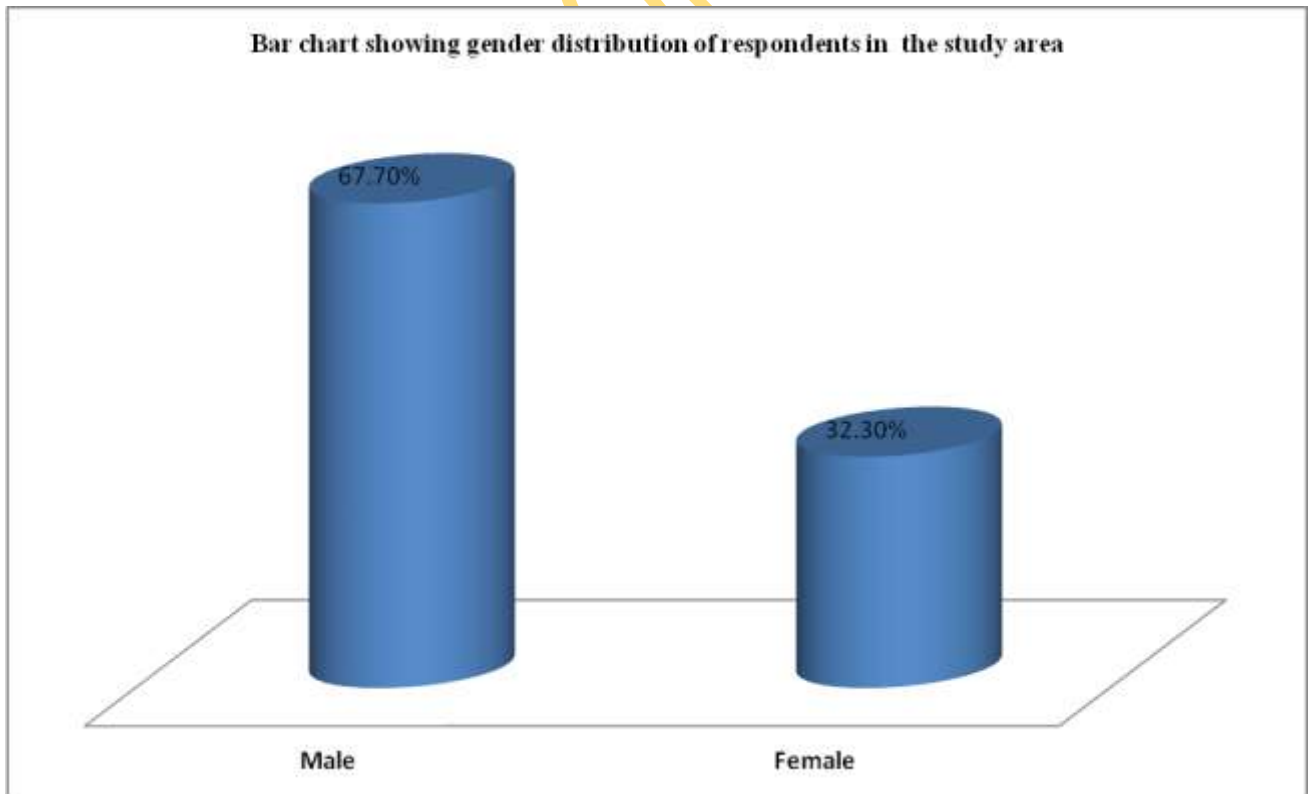


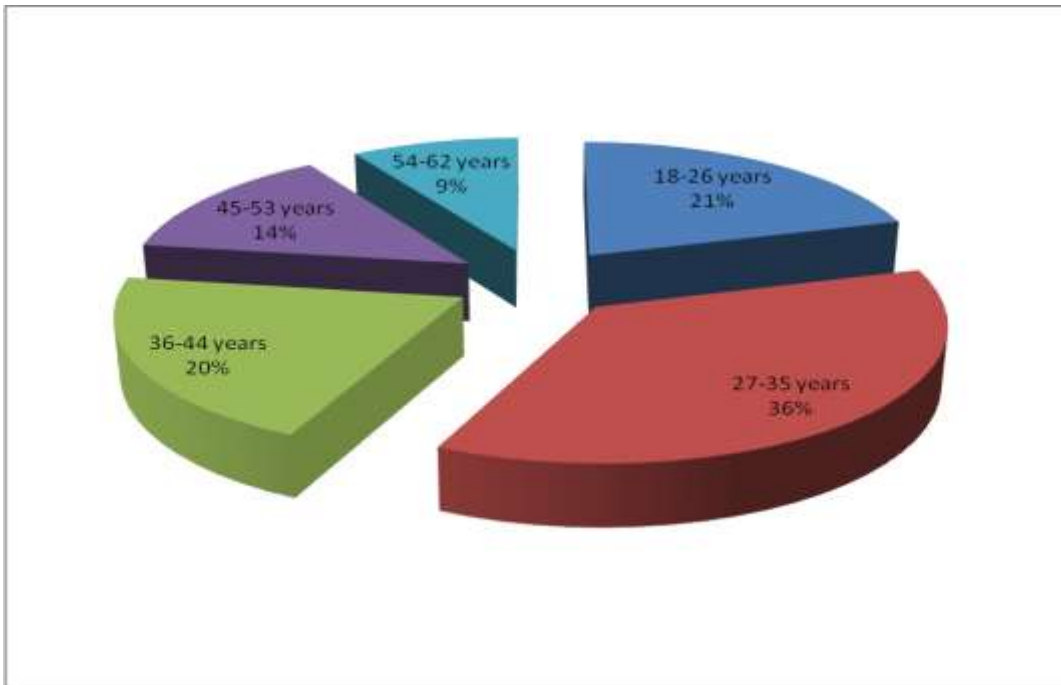
Table (6.2.1) and chart (Fig 6.2.1) shows the frequency and percentage distribution of sampled respondents by sex. It reveals that 68% were male while 32% were female. Findings revealed that more male respondents were sampled and were more receptive to political issues than the female respondents. Result showed that male respondents were more than the female, and were more politically conscious of the issues affecting their region and environment. According to Dow (2009) men are more politically knowledgeable than women, even though male and female are both victims of injustice, and actors in taking actions to rectify acts of inequality or any anomaly in the society; particularly, issues that directly affect their developmental growth (Burns, Schlozman and Verba, 2001)

6.2.2: Mean Age distribution of respondents

The age distribution of the respondents is shown in the table and pie chart below:

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
764	18.00	62.00	34.167	12.094

Figure 6.2.2: Pie chart showing age bracket of respondents



Discussion

Table 6.2.2 and Figure 6.2.2 shows the average age, percentages, and distribution of respondents by age group in a pie chart 20.5% of the respondents was between 18 and 26 years of age while 36.4% was between 27 and 35 years of age; 20.4% was between 36 and 44 years of age, and 13.6% falls in between 45 and 53 age group bracket. Others, 54 to 62 years of age groups were about 9.1%. The average age of respondents on Table 6.3.1 was 34.2 (± 12.1) years. The result shows therefore, that the highest number of respondents was between 27 and 35 years of age. The implication of the high percentage of this age bracket in the study area is that people within this age group are more amenable to inciting the process of agitating for their political right. It also shows that respondents of this age bracket were not gainfully employed and were easily coarse to violence. The data reveals that respondents between eighteen to forty-four (18-44) years of age were more antagonistic to perceived injustice. This is because they comprise the occupational age bracket of young men and women, while respondents who are 45 years old and above are likely to be more vocal and liberal in their response to issues of injustice (Ogbeifun, 2007; Oromareghake, Arisi and Igho, 2013).

6.2.3: Educational distribution of respondents

In this section, the educational attainment according to sex of respondent is presented. This is presented in table and bar chart below.

Table 6.2.3: Educational attainment distribution of the respondents

S/N	Educational Qualification	Frequency/Percentage by sex of respondents		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Tertiary	244 (31.9%)	98 (12.8%)	342 (44.8%)
2	Secondary	148 (19.4%)	55 (7.2%)	203 (26.6%)
3	Primary	83 (10.9%)	74(9.7%)	157 (20.5%)
4	No education	42 (6.9%)	20 (2.6%)	62 (8.1%)
	Total	517 (67.7%)	247(32.3%)	764 (100.0%)

Figure 6.2.3: Bar chart showing the educational attainment of the respondents

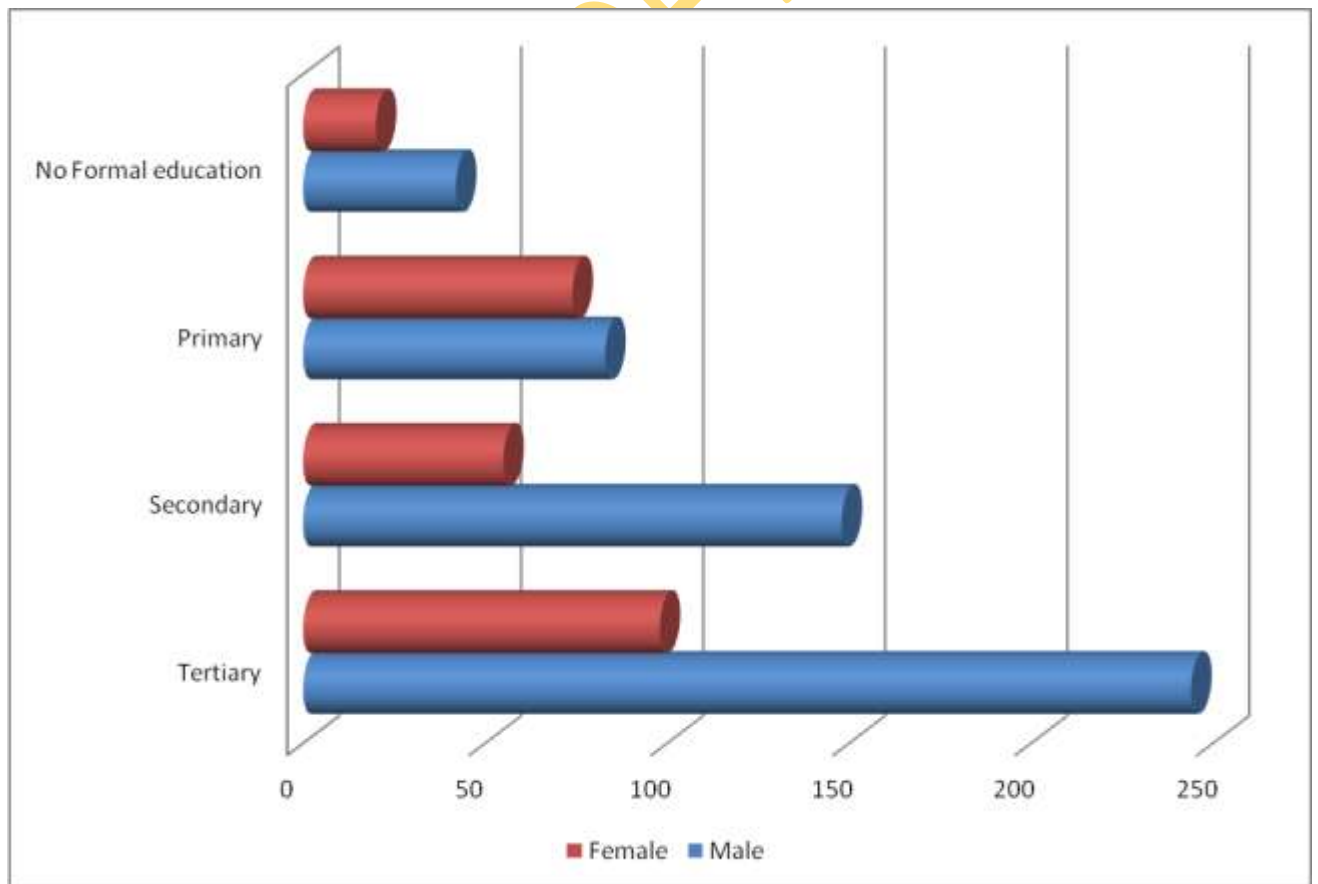


Table 6.2.3 and Fig 6.2.3 shows that 31.9% male respondents have tertiary education, while female respondents with tertiary education is made up of 12.8% of the study population. The male with secondary education makes up 19.9% while female with the same level of education is 7.2%. The percentages of the respondents with the lowest level of education; primary education is as follows: male 10.9%, and female 9.7%. Respondents with no formal education constitute the least percentage of the study populace; the males in this category are just 6.9% while the females are just 2.6%. Thus, people with tertiary education make up the larger part of the respondents.

From deductive observations, it was revealed that the higher the level of education, the more informed an individual is about his/her political rights. It was also discovered that respondents with the highest level of education, that is tertiary, were more informed about the level of poverty, socio-economic neglect and land degradation of their environment, and therefore, were more politically prepared to address the issue of injustice as it affects the region. In addition, as it can be seen in the table, male respondents were more responsive to acts of injustice than the female respondents.

6.2.4: Geo-political distribution of respondents

In this section, the geographic, as well as political distribution of respondents is given. The geo-political divisions of the country into states and local governments were adopted, since it gives a well defined manner for grouping the respondents. The table below shows the states and Local Government Areas (LGA) of the respondents. It also indicates their employment status.

Table 6.2.4: Distribution of respondent by State and LGAs

S/N	State	LGA	Community leaders			Employed youth			Unemployed youth			Under-employed			Grand Total
			M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
1	Delta	Uvwie	13	5	18	12	8	20	19	16	35	10	3	13	86
		Burutu	12	4	16	9	4	13	14	11	25	7	3	10	64
		Warri	16	7	23	11	6	17	17	14	31	9	4	13	84
		TOTAL	41	16	57	32	18	50	50	41	91	26	10	36	234
2	Rivers	Portharcourt	19	6	25	13	10	23	23	19	42	8	2	10	100
		Okrika	16	4	20	12	8	20	18	14	32	6	1	7	79
		Degema	14	5	19	8	5	13	17	12	29	6	0	6	57
		TOTAL	49	15	64	33	23	56	58	45	103	20	3	23	246
3	Bayelsa	Yenagoa	11	4	15	10	3	13	16	8	24	5	2	7	59
		Ekeremor	9	2	11	12	2	14	13	7	20	4	2	6	51
		Ogbia	5	2	7	8	3	11	9	5	14	4	1	5	37
		TOTAL	25	8	33	30	8	38	38	20	58	13	5	18	147
4	Edo	Oredo	10	4	14	11	4	15	18	6	24	4	2	6	59
		Etsako East	8	2	10	7	3	10	15	5	20	3	2	5	45
		Etsako West	7	3	10	6	0	6	11	3	14	2	1	3	33
		TOTAL	25	9	34	24	7	31	44	14	58	9	5	14	137
Grand Total			140	48	188	119	56	175	190	120	310	68	23	91	764

Table 6.2.4 shows cluster distribution of respondents in the order of their status across Delta, Rivers, Bayelsa and Edo States and the Local Government Areas (LGAs) under study. Table reveals that out of the eight hundred questionnaires administered, seven hundred and sixty-four were consequently analysed, out of which five hundred and seventy-six (576) of the respondents were a cross-section of youths. From the 576, one hundred and seventy-five were employed youth, three hundred and ten were unemployed (310) and ninety-one (91) were under-employed youth. One hundred and eighty-eight (188) of the population is made up of community leaders.

Figure 6.2.5: Pie chart showing the employment status of respondents

Pie chart distribution of sampled respondents across the States under study

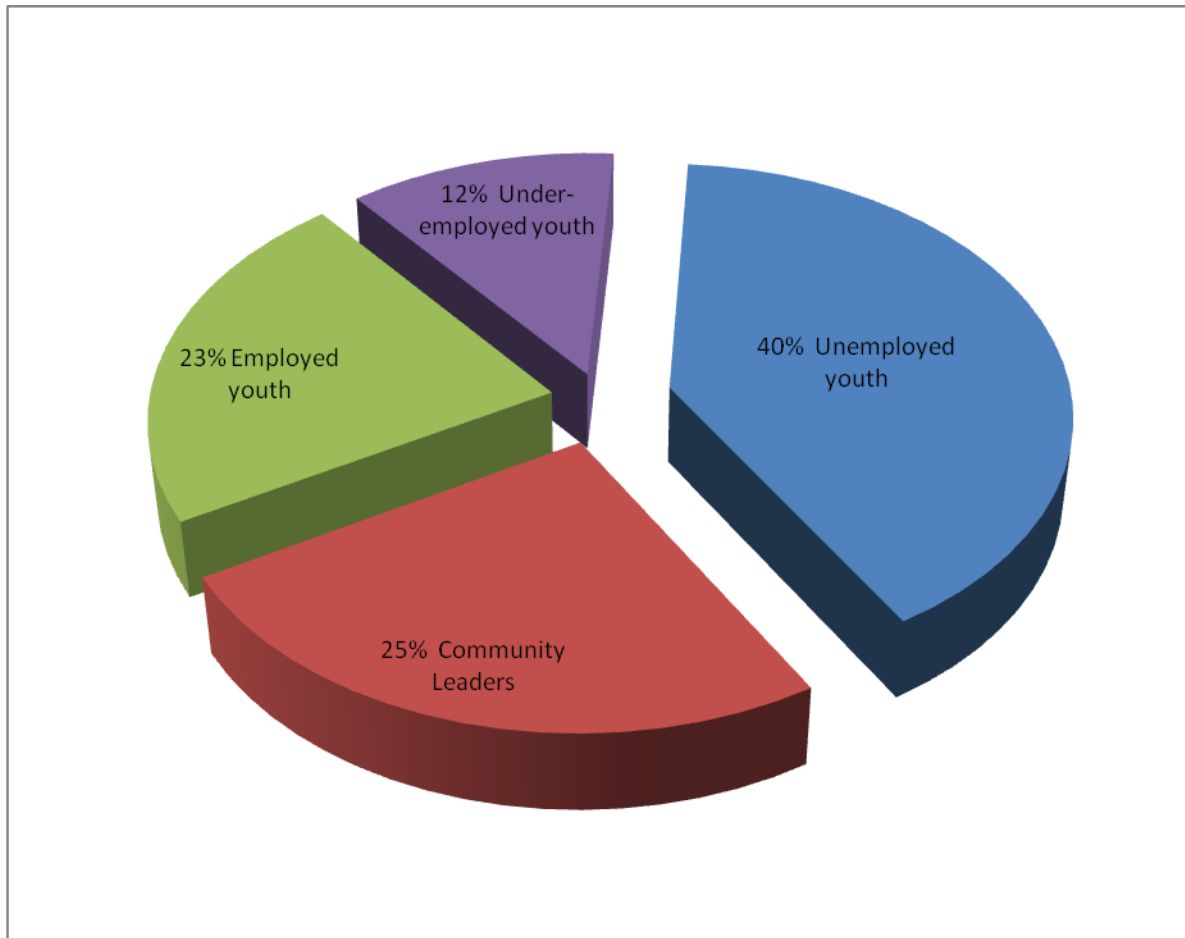


Table 6.5.2 shows the pie chart distribution of the employment status of respondents in percentages. From the above chart, 310 (40%) of the respondents were unemployed, 188 (25%) were community leaders, and 175 (23%) were employed youths and 91 (12%) were underemployed youths. It can be deduced that the highest percentage of the respondents were mainly unemployed youth. Despite the presence of multinational oil companies in the region, majority of the youths have no gainful employment. This has resulted in the incessant violent agitations by youth in the region. In essence, there is need to provide jobs for both the underemployed and unemployed youths in this region.

6.1.5: Gender and Community distribution of respondents

In this section, the gender distribution of the respondents is given. This section also shows the community distribution of the respondents, that is, the section shows rural-urban dichotomy.

Table 6.5: Frequency percentage distribution of respondents by Sex in rural/urban setting

S/N	Male	Female	Total
Rural	314 (41.1%)	142 (18.6%)	456 (59.7 %)
Urban	203 (26.6%)	105 (13.7%)	308 (40.3%)
Total	517 (67.7%)	247 (32.3%)	764 (100.0%)

Figure 6.5

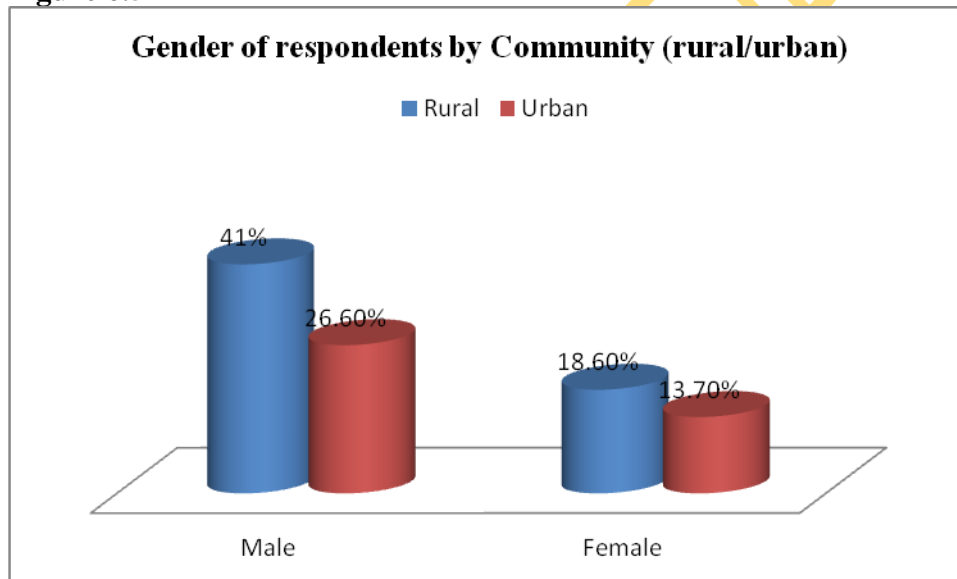


Table 6.5 and Figure 6.5 show the distribution of respondents by sex in rural and urban areas. From the rural sector, male respondents summed up to 41.1% while female respondents are made up 18.6%. From the urban sector, 26.6% respondents were male while 13.7% were female. Respondents from the rural sector were given preference to ascertain respondent's perception level of injustice in the rural area. The intention was to remove every form of bias of urban settings.

6.3 Results and Discussion

In addition to the administration of questionnaire, Key informant interviews (KIIs) were also conducted. Using the descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, results are presented in seven tables. The frequency percentage count was used to discuss findings and content analyse results. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also used to test for hypothesis at 5% level of significance across the states under review. Eight hundred (800) copies of the questionnaire were administered. Ninety-six percent (96%). were successfully retrieved, 2% were uncompleted, and 2% could not be retrieved.

Question 1: Why are ethnic minority group agitations a recurrent feature of politics in Nigeria?

Hypothesis 1: Perceptions of inequality among ethnic groups do not influence persistent agitation and quest for justice in Nigeria.

Table 6.6: Recurrent ethnic agitation in Nigeria

Perception for recurrent ethnic agitations in Nigeria	STATES				TOTAL
	DELTA	RIVERS	BAYELSA	EDO	
	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	
Minorities are economically marginalised					
Count	120:40	125:31	97:37	87:37	429:145
% within the state	51.3:17.1 (68.4%)	50.9:12.5 (63.4%)	66.0:25.2 (91.2%)	63.5:27.0 (90.5%)	56.2:19.0 (75.2%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	27.9%	27.2%	23.3%	21.6%	100%%
Unequal provision of social amenities between minority & majority ethnic groups					
Count	188:31	197:25	101:33	97:31	583:120
% within the state	80.3:13.3 (93.6%)	80.1:10.2 (90.3%)	68.7:22.4 (91.1%)	70.8:22.6 (93.4%)	76.4:15.7 (92.1%)

% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	31.2%	31.6%	19.1%	18.2%	100%
Discrimination of minorities by ethnic majority					
Count	92:41	89:49	69:39	67:35	317:164
% within the state	39.3:17.5 (56.8%)	36.2:19.9 (56.1%)	46.9:26.5 (73.4%)	48.9:25.5 (74.4%)	41.5:21.5 (63.0%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	27.7%	28.7%	22.5%	21.2%	100%
Political exclusion of minorities					
Count	78:38	73:41	63:17	57:13	271:109
% within the state	33.3:16.2 (49.5%)	29.7:16.7 (46.4%)	42.9:11.6 (54.5%)	41.6:9.5 (51.1%)	35.5:14.3 (49.8%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.5%	30.1%	21.1%	18.4%	100%
Scarce infrastructural facility					
Count	158:38	146:35	72:35	74:21	438:141
% within the state	67.5:16.2 (83.7%)	59.3:14.2 (73.5%)	48.9:23.8 (72.7%)	45.3:24.1 (69.4%)	57.3:18.5 (75.8%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	33.9%	31.3%	18.4%	16.4%	100%
Religious intolerance					
Count	60:24	62:30	59:19	51:15	232:88
% within the state	25.6:10.3 (52.1%)	25.2:12.2 (37.4%)	40.1:12.9 (53.0%)	37.2:10.9 (48.1%)	30.3:11.5 (41.8%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	29.0%	28.8%	24.4%	20.6%	100%

Poverty					
Count	80:42	82:46	77:35	96:12	325:145
% within the state	34.2:17.9 (52.1%)	33.3:18.7 (52.0%)	52.4:23.8 (75.7%)	70.1:8.8 (78.9%)	42.5:19.0 (61.5%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	29.0%	27.1%	23.7%	23.0%	100%
Total					
Count	183:51	193:53	107:40	93:44	576:188
% within the state	78.2:21.8 (100%)	78.5:21.5 (100%)	72.8:27.2 (100%)	67.9:23.1 (100%)	75.4:24.6 (100%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.6%	32.2%	19.2%	17.9%	100.0%

Table 6.7

ANOVA

On recurrent ethnic agitation in Nigeria

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.528	3	.176	.170	.917
Within Groups	787.232	760	1.036		
Total	787.759	763			

Table 6.6 indicates the frequency and percentage count of respondents' perception of the major factors responsible for the recurrent ethnic minority groups' agitations in Nigeria. Item 2 reveals unequal and unfair treatment in socio-economic provision of groups considered to be subordinate to other groups in Nigeria as a major source of ethnic agitations among groups in Nigeria. A cross-section of youth and community leaders in the ratio of 583:120 (92.1%) ranked highest in frequency and percentage count as a major factor responsible for persistent ethnic minorities' agitations and quest for justice in Nigeria. While 90.2% in Rivers and 93.6% in Delta states agreed that inequality and unfairness is a main factor in persistent ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria, 90.5% in Edo and 91.2% in Bayelsa states reveal marginalisation of minorities as contributory factor to ethnic minority struggles in Nigeria. Also, between 73.5% in

Rivers and 83.7% in Delta states cited underdevelopment, while 73.4% in Bayelsa and 74.5%; stated discrimination of minorities by ethnic majority groups. Other factors given are poverty (61.5%); politics of exclusion (49.8%) and religion (41.8%). These were factors perceived by respondents as being responsible for persistent ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria. There was no significant difference in subjects' responses across the four States concerning perception of persistent ethnic agitations in Nigeria. Thus, the hypothesis that perceptions of inequality among groups do not influence persistent agitation for justice in Nigeria is rejected. Perception of inequality among groups will influence agitation for justice.

Discussion

Findings on Table 6.6 reveal that items 1-7 are issues that have continued to influence ethnic minority agitations and demands for recognition and justice among the deprived and oppressed groups in Nigeria. Unequal and unfair socio-economic distribution of provision (item 2) was revealed by respondents to be a major factor for persistent ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria. In all the states for instance, there was a consensus among the respondents that unequal or unfair treatment will serve as a major predisposing factor for agitation among groups. Key informant interviews (KIIs) also revealed that inequality and differential policy application in socio-economic distribution of resources among the various groups in Nigeria has remained an influential factor for the persistent agitations for justice in Nigeria. It confirms Gurr's (1971) argument that the potential for struggle is inevitable in societies, where people become frustrated as a result of unfair or unequal treatment in relation to other groups within the same society.

Other items cited, complementing and also responsible for ethnic struggles in Nigeria are as follows: marginalisation and discrimination of minorities by the majority ethnic groups; politics of domination and exclusion, underdevelopment, unemployment; religious intolerance and poverty. From the above table, any of these factors mentioned can create an atmosphere of disaffection and protests for better living conditions and recognition. KIIs also revealed that some of the issues responsible for persistent ethnic minority protest in Nigeria include unfairness among groups, economic domination, reverse discrimination, poverty and underdevelopment that is rampant among many

Nigerians, and intolerance among ethnic and religious groups. According to Smith (2004) and Maiese (2003), the perception of threats coupled with fear of domination and serious injustice make conflict and struggles for justice intractable. Rawls (2001) also established the fact that a person or group of persons will resist any attempt to apply to them an unequal or unfair procedure of justice whatever it is. Thus, when an individual or groups of people perceive that an unfair course of action is being applied to them, then the basis for protest and violent conflict become an option to be considered.

Edwin Clark (KIIs, 2007) buttressed the fact that ethnic minorities, especially minorities from the Niger Delta region, are treated as second class citizens and inferior groups as against the 'special' treatment given to ethnic majority groups. He mentioned the sudden change in the derivation principle and reduction in revenue allocation, just after the discovery of petroleum oil in the Niger Delta region, as an instance of the kind of injustice ethnic minorities are subjected to in Nigeria. According to him, this is contrary to what was obtainable in the era of cash crop when ethnic majority groups received 50% allocation. He argued that derivation principle would not have been abandoned if petroleum oil was discovered in the majority region, revealing the inequality of treatment.

In like manner, Dorsu Isaac (KIIs, 2007), former Secretary General of the Itsekiri National Youth Council (INYC), argued that the absence of ethnic minorities to participate in and influence national issues, and their inability to contribute to state policies is not only discriminatory, but also the basis for struggle and ethnic identification in Nigeria. He also affirmed that the special treatment accorded to major ethnic groups is unfair, while minorities are onlookers. According to him, "justice in Nigeria is an issue of the highest bidder (majority group) taking all; it's for the rich and the three powerful groups and this has always been the status quo." There is need to change the present political climate in Nigeria, and this is the basis of the Niger Delta struggles.

Question 2: What are the dynamics for persistent agitation and quest for social justice in the Niger Delta region?

Table 6.8: Result

With particular reference to Niger Delta agitation	Crosstab STATES				TOTAL
	DELTA	RIVERS	BAYELSA	EDO	
Perception of Underdevelopment	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	
Count	138:48	142:35	99:33	84:38	453:154
% within State	58.9:20.5 (79.4%)	57.7:14.2 (71.9%)	67.3:22.4 (89.7%)	61.4:27.7 (89.1%)	59.2:20.2 (79.4%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	29.0%	29.2%	21.8%	20.0%	100%
Inadequate Compensation for Environmental pollution					
Count	156:42	120:44	64:32	34:12	374:130
% within State	66.7:11.9 (84.6%)	48.8:17.9 (66.7%)	43.5:21.8 (65.3%)	24.8:8.8 (33.6%)	48.9:17 (65.9%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	39.3%	32.5%	19.0%	9.1%	100%
Unemployment					
Count	147:41	127:39	95:28	58:26	427:134
% within State	62.8:17.5 (80.3%)	51.6:15.9 (67.5%)	64.6:19.0 (83.6%)	42.3:18.9 (61.3%)	55.9:17.5 (73.4%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	33.5%	30.0%	22.0%	15.0%	100%
Perception of lack of resource control					
Count	170:42	179:48	91:34	77:28	517:152
% within State	72.6:17.9 (90.5%)	72.8:19.5 (92.3%)	61.9:23.1 (85.0%)	56.2:20.4 (76.6%)	67.7:19.9 (87.6%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	31.7%	34.0%	18.7%	15.7%	100%

Poverty					
Count	138:44	118:46	93:30	73:29	422:149
% within State	58.9:18.8 (77.7%)	47.9:18.7 (66.6%)	63.3:20.4 (83.7%)	53.3:21.2 (74.5%)	55.2:19.5 (74.7%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	31.9%	28.7%	21.5%	17.9%	100%
Total					
Count	183:51	193:53	107:40	93:44	576:188
% within State	78.2:21.8 (100%)	78.5:21.5 (100%)	72.8:27.2 (100%)	67.9:23.1 (100%)	75.4:24.6 (100%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.6%	32.2%	19.2%	17.9%	100.0%

Table 6.9

ANOVA

Table 6.9: About the Niger Delta agitations for justice

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.658	3	.219	.174	.914
Within Groups	957.263	760	1.260		
Total	957.921	763			

Table 6.8 shows five dynamics for persistent agitation by minorities in the Niger Delta region. Starting with the highest frequency of occurrence and percentage ranking across the states; the following factors were given by the respondents for persistent agitations for justice by Niger Delta minorities: Underdevelopment was cited by 453:154 (79.4%) respondents as a major reason for the perennial struggles in the Niger Delta region; this percentage is between 71.9% respondents in Edo and 89.7% in Bayelsa states. Also, 61.3% respondents in Edo and 83.6% in Bayelsa States revealed unemployment as another factor for the Niger Delta struggles. Whereas 76.6% in Edo and 90.5% respondents in Delta states cited the lack of power to control the resources of the region as a factor, 33.6% in Edo and 84.6% in Delta states cited inadequate

compensation for oil exploration and environmental pollution as a factor. These are high percentage response indicators or variables implicated in the struggle for justice in the Niger Delta region. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed no significant difference in response within and across states of the Niger Delta region.

Discussion

Table 6.8 reveals five major factors that are responsible for persistent agitation for justice in the Niger Delta struggle. Findings revealed that underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment, lack of political power to control resources from the region, land degradation and environmental pollution are factors responsible for persistent agitation and violent struggles in the region. Lack of good water and electricity supply, inadequate health facilities and good road network, and unemployment among others have all combined to exacerbate the level of poverty in the region. For instance, a recent UNDP report on the Human Development Index (HDI) indicated a widespread poverty in the region. The report also noted that this region which is home to Nigeria's oil wealth remains the most impoverished community in the nation lacking in basic infrastructure – good road network, health care facilities, good schools and potable water (Duru, 2011). From the high level of respondent's response to the items cited, it is evident that underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment and environmental pollution are some of the major factors for agitation in the Niger Delta region. For instance, it has been argued that youth unemployment is an "economic waste" and massive youth unemployment is a social menace breeding vulnerability and feelings of exclusion and worthlessness which may lead to personally and socially destructive activities (Dappa, 2012). According to Clark (KIIs, 2007), although, the picture portrayed in the state capital cities of the Niger Delta region is that of a region well developed, but, it is a window dressing compared to the deteriorating condition of the rural villages. He stated that it is disheartening that Nigeria, after many decades of independence, is still battling with the issues of provision of water, electricity, schools, health facilities and other social amenities. He stressed further that the case of the Niger Delta region, is even more disturbing, considering the fact that the region provides a major part of the country's revenue from oil production.

KIIs also revealed that government inability to grant some measure of control over resources and the wealth accruing from petroleum production to facilitate socio-economic development, create jobs and provide employment for youths of the Niger Delta people is a major reason for persistent agitation and violent struggle in the region. Clark and Eghaghare, in an interview, revealed that Niger Delta region is bedeviled with backwardness as a result of underdevelopment, poverty, dishonesty and selfish personal interest of the so called community leaders. For instance, Clark pointed out that the road linking Delta and Bayelsa States is too narrow for an economically viable region like the Niger Delta. He also noted that the mud and shanty houses and buildings along the road are evidence of the high level of underdevelopment of a region that produces oil for the revenue that sustains the nation. Abject poverty still exists in the rural communities, inspite the presence of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The World Bank report (cited in Ebegulem, 2011) revealed poverty, particularly the failure of economic development, as part of the few causes of armed struggles in oil producing countries. Akwen and Gever (2011) also maintained that poverty, negligence and frustration breed tension. Tension robs a people of their peace and development and infuriates an already tensed environment. Affirming Clark views, Oyesile and Offor (2013) reiterated that issues in the Niger Delta region are multifaceted; they include lack of control of resources, environmental degradation and land pollution. All of which create poverty, economic marginalisation and the flagrant display of stolen wealth and oil proceeds from the region.

Clark, Dorsu and Tsekiri in separate interviews recalled that the abandonment of the derivation formula, and consequently, the reduction in revenue allocation to the region is a great injustice to the Niger Delta minorities. According to Clark, “derivation is the right of the Niger Delta people, just as it was for the three major ethnic groups of Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba in regional Nigeria, and for that reason, cannot be sacrificed for ethnic majority interest. We are only demanding for what is rightfully ours, and more so, for the development of the region”. To emphasise this opinion, Sistare (1994), in her theory of justice as rights, argued that justice seeks to protect the individual and the groups’ liberties, preserve the human dignity of man in its relationship and interaction with others and the state. More importantly is the need to protect

citizen's right of ownership to state resources and protection against government infringement on social, economic and cultural rights of the group. According to Nherere and Ansah (cited in Osaghae, 1996), group rights are expected to serve as survival rights, protection rights, empowering rights and collective rights. According to William (cited in Sistare, 1994) although right is never the ultimate appeal, it invariably affects the bearer of the right if violated.

Question 3: What are the factors responsible for the failure to address the Niger Delta question?

Result: Table 6.10

Perception of the failure to address Niger Delta minority demands	Crosstab STATES				TOTAL
	DELTA	RIVERS	BAYELSA	EDO	
	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	
Inadequate Compensation					
Count	184:40	184:48	69:39	62:36	499:163
% within State	78.6:17.1 (95.7%)	74.8:19.5 (94.3%)	46.9:26.5 (73.4%)	45.3:26.3 (71.6%)	65.3:21.3 (86.5%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	33.8%	35.0%	16.3%	15.5%	100%
Disagreement/disunity among the ND elites					
Count	78:18	80:26	47:25	38:20	243:89
% within State	33.3:7.7 (41.0%)	35.5:10.5 (46.0%)	32.0:17.0 (39.0%)	27.7:14.6 (42.3%)	31.8:11.6 (43.4%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	28.9%	31.9%	21.7%	17.5%	100.0%
Lack of dialogue/ Participation					
Count	82:46	104:41	83:27	85:21	354:135
% within State	35:19.7 (54.7%)	42.3:16.7 (59%)	56.5:18.4 (74.9%)	62:15.3 (77.3%)	46.3:17.7 (64%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	26.1%	29.7%	22.4%	21.7%	100.0%

Violent Military attacks Count	124:34	126:42	104:28	68:12	422:116
% within State	52.9:14.5 (67.3%)	51.2:17.1 (68.3%)	70.7:19.0 (89.7%)	49.6:8.8 (58.4%)	55.2:15.7 (70.4%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	29.3%	31.3%	24.5%	14.9%	100.0%
Dearth developmental project Count	142:42	128:39	62:21	52:27	384:129
% within State	60.7:18 (78.7%)	52:15.8 (67.8%)	42.2:14.3 (56.5%)	38:19.7 (65.2%)	50.3:16.9 (67.2%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	35.9%	32.6%	16.2%	15.4%	100.0%
Perception of Corruption Count	170:32	148:49	89:36	78:36	485:153
% within State	72.6:13.7 (86.3%)	60.1:20 (80.1%)	60.5:24.5 (85%)	57.0:26.3 (83.3%)	63.5:20.0 (83.5%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	31.7%	30.9%	19.5%	17.9%	100%
Greed/diversion of funds Count	181:44	182:32	101:33	78:36	542:145
% within State	77.4:18.8 (96.2%)	74:13 (87%)	68.7:22.4 (91.1%)	56.9:26.3 (83.2%)	69.3:20.1 (89.4%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	32.8%	31.2%	19.6%	16.4%	100%
Insincerity in Government policy Count	142:46	162:42	97:35	93:29	494:152
% within State	60.7:19.7 (80.4%)	65.9:17.1 (83%)	66:23.8 (89.8%)	67.9:21.2 (89.1%)	64.7:19.9 (84.6%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	29.1%	31.6%	20.4%	18.9%	100%

Total					
Count	183:51	193:53	107:40	93:44	576:188
% within State	78.2:21.8 (100%)	78.5:21.5 (100%)	72.8:27.2 (100%)	67.9:23.1 (100%)	75.4:24.6 (100%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.6%	32.2%	19.2%	17.9%	100.0%

ANOVA

Table 6.11: Inability to resolve the ND Question after years of struggles

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.319	3	1.440	.973	.405
Within Groups	1124.826	760	1.480		
Total	1129.145	763			

Table 6.10 shows seven items as factors responsible for the continued failure of government to resolve the Niger Delta minorities' demands for justice. According to the response ratio of a cross-section of youth and community leaders and in the order of highest frequency of occurrence and percentage count, the following items are cited as major factors for failure to address Niger Delta demands. Greed and diversion of funds 542:145 (89.4%) was between 83.2% in Edo and 96.2% in Delta; and closely related is the fourth item, insincerity in government policies and also on the part of the Niger Delta leaders 494:152 (85.5%) which is between 80.4% in Delta and 89.8% in Bayelsa states. Whereas inadequate compensation was cited by 33.6% in Edo and 84.6% respondents in Delta states, corruption was stated by 80.1% in Rivers and 86.6% in Delta. Other factors mentioned were violent military response to protest cited by 58.4% in Edo to 89.7% in Bayelsa States, lack of participation and dialogue of Niger Delta minorities in decision making of the region 54.7% in Delta and 77.3% in Edo; absence of developmental projects 56.5% in Bayelsa and 78.7% in Delta; and disagreement and disunity 39% in Bayelsa and 46% in Rivers States. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed that there is no significant difference in the views of the respondents within and across the states on the way to address the Niger Delta region.

Discussion

Result on Table 6.10 shows that there is no disagreement in respondents' view on the failure or inability to resolve the Niger Delta question. Item 6 on the table have the highest as well as total percentage. It reveals that greed (diversion of funds) among leaders is a major factor for the inability to resolve the Niger Delta question and demands for justice. Many agreed that dishonest policy formulation and insincere approach to minority demand have equally contributed greatly to the inability of government to address the Niger Delta minority demands for justice. In other words, government's policies are not aimed at addressing the issues of ethnic minority demands, and many of the affirmative actions taken are palliative measures to douse any form of agitation. Instead of a sincere approach to Niger Delta demands, government have approached ethnic minority protest with heavy military presence and violent attacks, thus, the continual protest and violent response from the Niger Delta people.

Another aspect contributing to the failure to resolve the Niger Delta struggle is the lack of participation of Niger Delta minority in the affairs and decision making process of the issues affecting them. According to Rawls (1973), the 'principle of participation' allows all citizens an equal access to a fair opportunity to take part in and influence the decision making process of government. When individuals and groups are denied the opportunity to participate in issues concerning them, resolving the issue(s) becomes impossible. The absence of dialogue with Niger Delta minorities, and the fact that there is disagreement and disunity among the communities as a result of the selfish interest of Niger Delta leaders are some of the issues promoting persistent agitations in the region. Inadequate compensation for the destruction of land and farm produce as a result of oil exploration have been argued to contribute to the disaffection between the state government and the communities involved, thus, creating friction, and every attempt to address the Niger Delta demands for a better living condition. Two issues were very profound in all the interviews conducted. For instance, in the words of Semiamia of Stakeholder Democracy Network (SDN), corruption and insincerity among the leaders in government at the Federal, State and Local Government levels are major reasons for the failure to have addressed Niger Delta minority quest for social justice.

Offor (2005) added that the lack of will power to carry out reforms on the part of government has compounded the problem of the Niger Delta people.

To stress these findings, Clark, Dorsu and Tsekiri (KIIs, 2007), affirmed the above factors, particularly, the high level of insincerity in government's approach to address the demands of the Niger Delta region. Clark insisted that government has not been sincere with the Niger Delta minorities in implementing policies and recommendations that will meet the needs of the rural populace, who are mostly affected by the high level of infrastructural decay in the region. Tsekiri, Secretary to the Uvwie Local Government Council of Delta State, also affirmed the insensitivity of successive governments and administrations, at the federal level, to the destruction of the Niger Delta's land and means of livelihood due to the exploration of oil in the region. He reiterated the inconsistency in government decisions, which has increased ethnic minority agitation and conflict in the region. He also accused the government of creating disaffection between the communities. According to him, government has not only failed to address Niger Delta demands, it has consistently created friction, disagreement and conflicts within and among the various communities and villages by selective negotiations, though, a few individuals from some communities, who are also concerned about their personal selfish interest and gains. He maintained that violence will not cease in the Niger Delta region, until the rights of people, compensations from land destruction and benefits accruing from oil production from the region are provided. Tsekiri expressed as unfortunate the dimension the agitation have taken; that is, hijacking the struggles for dubious means. This he argued should be expected, since, the youths have no jobs and comfortable means of livelihood.

6.4 Recommendations of Findings

Question 4: In what ways can incessant ethnic minority agitations be addressed in Nigeria?

Table 6.12

Means of addressing recurrent ethnic minority agitations	Crosstab				TOTAL
	DELTA	RIVERS	BAYELSA	EDO	
	STATE				
	DELTA	RIVERS	BAYELSA	EDO	TOTAL
Provide human capacity devt	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	
Count	134:26	126:32	70:18	62:16	392:92
% within State	57.3:11.1 (68.4%)	51.2:13.0 (64.2%)	47.6:12.2 (59.8%)	45.3:11.7 (57%)	51.3:12.0 (63.3%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	33.1%	32.6%	18.2%	16.1%	100%
Create more States/LGAs					
Count	65:26	64:35	63:27	57:23	249:111
% within State	27.8:11.1 (38.9%)	26:14.2 (40.2%)	42.9:18.4 (61.3%)	41.6:16.8 (58.4%)	32.6:14.5 (47.1%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	25.3%	27.5%	25.0%	22.2%	100%
Proactive Actions					
Count	46:22	50:21	38:22	38:18	172:83
% within State	19.7:9.4 (29.1%)	20.3:8.5 (28.8%)	25.9:15 (40.9%)	27.7:13.1 (40.8%)	22.5:10.9 (33.4%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	26.7%	27.8%	23.5%	22.0%	100%
Proactive Actions					
Count	46:22	50:21	38:22	38:18	172:83
% within State	19.7:9.4 (29.1%)	20.3:8.5 (28.8%)	25.9:15 (40.9%)	27.7:13.1 (40.8%)	22.5:10.9 (33.4%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	26.7%	27.8%	23.5%	22.0%	100%

Equity/fair share among all groups					
Count	166:48	174:52	107:31	96:36	543:167
% within State	70.9:20.4 (91.4%)	70.7:21.1 (91.8%)	72.8:21.1 (93.8%)	70.1:26.3 (96.4%)	71.1:21.9 (93.0%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.1%	31.8%	19.4%	18.6%	100%
Maintain equal political representation of all group					
Count	33:9	28:5	9:6	12:3	77:23
% within State	14.1:3.8 (18.0%)	11.4:2.0 (13.4%)	6.1:4.1 (10.2%)	8.8:2.2 (11.0%)	40.4:12.2 (52.6%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	42%	33%	15%	10%	100%
Education and awareness programmes					
Count	72:31	83:20	53:19	55:14	263:84
% within State	26.5:13.2 (44%)	33.7:8.4 (41.8%)	36.1:12.9 (49%)	40.1:10.2 (50.3%)	34.4:11.0 (45.4%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	29.7%	29.7%	20.7%	19.9%	100%
Permit dialogue between government and aggrieved groups					
Count	48:34	57:39	31:9	24:12	160:94
% within State	20.5:14.4 (35%)	23.2:15.9 (39.1%)	21.1:6.1 (27.2%)	17.5:8.8 (26.3%)	21.0:13.3 (33.4%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	32.3%	37.8%	15.7%	14.2%	100%
Ensure equal developmental strategies					
Count	102:22	114:27	61:16	57:15	334:80
% within State	43.6:9.4 (53.0%)	46.5:11.0 (57.3%)	41.5:10.9 (18.6%)	41.6:10.9 (52.5%)	43.7:10.5 (54.2%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.0%	34.1%	18.5%	17.4%	100%
Total					
Count	183:51	193:53	107:40	93:44	576:188
% within State	78.2:21.8 (100%)	78.5:21.5 (100%)	72.8:27.2 (100%)	67.9:23.1 (100%)	75.4:24.6 (100%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.6%	32.2%	19.2%	17.9%	100.0%

ANOVA

Table 6.13: Ways to addressing ethnic minority struggles in Nigeria

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	29.707	3	9.902	3.494	.015
Within Groups	2154.104	760	2.834		
Total	2183.812	763			

Table 6.12 reveals eight items, across the states of the Niger Delta region, as some of the ways or means of resolving incessant ethnic minority agitation in Nigeria. In the order of highest frequency of occurrence and percentage count, equity and fair treatment of all groups ranked highest response 543:167 (93.6%). Between 91.4% in Delta to 96.5% in Edo States perceived equity a major way to addressing persistent ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria. Following closely is the provision for human capacity development which rank between 57% in Edo and 68.4% in Delta state. Other items cited are provision of equal development strategies 334:80 (53.8%), creation of States/LGAs between 40.2% in Rivers to 61.3% in Bayelsa; educational awareness (45.5%); proactive policy (33.4%); dialogue 33.4%; and political representation (12.2%). The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant difference ($F=3.494$; $p < 0.015$) on the steps and means to adopt in minimising incessant ethnic minority struggles in Nigeria. Therefore, the hypothesis that there will be agreement among groups and regions on the step to adopt in addressing incessant ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria is rejected.

Discussion

Result on table 6.12 showed fair treatments of all groups in political and socio-economic provision as an important factor for resolving relentless ethnic minority struggles and its attendant violence in Nigeria. The application of the principle of fairness among all groups, essentially in the distribution of political and socio-economic resources, is considered an important factor for minimising persistent ethnic agitations and the ability to facilitate peaceful coexistence among all ethnic groups in Nigeria. By implication, a fair application of procedure for all groups in all cases of distribution, irrespective of ethnic origin or culture, religion, demographic population, geographical

location and economic resources from a particular region, will improve ethnic group relations and ensure a stable society.

The idea of a fair treatment will also include treating minority demands with urgency and respect; giving every group the right to appropriate what is entitled to them in terms of adequate provision of basic needs and resources without discrimination. Fairness usually involves coordinating diverse goods and interests, with the perpetual will to give every man his due, while equity allows for differences in outcome and at the same time enables the members to maintain a unit relation of interdependence and essential similarities (Sampson, 1975; Young, 2000). Fairness as a conception of justice is the natural preferred state of human relationships because it allows and requires the allocation of greater resources to those whose inputs in a relationship are greater, relative to others. As a factor of justice, therefore, fairness ensures that order, cohesion, and justice prevail.

In addition to the principle of fairness and equity is the provision for capacity building and development of each region of Nigeria. There is need to build the ability and potential of people, particularly the youth, and those seeking for means of livelihood through vocational training and skill's acquisition programmes. It is assumed that when the individual mental power and skill ability is developed, the potential or inclination to be co-opted into violent protest will be reduced. It is believed that opportunity for educational and vocational training will provide the necessary awareness and opportunities for growth and development; jobs will be created and gradually poverty will be at the lowest level.

Offor (KIIs, 2012) argued for an inclusive approach, where everybody is important and every ethnic group realise that they are part of the larger Nigerian federation. Clark (KIIs, 2007) also agreed to the idea of inclusiveness; a situation whereby, every individual and group in Nigeria is recognised and respected anywhere they are located. He argued that individuals must be given a sense of belonging by contesting for political offices in that location and the region they live irrespective of their ethnic background and affiliation. He stated further that, ethnic sentiments should be discarded in government positions and appointments; ethnicity and tribalism should be down-played; and everyone and groups should be free to participate fully in

governance. He stressed that the Niger Delta people's demand for resource control or economic empowerment is because they have been neglected and deprived of their right to the basic necessities of life.

As a matter of fact, economic justice consists in making the individual and society at large to own the property on which their lives depend. Economic justice consists also in not allowing privileged or bargaining power position that permits anyone to exploit another. According to Nozick (2001), there is no central distribution, which entitles persons or group to control all the resources, jointly deciding how they are to be doled out. In a free society, diverse persons control different resources, and new holdings arise out of the voluntary exchange and actions of persons.

Ogbeni, Clark and Dorsu (KIIs, 2007) aver that injustice must first be addressed through the necessary compensatory policies and in the case of the Niger Delta region, rapid development should commence and provision of jobs/employment for the youths must be put in motion. They also stressed the need for the State to provide sincere constitutional policies for the implementation of a fair distributive application of justice; one that will guarantee equitable distribution of political, social and economic benefits for all groups.

Question 5: What are the steps to minimising violent agitations in the Niger Delta region?

Table 6.14

Addressing violent struggles in the Niger Delta region	STATE				TOTAL
	DELTA	RIVERS	BAYELSA	EDO	
	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	
Complete orientation of the Niger Delta region	114:42	115:48	33:23	28:18	280:141
Count	48.7:18.0 (66.7%)	46.7:19.5 (66.2%)	22.4:15.5 (38%)	20.4:13.1 (33.5%)	36.6:18.0 (55.1%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	37.1%	38.85	13.3%	10.9%	100%

Education/Skill acquisition		169:38			
Count	142:36	68.7:15.4	88:26	66:21	475:111
% within State	60.6:15 (65.6%)	(84.1%) 35.3%	59.9:17.7 (77.6%)	48.2:15.3 (63.5%)	62.2:14.5 (76.7%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.4%		19.5%	14.9%	100%
Provide employment for the youth					
Count	152:44	156:39	102:38	97:35	507:156
% within State	65.0:18.8 (83.8%)	63.4:15.9 (79.3%)	69.4:25.9 (95.3%)	70.8:25.5 (96.3%)	66.4:20.4 (86.8%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	29.6%	29.4%	21.1%	19.9%	100%
Creation of jobs					
Count	116:38	114:42	75:32	47:34	352:146
% within State	49.6:16.2 (65.8%)	46.3:17.1 (63.4%)	51.0:21.8 (72.7%)	34.3:24.8 (59.1%)	46.1:19.1 (65.2%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	31.9%	31.3%	21.4%	16.3%	100%
Total					
Count	183:51	193:53	107:40	93:44	576:188
% within State	78.2:21.8 (100%)	78.5:21.5 (100%)	72.8:27.2 (100%)	67.9:23.1 (100%)	75.4:24.6 (100%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.6%	32.2%	19.2%	17.9%	100.0%

ANOVA

Table 6.15: Ways of ending violent struggles in the Niger Delta Region

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.345	3	.782	.537	.657
Within Groups	1106.182	760	1.456		
Total	1108.527	763			

Table 6.14 reveals four items as means of minimising continual agitations and violent struggles in the Niger Delta region. In the order of highest frequency of occurrence and percentage, 507:156 (86.8%) of the respondents agreed on youth employment; this ranked between 79.3% in Rivers and 96.3% in Edo states. Whereas 63.5% in Edo and 84.1% respondents in River states agreed on education and skill acquisition programmes; between 59.1% in Edo and 72.8% in Bayelsa agreed on job creation as means of reducing persistent agitations in the Niger Delta region. Finally, 51.3% agreed on complete orientation of the Niger Delta region in minimising protest and violent struggles in the region. There is no significant difference in the analysis of variance of the respondent's views.

Discussion

In Table 6.14, two items were dominant: employment for youths; and education, vocational and skill acquisition programmes for the the unemployed. The study showed that if these two steps are considered and adequate provisions made for their urgent implementation, there will be less friction, and violent agitation will be greatly reduced, not only in the Niger Delta region, but also in other parts of Nigeria in general. According to Ogbeifum (2007) and Abdullahi (2011), unemployment is a factor for agitations and conflicts in Nigeria, and as long as the youths continue to see their future and that of their region on a failing socio-economic landscape, they will always be motivated to rise against it. Job creation and employment particularly, for the youths in Nigeria will reduce the frequency of agitations and violent demand for social amenities. Stewart (2002) affirmed that as deprived groups gain improved access to education or jobs, their economic potentials can be more fully realised.

For Ogbeni (KIIs, 2007), the President of the Egenni Student Union agreed that, although, violence is an outdated weapon and should be the last option of agitation, there will continue to be increase in violent struggles among the youths of the Niger Delta and in Nigeria generally, if the youths have nothing meaningful to occupy their time. Ogbeifum (2002) insisted that, the lack of provision of basic amenities and total disconnection between the people and government will continue to influence agitation for a better life-style. Clark, Tsekiri and Ogbeni (KIIs, 2007) also agreed that there is the need for adequate compensation for the Niger Delta people. Educating the youth and establishing skill acquisition programme and training, creating jobs for employment as a means of livelihood for the youth, sustainable development programmes, and a complete orientation of the Niger Delta region were also

some of the suggestions for curbing incessant violent agitations in the Niger Delta region. Put differently, there is need for affirmative action and proactive transformation of the Niger Delta environment as well as the psychological and biological provision of security, respect and dignity.

Question 6: What is the role of the State (Federal Government) in persistent ethnic minority struggles in Nigeria?

Table 6.16

Crosstab

Role of the government in addressing ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria	STATE				TOTAL
	DELTA	RIVERS	BAYELSA	EDO	
Provide civil protection	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	
Count	26:2	21:7	17:2	14:4	79:13
% within State	11.1:0.9 (12%)	8.5:2.8 (11.3%)	11.6:1.4 (13%)	10.2:2.9 (13.1%)	10.3:1.7 (12.0%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.4%	29.3%	20.7%	19.6%	100%
Provide skill development programmes for youth					
Count	148:45	143:41	68:31	55:29	414:146
% within State	63.2:19.2 (82.4%)	58.1:16.7 (74.8%)	46.3:21.1 (67.4%)	40.1:21.2 (61.3%)	54.2:19.1 (73.3%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	34.5%	32.9%	17.4%	15.2%	100%
Ensure sincere approach to ethnic minority demands					
Count	164:36	139:47	87:36	75:31	465:149
% within State	70.1:15.0 (85.1%)	56.5:19.1 (75.6%)	59.2:24.5 (83.7%)	54.7:22.6 (77.3%)	60.9:19.5 (80.4%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	32.4%	30.3%	20.0%	17.3%	100%

Set up committee					
Count	65:23	74:21	58:15	42:19	239:78
% within State	27.8:9.8 (37.6%)	30.1:8.5 (38.6%)	39.5:10.2 (49.7%)	30.7:13.9 (44.6%)	31.3:10.2 (41.5%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	27.8%	30.0%	23.0%	19.2%	100%
Guarantee equal social infrastructures					
Count	177:44	176:42	70:33	58:28 42.3:20.4	481:147
% within State	75.6:18.8 (94.4%)	71.5:17.1 (86.6%)	47.6:22.4 (70.1%)	(62.7%)	63.1:19.2 (82.2%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	35.2%	34.7%	16.4%	13.7%	100%
Curb corruption					
Count	137:45	154:48	94:34	90:36	475:163
% within State	58.5:19.2 (77.7%)	62.6:19.5 (82.1%)	63.9:23.1 (87.0%)	65.7:26.3 (92.0%)	62.2:21.3 (83.5%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	28.5%	31.7%	20.1%	19.7%	100%
Implement development programmes					
Count	112:43	104:43	35:29	33:19	284:143
% within State	47.9:17.5 (65.4%)	42.3:17.5 (59.8%)	23.8:19.7 (43.5%)	24.0:13.9 (39.9%)	37.2:18.7 (55.9%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	37.1%	35.2%	15.3%	12.4%	100%
Total					
Count	183:51	193:53	107:40	93:44	576:188
% within State	78.2:21.8 (100%)	78.5:21.5 (100%)	72.8:27.2 (100%)	67.9:23.1 (100%)	75.4:24.6 (100%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.6%	32.2%	19.2%	17.9%	100.0%

ANOVA

Table 6.17: State Govt role in ethnic minority agitations

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	348.907	3	116.302	24.281	.000
Within Groups	3640.240	760	4.790		
Total	3989.147	763			

Table 6.16 revealed seven items as some of the role expected from the Federal Government to play in addressing ethnic minority demands for justice in Nigeria. In the order of highest frequency count and percentage, item 6, curbing corruption which takes (84.8%), was cited by 77.8% in Delta and 92% respondents in Edo states as a major step to addressing minority issues in Nigeria. Other items cited include: provision of infrastructural facilities between 61.3% in Edo and 94.4% in Delta states; sincere and honest application of government decision is between 75.6% in Rivers and 85% in Delta states. Other items stated are: provision of skill acquisition programme cited by 61.3% in Edo and 82.5% respondents in Delta states; setting up committee between 37.6% in Delta and 49.7% in Bayelsa states. Also, between 38% in Edo and 66.2% respondents in Delta states agreed to the need to implement development programmes and finally, 49% agreed to civil protection. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant difference of ($F= 24.281$; $p < 0.001$) in the role government is expected to play in resolving persistent ethnic minority politics in Nigeria. Therefore, hypothesis that there will be agreement among ethnic groups on the expected role of government is rejected.

Discussion

In table 6.16, the role of the State (government) in resolving ethnic ethnic demands and violent struggles in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. A foremost expectation as stated by respondents is the provision of skill acquisition programmes for the youth and the unemployed to develop their capacity. Many respondents also agreed that infrastructural development of ethnic minority regions will promote the total wellbeing of the people in the different rural communities in Nigeria. The availability of skills acquisition programmes for youths and the unemployed, and the provision of jobs for graduate applicants will help to develop their potential for growth and development. It will also assist to direct the acquired skills to productive use instead of violence. Honest approach to allegations of injustice by ethnic

minorities and sincere implementation of policies to addressing their demands is an important policy decision to resolving minority demands and persistent agitations and violent struggles in Nigeria, particularly for the Niger Delta region. Other items mentioned, though on a low response level, are also important as well as complementing other factors for addressing persistent ethnic minority politics in Nigeria. Constitutional amendments to meet the needs of minorities, honesty, sincerity and dialogue with the Niger Delta people were also cited as ways to meet Niger Delta demands.

Clark (KIIs, 2007) suggested that it will only be fair to restore the derivation formula for revenue sharing. He believes that the operational formula of 50% from earnings derived from resources from the regions should be restored to favour the Niger Delta minorities. He expressed dissatisfaction at the 13% that is presently allocated to the Niger Delta region as being too low and unacceptable, and demanded for 50% allocation to develop the region and to create jobs for the youths. According to him, “derivation is our right. Also, we cannot sacrifice our right.... We are only demanding for what is rightfully ours as it were for major ethnic groups in the era of regional government.”

Question 7: What form of justice system will you suggest for a multi-ethnic State like Nigeria?

Table 6.18

Crosstab

Perception of the appropriate justice system for Nigeria	STATE				TOTAL
	DELTA	RIVERS	BAYELSA	EDO	
Restore derivation formula	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	Youth/Comm. Leaders	
Count	47:11	45:21	28:7	22:4	142:43
% within State	20.1:4.7 (24.8%)	18.3:8.5 (26.8%)	19.0:4.8 (23.8%)	16.1:2.9 (19.0%)	18.6:5.6 (24.2%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	31.4%	35.7%	18.9%	14.1%	100%

Provide equal socio-economic benefits Count	133:36	107:49	79:13	78:18	397:112
% within State	56.8:15.4 (72.2%)	43.5:20.0 (63.5%)	53.7:8.8 (62.5%)	56.9:13.1 (70.0%)	52.0:14.7 (66.7%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	32.4%	30.6%	18.1%	18.9%	100%
Guarantee regional control of resources Count	142:47	145:52	72:32	39:28	398:159
% within State	60.7:20.1 (80.8%)	58.9:21.1 (80.0%)	49.0:21.8 (70.8%)	28.5:20.4 (48.9%)	52.1:20.8 (72.9%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	33.9%	35.4%	18.7%	12.0%	100%
Apply the constitution to address inequality and injustice Count	110:36	134:28	32:16	29:3	302:83
% within State	47.0:15.4 (62.4%)	54.5:11.4 (65.9%)	21.8:10.9 (32.7%)	21.2:2.2 (32.7%)	39.5:10.9 (50.4%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	37.1%	42.1%	12.5%	23.4%	100%
Ensure equity among all groups Count	178:46	179:48	102:40	96:37	555:171
% within State	76.1:19.6 (95.7%)	72.8:19.5 (92.3%)	69.4:27.2 (96.6%)	70.1:27.0 (97.1%)	72.7:22.4 (95.1%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.9%	31.3%	19.6%	18.3%	100%
Total Count	183:51	193:53	107:40	93:44	576:188
% within State	78.2:21.8 (100%)	78.5:21.5 (100%)	72.8:27.2 (100%)	67.9:23.1 (100%)	75.4:24.6 (100%)
% within why ethnic agitation in Nigeria	30.6%	32.2%	19.2%	17.9%	100.0%

ANOVA

Table 6.19: Suitable justice system for Nigeria

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.762	3	.921	.442	.723
Within Groups	1583.411	760	2.083		
Total	1586.173	763			

Table 6.18 showed five suggested items as some of the pragmatic steps expected from the State (Federal Government) in ensuring the appropriate justice system for all the ethnic groups in Nigeria. In the order of highest frequency of occurrence and percentage count, 555:171 (95%) of the respondents cited equity as a principle to accommodate all the ethnic groups in the distribution of resources. Thus, while 92.3% in Rivers and 97.1% in Edo states stated equity, between 48.9% in Edo and 80.8% in Delta states suggested that regional control of resources should be guaranteed to all regions. Whereas 62.6% respondents in Bayelsa and 70.5% in Delta states suggested that equal socio-economic benefits should be adopted as the proper justice system for Nigeria; between 23.4% in Edo and 65.9% in Rivers states suggested amendment of the present constitution to accommodate fairness in the implementation of government policies for all ethnic groups. Finally, the restoration of the derivation formula was suggested by 25.2% respondents as a way of addressing issues of injustice. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) reveals no significant difference.

Discussion

Result reveals in table 6.18 that the application of the principle of equity among all groups is an important step to ensuring a peaceful relationship among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. 95.4% of the respondents agreed that equity has, within it, the ability to ensure equal opportunity for the growth and development of all groups and ethnic regions. According to Bietz, (cited in Hussein, 1975), equity and fairness (distributive principles) compensate those who have been relatively disadvantaged by the cooperative scheme and also counter undeserved advantages that are historically acquired and maintained by structures, and formative discriminatory practices. Secondly, it is the belief of many that the power to control resources discovered in a region will not only encourage development, but will also reduce the level of poverty experienced by

many disadvantaged or marginalised groups. In addition, control of resources will promote a sense of belonging for ethnic minority and majority groups and also reduce the inclination for violent ethnic agitation presently affecting the Nigerian state.

Many of the respondents do not believe in ethnic violence. They agreed that to avoid ethnic violence, each region must be allowed to manage and control resources within it. It is the belief of Tsekiri (KIIs, 2007) that ethnicity cannot be avoided particularly in issues about ethnic injustice against a particular group. He stressed that ethnicity is part of our historical 'make-up' and has the power to influence the necessary justice system for a group, and particularly, the Niger Delta minorities and all other oppressed groups in Nigeria generally. In Clark's view, every Nigerian belongs to an ethnic group and each of these groups will strive to promote and ensure that its group's interest is well represented. Implicated in his view, ethnicity is acceptable as long as it does not infringe on the interest of others. Although other issues raised are on the low response level, equal socio-economic benefits, beneficial constitutional policies, reforms and restoration of derivation formula, they are also important for the stability of the country.

6.5: Summary of Result and Findings

Table 6.6 and 6.8 above revealed that a combination of the factors (items) cited by respondents can be, and have been, some of the predisposing factors for the persistent ethnic minority demands and agitations for justice in Nigeria, and the quest for social justice in the Niger Delta region. According to Gurr's (1971) Frustration Aggression (FA) and Cunningham's (1998) Relative Deprivation (RD) theories, these factors: perception of marginalisation, discrimination, underdevelopment, poverty, unemployment and any other forms of perceived injustice towards a particular group of people, can serve to encourage and influence agitations and the potential for violent struggles among groups in a society and against the State. It becomes more fundamental when a particular group or groups of people are deprived of social amenities and economic benefits or singled out for differential treatment. In Nigeria, inequality among the minority and majority ethnic groups, the change in the derivation formula, inadequate compensation for environmental degradation, the absence of development

projects and programmes, high level unemployment and poverty have continued to encourage ethnic group formation and minority demands and agitations for justice. Insincere and dishonest approach to ethnic minority demands, human right abuses and selfish personal interest and gains of leaders in government and ethnic minority representatives have remained a compelling drive in the violent demand and quest for justice in the Niger Delta region and Nigeria as a whole.

For perceived injustice and allegations of inequality, it is assumed that the State (Federal Government) should consider some of the grievances and issues raised by minorities of the region and proffer affirmative steps and sincere policy action of addressing them. For instance, Sistare (1994) notes that, injuries arising from differences (race, gender, and ethnicity) which have been the basis of discrimination and unequal treatment in the past must be recognised as ground of affirmative action to rectify them. For Young (1990), demands made by deprived groups must be recognised, and recognition sometimes requires special treatment for the disadvantaged group and a commitment to justice and the rule of law, coupled with a firm recognition and promotion of cultural life form and group diversity. Young (1990) also notes that the recognition in public life is not only about a reformulated principle of justice, it requires a radical increase in opportunities for participation in the context of common activity, in the institution of economic, social, and political life; such opportunities for democratic participation is required by principle of justice. For Sistare, (1994), justice can only be said to have been done when it entails recognition and consideration for relevant differences, and when equal treatment is seen as inherently responsive to and defined by differences.

Taylor (1994) is however of the view that recognition on its own is not enough, due recognition or appropriate recognition must be accorded to all. He argued that it is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need, capable of understanding ourselves and defining our identity. To refuse or deny equal and due recognition of all groups (ethnic, racial, gender) does not only inflict damage on those denied, it portends separatist impulses in their demand for inclusion in the economic, social and political life. Elucidating Sistare's (1994) view, Young (2000) is of the opinion that the good of society does not eliminate or transcend differences; rather it entails equality among

socially and culturally differentiated groups, who mutually respect and affirm one another in their differences. The accommodation of differences, therefore, is the essence of true democracy. For this reason, Young (1990) advocated a special representation rights for the “oppressed groups” and justice that guarantees an explicit recognition and equal representation of all groups.

To achieve this, first, there is need for constitutional amendment that recognises ethnic differences, promotes equal political representation and participation and advocates a special compensation to cater for the needs and interest of the minorities; one that allows all ethnic groups particularly, minorities to aspire to the highest political office. Second, constitutional power should be provided for each state and ethnic regions to have control over resources from their states or regions for the development of the communities within the region. Third, government should ensure and guarantee the implementation of constitutional provision of equality and fairness among all groups in Nigeria, without ethnic sentiments or bias. Development and provision of basic amenities for every community and region must be equally pursued.

For ethnic minorities in the Niger Delta region, a major resolution is in the hands of the Federal and State government to approach the Niger Delta demands, and allegations of injustice as well as crises in the region with sincerity, and honesty. Clark (KIIs, 2007) argued that proffering policies or making recommendations are not enough; they must of necessity be implemented completely and with a sense of urgency. According to him, there is need for a reappraisal of the derivation formula for sharing revenue. A fifty percent allocation for the development of the Niger Delta region over a period of time will reduce poverty and violence in the region. He also reiterated the need to retain half of the wealth from the region’s resources for the development of the region as a step in the right direction, while negotiation on resource control is ongoing. He did not fail to emphasise the need to accommodate the interest of the other ethnic groups in order to avoid a cycle of violent quest for ethno-regional recognition across the State. Fourth, government should as a matter of need, compensate the villages and communities in the Niger Delta region adequately for the damages from land degradation and environmental pollution. Progressive development of infrastructural facilities such as roads, health facilities and schools must be diligently pursued, with

specific attention to the rural areas of the Niger Delta region. Fifth, government must as a matter of urgency create jobs and provide employment for many of the graduate applicants and youths who are being co-opted daily into violent ventures as a result of joblessness.

6.6: Recommendation: Ethnic Minority Quest for Justice in Nigeria

An important aspect of this study is the need for restructuring and total orientation of the Nigerian State, one that will usher in equity and justice for the Niger Delta and all aggrieved groups in Nigeria. For Kukah (2004), restructuring of the Nigerian federation goes beyond awarding people contracts and giving government appointments. According to him, every person in the Niger Delta area and minorities generally need to have a new life, and the new life should consist in the provision of basic needs of life, such as water, electricity, roads, schools, health centers and other social amenities for the people. If these are done, life in the communities will begin to change. To avoid constant ethnic protests, Soyinka (cited in Momoh & Ajetumobi, 2002) warned that the State Government should avoid the delusion and self-destructive pitfall of imagining that the present structure under which the Nigerian people have consented to is the best arrangement. Thus, there is a need to restructure the political system and an authentic popular representation of all groups that will usher in a well-balanced structure. He argued further that the failure to grant ethnic minority demands or implement the recommendations for economic, social, political and cultural advancement of disadvantaged people will generally continue to increase violent confrontation of the state. In Young's (1990) views, the rules of allocation cannot be said to be just if they violate basic human needs, such as housing, education, health, and others that guarantee a sense of integrity and self worth.

The State (Federal Government) should make provision for ethnic minority groups to be involved and represented in the politics, policy and decision making process of government at all levels of developmental programmes and projects of the regions and the central government. In other words, there should be participatory involvement of every ethnic group in the decision making process and affairs of the State of Nigeria. Awari Ogbeni (KIIs, 2007) made a suggestion to the effect that a

people's parliament, separate from the House of Representatives should be created (a kind of opinion poll), to assess people's opinion and ideas about issues that directly and indirectly affect them. In this parliament, each community or region should be represented by a minimum of three individuals to present their issues and demands and promote their particular regional interest(s). In consequence, political participation of all groups is required where the group's needs are deliberated upon, demands are presented and addressed and solutions are proffered in the overall interest of the Nigerian state.

For Rawls (1973), the 'principle of participation' allows all citizens an equal access to a fair opportunity to take part in and influence the decision making process of government. For Aristotle (1976), allowing all groups to participate in the life of a well-ordered society is a great good. According to him, a well ordered and structured society tends to eliminate or at least control men's inclination to injustice. Osaghae (2001, 16) avers that, "the ability to participate equally with others in the affairs of the state, including that of power and resource sharing must be recognised. Participation provides opportunities for the effective expression of differences and for its appropriate recognition in several ways". In Igbuzor's (2007) views, participation by the people is crucial because if the people do not participate, both the process and the final document will be useless and irrelevant to democratic renewal that is so badly needed in the country. He argued that it is necessary that the people not only participate in the process, but should also have easy access to the process and the final constitution, understand it and use it in the defence of their individual and collective rights. The principle of participation is pivotal because the centrality of a constitution to the democratic process is increasingly being recognised by scholars, activists and governments all over the world, and there is need for the government of Nigeria to embrace it (Igbuzor, 2007). The implementation of the principle of federalism which is the tenet of the Nigerian State is very important in this regard. This is because federalism preserves ethnic identities and differences; ensure equitable distribution of power and resources and benefits to all groups; allows for the expression and relative autonomy of the various ethnic groups; and guarantees group access to participation in power structures at the centres.

In Nigeria's ethnic minority struggles, there is need for a holistic approach in addressing incessant ethno-political agitations. In addition to participatory justice, it is necessary for compensation to be paid to communities and regions that have been bedeviled with intergenerational injustice, and proactive actions must be applied in resolving ethnic minority struggles particularly, the Niger Delta struggles. Communication and dialogue is also a very vital resource to ethnic minority demand for justice and distribution of resources. Communication is an important means through which resolution of conflict involving distribution of resources can be addressed. According to Burton (1988), resolution of resource distribution must involve processes by which communication can be effective. These include deliberate conveying, accurate receipt and interpretation of what was intended and the full employment of information as received and stored in the allocation and reallocation of values, interest and goods". Thus, equal participation and changing attitudes in promoting communication will ensure mutual trust and economic development.

It is a fact that wherever one finds people who desire to have something and anywhere there are desired resources to be shared or distributed, the pre-eminent factor in the distributive arrangement are the principles that should guide such ventures. In any discussion about justice, principles are needed to guide such distributive formula. Principles of justice (equality, merit, fairness, impartiality, need, etc) are often used for the most appropriate and fair distribution. However, when principles seem to favour a particular individual/group, attempts are made by those who feel disfavoured to erase the injustice by whatever form or means considered appropriate. It is for this reason that Lotito (2002: 6) argued that the restoration of the historically broken equilibrium requires a "retribution and restitution for those segments of society that for generations have been deprived of the right to autonomy by the imposition of discriminatory practices". Lotito (2002) stressed that the process of eradicating the detrimental consequences of accumulated discrimination does not involve simply abrogation, withdrawal or substitution of laws that shaped and legitimised it. Rather, it calls for an effort of "proactive justice" which may at times put a democratic government in the paradoxical position of overtaking formally instituted forms of justice. For a distribution

to be just, the social system must be structured under a suitable political and legal institution without which the outcome of the distributive process will be unjust.

6.7: Contribution of this study to knowledge

This study has identified, examined and explained the factors responsible for ethnic and prolonged agitations in the quest for justice by the Niger Delta minorities. Suggestions have also been made as to the means of addressing constant agitations in Nigeria as well as approach to be applied in ensuring social justice for the Niger Delta minorities. Since the recommendations are from informants who provided data for the study, it is believed that if such recommendations are implemented, the pervasiveness of protest and unrest in the Niger Delta region will be minimised. In addition to its relevance to the socio-economic development and growth of the Niger Delta minorities and region, this study has contributed to knowledge in the following ways:

The study has contributed to the theoretical understanding of ethnic minority agitations in the Niger Delta region as a quest for justice with particular emphasis on the principles of equity and fairness. It has also contributed to knowledge in the sense that the State recognition of ethnic minority demands, socio-economic development, massive employment of youths, wealth creation and social and economic security is necessary for the maintenance of justice in any established society. Also, the appropriate application of procedures and principles of distributive justice is essential and significant for the political stability of any organised society.

The study showed that ethnic agitations and struggles is an enduring feature of a society and are, at times, necessary for justice. The study also revealed that the manner in which political and socio-economic reforms are introduced and implemented by the government in a multi-ethnic state like Nigeria must be re-appraised, to include the full participation of all the groups in Nigeria for mutually beneficial development, which is crucial for political stability. In addition, this study provides information for the government, policy makers, non-governmental organisation, international organisation, media practitioners and others who are interested in the Niger Delta minority struggles to go beyond the surface of the protests presented, to the deep core issues of allegations of marginalization vis-à-vis question on justice. The government as well as other

organisations will benefit from this study in terms of policy making, particularly, in reviewing the current policies on the Niger Delta region with emphasis on the principles of justice. Furthermore, anyone interested in the research into ethnic minority agitations will find the study a good resource, particularly in the area of political theory.

6.8: Suggestions for further study

It is necessary to state that because of the level of corruption and the oppressive nature of State (government) leaders and policy makers, studies on the quest for justice are ongoing, not only in Nigeria, but also in Africa. For this purpose therefore, the following research areas are suggested for further investigation on ethnic minority politics and quest for justice in Nigeria:

1. Assessing revenue allocation in the quest for justice in Nigeria.
2. Fiscal federalism and ethnic minority quest for justice: Issues and Challenges.
3. Justice policy implementation as correlate of ethnic minorities' resource control in Nigeria.
4. Ethnic groups and the principle of distributive justice in Nigeria: Myth or Reality.

6.9: Conclusion

In this study, the agitations of the minority ethnic groups in the Niger Delta were examined. The factors responsible for such struggles were identified and analysed, suggestions that will assist in putting an end to such struggles were also given. The first chapter served as the introductory part of the study. The statement of the research problem was given in the first chapter. The chapter identified the structural imbalance, unfair treatment of minorities and unequal distributive arrangement between the majority and minority ethnic groups, as a consequence of ethnic identity consciousness and formation in the struggle for ethnic justice in Nigeria. The chapter also enumerated the aim and objectives of the study, explicated the methodology adopted for the study, and gave scope and limitation of the study. Definitions of concepts such as ethnic and

minority group, justice, resource control and so on that are cardinal to the study were given. Lastly, the chapter gave an overview of the study in this chapter.

In Chapter two, conceptual and theoretical framework was discussed. Definition, historical and theoretical explanation of ethnicity and ethnic group were also discussed. Ethnic minority and conflict theories were discussed, that is, the social conflict, relative deprivation, frustration-aggression and the human need theories were enumerated as sources of conflicts in Nigeria. In the chapter, also, definition and historical explanation and theoretical perspective of justice were discussed. To address allegations of injustice, John Rawls' theory of "justice as fairness" was discussed as a means for addressing injustice of distribution among groups. Put differently, in the distribution of social and economic resources, the benefit of every group in the society should be considered, particularly, the benefit of the least advantaged member or group in the society. If this is followed strictly, then, equality principle will be upheld. Nozick's (2001) "principle of entitlement" was also discussed. He reiterated that distribution is fair once it is in accordance with the principle of justice in transfer and acquisition, and in accordance with rectifying past injustices. The principles of social and distributive and ethnic justice were also discussed.

In Chapter three, the study looked at the overview, processes and stages of ethnic minority politics in Nigeria. The chapter discussed the creation and perpetuation of inequality and differences through colonialism and colonial policies between the ethnic minorities and majorities of Nigeria which was accentuated by post colonial nationalists. The chapter maintained that the singular policy of regionalisation which invariably gave excessive power to the three major groups of Yoruba, Hausa/Fulani and Igbo relegated other groups to the status of minorities. The chapter also revealed that the politics of accumulation by post independence elites contributed greatly to the structural and constitutional imbalances of power and resources, the emergence of ethnic identity politics and the struggle for autonomy in Nigeria.

Power, as argued, has the capacity of an individual or group of people to modify the conduct of other individuals or groups in the manner in which they desire, and also to prevent their own conduct or that of groups from being modified in the manner which they do not. It therefore follows that the more powerful an individual/group is, the more

successful such an individual/group becomes at capturing the bigger share of community goods, and in persuading others to acknowledge the equitableness of the unbalanced allocation (Lerner, 1975). Belonging to an ethnic group formation/association is, therefore, a mechanism through which insecurity and the inferiority position that the minorities have been subjected to can be abolished. Citing Lerner (1975) and Dustin and David (1975), it was emphasised that it is only in such ethnic alliances that they will be able to express their grievances and present their needs and interests.

Chapter four examined the struggles for accommodation by minorities in the Western region. The fears of minority domination by ethnic majority groups in the regions led to the formation of minority identity groups in all the three regions of the West, the East and in the North to demand for a separate region/state and autonomy. Thus, minorities adopted ethnicity/ethnic group formations as an intrinsic and powerful form of social expression, as the self-fulfilling and self-sustaining dynamics in the demand and struggles for justice. In other words, ethnicity and ethnic group associations played a major role in the actualisation of justice, in the creation of the Mid West region and subsequent state creations.

Chapter five discussed the strategic shift in demand for accommodation to the struggle for resource control. The chapter emphasised the failure of government to develop and improve the social conditions of minorities particularly, the Niger Delta communities. The adjustment in the principle of derivation and the complete destruction of lands, water and farms as a result of exploration of oil by the multinational companies, without adequate compensation, intensified the emergence of ethnic, social and non-governmental group formations, and the strategic militant posture in the struggle for justice in the Niger Delta region. The chapter also discussed the different stages of conflict from the stage of protest to sabotage and the present violent struggles of the Niger Delta minorities by MOSOP, INC and MEND. According to late Ken Saro Wiwa, (a former leader of MOSOP) the formation of ethnic minority group organisations became inevitable because of the need for social justice, equity in power sharing, compensation for environmental devastation and the restoration of the environment, payment of economic rents to oil producing areas, human dignity and self-realisation (cited in Achinewu & Ikiriko, 2000).

Chapter six discussed the findings and conclusion. The findings identified that inequality and injustice do exist in Nigeria among the minorities. The chapter also revealed that the failure to address minority demands and government's inability to bridge the gap due to insincerity and greed has continued to influence ethnic crisis. The chapter suggested an urgent application of the principle of equality and fairness in the distribution of resources, urgent provision of the basic necessities of life, infrastructural facilities and job creation and employment for youths as immediate solution to violent ethnic minority struggles in the Niger Delta region. The chapter also suggested that pragmatic steps should be taken to address demands in the Niger Delta and participatory justice should be ensured for all groups in Nigeria.

In conclusion, justice issues and demands go beyond addressing the issues of the political and socio-economic needs of individuals and groups: it include the human angle, that is, the aspect of human dignity, giving respect and attention to people's grievances instead of treating them and their demands with contempt. It is important and necessary to show respect for individual group as well as recognition and preservation of the culture and custom of the group. According to Nwabueze (1993), justice needs humanness, that is, government should not be seen as a bundle of impersonal closed processes, but as a human organisation motivated by a concern for all and one that abhors inhuman treatment of any kind.

A society that is unjust cannot maintain its cohesion and stability, much less can an inhuman one. An inhuman society cannot, like an unjust society, escape from self-destruction. A just society is one which provides a certain level of welfare for everyone, one which secures or at least has concern for the good life of its members (Nwabueze, 1993). Although some ethnic differences may be inherently unsolved, steps should be taken to reduce inequality as much as possible to the barest minimum by creating incentives for inter-ethnic cooperation in order to reduce disparity between or among groups.

If justice and peace must be in place in Nigeria, government must empower and sustain her growing democracy by exhibiting patriotic sensitivity to the cries of the minorities in Nigeria, particularly the Niger Delta minorities. According to Clark (oral interview: 2005), the Niger Delta minorities are not requesting for total or complete

control, but that for once, the minorities should be allowed to develop and manage the affairs of their region and grow alongside other regions of Nigeria. To avoid continued violence in Nigeria, each group must be allowed some measure of autonomy in order to develop, preserve, protect and promote its language and culture.

In other words, emphasis should be anchored on some acceptable conception of justice. This is because it is one of the fundamentals for sustaining ethnic stability and democratic consolidation. For the minorities in Nigeria, and more importantly, the Niger Delta minorities, the principles of equality, equity and need should be employed in the socio-political and economic distribution of power and amenities. Put differently, equality for all groups in the distribution of amenities is an effective principle to avoid conflict of interest. Though one may argue that ethnic majority groups of Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba have put in effort in terms of farm produce to have qualify them for the 50% revenue allocation from the federal purse, it is also a fact that petroleum oil which though is geographically located by nature has brought undue environmental burden on the Niger Delta region, thereby denying them the means of cultivating their land. Going by the distributive principle of justice, it states that there should be equality of benefits and burdens arising from any resources. It is mandatory for the government therefore, to alleviate the burdens of environmental pollution and compensate the Niger Delta minorities for years of degrading their land, bearing in mind that to be fair means that social and economic equality should be to the benefit of the least advantaged person or group in the society.

There is also the distributive factor of need. In many of the minority areas in Nigeria, basic amenities are lacking and there is dearth of needed development. There is an urgent need to improve the living conditions of the people. For no government is legitimate who does not show equal concern for the fate of those citizens over whom it claims dominion of and from whom it claims allegiance. Equal concern for all groups is the sovereign virtue of any political community, the ultimate criterion of who gets what, without which government is a tyranny.

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**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN**

QUESTIONNAIRE

ETHNIC MINORITIES AND THE QUESTION OF JUSTICE IN NIGERIA

This questionnaire is to obtain information on ethnic minority demands in Nigeria particularly in the struggle for justice by minorities in the Niger Delta region. The questionnaire is purely a research study and all answers will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Section A: Demographic Data.

Please tick (✓) as applicable to you.

1. Sex: (a). Male () (b). Female ()
2. Educational Qualification: Tertiary () Secondary () Primary () No Education ()
3. Age (s) in years: 25– 40 () 41 – 50 () 51 and above ()
4. State of Origin: -----
5. LGA: _____
6. Community: Rural () Urban ()
- (i) No of Years in Locality: (a) 1– 5 (b) 6 – 10 (c) 11 – 15 (d) 16 - 20yrs above
7. Leadership Position Previously/Presently Occupied -----

Section B: Perception of Ethnic Minority Agitation in Nigeria

1. What do you understand by the term ‘ethnic minority’?

2. In your own perception, who can be referred to a minority groups in Nigeria?

3. There have been many agitations by the different ethnic groups in Nigeria, what do you perceive to be the reason for the persistent ethnic protests in Nigeria?

4. Don't you think that many of these protests are unnecessary?

Section C: Perception of the Niger Delta Minority Struggle

5. What do you understand about the Niger Delta agitation?

6. What in your perception is responsible for the persistent agitation in Niger Delta region?

7. Have you at any time participated in the struggle for the Niger Delta demands?

8.

9. What is your perception of the violent dimension to the struggle?

10. Has there been any form of change or development by the government in the Niger Delta since the struggle started?

11. Some have argued that the power to control resources from each region will create ethnic domination of other regions, what are your views on this?

12. Are the minorities' of the Niger Delta region justified in their demand?

Section D: The Role of the State Government

13. What is your perception about the ability of government in the administration of the State generally?

14. Do you think that the State government has not been fair to all the ethnic groups in Nigeria? Please explain.

15. With particular reference to the Niger Delta minority struggle, what is your perception of the State ability in addressing the demands of the region?

16. Why has it been so difficult for the government to address the Niger Delta struggle?

15. What can be done to reduce violent ethnic struggles in the region and in Nigeria?

16. What will you suggest to the government as the means of addressing the Niger Delta demands?

17. Generally, what will you suggest to the State as a lasting solution to the frequent ethnic agitations in Nigeria?

18. Considering the diversity of the Nigerian state, what approach or principle of justice should the State adopt in its attempt to be fair to all the ethnic groups?

19. What will be your suggestions to the government in ensuring a stable Nigerian state and a peaceful relationship among all the ethnic groupings?

20. Any other comment with regard to the Niger Delta demands and ethnic minority agitations in Nigeria?

Thank you sir/ma for your time.

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