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MONO-ECONOMY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
DELTA STATE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examines mono-economy and its implications for Delta State of Nigeria. Thus, the specific objectives were to: find out how agricultural products enhance the economy of Delta State; examine the over reliance on petroleum products (mono-economy) and its implication for the agricultural sector of Delta State and; investigate the consequences of mono-economy for Delta State. To achieve these, the study employed the system theory as a tool of analysis. It adopted the qualitative methods, using historical research design, and relied essentially on secondary data; sourced from archives, texts, journal articles, newspapers, monographs, magazines, and relevant web pages. The research study unveiled a paradox, noting a situation where petroleum products exported in large quantity and benefits from agriculture that supposed to be a blessing to Nigeria and Delta State in particular, has turned out to be a curse due to corruption perpetrated by both the military and political leaders. The implication for Delta State is that payment of the salaries of civil servants, teachers and other workers became cumbersome, not to disclose the mass unemployment and lack of infrastructural development, which leads to crimes, such as kidnapping, and armed robbery in the State, and Nigeria at large. The study therefore recommend amongst others the urgent need for the Buhari administration and the prospective successor to carry out fresh policies and measures to encourage a rapid diversification of Nigerian economy, Delta State in particular away from its current over-dependence on oil and gas sector.

Keywords: agriculture, Delta State, diversification, mono-economy, oil, political influence,

Introduction

Nigeria, a Post-Colonial State has a mixed history of economic activities in agriculture and oil industry. Nigeria constitutes a diverse set of people who were engaged in one economic sector or the other. Before the early 60s to 70s, the Oyo Empire for instance was known for commercial production of cocoa which resulted to the building of cocoa house in Ibadan, and other economic benefits. Webster (1967) captured this assertion when he says that “Oyo’s prosperity was the result of its fertile soil and its position as the leading trade centre south of the Niger, Oyo also developed as a manufacturing centre, its high quality clothes, leather and iron products finding ready sale”. The Eastern part of Nigeria also had a robust economic prosperity which stemmed from the production and sale of palm produce. This was traced to the Delta area of Bonny, Itsekiri, Brass, Calabar among others. The sale of palm produce brought a rise in the economic activities of Bonny. Boahen (1967)

has this to say: “between 1830 and 1850, when twelve Liverpool firms were buying palm produce in Bonny, the price and demand for palm oil kept rising steadily”.

The Northern part of the country was famous for its agricultural activities and production in other sectors. The Hausa-Fulani was noted for the massive production of groundnuts, hides and skin, millet, sweet potatoes, beans, yams, cattle, and coal to mention but a few. The dramatic rise in the production and sale of groundnuts resulted in the construction of the famous groundnut pyramids in Kano. From the foregoing, the regions showcased a robust economic system that was not exclusively dependent on the production or exploration of only one mineral or agricultural produce to the exclusion of other viable resources of income generation. It is instructive to note that it was rather a highly diversified economic system and to a large extent one that encouraged the exploitation and production of agricultural and mineral resources the nation was endowed with.

During this period under review, political, economic, and social-cultural activities, received development across the country which made Nigeria to be recognized as the giant of Africa. This period witnessed resource control where the three regions, the West, East and North harnessed resources in their regions particularly agricultural sector, developed it and payed tax to the central government.

Consequently, the political influence of the military with decree No. 34 reversed this policy in 1966 under General Aguiyi Ironsi. With this military might; he centralized the government which led the country to the unstable economic setback it is witnessing today. Agriculture contribute immensely to the Nigeria’s economic and Delta State in particular in various ways, namely; provision of food for the increasing population, supply of adequate raw materials and labour input to a growing industrial sector, a major source of employment generation, foreign exchange earnings and provision of market for the products of the agrarian sector (Okumadewa,1997). Therefore, agriculture became the mainstay of the Nigerian economy since about 80 percent of the Nigerian population is engaged in agriculture dominated activities. Apparently, agricultural sector was the major revenue source for both the government and the Nigerian people. This resulted in socio-cultural, political and economic development in 1960s to 1980s, as reflected in the benefits derived from the agricultural sector in the then four regions of Nigeria, namely, Eastern, Western, Northern and Midwestern regions. With the passage of time, by early 1970s, Nigeria had shifted attention to the oil sector with the discovering of oil and gas in large quality in Oloibiri in 1956 to the detriment of other sectors of the economy, especially agriculture, resulting to steady fall in the share of non-oil export and corresponding increase in oil exports. The political influence of the federal government in the oil and gas exploration and exploitation, both military and civil authority resulted to the neglect of agricultural products and other sectors of the economy. This in turn has grave consequence for the people of Delta State since the state is a unit in Nigeria. The implication of over reliance on petroleum product (oil and gas) driven economy to the neglect of agricultural product and other sectors of the economy has resulted to economic recession in the 21st century. Global political economy has negative consequence on Nigeria petroleum industry due to oil gluts in international market that causes sharp reduction of the price of oil and gas, occasion by economic –recession which by extension affected Delta State in the period under review.

The economic crises may have had adverse effects on socio-economic, cultural and political condition in Nigeria particularly in Delta State. This has also extended to scarcity of foodstuffs leading to inflation of goods and services, unemployment and inability to pay civil servants salary resulting to strike actions. Even when Nigeria had oil boom from the 70s, scholars were of the opinion that the oil revenue was mismanaged by both the military and the political class by diverting same to their personal pockets with impunity which the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari is said to have being recovering today through the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

The main focus of this study is on mono-economy and its implications for Delta State, it therefore become imperative to glean on the economic activities in retrospect. Delta State is an oil and agricultural producing state of Nigeria situated in the South-South Geopolitical Zone. Delta State was carved out of the former Bendel State on August 27th 1991 by General Babangida administration and the state capital was located in Asaba. It shares boundaries with Edo State to the North, Ondo State to the North-West, Anambra State to the East, River's State to the South-East, Bayelsa State to the South South and the Bight of Benin to the south. It has 25 local governments council areas and the major ethnic groups are Urhobo, Ijaw, Isoko, Itsekiri and Anioma that are made up of Ibospeaking people. The State is blessed with natural resources and is rich in root crops and major tubers such as yam, maize, cassava, cocoyam and plantain amongst others. Besides, it is also rich in the production of timber, palm oil, fishery, rubber, and poultry. Delta State is richly blessed with crude oil to the extent that it has one of the country's largest refinery and petrol chemical plant which is located in Warri.

Prior to 1960s to 1970s, agriculture was the mainstay of the Nigerian economy; it constitutes foreign earnings which was a major source of federal government revenue generation. Sadly, a notable shift emerged with the discovering of oil in 1956 at Oloibiri in present day Bayelsa State as agriculture was supplanted for the oil industry. As a result of oil gluts in the world market, the oil price which was formally U.S \$135 between 2014/2015 is currently U.S \$37 and this had a corresponding decrease which resulted to economic crises in Delta State. Delta dream of economic, socio-political development has been overtaken by economic crisis in the 21st century. The over reliance/dependence on petroleum products (mono-economy) is liken to someone putting all eggs in one basket. What affect the basket will certainly affect all the eggs. This simply means that the neglect of agricultural product for oil and gas resulted to the economic recession the Delta State is facing currently.

Consequently, before the 70s when agriculture was the mainstay of Nigeria economy, its diversification resulted to economy buoyancy in the absence of petroleum product. The discovery of oil and gas led to the neglect of agricultural and other sector of the economy by both the military and the political class. Oil boom was a celebrated period in Delta State as the huge foreign earnings raised the status of Nigeria in international community of nations. It is in this direction the study seeks to explore the effect of the mono- economy structure (petroleum products) on agriculture in Delta State economy as global oil gluts leads to sharp decrease in the price of the commodity. Furthermore, it is worrisome to note that petroleum products (oil and gas) that is supposed to be a blessing to Delta State has become a curse because of both military and political influence that have affected the oil industry negatively considering the present economic situation of the state.

The broad objective of the study is to examine mono-economy and its implications for Delta State. The specific objectives are to;

- i. find out how agricultural products enhance the economy of Delta State.
- ii. examine the over reliance on petroleum products (mono-economy) and its implication for the agricultural sector of Delta State.
- iii. investigate the consequences of mono-economy for Delta State.

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

- i. does agricultural products enhance the economy of Delta State?
- ii. are petroleum products (oil and gas) responsible for the neglect of agricultural sector in Delta State?
- iii. what are the consequences of mono-economy for Delta State?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this research will be beneficial in the following ways:

- i. the federal, state, local government and professional in agricultural sector will learn from the contributions made in this study on the need for agricultural sustainability and self-reliance.
- ii. the federal and state government will gain more ideas from this study on the consequences of over reliance on only one sector of the economy (oil and gas).
- iii. this study will reveal the usefulness of diversification of the economy to the managers of resources in Delta State.

The Role of Agriculture in the Economic Development of Nigeria

This section reviews the contribution of agriculture to the economy of Nigeria since independence in 1960 till date. The study also highlights the over reliance on the petroleum product (mono- economy) and its grave consequences for Nigeria in general and Delta State in particular. Mono-economy in this study means over dependent on a particular sector of the economy against neglect of other sectors. Nigeria is a post-Colonial State with unstable history of economic activities in both agriculture, solid minerals and petroleum product which remained unabated till date.

Before oil was discovered in Oloibiri present Bayelsa State in 1956, agriculture account for a lion share of the Gross Domestic Products (GDP). It also provided employment and food for the teeming population as well as raw materials for the growing industries (Adeniyi, 2008). Ogen (2007) posits that agriculture has been the lead sector of growth in Nigerian economy during the 1960s. Ogen (2007) noted that Nigeria during that period become one of the world largest producers of cocoa and the lead producer and exporter of palm oil. Alkali, (1997) also pointed out that besides being the lead producer in palm oil, Nigeria had also become the lead exporter in groundnut, rubber, timber, cotton wool, hides and skins amongst others. Lawal (1997) affirmed the positive contribution agriculture had made to the economy of Nigeria before the oil discovery. Prior to the 1960, agriculture was known to be the dominant sector of the country's economy, it constitutes Nigeria foreign earnings and federal government revenue (Akpan 2009). However, a notable shift emerged with the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in 1956 as agriculture was replaced by the oil industry (Sekumade 2009). Despite the diversification and reliance on traditional farming methods, agriculture was the mainstay of the economy which constitutes Nigeria's exports (NEEDS, 2004). But the oil boom of the 70s led to the neglect of agriculture and increased dependence on oil resources.

According to Ogen (2007), by 2004, the contribution of the agricultural sector to Nigeria Gross Domestic Products (GDP) had declined to less than 5% and this had made food insecurity and poverty to remain persistently high in Nigeria. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) policy Paper (2004) further reveals that two-thirds of Nigeria population live below U.S \$1 per day with most of them residing in the rural areas. From the foregoing, agriculture cannot and will never be forgone alternative for any other resources because without food production life will go into extinction (death). Anyanwu (1997), supported this as exactly the case in the 1960s to 1980s, considering the achievements made from the earnings in agricultural sector from the then four regions of Nigeria namely; Midwestern, Eastern, Western, and Northern regions. However, with the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria agriculture has gradually been neglected. Soludo (2004) captures this also when he stated that "the dominant role of the petroleum sector as the major foreign exchange earner, agriculture remains the mainstay of Nigerian economy".

The Political Impact of Agricultural Policies on Nigeria Economy

Anyanwu (1997) opines that there had been a number of policy measures and programmes within the last two decades which involve the reconstruction or reformation of the whole structure of the agricultural sector by the creation of appropriate institutions and public services designed to strengthen

the economic position of the independent farmers. These measures and programmes are as follows (a) National accelerated food production project (NAFPP) (b) The Nigeria agriculture and cooperative bank (NACB) (c) The River basin development Authorities (RBDA) (d) Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) (e) Rural Banking Scheme (RBS) (g) Commodity Board (CB) among others. Be that as it may, despite the conscious efforts by both military and democratic government to revamp the sector, agricultural development remains a mirage due to corruption by political leaders, this by extension impact on Delta State negatively by diversion of funds into their private account meant to boost agricultural production.

The Role of Oil Industry on Nigeria's Economy

The discovery of crude oil in 1956 in Oloibi resulted to the neglect of agricultural sector in 70s-80s. In this period under review, petroleum product became the dominant mineral resources in Nigeria and it accounts for over 90% of Nigeria export revenue and over 80% of the government's budget (Jekwe n.d). This petroleum revenue has been mismanaged through corruption and disoriented, myopic and short term economic programmes by both the military and the political elite.

Nigeria as presently comprising 36 states among which Delta State is one of the major State that has quantities of petroleum products among the Niger Delta. Nigeria is mono-economy based, with the mainstay of the national income derived from crude oil found in the Niger Delta area of the country. The Niger Delta make up the nine oil producing States namely; Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers having an estimated population of about 28 million equivalent to 16.7% of Nigeria population (Emmanuel, 2004).

The Implication of Mono-Products Driven Economy

Delta State has suffered the dire effects of oil exploration with its attendant environmental degradation for years. Ironically, oil revenue accounts for about 95% of Nigeria foreign exchange earnings and 95% of federal revenue (George, 2006). The above assertion was supported by Daramola et.al (2007) who says that since 1960s when oil was first discovered in Nigeria, it accounts for a large share of Nigeria export earnings. In the same vein, Akpan (2009), opine that in the year 2000, 99.6% of Nigeria's export income came from oil, making it the world most oil dependent economy. For a mono-product economy like Nigeria, it is not unprecedented, therefore, that a sudden and sustained decline in the price of petroleum products will impact the country revenue negatively. Former Central Bank Governor, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi (2011) stated that: our major concern is that a major decline in the price of oil or (domestic output) would lead to a massive depreciation of the currency, a collapse in reserves and a huge growth in deficit and some of the states outside the oil-producing regions might find themselves in a situation where they are not able to pay salaries of civil servants, Sanusi, (2011).

Solution to Nigeria Crisis on Mono-products Driven Economy

The Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, (2017) expresses the readiness of the president Muhammadu Buhari administration to diversify the nation's economy against the over-dependence on oil in the country, particularly Delta State. According to him, Diversification as roadmap to Nigerian economic recovery captures the major challenges the Buhari administration is poised to address. Maureen Ovie, (2017), a director at the ministry of labour and production however, expressed worry that agriculture and mining which were the primary drivers of Nigeria economy, have been abandoned since the 70s for crude oil, adding that this now makes the country a virtual mono-economy. Osinbajo believes that the oil sector remains the dominant revenue carrier earning accounting for about 70 percent of Nigeria's export earnings.

In support of the above assertion, President of Academy for Entrepreneurial Studies (AES), Ausbeth Ajagu (2017), urge government at all levels notably Delta State to diversify the economy by looking

into other key sectors such as tourism, landscaping, gardening, revamping of coal, tin, palm oil, groundnut, peanut, cotton wool, rubber, timber, hide and skins, textiles, food products, footwear, chemicals, fertilizers, printing, Ceramics, Nollywood entertainment, telecoms, cement among others. Consequently, Delta State as part of Nigeria is blessed with large quantity of oil and agricultural products, it has 25 local government councils and its traditional occupation is production of palm oil, yam, cocoyam, fishery, plantain, cassava and maize, its headquarters is located in Asaba, and its tribes are Urhobo, Ijaw, Isoko, Itsekiri and Anioma respectively. The revenue (oil and gas) from Delta State among other States in the Niger Delta raised the status of Nigeria in oil industry and is derived from the five tribes mentioned above. Unfortunately, the over reliance on oil (mono-economy) products resulted to the neglect of agricultural products in Delta State. Therefore, it could be said that the over-supply of oil resulted to oil gluts in the international market which by implication leads to economic recession in Delta State. These had direct relationship on inflation of goods and services, unemployment, high cost of foodstuffs, insecurity and inability for State government to pay civil servants salaries among other things.

Theoretical Framework

The System theory is adopted in this study as a theoretical framework of analysis and the study is situated within the ambit of the system theory. David Easton is usually credited with pioneering the application of System approach to the analysis of the political process. He defines the political system as the system of interactions in any society through which binding or authoritative decisions are made and implemented (Easton, 1965). Borrowing from the works of Max Weber, Talcott Parsons and David Easton, many political science scholars have postulated about the systems approach.

Using the experiences of other disciplines like, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Psychology and Communication, authorities like Rapoport (1962) have suggested what constitutes a political system in international system. Rapoport argues that ‘a system is a whole which functions as a whole by virtue of the interdependence of its parts’, Deutsch (1976) attempts to offer an interpretation of the systems approach by his analogy to the volume of transactions between the component parts of the political system. He tries to elucidate the basis for comparing the complex society to an individual’s nervous system. The scholars are of the same opinion on how the system works. While Rapoport view system as interdependent, Karl Deutsch says, a system is transactions between the component parts of the political system.

System theory as a method of research have been used in rudimentary form since ancient writers started describing structures of organizations and the functions of their components parts. The theory helps scholars to gain more understanding of some circumstances or situation in different setting. Talcott parsons, David Easton, Max Weber and Rapoport, applied systems theory to the study of social units. Other writers resulted in building on the foundation they established. Since their days, numerous scholars have added to the literature of their subject area by the use of system theory as the framework of analysis.

The philosophy of the system theory therefore, is that a system consists of different parts (Sub-systems). These sub-system or parts must be healthy and active to ensure the form of a relationship that can engender the achievement of the overall goal of the system. Failure of one or more of the parts impinges negatively on the overall purpose of the system.

Strength of the system theory

The system theory helps to unveil or reveal the complexity of open-ended setting, where there are many unpredictable variables at work. System approach is used to address issue of appropriateness and interdependence in decision making. System theory is useful in providing a framework in which to

study complex variables influencing one another if some phenomena are beyond a cause-addressing situation as they exist, for instance, the interdependent of the various sector of the economy, which is in line with Rapoport's postulation.

Weakness of the system theory

Any theory chosen for a study is bound to have some elements of weakness, and system theory is not an exemption. System theory according to Infante (1997) is viewed as a reality but is not the reality itself that is, a means to an end but not an end itself. To him, the second criticism of system theory is that it has been over utilized. Critics say that the theory attempts to explain too much on a system. Also the theory has been criticized because of its emphasis on the relationship components. Critics using this argument charge that systems theorist framework is inadequate in that it gives too much emphasis on the relationship components of the various subsystems (Infante, 1997).

Relevance and Applicability of the System Theory to this Study

If a theory helps in the understanding of political phenomenon or human condition, then it can be applied to specific contexts. System theory meets that criterion. System theory has been applied to a number of different content areas and it has successfully served its mapping functions in applied conditions. The System theory has been found applicable virtually in any academic domain.

The System theory is relevant to this study, mono-economy and its implications for Delta State. The applicability of this theory is hinged on Delta State as one of the States in the Niger Deltas, which is blessed with agricultural products, solid mineral and oil resources. The theory was adopted to underpin the importance of the interdependence of the various economic sectors. The neglect of one aspect of the economy will certainly results in the decline of revenue generation in Nigeria and Delta State in particular. This will in turn have negative consequence on social, political and economic setback.

The emphasis here is that, all the sectors of the economy that is, agricultural products, solid mineral, and petroleum products are interdependent of its parts. However, if the resources are harnessed and well managed by the political class, Delta State economy will be self-sustaining or self reliant and this will trigger social-political, economic and cultural development of Delta State in particular. Where there is over reliance on (mono-product) one sector of the economy, coupled with corruption by resource managers, development will be impaired arising from economic recession which will in turn affect Delta State negatively.

From the system theory analysis, Delta State as a political entity is blessed with various economic resources, the neglect of one as a unit will certainly affect the others, as sub-system. According to the assumption of this theory, where one part is experiencing a defect due to neglect and corruption by political class, it will certainly affect the whole that is, other sectors of the economy. For example if agriculture and solid mineral are abandoned as a result of oil exploitation and exploration this will lead to over reliance on one sector of the economy that is (mono-economy). Consequently, when the income from the over reliant sector falls, then economic recession will surface in which case Delta State, Nigeria in general is a victim currently. Oil gluts in the international market have resulted to a fall in Delta State oil-based revenue, leading to devaluation of the national currency and other economic policies. The living standard of the people is thus affected, enthrone poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, political and cultural setback to mention but a few. Therefore, despite its weaknesses the researcher considers the system theory as being more appropriate to this study because the interdependence of all sectors of the economy in a healthy working relationship will trigger social-political, economic and cultural development of Delta State. What affects a unit of the economic sector like agriculture affect the whole as a result of neglect?

Mono-Economy and Its Implications for Delta State

The Economic Situation of Nigeria

Nigeria is richly endowed with vast natural resources that are widely distributed across the country. Among these are; solid minerals, petroleum and natural gas. About fifty solid minerals have been discovered in five hundred locations in the country (Alison-Madueke, 2009). As a result of this, mining is done virtually in all the States of the federation. Mining industries have been viewed as key drivers of economic growth and the development process, as lead sectors that drive economic expansion which can lead to higher levels of social, political and economic well-being (Bridge, 2008). Coal and Tin ranked high as Nigeria's foreign exchange earners during the colonial period and after the country's independence in 1960, other minerals such as Limestone, Gold, Marble, Clay etc were mined to a lesser degree mainly for local consumption (Adekeye, 1999).

In spite of this resource endowment, Nigeria is a mono-economic nation with its economy heavily dependent on petroleum revenue which accounts for about 80% of government revenue and 90% of foreign exchange earnings. Before the prominence of petroleum industry, Nigerian economy was dependent on agriculture. The growth of petroleum industry in Nigeria brought about dramatic change in the nature of Nigerian economy. The high economic gains of the oil industry made the nation to abandon other sectors of the economy and depend solely on oil industry. The situation has led to non-development of other sectors of the economy like exploitation of abundant solid minerals, agriculture, manufacturing industries and service industries. This has exposed the nation to economic instability occasioned by the vagaries of international oil markets, gross unemployment, poverty in the face of plenty, and a passive political leadership that is lukewarm in articulating and embarking on viable economic policies.

Endemic Corruption and Mismanagement of Resources

The endemic nature of corruption in Nigeria makes it very difficult to effectively manage the nation's economy and sustain any policy that will transform the economy. The economy and its policies are corruptibly sabotaged to satisfy individual or sectional interests. The huge earnings of the nation end in private hands. They do not make significant impact on the living standard of the people or on the economic fortune of the nation. Nigeria is a place where there are millionaires and billionaires who have no line of business but are only friends to government officials. They employ no body and produce nothing to justify their wealth. It is the endemic corruption that denies the nation the most needed revenue for infrastructural, political and economic development.

The federal nature of the nation State has been dominated by the interest of the small groups that control the Federal Government to control the oil revenue. All the tiers of government have shown poor leadership and initiative to develop other sectors of the economy because of their overdependence on oil revenue. It is worrisome for government to solely depend on oil revenue for them to pay their workers let alone providing any infrastructure. The politics of control of oil revenue has over heated the polity that discussions on national economy revolve around the sharing of oil revenue and not on the development and sustainability of the economy through diversification and engagement of the teaming work force in productive ventures for wealth creation (Bayo, 2014). Nigeria as the giant of Africa is mere reveling in the glory of the past. What do we have today? Chronic balance of debt payment problem, high level of inflation and unemployment, economic growth with negative development, and corruption-in all ramifications. Since Delta State is the focus of this study, it becomes imperative to glean on its economic activities.

Mono-Economy and Delta State

To have a better understanding of what the economic situation of Delta State is, it is expedient we make reference to how it is. It is no gain saying that the Delta State economy at the moment is

witnessing a chronic downturn. Nothing seems right; everything seems to be in a mess as a result of the sharp decrease of agriculture and oil price in the global market. Today, the consequence of the mono-economy products (oil and gas) has resulted to untold hardship in every spheres of life politically, culturally, socially and economically. The oil glut in the world market led to a sharp decrease in the price which resulted to economic recession in the State (George, 2006).

Delta State currently has twenty five local government areas. They are: Aniocha North, Aniocha South, Bomadi, Burutu, Ethiope East, Ethiope West, Ika North East, Ika South, Isoko North, Isoko South, Ndokwa East, Ndokwa West, Oshimili North, Oshimili South, Patani, Sapele, Udu, Ughelli North, Ughelli South, Ukwani, Uvwie, Warri North, Warri South and Warri South West. Delta State consists of five ethnic groups which are: The Urhobo, Anioma, Ijaw, Isoko and Itsekiri. The State is rich in both agriculture and oil and the economic activities of both ethnic groups are shown as follows:

Urhobo Ethnic Groups: The natural terrain of Urhobo land afforded the people their traditional occupation of farming and fishing. The Urhobo are predominantly an agrarian people and they are well known for the production of palm oil, palm kernel, groundnut, okro, cassava, plantain, yam, cocoyam, garri, starch, tapioca, vegetable, orange, and rubber among others.

Igbo Speaking People (Anioma): The Anioma is made up of different groups of Igbo speaking people of Delta State and are referred to as Delta North. They are predominantly an agrarian people and they are well known for the production of pineapple, cassava, yam, akpu, garri, maize, mango, Palm wine, Plantain, banana, palm oil and groundnut amongst others. They also engage in poultry and animal farming like pig and goat.

Ijaw Ethnic Groups: The Ijaw people of Delta State and their traditional occupation includes agricultural products such as plantain, banana, water yam, ogbolor, vegetable, and majorly into fishery. They are also into the production of hot gin (ogogoro).

Isoko Ethnic Groups: The Isoko nation are blessed with different agricultural resources viz cassava, yam, palm oil, palm kernels, garri, starch and tapioca. They also engaged in other economic activities such as hunting and fishing respectively.

Itsekiri Ethnic Group: Itsekiri are mainly into agricultural product and fishery.

Delta State is also into different industries for example, Delta Steel Company (DSC) is located in Aladja community, a sub-group of Urhobo ethnic group. The DSC an integrated steel manufacturing industry is structured on hectares of land provided by both Ovwian and Aladja communities. Unfortunately the steel plant is currently out of business as a result of mismanagement by the political elite. This led to the sales of the plant to foreign investors who estimated ₦600 billion naira for resuscitation in the moribund multi-billion naira DSC. The plant is the second largest steel company after the Ajaokuta Steel Plant. Delta Steel Company Ovwian-Aladja is now known as Premium Steel and Mine Limited (PSML) which is named after foreign investors. Other industries that are in need of urgent resuscitation in Delta State include; Delta glass factory at Ughelli, the African Timbers and Plywoods (AT& P) Sapele, Asaba Textile Mills and Delta Boatyard Warri and so on (Emmanuel, 2004).

Delta State is a major oil producing State. The State supplies about 35% of Nigeria crude oil and some considerable amount of natural gas. The oil producing local government areas are as follows: Warri North and south, Isoko North and south, Burutu, Ughelli North and South, Okpe, Ethiope East and West, Sapele, Ndokwa East and West respectively. Some of the oil servicing companies in Delta State are: Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Shell Company, Agip, Texaco, I.O. Ibecco Int, Ciskon Nigeria Ltd, Fenog Nigeria Ltd, Lym Consult Nigeria Ltd, Neconde Energy Ltd, Nestoil Plc, Nune-Ede Nigeria Ltd, Wave Int. Coy, Zumax Nigeria Ltd, De Don Group Nigeria Ltd and Y.J.I Dredger Investment Ltd amongst others.

The nations second refinery as well as petrochemical plant are located in the State at Warri. The oil and gas revenue generated billions of naira since 1956 when oil was discovered in Oloibiri in the present Bayelsa State. Since then oil and gas has been exploited in nearly all parts of Delta State as shown above. Conversely, there is almost nothing to show for it as a result of corruption and diversion of funds generated from the sector by the political class. Agriculture that was the mainstay of Nigeria economy and Delta State by extension was abandoned for the exploitation and exploration of oil (mono-Economy). Consequently, as a result of oil gluts in the international market the oil price has dropped drastically which placed Delta State in economic recession. The political influence that has affected the oil sector negatively by way of diversion of revenue generated from oil sector resulted in agitation of militants who formed various movements in order to achieve their self-interest.

However, Bayo, (2014) opine that, the Delta State government is making efforts to diversify the State revenue base from solely oil. Mono-economy syndrome embarked upon by Delta State has resulted to economic collapse which the State has been battling with since 2014. The State government has accorded various forms of assistance to farmers in fisheries, agriculture, forestry, veterinary service, produce planning and research. However, these efforts have not yielded any meaningful results.

Programmes initiated by the State government led by past administration of Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan to encourage agriculture in the state include: Delta Agricultural Development Programme (DADP), Task Force on Commercial Farming Agricultural Loan Scheme to small Scale Farmers, Fishermen farm settlement scheme, Tree Crop Unit and Livestock Production. These efforts lead to “Delta Beyond Oil slogan” by the government. According to him, Delta State has not taken the rightful place in agricultural production, the failure of the Youth Empowerment through Agricultural (YETA) programme easily comes to mind. Representation of the different farmers groups blamed politicians for the failure of youth empowerment through Agriculture (YETA). According to them, politicians recommended youth for training in this programme particularly Songhai-Delta Amukpe but later abandoned the programme (Maureen, 2017).

Conclusion/Findings

From the above analysis, it is instructive to note that agriculture was the mainstay of Nigeria economy, including Delta State as it accounts for at least 95% of Nigeria’s foreign earnings and 85% of Nigeria’s budget in early 60s-70s respectively. The price of oil has crashed in 21st century as a result of oil gluts in the world market which placed Delta State under economic downturn, leading to high level of inflation. This has forced government also to reduce State allocation from federation account. The implication is that some States including Delta State cannot pay the salaries of their civil servants, teachers and other workers. Sanusi (2011) asserted that this resulted to mass unemployment, lack of infrastructural development, by extension, leading to crimes, such as kidnapping, and armed robbery. This has also affected high cost of food, rents, taxes, education and power sector among others. The researcher noted that there is a paradox, it is a situation where petroleum products exported in large quantity and benefits from agriculture that supposed to be a blessing to Nigeria and Delta State in particular, has turned out to be a curse due to corruption perpetrated by both the military and political leaders. Agriculture that was the mainstay of Delta State economy was also mismanaged by the resources managers.

Recommendations

Base on the findings of the study and taking into account the significance of the subject matter under review, the researcher makes the following recommendations.

- i. The paper recommends among other things the urgent need for the Buhari administration to carry out fresh policies and measures to encourage a rapid diversification of Nigerian economy, Delta State in particular away from its current over-dependence on oil and gas sector.

- ii. The neglect of agriculture resulted to food insecurity and scarcity in Delta State. The two tiers of government, the States and local government should endeavour to redirect attention to agriculture in practical terms for food production by providing soft loans, seedlings, fertilizer and modern farm implements to medium scale farmers.
- iii. The over-reliance (Mono-economy) on oil and gas has resulted to economic recession in Delta State and Nigeria in general. It has become imperative for the two tiers of government the State and local government to diversify their economy as a matter of urgency in order to come out from the economic woos.
- iv. We also recommend sustainability of economic policies and programme. This will go a long way to strengthen every aspects of the economy in Delta State.
- v. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent and Crime Prevention Commission (ICPC) should be strengthened to deal decisively with any political leader that may politicize the economic programme and policies occasion by diverting the funds generated from the various economic sectors.
- vi. Delta State government should improve agriculture which operates on subsistent farming and relies on rudimentary farm implements and low technology which cannot effectively satisfy the needs of the operators and meet current agricultural needs of the State.
- vii. The primary sector's produce gets to the tertiary sector or end user with little or no input from the secondary sector. The secondary sector which should consolidate and give value to primary sector's produce to boost the economy should be adequately developed.

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