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**GOVERNANCE, POVERTY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
MANAGEMENT**

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**Ph.D**

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**GOVERNANCE, POVERTY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
MANAGEMENT  
A CASE STUDY OF THE NIGER DELTA**

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## ABSTRACT

### GOVERNANCE, POVERTY AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

A Case Study of the Niger Delta

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**Keywords:** Access, Agency, Conflict, Institutions, Livelihood, Participation, Power, Resources

This study employs ethnographic research to investigate the extent to which local governance affects both poverty and natural resources management in the Delta region. The research develops a framework for governance of natural resources to understand the daily practices of different actors within the local context using informal observation and interviews.

In applying the framework, the study places emphasis on resources for governance, actors' agency, arrangements of access to resources and governance outcomes in the Delta region. Evidence from the study shows that while the state and corporate actors only contextualise resources in terms of economic value, local actors interpret resources beyond economic value to incorporate symbolic and socio-culturally constructed values linked with historic values. The study also identified relational, routine practices and structural factors which differently shape actors' agency for resources management. The context which shapes different arrangements of access to local resources by actors varies. These arrangements are subject to negotiation, power differences and socio-cultural factors. The findings related to governance outcomes reveal both positive (favourable) and negative (unfavourable) outcomes for the livelihood of different actors.

The study concludes by exploring implications for local governance in order to address poverty and enhance optimal resource management in the Delta region.

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## ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFA	Agbere Fishermen Association
AIDs	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ATR	African Traditional Religion
BYSIEC	Bayelsa State Independent Electoral Commission
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CDC	Community Development Committee
C of O	Certificate of Occupancy
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre
DFID	Department for International Development
DPR	Department for Petroleum Resources
FEPA	Federal Environmental Protection Agency
FGDs	Focused Group Discussions
FOS	Federal Office of Statistics
FFCS	Fish Farmers Co-operative Society
FSA	Fish Sellers Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
INC	Ijaw National Congress
IYC	Ijaw Youth Council
KLGC	Khana Local Government Council

LEEDS	Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategy
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People
NAC	Niger African Company
NAOC	Nigeria Agip Oil Company
NDBDA	Niger Delta Basin Development Authority
NDDB	Niger Delta Development Board
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDPVF	Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force
NDVF	Niger Delta Volunteer Force
NEEDS	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
NEITI	Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
NYCOP	National Youth Council of Ogoni People
OBR	Ogoni Bill of Rights
OMPADEC	Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission
OPA	Oil Pipelines Act
RNC	Royal Niger Company
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SEEDS	State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
SLGC	Sagbama Local Government Council
SPDC	Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited
UAC	United African Company
UN	United Nations



UNDP United Nations Development Programme  
USAID United States Agency for International Development

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is wholeheartedly dedicated to Almighty God (Subhana watahallah) without whom this work (magnum opus) would have remained a difficult dream to accomplish.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The thesis questions the role that local governance plays in shaping both the livelihood dynamics and the resources management within a village context in the Niger Delta. In questioning local governance, the thesis demonstrates how governance works in practice at the village level to reveal its impact on the livelihood of different actors and different strategies these actors employ to manage resources.

In focusing on local governance, this study explores the manner in which the state<sup>1</sup>, corporate<sup>2</sup> and local<sup>3</sup> actors interact on a range of economic, political, social and administrative systems at the local level on decisions related to the access and management of local resources. Resources at the local level not only comprise valuable economic resources, they also consist of socio-cultural resources and resources of rights and entitlements. In view of this, different actors compete to gain access, control and benefits from these resources in order to support their livelihoods. Within the context of the Niger Delta, local governance comprises the systems of resources, agency, arrangements of access and outcomes through which social actors express their interests and participate in decision making. The

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1 The state institutions in this thesis refer to three tiers of government (local, state and the federal government) and agencies of the government.

2 Corporate institutions include the multi-national oil companies and private sector organisations operating in the Delta region. The multinational oil companies have their parent headquarters located in the North and are driven by profit maximization (Morvaridi, 2008).

3 The local institutions otherwise known as socially embedded institutions are conceived as those based on culture, social organizations and daily practices (Clever, 2002).

local governance process reveals how competition between different actors is played out, and the opportunities which exist for different actors to register their voices through legal and traditional rights. It also reveals the mechanisms through which different actors derive their livelihoods and development of different arrangements for the resolution of conflicts. The conception of local governance also reveals the dynamics of shocks and vulnerability of local people and crafting of strategies for coping with these challenges, especially by the villagers.

The thesis draws on an ethnographic approach to explore the daily practice of local governance in both Bori and Agbere villages in order to understand the extent to which resources support the local governance systems. The use of the ethnographic approach is also instrumental in unpacking various instruments actors adopt to gain strategic control of the resources at the local level. In addition, the ethnographic approach also provides the inputs that reveal how the dynamic actions of different actors generate different governance outcomes in relation to the use of resources at the local level.

During the last few decades, policies and programmes by states in developing countries have been partly successful in addressing the problems of citizens at the local level. Efforts made to address faults in the system at all levels often fail to achieve desired results (Huque and Zafarullah, 2006). Huque and Zafarullah (2006) identified several reasons for such problems. First, the state might lack the capacity to identify problems appropriately. Also, the best method or approach might not have been sought for tackling the problems accordingly once identified. In other situations, the selected



solutions may not be appropriate for the particular social systems, or the institutional framework in which the system exists may not be consistent with the existing government policies. In recognition of the implications of institutional failure on governance outcomes, Ibi-Ajayi (2002) classified institutional failure into two parts. The author linked the first type of failure with those activities the state should not have undertaken and yet does. The second type focuses on activities the state should have executed but never did or did execute but in a substandard way.

The forms of institutional failure identified by Ibi-Ajayi (2002) represent the situation with the state of governance in the Niger Delta on certain grounds. First, the state has relied for so long on the efficacy of its bureaucratic structures and regulations as a weapon of promoting social justice and economic transformation in the entire system (ibid). The approach adopted by the state has failed to capture the daily social and economic realities in the Niger Delta. Therefore, the failure to recognize local practices (that is, practices based on culture, social organizations, regular activities) where Cleaver (2001, 2002) considered actors as being dynamically involved in the production and reproduction of social systems is a serious threat to the realization of local governance in the Niger Delta. In practical terms, the local institutions really exist in the Delta region, but the degree of power and influence commanded by the state actors,<sup>4</sup> and corporate actors<sup>5</sup> over the

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4 State actors comprise: officials at the formal institutions of the state (that is, officials of the governments at all levels, and its agencies).

<sup>5</sup> Corporate actors are the officials of the multinational oil companies operating in the Niger Delta such as Shell Oil Company and Agip Oil Company.

local actors<sup>6</sup> in relation to resources ownership and control has created a wide gap between these actors.

From the foregoing analysis, the role of local governance becomes pertinent as a potential requirement for stimulating economic progress and striking a balance between the role of the government and the activities of other actors (corporate and local actors). This view is particularly necessary for effective local governance practices for resources management which recognize the interplay of the state, corporate and local institutions in shaping better outcomes for diverse actors in a socially dynamic Niger Delta environment.

## **1.2 Genesis of the research**

Findings from Sarantakos (2005:131) show that expertise, research paradigm and ideology are fundamental factors affecting the choice of every research topic. Following from this, the genesis of my research topic: “Governance, Poverty and Natural Resources Management” stems out of growing interest in development issues given my undergraduate, higher academic and professional training in economics, environmental resource management, international relations and strategic studies. During these periods, I developed strong enthusiasm in the search for knowledge in natural resources management and how these natural resources affected both the ruled and the rulers, particularly in the African continent where plentiful resources (renewable and non-renewable) exist. Secondly, my

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<sup>6</sup> Local actors on the other hand consists of the traditional rulers, council of chiefs, church officials, family heads, youth leaders, villagers, officials of community based organisations, etc.

wealth of one and a half decade of teaching and research experience in development economics further stimulated my intellectual curiosity in the study of governance. My understanding of governance at this point was restricted to the role of the state in the economic, political and socio-economic transformation of Nigeria. In a short space of time, I became transformed after thorough academic research, only to realize the state alone was incapable of changing the structure and direction of local governance without incorporating both corporate and local actors. This is especially fundamental if the collaboration between the state and non-state actors were to resolve complex, diverse and dynamic challenges (Koiman and Vliet, 1993; Koiman, 2000). This thought strengthened my vigour in the search for further knowledge in governance where various forms of alliances, networks, reciprocity, co-operation, trust and effective communication becomes integrated to shape local relationships in a dynamic and multifunctional social system. This becomes necessary to tease out how different actors contest the use and control of natural resources (Mehta, *et al*, 1999, 2001; Hemmati, 2002). In addition, my visit to core Niger Delta states (Akwa-Ibom, Cross-River, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers states) in 2004 revealed a negative picture different from doctored or manipulated information documented in various government reports plus the weapon of propaganda in the media employed by governments at all levels and the multinational oil companies.

Against the background of the government's position, the community based organizations have different positions regarding the governance situation in the Delta region. For example, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni people (MOSOP) was of the view that the Delta region has become

underdeveloped on account of the power advantage governments at all levels command over the resources of the region (MOSOP, 1990). The power advantage in MOSOP's view has altered the access of local people to these resources whose livelihoods largely depend on the resources hitherto controlled by the local people (ibid). The perspectives raised by scholars on the state of affairs of the Delta region also facilitated my desire to investigate the governance situation of the region. For instance, Obi (1999) argued that the greater proportion of the crisis in the Delta region could be linked to the activities of the people, particularly the ways the economy and modes of power interact with ecology. These interactions have destabilized the environment in the form of environmental degradation, livelihood crises, resources conflict, repression, infrastructural decay and the separation of the local people from the use of resources (ibid). While qualifying Obi's position, Hyden and Court (2002) regarded the negative outcomes created by various actors during their interaction with the system as "Crises of Governance" The issues raised above have both influenced and accentuated my choice of research topic.

### **1.3 Research Problem**

Nigeria is vastly rich in natural resources (material and non-material resources) but to a large extent the exploitation and management of these resources has failed to meaningfully address the question of poverty particularly in the Niger Delta. This was largely due to the power differences in historical institutional structures governing resources management in the region (Ake, 1985; Aluko, 2004; Omoweh, 2005). Findings from the above

scholars reveal that the ownership of resources such as land, water and forest was managed through communal, kinship and individual ownership during the pre-colonial period, where the political system allowed local villagers to express their views on matters affecting the rural people. The direction of power governing resources management during the colonial period changed in favour of the colonialist over the local people through strategic military dominance. In sharp contrast, the focus of power in the post-colonial period to date widens the relations of power, bringing the state as the most powerful actor into the struggle with the local people over the ownership and management of resources (ibid).

Towards the end of the colonial period, oil was discovered at Oloibiri in 1956 in the present Bayelsa state (previously under the Rivers state). The discovery of oil generated the struggle for the control of local resources based on different values actors placed on these resources. For instance, the villagers of the Delta region place higher premium on local resources for food production, social benefits and cultural symbolism to support their livelihood while the government attaches greater value to the revenue being derived from crude oil deposits in the region.

In order to capture the socio-historical context to analyze the contemporary political economy of the area, it is useful to point out that several decades of neglect and poor development, dating back to the findings of Willinks Commission of 1958, now account for the deepening social, economic and governance crises in the Niger Delta. These have translated into inadequacy of infrastructure, massive numbers of unskilled youths, and an unprecedented level of unemployment, marginalization of

people, particularly women. It is fair to say that all these breed restlessness. Certainly, the factors affecting poverty and resource management in the Niger Delta historically include: lack of sound partnership and community participation, lack of voice, social exclusion and to greater extent weak governance in the affair of resources of the region (Joab-Peterside 2007).

It has also been observed that the governments (at all levels) and multinational oil corporations have continuously avoided taking responsibility for the state of disrepair of the region, arising from environmental degradation. On the one hand, the Nigerian government has been consistent in making diplomatic calls and appeals to the multinational oil corporations to develop the region and ensure good relations with the local people in bringing about a conflict-free atmosphere. On the other hand, the multinational oil corporations argue that since they pay huge grants to the government in terms of royalties, the onus of social, economic and physical transformation of the region lies with the government (Stepping Stone, 2008). Given these positions, it follows that inadequate responsibilities and accountability from major actors account for the governance crises in the region translating into development problems of great magnitude.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study and Research Questions**

The general objective of the study is to explore whether local governance brings about transformative changes in livelihood and resources management at the local level or not. It is very challenging to find the real impact of governance on changes in both the livelihood and the resources management of the people at the local level. The reason is that it is at the

local level that different actors form various forms of networks, partnership, and co-operation over local resources which significantly influence their daily lives. The manner in which different actors shape networks over resource access and management of resources can illuminate our understanding of how local governance works in practice at the local level, particularly how it affects the livelihood of different actors (Cleaver and Franks, 2005).

In view of the foregoing arguments, the following specific objectives have been identified in order to achieve the general objective of the study:

1. To determine the extent to which resources support the local governance systems at the local level.
2. To find the extent to which actors' agency affects the local governance systems.
3. To understand how actors draw on resources to fashion out bundles of arrangements of access to support livelihoods at the local level.
4. To reveal the outcomes of the local governance systems on the livelihood of different actors at the local level.

The main research question guiding the thesis is stated as follows:

*“To what extent does local governance affect poverty and natural resources management at the local level?”*

It is important to stress that local governance can only be properly analysed in relation to poverty where the scope of poverty is taken beyond the monetary measurement. At the local level, there are other deeper components of poverty which are better captured in the livelihood analysis such as shocks, seasonality, asset strategies, vulnerability, diversification, diverse conditions of the poor and the like (Ellis, 2000). On account of this,

livelihood will be used as a proxy for poverty in this study in order to have deeper understanding of how local governance affects the conditions of the local people, particularly the poor.

In order to understand how governance affects resources management and the poor, the above question is targeted at a local rather than national level. On one hand, the question will assess how the poor are able to exercise their voice during the decision making process in opposition to the views of the powerful in the local governance process (Cornwall, 2004 and Kesby, 2005). On the other hand, managing natural resources in the Delta region affects power relations between different actors whose livelihoods and economic interests revolve around these resources (Joab-Peterside, 2007; Moncrieffe, 2008). It is through multiple and dynamic institutions and uses that one can promote better governance approaches for the management of local resources (Vincent, 2005). The combination of circumstances related to poverty and resources management in the Niger Delta is challenging and complex. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of these difficulties, further investigation is required in view of the following key questions which are sequenced in order of the specific objectives of the study:

1. What constitute resources at a local level in the Niger Delta?
2. Why are some actors able to exercise agency over resources to support livelihood while others face constraints?
3. Which factors explain inequalities between actors over access to local resources?



4. Are all actors equally affected by the local governance outcomes of resources?

### **1.5 Scope of the study**

The scope of the research covers Bori and Agbere villages, located in the Khana local government council of Rivers state and the Sagbama local government council of Bayelsa state respectively. The first reason for choosing these villages is based on the need to understand the similarities and differences in the state, corporate and local governance systems between the villages. Moreover, it is important to examine the differential impact of governance on the local people to understand why local governance works in a particular research location and does not work in other locations and vice-versa.

Furthermore, my prior knowledge of the research areas in 2004 where I learnt a lot about the diverse state institutions and historical socio-cultural values of the villagers of the region also facilitated the choice of the research locations. Besides, my previous contacts and new contacts with the state and corporate actors in Rivers and Bayelsa states also stimulated my choice of the selected research areas.

The study applies a framework for governance of natural resources to provide explanations as to how the resources available to different actors at the local level support the livelihood of different actors. Through resource availability, the study covers the power dynamics which shape resource use by different actors at different institutional levels. The power relations built into the local resources is fundamental in explaining the importance different

actors attach to local resources. Further, the study covers the enabling and the constraining factors which shape agency at the local level. The study also covers different arrangements which actors employ to draw on local resources to support their livelihood. The agency of different actors is recursively shaped and being shaped by both resources and arrangements of access to produce different outcomes for local people. The study identified both negative and positive outcomes for different actors at the local level.

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

This study is significant for both theoretical and practical reasons. On the theoretical side, the study contributes to the debates on governance, taking it beyond the practice of government to a broader level of partnerships, networks, relationships and multiple spheres within which governance takes place (Dean, 1999; Agrawal, 2005). Secondly, the study also acknowledges that governance is not a result of the decline in the responsibilities of the state, but rather of the state's ability to adjust to external changes. It is through the state's adjustment to external changes that other actors are incorporated into the governance process. Through this process, the government plays a coordinating role in relation to other actors to realize desirable governance outcomes (Pierre, 2000). Rather than acting alone, it is more beneficial for the state to engage in co-regulation, co-steering, co-production, and cooperative management with other actors in order to collectively tap from the gains associated with resources management (Kooiman, 2000; Stocker, 2000).

On the practical side, the study acknowledges that resources management is responsible for different forms of conflict between different actors at the local level. Therefore, findings from the study are expected to shape better approaches for conflict resolution between different actors involved in the use and management of resources. This position is significant in the sense that the benefits associated with local resources will promote the livelihood of the local people where the local institutions involved in resources management operate in a peaceful environment. The study is also significant in view of the focus it places on the role which social resources play as an alternative to the support that land resources provide to the livelihood of the poor at the local level.

## **1.7 Structure of the Study**

Following the general introduction in chapter one, chapter two engages with the literature to find the rationale for governance and identify various concepts which have shaped governance debates and practice from inception. However, the global institutions on governance provided insufficient answer to the question of power relations at the local level. This gap provided an entry point into the review of poverty and livelihood concepts. The integration of various concepts reviewed stimulated the development of a working definition for local governance. The integration of the working definition for local governance, inputs from water governance framework by Cleaver and Franks (2005) and social theories provided an entry point into the development of a framework for governance of natural resources. The framework for governance of natural resources conceptually

captures the relationships between resources, agency, and arrangements of access and governance outcomes for local resources in the Delta region. From the framework developed, I argue that various institutions involved in the governance of natural resources at the local level are critical for understanding the complexities and processes which shape the actions of different actors in the use and management of resources.

Chapter three analyzes the research strategy and methodologies governing the thesis. From the research methodologies, the chapter provides justification for the adoption of the qualitative research strategy and research design and discusses the phases and methods of data collection, data recording and analysis. The chapter also analyses the researcher's reflections on the research process and ethical considerations which influenced my data collection.

Chapter four analyses the dynamics of power relations during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras which shape the governance and development process of actors in the contest for local resources in the Niger Delta. In addressing this question, the chapter employs a historical perspective to disentangle the complexities of power. It looks at multiple sources of power explored by different actors over symbolic, economic and historically constructed natural resources during different periods (Mehta, *et al*, 1999). In this chapter, I argue following Foucault (1986) and Sharp *et al* (2000) that power is not static but fluid, ubiquitous, full of domination and resistance, dynamic and embedded in the fabric of the social system which is located in every perception, judgement and act of individuals. These conceptions of power clearly explain the complexities involved in the

governance of local resources during different phases of development in the Niger Delta.

Chapter five sets the platform for the research context and explains the theoretical structure and functions of institutions at the local level. The chapter questions what constitute resources and discusses forms of property ownership which governs resources in the research areas. The chapter also unpacks the interactions between actors and local resources and how the governance system which generates actors' interactions with local resources shapes the livelihoods and economic opportunities of different actors. The reason for the analysis is to reveal the extent to which local resources support the local governance systems in the research areas. Within the context of the governance systems in the Delta region, I argue that highly placed actors do not only exercise powers over the ecosystems where local resources are found, but are also more involved in the strategic power advantage which undermines the strengths and capabilities of less powerful actors. Therefore, excessive power influence from domineering actors (government at all levels, multi-national oil corporations and highly placed local people) promotes a struggle for resources, over-exploitation leading to the degradation and destruction of the social-cultural values of local people, inequality and exclusion of the poor.

Chapter six analyzes the context of actors' agency in relation to the governance of natural resources in the Delta region. The chapter focuses on how the agency of actors is exercised at the state, corporate and village level. The importance of agency is to reveal the factors which explain disparities in the positions of actors when exercising their agency. The

spaces for participation and representation, accountability in collective action, the critical importance of physical embodiment, social networks and poverty dynamics at the village level are differently engaged in order to reveal how they shape the agency of different actors. The analysis reveals why different actors are differently positioned in terms of agency to shape access to local resources. The enormous power and influence commanded by the powerful actors enable them to exercise their action at will.

Chapter seven explores the multi-dimensional analysis of the different ways actors draw on resources in order to fashion bundle of arrangements which shape their access to natural resources for supporting their livelihood in the research areas. The chapter analyses the perception of local actors about the arrangements of access of actors to local resources. The chapter also questions the reasons for inequality in access to resources by different actors in the research areas. That is, why do some social actors have access to some local resources while others do not have access to these resources? In response to this question, I argue that given the material values which local resources from both Bori and Agbere provide to different actors, the more powerful actors particularly the government, multinational oil companies and a few highly placed villagers differently draw on power and influence which changes over time in order to gain, control and maintain access to resources.

Chapter eight sets the platform for the discussion of multiple outcomes, from the governance of natural resources by actors at the state, corporate and village level. The chapter analyzes different level of outcomes for different actors, particularly the poor and for the environment. The chapter

also discusses the extent to which the poor are able to cope with the governance outcomes. The outcomes are positive in some cases and negative in other situations.

In chapter nine, findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations for further study are highlighted. The chapter draws on issues raised in previous chapters to develop pragmatic ways through which actors can optimally manage the resources of the Delta. The chapter argues for a new direction in the management of local resources, where the power and influence of the powerful actors is reconfigured to embrace other actors in the management of local resources in the Delta region. The chapter further suggests vital issues which might improve the quality of similar studies in the future and also highlight contributions of the thesis to knowledge.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CONCEPTUALIZING GOVERNANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

In conceptualizing governance of natural resources, this chapter engages with the literature to discover the rationale for governance and identify various interpretations which have shaped governance debates in theory and practice. The chapter reveals the gaps by global institutions concept of governance to address power relations particularly at the local level where different actors shape the use and management of resources. These gaps provided an entry point into the review of different dimensions of poverty and livelihood concepts.

The integration of various concepts reviewed stimulated the development of a working definition for local governance in order to understand how governance works at the local level. These efforts stimulated the development of a framework for governance of natural resources. From the framework, I argue that institutions involved in the governance of natural resources are critical for understanding the factors which shape the agency and accessibility of different actors (particularly the poor) at the local level.

#### **2.2. Conceptual Discourses in Governance**

This section focuses on the rationale and various thoughts which have shaped the debates about governance. The governance debates unravel the ambiguity surrounding the usage and application of the concept in both theory and practice. There are diverse reasons for engaging the literature in search for conceptual discourses on governance. The first reason is to find



what the implication changes in the usage of the concept will have on thinking and practice of local governance. Secondly, such research effort provides in-depth and more robust research strategy for expanding the frontiers of knowledge in the field of governance.

### **2.2.1. Why Governance?**

The notion of governance appeared in the late 1980s when questions were raised in both advanced and developing countries about the capability of government in addressing salient societal problems affecting the social, economic and political lives. These developments pose a tremendous challenge to the state's ability to maintain some degree of control over its external environment and to impose its will on the society. This was partly because citizens were becoming unwilling to fulfill their responsibilities by working together with the state requirements and partly because the legitimacy of the state's predominant position is diminishing. Governance has come about as a result of the recognition of the changing nature and role of the state in a local, globalized and interconnected world (Pierre, 2000:2; Cleaver and Franks, 2005). This factor represents the basis against which the growing interest in governance amongst development experts is being considered.

Pierre and Peters (2000) further identify other reasons driving the rationale for governance in modern societies. In the first instance, the writers discovered the heavy workload on the government was responsible for their inability to resolve all the tasks and demands placed upon them by the citizenry. This was the situation during the severe financial crises that

engulfed most countries of the world in the 1980s and 1990s. It meant governments could not use financial incentives to ensure compliance among societal actors to the same extent as before. The economic crises forced the states to cut back, more or less extensively on its services; a development which in turn led to a search for new strategies of public service production and delivery. On another ground, there has been an increasing problem of co-ordination, both in government and also in order to ensure that public and private projects to some degree share the same objectives or at the very least, do not conflict with each other. The third factor which has facilitated upsurge in the interest in governance is the globalization of the economy and the growing importance of transnational economic institutions like World Trade Organization (ibid).

Another justification provided for governance lies in its significance in building relationships or networks between citizens and arrays of institutions which meet citizens' needs as well as shaping interactions between state and institutions within society at different levels. At the national level, the state, private and the civil society interacts in the areas of policy making and service provision. While at the local level, various alliances are formed between community organizations and government institutions to develop local governance systems for addressing daily problems (Olowu, 2002; Cleaver and Franks, 2005). Fiszbein and Lowden (1999) and Giguere (2008) separately considered alliances formed through governance as partnership between actors such as the state, private and civil society through which these actors bring their respective resources (financial, human, technical and intangibles) together to achieve better outcomes. That means, by bringing

resources together, the actors with limited resources in one area benefit from other actors with surplus resources in other areas (ibid).

### **2.2.2. Conceptualizing Governance: Dilemmas and Debates**

Conceptualizing governance is a challenging task as various differing definitions concerning its scope, purpose and objectives have been advanced in the literature. Despite its vast usage, the definitions of governance have generated an increasing discourse and contest regarding its boundaries (Huque and Zafarullah, 2006:5). Most of the usages of the concept either signal situations which pose a big threat to the conventional forms of democratic government or they actively propose to step down democracy, (Hirst, 2000: 13). Earlier contribution by Hindess (1997) advanced that the growth of multiple concepts of governance is a reflection of real changes away from the central government of the nation state as the principal provider of control and regulation within the national territory. Notwithstanding, the contribution was insufficient due to its failure to identify other actors besides government involved in shaping the course for national developments. However, the remaining part of the section presents different interpretation of governance and how the gaps identified from each interpretation are filled by others.

In describing governance as an activity, contribution from Hirst (1997) linked governance with the means by which an activity or ensemble of activities is controlled or directed for purposes of delivering an acceptable range of outcomes according to some established social standard. The contributor acknowledged any gap in governance and lack of co-ordination

between levels of governance will undermine the efficiency of the governing bodies involved in the governance process. This contribution is rich in terms of its ability to identify how lack of co-ordination might undermine the governance outcomes. On the other hand, it does not provide adequate explanations of the role of government in the co-ordination and process of governance.

This gap was filled by Pierre (2000:3). Pierre offered dual interpretations of governance: first as the empirical manifestations of state responses to its external environment and second, as a process which described how various decisions of social actors are harmonized in a social system which questions the major role of the state in that process. It is imperative to acknowledge the importance Pierre accorded the state as a principal driver of governance process both in terms of external relations and synchronization of the social system (ibid). On the other hand, Pierre (2000) did not consider the likely outcomes which may arise from the state's leadership process in the governance process. The shortcomings in Pierre's (2000) definition were filled by Peters (2000) who further classifies the latter meaning of Pierre's perception of governance into two. The first category is what he calls the old governance where questions are raised about how and with what conceivable outcomes the state steers society and the economy through political brokerage, by defining goals and making priorities. The second theoretical view on governance generally considers the co-ordination and various forms of formal or informal types of public-private interaction, most predominantly on the role of policy networks. In critical terms, Peters (2000) was more elaborate in his perception of governance than Pierre

(2000). In the first instance, Peters (2000) focused more on the outcomes which may arise from the governing efforts of the state in the steering process. These outcomes may either be positive or negative depending on the efficacy of the governance structure in place. Besides, Peters (2000) was quite emphatic of the role networks play in driving the success of governance between different actors.

Despite the strength of the positions above, fewer contributors have contextualized governance from the perspective of the role played by institutional agencies other than the government. The deficiencies emanating from these contributions were covered by Gamble's perspective. In the words of Gamble (2000: 110), to govern is to influence, shape, regulate or determine outcomes through many other agencies and institutions that are involved in governing a social order. In furtherance of the foregoing position, Gamble (2000) defines governance as the steering capacities of a political system, that is, the ways in which governing is carried out, without making any assumption as to which institutions or agents do the steering. By implication, Gamble (2000) acknowledges the roles multiple institutions plays in the governance process of a political system. Depending on the level of political development in every system, well crafted institutions are a necessary benchmark for the actualization of favourable governance outcomes (ibid). The summary of Gamble's view on governance is captured by the following submissions:

*"For any social order like the economy, governance has to be understood at two levels. First, there are the basic laws, rules, standards and principles which provide the constitutional framework for governing, many of which are*

*not formalized; but implicit governing associated with particular institutions and agencies. Second, the state is seen to be involved in governance, but often in an enabling rather than a directing role, helping to establish and sustain the institutions in society including crucial markets, which make steering possible.”* (Gamble, 2000:111).

Besides Gamble’s (2000) position, other contributions have emerged to strengthen the steering role which governance plays in a social system. The views expressed by Osborne and Gaebler (1991), Stocker (2000) and Hemmati (2002) have provided a major breakthrough to thorny questions usually raised by development experts concerning the governance challenges involved in steering a particularly social system. In the first regard, Osborne and Gaebler (1991) argued that steering in governance is not synonymous to the government’s role in crafting its policies alone and subjecting other institutions (like private sector, civil society, *et cetera*) to passive players in the implementation process. Rather, steering arrangement in the governance process requires that government negotiate both policies and implementation with partners in public, private and voluntary sectors. In the process of negotiation, Osborne and Gaebler (1991) discover that government needs to learn a different operating code which rests less on its authority to make decisions but rather develops its capacity to create the conditions for positive partnerships through crafting effective rules to realize beneficial governance outcomes.

The findings of Hemmati (2002) provided support to those expressed by Stocker (2000). Both scholars on different accounts consider steering in governance is built around multi stakeholder processes whereby all

stakeholders are brought together in a new form of communication, decision-finding and possibly decision making on a particular issue. The study suggests that stakeholders work together to achieve equity and accountability or more generally, involving equitable representation based on democratic principles of transparency and participation and aiming to develop partnerships and strengthened networks among stakeholders. In Hemmati's (2002) view, multi-stakeholder governance approach covers a wide spectrum and structures and levels of engagement. They can comprise dialogues or grow into processes that encompass consensus building, decision making and implementation. It allows for the under-represented in formal governance structures to have their say in policy making, develop shared power with a partnership approach, create trust through honouring participants' contribution as a necessary component of the bigger picture and create mutual benefits (win-win rather than win-lose) solutions. For multi stakeholder processes to work, Hemmati (2002) argued it requires partnership. The terms of partnership involves specific management functions of the actors and guarantees their benefits and costs as well as rights and responsibilities (ibid). For partnership to achieve its objectives, Hemmati (2002:55) clearly articulate that it must be based on trust, equality, reciprocity, mutual accountability, mutual benefit and legitimate interest. All parties involved in the partnership face the challenge of understanding the needs and concerns of others and of cultural and behavioural change in order to create successful partnerships.

Kooiman and Vliet (1993) widened the analytical gaze of governance beyond steering a society to a social change through which the government

responds to complex, diverse and dynamic situations. The authors argue that steering becomes challenging where it becomes entangled with the challenges of governing complex and fragmented societies, and the difficulties encountered by the state in attempting to solve complex and seemingly intractable problems through direct forms of intervention. Kooiman and Vliet (1993) argued that no government is capable of determining social development alone without interacting with other institutions or partners to be able to provide solutions to the challenges of steering the complex, dynamic and diverse governance situation. In supporting governance as solver of dynamic and complex problems, Kooiman (2000) focused on a socio-political governance approach based on broad and systematic interactions between the actors of governance and the governed which has eroded the traditional patterns in which the state plays a major role in the governance process. Kooiman (2000) argued further that no single agency, public or private, has all the knowledge and information required to solve complex problems in a dynamic and diverse society and no single actor has the power to control events in a complex and diverse field of actions and interactions. Rather than individual efforts, Kooiman (2000) advocated that the actors of governance should engage in co-regulation, co-steering, co-production, and cooperative management, public/private partnerships and other forms of governing that cross the boundaries between government and society, and between public and private sectors.

In furtherance of the governance debate, it is common in development parlance to use governance in place of government. But the differences and similarities between the concepts was reconciled by Frischtak (1994) and



Cleaver and Franks (2005). Cleaver and Franks (2005:3) strongly contended that equating government with governance reduces the scope of the latter because governance is more productively used as a basis for thinking about new and emerging ways in which a society order its affairs, rather than as a way of helping government to function better. More so, the clarifications offered by Frischtak (1994) clearly separate governance from government. The former denotes the overarching structure of political and economic institutions, which are the principles, procedures, relationships and rules by which the total social, political and economic life of a society is governed. Governance represents the structures and relations of institutions. Government on the other hand refers to the formal institutional structure and location of authoritative decision making in the modern state. The clarifications made by the contributors imply government as one of the agents in the governance process in any social system.

Apart from accepting good governance as a necessary component of effective economic modernization, Hirst (2000:14) supported by Newman (2001) also identified other approaches to which governance can be applied. With reference to the field of international institutions and regimes, Hirst (2000) recognized that certain important problems such as the global environmental problems, poverty, *et cetera* cannot be controlled or contained by actions at the level of national states alone. Therefore, the recognition of the extensive role of international agencies and the growth of private sector participation in governance has led to the retreat of the state as the only actor of governance that has the capability to combat environmental problems and poverty (ibid).

In another usage, Hirst (2000) perceived corporate governance as the watchword of those who wish to improve the accountability and transparency of the actions of management, but without fundamentally altering the basic structure of firms in which different shareholders are the principal beneficiaries of the company. While supporting Hirst's (2000) position, Solomon (2007) offered a broader definition of corporate governance and argues that companies are accountable to the whole of the society, future generations and the natural world. She defined corporate governance as the system of checks and balances both internal and external to companies, which ensures that companies discharge their accountability to all stakeholders and act in a socially responsible way in all areas of their business activities, (ibid:14).

Another context in which governance is commonly used is to conceive it as a tool of management. As a management tool, Singh (2003:476) argued that governance may be treated as the equivalent of strategic management. Governance deals with coping and adapting to an uncertain and changing environment. In business, these changes arise first and foremost from changes in the market and in technology. In a political and economic environment, such changes are also caused by the wishes of the empowered groups of people to change the conditions under which they are ruled. Cleaver and Franks (2005:4) adopted a different approach. They scholars considered management as the collective allocation of resources to achieve specific objectives and link it to governance through the processes of decision making related to those resources. Management requires interaction by the managers with stakeholders in the process of achieving outputs whilst

governance describes the interactions between stakeholders to achieve the outcomes. Management systems can be planned and implemented, governance represents a concept which develops through the political relationships and network of different groups in the society.

The governance debate is incomplete without consideration of the local dimension of governance and various forms of networks which actors employ to shape local governance outcomes. Goss (2001) described local governance as the ways agencies interact at the local level. In this case, governance is used to describe emerging new forms of collective decision-making at the local level which lead to the development of different relationships between citizens and public agencies. The role of local governance is not simply to work at the local level, but to negotiate relationships with other levels of governance. That is, the relationship between government and people. The relationships in question is better described in terms of the interactions between actors of governance at the local level and how such actions shape resource management outcomes.

Within the interactions at the local level, actors draw on various forms of network which shape governance outcomes. The findings of Kickert, *et al* (1997), Bardach (1999), Mandell (1994), Agranoff (2003) and Keast, *et al* (2007) referred to networks as linkages which occur in different institutions (organizations), groups and individuals. These networks are usually drawn upon by different institutions, individuals and group to either enhance partnership or facilitate a particular goal. The cooperative networks involve sharing of information and expertise between actors. It involves limited risk as the actors remain independent and only interact with each other when

necessary. Coordinative networks take place when institutions feel unsatisfied about the results of services delivery and intensify efforts to integrate existing services among all institutions involved in services delivery. In the coordinative networks, actors move beyond exchanging information and expertise and become more involved in making changes at the margins in the ways they deliver their services. Collaborative networks are only appropriate if there is need for actors to come together to solve complex problems. The actors are inter-dependent in collaborative networks because they need to pool their respective resources together as the efforts of a particular actor will complement that of others. The trio of co-operative, coordinative and collaborative networks is significant in understanding how actors' actions are shaped. However, actors' actions are not always rational and as such the action of the more powerful actor in the network chain of governance may sometimes have negative repercussion on the interest of other actors (ibid).

### **2.3. Global Institutions Concept of Governance.**

The global institutions are not left out in the conceptualization of governance. These institutions (the World Bank, ADB, USAID, IMF and DFID) share similar view on governance (see Table 2.1 below). From this table, it is evident that all the global institutions perceived governance as the practice of government, with each drawing on the functions of government. However, I will focus only on the review of the World Bank, being the leading global institution in the arena of governance. The notion of governance surfaced in the World Bank's Report of 1989 on Sub-Saharan Africa, which

characterized the crisis in the region as “crisis of governance”. The main thrust behind the introduction of governance by the Bank resides in the continuing lack of effectiveness of aid, the feeble commitment of reform of recipient governments and the persistence of endemic corruption and mismanagement of resources in the global south (World Bank, 1989, Santiso, 2001).

**Table 2.1 Definitions of Governance by Global Institutions**

S/N	Global Institutions	Conceptualizations of Governance
1.	The World Bank	“Governance encompasses the forms of political regime; the process, by which authority is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for the development, and the capacity of governments to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions.” (World Bank, 2000a)
2.	ADB	“Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social development.” (ADB, 1997)
3.	USAID	“Governance is the ability of the government to develop an efficient, effective and accountable public management process that is open to citizens’ participation and which strengthens rather than weakens a democratic system of government.” (USAID, 2005:1)

4.	IMF	“Governance involves improving the management of public resources through reforms of public institutions including administrative procedures; and supporting the development and maintenance of a transparent and stable economic and regulatory environment conducive to efficient private sector activities.” (IMF, 2005:4)
5.	DFID	“Governance deals with how the institutions, rules and systems of the state (the executive, legislature, judiciary and military) operate at the central and local level and how the state relates to individual citizens, civil society and the private sector.” (DFID, 2001:11)

Source: Compiled by Author.

Despite recognizing the importance of the political dimensions of governance, the World Bank (1991) interpreted the concept restrictively, arguing that the question of democracy in a country or lack of democracy was completely outside its control. The institution argued that in poor countries, the problem of poverty, underdevelopment and resource mismanagement is increasingly attributed to the problem of governance or rather lack of good governance. Within the context of governance classifications, the World Bank decomposed governance into bad or good (World Bank, 1991, 1992). Bad governance is considered to be an obstacle to investment, innovation and a primary cause of delays to progress delivery, which in turn raise the overall cost of development. The Bank (1991, 1992) further identified the main features of bad governance as follows:

*“Failure to properly distinguish between what is public and what is private, leading to private expropriation of public resources; inability to establish a predictable framework for law and government behaviour in a manner conducive to development or arbitrariness in the application of laws and rules; excessive rules and regulations, licensing requirements, which impede the functioning of markets and encourage rent-seeking activities; priorities that are inconsistent with development; thereby resulting in misallocation of national and natural resources and exceedingly narrow base for or non transparent decision making (p.9)”.*

Against this background, the institution described good governance as an idea for achieving institutional reforms. The concept of good governance puts further requirements on the process of decision making and public policy formulation, extending beyond the capacity of public sector to the rules that create a legitimate, effective and efficient framework for the conduct of public policy. It implies managing public affairs in a transparent, accountable, participatory and equitable manner. It also involves effective participation in public policy-making, the prevalence of the rule of law and an independent judiciary, institutional checks and balances through horizontal and vertical separation of powers and effective oversight agencies. Moreover, the World Bank noted good governance is an essential component for economic development as it sets the context for the way in which power is employed to manage the market and determines a nation’s social and economic resources for growth and development (World Bank, 1991, 1992). In view of the foregoing review, the position of the global governance institutions was

that improved governance constitutes a principal instrument for poverty reduction (Hyden, 2007).

However, the perspective of governance expressed by the World Bank and other global institutions is characterized by a number of shortcomings. Critics argued that the World Bank's perception of good governance exhibits political neutrality. That implies that the institution gave the impression that technical and economic questions in which good governance has been tied as a condition for granting financial aid to developing countries can be disentangled from politics (Boas, 2001; Santiso, 2001). On this account, the global governance institutions suffered from the illusion that the emergence of good governance, regarded as a technical solution can address the question of politics and power. In the words of Grindle (2001), the World Bank's good governance suffered a major setback on the ground that the financial institution considered politics as a negative input which affects policy decision making process. In view of the argument above, the current governance approaches by the global institutions like the World Bank are under-theorized and also based on partial understanding of the concept, particularly the way local interactions shape and influence governance processes (Cleaver and Franks, 2005; Hyden, 2007).

At the local level, various forms of relationship hold between different actors which bring about inequality<sup>7</sup> in accessibility of local resources. In Bonfiglioli's (2003) position, the power relationships which takes place at the

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<sup>7</sup> Morvaridi (2008) conceptualized inequality as the social relations or relationships between those that have and those that have not, between rich and the poor and between different classes and between men and women. The existence of poverty in a society means individuals and groups are drawn into unequal relations with others who are more powerful or have a more privileged position through which they have advantage (ibid).



local level might affect certain groups (e.g., local farmers, local fishermen, ethnic minorities, marginal groups) more than others where the affected groups are largely uneducated and live in remote and inaccessible areas.

While building on the work of Morvaridi (2008), I argue that different forms of social and institutional inequalities exist between traditional leaders and villagers, land owners and the serfs, parents and children, men and women, local government and citizens and old and young. These forms of inequalities are capable generating the winners and losers. These forms of inequalities were not also captured by the global institutions concept of governance.

Whenever inequality exists, one cannot underestimate the occurrence of poverty (ibid). In the section that follows, I intend to critically review the linkages between poverty and livelihood concepts and to demonstrate how these concepts facilitate the definition of local governance for my study as an alternative to the global institution concept of governance.

#### **2.4. Questioning Poverty, Livelihoods and Local Governance**

The monetary approach considered income based criterion as an important determinant of the status of poverty in a population (Booth, 1970; Nolan and Whelan, 1996; Stewart, *et al*; 2007). The approach was developed by economists to determine the economic well being of the people in every system (ibid).

However, several scholars including: Sukhatme (1992), Dasgupta (1993), Payne (1993), Bernstein (1992), Reddy and Pogge (2002), Smith (2004) and Smith *et al* (2005) severely criticised the monetary approach as

an insufficient barometer for the determination of poverty on several grounds. The first factor is attributed to differences in the taste of consumers, food availability and prices required for the money income to achieve a particular level of nutrition. Another problem is that the prices of basic commodities like food staples vary within countries both spatially and with time. In addition, even when poverty indicators consider distribution of income, it focuses on measuring income distribution between households which vary in size and composition. More so, many poor people in rural areas are poor because they depend on their own productive efforts for a living and command limited cash income (ibid). In another context, the rural people may become poor on account of vulnerability to social exclusion<sup>8</sup>, lack of resources and opportunities to establish a viable livelihood, and often having to struggle for daily survival (ibid). The CPRC (2004) and Smith (2004) classified the chronically poor as not simply a list of vulnerable groups, but individuals affected by different combination of structural factors including: labour and product markets, ethnicity, gender, class, life cycle factors (widowhood, household composition), natural disaster, ill-health, livestock death, crop failure and robbery. This implies that some of the poor are only poor for a

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<sup>8</sup> The CPRC (2004:131) linked exclusion to the economic, political and cultural processes which leads to the isolation of some groups in the society, including various forms of discriminations, ethnic minorities or long term unemployed.

short period time (the transitory poor)<sup>9</sup> while others are poor for a long period of time (the chronically poor)<sup>10</sup>.

Bradshaw (2006) highlighted the cultural aspect of poverty which explains the creation of poverty as the transmission over generations of a set of beliefs, values and skills that are socially generated. In explaining poverty caused by geographic disparities, Bradshaw (2006) also identified differences in the location of institutions and resources accounts for why some people are poor. In every developed region, people can explore several opportunities which may enhance their livelihood while people in less-developed regions lack the required resources to realize well being and income, and they lack the power to claim redistribution (ibid:12). Poverty can also be considered as lack of access to basic goods and services such as health, water, good roads, education or deprivation of economic, political, cultural and social rights (ibid). The conceptualization of poverty also raises the dichotomy between relative and absolute dimension<sup>11</sup>.

The various dimensions of poverty highlighted above are covered by livelihood analysis. Drawing on Chambers and Conway (1992), Scoones (1998) stated that:

*“Livelihood comprises capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living.*

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<sup>9</sup> The CPRC (2004) described the transitory poor as economically active but unable to wriggle out of poverty as a result of terms of their employment, lack of access to productive assets or social barriers which expose them to various forms of discriminations.

<sup>10</sup> The chronically poor are regarded as those engaging in casual labour, those living in households with high dependency ratios and people with few accesses to assets (ibid: 7).

<sup>11</sup> The absolute dimension defines poverty line in real terms while the relative dimension adjusts for the poverty threshold to reflect levels of consumption and welfare in society as a whole (Smith, 2004).

*A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses, shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities<sup>12</sup> and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base.”*

The major challenge raised in the livelihood analysis is that given a particular context, what combination of livelihood resources provides the ability of the poor to follow what combination of livelihood strategies to achieve certain outcomes (Scoones, 1998:3). The ability of the rural people to pursue different livelihood strategies<sup>13</sup> is shaped by possession of different livelihood resources (capital). In view of this, people draw on different assets in order to implement a livelihood strategy including: human capital, social capital, natural capital, physical capital, and financial capital (ibid: 7; Norton and Foster, 2000). For livelihood to be properly constructed, DFID (1999), Scoones (1998) and Ellis (2000) maintained that the assets at the disposal of the rural people can be combined in different ways to enhance livelihood improvements. That means the more access rural people have to various categories of assets, the greater will be their propensity to secure livelihood and avoid the trap of vulnerability to poverty (ibid).

The vulnerability context of the livelihood analysis is important because it explains the impact on people's asset while people construct their livelihood and options available to the rural people in search of beneficial livelihood outcomes. For example, shocks within the context of rural livelihood are

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<sup>12</sup> Sen (1993:41) defines poverty as a failure or deprivation to have certain capabilities (denial of choices as opportunities for living a tolerable life). In analyzing capability, Sen (1985) described functioning as the use a person makes of the commodities at his or her command while capabilities explain what a person can do or be, that is, the range of choices or options that are open to individuals.

<sup>13</sup> In analysing broad livelihood strategies, Scoones (1998) argues the rural people may prefer to gain more livelihoods from agriculture, or diversify livelihoods to cover off-farming activities or engage livelihood elsewhere either temporarily or permanently.

capable of destroying rural people's assets where there are floods, conflicts or drought. These shocks may drive the need for the affected to dispose their assets or even migrate to a safer place as part of their coping strategies. Similarly, seasonal shifts in prices, employment opportunities and food availability represents areas where the poor encounter hardship given that the poor lack the required purchasing power and basic skills to cope with these challenges (DFID, 1999:3, Ellis, 2000).

However, access to different resources, opportunities and services by rural people is shaped by different institutions. While reflecting on the work of Davies (1997:24), Scoones (1998:12) argued that institutions are the link which brings different actors to access capital of various forms to achieve livelihood outcomes. This position is presented below:

*“Institutions are the cement which link stakeholders to access capital of different kinds to the means of exercising power and so define the gateways through which they pass on the route to negative or positive (livelihood) adaptation (p.24).”*

Therefore, the role of institutions is central to the understanding of local governance because local institutions shape the ability of the poor to achieve their livelihood outcomes which come in form of more income, increased well-being, improved food security and sustainable use of natural resources (ibid: 2; Carney 2002; Toner, 2004). This is particularly significant at the local level where interactions between social actors in a multi-stakeholder environment are shaped by multiple factors such as political, social, cultural, powers and conflicting interests in crafting the dynamics of negotiation and renegotiation of access to natural resources. The emerging theories of

institutions acknowledge multi-level governance structures, diversities of livelihood conditions and the role institutions play in negotiating power influences and conflicts between local people on one hand and between local people and different actors on the other hand over the use of resources (Mehta, *et al*; 1999, 2001).

Unlike the mainstream approaches, the emerging views (post-institutional thinking) treat institutions of governance as a socially embedded and multi-functional process determined by historic, socio-political, anthropological, economic and ecological diversities which shape the activities of local people and differentiated actors in relation to power negotiations, participation, accountability and gender relations over the use of natural resources (Mehta, *et al*; 1999, 2001). The institutions governing natural resources at the local level represent sites of social interaction, negotiation and contestation comprising heterogeneous actors having different goals. These institutions need not be regarded as mere rules of the game but cannot be detached from everyday lives, beliefs and practices of the local people (*ibid*). The foregoing argument stimulated institutions being described by Cleaver (2001, 2002) as resulting from a process of *bricolage*, that is, a process by which people draw consciously and unconsciously on existing social and cultural arrangements to shape institutions in response to changing situations. One cannot also underestimate the importance of various legal rights at the disposal of actors in making claims to governance of resources at the local level. The recognition of legal claims bring out the relative strengths and weaknesses of different property rights by different actors in relation to ownership and control of resources as it affects the

livelihood survival of the poor in a fluid and dynamic environment (Meinzen-Dick and Pradhan, 2001).

The relationships between different institutions are particularly important in the governance of natural resources in order to find how the state institutions and corporate institutions interact with local institutions to shape governance practices. However, this relationship is sometimes complex to establish due to conflict of interest between actors in the ownership of property rights, who benefits from property rights, the determination of agency and accountability, insecurity of resources ownership, and inequality in the distribution of resources, determination of environmental, participatory and representation decisions in local resources (World Resources Institute, 2003).

However, actors in different institutions engage regularly with different resources to shape different relationships which generate different outcomes at the local level. A working definition for local governance is developed in section 2.6 in order to understand how different actors interact with local resources.

## **2.5. Working Definition for Local Governance**

From the foregoing analysis, I develop a working definition for governance of natural resources to be applied in the Delta region as follows:

*“Governance involves state, corporate and local relationships which are determined by economic, political, socio-cultural and administrative systems at the local level on matters related to resources, actors’ agencies, arrangements of access to resources,*

*and governance outcomes for different level of actors. It is through these processes that actors express their interests, participate in decision making, derive their livelihood and craft strategies for conflict resolution and demand for their rights for resource use and management.”*

The working definition above represents a good benchmark for the development of a framework for governance of natural resources on some grounds (see section 2.6). First, it shows that governance at the local level is driven by the state, corporate and local relationships in order to understand how various networks are shaped by different actors in a dynamic environment. Second, the definition acknowledges the local governance processes involving: resources-actors' agency-arrangements of access to local resources-governance outcome relationships. The processes take the level of governance beyond the practice involving a single actor (government) into more dynamic level where different actors (corporate and local actors) with different interest, power and influence struggle for control of resources. This is helpful to evaluate how actors express their interests, how participation holds, how the voices of the actors are shaped, how livelihoods of the rural people are determined and how conflicts over resource use at the local level are resolved. Third, the working definition of local governance also recognises the way resources and other livelihood opportunities are distributed locally and how these resources might be influenced by informal structures of social dominance and power within the local level (Krantz, 2001). Fourth, working definition is also helpful to provide explanations to various concepts which underlie the framework for the governance of natural



resources in section 2.6. Fifth, the working definition is also useful to the development of the framework for natural resources because of its recognition of different outcomes for different actors. This particularly important for analyzing how the impact of governance on the poor and the strategies available for the poor to cope with livelihood challenges. Sixth, the economic, political, socio-cultural and administrative systems of the working definition for local governance are important inputs for the development of the framework for governance of natural resources. The theoretical relevance of these systems were expanded drawing on the review of poverty and livelihood analysis, emerging theories of institutions and social theories in order to understand how these systems of governance work in practice (see sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6.1, 2.6.2, 2.6.3 and 2.6.4) respectively.

## **2.6. A Framework for Governance of Natural Resources.**

A framework for governance of natural resources facilitates the understanding of how governance works at the local level, its impact on different actors, particular the poor and how local governance shapes the management of natural resources. The framework for governance of natural resources derive partly from the water governance framework by Cleaver and Franks (2005), partly contribution from emerging views on governance, poverty and livelihood analysis, working definition of local governance and insights from social theories. In the framework for governance of natural resources, explanations are provided to key concepts guiding resources management and how these concepts offer synergies for deeper penetration

of benefits/challenges which actors derive/encounter in the management of resources at the local level.

In terms of critical evaluation, the water governance framework has a major strength in analyzing a range of actors and agents shaping water governance on a platform broader than the practice of government and recognition of a range of differentiated outcomes for water governance considered to be broader than the management functions of individual authorities. Furthermore, the framework also provided pluralistic views of governance concepts in order to separate the meaning of governance from what governance does not represent (ibid: 3). In addition, the framework acknowledges different mechanisms through which actors gain access to water delivery. It is interesting that the framework acknowledged that mechanisms are not static but dynamic and are negotiated and re-negotiated by actors both consciously and unconsciously to facilitate access to water delivery through daily practices (ibid: 7). By extension, the framework also provides reasonable knowledge about the way local interactions between actors shape and influence governance processes.

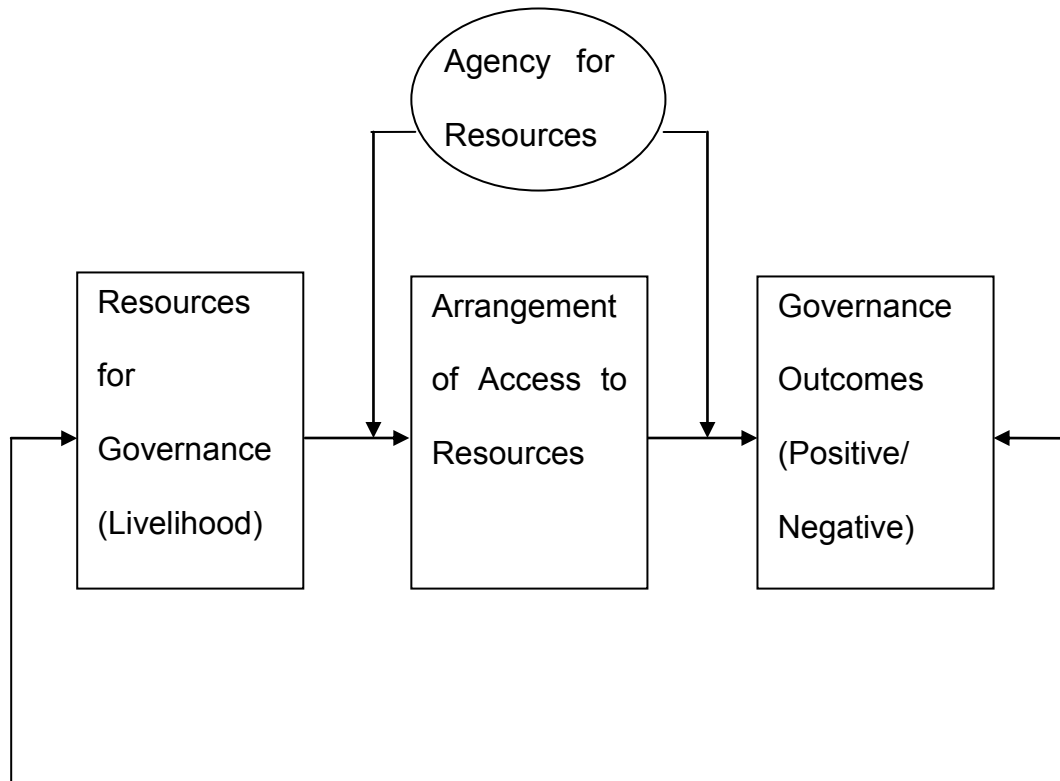
Despite the strengths of the water governance framework in understanding local interactions, the framework is potentially insufficient for providing complete picture of the governance of natural resources situation in the Delta region on a number of grounds. A major shortcoming in the framework is attributable to its weaknesses in analyzing governance from multi-stakeholders' perspectives; whereas such perspectives would have provided better analysis of how stakeholders exercise their respective agencies and the impact of powerful stakeholders on others in a complex,

fluid and multidimensional natural resource environment (Cleaver and Franks, 2005). Second, the water governance framework did not provide adequate outcomes of the water governance on the poor (Cleaver and Franks, 2005). Third, the water governance framework referred to “the poor” and “the chronically poor”, but the framework did not offer any conceptual clarifications to these issues. Therefore, lack of adequate clarifications on these concepts offered a partial or limited understanding of the parameters for determining who are the poor, why are the people poor and how are the poor treated in relation to different livelihood situations (see section 2.4 for discussion of these questions). Further, the question of agency is multi-dimensional and requires deeper analysis for better understanding of factors shaping or constraining actors from exercising their actions. The agency-structure relationship and dichotomy was inadequately explored in the water governance framework. The water governance framework did not provide adequate account of the relationship between agency and power relations between different actors (see section 2.6.2 for the review of agency, structure and power). Further, analyzing natural resources governance requires deeper thoughts and insight into more complexities and dynamic nature of power relations, accountability, conflict management and gender relations beyond the limited perspective presented in the water governance framework. Besides, the water governance framework only provided a sketchy conceptualization of institutions without teasing out the evolution governing these institutions from mainstream to emerging views (ibid:7). The water governance framework also failed to recognize the seasonality in the lives of rural people especially during the planting, transplanting and

harvesting period. These periods are relevant for unravelling the opportunity cost rural people encounter relative to taking part in meeting and negotiation process (ibid:15). Unlike the framework developed by Cleaver and Franks (2005), the framework for governance of natural resources framework has been developed to provide explanations of other resources other than water such as forest products and crude oil. Following from the above, the framework for governance of natural resources is presented below (see Figure 2.1).

From Figure 2.1, resources (allocative and authoritative), agency, arrangements of access and outcomes represent the key concepts relevant to understand governance of natural resources. In explaining the flow of arrangement of the framework, the resources for governance are drawn upon in different ways by different actors (state, corporate and local actors) to construct the arrangements of access to natural resources governance. The arrangements of access to resources indicate bundle of means through which different actors gain access to local resources. The governance outcomes are shaped by different arrangements of access actors employ to gain access to local resources.

**Figure 2 1: A Framework for Governance of Natural Resources**



Sources: Author's construct derived from Cleaver and Franks (2005)

The governance outcomes are shaped by different arrangements of access actors employ to gain access to local resources. At each interface in the framework, actors shape or are being shaped by resources, arrangements of access to resources and governance outcomes. The rest of the review is devoted to theoretical basis of the concepts.

### **2.6.1. Resources**

On one hand, resources are conceived in terms of the difference between renewable (flows) and non renewable (stocks) resources. Within the context of renewable resources (examples include water, timber, fruits, vegetable, *et cetera*), the physical quantity available changes over time as

what is used from the resources now may not necessarily affect what is available later. For non-renewable resources, the physical quantity available for use is fixed as what is used from the resources now will not be available later (examples are coal, oil, diamond, bauxite, *et cetera*), (Gibbs and Bromley, 1989; Khana, 2001). On the other hand, resources are treated as a factor of production or assets which provide human satisfaction upon being complemented by other factors of production. In this context, the assertion that land is free gift of nature is not adequate to provide human satisfaction as labour, capital and entrepreneurial efforts will be required to add value to the resources extracted from land (Lino-Grima and Berkes, 1989).

Despite the perspectives raised by the scholars above, a number of issues remain to be discussed. The principal issues affecting the analysis of resources are the social context and power relations which shape how actors produce or reproduce these resources. These issues are lacking in the perspectives raised by the scholars above. Secondly, resources have limited application whenever it is treated only as the material, economic and direct use value it provides to human satisfaction. These gaps are filled by the Giddens (1984) perspective on social theory, Cleaver and Franks (2005) contribution in water governance and work by Mehta, *et al* (2001), on environmental governance.

In constructing resources for the governance framework, I draw on the epistemological thought of Giddens (1984) to divide resources into two dimensions namely: the allocative and authoritative. Allocative resources comprises: raw materials, material power sources, means of material reproduction and produced goods shaped by the interaction between

material attributes of the environment and means of material production. The authoritative resources capture organization of social time space, organization and relation of people and opportunities for human development and self expression (ibid: 258-62). In a clearer context, Giddens (1984) made a distinction between the two dimensions of resources as follows:

*“Allocative resources refer to capabilities or forms of transformative capacity which generate command over objects, goods or material phenomenon. Authoritative resources on the other hand refer to types of transformative capacity generating command over people or things (p.33).”*

Therefore, Giddens described resources as “the structured properties of social systems drawn upon and reproduced by knowledgeable agents in the course of interaction and these resources provide the medium through which power is exercised”. That is, human actors develop rules which structure allocation of resources while the influence of power over these resources determines the actions of actors or agents. The contextualization of resources in this study is fluid and incorporates: relationship of power, structures of inequality, rules of social life and systems of resource allocation (Giddens, 1984:14-15). These resources are symbolic with meanings that are locally and historically valued and socially constructed rather than treating it alone from narrow perspective of the material values it provides to human needs (Mehta, *et al*; 2001).

In order to understand the nature of resources, structuring of relations and the actions of actors; I adapted the contributions by Cleaver and Franks (2005) for building on resources in the framework for governance of natural resources. On the basis of this, I classified resources into allocative and

authoritative in order to fulfil Giddens' (1984) benchmark for resources classification. In the allocative resources classification, we have: land and water resources, infrastructural capital and financial resources. The authoritative classification comprises human resources, institutional resources, socio-cultural resources and resources of rights and entitlements (see chapter five for the practical application of both allocative and authoritative resources).

### **2.6.2. Agency, Structure and Power.**

In order to place actors' behaviour into a wider context, social theorists including Giddens (1984), Bourdieu (1977) and Long and Van Der Ploeg (1994) identify agency and structure as major factors shaping behaviour. The writers argue that agency (that is, the capability or power people have to do something) does not exist independently but is also relational and exercised in a social context where the structure determines the resources and opportunities available to actors. In Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, social actions create structures while structures generate and regenerate social action. He identified rules and resources as major determinants of structures. These rules and resources are put into different practices through human actions. Therefore, actors intervene in the world through their knowledge of the environment and these processes of human intervention are repeated such that the structure of the system, social systems and institutions are all reproduced. According to Giddens, both structure and social actions exist in a social system where multiple forms of interaction take place and this system is subject to dynamism in time and space. In



furtherance of this position, Giddens states that “the structure is not external to individuals or constraining. Rather, structure occurs in both enabling and constraining circumstances” (ibid: 25).

In support of Giddens (1984), Long and Van Der Ploeg (1994) recognized the structural constraints with which actors operate, non-reflexive practices, intended and unintended impact of individual actions. To these theorists, the exercise of reflexive agency (that is, the capacity of an actor to use forces of socialization to influence his position within the social structure) and application of various forms of capital (economic, political, etc) provide good explanation for differences in behavior of different actors. Long and Van Der Plog (1994) capture the characteristics of social actors in relation to the practice of agency as follows: “the notion of agency attributes to the individual actor the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life even under the most difficult situation”. In Long and Van Der Plog’s view, every actor is regarded as a social processor of knowledge which arises from his or her environment and this knowledge will always provide direction for decisions to be taken under the most constraining situation (ibid).

The approach adopted by Bourdieu (1977) in treating agency and structure was conceptually and methodologically different. In treating the relations between agency and structure, Bourdieu (1977) developed three concepts namely: habitus, field and capital. In order to capture the nexus between structure and agency, the writer<sup>14</sup> rejected the rational choice theory<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The rational choice theory is a human behavioural model constructed around the idea that the action people take is fundamentally rational in character and that people calculate the likely costs and benefits of any action before putting the action into practice (Scott, 2000).

on account of being unable to capture the complex behaviour of social actors. According to Bourdieu (1977), social actors do not regularly calculate in accordance with the rational choice theory but act according to operations of *habitus*, field and capital. In Bourdieu's (1977) view, actors interact with the field, that is, a structured social space characterized by its own rules, schemes of domination and hierarchy through which actors contest for dominant position. The ability of every actor to engage the field depends on various forms of capital (such as economic, symbolic and cultural capital) available at his disposal. These capitals incorporate social networks which actors employ to produce and reproduce social outcomes which may either be positive or negative. As actors draw on their position in the field, they internalize relationships and develop habitual expectations. The internalized relationship built by actors and their habitual expectation constitutes *habitus*. The *habitus* represents a set of socially constructed dispositions, skills and actions which are acquired through daily experience of actors. In order to reconcile structure and agency, the writer argues that as external structures become part of actors' behaviour while the behaviour of actors affect external interaction between actors in the field, there exist dialectic between externalizing the internal and internalizing the external (ibid).

The contributions raised above require critical evaluation of the structure and agency dialectic in order to place the concept in a better perspective. In the first instance, the perspective by Giddens (1984) bringing both structure and agency on the same side of a coin is very complex. Critics argued the conflation of the concepts tend to stress the limit on human action with little explanation of the changes in social structure required to bring

about other changes in human action (Archer, 1982 quoted in Haralambos and Holborn, 1995). In the case of Bourdieu (1977), critics rejected his conception of action as an embodiment of past experiences without much consideration for reflexivity and creativity of social actors (Swartz, 1997). However, the analysis of structure and agency is incomplete without relating it to power relations. The relationship between actions of actors at different contexts will reveal how unequal relations in different positions of actors either enable or constrain the actions of local actors from the use of resources for supporting livelihood.

In the words of Giddens (1984), power is not necessarily linked with conflict but is conceptualized within the context of the capacity to achieve outcomes. Giddens considered power whether physical or hidden as generated through the reproduction of structure of domination (ibid: 257-8). The logic in the relationship between agency and power is complex. The complexities involved were partly resolved by Giddens (1984) when he argues that for a social actor to be able to act implies being able to engage the world with the objective of influencing a specific process. By implication, Giddens (1984) submits that to be a social actor means deploying a number of causal powers to influence the actions of others. Therefore, the actions of an actor depend on his/her capability to make a difference to a course of event or transform things from what they should have been. In this respect, an actor loses his or her position where he or she is unable to command sufficient power (ibid: 14). That means all social actions involve power relationships in that human action involves transformational capacity which can be used to exercise power over others. For those actors in possession of

power, they are possessed with the capacity to change the will of others and constrain their actions. For these actors with sufficient powers, their freedom of action is enhanced over powerless actors.

Unlike Giddens (1984), who conceived power in accordance with structuralist perspectives<sup>15</sup>, the post-structuralist writers relate power to multidimensional areas. In the post-structuralist view, power covers overt, covert, formal and socio-cultural valued areas where relational situations exist between various actors who can deploy various ways to use their respective capabilities.

The work of Foucault (1982) is central to the review of the post-structuralist views on power. Foucault (1982) never attributed power to any actor; rather power was conceived as an omnipresent asset which can be deployed by every actor to achieve a desired outcome which will ultimately affects every actor. Foucault (1982) argues that power is not reducible to government institutions but it can be employed by other institutions. This makes power relational in terms of how it affects different institutions whenever it is exercised (ibid). The interpretation of power by Foucault (1982) can be expressed as “power everywhere” which in broader sense considers power as everyday practices of all aspects of human lives. In relating knowledge<sup>16</sup> to power, Foucault (1982) explained that knowledge upholds societal norms<sup>17</sup> and values<sup>18</sup>. Knowledge in Foucauldian view is

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<sup>15</sup> Following the work of Weber (1922), the structuralist perspectives of power are characterized by rigidity, compliance with rules and procedures, dominance and legalism.

<sup>16</sup> Eyben (2005:22-3) perceives knowledge as how we understand and describe the world based on our time and power relations which shapes our lives.

<sup>17</sup> Norms are specific guides to action which defines acceptable and appropriate behaviour in particular situations (Haralambos and Holborn, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> Unlike norms, a value provides more general guidelines for human conduct. It is a belief that something is good, desirable and worth striving for (Haralambos and Holborn, 1995).

interpreted into the way people see themselves and how people relate with one another. This form of interpretation was described by Foucault as disciplinary power (ibid). The importance of disciplinary power in the explanation of Foucauldian concept of power is that it acts on people whose actions (behaviour) have to be controlled through self-monitoring and self-measurement in order to comply with social norms (Foucault, 1982). However, it is not always the case for power to bring about compliance of people with social standard. In this context, disciplinary power as Foucault discovered, provides an arrangement through which different actors renegotiate their understanding of realities due to different struggle and different interpretation actors give to societal norms. In Foucauldian sense, power is not attributed to coercion or violence, but the setting up of shared truths in order to avoid violence. Violence occurs where the limits of power are reached (Foucault, 1982).

Agrawal (2005) also built on the work of Foucault (1982) to discuss environmentality in Kumaon, India. Agrawal (2005) discovered that power was not concentrated in the hands of the government alone, as the villagers were also involved in the decision making process affecting the management of Kumaon forest which was hitherto taken over by the government. The government included the villagers in the governance of Kumaon forest because the villagers embarked on collective protest against government's decision to take over the forest which provided their livelihood. The major argument raised by Agrawal (2005) was that power is not static but fluids which allow actors to negotiate and renegotiate their day to day practices based on the conditions governing their environment. The technology of

government is important for explaining different aspects of power relations. In the first instance, the technology focused on the formation of forested environment and secondly on the emergence of new regulatory power spaces where social interactions around the environments between actors (government and villagers) involved in the management of the forest took form. The author labeled the second technology of government as regulatory communities because it marked the emergence of new alliances and divisions among local villagers. Some of the villagers welcomed the alliance with the government in the management of forest while other villagers believed the forest is better managed by the villagers whose livelihood revolves around it (ibid:7). In the third technology, Agrawal (2005) identified the “constitution of environmental subject” as a roadmap which provided a new direction for the villagers on the best practices to govern the environment. These technologies only became developed as a result of changes in the loci of power between the government and the villagers of Kumaon (ibid).

Few (2001:31) also reflected on Foucault (1982) when he qualified that power is scattered across every society rather than concentrated in the hands of the dominant. Few (2002) discovered that power operates in social relations between various actors with different intentionality, identities and resources and these pluralistic powers are articulated through complex instruments by which various actors negotiate and renegotiate their differentiated interests (ibid).

The three-dimensional power advanced by Lukes (2005) provided a strong benchmark for conceptual analysis of power in this study. In analysing

power from a radical perspective, Lukes (2005) was of the view that the effectiveness and level of power for a given group or individual is determined taking some criteria into account. In the One dimensional view of power<sup>19</sup>, Lukes (2005) considered the power A has over B as A's capacity to get B to do something while the second statement specifies a successful attempt by A to get B to do what B would not have done. This shows the difference between potential and actual power, between possession of power and the way power is exercised (ibid: 16). It is the way power is exercised by an actor which explains the behaviour affecting actors' decision making process (Lukes, 2005). While reviewing Dahl (1961), Lukes (2005) discovered that the fundamental issue is to "determine for each decision which participants had initiated alternatives that were finally adopted, had vetoed alternatives initiated by others, or had proposed alternatives that were turned down, (pp.17)". Lukes (2005) classified this action as individual "successes or defeats" in which the participants with the highest result of successes out of the total number of successes as the most influential. However, Luke (2005) critiqued the one view dimensional view of power for being narrow because it focused on behaviour in making decisions over which observable conflict (subjective) of interest exist. In explaining the two dimensional power,<sup>20</sup> Lukes (2005) drew on the work on Bachrach and Baratz (1970) to qualify the one-dimensional view of power which focused on behaviour. Lukes (2005) used "qualification" to assume that non-decision making is a form of decision

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<sup>19</sup> Dahl (1957) treats one dimensional view of power as a situation where "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do."

<sup>20</sup> In the two-dimensional view, Bachrach and Baratz (1970) states that: " power is exercised when A participates in the decision making which affect B. Power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political decision making to an agenda determined by A."

making. That means, it can be the decision not to make a decision. The two dimensional view of power focuses on the way decisions are made and can be influenced. In the process of setting agenda where a fundamental issue relevant to B is left off the agenda by A, such issue is called non-decision making aspect of power (ibid). The two dimensional view of power also consider the reasons which surround the ways in which decisions are prevented from being taken on potential issues with focus on observable conflict (overtly or covertly) and conflict of (subjective) interest. In the third dimension of power<sup>21</sup>, Lukes (2005) critiqued the position of Bachrach and Baratz (1970) on the ground that the two-dimensional view of power was too committed to the study of behaviourism (that is, the overt, actual behaviour of which vital decisions are made by an actor during conflict situation. Lukes (2005) argued that power is not necessarily reducible to the actions or deliberate non-actions of actors, but rather they are inherited from the past in the form of structured or culturally patterned behaviour of groups. The third dimension of power concentrates on the decision-making in a political agenda and the control over that agenda. It allows consideration for current issues and the way potential issues are kept out of decision making process through the operation of institutional or individual practices (Lukes, 2005). This can occur in relation to both overt and covert observable conflicts, and those that might be latent. The latent conflict occurs where there is contradiction between the interest of those exercising the power and real interests of those actors being excluded (ibid).

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<sup>21</sup> In the three dimensional view of power, Lukes (2005) states that "A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interest.



Moncrieffe (2008) shared a radically different view as power relations was conceived from pluralistic perspectives ranging from coercive and non-coercive, visible and hidden to agreed and imposed. The author remarked that whatever form power relations take, what is certain is that it will produce a particular outcome whether negative or positive.

With a view to gaining deeper picture of the power dynamics at the local level, this study shall bring together the pluralistic review of power, capitalising on their common orientation to see how they affect the daily social interactions between different actors. Combining different facets of power reviewed above represent a good benchmark for the study in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the power dynamics at the local level. For example, the structuration view on power highlights how social actors respond to both limitations and opportunities which flow from their daily lives and continuously renegotiate ongoing social relations. In contrast, the Foucauldian perspective on power revealed how “disciplinary power” helped in shaping the behaviour of actors to conform to societal norms and the struggle between different actors over different interpretations they give to societal standard. Lukes on the other hand radically presented power from the view point of the conflict between the interest of those exercising the power and the real interest of those being excluded. The benchmarks provided by Giddens, Foucault and Lukes complement one another.

### **2.6.3. Arrangements of Access to Resources**

In my framework (Figure 2.1), arrangements of access refer to the instruments or bundle of means for drawing on local resources by different

actors. Such arrangements which are fluid represent negotiating instruments for enhancing actors' access to local resources. Different arrangements may coincide with one another and interweave. The specific arrangements for drawing on land resources depend on nature of interest, economic values, historic and symbolic interpretations accorded the resources in a socially constructed environment. These include: inheritances, kinship, village membership, payments, rentals, licenses, gifts, leases, statutory regulations and customary practices. The appropriate arrangements through which actors draw on physical embodiment include: physical labour, effective communication (voice), knowledge, skills, *et cetera*. For infrastructural capital, the basic arrangements for accessing it comprise: payment, participation, co-operation, membership, *et cetera*. For financial resources, the appropriate arrangements cover payment by installments, granting loans and credits, returns from child labour, returns from sold labour, gifts from friends, relatives or membership of social associations, sales from agric produce, bride price, *et cetera*.

Unlike financial resources, the arrangements for drawing on institutional resources range from government agencies, state governments, village governments, village assemblies, village council, and local resources users group to community based organizations. The bundle of arrangements for drawing on social resources include: family relationship, kinship groups, network, contacts, informal negotiation, popularity, wealth, gender identities, class structure, ethnicity factor and social associations (youth groups, religious group and women group). Finally, protest, strikes, dialogue (negotiation), kidnapping, voting, public hearing, media, legal actions,

collective actions, citizenship, accountability, claims, local property rights and quotas for representation at local governance level are the basic arrangements through which people draw on resources of rights and entitlements.

#### **2.6.4. Outcomes**

From relationship between resources, actors' agency and arrangements of access, different categories of outcomes relevant to local governance can be identified at different levels (livelihood, access, unequal relationship between actors, political voice, representation and conflict). The access to local resources is also differentiated according to whether actors can access natural, financial, infrastructural, human and other forms of resources with little or no challenges. Where there are challenges for accessing local resources, the outcomes for the people will reveal the extent to which the affected are disadvantaged (Cleaver and Franks, 2005; Ellis, 2000). In terms of livelihood, the outcomes for actors are different. Some actors are able to use local resources to support and improve their livelihood relative to others due to differences in status, economic, social and political power, location and livelihood diversification (ibid).

With respect to agency, outcomes for different actors occur at political and representation levels in order to determine how the structures of power and influence either support or undermine the voices and rights of different actors at the local level (Cleaver and Franks, 2005; Lukes, 2005). The outcomes for local governance arrangements is treated in the framework for governance of natural resources in terms of social relations and processes

which develop over access and cases of inclusion and exclusion of different actors as a result of conflict (latent and overt) and unequal relationships between different actors (ibid)

Finally, the outcomes for environment are fundamental in explaining the framework for governance of natural resources. The reason is that it reveals the impact different actors have on the alteration of the environment in the exploitation and exploration of resources. The impact of actors on the environment has profound outcomes for different people and the environment itself. Therefore, outcomes for the environment and the poor are recursively interwoven in some respect. For example, as the environment changes as a result of impact of different actors on the use of resources, this will have impact on the survival of the poor depending on the extent of damage done to the environment (Cleaver and Franks, 2005 and Ellis, 2000).

## **2.7. Conclusion**

This chapter has critically engaged with the literature to develop conceptualization of governance of natural resources. In realizing this objective, I conducted an in-depth review within which the usage and application of governance were considered. These efforts broaden the review of governance beyond the practice of government to incorporate corporate and local institutions where governance practices exist but are often ignored. The chapter also filled the gap which emanated from under theorization of power relations (inequality) by global institutions of governance by discussing poverty and livelihood approaches. The knowledge from the poverty and

livelihood analysis provided an entry point into the definition of local governance.

The efforts above stimulated the development of a framework for governance of natural resources which provide the linkages between governance, poverty and natural resources management to be applied in the Delta region. It is fundamental to stress that the framework for governance is expected to unravel the extent of relationships between state, corporate and local institutions within the context of the resources management in the Niger Delta and also demonstrate how actions of different actors shape multiple outcomes. From the framework, I argued that various institutions involved in the management of resources need to be identified to discovered how different relationships are negotiated and renegotiated within the context of the socially dynamic environment.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter captures the methodology governing this thesis based on the literature review presented in the last chapter. The chapter begins by highlighting the research strategy and methodologies which informed the thesis. From this, the chapter discusses ethnography as a research strategy of the study and provides justification for the adoption of case study research design. In the next section, the chapter highlights the phases and methods of data collection. The chapter also presents how data generated were recorded, processed, and analyzed. The reflections on my position as a researcher and kidnapping experience during the field research in the Delta region are also discussed in this chapter. Finally, the chapter unravels ethical considerations which influenced data collection and the strategies I adopted to survive the dilemmas which flow from the field study.

#### **3.2. Research Strategy and Methodologies**

In conducting research on sensitive issues of this nature, one needs to plan the appropriate methodology to use in advance. This section presents the design and strategy of the study, phases and methods of data collection and research instruments and data sets.

##### **3.2.1. Research Design and Strategy of the Study.**

This thesis draws on ethnography, a qualitative research strategy which allows researchers to study the cultural and societal behaviour in a

natural context which are essential aspect of human experience (Creswell, 1994; Punch, 2001). The underlying foundation of ethnographic research strategy is that adequate knowledge of social behaviour cannot be completely understood until the researcher is equipped with the knowledge of the symbolic world<sup>22</sup> where people live (Fielding, 1994). In order to understand the dynamics of symbolic world, Hertz (1997) stressed the importance of reflexivity by an ethnographer to be able to obtain first hand information from the field. In relation to the governance of natural resources, it means an ethnographer can obtain first hand information on the use of local resources from actors based on the experience at their disposal and other factors that are informed by socio-cultural context, use of power and effects of such power relations on the actions of actors (Jeppensen, 1998; Long, 2003).

There are several reasons for adopting ethnographic strategy for a study like governance. First, the use of ethnography in this thesis will enable us to unravel multiple meanings social actors attribute to local resources judging from their experience and meanings these actors developed through patterns of social actions which are in some manner different from one cultural setting to another (Fielding, 1994). Second, the advantage of ethnography for a study like governance lies in its ability to facilitate understanding of everyday life of social actors and of the processes by which images, identities and social practices of these actors are shared, contested, negotiated and at times rejected by the various actors. This advantage

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<sup>22</sup> Symbolic world refers to the meanings people apply to their experiences, meanings developed through patterns of behaviour which are in some way different by comparison to the outside world (Fielding, 1994:157).

enables a researcher to appreciate how the actions of actors differently placed in a social system are produced and reproduced in order to shape the rules of engagement affecting the use of local resources (ibid: 48; Jeppensen, 1998; Lather, 2001). Third, the use of ethnography is eclectic, that means it is unrestrictive in terms of data collection techniques. The broader methodological approach of ethnography stimulated McCall and Simmons (1969) comments as follows:

*“Ethnography includes some amount of genuinely social interaction in the field with the subjects of the study, some direct observation or relevant events, some formal and a great deal of informal interviewing, some systematic counting, some collection of documents and artifacts; and open-endedness in the direction the study takes (p1).”*

Ethnography has been chosen for this study relative to other research strategies like experimental and survey approaches for a number of reasons. In the case of experimental approach, the researcher is allowed to control or influence the research situation when involved in the study of two or more groups. In the case of studying two groups, the researcher can change the first group (this is called the experimental group) and leave the other group intact (this called the control group). On the basis of this, the researcher can explain the reason for the change which the experimental group has caused to the controlled group. Due to the influence researchers have over variables in experimental design, its external validity becomes weak because of the changes made to the variables in the experiment (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996:148). Ethnography is a preferable research strategy because it studies human lives and social interaction in action outside a



controlled environment (Punch, 2001). Unlike quantitative survey research which provides an artificial account of how the social world operates because researchers conduct research (through questionnaire) using their own assumptions or self understanding about a particular research issue, ethnography provides a better operation of the social world because it investigates people in a natural setting (Bryman and Bell, 2003). The strength of ethnography over survey research is its opportunity to allow researchers to study human behaviour and cultural setting in original form in order to gain proper understanding of the context and factors which determine human behaviour (ibid; Punch, 2001).

This study is conducted within a case study design. A case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1991).

The use of case studies in social research has its own strengths. First, the case study allows in-depth investigation into any area of research being investigated. It also produces first hand information in its natural setting and employs methods that encourage familiarity and close contact with the informants. Furthermore, the use of case studies allows the employment of variety of interrelated methods and sources and focuses on direct and verifiable life experiences. Besides, case study design also has the strength of creating long term contacts and personal experiences in the field and finally produces information that covers the whole unit and not only small aspects of it (Ragin, 1992; Sarantakos, 2005: 212 and Bromley, 1986) .

The case studies design has been chosen for this study as opposed to other designs for both theoretical and practical reasons. On the theoretical note, governance issue is a process and cannot be sufficiently addressed by simply using other designs which exclude the context and the historical background. In essence, both current and historical data will be required to contextualize the study. The case study design facilitates data collection under such circumstances (Yin, 1991). On practical note, time and financial constraints conveniently place case study design over other designs where unmanageable samples of the population are required to fulfill statistical reliability and validity criteria (ibid).

Within the case study design, the study uses the ethnographic methods of data collection such as semi-structured interview, focused group discussions, life histories and oral traditions, informal observation, life histories and archival sources. Multiple methods of data collection are imperative in a study like governance to provide for triangulation in order to improve on the quality of reality (Robson, 2002). That means, where the use of interviews in data collection is insufficient, other data collection methods such as archival sources, life history and informal observation will augment the gaps (ibid).

Like other scholars in qualitative research, Robson (2002) and Bryman and Bell (2003) were of the view that sampling in a research of a case study design like governance for natural resources is better guided by theoretical sampling and snowball sampling because of the better fit between these sampling techniques. The theoretical sampling was adopted in this research to facilitate the selection of the units of investigation which enhanced my

ability to collect the required data. The beauty of this sampling approach is that it does not place limitation to the number of actors that can be selected for the study, other than to stop interacting with these actors whenever theoretical saturation point<sup>23</sup> has reached its limit (ibid; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Theoretical sampling has the limitation of completely identifying the participants to be sampled in a complex, conflict ridden and pluralistic environment like the Niger Delta. In such a situation, the question of access becomes more challenging. Snowball sampling is adopted as a remedy in this circumstance to break the jinx of access to contacts of the social actors through which I was able to reach out to other social actors relevant to this research. This position is further supported by the fact that whenever a researcher needs to reflect on the relationship between people, snowballing is preferable as such approach provides clearer picture of the network which exist between various participants being linked to the study (ibid). In essence, the study units for this research are located in the research areas ((Bori and Agbere) where the state, corporate and local actors were observed, studied and interviewed to understand complex social relations which exist in the struggle for local resources in the Niger Delta.

Unlike quantitative research methodology, the use of sampling in this study is not to make generalizations about the entire population but to reflect on how the processes of relationships between various actors provide deeper knowledge of local governance (ibid; Limb, 2004). Therefore, the ethnographic method of data collection in this study enhanced deeper

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<sup>23</sup> Theoretical saturation point is used in this study to mean a point where generation of data from actors has been fully explored and no new insights are being generated (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

penetration into the social lives of the actors to capture their actions and its implications on the livelihood and management of local resources in the Delta. Therefore, data generated (as captured in section 3.2.2 and 3.2.3) facilitated my ability to link them with the theoretical concepts developed in chapter two to enhance internal validity of the research (Bryman, 2004:273). The next section discusses the procedure for phases of data collection.

### **3.2.2. Phases of Data Collection**

This section presents the phases, sources and the challenges involved during the data collection exercise in the Niger Delta. The data collection covered a six month period, between July-December, 2009. Data collection within the context of a volatile, pluralistic and complex region like the Niger Delta was quite challenging. On account of the difficulties encountered, I employed high level negotiating skills to navigate different research spaces and reconfigure my chances of survival throughout the period of stay on the field. At a point, I encountered total breakdown of infrastructure in the hotels where I lodged as a result of infrastructure failure from the central and states power providers and the technical failure of the hotel generator. These problems affected the pace of my data collection. The situation was the same in the villages where we collected data. Worse still were the challenges I faced getting the monthly reports from the field research forwarded to my supervisors. I had to travel from my research locations to places where there were fairly effective cyber cafes to be able to forward these reports at exorbitant prices. This was because the few

functional cyber cafes had to resort to the use of generators to power their information technology (IT) and office facilities.

Within the context of the selected research locations, data collection for this study involved three mutually reinforcing stages: the preliminary, main data collection and supplementary data collection stage. These stages of data collection are discussed in turn.

### *Preliminary Stage*

At the preliminary stage, I devoted July, 2009 to training my field assistant (Friday Opara). Opara hails from Bori in Khana local government area of Rivers State. He speaks Ogoni language fluently and holds a Bachelor of Science (B.sc) degree in Banking and Finance from the Lagos State University and a Diploma in Statistics from Kwara State Polytechnic. After his undergraduate studies, Opara relocated to Rivers State in 2009 in search for white collar job. After unsuccessful efforts at getting a job, he started a local network project through financial support from friends. From this network, Opara raised the consciousness of the villagers on the importance and challenges of community development in Bori. His regular interactions with the Bori people strengthen the network of his contacts with different people in Bori including the youth groups, women groups, local chiefs, politicians, community based organizations and some villagers. Therefore, the requisite knowledge of my field assistant at the grassroots level (particularly his contacts and network with different local people), his academic qualification, strong passion and concern for the state of development of the region provided the reasons for choosing him.

Besides the reasons for selecting Opara, I strongly felt he required adequate knowledge about the research mission on the field to be well guided and adequately prepared against the challenges of conducting a study of this nature. The training covered areas including the general background of the research, the objectives of the study, methodology and methods of data collection, skills required for sound data collection and ethical issues affecting data collection. In the course of training, I argued local governance was the searchlight of the study and considerably linked governance with poverty and natural resource management so that he could have a clearer picture of the study. During the training, I specifically drew his attention to how local people do things and how the activities of actors at the state and corporate levels such as government at all levels, multinational oil companies affect the conditions of living of the local people. Besides, I also discussed how to achieve successful strategic mapping with him. In actual fact, we reactivated several contacts spanning across the stakeholders and got several appointments booked. Furthermore, we considered the necessity for effective direction so that we could adhere strictly to events without distractions. In addition, I highlighted and critically reflected over the major themes to be investigated and how they affect the objectives of the study. These are: relationship between stakeholders of governance, management of environmental problems, livelihood, roles and accountability of social actors of governance, participation, gender issues, socio-cultural/institutional considerations and partnership of social actors. I also discussed the nitty-gritty of triangulation and how it could enhance the quality of data collection from the stakeholders of governance. I argued that the questions to ask

actors should be semi-structured to be able to capture deeper thoughts of these actors to enhance the quality of data. Furthermore, I deliberated with the field research assistant on the most effective ways of tracking down the participants based on our appointments schedule and agreed to keep strictly to time to be able to honour appointments and used mobile phones to remind our participants in advance of every appointment.

### *Main Data Collection Stage*

I started the main data collection stage precisely in August, 2009 and it lasted till November 2009 (see Table 3.1). This stage was the most challenging part of the exercise for several reasons. In the first instance, it set the stage for practical interactions with the actors interviewed and facilitated the information gathered both from informal observation, life histories and archival sources. Secondly, it enabled me to have clearer picture of the governance situation at the local level. More so, I also found different or pluralistic behaviour from the actors of governance and how actions of some of these actors affected the interest of other actors. The actions of the actors of governance interviewed differed from one another. But we had to employ high level diplomatic, cultural and negotiating skills in areas of difficulties (Ali and Kelly, 2004; Mullins, 2007).

From the guidelines I prepared during the preliminary stage of the data collection, it was indicated that the main data collection should start from Rivers state. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, Rivers state is the headquarters of the entire Niger Delta region. Therefore, using Rivers state as a starting point provided the much required advantage for linking the state

and corporate actors of governance. The second argument was premised on the fact that Rivers state is the headquarters of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). Similarly, Rivers state also serves as the South-Southern<sup>24</sup> regional headquarters of the trio of the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC) and Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) respectively. Despite the appointments I earlier booked with these organizations, I still encountered a number of problems with their gatekeepers. The organizations all requested for a letter of introduction to be provided by the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation. Initially, I felt uncomfortable with the restrictive arrangement or procedure where having collected a letter of introduction from the University of Bradford I also needed to collect another letter of introduction from NNPC. Notwithstanding, I complied with the procedure and my compliance produced the much needed letter of introduction after five days. The letters came through intense negotiation with the gatekeepers from Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation.

With these letters, I gained access into various offices of these organizations. Virtually all the organizations had to re-book us for other appointments which we subsequently honoured. It may be necessary to state that collecting data from these organizations had its own challenges (see section 3.2.3).

The situation with the Bori people was more tasking given their conservative cultural background. The moment they spotted us, it became evident we were strangers until my field assistant communicated with them in

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<sup>24</sup> The south-southern geo-political zone in Nigeria comprises: Akwa-ibom state, Bayelsa state, Cross River state, Delta state, Edo state and Rivers state.



their local dialect. Even though, we had prior contact with the local people, we still faced the problem of acceptability until both of us renegotiated our relationships with them. The next thing was to go their traditional and cultural ways by wining with the people by drinking their local dry gin. According to their culture, local dry gin is shared with strangers as a mark of peace and acceptability (Kpone-Tonwe, 1990; Omoweh, 2005). The renewed relationship later took us through the interactions with the traditional leaders, youth leaders, village heads and officials of the community-based organizations in Bori.

Table 3 1: Phases of Data Collection

Phases	Activities	Schedule
1.Preliminary stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training and Contacts</li> <li>Training of field assistant, collection and re-activation of contacts.</li> <li>- Strategic Mapping,</li> <li>Adhering strictly to schedules, seeking contacts and appointments.</li> <li>-Tracking of participants</li> <li>Federal, state and local government officials, civil society organizations officials, NDDC officials, local community members, youth leaders, officials of multinationals.</li> </ul>	July, 2009
2. Main Data Collection Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Forms of Data Collection, Semi-structured interview, focused group discussion, informal observation, oral tradition, life histories, archival searches.</li> </ul>	August- November, 2009.
3.Supplementary Data Collection stage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make up Data Collection: Catching up with failed areas continuous enquires and further archival searches.</li> </ul>	December, 2009.

Source: Author's Field Research, 2009.

The situation with data collection in Agbere marked a turning point in our field work due to its geographical location. The area is located on River Nun and is only accessible by local speed boat which was more expensive relative to the transport fares commuting between Bori villages. Secondly, it takes about an hour to get a turn of local speed boat while it takes between one to one and half hours to commute from Odi terminus to Agbere village. The situation with the local people in Agbere was much more difficult due to the complex terrain of the environment. The people were quite unfriendly and somehow hostile to strangers primarily due to long years of neglect and inability from the state and corporate actors to keep faith with their agreements. Due to the bitter experience they have suffered from these actors, the villagers found it difficult to believe us even where we disclosed the purposes of our mission.

Unlike Bori, it took several hours to convince the people about our research mission. Initially, they considered us to be government officials and threatened to employ uncivilized ways to deal with us where it was discovered we were not researchers. This threat came amidst entreaties from one of our contact persons from the place. After several hours of scrutiny, we were later allowed into the village. At Agbere, I conducted semi-structured interviews with the traditional leaders, youth leaders, village heads and villagers. The interview became very acceptable to the people of the area when they discovered the reality of our mission and they clamoured that their positions be reported the way they responded to our questions. They advanced this position largely out of mistrust from researchers who explored

the region in the past for research purposes but never published the true side of their findings (ibid; O' Neil, 2007).

### *Supplementary Data Collection Stage*

By the time I got to this stage, a reasonable part of the data needed was already collected except for those from the failed contacts which I had to reactivate, other enquiries that developed in relation to the topic and other information which required travelling outside the Niger Delta. This was the situation with further interview with one of the officials of Shell Oil Company in Lagos where its corporate affairs department is situated. Similarly, we also got referral to the Lagos office of Agip Oil Company to be able to complement the information gathered from their Port-Harcourt office in Rivers state (see Table 3.1).

### **3.2.3. Methods of Data Collection**

Scholars argue that the methods used in collecting data follow largely from literature review and once the research questions have been carefully formulated and a good sample drawn, the next link in the research process is the data collection instrument (Burton, 2000; Fowler, 1993). On account of this position, the data for this study was collected from primary and documentary sources. The primary data was generated mainly through: interviews, focused group discussions, informal observation and life history while documentary sources provided the inputs for the secondary data. These sources of primary data are discussed in subsequent part of the section.

### *Interviews (Semi-Structured and Focused Group Discussions)*

The interview method was used to collect data from the selected villages. While following May (2001), this thesis draws on semi-structured and focused group discussions for interacting with actors in the research locations. The semi-structured interview was chosen for the purposes of reflexivity, naturalism, openness, flexibility, which a questionnaire may not be able to provide (ibid). The semi-structured interview was conducted at the state, corporate and the local institutional levels. The actors targeted at the state and corporate levels were: state officials, local government officials, officials of the NDDC, officials of the multinational oil companies and officials of the NNPC. Interacting with these officials was challenging at every moment due to the sensitive nature of my research topic. There was reluctance initially from the gatekeepers to grant us access into other places even where we had earlier gotten oral approval through our contacts.

The major reason for reluctance of these gatekeepers was based on directives from the management that sensitive topic like governance of Niger Delta should not be discussed with any researcher except where the senior officials are convinced of the researcher's identity. This situation became frustrating in the two multinational companies I visited until I convinced their respective public relations officers. To be precise, the public relations officer of Agip Oil Company became easily enthusiastic about my mission for two reasons. One, he stated categorically that my topic may likely provide the basis for the socio-economic transformation of the Niger Delta. Secondly, he stated I had similar identity and charisma with one of his children studying in

the United Kingdom. On the basis of these factors, I was granted entry to meet him for interview. At various intervals, he had to raise some fear judging from the questions being asked. In the middle of the interview, he threatened to arrest me if it was discovered I was a journalist rather than being a research student. But I always had to reassure him of my genuine mission rather than being an undercover journalist. More so, I ensured that I got his consent at intervals in order to observe the ethics of data collection.

The situation with Shell Oil Company was more worrisome as researchers were not allowed to have access to their information except through high level contact. As a matter of fact, the entire Shell office in Port Harcourt was surrounded with armed security personnel due to the unfriendly relationship between the organization and the local people. Notwithstanding, I survived the hurdle of gate keeping at Shell Oil company through my initial contact through which I was directed to the corporate office in Lagos to conduct the interview. On getting to the corporate office in Lagos the following day, the official in charge of corporate affairs only referred me to their journals except for some relevant information I got from him in the course of our discussions. My experience with the oil companies was not different from the agencies of the government. However, I survived the hurdle through a number of factors including patience, sound negotiating skills, good interpersonal relations, and effective communication and the knowledge from research skills and scholarship training from the University of Bradford. Besides, the local people were also interviewed based on the interview guide and other issues which were germane to the study (Bryman, 2004: 321). At the local level, the actors interviewed included: officials of the community

based organizations, traditional leaders, youth leaders, women, men, village heads, members of social, cultural and religious organizations and villagers (see appendix B).

A focused group discussions (FGDs) is a planned discussion designed to obtain perception on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment. It is used to engage participants in focused discussion of an issue and to produce qualitative data that provides insight into the attitudes, perceptions and opinions of actors. The focus group method offers information about group processes, spontaneous feelings, reasons and explanations for attitudes and behaviour of the actors interviewed (ibid, Krueger, 1988). Employing the FGDs in this study has a number of advantages. The major advantage is that it allows the researcher to obtain data from a large number of actors in a short time span. That is, the time I spent conducting the FGDs was relatively shorter than for the semi-structured interviews. Additionally, it enables the researcher to find the realities surrounding interactions between different actors at the local levels and how such interactions shape village governance (see appendix B and C for comprehensive information on FGDs).

The focused group discussions also provided an avenue for the men and women drawn from the youths and adults to ventilate their views on several dimensions of governance as it affects their environment and local people. I actually had two sessions of the focused group interview per group. The focused group interview from Bori comprised equal men and women drawn from the village but separated for the purpose of obtaining reliable data from them. I realized the women felt more independent and comfortable

expressing their views on several dimensions of governance from the stakeholders and how they are directly affected when separated from men.

I conducted focused group discussion for twelve participants in Agbere which comprised equal men and women together. The reason for adopting this option was to determine the level of independence, exclusion and marginalization of women by men in the scheme of governance at the local level. The FGDs started on a very peaceful note until one of the male participants raised an eyebrow that it was against the traditions of Agbere to recognize women or be allowed to talk before men. The women in attendance felt slighted leading to power tussle and exchange of words between both sexes. The struggle between them created a conflict atmosphere for hours which were later resolved the following day by a group of elders and youth leaders from the village (Hobbs, 1988; Lee-Treweek and Linkogle, 2000).

#### *Informal observation*

This method involves observing the actions and activities of actors and documenting them. In ethnographic parlance, observation has diverse interpretations (see: Gold, 1958; Gans, 1968; Punch, 2005; Silverman, 2004, 2005). While following these scholars, this thesis adopted moderate observation (informal observation) to observe events in the selected villages in relation to how governance work at the local level, particularly in relation to poverty and access to natural resources. That means, there is some observation, but very little of it involves participation (see: *ibid*: 301 Sarantakos, 2005; May, 2001: 146-174). Besides being relatively less



complicated, cost and time effectiveness, informal observation method has been chosen because it offers data relevant to local governance of natural resources from research areas which actors were unable to offer through the interviews (ibid). The notes taken, tapes recorded, photographs taken and video recorded all shaped the quality and outcome of the observation as my encounter with the actors and the research areas turned the observation into natural interaction which simplified documentation of events as they occur (Stanley and McLaren, 2007; Miller and Brewer, 2003; Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1996).

#### *Oral tradition/Life history method*

The relevance of both oral tradition and oral history in data collection has been acknowledged in the literature. For clarity a distinction between these methods of data collection is necessary. By oral tradition, we mean the verbal transmission of cultural material and traditions from time to time. The life history method on the other hand emphasizes information about the inner experience of social actors and its relationship with changing events and phases throughout the life course using data arising from life history interview and personal documents (Vansina, 1985; Ki-Zerbo, 1990; Bryman, 2004:540). Both oral tradition and life history methods were employed to supplement the information which archival sources and informal observation were unable to cover.

Through the oral tradition, I was able to capture the originality of the traditions and culture of local actors relevant to local governance in both Bori and Agbere. For instance, the question of migration of Ogoni and Ijaw people

was properly captured through oral traditions. Life history method enabled me to understand the changes that took place in the lives of social actors and how such changes enabled or constrained the interest of these actors (Vansina, 1985; Ki-Zerbo, 1990 Bryman, 2004).

#### *Archival information (Secondary Sources)*

The importance of documentary data has been documented in the literature (see: MacDonald, 1993; 2001). Documentary data was collected for the purposes of analyzing the structure of local governance in the Niger Delta region. The data from documents on policies, laws, regulations on natural resources and interventions that have taken place in the region were instrumental in shaping the analytical chapters of my thesis. For this purpose, archival data were obtained from the federal office of statistics (FOS), state offices of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), research departments of multinational oil companies, research department of United Nations mission in Nigeria, the central bank of Nigeria (CBN). However, accesses to these offices were facilitated through intensive exploration of their websites, contacts through friends, relatives working in these offices and the letter of introduction from the University of Bradford.

### **3.3. Data Recording and Analysis**

The data generated from the field research were recorded in field notes, voice recording, video and photographic images. In the case of interviews conducted, I employed a considerable number of field notes and in some cases I had to draw on voice recording. For example, whenever actors felt

uncomfortable with voice recording, I resorted to the use of field notes based on their consent. For most of the information gathered through informal observation either at the state, corporate or local institutional levels, I used a combination of video, photographic images and field notes to document my interaction with social actors. In cases where the information observed was not explanatory enough, I took photographic images and in other cases, I recorded events with video as they occur. Where both photographic evidence and video images were inadequate, I took field notes of events as they are captured in the research locations. For instance, the monthly women's meeting at Agbere, I was privileged to informally observe their deliberations because it was conducted in the open and based on their consent I also took some photographic images which informed the manner through which decisions are taken by Agbere women in a social setting. My observation and interaction with these women showed the role women play in shaping local governance of the village particularly, how they draw on support from the membership of their social organization to cope with financial difficulties. With respect to oral tradition, I documented the historical account of the cultural traditions of the local people as they were presented to me by participants. This account helped me to understand the origin, sources and changes which have taken place in the traditions of local people. This is also important to understand the extent to which such cultural transformation has affected local governance of resources. The archival sources were documented in printed forms and were supported with some field notes to be able to separate public documents from private documents.

The information recorded from the data collection generated mass data which was not easy to organize and analyze. The large volume of data generated requires high level of research skills for data preparation, data reduction and data analysis to enable me to achieve the research objectives of the study. In order to deal with the challenges from the mass data generated, I listened to the conversation which emanated from the field and brought other data together (field notes, photographic and video sources, documents) to have an understanding of how and what type of data were collected. Through this, I identified the strengths of my data and wasted no time in collecting additional data which was not covered in my research questions. This approach set the direction for my data analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Mason, 2002).

I began the data analysis by developing key words, thematic areas relevant to the research, which I later classified into categories (Resources-Agency-Arrangements of Access-Outcomes). The classification of data into categories, facilitated the reduction of data what was hitherto considered too bulky. The strategy I adopted was manual through which a matrix was developed to classify words arising from the data into various categories written in a spreadsheet from time to time. This process became recursively applied until I completed the task of data analysis (ibid: 408-9).

### **3.4. Reflections on Field Research**

In conducting ethnographic studies in a volatile environment like the Niger Delta, it is very important to plan in advance on how to build a good relationship as a researcher with the local people to be researched. This

relationship to some extent will determine the quality of data to be collected, safety of the researcher and ability of the researcher to negotiate his ways during difficult situations in the field. In view of the fact that conducting research at the local level of Bori and Agbere involves intruding into peoples' lives, it was essential on my part as a researcher to create a mutually respectful and a win-win relationship with the actors in order to encourage my participants to respond candidly based on sound relationship with the interviewer (Miller and Brewer, 2003; Benyard and Flanagan, 2005). In this section, I will discuss my reflections with actors in the research locations where the data collection took place between July and December, 2009. These reflections are divided into my position as a researcher and my reflection on kidnapping.

#### **3.4.1. Reflection on my Position as a Researcher**

The sensitivity of my research topic posed different challenges through which my field assistant and I negotiated our relationships with the actors at different times. This experience was in agreement with the view of Michelowski (1997) who submits that ethnographers must negotiate their path through pluralistic discourses, each of which may have different implications on their investigations. This position is truly connected with every step taken in interacting with social actors in the selected areas of my research locations.

In spite of the fact that we had previously booked appointments with the gatekeepers, I still had some skirmishes with access into virtually all offices of the senior officials of these institutions. At every point, actors became

uncomfortable with the sensitivity of my research topic. For example, during an encounter with the officials of the NNPC, the head of corporate affairs also became suspicious of me and my topic. At a point in time, it became difficult to get back to him having re-booked another date for our interview. By the time I succeeded in meeting him, he scrutinized my identity further and I had to convince him I originally came from the South western part of Nigeria, precisely, Lagos. Besides, one of his children bears my name, Ibrahim, a Muslim name. Through this means, I successfully negotiated my path to enhance my acceptability by the actor (NNPC official). Thereafter, we started interactive process which lasted for long. Notwithstanding, he ensured he played safe with me and had to tell me not to record his voice on some sensitive information. The situation with Shell Oil Company was the most challenging due to the strained relationship the oil company have had with researchers in the past. On arrival, we became subject of suspicion as the police officers subjected us to series of checks the moment they realized I was researching the Niger Delta. Little effort was made to ask about the purpose of the research but the name Niger Delta was the straw which broke the camels back in this case where over twenty of these police officers surrounded me to raise a number of questions bothering on security checks. After two hours of intensive discussion with the most senior security personnel, I was directed to contact the public affairs department in Lagos. But I survived the hurdle of suspicion from the police officers through high level diplomacy and sound deployment of interpersonal skills.

The context of insider–outsider divide shaped my interaction in the data collection process in both Bori and Agbere villages. I was considered an

insider whenever village actors felt free talking to me and our interaction became smooth without any threat or fear of obstruction. Whenever the question of trust is raised on sensitive issues, then greater level of secrecy had to be maintained as a sign of regarding me as an outsider (that is a visitor). In Bori, we attended a Sunday church service in one of the local white garment churches. This service brought me into contact with a number of villagers (in addition to previous contacts) who command reasonable level of respect and authority in the village through which we contacted other influential members of the village. On the basis of this, I had little or no problem getting information regarding the historical changes that have taken place within Bori from time to time because I was considered as an insider due to the influence the social actor that linked me commanded. In different situations, I was treated both as an insider and outsider by social actors in Agbere. In the area involving general interaction affecting the livelihood of the local people, resources management, the origin of the Agbere people, I had no problem getting information from the villagers until questions were raised about the cultural aspects of the people's lives. Through one of my contacts (Clifford), I was able to get detailed information regarding how the culture of Agbere affects the local governance of the village.

With these contacts, the elders of the village became comfortable to share useful parts of the culture of the land with me except those that have grievous implications on human lives. The FGDs I conducted generated robust output as a number of villagers in Agbere already considered me as part of the village due to my frequent visits in the village. The discussions we had with the actors opened up so many challenges which affected the local

governance of the village including lack of participation, conditions of the poor, access to resources, livelihood systems and survival strategies of the local people, relationship building at the local level, conflict management, *et cetera*

### **3.4.2 Reflection on Kidnapping.**

The professional guidelines of the British Sociological Association (2005) enjoin researchers to be mindful of risk to their own safety that could arise in the conduct of research. Prior study conducted by Lee-Treeneek and Linkogle (2000) was more emphatic in terms of the volatility of the research environment where the research would take place. The importance of this position stimulated these writers to warn researchers to be extra vigilant and cautious when investigating conflict prone areas .The degree and intensity of the crises in the Niger Delta stimulated O' Neill (2007) to state as follows: "The number and severity of attacks in the Niger Delta have been building, led by youth groups demanding access to the oil wealth in their territories. The surge in militancy is emblematic of a continent-wide frustration among the young (p.44)." Since my research took place in the Delta region, I took a number of steps which emanated from the risk assessment of my field work including:

- I prepared a comprehensive schedule in conjunction with local organisations and NGOs to identify the areas of study to be covered.
- I created effective communication through the use of mobile phone, informing my field assistant of my where-about.



- I also remained responsive to risk and was able to devise alternative exit routes in case of any eventuality.
- I undertook regular review of plans and contacts to forestall unexpected risks.

These strategies worked very well for me as the region witnessed reasonable level of peace except for my kidnapping experience by armed militants that overpowered our speed boat along River Nun on my return from Agbere to Odi after the completion of FGDs with the local actors. The militants instantly gained the control of our boat as one of them took over the control of the boat from the original driver while the boat brought by the militants followed ours as the journey lasted. About six of us were actually kidnapped (the boat driver, three other passengers, my field assistant and myself). My field assistant and I were held for two and half weeks. But my field assistant and I were the last to be released as other passengers negotiated their freedom on account of being indigenes of Agbere. This reflected in their flow of communication with one of the militants that operated our boat. The situation would have been more favourable to us but for the fact that I could not communicate in Ijaw dialect unlike bits of understanding of the language by my research assistant. Upon realizing both of us were together, the militants became suspicious. On one ground, my field assistant was treated as a sell out to the Ijaw cause for associating with me when the militants never knew about our level of relationship.

The condition of living at the kidnapping camp was quite unbearable and unavoidably disgusting. On getting to the unknown destination, we became separated and I became the main target of the militants due to the

conspicuous nature of my physique and lack of proficiency in Ijaw language. They conducted series of checks on me, after which they discovered I was a foreign postgraduate researcher from the University of Bradford. This alone intensified pressure against my person in the light of the relationship of Shell Petroleum Development Company with Britain. The militant group subjected me to dehumanizing conditions. For a number of days, I could not eat because I had no trust in the food they served us. Besides, I could not sleep for several days due to the horrible things I sighted in the camps (human bones, some fresh corpses and kidnapped people including few oil workers whose cases were yet to be decided and shrines where some human flesh were hung for sacrifices). One of them had wanted to open gunfire at me but for the immediate intervention of the commander who became convinced about my mission in Agbere after realizing I was from Lagos and that I hold a senior teaching appointment position at the Lagos State University. Fortunately, I was with the identity card of my place of work and wasted no time displaying it. The intervention of the camp commander marked a turning point in the kidnapping experience as the commander became enthusiastic about my expression in which I told the group of militants I have been researching the Niger Delta to find the truth about its development in the last ten years (from 1997 to 2007). I equally stated I had written a number of journal articles which dealt with the position of the local people and also the position of the government. But I told him the field study which resulted in my kidnap was meant to gather current data related to the role of different actors in the local governance of natural resources in the region. On the basis of this expression, the commander became convinced about my position. He

also expressed his feelings and allowed me to ask further questions which I felt could improve the quality of my research.

According to the commander and few of the militant group that were very fluent in English language, they were forced into kidnapping and oil bunkering survival since the oil resources which belongs to the region is being utilized for the good of other regions which contributed nothing to the Delta region. After exhaustive talks with these militants, the commander directed that my field assistant and I be released. That was the first experience I have ever had with kidnapping despite having lived for decades in a more conflict city like Lagos. I did not find it easy spending part of my life in the creek, but I concluded within me that such experience could have happened to me outside my research endeavour. I survived the hurdle through luck, prayers and sound negotiation from my training in research ethics. It became clear to me that dangers could not have been totally averted in a place like Niger Delta in spite of sound ethical research planning I took into account at every stage of data collection process.

### **3.5. Ethical Issues Guiding Research Decisions**

Ethics refer to the moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication of results and beyond. For example, the curation of data and physical samples after the research has been published (ESRC, 2007).

The data collection exercise which guided my thesis was carried out in strict compliance with ethics of research to enhance reliability and validity of my data. In all the methods of data collection used for interacting with

different actors across the research areas, I ensured I received the consent of all actors prior to my social interaction with them. This was carried out by divulging my identity, purpose, methods and duration of the study, appropriate and detailed explanation of potential risks and harm in meaningful terms to the participant (Stanley and McLaren, 2007:38; Miller and Brewer, 2003: 96; De Laine, 2000; Ali and Kelly, 2004). Getting the consent of the actors provided opportunity for me to interact with them to get facts which flowed from the governance of resources in the research areas. This was facilitated through exchange of ideas between the actors and me following the consent agreement which provided the actors with my mission and purposes of the research. Secondly, I also ensured I acted with integrity throughout the data collection exercise by integrating my actions with the values of research ethics. For example, I was not oblivious of the rules guiding privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of information of actors from falling into wrong hands (Rowson, 2006:125). During interviews with some villagers in Agbere, the actors claimed anonymity due to sensitivity of some of the information which arose in the course of our interaction which I instantly obliged. Some actors from Bori became comfortable being interviewed in the privacy of their room. For most of the interviews I had with the state and corporate officials, the question of confidentiality was strongly emphasized by the actors. I did a lot to protect the interest of these actors from being harmed. I also ensured I guarded against actions which could infringe on their rights to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. I made these efforts to avoid subjecting the participants to personal agony, psychological distress and humiliation.

On power, authority and production of knowledge, I became guided by responsibility of research ethics in my encounter with different actors. I employed reflexivity and ethical practices which influenced the behaviour of actors under different situations. For example, all the actors interviewed had different perspectives on local governance of resources in the Delta region and every actor became determined to influence the quality of my findings to their advantage. For instance, one of the corporate actors interviewed did ask if my research was going to project his organization in good light or otherwise. But I parried this question through high level diplomacy. Through triangulation approach, I overcame the problem of power influence over data collection and analysis by balancing the position of facts from all actors in the Delta to promote objectivity and fairness in the production of knowledge.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the road map towards realization of the research objectives of this thesis. In doing so, the chapter discussed the research strategy and provided justification for the adoption of a case study design within which ethnographic methods of data collection was used to investigate the daily social lives of different actors. The chapter also explained the processes involved in managing the data generated from the field and showed how the data was analyzed by manual method. The chapter further highlighted my reflections on the field research which covered my position as a researcher and critical reflection on how I was kidnapped during the data collection exercise. The data generated from the field was used to

answer the research question in the thesis. In conclusion, this chapter represents a blue print for providing clear direction for my research.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE IN THE NIGER**  
**DELTA: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS**

**4.1 Introduction**

To conduct historical analysis of governance and development in the Niger Delta region is a challenging task in the light of phenomenal phases of development the region has passed through. Drawing on Marx (1970), Haralambos and Holborn (1995) regarded people as both the producers and the products of society. The writers attributed people as makers of society and themselves by their own actions and linked history with the process of human self creation. Haralambos and Holborn (1995) further argue that proper understanding of society involves a historical perspective which investigates the process whereby people both produce and are produced by social reality. On account of the foregoing position, analyzing the Niger Delta's governance process is as good as reflecting upon the power relations which shape the interactions between different actors during the pre-colonial era, colonial era and postcolonial era (Debord, 1994).

Therefore, my intention in this chapter is to critically analyze the dynamics of power relations which shape the governance of resources and development process in the Niger Delta. In addressing this question, the chapter employs historical approach to draw on the emerging institutional perspectives to disentangle the complexities of power play in multiple locations by differentiated social actors over symbolic, economic, locally and historically embedded and socially constructed natural resources in the Niger

Delta during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. In this chapter, I argue that power is not static but fluid, full of domination and resistance, dynamic and embedded in the fabric of the social system which is located in every perception, judgement and actions of social actors (Foucault, 1982, 1986; Sharp et al, 2000). These conceptions of power clearly explain the complexities involved in the governance of local resources during different phases of development.

#### **4.2. Power Relationships during Pre-colonial Era.**

The analysis of people's lives will provide deeper insights into understanding of the pre-capitalist activities of the Niger Delta and the relationship it bears with colonial intervention to reveal the impact of the intervention on the local governance of the people in the Niger Delta. Scholars like Dike (1956), Alagoa (1964), Afigbo (1972), Olowu and Wunsch (2004), Omoweh (2005) and Okonta (2008) acknowledged similarity in the governance systems of the local people in the Delta region during the pre-colonial activities. Their findings highlighted indigenous or traditional governance systems in the Niger Delta responsible for shaping the lives of the local people. Contributions from these scholars greatly shape the analysis of the power relationships during the pre-colonial era along three spheres: political, economic and socio-cultural.

##### **4.2.1. Political Systems in the Pre-colonial Niger Delta.**

The political systems of governance during the pre-colonial period was based on local values as decision making processes were chiefly governed by both monarchical and republican systems (Omoweh, 2005). It is



interesting to analyze the operations of these systems of local governance in order to explain how it shaped power relations between the traditional rulers and the local people in the Niger Delta.

The Bonny kingdom<sup>25</sup> of Ijaw comprised several settlements including Okoloma, Finima, Ayama and Febre, Kalibiama, Abalamabie, Ayambo, Aganya and Iwoma, Isilegona, Egelebie and Bologiri, Oboma, Kuruma and host of others. Cooky (1974) found each of the villages was regarded as canoe-house<sup>26</sup> headed by the village leader who made decisions with other members of the village on issues affecting the local development of his settlement. The village leader convened meetings at his discretion where selected members of the village appointed on merit made collective contributions to village development and made rules and regulations on the governance of their locality. Findings from Cooky (1974) revealed the King of Bonny was also responsible for ensuring ritual rites related to commemoration of the ancestors were performed and represents his canoe-house at the “council of head of canoe houses meeting” where all rules and decision governing all the canoe houses were made (ibid). The council represented the centre of legislative and judicial organ of decision making on issues affecting Bonny kingdom. At the council meeting, the “Amanyabo” presided as the head and allowed every village head to ventilate their views

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<sup>25</sup> Benatari (2006) found Bonny kingdom was established by the Isedani Ijaw lineage of Kolokuma who left the central Ebe of Kolokuma on the directive of tradition to avert civil conflict between 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century. They first settled in Ogoni and finally settled at the present Bonny, eastern sub-group of the Ijaw kingdom in Rivers State of Nigeria. The Bonny people were traditionally called Ibanis, a name which derived from Kala-beni which literally means small water. Oral tradition has it that Tarakiri, one of the founders of Agbere was the sibling of Isedani.

<sup>26</sup> A canoe-house represented a number of persons grouped together for the purposes of trade and subjected by native law and custom to the control, authority, and rule of a chief known as the head of the house (Alagoa 1964).

on deliberated issues related to disputes between individuals from different canoe-houses and this development provided avenues for exchange of ideas and resolution of disputes between affected members of the kingdom. The death of any head of a canoe-house implied cessation of representation of such house in the “council of head of canoe houses meeting” until a successor of the affected canoe-house was elected by the council (ibid).

The successor might be the son, brother or successful slave of the deceased village leader who had to be presented for approval and formal ceremony presided over by the “Amanyabo” where the staff of office was handed to him as mark of authority to lead his people (ibid: 15). However, the powers and prestige commanded by the Amanyabo became a subject of abuse in terms of decisions made by the Amanyabo on local issues over canoe-houses. It was discovered that the final decision which the “Amanyabo” took at times were favourable to some canoe houses relative to others. These decisions were considered as products of double standard by the affected canoe houses. The development led to the decline of the office of “Amanyabo” in the middle of the nineteenth century (Cooky, 1974: 16). In other Niger Delta communities like Urhobo and Ogbia, the political system prevalent was republican. This system empowered local villagers to express their views on a broad range of issues which affected social, economic and political lives of the people before decisions were taken by the first class chiefs who were regarded as political head (Omoweh, 2005:3).

Further, Okonta (2008) found that the village was the foundational unit of power in the pre-colonial Ogoni, where the Menebon (village head) was a hereditary ruler with direct biological relationship with the first male child of

the community founder. The village head was supported by an assistant whose ancestor was also linked to a co-founder of the village or had played significant role in the creation of the community. The Menebon, his assistant and the chief priest derived their authorities for governing the Ogoni<sup>27</sup> people from both religious and mythical origins (ibid). The council of chiefs which comprised the Menebon (paramount ruler), his assistant, lineage representatives, the chief priest and other respectable title holders mirrored the administrative and political structure in Ogoni during the pre-colonial era. Okonta (2008:31) identified the Menebon and his council of elders on one hand and the village assembly as two political institutions in Ogoni during the period under consideration. The village assembly was the highest political organisation in all Ogoni Kingdom. The assembly played a fundamental role in choosing every Menebon. In order to choose a serving Menebon, a nominee from a large extended family of the village founder was presented to the village assembly in the market square either to signify acceptance or rejection of the nominee. Where the village assembly rejected a selected Menebon, the chief priest had to consult the oracle to find the most favoured according to traditional rites out of the list of contestants from the extended members of the village founder. Despite the role the village assembly played in the determination of every Menebon, they lacked the powers to remove him except where the Menebon breached the traditions of the land. However, the Menebon was highly influential particularly given his leadership role in the

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<sup>27</sup> The Ogoni ethnic nationality is geographically located in the South-western part of the Niger Delta in Rivers State of Nigeria. Ogoniland is divided administratively into four local government areas: Eleme, Gokana, Khana, and Tai respectively. The Ogoni people (including Bori) speak Ogoni while the Bonny people speak Ijaw language (Sha'aba, 1998).

council of chiefs and elders. He presided over the council meetings and special village assembly. Decisions over local issues were taken based on collective decisions of the council of elders and decisions made from the council meeting communicated to the villagers in the name of Menebon. The office of the Menebon was highly exalted during the pre-colonial period through which he influenced other members of the council whenever decisions were taken on sensitive issues critical to his interest.

The political systems prevalent during the pre-colonial period were highly organized and formidable such that its defence could not be easily broken by external aggression. The systems were capable of maintaining law and order and were efficient in the dispensation of justice. Dike (1956) and Alaoga (1964) found the small city-states of Nembe and Brass during the pre-colonial era to be equal to those prevalent in the Greek city-states. The explanation of the concept of the city-state was well documented by Dike (1956) who conceived Nembe and Brass as city-states because of the manner in which their organised political authority spread from one city to surrounding settlements and especially to trading posts in the hinterland.

#### **4.2.2. Economic Systems during Pre-colonial Era.**

The economic activities in the pre-colonial period were subsistent and non-monetized. The subsistence mode of production was facilitated through the use of land, which was regarded as the most fundamental factor of production. The property regimes governing ownership of land and other natural resources were communally, familiarly or individually owned (Gibbs and Bromley, 1989).

The major economic activities of the pre-colonial Delta people revolved around farming, fishing, production of wine and palm-oil, salt making, production of local gin, mat weaving, traditional canoe-carving, basket weaving, et cetera. Since the entire livelihood of the people centred on agricultural resources, every village or kingdom had its respective rules for governing the sustainability of its local resources and appropriate arrangements were designed for the resolution of dispute between local people over the use and ownership of resources. For example, the Menebon and his council of elders were the first point of contact for the local people whenever conflict arose between individuals or families over ownership of resources. Where the conflict could not be resolved, then the case would be referred to the village assembly for wider consultations until amicable solutions were found to the conflict (Ibid: 32). The medium of exchange in the pre-colonial period was commodity currencies such as cowries, native salts, palm oil and metallic ornaments (bangles). These commodity currencies facilitated business transactions domestically between local people at the intra and inter-village levels on one hand and between villagers and the Portuguese merchants on the other hand (ibid: 4).

In order to appreciate the scale of trade relations which subsisted between local villages during the pre-colonial era, (Ofonagoro, 1979; Okonta, 2008:33) acknowledged effective flow of exchange of goods and services between the Igbo, Ogoni, Ibibio and Bonny-Ijo traders for a long time. The writers claimed the Ogoni engaged in the production of agricultural produce such as yams, dried fish and live stock on Ogoni coast market while the Bonny-Ijaw traders brought fish and salt. These commodities were

exchanged between these neighbouring trading partners based on well defined business terms to sustain the growth of traditional economy. Though the scale of exchange of goods and services between these trading partners was undeveloped and unspecialized, local traders gained from one another because they were able to facilitate exchange for the purposes of meeting their personal needs, at least advancing the course of their business interest beyond the threshold of subsistence.

The emergence of slave trade in the sixteenth century changed the structure of economic and political relations in the Niger Delta environment. It discouraged local people from travelling out of their localities because of the fear of being captured and sold into slavery. This development subsequently affected the volume of trade between various Niger Delta communities. For example, traders that operated between Igbo hinterland, Ogoni and Ikwerre markets near the Niger Delta coast had to apply for protection prior to coming to the market. Otherwise, traders faced the risk of attack and once captured, they were sold into slavery. The impact of slave trade also took its toll on displacement of local people that had hitherto enjoyed their peaceful environment (Dike, 1956).

Okonta (2008:34) remarked that the Ijo (Ijaw) city states and Igbo clans (Aro, Ikwerre) played the roles of spies for capturing slaves from other less powerful villages and facilitated the flooding of the Niger Delta and its hinterland with firearms supplied by the Europeans for executing slave raiding activities. The slave trade relations between the Delta region and the Europeans have remained a subject of debate amongst scholars. According to Rodney (1973:116), slave trade put Europe in a vantage position because

locations of slave trade in Africa including the Niger Delta facilitated the development of Western Europe at the same time as Western Europe constrained the development of the slave trading areas. The major impact of slave trade on the development of affected countries in which the Delta region played a major role has been captured by Rodney (1973) as follows:

*“The general picture of destructiveness of slave trade is clear given the number of captives recruited from Africa. The estimate ranges from few million to over one hundred million. One of the studies conducted showed that ten million slaves were expropriated from Africa which landed alive in Americas, the Atlantic islands and Europe (p.144)”.*

Following the abolition of slave trade in Britain in 1807, the search for a legitimate trade became important for building the trade relations between Niger Delta region and the rest of the world. Eventually, trade in palm oil became a good substitute for slave trading. The production of palm oil at the local level became important sources of demand to Europe for servicing their machines, production of soap and margarine. By 1830, the trade in palm oil by the people of the Niger Delta had blossomed into a lucrative venture marking a turning point in the economic prosperity of the region. For instance, through the expansion in the production of palm oil, Bonny (one of the major cities in the Niger Delta) ascended to the political and economic hub of the Niger Delta with highest exportation profile in palm oil relative to other West African ports.

However, the economic gains recorded in palm oil business had its positive and adverse effects on the lives of the people in the Delta region. On one hand, the economic prosperity from palm oil business catapulted the

middlemen (like King Jaja of Opobo, Nana Olomu of Itsekiri and other merchants from city states of Bonny and Okrika) into more powerful and economically advantageous positions at the expense of the local producers of palm oil from Igbo hinterland and Ogoni. The middlemen prevented the local producers of palm oil from dealing directly with the Europeans for the fear of loss of economic profits and being displaced from the business by European traders (ibid: 25). The middlemen adopted a strong security network with well-equipped and locally trained security officers whose responsibility was to monitor the flow of supply of palm oil business both within the hinterland and on the coast. On the basis of financial and military strength, the middlemen were able to dictate the terms of trade affecting the supply of palm oil through which they realized super normal profit from buying and selling of palm oil produce (Alagoa, 2003; Rotimi and Ogen, 2008).

On the other hand, the European traders also had their strategies, which were also in conflict with the middlemen in the Niger Delta. First, the plan of the European traders was to eliminate the middlemen from the chain of supply of palm oil business for purposes of profiteering. Secondly, they thought of taking over the control of the palm oil business entirely from local actors through annexation of the Niger Delta region. Besides, the European traders felt the trade depression in England during the 1880s could be augmented through profiteering by intervening into the local palm oil trade by eliminating the middlemen from the supply chain of palm oil business. But their primary concern was to stage a deep penetration into the local palm oil



businesses before taking total control of the business (Rotimi and Ogen, 2008).

However, these dreams did not materialize until 1854 when there was a breakthrough in the discovery of quinine. Quinine was a major antidote for curing malaria, a disease which affected lives of the earlier European traders that had contact with the Niger Delta environment (Falola, 1999; UNDP, 2006). The development of quinine precipitated the economic interest of British companies in the Niger Delta.

This development led to the emergence of United African Company (UAC) in 1879 which controlled active British traders in Niger region and later took the control of lower Niger River. Due to internal restructuring of UAC, the nomenclature of the company changed to Niger African Company (NAC) and later became known as Royal Niger Company (RNC) in 1886 when it got its chartered status as a recognized company under British protection and was granted the rights by the British government to govern the Niger Delta territories and others territories under its control through treaties with the local chiefs. Through the powers conferred on the RNC, the company was able to negotiate with local Niger Delta Kings and middlemen into signing treaties placing their respective territories under the protection of the company. These treaties repositioned the RNC to take over the control of the palm oil business in the Delta region for economic gains despite the refusal of the Niger Delta Kings to agree with the terms of the treaties (Oloya and Ugbeyavwighren, 2008).

The imposition of the terms of trade on the Delta region Kings by the RNC in order to gain monopolist advantage over local trade and industry

promoted the first rebellion in the Niger Delta. The Niger Delta kings challenged the actions of the RNC and such actions generated undesirable outcomes which resulted in the sentencing and subsequent deportation of King Jaja of Opobo to Accra and later to the West Indies. Similar treatments were meted out to other notable Delta Kings such as King William Dappa-Pepple of Bonny in 1854, Prince Nana of Itsekiri in 1894 and Oba of Benin in 1897. Besides, the local people of Nembe in Akassa revolted through mass protest against the RNC in 1895 when the company attempted to stop the local people from trading in palm oil and other palm produce (Burns, 1929; Rotimi and Ogen, 2008; Okonta, 2008; Oloya and Ugbeyavwighren, 2008:8). Finally, the spate of crisis in the Niger Delta over the control of palm oil trade was resolved when the British government revoked the chartered status hitherto granted to the RNC. Afterwards, the British government assumed direct control of the region starting from 1900 (UNDP, 2006:111).

The position established by Masaki (2006) on the oppression and emancipation nexus in ongoing power struggles and power dynamics in Nepal mirrors the power relations which shaped the actions of the social actors during the pre-colonial era. Masaki (2006) argues that power is not a monopolistic asset of a particular social actor but regarded power as an asset which can be found at the disposal of any social actor depending on the context and circumstances surrounding every society. It is clear that the middlemen and the European traders drew on different power structures to gain dominance and resistance at different times. At each moment of power advantage, I realized from Masaki's (2006) contribution that the palm oil

producers were at disadvantageous position relative to the position of key social actors (middlemen and European traders).

#### **4.2.3. Socio-Cultural Environment in the Pre-colonial Period**

The review of the pre-colonial era is incomplete without contextualizing the socio-cultural environment in which the local people of Niger Delta lived. The socio-cultural lives of the Niger Delta people was governed by their traditional religion, traditional ways of living, naming ceremonies, modes of burying the dead, observance of deities, traditional health care, local conflict resolution procedures and the cultural symbolism of land (Omoweh, 2005: 5).

Information from archives showed that all villages which existed in the Niger Delta during the pre-colonial period believed in the efficacies of local deities as intermediary between the local people and almighty God. On the basis of this belief, local people constructed their activities norms and values around deities. For instance, the Ogbia people from present Bayelsa state considered “Pamara Tamuno” as the Supreme Being (Almighty God) to whom they communicated with the help of local deities in every village. The situation was similar amongst the Urhobos, Efiks, Itsekiris and the Ogonis who regarded “Orowhori”, “Abasi”, “Oritse” and “Bari” respectively as the supreme omnipotent God. Similar to the situation in other parts of the Niger Delta, villagers considered the supreme God as the highest in the hierarchy of belief system while various local deities served as intermediary between villagers and the supreme God. The pre-colonial Niger Delta people generally believed in the efficacies of their local deities whom they revered whenever they required solutions to problems beyond the ordinary. For example, it was

common practice amongst the Niger Delta people to search for metaphysical explanations whenever strange occurrences like the sudden death of the younger ones (youths) occur. The belief system allowed the spirit of the deceased to be consulted after performing appropriate sacrifices to find the cause of such death. Where the death was attributed to natural cause, then the corpse was allowed to be finally laid back to rest. The situation became complicated where the death of the deceased was attributed to human cause. In this case, the spirit of the deceased is re-invoked and later sent to seek vengeance on the culprit responsible for such death. In specific terms, this divination practice in Ijaw, from where Agbere villagers hailed is called Igbadai (Okonta, 2008:31, Omoweh, 2005:5 and Ijaw dictionary, 2011).

Animals also played significant roles in the lives of the pre-colonial Delta people. The Delta villagers personified animals as veritable sources of security both for internal safety and against external aggression. The mythical significance attached to various categories of animals by the Niger Delta people is captured in Appendix H (see appendices).

#### **4.3 Governance of the Niger Delta during the Colonial Period.**

The governance of the Delta region during the colonial era supported the penetration of colonialism in the region. Most scholars argue that colonialism paved opportunities for the British government to extract raw materials from the Delta region for the metropolitan industries for purposes of re-selling those produced goods at prices determined by the British government (Azaiki, 2006). In the words of Mandani (1996), the major interest of the British colonialist in Africa was to control the natives of the

continent and provision of order to achieve their objective of colonialism. In doing so, Mandani argues

*“The African colonial subject was regarded as a tribe’s person, a mode of rule expected to generate dual developments on the continent: ethnic politics and a divided state which reproduced the colonial practice of treating people in the urban areas as people governed by civil law and rural people as subjects under the custodian of native customs (p.21).”*

In Mandani’s (1996) view, the British colonialist divided its colonial states including the Niger Delta into manageable parts and ensured firm control of the environment and its subjects through establishment of police force and court systems as strategic foundation for realizing Britain’s economic interest. Realizing the gains of economic interest did not come easily. The colonialists supported the economic drive with the propagation of religion and education. The rest of this section discusses the role played by the colonialists during the colonial period and the challenges the colonialists encountered in governing the Niger Delta.

#### **4.3.1. The Colonial State and Local Governance in the Niger Delta**

In 1900, the British government assumed direct administration of Nigeria after the revocation of the Charter status granted to RNC. In the same year, the Niger Coast Protectorate took over the control of the RNC territories in the Niger valley of Idah on account of criticisms levelled against the RNC monopolist excesses in the control of palm oil trading activities in the Niger Delta. The activities of the RNC were comparable to those of the middlemen previously captured in section 4.2.2.

The Niger Coast Protectorate later became the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria with Sir Ralph Moor, an ex-policeman, as High Commissioner with its headquarters in Calabar. The protectorate was divided into four geographical areas including: Eastern, Central, Cross River and Western division with the Igbo, Ibibio, Ijaw (where the Agbere people belong), Ogoni and Ogoja people part of the western division. The Ogoni ethnic group (where the Bori people geographically and culturally belong) became part of the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1901. The Lagos Colony was governed by Sir William MacGregor, a medical officer, as Governor with its headquarters in Lagos while the protectorate of Northern Nigeria was administered by Sir (Lord) Frederick Lugard as High Commissioner, with its headquarters in Kaduna. In 1906, the protectorate of Southern Nigeria was combined with the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos to become the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria with Sir Walter Egerton as Governor. In 1914, Lord Lugard became the Governor-General of Nigeria following the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates of Nigeria. The amalgamation was facilitated in order to reduce the challenges involved in the administration of separate protectorates being governed by the British administrators and to improve the problems with communication which these protectorates had in interacting with the colonialist headquarters in London. The other factor which precipitated the amalgamation was the active administrative prowess the French displayed in the management of neighbouring Dahomey (now Republic of Benin) and the intrigues she demonstrated in her interest towards emirates of what later became the protectorate of Northern Nigeria. On account of this suspicion, the British government assumed the formal control

and political responsibility of this area. Besides, the British government also became threatened by the aggressive commercialism of Germany which became the largest net importer of Nigerian palm oil in 1913. This development in trade opened the economy of Nigeria to German traders who later became good business partners with the palm oil traders in the Niger Delta. The threat posed by Germany facilitated the speed for unification of the protectorates by the British government (Okigbo, 1989:5; Okonta, 2008:48).

It needs to be stressed that the British colonialists achieved their objective for bringing several components of Nigeria together. One could have argued in favour of the tremendous benefits such amalgamation brought to the economic, political and socio-cultural lives of the local people. Rather, the amalgamation provided some explanations for what Zwingina (1992) branded as legitimization of colonial rule in Nigeria. In the first instance, Zwingina stressed colonialism was perceived by the colonialists as an ideology in the interest of both the colonized and the colonialist on the ground that the colonized areas like the Niger Delta became burdensome for the colonialist due to the challenges involved in civilizing the colonized areas. Another argument raised in support of colonization by its protagonists was described by Zwingina (1992:37) as “the backward past of the colonized areas of Africa including the Niger Delta which was considered full of heathen ancestor worship, primitive and undeveloped.” The third argument advanced was that the colonized people did not contribute to the building of the Nigerian nation.

In spite of the strategies employed by the British government to achieve the objective of unification of the protectorates, the major challenge the government faced was developing appropriate governance style which received the acceptability and support of the local people. However, Lord Lugard achieved positive result with the adoption of indirect rule in the Northern part of Nigeria after conquering the Sokoto Caliphate for the British government in 1912. Through indirect rule, he created a vertical system of administration where the Emirs were subordinated to whims and caprices of the British government. All forms of directives were communicated from the British officials through the Emirs to the subjects. This system worked successfully in Northern Nigeria due to religious ethics which supported taking directives from the Emirs as both religiously obligatory and rewarding from God (Kashambuzi, 2009). On the contrary, the indirect system had its challenges in Southern Nigeria both in terms of implementation and application. These challenges are discussed in the next sections of this chapter.

#### **4.3.2. Challenges of Governing the Niger Delta during Colonial Period.**

Unlike the Northern protectorate of Nigeria, the British faced a number of challenges governing the Southern part of Nigeria with indirect rule for several reasons. Contribution from Falola and Heaton (2005) identified the failure of Lord Lugard to acknowledge the importance the villagers attached to socio-cultural values as a major impediment to the success of the British policy of indirect rule. Talbot (1969) had earlier discovered that the social structure of the Niger Delta comprised people living in independent



unconsolidated and usually small groups with no central government. The colonial state did not understand the social structure properly before the introduction of indirect rule (ibid). Findings from archive revealed that the local Delta people owed their traditional and socio-cultural practices more allegiance than the alienated system of governance introduced by the British government. Falola and Heaton (2005) also discovered that indirect rule policy was introduced at a wrong time when no previous study was hitherto conducted to find the compatibility of the policy with the socio-cultural background of the local people of the Delta. The following findings were relevant in justifying Falola and Heaton's (2005) position on the weaknesses of the indirect policy in relation to the existing system of local governance in the Niger Delta:

*“The major pre-occupation of the British government the moment they came in control of political power in Nigeria was to create an administrative superstructure which would guarantee law and order, serve their economic interest and subsequently become financially self-supportive. These systems fundamentally failed to account for different nature of chieftaincy in southern Nigeria that is Niger Delta where Islam was considerably less influential. Therefore, lack of correct knowledge and weak policy (indirect rule) implementation were responsible for ineffective administration of the British government in the Niger Delta during colonial period in Nigeria (P6).”*

One of the significant challenges was the conflict which the emergence of colonialism brought against the socio-cultural ways of the Niger Delta people who became resistant to the western styles of doing things. As Omoweh (2005) pointed out:

*“Culture dies hard, because it is difficult for people to give up easily their native ways of doing things, which explained the greatest resistance the colonial state faced as it penetrated the Niger Delta for economic reasons. The recalcitrant nature of the socio-cultural ways of the local people generated the desire by the colonial state to upturn local beliefs, traditional religions, indigenous knowledge and traditional political systems of the Niger Delta. With the combination of the state’s military might and the Christian missionaries who used the Bible to alter the traditional religion of the people, the state was able to deal decisive blows on the culture of the people. The moment the state took the control of the Niger Delta; its law was enforced throughout the land (p.6).”*

Ekundare (1973), Ofonagoro (1979), Kpone-Tonwe (1990) and Omoweh (2005:9) provided explanations to the role the colonial state played in the alteration of both the cultural and economic lives of the Niger Delta people. Kpone-Tonwe (1990) and Omoweh (2005) noted that the strategy adopted by the colonial state to change the traditional political system of the local people was the introduction of the warrant chiefs after the suppression of resistance from the Ogoni people in 1914. The warrant chiefs were appointed by the colonial state based on their loyalty rather than their contributions and acceptability to the local people. The warrant chiefs had the mandate of the colonial state to administer the local areas of the Niger Delta using native laws.

Ekundare (1973) also identified how the colonial state changed the local currency without any consultations with the people in the Niger Delta. Cowries served both as a medium of exchange and potent tool through which

most of the traditional religious practices were offered to various ancestors or deities (ibid). In Ekundare's (1973) view, the abolition of local currencies amounted to usurpation of the economic rights of the local people because the system of exchange which was basically carried out in local currencies was unexpectedly outlawed to the detriment of the indigenous people whose economic livelihood revolved around these local currencies. Ofonagoro (1979) has interpreted the position analyzed above as follows:

*“The moment the colonial state gained political control of the Niger Delta, they put necessary measures in place to change the local currencies into British currency. Before the emergence of the colonial state, the traditional currencies like cowries discharged the role of money for several years before it was outlawed and later became unrecognized as legal tender by the colonial state until the currencies lost standing and became worthless to its last holders (p.623)”*

Another challenge which the colonial state encountered was the resistance the state faced from the imposition of taxes on the Oloko village women at Aba. Okonta (2008:52) articulated the causes of the women's resistance from clearer perspectives. According to Okonta, the major factor responsible for the crises was the problem inherent in the instability in the world prices of palm oil, palm kernel and other agricultural products which affected the cost of running the colonial administration of the Niger Delta. In order to finance the increasing cost of administration therefore, the colonial state enacted the Native Revenue Ordinance in 1928 which empowered the divisional officers working for the colonial state to assess the income of peasant farmers and subsequently deduct 2.5 percent to be paid as tax.

Okonta (2008) also found that the assessment of income of peasant farmers conducted was initially targeted at men. But the equation of the tax laws which was later extended to women as well as children precipitated the women's protest against the colonial state. The imposition of tax by the colonial state led to the women's uprising in 1929 which started from Oloko village in Owerri province of Igbo hinterland and later extended to other parts of the Niger Delta region such as: Opobo, Ogoni, Nkoro, Andoni, *et cetera*. The crises led to the death of sixteen (16) women (Okonta, 2008:53).

The casualties recorded from the uprising gave birth to inauguration of two commission of enquiries set up by the colonial state. The bias involved in the first commission of enquiry led to the inauguration of the second commission of enquiry whose membership comprised both the government and members of civil society. Some of the findings of the commission were that: low prices of export and high prices of import goods, corruption of both warrant chiefs and members of the native courts and tax imposition were immediate causes of the riots (Aba Riot, 1929). In the words of Umoren (1995:68), the political and social changes the uprising brought to the Niger Delta people are captured as follows:

*“The agitation for the right of women later recommended for cancellation of tax imposition on women. It also led to reduction in prices of imported goods and rise in the prices of exported goods. It led to the re-organization of indirect rule with the cancellation of warrant chiefs and being replaced with the system of native authorities to address the needs of the local people (p.68).”*

The participation of the colonial state in the internal development of Nigeria which led to the advent of fiscal federalism also constituted a major challenge which the coloniasts faced in the governance of the Niger Delta. After the development of Colonial Development Act in 1929, the colonial government subdivided Southern Nigeria into the Western and Eastern regions on the ground of promoting the development of the resources of the colonies and the standard of living of the people. Upon the decomposition of Southern Nigeria into two regions, some states became minorities with their rights being overwhelmed by stronger states. For instance, the present Edo and Delta states became minorities in the western region dominated by the Yoruba. By similar token, the present states of Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River and Rivers states also became dominated by the Igbo speaking people of the Eastern region (UNDP, 2006). Unequal development relations between the stronger states and the minority states promoted marginalization and lopsided development suffered by the Niger Delta states as three of these ethnic groups including the Ibos, Hausas and Yorubas constituted the dominant group in terms of population and political power (ibid: 112).

Following the need to correct the development problems associated with resources allocation and minority problems in Nigeria, the colonial state commenced fiscal federalism as an economic alternative for allocating financial resources between the centre and the component regions. During the colonial era, four fiscal commissions were set up namely: Phillipson Commission, Hicks-Phillipson Commission, Chicks Commission and Raisman Commission (see: Phillipson, 1946; Hicks-Phillipson, 1951; Chicks, 1953 and Raisman and Tress (1958). All the commissions were marred with

controversies. For instance, the federal government of Nigeria got the lion's share of the centrally collected revenue in both Phillipson and Hicks-Phillipson Commissions and also exercised financial dominion over other regions (see: Phillipson, 1946; Adedeji, 1969:60; Baker, 1984; Suberu, 2001:49; Oladeji, 2005). The Chicks commission became a subject of attack by all the regions after its four year application. The Eastern region where the Niger Delta used to be located branded the Commission "Regional Financial Disparity" because it received the lowest derivation figure of £30.2 million as against the Western region which got the largest share of £69.6 million. Comparatively, the distribution of derivation formula under Raisman Commission was fairer to the Eastern region as it got 31% of the allocated revenue relative to the western region that only got 24% of the total derivation.

The widespread agitations of the minorities in the Eastern region became recognized in 1957 when the colonial office in London commissioned Sir Henry Willinks, a respected Queen's Counsel, to undertake a detailed study of the fears of domination expressed by the minorities in the Eastern region. After a six month investigation of the Eastern Nigeria, Willinks and his team observed a lot of development challenges in the Niger Delta and raised the following comments:

*"We were impressed by the arguments indicating that the needs of those who live in the creeks and swamps of the Niger Delta are very different from those of the interior. We agreed that it is not easy for a government to concern itself or even fully understand the problems of a territory where communication is so difficult, building expensive and education so*

*limited. The region has got a difficult terrain and therefore should be regarded as a special area by the central government (Willinks, 1958)."*

Besides, the commission recommended there should be a federal board appointed to direct the development of the area into channels which would meet the peculiar problems of the people. The commission also prescribed that the neglect and oppression in the region should be urgently resolved by the federal government to avoid a rebellious situation in the future where the oppressed people might take arms against the government (Willinks, 1958).

The unresolved socio-political and economic problems amongst the regions of Nigeria were carried into 1<sup>st</sup> October 1960 when Nigeria got her political independence. It is imperative to stress that the constitutional conferences of 1954, 1958, 1959 and 1960 were driving factors which stimulated the independence of Nigeria (Azaiki, 2006).

#### **4.4 Power Relationships after Colonial Period**

The political independence of Nigeria was described by Azaiki (2006:41) as a political agenda to give all ethnic groups equal opportunity to manage the affairs of the nation. Nyemutu-Roberts (2004:28) had previously discovered that the independence of Nigeria provided a mechanism of political accommodation to give the component units, equal and coordinate rights and obligations. Nyemutu-Roberts (2004) found that the situation provided an avenue for the emergence of ethnic dominance with the ascendancy of Northern hegemony over the rest of the regions in Nigeria.

The section that follows explores how different governance regimes affect economic performance in Nigeria.

#### 4.4.1. Governance Regimes and Economic Performance in Nigeria

From Table 4.1, it is evident Nigeria has lived as a sovereign state for fifty-two years which can be decomposed into six different military heads of state, six democratically elected presidents and one interim civilian head of state.

Table 4 1: Topology of Governance Regimes in Nigeria.

Period	Regime Type	Heads of state
1960-1966	Civilian (parliamentary) – market system with planning and control	N.Azikwe/ T.Balewa
1966-1975	Military-market system: demand management, planning and control	A.Ironsi/ Y. Gowon
1975-1979	Military-market system: demand management, planning and control	M.Muhammed/ O.Obasanjo
1979-1983	Civilian-market system: austerity measures	S.Shagari/ A.Ekwueme
1983-1985	Military-market system: controls and stabilization	M.Buhari
1985-1993	Military-market system: structural adjustment programme	I.Babangida
1993 (Aug-Nov)	Civilian (Interim)-market system	E. Shonekan
Nov.1993-	Military-market system: Guided	S. Abacha



June 1998	deregulation	
June 1998- May 1999	Military-market system: Guided deregulation	A.Abubakar
May 1999- May 2007	Civilian-market system: deregulation	O.Obasanjo/ A.Atiku
May 2007- May 2010	Civilian-market system; deregulation	U. Musa-Yaradua/ G.Jonathan
May 2010 May 2011	Civilian- market based: deregulation	G.Jonathan/ N.Sambo
May 2011- Present	Civilian- Market based: deregulation	G.Jonathan/ N.Sambo

Source: Compiled by author.

The governance of Nigeria during parliamentary system was favourable. This became evident as economic indicators between 1960 and 1966 were fairly encouraging. Investment/GDP which was 13% in 1960 rose to 15%, 17% and 19% in 1961, 1964 and 1965 respectively. Similarly, the growth rate in the real GDP also improved from meagre 0.3% in 1961 to 4.2% and 8.8% in 1962 and 1963 respectively. Inflation rate also improved considerably between 1960 and 1964 as the rate which was hitherto 6% in 1960 fell to 1.1% in 1964 apparently due to tight fiscal and monetary fiscal policies by the government (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2000). From the statistical information provided, the combined effect of the economic performance during 1960-1966 was impressive as economic policy was effective in facilitating moderately rapid industrial development and a non-inflationary growth (ibid: 358). Not too long after the military government

intervened in the governance of Nigeria, civil war broke out between the federal government of Nigeria and the Biafra secessionist in 1967 and lasted till 1970 (see Uwechue, 1971; Abiola, 1984; Okaba, 2005; Thomas, 2010).

The devastating effects of the civil war took its toll on the economy of Nigeria as it weakened and discouraged growth and investment activities. Real investment during the civil war period fell from 18% in 1967 to 16% and 14% respectively in 1968 and 1969 (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2000). In the immediate post civil war era, the main strategy of the government was to have effective control of the economy. The government used the oil sector as a strategy to enhance economic recovery (ibid: 359). In 1979, the military administration led by General Olusegun Obasanjo relinquished power to the first civilian elected President of Nigeria, Shehu Shagari. The economic objectives of the second republic (1979-1983) were not significantly different from the military government that relinquished power as the government maintained its control over the economy. The external value of the domestic currency and domestic interest rates were fixed in order to stabilize the level of domestic investment. For example, interest rate was 7.5% between 1979 and 1980 respectively (Central bank of Nigeria, 2000).

However, lack of grip of the economy by the civilian administration coupled with high level corruption paved the way for the intervention of the military administration on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1984 by General Buhari-Idiagbon through a successful coup. The military justified their intervention in the national polity on account of gross economic mismanagement by the preceding civilian administration (ibid; 365). While the Buhari-Idiagbon military led administration was engaged in the reconstruction of the economy

of Nigeria, their policy shift was truncated by another military coup led by General Ibrahim Babangida in 1985. The annulment of June 12 presidential election results by General Babangida's military administration in 1993 generated national crises in Nigeria because the conduct of the election was considered the fairest and freest in the history of democracy in Nigeria (Uwatt, 2004). The acclaimed winner of the election, President-elect Moshood Kashimawo Abiola received the support of larger segment of human right activists locally and internationally. The heat generated by different pressure in Nigeria groups over the denial of Abiola's mandate led to a change of government from military to interim civilian government led by Earnest Shonekan. After the assumption of office of Earnest Shonekan, several human right organizations intensified his removal because he was not democratically elected by Nigerians. Rather, his selection by General Babangida was considered as a strategy for General Babangida to return to power under the platform of democracy (ibid). The strategy of General Babangida failed following the intervention of General Abacha which ousted Earnest shonekan from office only after four months of leadership of Nigeria. The governance of Nigeria changed in 1998 following the death of General Sanni Abacha. General Abacha was succeeded by General Abdul Salam Abubakar military's administration in the same year. Governance in Nigeria during the military regimes was characterized by gross abuse of fundamental human rights as the civilians were made to live in fear coupled with arbitrary arrest of social critics, intimidation, molestation, unlawful detention and organized execution and extrajudicial killing of human rights campaigners (Uwatt, 2004).

The return of Nigeria to democracy did not materialize until 1999 when President Olusegun Obasanjo was sworn into office as a civilian democratically elected President. Since 1999 to date, Nigeria has remained politically stable under presidential system of governance but with numerous development challenges (Uwatt, 2004)). The enormity of development challenges in Nigeria since the country returned to democratic governance in 1999 stimulated the political-economic sketches of the Secretary of State of the USA as follows.

*“The most immediate source of disconnect between Nigeria’s wealth and its poverty is a failure of governance at the federal, state and local governments levels. The lack of transparency has eroded the legitimacy of the government and contributed to the rise of groups that embrace violence and reject the authority of the state. Repression takes so many forms and too many nations are plagued by problems which condemn their people to poverty. The poverty rates in Nigeria have gone up from 46% to 76% in the last thirteen years from UN’s estimate. No country is going to create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves (Clinton, 2009:.2-3)”.*

The power relationship after the colonial period is insufficient without considering the politics which shape planning in the Delta and the role played by governance regimes in crafting these development plans. In order to address this concern, the section which follows presents the politics of development planning in the Niger Delta.

#### **4.4.2. The Politics of Development Planning in the Niger Delta.**

The development plans marking post-independence era in Nigeria were targeted at the medium term. These development eras include 1962-1968, 1970-1974, 1975-1980, 1981-1985, a series of two year rolling plans between 1990 and 1998 and vision 2010 policy document. For instance, Ibi-Ajayi (2003) succinctly stated that the genesis of development plans in Nigeria was filled with great optimism that such plans would produce the easiest route to the path of growth and development. Ibi-Ajayi (2003) drew on the objectives of 1970-1974 development plans which focused on five areas meant to establish Nigeria firmly as:

- A united, strong and self reliant nation;
- A great and dynamic economy;
- A just and egalitarian society;
- A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and
- A free and democratic society.

The development plans between 1962 and 1985 were followed by the structural adjustment programme in 1986 by the then military administration of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. It should however be recalled that the major objective of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) was to restructure and diversify the productive base of the Nigerian economy in order to reduce dependence of the economy on oil (National Office of Statistics, 1987).

However, the optimism of the citizens in these development plans to deliver the fruits of growth and economic transformation in the lives of the people became thwarted by administrative ineptitude, neo-patrimonialism

(political domination, clientelism and patronage) and poor implementation of contents of these plans (Erdmann and Engel, 2006). Toyo (1997) earlier provided a political economic framework for analyzing the government economic development programmes from independence as part massive hypocrisy and deception and part a leap in the dark. Toyo's (1997) position was so clear on account of the disparities between the policy documents developed by the Nigerian government since independence and policy outcomes of these development plans. According to Toyo, the economic policy making of the government since independence has basically served parasitism and has been borne out of misguided theories and prescriptions when judged from the standpoints of basic social and national interests (ibid).

Toyo (1997) captured the structure of Nigeria's development process as follows:

*“Development in Nigeria is not only the development of the forces of production; it is also the development of capitalism; of neo-colonialism; of property forms and their consequences, of exploitation and not simply production and trade, of rights, of privileges, of various forms of income and not simply of income sizes (p.54).”*

In spite of the weaknesses which affected the implementation of previous development strategies, the government adopted the implementation of MDGs in 2000 and supported its implementation with more locally consistent economic policy documents to change the focus of development plan formulation and implementation from top down development strategy to bottom up development strategy. This objective was achieved with the introduction of a triad strategic policy namely: The National

Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS), The State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS) and Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (LEEDS) at the national, state and local levels respectively (National Planning Commission, 2005). These development strategic policies were aimed at achieving the MDGs and also targeted at the complex economic structure of Nigeria. These policies were focused on eradication of poverty and hunger, promotion of gender equality, achievement of universal primary education, inclusion of all stakeholders in decision making processes, particularly at the local level, putting people at the centre of development, et cetera.

Unfortunately, the relics of pains and agony the citizens of Nigeria faced during the implementation of immediate post-colonial development plans re-surfaced again during the implementation of NEEDS, SEEDS and LEEDS but in a more excruciating manner. Adogamhe (2010) found total disconnectivity between the government and the local people on one hand and failure from the government policies (which are always politically influenced) to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor on another hand were responsible for low success of the policy to reduce poverty at all levels.

The situation with the gap created by the development plans of Nigeria became so problematic that Phillips (1997) in a study into why economic policies have failed in Nigeria articulated a catalogue of problems including: non accountable governments at all levels; pre-occupation of rulers with tenure and security; unstable polity; over centralization and forcible uniformity; infallibility syndrome; inadequate data, culture of lack of continuity of development plans (policy instability); et cetera. In analyzing the non-

accountable culture of different institutions in Nigeria, Phillips (1997:13) drew on the role played by the military incursion into the governance of Nigeria and the impact their long stay in power had on the formulation and implementation of development plans at all levels of government in Nigeria. For example, the military governments were in power for thirty-six years out of over fifty years of existence of Nigeria (see Table 4.1 above).

The power of the federal government to influence policy implementation is not restricted to development plans alone, but the power of the government has implications for the survival of various government agencies at the local level. The next section analyses how the power commanded by the government of Nigeria influences the operations of various government agencies whose operations should have improved the quality of lives of citizens at the local level.

#### **4.4.3. Development Institutions and the Niger Delta.**

The role of institutions in the promotion of local values and community development have been extensively documented in the literature (see: Ostrom, 1990; Wade, 1988; Agrawal, 2005; Cleaver, 2002). Efforts by the federal government of Nigeria to address the development challenges in the Niger Delta have resulted in setting up of various institutions in the region since 1961 (see table 4.2 below). From table 4.2, the first institution set up by the government to address the yearnings and aspirations of the people of the Niger Delta was the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB), established in 1961. The institutional body was set up following the recommendations made



by the Willinks Report of 1958 as a panacea for resolving the development challenges of the Niger Delta.

Table 4 2: Post Independence Development Institutions in the Niger Delta

s/n	Year	Successive Institutions	Law setting up the institutions
1.	1961	Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB)	Parliamentary Act
2.	1979	Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA)	Decree 87
3.	1992	Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC)	Decree 23
4.	2000	Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)	NDDC Act

Source: Compiled by the Author during Field study in 2009

The NDDDB was set up by the parliamentary Act of 1961. Some of its term of reference included:

- Responsibility for advising the government with respect to the physical development of the Niger Delta
- The Board of the NDDDB in discharging its responsibility shall be responsible for the survey of the region to ascertain measures required to promote its physical development

- Prepare schemes designed to promote the physical development of the region together with the estimates of the cost of putting such schemes into effect.
- The Board was also mandated to submit to the Federation and Governments of Western (later Mid-Western) and Eastern Nigeria an initial report describing the survey of the Niger Delta and measures which appeared to the Board to be desirable in order to promote physical development thereof, having regard to the information derived from the survey and subsequent annual reports describing the work of the Board and the measures taken in pursuance of its advise.

However, the Board later became an investigative body without executive powers to carry out recommended schemes being delegated to it. Secondly, the Board became a subject of financial dislocation as funds required to carry out scientific investigation into the physical development of the Niger Delta were not provided (Azaiki, 2006; UNDP, 2006). The failure of the NDDB coupled with continued neglect of the Delta people resulted in the first post-independence minority rights revolution in the Niger Delta in 1966 (see section 4.5).

The NDDB was replaced with the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA) through military Decree 87 of 1979 on account of financial mismanagement of NDDB officials and neglect being meted out by the institution to the local people. Similarly, NDBDA was later changed in 1992 when then military head of state, General Ibrahim Babangida issued Decree 23 of 1992 to set up Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission

(OMPADEC). The failure of the NDBDA was attributed to a number of factors the chief of which was its lack of legitimacy at the local level. Second, none of its Board members appointed by the Federal government of Nigeria were indigenes of the Niger Delta. The appointment of Board membership of NDBDA was not done in consultation with the local people of the region whose problems were to be resolved. Rather, government only appointed politicians as Board members who considered such offices as veritable sources of getting their own portion of national cake (UNDP, 2006:12). With respect to the shortcomings of OMPADEC, politics rather than the volume of oil produced determined the siting of projects. Corruption was also condoned with impunity as indicated in the report of the investigation which probed the commission. Some contractors left with mobilization fees of ₦6.6 billion with large number of abandoned projects with resultant direct negative impact on the lives of the Niger Delta people (Odje, 2002:35, UNDP, 2006).

The failure of OMPADEC to meet the aspirations of the local people of the Niger Delta led to the formation of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) through NDDC Act 2000. The commission was charged with the responsibility for formulating policies and guidelines for the Niger Delta, and to conceive, plan and implement projects and programmes for the development of the region. In spite of the beauty of arrangement set up for the funding of the commission involving the Federal government, oil companies and from the member states' ecological funds, the commission still remains an appendage of the federal government as directives have to be taken mostly from the Presidency. This development hampered the commission from achieving the purpose for which it was established. Due to

the overbearing influence of the government over the commission, the Federal government under President Olusegun Obasanjo underfunded the commission to the tune of ₦240 billion preventing the commission from realizing its full potential (Etekpe, 2007). Since the failure of the NDDC to address the plights and basic concerns of the Niger Deltans coupled with the assassination of Ken Saro Wiwa and others, several insurrections have taken place in the region against the government and the multinational oil corporations (see section 4.5).

#### **4.5. Struggles for Resource Control in the Delta Region**

The struggles for resource control in the Delta region have produced different movements whose activities involved strong agitation for increased autonomy, infrastructural development and fair share of the proceeds from oil revenue and environmental stewardship where oil extraction takes place. While the activities of some of the movements involved in these struggles have considerably altered the position of the government, what has not really been achieved is the conferment of control over natural resources on the people of the Niger Delta (Azaiki, 2006). The remaining analysis discusses the role played by various actors in the struggle for the actualization of resource control in the Niger Delta region.

The major factor which clearly explains the drive for resource control by indigenous people of the Delta was non implementation of several recommendations offered in development reports submitted to the Federal government by various committees since 1958 to date (see Appendix D below). From appendix D, a total of sixteen different reports focusing on

governance, derivation, status of the region, infrastructure, human development, violence and insecurity, land ownership, environmental issues and fiscal federalism were submitted to the federal government following various committees set up by various governments in Nigeria during military and civilian administrations. The recommendations offered in these reports were similar and would have probably taken the Niger Delta out of the present predicament if those recommendations were implemented long before now (Technical Report on the Niger Delta, 2008). In the area of governance, virtually all the reports recommended specific policies to be developed by the actors operating in the Niger Delta in areas incorporating policies on gas flaring and spillages, derivation to be spent transparently and inclusion of the three tiers of government and civil society in the development of the region. Other areas of recommendation identified in the report included collaboration with civil society to check excesses resulting from financial mismanagement from the government and political restructuring to devolve powers to the local people in resources management (Willinks, Popoola, Etiebet, Ogomudia, Tobi and UNDP Reports). Similarly, the aforementioned reports also suggested equitable distribution in the sharing of revenue derivation formulae with special attention to the oil producing states. A comparison of the suggestions made with the practice of revenue allocation formulae by the federal government was contrary to natural justice; equity and good conscience in the Niger Delta (see Appendix E).

Between 1946 and 1960 when there was much dependence on agricultural produce such as cocoa, groundnuts, cotton, palm oil, palm kernel, et cetera, derivation principle stood at 50%. The trend was also

maintained from 1960 until 1967 when the civil war broke out. However, Sections 134 and 140, (1) of the Nigerian Independence Constitution (1960) and the Republican Constitution (1963) respectively sanctioned payment of 50% to the region of revenues accruable from royalties on the extraction of any oil mineral while same proportion (50%) was also payable on the exportation of agricultural products including palm oil from the Niger Delta. Between 1969 and 1971, the revenue formula changed from 50% hitherto allocated to the producing states to 45% apparently due to the financial constraint the federal government faced both in executing the civil war and to set the pace for reconstruction of the country during post war era. A significant development had earlier taken place in 1969 when the then Military Head of State General Yakubu Gowon promulgated Decree 51 in 1969 which puts the ownership and control of petroleum resources in any land within Nigeria under the control of the Federal Government (Oloya and Ugbeyavwighren, 2008; UNDP, 2006). The situation worsened between 1976 to 1979 under General Olusegun Obasanjo where a distinction was made between offshore and onshore proceeds with all offshore paid into distributable account. This distinction disadvantageously provided derivation of 20% to the producing states while the federal government recorded 80% boost from the derivation. The derivation was not in existence between 1979 and 1981 but was restored under the civilian administration led by President Shehu Shagari to 1.5% in 1984. The value of the derivation to the producing states rose to 3% between 1993 and 1998 under General Sanni Abacha while the derivation rose to 13% under the leadership of General Abdul Salam Abubakar.

In my view, derivation started on a good foundation until the incursion of military administrations into the management of Nigerian economy in the sixties. The intervention of the military government created inequality in the distribution of the gains from local resources in the Niger Delta, coupled with the promulgation of obnoxious decrees which vested total control of oil resources in the hands of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The period the Niger Deltans relied on the production of palm oil was much better than the era oil was discovered for a number of reasons. First, the local people of the region had a reasonable part of their environment protected even though the level of freedom the region had under the Eastern region was not too fair. Second, there was tremendous gains from agriculture as local people could afford to engage in surplus farming and fishing for sustainability of livelihood. The situation today where oil exist has brought more pains to the local people as the issue of derivation remain a complex issue between the federal, state and local governments and the indigenous people of the Delta region (Azaiki, 2006).

In Watts' (2005, 2009) view, the need to redress the level of injustices meted to the region since independence precipitated the formation of different anti-government movements by the people of the Delta region to agitate for justice, preservation of their resources from depletion and control of the resources found within their region (see Appendix F). Isaac Adaka Boro, an Ijaw nationalist laid the foundation for the struggle in the region in 1966. Boro accused the then military government of Nigeria of criminal exploitation of the region's natural resources without adequate care and concern for the delta people where the resources were derived (including

crude oil). Using the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) which comprised armed militia, he declared the Niger Delta Republic in February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1966 and fought the government for twelve days until he was overwhelmed by the government forces and subsequently charged for treason. He was later found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. The death decision against Boro was reversed by the federal government following the sporadic crises that hit the region from 1966 and beyond. Boro was granted amnesty by the then military head of state, General Yakubu Gowon. Isaac Adaka Boro's submission while addressing his team of liberationists remains evergreen in the history of human rights activism particularly in areas affecting freedom and liberation of the people from injustice, oppression and inequality (Azaiki, 2006).

The dimension of the struggle for resource control took a different dimension when Ken Saro-wiwa drew on the platform of MOSOP in the 1990s to internationalize the struggle. Saro-wiwa presented the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) at the United Nations which demanded for increased autonomy for the Ogoni people, fair share of the proceeds of oil revenue and concern for environmental protection (Asoya, 2008). In 1994, Saro-wiwa was arrested in 1994 along with other Ogoni eight (Saturday Dobee, Nordu Eawo, Daniel Gbooko, Paul Levera, Felix Nuate, Baribor Bera, Barinem Kiobel, and John Kpuine). These activists were regarded as Ogoni nine (Asoya, 2008). The Ogoni nine denied the charges and were later found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging by a specially convened tribunal in 1995 (ibid).

The INC was founded in 1991 as a local organization for bringing members of different socio-cultural groups of ijaw ethnic backgrounds



together. Comrade Kimse Okoko has played an exceptional leadership role by bringing all Ijaws together under the same umbrella to be able to achieve collective results through collective struggle. The organization was formed to bring structural change to the approach in which the resources and the environment of the Ijaw communities have been managed by the government and the multinational corporation actors in the private sector. The INC was also involved in the co-ordination of a communiqué which produced the Kaiama declaration by the IYC in 1998. In that communiqué the Ijaw youths from over forty clans organised a peaceful struggle which focused on freedom, self determination and ecological justice (Asoya, 2008).

The Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) was founded by Asari-Dokubo in 2004. Being a militant group, NDPVF received its financial support in large part from local and regional politicians who also derive financial benefits from the Delta region's oil revenue. Due to conflict of interest between its sponsor and the leadership of NDPVF, the militant group also launched attack against the operations of the oil companies in order to control the Delta regions oil resources. This action forced the oil companies to withdraw from some operations which led to drop in oil production and revenue in Nigeria. Findings from Watts (2009) estimated that that by November 2007, oil revenues were down by 40% and Shell Oil Company alone lost estimated revenue of \$10.6 billion between 2005 and 2008. The federal government arrested Dokubo and charged him for treason but he was later released in 2007 after being granted amnesty (Asoya, 2008, Watts, 2009). The Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) was formed by Henry Okah in 2006 as a militant group which engaged in the use

of arms for the liberation of the people of the Delta region from environmental injustices from the government and multinational oil companies. The spate of attacks by MEND against the operations of oil companies in the Delta region led to the trial of Okah by the federal government in 2008 over terrorism and illegal possession of fire-arms, among others. Okah was later released in 2009 through the amnesty the federal government granted to the Niger Delta militants (ibid). The attacks carried out by MEND in the Delta region was more pronounced relative to other militant groups. The leadership of MEND always claim responsibility for every attack it carried out either against government security forces, oil installations or officials of multinational oil companies (see appendix G).

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have critically analysed the dynamics which shape the governance and development discourse in the Niger Delta using historical analysis. In doing this, I analyzed the power relationships which shaped the governance process during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. In the pre-colonial period, the governance of the Niger Delta was shaped by local values and practices through which the Niger Deltans determined their local customs, economic livelihood and political systems. The involvement of local people in the political, economic and socio-cultural decisions promoted local participation where each canoe-house was effectively represented at the “council of head of canoe houses meeting” where legislative and judicial decisions which affected local villages were made within Bonny Kingdom. In comparative terms, the village was the

foundational unit of power in the pre-colonial Ogoni political system where the Menebon who was supported by other chiefs co-ordinated both administrative and political governance of Ogoni. The village assembly was discovered to be the most significant political institution in Ogoni because it was responsible for the determination of every reigning village head. The economic relations that shaped the exchange systems between different villages during the pre-colonial era was based on co-operation and understanding displayed by different villagers during the transaction of business activities. The use of commodity currencies promoted business transactions between local villagers on the one hand and between local villagers and the Europeans on the other hand. With respect to socio-cultural factors, the villagers showed strong allegiance to local deities as an intermediary between local villages and almighty God. The value people place on various deities to a great extent determined the actions of villagers in relation to naming ceremonies, arrangement of villagers' funerals, conflict resolution and villagers' relationship with land.

The governance of the Delta region by different actors during the colonial era came with a number of challenges. The structure of governance became redefined with the emergence of the colonial state where western governance practices conflicted with local governance systems. First, the introduction of indirect rule by the British government in 1912 as an administrative superstructure to manage local Delta villages came at a time when the colonial government had inadequate knowledge about the socio-cultural background of the people. Second, the challenges encountered by the colonial government created a state of disequilibrium for the economic,

political and socially-embedded relations of the local people. These developments resulted in further conflicts between the local people in the Delta and the colonial state which became increasingly domineering in terms of its governance approach. For example, lack of legitimacy in the governance style of the colonial state at the grass root led to the first women's riot in Aba in 1929. Third, the introduction of fiscal federalism by the colonial government to bring about equity in the allocation of resources between the centre and the component units was affected by controversies. The controversies led to widespread agitations of the minorities in the Eastern region (where the Niger Delta was located) to demand for resources control. This development precipitated the commissioning of Sir Willinks in 1957 to conduct a comprehensive study into the fears of the people of the Delta region.

The chapter realized that the independence of Nigeria after the colonial period has not significantly changed the governance of resources affecting the interest of the local people. This position is clear judging from the fact that government at the central level remained the most powerful actor of governance relative to the local level with the result that citizens' political, economic and socio-cultural interests were not given proper attention by the government at all levels. First, the governance regimes after independence added little to the realization of the rights of the local people due to excessive military intervention in the governance of resources in Nigeria. Instability in the governance regimes promoted corruption, disconnectivity between the federal (central), state and local government levels, lack of transparency and disrespect for governance systems at all levels. Second, the federal

government of Nigeria has often used development institutions as a vehicle of political and administrative convenience for the purpose of rewarding its clients rather than being productively engaged in the total transformation of local governance in the Delta region. Due to neglect by the government to institute change for sustainable development in the Delta region, the local people embraced conflict through the formation of several militia groups as a strategy for realization of their demands.

In conclusion, it is evident that different governance systems pervaded the Delta region during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods, with some similarities in terms of the way the local people managed their resources. However, the power relationships which characterized resources management during these periods were dynamic, full of domination and resistance (Foucault, 1982; Sharp *et al*, 2000). The complexities involved in power relationships by different actors produced gainers and losers during the struggle for control of local resources (Asoya, 2008 and Watts, 2009). For example the local people in the Delta region were major beneficiaries of local resources during the pre-colonial era when their resources were managed by local actors. The structure of power during the colonial period became disadvantageous to the local people in the Delta region since the colonial government assumed full control of the resources in the Niger Delta. The situation changed after the colonial period with the governments at all levels responsible for greater level of control in the management of resources belonging to the local people.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RESOURCES FOR GOVERNANCE IN THE DELTA**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

From the second chapter of the thesis, I developed a framework for understanding governance of natural resources where resources constituted the first component of the framework. In this chapter, I intend to show the extent to which resources support the local governance systems in the Delta region.

The importance of natural resources in the life of rural economy cannot be overemphasized. Besides providing input for rural production, natural resources remain the single most important economic asset shaping the livelihood of rural economy. Several studies including perspectives from Mukherjee (1997), USAID (2006) and Devarajan and Giugale (2011) acknowledged both direct and indirect benefits rural users derive from the use of natural resources. In terms of direct benefits, natural resources provide support ranging from food, income, habitat and shelter, raw materials (oil, grass and wood for cooking and furniture), ornaments, religious items and cultural symbols, local medicines to grazing sites (ibid). The indirect benefits rural people derive from natural resources include providing greenery, making for prestige and beauty, provision of habitat for wildlife and host of others (ibid).

This chapter begins by setting the context for the research areas where resources are located in order to understand the general picture of the research areas and reasons for choosing them. Following the research

context, the chapter provides background sketch of various institutions that shape the governance of local resources in the research areas. In the next section, the chapter investigates what constitute resources in the research areas. Identifying the forms of resources at the local level is as challenging as interpreting the perceptions of actors on these resources. But these challenges were addressed in this chapter by drawing on the data from the field to provide information on various forms of resources at both Bori and Agbere villages and the interpretations local actors give to local resources. The second section of the chapter attempts to find the interactions between social actors and local resources and how the governance systems of resources provide support to the livelihood systems of different actors. Questioning the interactions between different actors is complex particularly in a volatile research area like the Delta region where power relations determine actors' relationship to local resources and their ability to negotiate and renegotiate their interest for the use of these resources on daily basis in the Delta environment (Giddens, 1984; Agrawal and Gibson, 2001; Agrawal, 2005)

This chapter draws on post-institutionalist thinking to argue that resources have a wider interpretation beyond the narrow view of economic value they provide to social actors. Resources further incorporate significant values that are symbolic and socio-culturally constructed with meanings which are historically embedded (Mehta, *et al*; 1999, 2001).

Within the context of the governance systems of resources in the Delta region, I argue that highly placed actors at different institutional levels not only exercise powers over ecosystems where local resources are found, but

are also involved in strategic power advantage which undermines the strengths and capabilities of less powerfully positioned social actors. Therefore, excessive power influence from domineering actors (such as government at all levels, multi-national oil corporations, local chiefs, traditional rulers, highly placed villagers) resultantly promotes deep struggle for resource control and over-exploitation of these resources leading to degradation, inequality, discrimination and exclusion of the poor from economic, political and socio-cultural processes (CPRC, 2004; Cleaver and Franks, 2005; Moncrieffe, 2008).

## **5.2. Setting the Research Context**

At this juncture, it is pertinent to present the description of the research areas in order to understand the general picture of the areas, livelihood activities and cultural practices of the local people. The section also provides justifications for the selection of the research areas.

Bori is situated in Khana local government area<sup>28</sup> of Rivers state<sup>29</sup> in the Niger Delta<sup>30</sup>; with Port Harcourt being the capital city of the state (see Figure 5.1 below). It has a population of 11,693 people. This figure makes Bori a rural area according to the demographic benchmark developed by the National Population Commission of Nigeria where the commission classified any area less than 20,000 people as rural area (NPC, 2006). The

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<sup>28</sup> Khana local government council (KLGCC) has an area of 560 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 294,217 people (National Population Commission, 2006).

<sup>29</sup> Rivers state was created on the 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1967. Its population is 5.2 million and has a land size of 11,077 km square (National Population Commission, 2006).

<sup>30</sup> By geographical and political definition, the Niger Delta comprises nine states including: Abia, Akwa-ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers states. In reality, the core Niger Delta states where major oil is extracted consists of Akwa-ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers and some parts in Edo (Dafinone, 1999).



geographical coordinates of Bori are 4° 42' 0" North, 7° 21' 0" East. Linguistic evidence by Williamson (1986) has it that the Bori people like other Ogonis settled in their present location some two thousand years ago. Their traditional language is Ogoni. The Ogoni people consist of six clans: Nyo Khana, Ken Khana, Tai, Babbe, Gokana and Eleme. Findings from Okonta (2008) revealed the first four aforementioned clans occupy the eastern and northern part of the land and are generally called Khana while the Gokana people live in the south-central part of Ogoni-land.

The Eleme people on the other hand occupy the western part of Ogoniland. The Ogoni people speak four related but mutually unintelligible languages, with Khana which the Bori people speak and Gokana being the major ones. Due to the unity between the people, Bori was made the traditional headquarters of the Ogoni people. Oral tradition from the field research I conducted in 2009 has it that the Bori people like other Ogonis migrated to their present location from the ancient Ghana Empire under the leadership of a woman warrior called "Gbenekwaanwaa" with other lieutenants and body guards after the outbreak of a civil war. These groups of people later settled in the present Ogoni through the Atlantic coast in their canoes.

The key livelihood activities of the Bori people are farming and fishing. Unlike Agbere, an average Bori villager engaged in farming relative to fishing due to availability of land for farming. In modern period, the local people of Bori also engage in petty trading, carpentry, basket weaving, pottery making in addition to their traditional occupations. With respect to culture, the local Bori people still protect their cultural heritage in spite of acceptance of

Christianity. For example, the land on which the typical Bori people live and the water which surrounds it are regarded as an intermediary between the people and God. The customs and traditions of Bori, particularly Bane clan, allow marriages within other Ogoni kingdoms as well as Ibibio people while marriages with other ethnic nationalities are forbidden. The major reason for this custom is to protect the originality of the tradition of Ogoniland.

Agbere on the other hand is located in Sagbama local government area<sup>31</sup> of Bayelsa state<sup>32</sup> (see Figure 5.1 below). The population of Agbere according to the community source in 2009 was estimated at 16000 (Tarakiri Cluster Development Board, 2009). In terms of size, Agbere is less than one square kilometre. It is located in the Nigeria Agip oil company (NAOC) Samabiri Oil Field and it harbours the Shell pipeline as well as other oil facilities of the NAOC. The community shares boundaries with Ekpide-Ama (after River Nun), Okodia (Yenagoa LGA), Obuotor and Odoni in the North, South, East and West respectively (ibid). Agbere is geographically situated in fresh water mangrove forest agro-ecological zone of the Delta region. The area is characterized with sandy loam and clay soil texture and is prone to flooding, erosion, land degradation and water pollution. Agbere is also characterized with rainfall pattern which starts from every March to November. The majority of the villagers in Agbere are Ijaws. Oral tradition shows the Agbere people are members of nine clans including: Apoi, Kabo,

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<sup>31</sup> Sagbama local government council (SLGC) is one of the eight local government councils in Bayelsa state. Its headquarters is located in Sagbama town, part of which lies within the Bayelsa National Forest. The local government council has an area of 945 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 187,146 at the 2006 census (NPC, 2006).

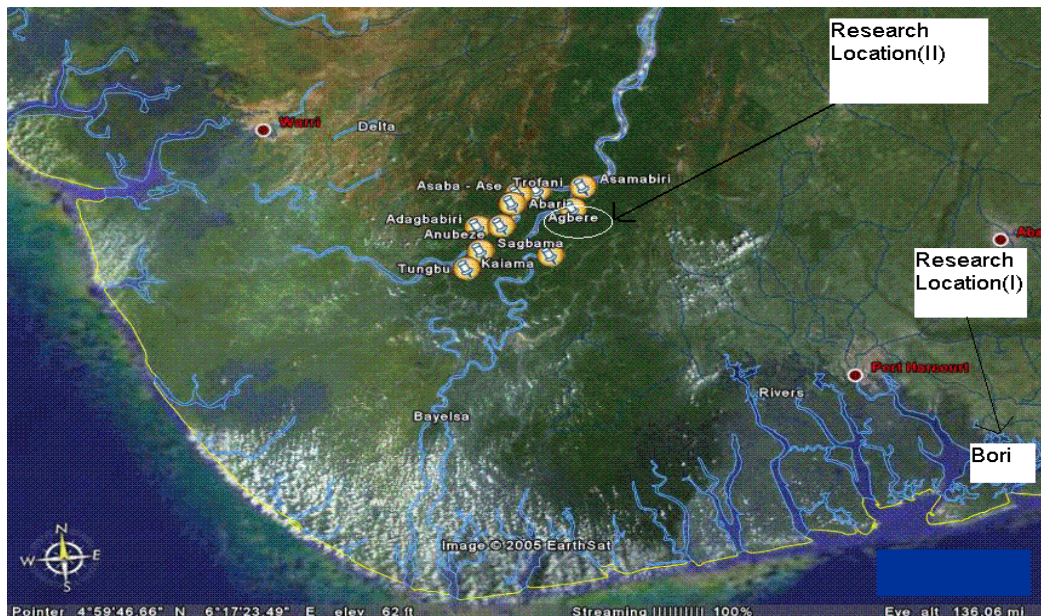
<sup>32</sup> Bayelsa state was created by the military administration of the late General Sanni Abacha on October 1, 1996 from the old Rivers state. Yenegoa is its capital. It has a land size of 10,773 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 1.7 million (NPC, 2006).

Kumbo, Tarakiri, Opokuma, Talaokuma, Kolokuma, Gbaran and Mein. Agbere has four quarters namely: Ayama (new town), Tuburukuni, Kakarabiri and Tambiri. Information gathered from the field study revealed Agbere was previously located opposite Kpakama, until communal crises erupted between the Agberians and the Kpakama people. After series of consultations with the goddesses and offering of sacrifices, the Agbere people finally settled on virgin land which today is called Agbere. The key livelihood activities in Agbere are multi-faceted and revolve around: farming, fishing, trading, civil service, artisan, transportation and hunting and related occupation (Tarakiri cluster Development Board, 2009).

There are several reasons for choosing two research locations for a sensitive study of this nature. The first reason is the need to understand the similarities and differences of local governance systems in the selected research sites. On another account, it might be important to examine differential impact of governance on the daily practices of these areas. Thirdly, it might also be necessary to find how governance works in practice in the research areas. That is, to find why governance practices are working in one research area and ineffective in the other research area and vice-versa. Fourthly, my prior knowledge of the Niger Delta in 2004 was helpful in choosing both Bori and Agbere villages. During this period, I learnt a lot about the socio-cultural values of the people of the region, particularly the Ijaws and the Ogoni. My prior knowledge of the region and its people has been helpful in choosing appropriate research locations which would impact productively on the quality of my research outcomes. Besides, the contacts I built in 2004 with some of the officials of government agencies in Rivers and

Bayelsa states coupled with the prior knowledge and contacts of my research assistant was another reason for choosing the research areas.

Figure 5 1: Map of Bori and Agbere Areas



Source: <http://www.ijawfoundation.org/map.html> (Accessed: 15/12/2009)

### 5.2.1. Theoretical Structure and Functions of Institutions at the Local Level

Various institutions exist at the village level to shape the governance of local resources. These institutions include federal, government agencies; state, corporate and local institutions (see Appendix A). The federal government is constitutionally empowered to control all mineral resources found from any part of the Nigeria (Nigerian Constitution, 1999). Besides, the federal government is also statutorily responsible for the provision of security for the citizenry (ibid). In order to discharge the above responsibilities, the federal government is supported by a number of agencies through which the

government interacts with the local people. These agencies include the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) and Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

At this juncture, it is imperative to provide background information on the government agencies in order to unearth their respective functions in relation to other institutions operating in the research areas. NNPC was established in 1977 as an agency of the government in control of both the upstream and downstream sectors of the petroleum industry. Within the structure of the petroleum ministry, the department for petroleum resources (DPR) ensures compliance of the oil multinational companies with industry regulations; processes applications for licenses, leases and permits, establishes and enforces environmental regulations (NNPC,2010). FEPA was set up by the military led government of General Ibrahim Babangida under decree 59 of 1992 to protect and conserve the natural resources in Nigeria (FEPA, 1992). Through this decree, FEPA works in collaboration with DPR to control the activities of the oil multinational companies in order to comply with environmental standard. The NDDC is required by the law setting it up, that is, the NDDC Act 2003 to be responsible for the reconstruction and provision of infrastructure in the entire Niger Delta. The law mandates NDDC to transform the region into rapid, even and sustainably developed region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful (NDDC Act, 2003). Through the NDDC Act, the commission has been able to interact with the local people of the Delta region to carry out its statutory functions. INEC is

required by law to conduct elections into federal and state executive political offices through which local people determine representatives of their choices (see Nigerian Constitution, 1999). The appropriate institutions for conducting elections for the determination of representation of executives into local government councils in Bori and Agbere are the Rivers State Independent electoral Commission (RESIEC) and the Bayelsa State Independent Electoral Commission (BYSIEC) respectively. These commissions derived their powers from the relevant provisions of Nigerian constitution (Nigerian Constitution, 1999).

With respect to corporate institutions, Shell Petroleum Development Company Limited (SPDC) and Nigerian Agip Oil Corporation (NAOC) are the multinational oil companies that operate in Bori and Agbere villages respectively. For the purpose of this study, SPDC and NAOC are used interchangeably with Shell Oil Company and Agip Oil Company respectively. Beside the production sharing agreement<sup>33</sup> between these corporations and the federal government of Nigeria, these multinational corporations also interact with the local villagers through signing of memorandum of understanding<sup>34</sup> with local villages in areas related to peace, relationship building and corporate social responsibility. Facts from the field show that the Shell<sup>35</sup> has one of its oil fields in Bori where gas flaring affects the activities of

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<sup>33</sup> The production sharing agreement focuses on the sharing of the output of oil and gas operations in agreed proportion between the multinational oil companies and NNPC, the representative of the government interest in the venture. After making provisions for cost borne by the parties to the agreement, the balance of the oil production, called "profit oil" is shared in agreed proportion between the parties (Ameh, 2006).

<sup>34</sup> Memorandum of understanding is a written agreement between the multinational oil Companies and Niger Delta villages stating the roles and responsibilities of the parties toward each other.

<sup>35</sup> SPDC is the oldest and largest oil and gas company in Nigeria. Its commercial oil exportation from Nigeria dated back to 1958. SPDC's operations are in shallow water and

Bori villagers from time to time. Findings from the field pointed out that NAOC<sup>36</sup> has a number of its oil wells located within Agbere in addition to its oil pipelines which pass through the village.

The corporate social responsibility of Shell Oil Company is too broad to figure out the specific villages that have benefited from its community development programmes. However, the summary of the corporate social responsibility of Shell Oil Company towards the villages in the Delta region based on facts from Shell (2009) briefing notes are presented as follows:

*“Shell operations contributed over \$84 million directly to development projects in areas including small business and agriculture, training, education, health care and capacity building. We have trained and helped more than 850 people since 2004 when our partnership started with Globacom (Nigeria’s telecommunication company). Our global Livewire program has helped to train more than 2,200 young people, repositioning their skills to start small scale businesses. In the area of agricultural development, Shell’s partnership with USAID in 2008 assisted more than 3,200 farmers to boost cassava production. In 2008, we awarded 2,730 secondary school and 850 university scholarship in the Niger Delta. In the same year, almost 1,000 nets and more than 2,000 doses of anti-malaria drugs were given away at anti-natal clinics. We built three new community health care facilities in the Niger Delta in 2008 providing a whole range of*

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onshore in the Niger Delta spread over 30,000 square kilometres, including a network of more than 9,000km of flowlines and pipelines, 71 producing oil fields, approximately 1,000 producing wells, 87 flow stations, nine gas plants, among others (Shell,2012).

<sup>36</sup> NAOC commenced operation in Nigeria in 1962 when it was granted four concessions in the Niger Delta. Its current assets in the Delta region covers 26 producing oil fields, 157 oil wells, 745km of pipelines,8 flow stations, among others (NNPC,2010).

*services including: health education, vaccinations, eye-testing and treatment of malaria (p.2)”*

Data generated from the archive of Nigerian Agip Oil Company of Nigeria showed that poverty alleviation programs provided by the company are targeted at providing incomes and capacity development which covers aspects of agriculture, fishing, small scale industry, transportation and skills acquisition (NAOC, 2001). For instance, the agricultural poverty alleviation program is termed “The Green River Project” a grass roots-oriented development model for assisting individuals and groups to build up enterprises by providing necessary inputs and modern technology for transiting from subsistence level to large scale farming. To boost agricultural productivity, Agip Oil Company provided a plant testing laboratory to help farmers to determine the appropriate soil to grow and recommend fertilizer application for maximum productivity. It also provides seed selection and control through a sophisticated machine which dries and sorts out seeds to identify the best quality. In addition, the agricultural extension services provided by the oil company include professional site selection, establishment of demonstration plots, onsite training of farmers, retrieval of planting materials when due, to mention just a few. However, these corporate social responsibility programmes covered Olugboboro and Ogboinbiri villages in Bayelsa state.

The closest tier of government to the Agbere and Bori villagers are the Khana and Sagbama local government councils respectively. The functions of the local councils are similar because they derive their powers from the



constitution of Nigeria (Nigerian Constitution, 1999). The main functions of the local government include:

1. Consideration and recommendation of economic planning to the state,
2. Collection of rates, radio and television licenses,
3. Establishment and maintenance of cemeteries and burial grounds
4. Licensing of bicycles, trucks (other than mechanically propelled trucks), canoes, wheel barrows and carts,
5. Establishment, maintenance and regulation of slaughter houses, slaughter slabs, markets, motor parks and public conveniences,
6. Naming of roads, streets and numbering of houses,
7. Registration of all births, deaths and marriages,
8. Provision and maintenance of public transportation and refuse disposal.

These local government councils cannot achieve their statutory functions without the support of people at the local level. The reason is that local government councils require the support of local people in order to implement their programmes successfully. However, the manner in which every village is managed is also paramount in order to understand the relationship between different actors. Village administrations in the research areas are similar even though the style of every traditional leader might be different (see figure 5.2).

In terms of hierarchy of authority, the traditional leaders in both villages are the supreme head, ruler and the chief custodian of culture, customs and traditions. Both Menebon and Amanana-owie are empowered by the customs

and traditions of their respective villages to coronate other chiefs (see figure 5.2). The tenure of office of both Menebon and Amanana-owie are life. That implies traditional rulership in both villages cannot be replaced until the existent ones are dead. Both Menebon and Amanana-owie determine the selection of honourary chiefs based on their positions, wealth and contributions to village development. The position of the honourary chiefs is part-time. Facts from the field indicated that the honourary chiefs are usually involved in the development of the village because of the financial power and strong social network they command in the society.

The council of chiefs from both villages is occupied by representatives from different quarters within the villages and they assist the traditional rulers in decision making and coronation of other chiefs. Their tenure of office is the same as those of the traditional rulers. Findings from Bori which supported Okonta (2008) revealed that the council of chiefs represents an array of patriarchal figures deriving powers from cultural and mythical origin is brought together in a clearly defined administrative and political structure and is responsible for the administration of Bori village. The council of chiefs in Bori comprises “Menebon”, his assistant, the chief priest, lineage heads and chieftaincy title holders (selected or elected based on the discretion of the council of chiefs) in the village. In Agbere, the council of chiefs, otherwise known as “Ala-owie” consists of the “Amanana owie”, the chief priest, lineage heads and chieftaincy title holders. It is at the council of chiefs that overall decisions affecting the local governance of every village is taken. The Menebon and Ala-owie are the head of the council of chiefs in Bori and Agbere respectively. The council of chiefs also presides over the land

management committee in both villages where decisions related to land allocation and management is taken (see chapter six).

The village assemblies serve as platforms which bring villagers together to deliberate and take decisions germane to the development of every village. The composition of village assembly in Bori includes council of chiefs and village elders. In Agbere, the village assembly comprises the traditional ruler, local chiefs, and elders from reputable families, youth leaders and women leaders. Where the composition of the village assemblies is to be inclusive then, all the village members are allowed to participate in decision making process. Despite the scope of village assemblies in both villages, it lacks the power to remove either Menebon or Amana-owie from office because the traditional rulers are not administratively managed by the village assemblies. Rather, both Khana and Sagbama local government councils have powers to checkmate and enforce disciplinary measures against either Menebon or Ala-owei in cases related to violation of oath of their offices. Where any traditional ruler is found guilty of unacceptable behaviour which constitutes threat to the safety of the villagers or takes part in general politics, the local government authorities in conjunction with the state government can summarily remove him from office (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1976).

Beside the village assembly, facts from the field revealed a number of local associations formed by different group either in a self-help capacity or committed to community development. These associations work differently to shape the local governance systems at the village level. Findings from Bori showed that the Bori farmers association was initially a gathering where local farmers worked together to interact about the challenges facing farmers and

to fashion out some arrangements through which farmers supported one another during difficult times. In 1991, the association became an active informal resource users group with membership of ten (10) males. The membership of the association rose to twenty-one (21) divided into fifteen (15) males and six (6) females in 2009. There also exists Bori community development committee, a traditional group of volunteers within the village that worked together to provide support for the development of the village (see chapter seven for more discussion on Bori community development committee).

In comparison, the Agbere Fishermen Association (AFA) was established in 1985 with membership of fifteen (15) fishermen. As at 2009, the membership of the Association had risen to thirty-five (35) with all members being indigenes of Agbere. AFA was formed as an informal association for uniting local fishermen in Agbere. In order to be able to fish on the Agbere water, members of the association need to comply with its rules of the association. These include regular payment of membership dues, regular contributions to annual fishing festivity and regular attendance at meetings. Where any member of the association is unable to comply with any of the rules, he remains penalized to the extent of any part of the rule being violated. The erring members are restricted from fishing until the fines for the penalty is paid. In addition, the Fish Sellers Association (FSA) operated as a self help which provides supports and organizes social gathering to promote friendship and social interaction among its members. They provide patronage to AFA by buying different species of fishes from them to be resold for commercial purposes.

The Fish Farmers Co-operative Society (FFCS) also exist in Agbere as a local organisation to provide financial assistance to the members of the Agbere Fishermen Association that are registered on its membership list (see chapter seven for more discussion of FFCS).

The Agbere community development committees (CDC) also exist as a local based organization which consists of representatives from various Agbere quarters. The CDC represents the interest of the village in the development of local projects. The CDC sometimes liaises for financial support from different actors to be able to carry out mini-local projects including flood control among others within the village. The women are not left out in terms of the role they play in shaping local governance in Agbere. Findings from Agbere showed that Tari social club was founded in 2007 by a membership of twenty (20) local women as a forum for self-help and provision of support to members in financial and social needs. The Bayelsa ladies club which was founded in 1999 with membership of twenty females also exists as a self help and social gathering local organization in Agbere. The social organization provides support to its members during naming, funeral and social ceremonies.

Within the context of Bori and Agbere, different religious institutions exist which shape the belief systems of the villagers. Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion (ATR) are the major religions practiced by villagers in the research areas. Facts from the Bori have it that the Christianity constitutes about 65% while the ATR practitioners are 33%. Only 2% of the Bori populace practice Islam. Similarly, Christianity accounts for 70% in Agbere village, the ATR practitioners constitute 29% while only 1%

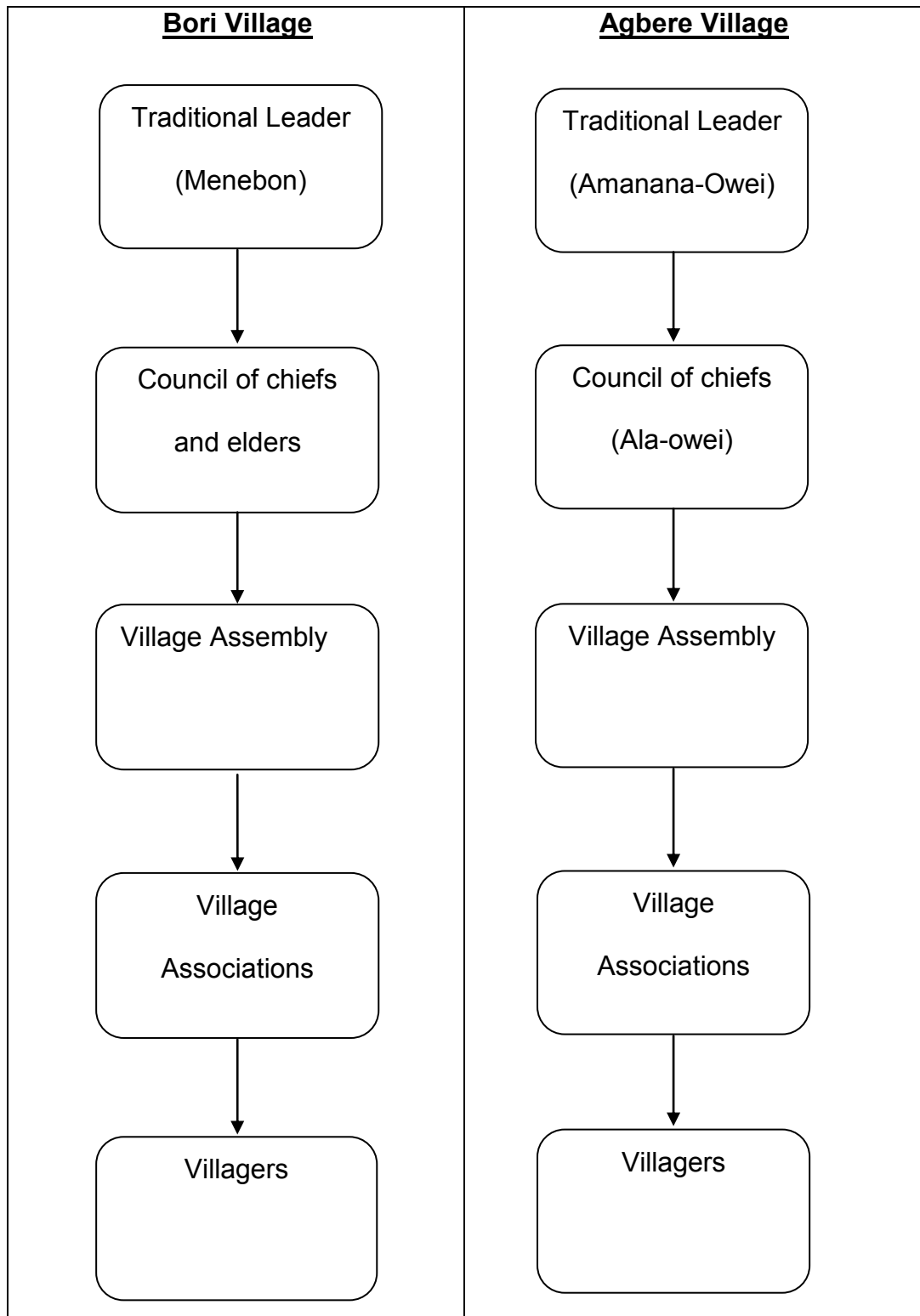
practices Islam. The growth in the number of churches of different denominations (Pentecostal churches and white garment churches) is responsible for higher proportion of Christianity religion in the research areas. Facts from the field showed that a reasonable number of villagers practice Christianity along side with ATR. Findings from the field revealed that a certain proportion of villagers that engage in dual religious practices considered ATR as an indigenous religion relative to Christianity which was regarded as a product of western culture. Another reason advanced by villagers was that combining the two religions would improve their spiritual growth and flexibility. There are six (6) and eight (8) major shrines in Agbere and Bori villages where different traditional activities are conducted either on annual basis or whenever urgent sacrifices are required to be performed in order to bring peace to the village or to avert calamities befalling the people living in the village. The chief priests in both villages are responsible for the custody and management of these shrines. Facts from the research areas revealed that the chief priests subject to the approval of the council of chiefs consult with different gods and goddesses to be able to provide direction for any sacrifice or traditional rites to be performed in every village.

The villagers represent the last component in the structure of village administration in the research areas. In the classification of villagers are farmers, fishermen, traders, civil servants, cassava processors, artisans, among others. It is interesting to state that some local based organizations exist at the local level independent of the village administration from Bori and Agbere villages. These organizations exist in order to promote the welfare of

the villagers and to agitate for the rights of the local people from the hands of powerful actors at all levels.

Facts from the field showed that the areas of focus of MOSOP include protection of the rights of the Bori villagers and Ogoni people as it affects development, supporting local rights in relation to self determination and rights to resource control. MOSOP also directs its effort to areas including: rights to participate in the areas that affect decision making of the Ogoni people, rights to protect the environment, rights to the culture of the people and rights to raise democratic awareness. Facts from Bori also revealed that MOSOP is a grass root based organisation which owes its existence and ability to the support of the community people and is found in all two hundred and twenty six (226) villages in Ogoniland including Bori. The acceptability of MOSOP by the local villagers is due to several years of good relationship it has built with the local people and also because its activities have been carried out in consonance with the aspirations of the people. The National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP) is the youth wing of MOSOP which provides support to the latter in areas where its services are required (see chapter eight for more discussion). Both Ijaw National Congress (INC) and Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) have similar objectives as MOSOP. Both INC and IYC have worked with the Agbere villagers in areas related to their livelihood improvement, local security, training, offering community advisory services and resolution of conflict within villages and from village to village.

Figure 5 2: Village Administrations at the Local Level



Source: Author's construct



### **5.3. What constitute resources at the local level?**

The perception of scholars regarding the component of resources of every environment varies and lends itself to diverse arguments. Scholars such as Gibbs and Bromley (1989) conceive resources as those components of the ecosystem which provide goods and services for the benefit of man. This conception of resources is inadequate because it reduces the relationship between several components of ecosystem and discounts the ecological value of resources as Lino-Grima and Berkes (1989) contend. Lino-Grima and Berkes (1989) strengthen the notion of resources to cover the ecosystem components and their relationships including aspects involving human society. The World Resources Institute (2003) also broadens the role of the ecosystem as a productive engine of the planet upon which human survival depends.

The situation at the local level is complex because of various institutional arrangements governing the use of resources. The state and corporate institutions consider local resources as the economic value to be realized from its usage. Basically, the state and corporate actors define their interest in oil, being the most valuable resource endowment based on optimal maximization of revenue and profits these actors derive respectively. The local actors on the other hand take the conception of local resources beyond the economic values to incorporate symbolic, socio-cultural and historical values within the socially constructed system of the Delta region. For example, among the Bori villagers, the land not only provides the food they eat and profits villagers make from sales of agricultural surplus from farming;

but the fruits of the land especially yam is a symbolic resource which has strong cultural and religious significance.

In analyzing the symbolic significance of land, data revealed that it is a common cultural practice in Bori amongst the Karikpo masqueraders to perform certain cultural practices during planting and harvesting season to show respect and allegiance to the land for enhancing the fertility of agricultural output. Data collected from a member of the Karikpo cultural group showed the masquerade festival is also performed during the burial ceremony of any of its members where certain sacrifices are performed to find the causes of death of any Karikpo masquerader. During the celebration, the masqueraders wear the Karikpo mask, a mask carved in form of animal face with two horns. The carved mask is used to cover the face of every masquerader with some raffia attached to the carved mask to cover the shoulders of the masqueraders. The raffia also covers the waist of the masqueraders in addition to being worn shorts. Data from Bori show the traditional belief of the villagers in the relationship in the transformations of human soul into animal form. This transformation shapes the physical structure of Karikpo masquerade. Simply put, the tradition of the Bori people has it that the human soul has the capability to change into animal form. Data also revealed certain rituals are performed by every initiated member of Karikpo society prior to becoming full member. The ingredients usually provided include a bottle of gin, palm wine and a plate of fish oil. Upon the provision of these ingredients, the chief priest of the society performs necessary initiation in the presence of other members until the process of initiation is completed. Therefore, the masqueraders honour the land during

the planting, harvesting and new yam festival as a way of showing allegiance to the land for enhancing agricultural productivity. Data gathered from Bori showed the masqueraders are not left alone in honouring the land as the chiefs and most villagers also take part in the Karikpo festival. The co-operation and collective action demonstrated by villagers during the Karikpo festival enable the farmers to draw on their cultural practice to support their livelihood. This was because of the strong beliefs the villagers attached to the efficacy of Karikpo cultural practice in appeasing the land for fertility. Non observance of this festival is commonly regarded as explanations for land infertility and starvation.

In explaining the local institutions amongst the Agbere people, water is considered as the source through which villagers get fishes of different species for both subsistence and commercial purposes. The same water in form of ocean, sea, rivers is symbolized because the traditions and culture of the Agberians believe that the supreme mother goddess (Wanyingi) and other goddess water spirit (which is known as "Owuamapu") dwells in water to protect the villagers against external aggression. The custodian of the water spirit is called "Beni-Ere" in the Agbere language which means water spirit priestesses. The general belief of the Agberians is that every individual originates from the water before coming into the world. On account of this, water is responsible for the multiplicity of different species of fishes and protection of the villagers from boat mishap. Therefore, the fishermen are often involved in the annual festival devoted to the worshipping and celebration of the Agbere water spirit. In the modern world, this practice is

linked with the worshipping of mermaids<sup>37</sup>. Data collected through interview with one of the Beni-Ere from Agbere showed that during the worshipping of the water spirit, the fishermen provide necessary sacrifices which are administered by the water spirit priestesses to ensure all rituals are properly conducted. The sacrifices are offered in a big calabash and are positioned on top of water until it is submerged by the water. This sign indicates acceptance of the sacrifices made to the water spirit. Therefore, most fishermen consider the worshipping of the water spirit as a veritable source of legitimacy for exercising their action for deriving livelihood support from fishing.

#### **5.4. Resources for Supporting Local Governance Systems**

In this section, I present in a systematic way, all the resources available to both Bori and Agbere villages which support local governance. Data from the field study has classified resources into allocative and authoritative (see chapter two). The practical application of these resources is presented in the sections that follow.

##### **5.4.1 Allocative Resources in Bori and Agbere Villages**

I found from both Bori and Agbere that allocative resources provide the major source of livelihood to the rural people. In practice, most villagers rely on these resources for their daily survival and any shock from these resources tend to cause livelihood difficulties for the villagers. On account of

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<sup>37</sup> Mermaid is an imaginary half-human creature in the sea with structural attributes consisting of the head and trunk of a woman and the tail of a fish (Thompson, 1996:853).

this, the remaining part of this section analyzes the components of allocative resources in the context of the research areas.

### *Land and Water Resources*

The land resources, which are fundamentally a subject of dispute between actors given the interpretation that different actors place on them cover agricultural land, mangrove trees, various species of plants and animals, lakes, rivers, confluences and crude oil (extracted from either/both onshore and offshore). Out of the allocative resources from both villages, land is the major provider of food, income and survival to the local people. One of the villagers interviewed in Bori passed the following comments on the importance of land resources to the survival of local people:

*“I am fifty-two years old and have been farming since I became six. My father then used to take us to farm on a full time scale and through this training, I mastered the skill of farming and my survival and that of my family entirely depend on whatever income we derive from cassava and yam and I feel happy being a farmer.”* (Interview with a Bori Villager, 03/08/09)

Comparatively, the situation in Agbere village was different as I found a large number of villagers who depended on water resources for living. During the course of interaction with one of the villagers, I obtained the expression below:

*“Our village is highly blessed with vast water and that is what separates us from other parts of the Niger Delta. The people of Agbere survive on fishing and that is exactly what I do for a living. Fishing provides the daily bread for my family at home. We eat from whatever we get from daily fishing*

*and sell the remaining in exchange for cash or give to neighbours, relatives or friends depending on the situation at hand”.*

(Interview with an Agbere Villager, 06/09/09)

The views expressed by villagers in terms of their survival being tied to local natural resources, particularly land was also supported by USAID (2006). The study conducted by USAID (2006) also found that:

*“Every three in four poor people who live in rural areas depend on natural resources for their livelihood while 90% of the rural people depend on forest for at least some part of their income (p.1).”*

Facts from the research areas show villagers derive benefits from various products they obtain from the forest. For example, the participants interviewed from both villages affirmed they derive several products from the forest such as herbal leaves for medicinal uses, leather from animal skins, and different species of snakes for consumption or for sale. Timber wood also supports the villagers for building hamlets while palm wine trees provide the source for local drink. During the course of interview with a participant, I gathered the following information on the level of dependence and benefits villagers derive from the forest:

*“The forest in Bori has been of tremendous value to our villagers. A reasonable number of villagers depend on the materials from the forest to support their livelihood and personal well being. Some of our villagers extract herbal leaves for medicinal uses either for domestic or for commercial purposes. In my case, I use the herbal leaves to support my well-being whenever I am sick or any member of my family is sick of malaria fever,*

*abdominal pains, headaches, backache and the typhoid fever.”* (Interview with Tamu at Bori, 18/09/09)

The people of Agbere are not different in terms of the support villagers get from drawing on the forest resources. One of the participants interviewed during the field research did affirm that the support he gets from hunting for different species of animals and tapping palm-wine in the forest has been helpful for supporting his livelihood. The summary of the participant's comments is presented as follows:

*“My survival depends on the palm-wine which I usually tap and different species of animal killed during hunting in the forest. The palm-wine tapped from the forest is sold to my customers in a big calabash depending on its quality and quantity. For a high quality palm-wine in big calabash, I make between ₦<sup>38</sup>2000 (£8) and ₦2500 (£10) while a smaller calabash of palm-wine sells for between ₦1000 (£4) and ₦1200 (approximately £5). For the animals, the demand for grass cutter is usually high during the dry season. So, I make between ₦1300 (£5) and ₦2000 (£8) depending on its size. But for snakes, I usually make sales from it all the time.”* (Interview with Aloy at Agbere, 24/09/09)

### *Infrastructural Resources*

Infrastructural resources consist of road availability, housing, power supply, water supply, sanitary and waste management facilities. The infrastructural resources in both Bori and Agbere mirror the state of

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<sup>38</sup> Naira is the national currency, that is, the legal tender for transacting businesses in Nigeria. As at the time of conducting my fieldwork, that was 2009, the exchange rate between British Pound sterling and Naira was £1= ₦250.

backwardness of the environment. In both cases, lack of electricity, lack of good roads, and lack of market, poor housing and water supply make lives very difficult for the local people of Bori and Agbere villages. Most of the participants interviewed from both villages confirmed that it has been very long since they last enjoyed electricity, probably in the city. The only source of generating power in these villages was through generators which were only found or affordable by powerful actors such as traditional rulers, local chiefs, local politicians and government officials. Lack of electricity constrains livelihood opportunities for rural traders who would have otherwise benefited from relatively cheaper power supply from the Power Holding Corporation of Nigeria (an agency of the federal government responsible for the supply of electricity in Nigeria). Rather, rural traders resorted to the use of generator which raises the cost of production because of the high cost of getting fuel to power the generator. In an interview with one of the local shoe cobbler, I got the following submissions:

*“Since I started this petty shoe making business, the major problem affecting the success of my business has been lack of power supply in this village. Most times, I have to buy fuel to power the generator my brother sent to me from the city. The generator is beginning to develop technical problems. By the time I deduct all expenses from every order placed by my customer, there is little or nothing left for me as profit. We need electricity to live fulfilled, decent and productive lives.”*

(Interview with a shoe cobbler at Bori, 24/09/09)

The major source of access of local people to water is to draw from river. This experience is more peculiar in Agbere which is located on River



Nun. Facts which emerged from Agbere revealed that the villagers, particularly the poor, drink water from the river, make use of same for cooking, washing and bathing. The water in most cases gets contaminated given that local people also defecate in the same river. This raises the risk of the villagers to high incidence of typhoid, cholera and water borne related diseases. In order to have a clearer picture of the scarcity of water supply in Agbere, one of the police officers I interviewed passed the following comments:

*“Agbere environs are a terrible place. It is the most difficult posting I have ever had in my career. I was posted here two years ago and getting water has become very difficult. Most of us had to buy sachets of pure water for bathing, drinking and other domestic needs at prices quadruple ₦20 (8pence) as against the normal price ₦5 (2pence). We cannot cook other than to travel to restaurant in the city because most of the foods they sell in the village were cooked with water from the river. A number of our colleagues who never had such knowledge became terribly sick after eating foods made from the village. Life is very difficult in Agbere. I hope they post me out of here.”* (Interview with a Police officer in Agbere, 24/09/09)

It is also worthy to analyze the state of development of road network and choices over modes of transportation available to the rural villagers in the investigated areas. In Bori, the road was a little better due to the topography of the area. In fewer places, roads were constructed but poorly maintained. This was the major source of transporting people, goods and services. The situation in Agbere was more difficult because water was the only source of transporting people, goods and services and this was usually

provided at exorbitant fares. In terms of comparison, the cost of transport fares in Agbere was about two and half times that of Bori. In view of this, the rural people of the villages under consideration lack choices over mode of transportation and this exposes them to large transactional cost.

The infrastructural challenges collectively constrained livelihood of the local people of Bori and Agbere on several grounds. Firstly, lack of electricity led to inefficiency and loss of productivity of the villagers. It also discouraged storage of agricultural and other related output. Secondly, lack of good roads diminished the opportunities of the villagers from interacting with outsiders and more so with neighbouring markets. Thirdly, non-provision of affordable markets to the villagers minimized gains which villagers would have realized from expanding exchange of goods and services. Lack of these resources according to Scoones (1998) undermines the sustainable livelihood of rural villagers and generally weakens their potential from competing for economic opportunities and reduces their propensities from pursuing different livelihood strategies.

### *Financial Resources*

Financial resources in the research areas vary considerably between actors. The state (officials of the government at all levels) and corporate actors (officials of the multi-national oil companies) have more access to financial resources relative to the underprivileged local people in Bori and Agbere. The state and corporate actors are highly placed and controlled a larger proportion of financial resources on account of the following reasons. First, these actors determine decisions affecting the allocation and

distribution of financial resources in the Delta region. Second, the actors are also found in the arena of seat of power where decisions affecting mineral deposit such as crude oil are taken. Third, the nature of business, which is oil transactions carried out by these actors, is capital intensive which allows for quicker return on investment. Fourth, the actors have a strong network within the chain of their business (for example the relationship between the oil companies operating in the Delta region, government at all levels and government agencies). Therefore, possession of financial resources by the state and corporate actors facilitated diversification of economic strategies and capabilities to pursue different financial opportunities (Scoones, 1998).

At the local level of Agbere and Bori, rural villagers lacked financial resources to pursue different livelihood strategies. Data from the research areas showed a number of factors which weakened the financial capability of the rural villagers. These included illiteracy which constrained opportunities to competitive formal jobs, poor land titling which constrained collaterals of the rural villagers to secure monetary resources or credit and difficulties from recovering from shocks in form of ecological devastation. Moreover, lack of financial resources meant inability to adopt modern farming techniques to enhance livelihood. I also found a number of villagers wanted to diversify into other petty trading activities which would have offered better financial returns but for lack of financial power. During an interview with a villager from Bori, I received the following submissions:

*“My occupation is fishing. I have been into this work since I was small. But the sad part is that I have become trapped into poverty since our water became affected with oil spillage from recklessness of Agip Oil Company. I*

*used to make a return hovering between one thousand five hundred (six pound) and two thousand naira (eight pound) before the spillage started. The situation now is completely beyond our control. I would have gone into other businesses like building bigger speedboats for business purposes, but for financial constraint.”*

(Interview with Ebie, a villager from Bori, 26/09/09)

The local people from Agbere also engaged in the sale of various forms of livestock such as goat, guinea-pig, rabbit and sheep to support their livelihood. During the data collection exercise in Agbere, a villager explained the support rearing various categories of livestock provided to the financial needs of his family. The summary of his submissions is presented below:

*“I started my livestock business with a little cash few years ago. Today, it is one of the main areas of financial support for the upkeep of my family. I have different types of livestock such as goats, sheep, and guinea-pigs, rabbits and ducks. Though, the livestock business is still growing, but is expected to expand in the future whenever I get more financial support.”*

(Interview with Akpabio at Agbere, 30/09/09)

#### **5.4.2 Authoritative Resources in Bori and Agbere Villages**

Facts from the research areas in relation to authoritative resources pointed to the command actors have over people and such command either benefits or constrains the activities of less powerful actors (Giddens, 1984). The remaining part of this section discusses components of authoritative resources in the research areas.

### *Human Resources*

The components of human resources in the research locations comprise the health condition, nutritional qualities, educational level and physical capability useful for supporting the livelihood of different actors. Data from the research areas showed that the state and corporate actors enjoyed higher levels of the components of human resources due to their favourable financial positions relative to common villagers who often struggle to gain access to the components of human resources.

The health levels of the local people were very low in both Bori and Agbere villages due to poor administration of health institutions. From my informal observation, I discovered that patients complained of shortage of medical personnel when I visited Bori General Hospital. I also found so many patients waiting tirelessly with a large number of admitted sick patients unattended to. Data revealed poor funding of the hospital by the state government was a major impediment responsible for shortage of manpower, diagnostic centre and medical equipment in the hospital. Non availability of modern medical facilities increases the mortality rate of the local people as those people who require urgent medical attention were consigned to untimely death. The situation was even worse for those with sexually-transmitted diseases who hardly have timely access to proper diagnosis, thereby resulting in higher incidence of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) among local people. During the course of interaction with one of the patients after one of his several failed appointments with the doctor, I gathered the following information:

*“I have been sick for the past three years. Since then, I have been referred to Bori General Hospital. You need to know one or some of the medical staff to receive attention or treatment. If not, you may need to offer bribe to administrative officers in the alternative. If you do not fulfill any of these requirements, you need to wait for appointments till eternity even where your situation become complicated. The pregnant women are worse-off because almost six out of every ten of them usually die during delivery. I was also a victim of this circumstance when my wife died from complications during delivery due to shortage of blood and the hospital had no blood of her genotype. The top medical officers, local and state government officials lack trust in this hospital and often travel abroad for minor sicknesses at the expense of tax payers’ money. For big men (powerful) villagers, they make use of expensive private hospital in the heart of the city whenever they are sick”.* (Informal observation and Interview with Magnus, a Bori Villager, 20/08/09)

The situation with the state of medical facilities in Bori is supported with the informal observation presented in Figure 5.3. Information from Picture 1 reveals the main signpost positioned at the main entrance of Bori hospital. As at 2009 when I conducted my fieldwork, the path which led to the entrance of the hospital was bushy which made it difficult for patients to get into the hospital. Picture 3 shows one of the patients’ worn long seats at the hospital’s reception. A number of patients in the hospital lamented they hardly sit on the seat because of the fear of bedbugs getting into their clothes. Poor state of medical facilities in Bori village resulted to shortage of local labour that should have productively engaged in commercial and

livelihood activities. This led to loss of human economic potential particularly amongst the local villagers relative to state and corporate (Gillespie and Prior, 1995). The contribution of Morvaridi (2008) is relevant in analyzing the health inequality between actors at state, corporate and local levels. This is important because the inequality the local villagers suffered from poor state of medical facilities means they were drawn into unequal relations with the state and corporate actors who were more powerful by virtue of their privileged position which enhanced their access to better medical facilities elsewhere.

Figure 5 3: State of Facilities in Bori General Hospital

(Picture 1)



(Picture 2)



(Picture 3)



Source: Pictures taken by author during fieldwork in 2009

Comparatively, the system of administration of medical facilities in Agbere is worse due to the geographical terrain of the village. There was no

standard hospital in the village except traditional healers who use local herbs to provide solutions to villagers' various medical problems. Further efforts made to probe the situation revealed the confidence of most villagers, who cannot afford the cost of private medical facilities, in the efficacy of traditional medicines even where such practice becomes ineffective in difficult situations. The argument raised by few of those interviewed pointed to relatively cheaper cost of receiving treatment from traditional healers relative to western doctors. Besides, some of the villagers laid claim to accessibility of traditional healers because it was easier to consult traditional healers than medical personnel in the government hospital where villagers might need to travel for a long journey, coupled with higher transport fare to get appointment from doctors. The data on the state of facilities in Odi/Agbere General Hospital in Figure 5.4 also supported the claims of the interviewed participants. Similar to the situation in Bori, Picture 1 shows a bushy main entrance without any compliance with environmental standard. Picture 2 reveals the plank construction which led the patients to the main reception. Similarly, to the concerns raised by a number of participants on the health and safety implications of the plank pathway, I also fell on the floor while trying to link the main entrance of the hospital to the reception. Information captured by Picture 3 reveals how the uncovered door of the hospital's gatekeepers exposed these officers to high incidence of mosquitoes attack. Lack of water within the hospital premises as shown in Figure 5.4 constrained the operations of medical activities as the medical personnel became frustrated in discharging their duties. Beside the interview I had with the villagers, I successfully located one of the village leaders in Agbere, who



gave me his consent to be interviewed. The interview provided further light on the actual state of medical facilities of the village. His contributions summed as follows:

*“The villagers of Agbere rely mainly on traditional treatment. As you can see everywhere (sign boards), we have more trust in our traditional medicine than what we get from governments hospital. There is hardly any good government hospital in this village and even where you see any; it is there for getting cheap political score from the government. The private hospitals cannot even be found because there is no one to patronize them except the powerful or rich villagers who are considered very few. The only general hospital our villagers use is located at Odi, another local government. To access the hospital, villagers can only use speedboat and it will cost an average villager between eight hundred and one thousand naira only for return fare”.*

(Interview and informal observation with village leader in Agbere, 20/09/09)

Figure 5 4: State of Facilities in Odi/Agbere General Hospital

(Picture 1)



(Picture 2)



(Picture 3)



(Picture 4)



Source: Pictures taken by the author during fieldwork in 2009

Given the situation in Agbere, the villagers suffered from lack of access to modern medical facilities which affected their well-being, productivity and livelihoods. This is similar to the Bori case where villager were unequally and disadvantageously positioned in relation to more powerful actors who had choices to medical treatments either in better private hospitals or abroad.

Turning to the educational component of human resources, most villagers in the research areas are predominantly illiterate who lack the capacity to present their views in a wider context where the use of English is

the medium of communication. Though, illiteracy level differs between Bori and Agbere villages. The low level of literacy is understandable from availability of limited number of primary and secondary schools in the affected areas. Even in few places where schools are available, it is not convenient in most cases for local people to access. For instance, the parents of the local pupils in Agbere usually take speed boat to be able to access their children's schools. For parents who might want their children to attend schools within the village, they need to take a long walk between 10 to 15 kilometers to be able to access these schools. In order to have a broader perspective of school administration in Agbere, I visited one of few schools serving the villagers and found the school in poor condition with inadequate textbooks in the library, poor offices layout, lack of chairs and tables in most of the classrooms, no water to drink for students, inadequate teachers and laboratories. In addition, poor management of these schools affected the quality of secondary school leavers being turned out as most of the school leavers were found incapable to move up the ladder of further educational career due to poor performances during internal and external examinations. During an interview with one of the boat drivers in relation with the administration of elementary and secondary schools in Agbere, the following information was extracted:

*"I am a secondary school leaver from Agbere. The situation with the state of facilities in our secondary schools calls for questioning the members in the management of the schools. I mean the school management, local council officers, elected representatives from our village at the council, state and federal level. During my student days, we hardly see teachers even*

*though we had school time-tables. Apart from small salaries being paid to teachers, most teachers are not encouraged to come to Agbere due to its relatively distant location and dangers involved in travelling to and from Agbere on speedboat through River-Nun. The situation is different with our mates whose parents are closer to the government officials. These guys were instantly given admission to federal government colleges, and are today studying professional courses in federal, state and private universities.”*  
(Interview with Dokuboh, a villager from Agbere, 21/09/09)

In Bori, the situation was fairer, not in terms of quality of educational services provided to the villagers, but the villagers could access primary schools and secondary schools with minimum difficulties because of the better geographical feature of the village. However, the state of facilities in most of the schools visited was very worrisome and pathetic. From my observation, I entered one of the primary schools where there was no roof and any chair for pupils to sit and it was coincidental that it rained and the entire school premises became flooded. Some parents who became sympathetic with the children began to offer helping hands to those children affected by flooding. One of the parents who came to pick her little child lamented about the state of underdevelopment of the school and during the interview she granted, she reacted as follows:

*“This primary school is one of the worst in this country. The school does not have enough teachers, pupils sit on the floor, there is no toilet and there is no board for teachers to write on. Every time we complain to the management of the school they always tell parents to convey these problems to the responsible local government council. After all, my kid is in primary four (4)*

*and I have been noticing these problems few months after she was registered here and nothing has changed up till now. We are afraid of the future of our children here. The situation is not different in other primary schools around. Is it St. Joseph primary school or St. Stephen or St. Luke Primary school? All the schools are in mess waiting for government's attention.”* (Interview with Angella, a Bori Parent, on 23/09/09)

It was evident that lack of human resources in the research areas accelerates poverty among the villagers in terms of income opportunities, consumption and capacity building of the villagers. The villagers without necessary educational training tend to be consumption-poor because they rely mainly on selling their labour very cheaply in poorly paid markets (Rural Poverty Report, 2001).

### *Institutional Resources*

At the local level, various institutional arrangements interact to shape the rules of negotiation guiding the use of resources. These institutions comprise state, corporate and local institutions. These institutions largely constrain local activities and in exceptional cases facilitate others. They provide the mechanisms through local people can draw on to arrange access for local resources (see section 5.2.1).

At the formal institution of local government, the local authorities are mandatorily responsible for provision of a number of services to the local people in order to promote the ideals of local governance (also see section 5.2.1). In practice, the contributions of the local authorities fell short of the expectations of the local people particularly the poor and less privileged in

terms of the supports these authorities have made to the local governance of the environment. In order to get the truth, I conducted further investigations in addition to claims by the participants about the contributions of the local government authorities to services delivery the research areas. First, the informal observation I conducted was not convincing to change the claims made by the local villagers of Bori against the poor services delivery of Khana Local Government Council (KLGCC). In furtherance of this, I interviewed an elderly villager to find if any relationship existed between our informal observation and his perception. The outcome of my interaction with the participant produced the following comments:

*“Our local government council has not been able to live to its responsibilities. Despite the suffering we go through, our local government still collects various forms of tolls from the villagers with nothing to show for it. The council executives this local government has produced in the last twenty years are nothing to write about. They are too far from the villagers and cannot provide basic services not to talk of providing jobs for the villagers. Their executives are too far from the local people. They are very weak!”*  
(Interview with Benjamin at Bori, 05/10/09)

The situation with the perception of the Agbere villagers was completely similar at every stage of investigation to find the services provided by Sagbama Local Government Council (SLGC) to the villagers. The villagers generally expressed complete displeasure in terms of the services they get from the council. A number of the villagers felt the council was mere rent collector even for services never provided while others regarded the council as the local central bank for sharing of monthly allocations rather than

provider of services. My interaction with a trader who sells plantain in one of the local markets pointed to the extent of burdens villagers get from Sagbama Local Government Council as against provision of quality services in consideration for honouring the electoral promises the local council executives made to the local people.

*“The local government in-charge of our market, Sagbama local authority is only good at collecting arbitrary market tolls from us rather than beautifying our market. Our market is still much undeveloped in terms of common facilities and the profit we should have made from business is forcefully collected from us in form of market development levy by the council touts. The council people have never been there to support us. They take more from us than what we get from them.”*

(Interview with a market woman at Agbere, 29/09/09)

The findings from the contributions of the local authorities to the local governance systems in the research areas was supported by the study conducted by Obi (1999) and Watts (2009) where the scholars discovered that the local people in the Niger Delta had no faith in the activities of local government due to failure from the government to deliver the fruits of local governance to the local people. The scholars further stressed that despite the failure of the local government authorities to provide support to the local people, they still rely on the people for collection of levies and fines on environmental sanitation offences.

The multinational oil corporations have also not been adequately supportive to the local people due to their failure to balance the conflict between profitability and welfare development of the local people. Facts from

the field show that the oil companies run into conflict with the local people on account of flagrant disregard for environmental laws, total neglect of the local people, destruction of the livelihood of villagers through oil spillages and gross abuse of human rights of the local people. The actions of the multinational oil companies toward the local people were responsible for the poor relationship the former have had with the villager from the research areas. To corroborate the argument above, the position of villagers from Bori and Agbere on the contributions of multinational oil companies to the local governance system is captured by the following expressions:

*“Shell has grossly undermined the livelihood conditions of an average Bori people for a long time. The oil company has realized much benefit from our soil. But it has failed in every angle from adding smiles to the faces of the Bori people. It has divided our people ever than before. Shell has told lot of lies about the impact of its support programmes on the Bori people. Our children who are graduates of Petroleum Engineering, Geology and oil related courses cannot get jobs easily from Shell in spite of its long years of promises and existence in our village. Its livelihood support like other oil companies goes to the powerful people. You cannot see any traces of support from Shell other than armed officers surrounding its premises. Shell is a huge failure in Bori and entire Niger Delta environs.”* (Interview with a State Government Official at Bori, 03/10/09)

*“Even where the local government failed, then Agip Oil Company should have helped those of us from Agbere where the company does its business. But the oil company has not lived up to expectation of the local people in terms of the level of support being provided to the people. What we*



*only see is that the company takes oil from our land without giving back something tangible to the village” (Interview with Ebele, 26/09/09)*

It is evident from the facts above that the actions of Shell Oil Company and Agip Oil Company violate the conception of the rules of the game developed by Friedman (1970). In Friedman’s view point, corporate social responsibility will enhance effective performance only where maximization of Oil Corporation’s profitability is in line with its ethical practices which take cognizance of the needs of the people within the vicinity of the place of operation of the oil corporations. In my view, the facts from the research areas disagree with the position of Friedman (1970) because most of the villagers have not gained much support from the corporate social responsibility of the multinational oil companies.

However, the failure of the oil majors and the formal institution of the government at the local level shifted the emphasis of the support required to enhance livelihood by different local villagers to community based organizations and the traditional institutions of village life. Facts from Bori revealed that the community based organizations such as the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP) were involved in providing the required support and raising the awareness of the local people in agitating for protection of their rights, particularly in Bori. MOSOP have also been involved in providing considerable assistance in the areas of free training, regular seminars covering livelihood sustainability, environmental rights and protection. This view was also expressed by a villager interviewed to provide clearer picture in the areas where IYC, a community based organization has provided support to the rural people of Agbere as follows:

*“The IYC has been helpful in supporting our youths by training them through short courses in some vocational areas like tailoring, weaving, carpentry and organizing some seminar to help us to know our rights and how to fight for them. They have helped a number of the youths to gain some skills through which they earn their livelihood. They have done well, but need support from government to do better.”* (Interview with Ebube at Agbere, 28/09/09)

The role of the local churches is important in terms of the support it provided to the villagers in the governance of institutional resources. Facts from the field revealed that the members of local churches in Bori were helpful in offering prayers during the day and night vigils whenever conflict existed between church members that were also members of different local associations within the village in order to restore peace to the village. One of the participants interviewed did state that the churches in Bori have been supportive of the villagers in restoration of peace in Bori through fasting and fervent prayers. The role of the churches is felt during crises situation between the youth groups and the traditional council of chiefs over breach of trust in relation to the management of proceeds from the land belonging to the village. Besides, the women’s group and the prayers group within the church were also found helpful in supporting the members of their church whenever a new baby was born. A participant who attended an Anglican church in Bori stated she got reasonable support from the women’s group and prayers group prior to her delivery and during the naming ceremony of her baby. Her contributions are presented as follows:

*“The women’s group and prayer warrior group from my church were very supportive to me during both my pregnancy and the naming ceremony of my child. The prayer group comes to my house after every church service on Mondays, Wednesdays and Sundays to offer spiritual support when I was pregnant till I delivered my baby boy. In addition, the women’s group also offered voluntary domestic support which assisted me to provide good care to the child. This support provided a lot of respite to me given that my husband was ill at the time the baby was delivered. The women’s group was also responsible for providing some gifts and financial help in form of cash to help me cope with the challenges of providing care for the baby.”*

(Interview with Debra at Bori, 10/10/09)

In addition, the role played by the traditional institution of village life is also important in the explanation of governance at the local level. Data from Agbere revealed how the chieftaincy institution worked collectively through its membership in the observance of traditional rite for the determination and selection of every Amanana-owei. Oral tradition has it that the Amanana-owei is determined through the selection of different candidates from recognized ruling houses in Agbere. Data collected from Agbere indicated the support provided by the chieftaincy institution is to ensure that only those candidates for the contestation to the throne have lineage relationship with the traditionally approved royal families from Agbere. Otherwise, the selection of a stranger might spell doom for entire village particularly in terms of strange calamities affecting the villagers and their livelihood.

The institutional arrangements analyzed above represent practical social interactions between different actors at different levels in contestation

for resources with unequal power relations. From the foregoing analysis, the state and corporate actors were found to be better linked within the chain of network of resources management in both Bori and Agbere villages. The stronger network and superior power created by these actors over local villagers was what Long (2003) regarded as the battlefield, that is, contested arenas in which actors' understandings, interests and values are pitched against each other and struggles over social meanings and practices take place and actors get involved in negotiated orders, accommodations, oppositions, separations and contradictions. Therefore, the survival of actors in the battle field largely depends on the level of power commanded by other actors in the same battle field of resources. The highly placed actors such as the government officials and officials of the multinational oil companies benefitted more than the local villagers. Therefore, the livelihood of the villagers became constrained by power advantage of the powerful actors (Agrawal and Gibson 2001). However, the local villagers benefitted more from their reliance on local institutional resources such as the local churches and community based organizations in order to support their livelihood.

### *Socio-cultural Resources*

The socio-cultural resources in the research areas consist of the social identities of the villagers divided into males and female (gender relations), the class or status of villagers, their ethnicity background, their religious practices, family groups and the social network villagers have built from time to time.

The socio-cultural resources are complex because they are socio-culturally embedded. Villagers from the areas of our research claimed allegiance to a number of ethnic groups, each with their own styles and set of peculiar customs, rules and traditions. For instance, the Bori villagers perceived themselves as Khana-Ogoni, an ethnic group identified by common dialects and identity. The Bori people were also linked with worshipping “Kwonwopodon”- a deity serving as an intermediary between people and Bari (which means God in Ogoni dialect) meant for enhancing and enriching the fertility of crops. Bori villagers perceived this deity as a resource endowment. In terms of its impact on the livelihood of the people, villagers interviewed collectively identified the deity as essential to the survival and livelihood of the Bori people because paying continuous homage to it has traditionally promoted crops and agricultural development.

This position was also supported by Okonta (2008) who found that the Ogoni people to whom Bori belongs held their cultural values in high esteem. This was because the Ogoni considered cultural resources as the most singular factor which separated an average Ogoni man from its neighbours. Apart from the deity of crops, a number of homes in Bori village have their respective distinct deities through which they seek justice from wrongdoing of other members of the village. A number of villagers interviewed confirm that despite of their commitment to church activities, they have never downplayed their allegiances to the deities of the land.

Similarly, the Agbere villagers are respecters of deities. The name Agbere symbolizes the tradition of the village and is directly linked with “Izon”

(which literally means the truth). According to oral tradition from one of the villagers from Ayama clan, we gathered the information below:

*“The Agbere villagers love and respect their traditions. We stand on the principle: Thou shall not kill. Apart from Ayama clan, others such as Tuburukuni, Kakarabiri and Tambiri Clans are also involved in the annual celebration of Izon. During this period, we usually beat our traditional drum which signifies bond of congregation and all necessary sacrifices are made to appease our deities for whatever wrongs that might have been made. It also serves as an avenue for the barren and those who do not have to present their requests.”*

(Interview and Oral tradition with Romeo Clifford at Agbere, 30/09/09)

The Agbere deity is generally regarded by the local people as a provider of sustenance and livelihood for the villagers provided villagers seeking for its support are honest. A number of villagers interviewed to find the extent of the livelihood support they have received from the deity did affirm they have benefited from the deity in a number of ways such as positive changes in the sizes of their farming businesses, transformation from barrenness to fertility and provision of continuous income. On a large scale, this cultural belief is accepted by many Agbere villagers due to livelihood benefits they derived from the deity.

The cases in both Bori and Agbere support the position of Douglas (1987) on the importance of having credible socio-cultural institutions which can be easily linked with some natural legitimacy instead of being interpreted as unnatural arrangements. Following Douglas (1987) and Cleaver (2000), the moral ecological framework in Bori and Agbere legitimizes and reinforces

socio-cultural relations of respect and sustainability of livelihood of the villagers by attributing them to the natural and super natural realm.

The role of family groups is also pertinent in explaining the support such groups provide to the villagers to enhance their livelihood in the research areas. Data identified the role of relationships between groups of persons linked by kin connection as an important factor which shapes local governance to support the livelihood of villagers. One of the participants interviewed from Bori described the level of co-operation between his family and those of his elderly brother. The summary of his submissions is shown below:

*“My elderly brother and I have lived a united life right from our childhood days. This relationship has become nurtured by understanding and trust such that today, my elderly brother, who by all standards is materially richer now, provides material and financial support for the upkeep of my family. In return, my children and wife sometimes provide voluntary assistance to his family especially during the cultivation of crops and cutting of grasses on his land. But I hardly draw on any form of support from our eldest brother who is considered to be richer than my elderly brother because of our ideological differences from childhood.”* (Interview with Omeha at Bori, 12/10/09)

With respect to Agbere, the collective support provided by family members is an important way for providing support to other members of the family in need of help. Data in Agbere pointed to the support which collective monthly contributions from the siblings of a participant provided to help their aged parents cope with their livelihood. The contribution of the participant is presented as follows:

*“We are four in Wilberforce family with aged parents. My father is 80 years old while my mother has just turned 72. Due to the challenges involved in caring for the elderly, my brothers and I contribute collectively on monthly basis for supporting our parents. Being the closest to the parents, I do manage the financial contributions to provide for their needs all the time.”*

(Interview with Dan Wilberforce at Agbere, 24/09/09)

It is clear from the analysis above that cooperation, trust and collective efforts from different family group have generated support through which the weaker family members were supported. This was supported by Cleaver (2002) when the writer found that close family relationships within family shapes social capital. The position of Cleaver (2002) was that the family groups constitute an essential solution which actors that lack social resources can employ to support their livelihood during difficult times. However, the extent to which the social resources can support livelihood depends on the extent of understanding between the members of the family. In a strained relationship between family members created by conflict, social resources become a difficult source of supporting family members (Long, 2001).

### *Resources of Rights and Entitlements*

In the resources of rights<sup>39</sup> and entitlements, attention is placed on how rights-based approaches can challenge multiple actors in terms of their

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<sup>39</sup> In explaining rights, Schalager and Ostrom (1992) argue the distinction between operational and collective rights is relevant in understanding the application of collective action approach. The former shows who has the right to use or access the resource while the latter indicates the approaches used in managing the resources, exclusion and alienation rights (ibid).



responsibilities toward one another and more fundamentally to the local environment where these actors operate. Due to multiple interests of actors in the use of local natural resources, there is a general discontentment about the manner in which resources are handled especially by more powerful actors in control of resources belonging to the people. Therefore, through political, social and civil accountability, the poor at every level can challenge the excesses of the powerful actors in relation to abuse of resources belonging to all (Laban, 2005; Newell, 2006).

The rights to land in the research areas represent claims which different actors make to support their legitimacy for accessing land resources. These rights come through the formal or informal ways. The state institutions usually rely on the formal laws to support their rights to land resources while the local institutions draw directly on customary and traditional practices to support claims to their land ownership. Data revealed that actors drew on both customary and statutory rights to gain access to land resources. The land rights explained the property and various rights a land owner can do with the land. These comprised the right to use the resource, the right to exclude others from unauthorized use and the right to derive income from the resource (Rukuni, 1999; USAID, 2006). It also involved the right to temporarily or permanently transfer some of these rights to others through a lease (*ibid*).

Data from Bori village pointed to customary and traditional practices through which the villagers derived their right to land resources. In this case, the village land committee exercised its rights by holding land in trust for every village or community. At the family unit, the right to hold land was

conferred on the family head. During the field study exercise in Bori village, a participant commented on the extent to which family relationship supported the rights of villagers to use land resources to enhance their livelihood. His submissions are summarized below:

*“Most of our villagers have been able to use their family relationship as a basis to obtain their rights to family land for farming purposes in order to earn their living. In the case of my family, we have a big land size. Through this asset, the head of our family in co-operation with other family members allocate lands to those family members who can farm to enable them support their livelihood. Through my rights to family land, I have been able to support my immediate family.”* (Interview with Peterson at Bori, 19/09/09)

Interview conducted with one of the multinational oil companies revealed that Agip Oil Company never had original access to the oil wells where oil has been explored in the last couple of years. Rather, the oil company has been able to gain access to the land through temporary transfer of the land to it through the DPR arm of the NNPC, an agency of the federal government of Nigeria. Through this, the oil company has been able to carry out its business to support its corporate objective. The submission of the official of the oil company during interview is presented below:

*“The rights of our oil company to different land where our exploration activities take place originated from the temporary lease we got from the NNPC, an agency of the federal government of Nigeria. The lease agreement has conferred on us the rights to be able to put the land allocated to us into exploration activities in order to support our corporate objective mission in the Delta region. Without this right, our oil company is powerless.”*

(Interview with the official of the Nigerian Agip oil Company, 25/09/09)

Data collected from the research areas also indicated villagers are qualified by rights to take part in every ceremonial and festive activity at the village level. For example, every Bori villager by birth is qualified by culture and traditions to take active part in the worshipping of “Kwonwopodon deity” just like how any Agbere villager with genealogical relationship with Agbere can partake in the worshipping of “Izon”. Data from Agbere has it that outsiders are restricted from these deities. This is due to non-genealogical relationships of outsiders with these deities and the negative spiritual implications such as prolonged sickness and sudden death it may have on outsiders if they forcefully gain access to local deities. Besides, data collected also revealed that villagers from Agbere have the rights to attend and take part in all other activities in the village such as village assembly.

The villagers from both Bori and Agbere also have rights to voting during elections at the local, state and national levels to be able to elect their representatives. The villagers have also expressed their rights to challenge excessive impact of actions of the powerful actors from use of local resources. Data from the field showed that the Ogoni Bill of rights of 1990 and Kaiama Declaration of 1998 respectively provided the Bori and Agbere people the mechanisms for peaceful demonstrations, assembly and agitation against the government in order to control the resources from their environment directly.

Similar to Odgaard (2002), I also found from the villages that right and entitlements through legal court system served as an alternative resource endowment which shaped the interaction of local people of Bori and Agbere

with their resources where the socio-cultural means proved ineffective. That is, where a villager was unable to derive justice through the socio-cultural means as a result of power and influence of the powerful actors, the legal means is sought as an alternative source of deriving justice. This supported dual systems of customary and legal institutional systems through which villagers laid claims to their rights and entitlements to local resources.

## **5.5. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have analyzed the resources which support the local governance systems of different actors at the village level. In order to have a clearer picture of the context within which local resources are located, this chapter provided the description of the research areas to unearth the livelihood, demographic and cultural activities of actors at the local level. This information also facilitated the rationale for the selection of the research areas.

The chapter discussed the background of various institutions that shape the governance of resources in the research areas. These institutions exist for various reasons and their interactions help in no small measure in providing explanations of the various functions they perform in relation to resources management. For example, the federal (central) government is supported by a number of agencies (NNPC, NDDC, FEPA and INEC) in order to interact with the local people in the research areas. The corporate actors (SPDC and NAOC) have also interacted with the local people through signing memoranda of understanding with the villages in order for the multinational oil corporations to fulfil their roles and responsibilities toward the

villages in the research areas. The chapter discovered that the corporate social responsibility of SPDC was not clear enough to figure out the specific areas from which villagers from Bori have benefitted. In the section which follow, the chapter questioned what constituted resources at the local level in order to bring out resources classification and contextual perception of different actors about local resources. The chapter also realized how the local government councils (Khana and Sagbama) worked to elicit the support of villagers in order to carry out their statutory functions. At the local level, the traditional rulers have responsibility for the governance of their respective villages. The chapter discovered that traditional rulers operate as the supreme head, managers of culture, customs and traditions of their respective villages. The chapter also highlighted the roles played by the council of chiefs, village assembly, community based organizations and local villagers in collaboration with the traditional rulers to shape the governance of local resources in the research areas.

In providing an answer as to what constitutes resources in the research areas, the chapter discovered that the benefits which different actors derived from different resources accounted for different values actors placed on local resources. While the actors at the state and corporate levels consider resources as material economic values characterized by direct use, the local actors moved beyond the economic value to symbolic and socio-culturally constructed usefulness of resources with resources interpreted within the local and historical values.

Further, I analysed the extent to which various resources supported the local governance systems in the research areas. Through this, the chapter

unraveled how local decisions over the use of resources affect different actors in a socially dynamic Delta system. Data from the research areas pointed to enormous benefits which ordinary villagers realized from the land and water resources. The situation differed for both infrastructural and financial resources for ordinary villagers. The state and corporate actors commanded reasonable level of power over both infrastructural and financial resources due to diversified opportunities available at their disposal. Due to low level of human resources in the research areas, the conditions of the ordinary villagers became worsened due to poor administration of health institutions by officials of the state actors. Worse still were the undeveloped schools at the local level which could not provide the required standard to train pupils and students due to dearth of qualified teachers, lack of equipment and lack of modern teaching facilities. From institutional resources, only the community based organizations were supportive of the livelihoods of local villagers due to long years of good relationship and trust which local people had in the CBO. The chapter unearths the failure of the local government councils and the multinational corporations to respond to the plights and support of the local people in terms of services delivery and corporate social responsibility. The socio-cultural resources also played significant role in supporting the livelihood of the local villagers. In specific terms, respect for local deities and family groups significantly uplifted the livelihood of the local villagers. In conclusion, it was evident that both allocative and authoritative resources provided different supports to different actors in a dynamic Delta context. I also realized that the privileged positions of the officials of the state government and officials of the multinational oil

corporations have enabled their capacities and capabilities to gain better support from the use of both allocative and authoritative resources relative to the local villagers in the research areas. Therefore, the local villagers who lack sufficient powers in material resources have no alternative other than to draw considerably on the use of socio-cultural resources in order to support their livelihoods.

## CHAPTER SIX

### AGENCY IN THE GOVERNANCE OF RESOURCES IN THE DELTA

#### 6.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on how the dynamics of agency affects the local governance systems of resources. The chapter explores the complexities in explaining actors' behaviour in relation to natural resources within the purview of the changing Delta region. My intention in this chapter is to specifically show why some actors are able to exercise agency in relation to natural resources to support their livelihood while other actors are constrained from exercising agency. This is important in order to show how local actors draw on institutional structures from social, cultural and traditional values to construct behaviour for either supporting or constraining livelihood (Cleaver, 2000). The key argument in this chapter is that agency is not static, but a reflection of capability of an actor to act and such capability is relationally exercised such that the environment determines the opportunities and resources available to different actors and behaviour is not simply a matter of individual choice. Therefore agency is shaped by factors such as: routine practices, socio-cultural, political, historical dynamics ranging from local to national (Mehta *et al*, 2001).

The next section of this chapter which employs post-institutional thinking presents the building blocks for analyzing the dynamic, multiple and complex factors which shape the agency of actors in relation to natural resources in the research areas.



## **6.2. Agency in Natural Resources at the Local Level**

Exercising agency in natural resources at the local level requires the thorough investigation of multiple channels through which actors in their daily engagements consciously or unconsciously negotiates their interest, organize relationships and construct their livelihoods. Drawing on a post institutionalist approach, I intend to analyze various strategies actors employ to interpret and change the existing institutional rules and regulations instead of relying on fixed institutions.

To capture the actions of actors at the local level, I intend to explain in this section differential responses of actors to similar structural circumstances and social interface (actors' action in relation to different interest, power and resources) to understand how agency is constructed at the local level around participatory spaces at the village level, representation at the village level, accountability in collective action, the critical importance of physical embodiment, poverty dynamics at the village level and the influence of social networks.

### **6.2.1. Participatory Spaces at the Village level.**

Participation involves the creation of a space for involvement of different actors interested in the use and management of natural resources. The processes of participation can enable the engagement of disadvantaged groups to become more involved in the decision making process affecting resource management (Fajber, 2010). That means participation deals with the powers given to actors to mobilize their respective capacities. The powers involve the capability to become actors as against being passive

subjects, the powers to effectively manage local natural resources, the capability to make decisions and control the activities affecting their lives (Cernia, 1985). However, actors are differently positioned in constructing agency based on factors including poverty, power inequalities, fear of withdrawal of support from the powerful or highly placed actors and low self-esteem. These factors considerably shape the participatory spaces of actors (Mahmud, 2004). Cornwall's contribution (2002, 2004) broadly captures several forms of spaces through which actors exercise their respective agencies. The summary is presented as follows:

*“Participatory spaces can either be emptied or rather filled. It can also be permeable or closed; it can be opening an invitation to speak or act (invited spaces), popular spaces through which actors exercise their agency can also be clamped shut, voided of meaning or depopulated as actors turn their direction or attention elsewhere. Therefore, participation as a spatial practice captures powers relations and the capacity of actors that provides for public engagement (p.1).”*

The level of participation at the villages is relatively complex due to the interplay of cultural, traditional and social practices. These practices considerably shape the ability of villagers to exercise agency on matters which affect their access to local resources. By similar token, the decisions taken by the family heads and council of chiefs are mostly determined by these practices. However, data collected from the research areas provided clear picture about the complexities shaping the agency of villagers to participate in matters related to the use of local resources. In some cases, participation of villagers with power and influence enables access to local

resources to support livelihood while ordinary villagers with limited power are constrained from exercising agency which would ultimately have improved their livelihood.

The situation with participation in Agbere village was formerly predicated on cultural and traditional values. I gathered from the interview which I conducted that participation in Agbere tradition supposedly resides in the local people based on factors including membership of the village, leadership position in the village (youth leadership, women leadership, village organizational leadership, *etc*). Given these memberships, people collectively exercise their participatory agency by coming together to discuss and take decisions on various issues affecting their daily activities and implement decisions taken through robust deliberations in accordance with ethics guiding traditional customs. I also discovered from the field that actual participation has taken a different approach from common traditional norms and values. The factors which accounted for the departure in local participation at Agbere were power differences between different actors within the village. At the central level in Agbere, the traditional ruler and his council of chiefs are the most powerful in terms of decisions affecting the village resources. The council of chiefs and the village assembly are the two most important centres at the village level where the traditional ruler and local chiefs participate in decision making processes affecting the resources of the village. The level of participation at this level was what Cornwall (2002) called closed participatory spaces. At this level, the members of the council of chiefs make decisions without consultations with other people other than decisions taken within the level of the council. Despite the powerful nature of

the position of the traditional ruler of Agbere, he has to lobby other powerful members of the traditional council to be able to influence issues affecting the village. Therefore, data from Agbere showed the existence of power differences between different members of the council of chiefs. Whenever decisions are to be taken by the council of chiefs, the traditional ruler ensures he gets the support of other highly influential chiefs prior to the meeting in order not to be opposed when the matter is tabled before the general house. The level of participation at the council of chiefs become more challenging given the gains which the traditional ruler and local chiefs stand to get for taking decisions which might have implications for actions of multinational companies in the village or in areas related to conflict situation. During the FGDs exercise I had with participants, a participant passed the following comments:

*“The level of participation at the council of chief is clear to an average Agbere villager. It is simply based on economic interest. The villagers are aware that our traditional ruler is the most influential figure within the village. He buys the minds of most of the chiefs except for only two of them who we learnt always expressed their reservations against some decisions likely to fuel crisis within the village. Most of the decisions taken at this level are behind the closed door. The traditional ruler is the winner; he is the winner of all. He is responsible for influencing who becomes a member of council of chiefs from various quarters from Agbere. Therefore; he that pays the piper dictates the tune.”* (Mirret during FGD at Agbere, 20/11/09)

At lower level, individual families have authority governing their land resources. But data revealed the power differences within some family

members strongly determine whose decision determines how family resources are shared. Apparently, the head of every family is usually regarded as the most powerful in terms of facilitating participation of every family member. The nature of participation at the family level is equal to what Cornwall (2002:24) regarded as invited spaces in which the head of every family allows every family members to take part in decision making process. Through invited participatory spaces, every member of the family is allowed to speak in Ijaw language on matters affecting collective resources (land, farm produce, etc) belonging to every family. Notwithstanding, the head of the family as data confirmed has selected family members as part of his inner caucus who always provide him with some level of support in terms of how the resources belonging to the family should be utilized or managed. The level of support the family head gets is reflected whenever voting takes place on thorny matters where voting is needed to determine the outcome of an issue. During interaction with one of the participants on the level of participation that holds at the family level, he provided the following comments:

*“The family head is the most powerful in every Agbere family whenever it comes to decision making during participatory process. It is only in cases where the family head fails to carry his people along that he encounters problems. Otherwise, he determines how participation holds, who participates, who the members of his inner caucus are, etc. In my family, same is applicable. The head of our family lobbies through some vibrant family members prior to family meeting to have their support in case the matter turn to voting during usual family deliberation. But this is not open to*

*every member of our family. It is all about politics, strictly politics within the family.”* (Interview with Alexander at Agbere, 06/10/09)

Data from Bori revealed that villagers do participate in the village assembly. But the decisions taken by council of chiefs at times tend to be detrimental to the interest of the villagers. The village assembly which should have supported invited spaces for robust participation of villagers is taken as a centre for the promotion of interest of the powerful villagers. Some of these decisions discourage ordinary villagers at times from taking active part in meetings where their presence and propensity to contribute to constructive engagements for local development would have made positive impact. Data also showed villagers were often skeptical about the will of the council of chiefs to protect the interest of the villagers from external forces even where they have the capacity, which is agency to do so. During interaction with some of the villagers, a farmer whose land was taken over by the government in favour of SPDC for explorative purposes pointed to lack of confidence in the council of chiefs as one of the reasons why he hardly exercises his agency for local participation. His contributions are expressed as follows:

*“The council of Chiefs should have been the protector of our local participation. But a larger number of our villagers have lost faith in them while the few people who participate are actively involved for personal gains. I lost my large expanse of land to the government due to inability of the council of chiefs to act. Afterwards, I confirmed from the government officials that my council of chiefs has been financially induced to overlook the foresight of repossession of my land. On getting to the council, they collectively advised*

*me to forget about the land due to the fact it involves the government. The council of chiefs is not to be trusted when it comes to money. They owe more allegiance to people and institutions with political, economic and financial powers relative to the local villager who may not be well placed.”* (Interview with Tam in Bori, 12/10/09)

Due to the social stigma the society place on the poor, there is heavy psychological burden on them from exercising agency in local participation. Besides, lack of economic power often erodes the poor from taking part in genuine participation. The worrisome nature of participation of the poor is captured by the data generated from participants during the conduct of FGDs in Bori and Agbere as follows:

*“The poor villagers hardly participate on matters affecting the village due to livelihood survival challenges. They prefer to spend larger part of their time in the farm to be able to prepare for the rainy days. They are less concerned about community issues or attending meeting other than focusing on incentives that will lift them up the survival level.”*

(Latty during FGDs at Bori, 18/10/09)

*“Participation of the poor is nothing to write home about. The poor people constitute the larger population segment in the Delta region and are those you find in the rural areas of the region where oil is being taken (extracted). For you to go against something at your full strength, you need to be financially sound. The poor are not united most times due to divided interest. The poor ones have low level of education. The poor are those who allow their will to die off when they are unable to get result from collective struggle, when they should have sustained the struggle. The poor are the*

*poverty ridden who believes in favour from godfathers and political class for economic empowerment and survival; these are reasons for disengagement of the poor from political participation in the region.” (Godfield during FGDs in Agbere, 20/11/09)*

### **6.2.2. Representation at the formal Institutions of the State**

Data from the research areas revealed that even where elections to determine representation of candidates are genuinely structured, there are more complex agency matters which arises from the powerful actors whose interest the elected representatives are to represent. Facts from Bori revealed that political representation of villagers were carried out mostly through godfatherism and high level contact at the public places. Through godfatherism and political contacts, the powerful actors in politics engaged in imposition of representatives on the electorates virtually at all levels rather than providing level playing ground for villagers to exercise their political agency by choosing representatives of their choices. In order to impose candidates, the powerful actors draw on their networks with both the government electoral officials and the ruling political party to determine political representations. These factors constrained the political agency of ordinary villagers who lacked the support of godfathers in winning representative seats. More so, villagers who voted for the popular representatives discovered that their votes were either not counted or where their votes were counted; the process of manipulation of votes by the powerful actors would have rendered such votes irrelevant. This experience



limits the number of genuine representation at all levels of polity in the Delta region.

Data revealed that the political godfathers ensured that they exercise their political agency by carrying out the directives of the government in order to remain in government's good book for economic, financial and political gains. One of the participants commented on the reality of constraining agency which surrounded the representation at the village level as follows:

*"We have not had true representation to speak for us at all levels of government. We only hear through influential sources and sometimes through the radio broadcast about representatives selected from our village even where we never voted for them. These representatives are always imposed on us by the powerful people. That is the reason why they do not care about the villagers. They only speak for their selfish interest and always protect the interest of their political godfathers. Therefore, true representation has long lost its value and pride in Bori. It is now a question of power and influence, that is (man know man)." (Ema during FGDs at Bori, 18/10/09)*

Findings from Agbere showed that villagers uphold the philosophy that power belongs to the people and not the political class. Similar to the situation in Bori, power and influence made the agency of political representation constraining to common villagers. Some of the participants interviewed affirmed that candidates get ticket for representation through various sources. First, it could be through membership of a powerful political group where candidates seeking representation would have made written agreement to the powerful political godfathers in their group on how the likely gains from the representation seats will be shared. Second, candidates in the

powerful party may be granted representation ticket by the powerful political group through the use of thuggery. Third, the powerful political groups working in collaboration with the government could employ various forms of support from the government in order to enhance political victory even where it requires putting the lives of the opposition at risk. The comments generated from one of the participants during FGDs exercise in Agbere are presented as follows:

*“Despite readiness of the people to participate, the government uses every means to manipulate their mandate. The government uses military might, that is, deployment of armed police and military personnel with sophisticated weapon to scare people from exercising their voting rights during election. During the process of scaring villagers from voting, the political thugs working for the sponsored candidates of the most highly placed political godfathers enjoys the support of military personnel to steal ballot boxes and subsequently manipulates the declared electoral results against the genuine will of the people. In some places where elections were never held, results were declared and published in the national dailies.”*

(Victor during FGDs at Agbere, 20/11/09)

### **6.2.3. Representation at the Village Level.**

At the village level, representation is shaped by local customs, traditional values and collective decisions of villagers on matters affecting the management of local resources. In terms of customs and traditional values, data confirmed the selection of traditional rulers from both research areas were based on purely traditional values where the chieftaincy institution in

collaboration with the existing council of chiefs had to observe traditional procedures in the selection of the traditional rulers in the event of transition of any traditional ruler. It emanated from the research that in order to determine the representative and custodian of culture, the Chief Priest, subject to the approval of the chieftaincy institution and the council of chiefs consults the god of divination to choose the most appropriate traditional ruler from the list of “Princes” from approved ruling houses. Whosoever the god of divination chooses becomes the traditional ruler in Bori and Agbere villages respectively.

However, the determination of representation at the village level becomes more complex when politics and power become critical factors in the selection of traditional rulership. Data from the village pointed out that the traditional values and customs no longer determine traditional rulership alone. Rather, the extent of power and political manoeuvring every prince commands determine who amongst the princes become the representatives in the research areas.

By implication, the determination of the custodian of culture and traditional practices from both Bori and Agbere is determined by factors such as traditional culture and values, and power advantage (economic, financial, spiritual and political power). During the data collection exercise, participants interviewed lamented the extent of the power struggle princes from various ruling houses undergo to enhance their agency in terms of earning the support to get the representation of their respective ruling houses. Once the representation issue is resolved, then the presented Princes from each ruling

house draw on contacts, power, influence and networks of government officials at all levels in the determination of who becomes the traditional ruler.

<p><i>“The determination of representation of traditional rulership in Bori is both traditional and political. You must be very rich, politically influential at local and high places. In the past, representation of traditional rulership posed no problem. It was strictly determined by customs and traditions. No one dare commit sacrilege against the traditions of Bori because of the grave consequences it portends for the entire village. Since the title became a subject of politics and heavy power play, our traditional values have become altered. The most powerful prince becomes the ruler because he has money and has got political support from the top. The Council of Chiefs sells our traditions for money because they want to become rich at the expense of devalued traditional heritage. The god</i></p>	<p><i>“In Agbere, the process leading to the selection of Amanana Owei in council that is the supreme head and custodian of our culture is very complex. It was straight forward when traditions and respect for our culture was followed. But the event which now determines the selection is shaped by a lot of factors. Wealth, political influence, absolute power, social contact, military might and metaphysical powers all determines the strongest traditional rulership. To be honest with you, we learnt about two of the princes that contested for representation of the rulership died mysteriously. Representation at that level is very hot. Every contestant passes through hell at least to be selected by their respective ruling houses. Once that stage is passed, every</i></p>
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<p><i>of divination which selects the most appropriate traditional representative is no longer respected. That might probably be the reason why things have become so devalued. Traditional values are becoming affected as a result of greed and love for material gains of life.”</i></p> <p>(Douglas during FGDs at Bori, 18/10/09)</p>	<p><i>representative from different ruling houses now begin the high level power play at the Council of Chiefs. This is where high level lobbying starts where every prince employs financial powers, economic powers, political power, spiritual powers and metaphysical might to change the process of selection to his advantage. It is hell all through.”</i></p> <p>(Sunday during FGDs Sunday at Agbere, 20/11/09)</p>
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It is evident from the analysis and data above that representation of actors at the village level lent itself to the possession of power advantage, high level politics and the use of material and spiritual asset to cling on to power. From both cases, a traditional representative is able to exercise his agency of traditional contest of rulership provided he is equipped with power advantage, material assets and other assets which will enhance his ascension to the traditional throne of rulership. For other contestants for same traditional position with limited possession of power advantage, wealth, inadequate contacts and network in high places and inadequate spiritual powers; they are constrained from exercising their representative agency as they are denied the opportunity of becoming a traditional ruler. In fact, such princes fizzle out easily from the selection process. Therefore, discrimination

against the less powerful contestants for representations reduces the quality of traditional governance systems and respect for cultural values. This practice devalues respectability for cultural legitimacy and promotes malpractices in the management of local resources.

The other area of representation which requires further analysis at the local level is the determination of the membership of the Council of Chiefs other than traditional rulership. Data from both research areas revealed that the representation of membership of the Council of Chiefs is not as complex as that of the traditional rulership. Data from the research areas revealed that the process of representation of the lineage head turned out to be a challenging even though it is determined mostly by simple selection process within every family. Except there are disagreements between people over their choice of a lineage head within a particular lineage, it is unusual for the traditional leaders to intervene in who becomes the lineage head in a particular chieftaincy family. Age is a strong factor which determines the selection of lineage head from every chieftaincy family as the eldest male is usually selected. In some cases, some chieftaincy families elect the wealthiest within the family to represent them at the Council of Chiefs. The use of wealth as a substitute for age in every family to a greater extent depends on the level of compromise reached between the actors in every family. But during conflict situation in the selection of lineage head from any chieftaincy family, the traditional rulers intervene to call the key actors to order. Then failure to get the selection process resolved within the stipulated period might lead the respective traditional rulers to select a representative to fill the gap from the affected chieftaincy family. Data also revealed that every

traditional ruler has power to determine his choice Chief Priest. The reason was that the chief priest is responsible for the performance of sacrifices and traditional rites to appease local deities. Due to the sensitive nature of this position, respective traditional rulers from the research areas prefer to choose a trusted priest whose allegiance and loyalty lies more with them than elsewhere.

Data from the research areas also indicate the traditional rulers alone determine representation of honorary title holders. Such positions are considered as honour bestowed on those respected and highly dignified members of the society in recognition of their contributions to the village or local development. However, participants interviewed from both villages shared different views. The views of the participants interviewed during the FGDs are presented below:

<p><i>“The representation of the honorary title holders in this village cannot be easily defined other than what our traditional ruler says. He has final say on it, not even the other chiefs. Possession of wealth and power is the most important to our traditional ruler in the selection of these title holders rather than contribution to village development. These days, no one vets character and the past of title holders. The love for material things has changed the face of</i></p>	<p><i>“There are some decent, well educated and dignified personalities in this village that should have been considered for honorary positions. But all we see our traditional ruler do is to focus attention to the wealthy people whose contribution to our local development is zero. Title holding in this village is about personal interest, use of money and position rather than village</i></p>
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<p><i>traditional representation.”</i> (Josephine during FGDs at Bori, 18/10/09)</p>	<p><i>interest. The influential villagers are rewarded while vigorous contributors to village development who commands weak financial powers are not rewarded.”</i> (Rebecca during FGDs at Agbere, 20/11/09)</p>
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At the village assembly from both research areas, representation has a wider scope. On one hand is the council of chiefs whose representation derives at least from their respective families. On the other hand are members of respective villages including: farmers, fishermen, youths, women’s group and the rest whose presence derives from membership of their respective villages. The village assembly represents the highest political congress in the respective villages. It is the conglomeration of all villagers. Data from the research areas indicate the village assembly meets as long as there are issues necessary to be openly discussed. That means there is no limit to the number of times the village assembly meets in every year. It comprises the rich, the influential personalities, the poor, the rulers and the ruled. It is the central meeting point for all villagers and an avenue for people to express their feelings or ventilate their views on matters affecting the development of the village and resources management. However, data pointed to the use of power influence sometimes to change the representation of attendance at the village assembly. This happens



whenever the Council of Chiefs requires the support of the powerful speakers at the assembly to get approval for decisions which could not be taken alone by the Council of Chiefs. In this case, the Council of Chiefs lobbies the strong members of the assembly in a closed-door meeting prior to the regular assembly through various means. For example, the Council of Chiefs sometimes provide material gifts to the strong members of the assembly to speak in favour of the position of the powerful people at the expense of the interest of ordinary villagers.

From the foregoing analysis, representation at the village level gives room for pluralist spaces for representation and power contest. At the traditional leadership level, the role of social network, economic, political, spiritual powers became evident in the determination of representation where various forms of closed doors meetings are held by the Council of Chiefs in the determination of representation process. The representation of every family for chieftaincy title also comes with enormous power and politics from respective lineage background where every contestant deploys different strategies to outplay less competitive contestants. The role played by wealth in the determination of title holders by the traditional rulers cannot also be downplayed while the village assembly also represents the rallying point where the powerful villagers employ different strategies for getting approval on matters in which decisions could not have been unilaterally taken. The analysis above was supported by Lefebvre (1991) who argued that spaces for participation in representation are a dynamic social product which is filled through various strategies by actors to achieve their goals. The author was of the view that the spaces of representation are engaged by different actors

using humanly constructed means of survival and control. This explained how the powerful actors such as the traditional rulers and Council of Chiefs were able to exercise their agency by dominating the actions of the less privileged villagers at the village level. Lack of power by the less privileged constrained the affected villagers from taking productive decisions to use local resources to support their livelihood.

#### **6.2.4. Actors' Collective action at the Village level.**

Analysing the collective actions of actors at village level is very complex. The contributions of Giddens (1984), Laban (2005), Cleaver (2005) and Dasgupta and Beard (2007) have provided in-depth picture on the factors which explains collective action in a dynamic social system.

In analyzing collective action, it is important that every actor needs to be accountable for their actions. In explaining accountability, Giddens (1984) states that "human actors are not only able to monitor their activities and those of others in the regularity of day to day conduct; they are also able to monitor that monitoring in discursive consciousness (p.29)". By discursive consciousness, Giddens meant the explanations about social conditions actors are able to offer for taking certain actions (ibid). Therefore to be accountable in Giddens' (1984) sense is to clarify reasons for ones action. In Laban's (2005) view, accountability implies taking responsibility for one's own behaviour and being able to account for the effects of such behaviour. In this sense, Laban (2005) recognized the need for all actors to take account of social, cultural and economic differentiation within environment with a view to recognition of the interest, priorities and rights of the underprivileged.

Cleaver (2005:900) stressed that collective action is characterized by the doctrine of voluntarism, bargaining, ability to accommodate and persuasion which promotes co-operation. Dasgupta and Beard (2007) also reflected on the work of collective action scholars to explain the benefits of collective action in relation to local resource management. They argued that collective action facilitates relationship between actors based on trust, reciprocal exchange and social network. However, power differences between co-operators make accountability in collective actions very challenging to analyse in resource management. In this case, the more powerful co-operators might use power advantage to capture the weak or the poor who lack the drive to construct agency at the local level (ibid: 223).

Following from the foregoing discussion, it becomes interesting to link the conceptual explanation above to the social practices in the research areas in order to understand how local actors construct their responsibilities toward one another in relation to collective actions in natural resource management. Facts from both Bori and Agbere affirmed that the villagers work together as a team in areas involving provision of basic community services, collective efforts in controlling flooding and production of agricultural output through farming using collective labour. The facts which explained the partnership which villagers utilized to construct their agency for resources management in the research areas are presented in the undergoing analysis.

Within the context of Bori, collective action was of tremendous help in the provision of basic needs for benefits which villagers would have waited for long to get from the government. Data from the village revealed that collective action was responsible for the construction of local pathways and

in some cases was being applied in the clearing of pathways which provided the direction for villagers or paths for entrance by visitors into the village. It is important to acknowledge that bringing villagers to work together under collective action was difficult considering the rationality involved in shaping individuals' interest. Notwithstanding, data revealed several heads are better than one given the context in which collective action was applied in Bori village. For the construction of local pathways, villagers come under same umbrella by individually contributing a token towards a common purpose under the management of a traditional based association known as community development committee (CDC). The contribution by every individual is not equal because of differences in the economic position of every villager. It is a rule but not an exception that every villager within Bori must contribute a token in order to avoid free riding and promote the culture of collective responsibility. The CDC coordinates the construction of the local pathways with some level of support from the villagers in Bori. Data from the village revealed the traditional rulers, local chiefs, honorary chiefs and the villagers are involved in the financial contribution. Whatever is realized from collective contribution is documented by the Bori CDC and would be judiciously used for the purpose for which the money was raised. In terms of accountability, the committee reports back to the village through village assembly about the progresses recorded in the construction of local pathway. However, any villager who refuses to contribute is given an option to carry forward the minimum fee against the future. With respect to the construction of forest pathways, members of the CDC, the youths, farmers, and women are involved in clearing the bushy parts while the powerful villagers who had

limited time for physical efforts are responsible for the provision of cutlasses, hoes and clearing equipment. In terms of benefits, collective efforts applied to the construction of local and forest pathways helped villagers in multiple ways. First, it linked Bori to other villages. A number of participants I interviewed from Bori stated that engaging in such collective efforts opened the village for economic opportunities facilitating the exchange of goods and services with other villages. Secondly, the application of collective efforts for the construction of local pathways also provided free entry and exit of farmers into and out of the forest. This effort provides regular income for villagers through exchange of agricultural produce and herbal medicinal products among the villagers on one hand and between villagers and outsiders on the other hand. From informal observation carried out in Bori, I found some local pathways and forest pathways constructed through collective efforts.

The situation is also evident in Agbere where villagers work collectively in exercising agency for the prevention of floods during rainy season. This is attributed to the geographic location of Agbere, as it stretches along River Nun. Therefore the water from River Nun overflows into the village during rainy season. From experience, the Agbere villagers come together to construct manual channel at least few months prior to the commencement of rainy season. In this regard, collective responsibility brought various actors who may likely be affected by flooding together through collective contribution to prevent environmental disaster. The responsible actors that shape collective action in Agbere flooding include the representatives of the traditional ruler, other members of Council of Chiefs, Agbere CDC,

fishermen, farmers, villagers, representatives of churches, among others. The contribution of every villager depends on the extent of financial, economic and authoritative powers being commanded. Data showed that every villager contributed unequally towards the prevention of flooding either from excessive rain or due to rise in water level from River Nun. During the course of interaction with the participants, I discovered that some powerful actors such as the traditional rulers, local chiefs and officials from churches contributed financially to support the prevention of flooding. For those villagers with limited economic and financial powers, they contributed their physical labour. Where some villagers refused to contribute to collective action, data revealed that such villagers are usually not supported during emergency period like flooding.

#### **6.2.5. Physical Embodiment**

The existence of able-bodiedness of villagers from the research areas also determined their ability to exercise agency in relation to the use of local resources and vice-versa. Data collected identified lack of able-bodiedness as a major constraint which affected the livelihood of a number of families from both Bori and Agbere villages. This factor has serious implications for the propensities of the villagers to live decent and dignified lives. Data collected also provided insight into the impact of absence of able-bodiedness on villagers' livelihood. The situation with the Abraham and the Johnson's family was a clear picture of how lack of physical embodiment constrained the agency of the participants from earning financial resources from their labour to support their livelihood (below). In the case of Abraham's family,

farming and fishing provided livelihood support to the family until Abraham suffered spinal-cord injury. Since Abraham's condition, livelihood has become extremely difficult and his family never recovered from the shock. The stress from the shock of Abraham was also responsible for the death of Maria and two other children. Comparatively, the contraction of HIV/AIDS by Johnson was responsible for the wife's desertion, death of his children, discrimination from work, discrimination from neighbourhood activities and stigmatization from other villagers. On account of lack of able-bodiedness of Johnson, survival became extremely difficult. This experience subjected his children to unquantifiable hardship and discrimination. The experiences of the two families considered are a departure from sustainable livelihood framework because both families lacked the powers to cope and recover from stress. These constraints worsened their agency (capabilities) and propensities to draw on other forms of asset to get out of the livelihood crisis they found themselves. The illness of the concerned families accounted for their vulnerabilities to livelihood failure and depth of their poverty (Scoones, 1998; Smith, 2004).

<p><b><u>Interview with Abraham at Bori,</u></b></p> <p><b><u>01/10/09</u></b></p> <p><i>“Abraham, 54, was happily married to Maria thirty four years ago. Both of them had four children. They live in a mud house in Bori. Abraham was a full time farmer while his wife supported him at times in the farm. Abraham supports his family from the gains he made from sales of agricultural surplus. Whenever the planting season is off, Abraham goes fishing as an alternative livelihood for supporting his family. In 2000, Abraham fell from top of a tree where he was tapping some palm wine for commercial purpose. Afterwards, he could not walk. He was thereafter taken to the cottage hospital in Bori and later to Bori general hospital. After series of test, his spinal cord was found to have broken completely. In 2006, the pains the family went through gave Maria some</i></p>	<p><b><u>Interview with Johnson, a</u></b></p> <p><b><u>retired Local Government</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Officer at Agbere, 18/09/09</u></b></p> <p><i>“Johnson, 45, was a retired local government council officer. He was married to Juliana twenty five years ago. Their marriage was blessed with five children (four boys and a girl). I left service five years ago, that was 2004 when it was discovered I had HIV infection. The information spread to other colleagues in the service and I became a subject of ridicule and discrimination. Three of my children: (twins) and the last baby also died from similar health problem. The sudden sickness of my wife made her family to separate her from me. I only have two of my children (a boy and a girl) providing support to me. Both of them have had to stop schooling when I could no longer</i></p>
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<p>psychological setback. After some protracted illness, Maria became briefly sick and later died of heart attack. This development affected the two eldest sons of Abraham's family and two years after the death of their mum, both of them mysteriously collapsed and died. The little kids aged 9 and 11 are now responsible for looking after the domestic affairs of their dad. Abraham receives only meagre support from a friend who only provides some foodstuff once in a while. He hardly gets support from any of his sibling."</p>	<p>support them financially. I only survive from the little I get from my pension. My failing health is a major setback for my family. Our survival has been put into very difficult situation. My neighbours have been very discriminatory. People hardly feel comfortable playing with my children. A number of their friend have even stop coming to our house since they got the news of the nature of my illness. Life has been miserable for my children and me. I feel terrible pain all the time. My children have been very helpful but what can they do other than to wish me well. Blood is thicker than water. The sickness has eaten my flesh. HIV/AIDS is real!"</p>
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### 6.2.6. Dynamics of the Chronically Poor at the Village Level.

Data from the field revealed different dimensions of the experiences of the chronically poor and how different conditions of the poor have constrained their agency to draw on the local resources from supporting their livelihoods. Facts presented below separately shows the perceptions of male and female participants interviewed from both Bori and Agbere villages regarding different positions of the chronically poor.

#### Box 6 1 Male perception of the Chronically Poor

The men interviewed expressed their feelings about the excruciating pains they experienced from chronic poverty. The summary of their views are presented below:

1. *Inadequacy of land to farm in the village as land is largely controlled by the powerful actors in the village. That is the traditional rulers, the high chief, etc. Displacement of the villagers from their land by the government.*
2. *Lack of financial resources to feed ones family and fulfil basic means of livelihood such as clothing, good housing, etc*
3. *Poor service delivery has constraining impact on the poor as the poor has no access to qualitative education, good health, electricity. Lack of access of the poor to these services discourages investors from coming into the village for investment purposes.*
4. *Theft of agricultural produce at night, theft of livestock, cash theft and lack of safety at times for personal belongings were*

*major problems responsible for shocks for the chronically poor in the village.*

*5. Most men into polygamy go through prolong trap because they build big family with lack of care for their children. This practice puts the survival of the children at risk as the children become divided, so also are their mothers. This breeds hatred, discrimination and spiritual wickedness against one another.*

*6. Habitual intake of alcohol and womanizing habit were major factors which undermined the capability of the chronically poor. They spent lots of money on locally produced whisky known as “Kaikai” and more of their limited income on chasing women.*

Source: FGDs at Bori Village, 18/10/09.

## Box 6 2. Female perception of the Chronically Poor

The women also expressed the conditions of being chronically poor. The contributions which arose from the Agbere women are stated as follows:

- 1. The major problem affecting the chronically poor is the suppression women get from their husband. The men reduce our potentials to common people without opportunities to develop our skills other than raising children and attending to their sexual desire. These factors generally prevent village women from getting out of the shock and stresses of poverty.*
- 2. Lack of equal opportunities for women in every aspect of lives in the village. I mean, open discrimination against us by men in all places. For example, we are not allowed to have access to the hidden or secretive management of the local deities of our land because of the belief that women's menstrual period could weaken the potency of Agbere deities.*
- 3. Domestic violence against women subjects Agbere women to slaves or second class citizens relative to men. Whosoever is wrong between men and women, the culture of Agbere still position men over women. In every polygamous home, the women pay the highest price for the family because they carry more burdens relative to men.*

Source: FGDs with women in Agbere Village, 20/11/09.

Following Bastiaensen *et al* (2005), it is clear that being chronically poor is a gender issue which affected both men and women from the research areas. That means chronic poverty is not a characteristic of certain group of gender. Rather, it characterizes a particular situation in which different people might be entangled in poverty. While relating Bastiaensen *et al* (2005) to the conditions of the chronically poor in the research areas, both men and women who became affected by different conditions remain agents of chronic poverty and their agency were constrained from realizing the benefits of different assets which would have supported their livelihood. From Box 6.1, it was glaring that men found themselves in chronic poverty as a result of cultural, institutional and habitual factors. These factors constrained different men from realizing the full benefits of material and non material assets from Bori. Comparatively, the agency of the women in chronic poverty from Agbere became culturally constrained from taking part in the management of local deities due to menstrual conditions. The women also became constrained from taking part in productive family decisions due to domestic violence against them by their husbands. These constraints undermined the opportunities of women to support their livelihood (see Box 6.2).

#### **6.2.7. The Influence of Social Networks**

The role of relations with neighbours and associational life are relevant in the explanation of both the enabling and constraining agency of villagers in the research areas. The influence of neighbourhood relations which Late Thompson built while alive became reciprocated by other neighbour to support his family during his funerals. Though, the exchange of relations of

favour between Late Thompson and his neighbours might be unequal, notwithstanding, his family benefitted from neighbourly support which enabled their agency to meet up with financial commitments during Late Thompson' funeral (see Thompson's life history's account below).

*“Mr. and Mrs. Thompson have been living together as a couple for twenty five years. The relationship was blessed with Anna, who turned 19 in 2009. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson engaged in full time farming and fishing for a living. The Thompson's family usually provides fruits of labour from farming (yams, cocoyam, maize, etc) to his neighbours during harvest season as a mark of strengthening their relationships. Ana, their only daughter stopped schooling because she could not complete her junior secondary certificate examination due to financial difficulties of her parents. So, Anna usually assists her parents to sell manually processed crops and fishes in the market. Mr. Thompson suddenly became ill from unexplainable sickness linked to spiritual attack. At the same time, Anna became impregnated by John whose where about could not be determined. After several efforts by Thompson's family to treat his ailment, their efforts proved abortive when Mr. Thompson finally died. His death caused much pains to the family and by greater token compounded the feeding of the family who had exhausted all the finances of the family on Mr. Thompson's sickness. Mrs. Thompson and Anna encountered problems with providing foods for mourners that came to visit them and this situation was considered disgraceful until neighbours from the village came together through self contribution to provide food, care and support for the mourners. The contribution of Mrs. Thompson's immediate neighbour, Mr. James was helpful to the survival of the family as he always*

*provide food and sometimes financial support for Mrs. Thompson and Anna to help them cope with their difficult situation.”* (Life history account with Thompson’s family at Bori, 13/09/09)

Unlike the case above, membership of social clubs was considerably helpful to Mrs. Theresa through which she exercised her agency in order to organize the funeral of her husband from the support she received from her social clubs. On the other hand, the agency of Theresa’s neighbours became constrained from joining the same club which would probably have provided different form of support to their social needs on account of lack of financial power to pay the membership fee (see Theresa’s life account below). Therefore, power relations between Theresa and her neighbours explained the extent to which these actors are able to construct their agency to draw on membership of social clubs.

*“Mrs. Theresa Goodwill was a widow with three children (Alex, 12; Paul, 10 and Lynda 8). Her husband (Late Joseph Goodwill, a former civil servant with the state government), died in an auto crash on his return from the naming ceremony of his younger brother in Rivers state in 2008. Mrs Theresa Goodwill trades in bags of gari (cassava flakes) on wholesale in Agbere and has some shops in nearby markets such as Kaiama market. She was an active member of both Tari social club and Bayelsa Ladies club respectively. These clubs were involved in self help, organization of social gatherings and provision of financial support for its members from time to time. During the burial ceremony of Mrs. Theresa’s deceased husband, the social clubs provided reasonable level of financial support to her throughout the funeral. Both clubs were collectively responsible for the provision of the*

*tents, chairs, food and traditional musicians for the successful conduct of the funeral. The level of support provided by both clubs influenced the interest of Mrs. Theresa's neighbours to join the clubs, particularly Mrs. Matina Dickson, a cleaner in the local government council. But the fees for membership was considered too high (₦15,000) for common villagers to afford."* (Life history with Theresa Goodwill at Agbere, 15/10/09)

### **6.3. Conclusion**

This chapter has critically analysed how actors' agency affected the local governance systems of natural resources in the Delta region. In analyzing agency, the chapter applied the governance of natural resources framework to the research areas in order to unravel the complexities of factors which shape the agency of different actors in the use of local resources to support livelihoods. The chapter discovered that actors' agency revolves around pluralistic factors which shape their behaviour in relation to resources management at different times. These factors include participatory spaces at the village level, representation in the formal institutions of the state, representation at the village level, actors' accountability, physical embodiment, the dynamics of the chronically poor at the village level and the influence of social networks. These factors provided answer to why some actors are able to exercise agency over resources to support their livelihoods while others faced constraints.

The spaces for participation at the village level provide relative advance to the powerful actors such as the traditional rulers and family heads to exercise agency over the less privileged actors in the management of local



resources. This was evident from the closed participatory spaces where the powerful actors had to take decisions first within themselves prior to that time when final decisions had to be taken in the open by members of the village. The enormous power and influence commanded by the powerful actors enabled them to exercise their actions at freewill. This supports Giddens' (1984) position that "a social actor stops being an agent if he or she loses the power to exercise some sort of power (p.14)". In other cases, lack of skills, knowledge and sound training also constrained a number of villagers from exercising their agency on participatory issues. Representation at the formal institutions of the state became marred by irregularities, godfatherism, and manipulation of electoral process and flagrant disregard for electoral laws. These factors worked together to weaken the propensity of the ordinary villagers to exercise their political agency in choosing representatives of their choices at the local level. The chapter also realized that representation at the local level was based on possession of wealth, absolute loyalty, social contact and strong political network rather than observation of traditional values, local customs and collective decisions of the villagers in the determination of local actors of governance of resources. The chapter demonstrates the role which collective action played in supporting the agency of local actors from the flood control and construction of local pathways for the benefits of villagers. Lack of abled-bodiness of some actors seriously undermined their agency from supporting their livelihoods to live decent and independent lives. The chapter unraveled the extent to which different conditions of the chronically poor (such as polygamy, theft of agricultural produce, excessive alcoholic intake, gender inequality and domestic

violence) at the village level constrained the agency of the affected villagers, particularly the women from realizing the full benefits in the use of local resources. The chapter also showed the significance of social network and how these helped a number of villagers to exercise their agency in order to realize the benefits associated with membership of social clubs and relations of exchange.

In conclusion, the analysis of agency from the research areas pointed to the fact that agency does not exist in a vacuum, but starts with an actor in relation to the actions of other actors. As actors draw on different power structures, some of the actors gain while others with less capacity to act lose. Therefore, the factors analysed above are responsible for why some actors were able to exercise agency in relation to the use of local resources in the research areas while other actors lack the agency to use local resources.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ARRANGEMENTS OF ACCESS TO RESOURCES IN THE DELTA

#### 7.1. Introduction

The relationship between access to natural resources and poverty is complex. Accessing natural resources is regarded as a fundamental key for enhancing the livelihood opportunities of local people. Therefore, the bigger the asset base, the less constrained the choices available to the people and the higher the possibility of substituting one form of resources for another and vice-versa (Maxwell and Wiebe, 1998). However, not all actors have equal access to local resources given that actors command different influences through which they access resources in a dynamic context. In support of this position, Ribot and Peluso (2003) described the complexity of ways through which different actors draw on natural resources. In explaining the arrangements through which actors gain access to natural resources, the authors argue that different actors and institutions hold and draw on different bundles of power. These bundles of power explain differences in the positioning of actors in relation to resources at various historical moments, geographical scales and change over time (ibid: 154).

Following from the foregoing analysis, I intend to show in this chapter how actors draw on resources in order to fashion out bundles of arrangements of access to natural resources to support their livelihoods in the research areas. Investigating the arrangements for natural resources at the local level becomes necessary in order to tease out the power struggle involved in gaining access to resources by different actors. In analyzing the

multiple factors shaping the arrangements of access, I realized different actors drew on structural and relational factors and analysed how bundles of power are commanded by these actors at the local level. I also noticed some actors were more powerfully placed to constrain the potentials of less powerful actors from accessing local resources. The inequality created from different positioning of actors stimulated further investigation into the reason why some actors have more access to some local resources while other actors lack access to these resources? In response to this question, I argue that the arrangements for drawing on local resources are fluid. On the whole, the arrangements are drawn by different actors in the research areas in relation to a bundle of powers, subject to negotiation and renegotiation over access to natural resources and subject to change over time (Mehta *et al*, 2001; Cleaver and Franks, 2005).

## **7.2. What determines Arrangements of Access to Local Resources?**

At the local level, I review the arrangements or the processes by which actors individually or collectively draw on local resources either on a short term or permanent basis. These arrangements are dynamic and tend to overlap and interweave with one another at different points. A number of writers such as Giddens (1984), Obi (1999), Cotula *et al* (2006), Kameri-Mbote (2005) and Tar (2008) identified power as a major factor through which actors gain access to natural resources.

In both Bori and Agbere villages, the state, corporate and local actors separately draw on a bundle of powers under different contexts to gain access to the natural resources. The government at all levels draws on the

natural resources located at Bori and Agbere villages through rights-based primarily on statutory law. For example, the federal government is statutorily empowered by law as rightful owner of natural resources like crude oil, gold, diamond and sundry found above and beneath any land located within the geographic location of Nigeria even where there are customary claims or ownership to such land by the local actors. On the other hand, the villagers at both Bori and Agbere still draw on local resources mostly using the customary claims considering the importance it has played in addressing the question of villagers' rights to resources and accessibility the local villagers have to these resources. Beside the rights-based access, local people from both Bori and Agbere also employ other forms of structural and relational arrangements such as social identity, inheritances, kinship, village membership, authority, participation, social network, labour and labour opportunities, knowledge and the rest as arrangements for gaining access to natural resources of the Delta region.

For bundles of arrangements employed by various actors in the research areas to be understood, it is necessary in this section to relate them to resources through which they are accessed. Such relationship will clearly reveal how and why various arrangements of access either constrain or enable the livelihood of different actors in the research areas.

### **7.2.1. Arrangements of Access to Land Resources**

Facts from both Bori and Agbere villages showed land as the most important source of economic power and social prestige. Land tenure in these villages is similar but very complex and has produced a series of

conflicts between the state and local actors that often lay competing legal claims to ownership of lands as a basis for drawing on the use of resources found on the land. Data collected from the field which was also supported by contributions of Obi (1999) and Okonta (2008), shows that land was previously owned by the communities and their governance was based on customary laws.

The Supreme Court of Nigeria in one of its rulings on the relevance of customary laws states as follows:

*“Customary law is the organic or living law of the indigenous people of Nigeria, regulating their lives and transactions. It is organic in that it is not static. It is regulatory in that it controls the lives and transactions subject to it. It is said that custom is the mirror of culture of the people. I would say that customary law goes further and imparts justice to the lives of those subject to it.”* (Supreme Court of Nigeria, 1990)

The land ownership systems in the research areas revealed different forms of ownership, rights which come with the ownership and how governance shapes land ownership systems in the research areas. Ownership of land refers to the authority and control over resources. It confers the right to use the resources (e.g. water, oil, trees) and give owners control and physical access to the resources (World Resources Institute, 2003). The determination of ownership of land resources in the research areas is very complex due to various rights that come with ownership of land. In explaining these rights, questions affecting the beneficiaries, how rights are enforced, and insecurity of ownership is subject of controversies (Bromley and Cernea, 1989; *ibid*: 23).

The property rights and tenure systems in the research areas have been analysed following scholars such as Berkes and Taghi-Farvar (1989), Gibbs and Bromley, (1989), Lino-Grima and Berkes (1989), Rukuni (1999) and McCay (2000). The tenure systems is similar in both Bori and Agbere villages as land in both villages is regarded as the most valuable asset of social prestige and economic power through which villagers promotes their cultural allegiances to land in festive periods and enhances their livelihood.

In both Bori and Agbere, land is communally owned under a customary land tenure system. This system traces ownership of land to lineage of every family. In Bori, the lineage is an important structure through which individual males with dependants draw on village lands. The lineage head of every family holds land in trust for the entire member of every family who then allocates the land to every member of the family in need after performing necessary rituals and social norms which guide the use of land. In case a villager needs additional income for survival or exigent reasons, the culture governing land use allows such villager to use the portion of land allocated to him as collateral for obtaining loan from the lender (creditor) until repayment period. It should however be noted that the land cannot be sold outright without the knowledge of the lineage head and other members of the land management committee. Until the loan is repaid, the lender could farm on the land for both subsistence and commercial purposes to earn an additional income (Okonta, 2008:32-3). In Agbere, families and village groups who have traceable origin to Agbere control small portion of land for farming purposes, at the blessings of village leaders. The village chiefs by virtue of the land they control have enormous powers in approving uses to which individual

members of the village can put land. However, the village leaders, who are members of the village land committee, assess the progress made in respect of the land owned by different families in relation to the community development in Agbere (ibid). In both Bori and Agbere, individuals only have rights<sup>40</sup> of usufruct as against the rights to sell or dispose of lands. It is only the villages' land committees that have the rights to dispose of the village lands in accordance with the customs and culture of their respective villages.

#### **7.2.1.1. Land Management at the Local Level**

Lands are managed at both family and village level in both Bori and Agbere villages. At the family level, each family unit has its elders that constitute land management team where family meetings are held at least once in every month on issues affecting the management of family land. In some instances, emergency meetings are summoned to determine issues which ordinarily could not have otherwise been postponed for deliberation against the next meeting. Meetings are held at the head of the family's residence. In both cases, the secretaries inform the family members in advance to enable family members have adequate time to prepare for the meeting. In the case of Bori, the head of every lineage who apparently is the eldest within the family, presides over the family meeting. The meeting enables every lineage to determine the progress made with respect to issues such as family land, areas which require further attention on family land and

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<sup>40</sup> Rukuni (1999:3-4) identified different rights related to ownership of land. The right to use represents rights to farm or occupy a land or make permanent development on it. Rukuni argues the transfer *right* empowers the land owner the right to sell, give, lease, or bequeath the land and its resources. The *exclusion right* confers on the owner the right to prevent others from using the resource while the *enforcement right* ensures all other rights are used by the owner of the land whenever the agreements attached to the land are not honoured.



how the gains of harvest are shared within the family. During the course of interaction with the secretary from Bane lineage in Bori, he passed the following comments regarding the management of their family land:

*“The family land cannot be single-handedly managed or allocated to any member of our family except through the monthly family meeting where the entire family approves of it. Land in Bori has cultural symbolic interpretation such that if any member of the family mismanages it, then the responsible person will pay dearly for it in a mysterious way.”*

(Interview with Secretary from Bane lineage in Bori, 07/10/09)

In Agbere, similar situations occur in terms of the management of family land as every family deliberates on issues affecting their family land. Every decision taken in the meeting binds on every member of the family. During interaction with a member of Tarakiri family from Agbere, I learnt the family usually holds its cultural values in high esteem and the interest of every member is recognized to reduce conflict which may arise from either request to farm on family land or sharing of the proceeds which comes from commercial selling of agricultural produce from family land.

The management of land becomes complicated at the highest decision making level in Bori and Agbere where the village land committees take decisions affecting land allocation for village development purposes. In Bori, the Menebon has powers to influence other members of the village land committee who by virtue of hierarchy of decision making are subordinated to his office. On account of this authority, other members of the village land committee often borrow from the Menebon when decisions are made on land

to be allocated on lease to outsiders. During the interview conducted, one of the village members reacted as follows:

*“The traditional village ruler and his team of village land committee take all decisions on the land which belongs to the village. What we only see as members of the village is that village lands are allocated to people. Whosoever does not agree to the decision taken by the committee must either keep quiet or may be kicked out for no good reason. They take decisions and enjoy the benefits that come with it and no one dare challenge their decisions because the culture forbids it.”*

(Interview with a Bori Villager, 20/09/09)

Similar to the situation in Bori, the Amanana has strong influence over decision making on allocation of land by the village land committee (a traditional institution). Facts from the field revealed that decisions affecting lands to be allocated are deliberated in a secret meeting between the supreme leader and inner members of his group before opening up the deliberation in the meeting. In a situation where there are disagreements, the supreme ruler will request for voting. Through voting process, the supreme leaders always have his way having initially lobbied the strong members of the village land committee. In an interview with a villager member in Agbere, the comments below were passed:

*“The decision over land allocation in the village as far as I am concerned lies with the Amanana-the supreme ruler in Agbere. He is very powerful and it is whatever he says that other members follow. We have never seen them quarrel over land matters and where they do, it might*

*probably be the returns from village land sold have not been properly shared between the council of chiefs.” (Interview with a villager at Agbere, 22/09/09)*

#### **7.2.1.2. Gender and Access to Land at the Local Level**

In terms of accesses to land, data from the research areas revealed men are better placed than women to use land because of the patrilineal system, which confers power on male by the lineage authority in every family. Women’s access to land are imperative for the reduction of poverty considering the role they play in producing food and social reproduction of smallholder farming. In another context, women are also responsible for feeding the family members and maintaining the household in those situations where wage labour and migration provide livelihood options for some family members. Therefore, granting women accesses to land will not only promote their welfare and income earning capacity but also enhance spending on food and their capability to take care of their children’s health and education bills (Quan, 2006).

However, data collected from both Bori and Agbere regarding the extent of discrimination women face in relation to access to land were similar and pointed to the fact that women only have secondary access to land through male relatives. The secondary access of women to land suppresses their productive capacities to take better decisions which would have otherwise provided better income to them. Since the rights of women to land are subordinated to men, the secondary rights women enjoy become threatened, where there are breakdown in their relationships with influential male family members of her family or her husband’s family or divorce. During the course

of interview I conducted at Bori, a villager lamented on the deep level of gender inequality, which placed men above women in terms of accessibility to land for productive purposes in Bori. Her comments are presented as follows:

*“Bori men villagers are the decision makers about who gain access to land. This is because the culture of this village gives power to men to hold land in trust for every family. Even at the highest decision making level in this village where our traditional ruler and his land committee members meet, most decisions are taken by men while women only engage in working in the farm. This makes me as a woman unhappy because I see myself in bondage as I lack the will to take decisions I want like other women in this village. Men have got too much domineering influence over us on land access.”*(Interview with a villager at Bori, 12/10/09)

In Agbere, the patriarchal male property rights also dominated kinship and inheritance practices. However, matrilineal systems at times provide opportunities for women with stronger social network to have access to land. Data from Agbere showed some highly placed women with strong network often draw on their contacts to facilitate their access to land. A good example was the case of the participant I interviewed during the field work who drew on her contact with one of the influential chiefs from Agbere to influence the head of her family to get access to land for commercial agricultural purposes. The summary of her submissions are captured below:

*“It is true men have total powers in the determination of who has access to our family land. But being a married woman, I do not have right to my father’s land. But I have no option other than to use the influence of one of*

*the powerful chiefs who was a friend to my dad while alive to change the mind of the head of family of my father's lineage to grant me access to our family land being an agriculturist by profession. Through access to this land I have been able to engage in commercial agriculture. Anyway, I have to pay the actors that made the access to land possible to express my appreciation.”*  
(Interview with an Agriculturist at Agbere, 20/09/09)

From the foregoing analysis, it is clear that unequal power relations exist between men and women from both villages in relation to distribution and redistribution of accesses to land (Kameri-Mbote, 2005:6). In both circumstances, women were constrained from accessing land for productive and investment purposes capable of generating income. The situations women faced from Bori and Agbere villages subjected them to discrimination, exclusion and inequitable access to land which worsen their livelihood positions and deepened their lack of power. The experience of women from the research areas was supported by the findings of Quan (2006) when the scholar discovered the dangers inherent in inequitable land access. According to the scholar, where land is managed by few hands, then secure land access<sup>41</sup> for the disadvantaged or the excluded ones will be limited and the consequences leads to inequitable patterns of income and distribution. Therefore, lack of access and limited access of women to land, forest, water, fisheries undermines their livelihood as these women have limited access to

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<sup>41</sup> (Quan, 2006:1) defined land access as the processes by which actors individually or collectively obtain rights and opportunities to use land for productive purposes and other economic and social purposes on temporary or permanent basis. The author identified participation in both formal and informal markets, access through kinship, social network, and access through inheritance, within families, land allocation by the state and land owners as forms of accesses for accessing land (ibid).

food, accumulating other assets and difficulties from recovering from financial shock.

#### **7.2.1.3. Arrangements for Resolution of Land Conflict at the Local Level**

Different forms of conflict occur at the local level arising from competing claims by actors in the course of drawing on land resources (Warner, 2000). The conflict between villagers over land and resources ownership is the commonest in the research areas. Findings confirmed that any threat to the lands from where villagers secure livelihood is a direct threat to other assets which guarantees their survival including human capital, financial capital, physical capital and social capital. During conflict situations, data revealed that the villagers draw on various arrangements to resolve disputes to avoid being economically dislocated from accessing of land for too long. The villagers relied on the combination of arrangements such as village assembly, religious institutions (churches and traditional confraternity groups) and family relationship rather than the formal legal system, which to the villagers has a culture of dragging too long and may not bring effective justice system, especially where any of the parties to land dispute is highly placed at the village level in relation to other parties involved in the conflict. Another reason for drawing on other arrangements other than the formal/ legal system is attributed to high cost villagers may need to pay for using private legal services. The experience from the field was similar to the findings of Kramm and Wirkus (2010) in a research on local water governance carried out in Tanzania, where the authors realized actors showed preference for the “Elders’ Court” on account of the trust villagers had in the socially embedded

institution in the resolution of land conflict at the villages level. Relatively, Kramm and Wirkus (2010) discovered that the villagers considered the formal/ legal system as long, open ended and expensive. Besides, the formal/ legal system was considered as a veritable source of power for the highly placed actors who used their financial and political influence to buy justice at all cost against the local farmers (ibid:34).

To corroborate the foregoing analysis, I discovered from my interaction with a participant in Bori on how strong family relationship was instrumental in resolving boundary disputes between two families sharing farm lands between each other. The contributions from the participant are summarized below:

*“I have been farming on this land in the last forty five years. From oral traditions, our family land extended over to Kpakol’s land. But Kpakol’s family laid claim to that part belonging to us due to boundary relationship. This issue dragged for long and would have been taken to court but for the interest of protecting the strong inter-family relationship we learn existed between our ancestors. In 2005, elders of the village with deep and sound knowledge in oral traditions and households history intervened in this matter and succeeded in resolving the disputes through tracing the historical ancestors of both families. Through the families’ intervention, we regained the possession of our two plots. The two families are back to their cordial family relationship and we now work as partners on the land for both subsistence and commercial purposes.”* (Interview with Stephen from Bori village, 10/10/09)

The situation with land conflict in Agbere was very complex. It involved long years of cold war between two families over land ownership. The situation became tense to the extent that children from both families were forbidden from interacting, socializing and marrying each other. Through high level of maturity and respect for peace by members of these families, the matter was eventually referred to the local village assembly supported by officials from the churches attended by representatives of warring families. The officials of the churches drew on various biblical verses related to conflict resolution to change the minds of the warring representatives towards the path of peace. Representatives from both families were separately questioned to get detailed information about the disputed land. During interaction with one of the representatives, I gathered the following information:

*“I am David Yobo (50), the representative of Yobo’s family on land matters. Our family had years of cold war with Paul (46), a representative of Andrew’s family over land matter. The conflict turned hundred years in 2004. It deprived the members from both families of many things such as reaping the gains of labour from the lands, socializing together and even marrying with each other’s compound. David and I became reasonable and matured enough probably due to our respective educational background and religious commitments to find amicable solutions to the lingering dispute. We both agreed to take the matter first to our respective churches and these churches in turn drew on our village assembly. At the village assembly, the families presented their positions on respective claims to ownership. After much debate, the assembly suggested the land be divided into two equal parts for*



*peace to reign between the families. Both families agreed and today there is peace between us.”* (Interview with David Yobo in Agbere village, 19/09/09)

The cases above pointed to different application of arrangements for conflict resolution over land matters and how nested these arrangements fit into one another. In Bori's case, the role of inheritances, village elders and strong inter-family relationship successfully shaped resolution of land disputes between the affected families. Drawing on these arrangements was instrumental to dispensation of justice and restoration of peace in the affected village. In addition, the affected families now benefit from each other on comparative livelihood advantage through which the family members draw on land to earn their living. In comparative terms, the major arrangements which provided solution to conflict resolution in Agbere were inheritances, knowledge, churches and village assembly. A closer examination of the cases clearly shows the relevance of inheritances in shaping rights to land ownership in the Delta region. By and large, the preferred mechanisms for resolution of conflicts in the cases presented above was also supported by Cleaver and Franks (2005) while researching how institutions elude design in Tanzania. The writers also found that the Usangu people preferably relied on socio-cultural structures of arrangements such as village elders and village membership and where these arrangements fail, then the villagers resort to formal/ legal means. However, the mechanisms employed by local people in the research areas differ in context and application with those instruments available to the government. In the next section we examine the arrangements government employs for gaining access to natural resources in the research areas. This will unravel the extent to which power context

between the government and local people shapes access to natural resources.

#### **7.2.1.4. State Arrangements for Drawing on Land Resources**

The study revealed that the federal government in collaboration with state and local government came up with statutory laws through enactment of acts, rules and regulations, military support and sometimes partial payment of compensation for drawing on land resources in the Delta region. This development brought insecure land tenure systems into the region, where the villagers from both Bori and Agbere who hitherto had full customary access to their land resources, were pushed off the resource base and further excluded mostly from their productive lands. The reasons advanced by the federal government for changing the laws governing land resources in Nigeria and the Delta region in particular were premised on a number of factors. First, the government considered the need to get land easily for the provision of public needs such as building public schools and construction of public hospitals. Second, there was lack of trust by the government in the customary practices driven by abuse by more powerful groups (for example, head of families and traditional chiefs) in villages who often engage in their preferential access to land at the expense of less powerfully positioned villagers. The statutory laws enacted by the government were expected to correct the shortcomings inherent in the governance of local resources by the aforementioned local actors. However, the federal government which specifically pointed out the need to eliminate hardship which it had hitherto encountered in getting lands for the provision

of public services like education and promotion of agricultural development as major reasons for the emergence of the laws was later found guilty of land abuses by hiding under the use of statutory law to separate the villagers from their lands (see: Joab-Peterside, 2007).

The contents of the Land Use Act enacted by the government in 1978 are stated as follows:

*“The provisions of the Act vests all land in the territory of each state (except land vested in the Federal government or its agencies) in the Governor of the state who would hold such land in trust for the people and would henceforth be responsible for allocation of land in all urban areas for individuals resident in the state and to organizations for residential, agricultural, commercial and other purposes, while similar powers with respect to non-urban areas are conferred on local governments [section 1 and section 2(1)].”*

The law further empowers the governor to revoke a right of occupancy for reasons of overriding public interest. This is expressed in section 28 of the Land Use Act as:

*“The requirement of the land for mining purposes or for oil pipelines or for any purpose connected therewith (Section 28, land Use Act).”*

The Act provides for payment of compensation to an occupier whose land is acquired for mining purposes and such compensation is due to be paid to the chief or community leader to be disposed by him for the benefit of the community. Then, the question of the determination of compensation also becomes a potential source of conflict between affected parties within a village. Statutory law has been applied particularly on lands belonging to

families or villages where inadequate compensations were paid in some cases and it was not paid in other cases. Participants interviewed in connection with land disputes affirmed that the statutory laws have given too much power to all tiers of government, particularly federal government to gain access and control to the lands in villages or any part of the country where natural resources are found at the expense of villagers.

The enforcement of statutory rights with the collaboration of both the state and the local government on big expanse of Dickson's family land in Bori left the family with little plots of land for inheritance and survival with the part payment of limited compensation from the government. However, efforts made by Dickson's family to seek support from MOSOP, the council of chiefs, local councilor, representatives of the political constituency of Dickson's family to reach the chairman of the local government and the state officials on land matters did not produce desired result. The matter became so complicated that the family became divided when the delay in getting justice became frustrating. The contributions of the participant during interview are presented below:

*"The larger part of ten (10) acres belonging to the Dickson's family in Bori was taken over by both the state and the local government during the military administration in the early 90's. The land was seized on account that it was to be used for building government hospital. Our family drew on the support of MOSOP officials, our traditional ruler, officials of the churches and highly placed indigenes of Bori to reach the local government administrator and military administrator of the state in order to prevent the government from taking our possession. All we received was a promise that little*

*compensation will be paid through the traditional ruler to the head of our family. While the discussion was in progress, the government brought mobile police to support government's building engineers to fence about 8 acres out of the land. After further pressure, the head of our family only received ₦20,000 (£80) being part payment of the compensation. Up till now, the remaining part of the compensation has not been paid. The most annoying part of it is that the land taken by the government is still there without any government hospital built on it.”* (Interview with Richard Dickson at Bori Village, 08/10/09)

Other areas of statutory laws through which the government draws on the land resources from both Bori and Agbere villages include: Oil Pipeline Act (OPA) and Petroleum Act of 1966 and 1969 respectively. The OPA regulates the laying of pipelines and stipulates the permission for such pipelines being sought from the Department for Petroleum Resources (DPR) of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (an agency of the federal government of Nigeria). In this case, the villagers whose lands become affected through laying of pipelines are excluded from being part of the issuances of the licenses. These villagers are only allowed to raise claims and objections in relation to any lands being used as burial grounds or cemetery and any land containing any grave, grotto, or trees or anything held to be sacred (The OPA, 1966). It is interesting to find how the enactment of the pipeline regulations affect the livelihood of the local people and where necessary to understand efforts made by the state and corporate actors to redress the conditions of the affected villagers. Evidence from the field shows government has not been supportive to the villagers affected by enactment of

statutory laws especially where their livelihood becomes threatened. The OPA confers absolute powers on the government to determine compensation to be paid to owners of productive lands affected by laying of pipelines. Data from Agbere showed the extent to which the government applied the use of force to displace the landowners in order to lay oil pipelines even where compensation was not paid to the land owners. Further attempt made by the affected landowners to engage in dialogue for obtaining their compensation through contacts with the officials of the government (that is, officials of the Department for Petroleum Resources) and political representatives of Agbere village at the state and national levels proved abortive. The contact made through the traditional ruler of Agbere who was perceived to be highly placed within the national polity did not change the course of events. A participant interviewed from Agbere shared his family experience with me as follows:

*“I inherited ten plots of land from my father. The survival of my family revolves around the gains we get from the lands. That is, farming on the land and selling the surplus produce in some cases to draw on cash. Suddenly, the government used its military personnel to take possession of the property without any consultation. After a few months later, I found pipelines laid across the land. All steps taken to seek redress for compensation through various means including: discussions with officials of the Department for Petroleum Resources, using village assembly and contacts of local politicians proved abortive.”* (Interview with Isaac in Agbere, 15/09/09)

The Petroleum Act vests statutory powers on the federal government to legislate on all matters relating to the oil industry in Nigeria. It empowers the federal government to regulate and control the petroleum industry and the

government draws on the revenue accruing from oil without due consultation with the oil bearing villages where oil resources are derived (The Petroleum Act, 1969). This Act constitutes strategic power advantage to the government for weakening the livelihood means of the villagers from the research locations. The contributions by Obi (1999) captures the relation between the federal and state governments with respect to the application of Petroleum Act and such application enhances the economic advantage of bureaucratic actors at the detriment of economic survival of the villagers. His submissions are expressed as follows:

*“By claiming ownership of all oil under the ground and having the power to expropriate all such land in the public interest, the state asserts its own power over the land in the oil producing villages while simultaneously dispossessing the local communities of the land and disempowering them regarding any claim from the oil wealth emanating from the villages. The main beneficiaries of such actions are the state officials who control the lucrative niche in the oil and state bureaucracies, and the multinationals oil companies granted licenses by the government to exploit the rich oil reserves of the villages. The villagers who lose their land end up getting little compensation or nothing at all (p.10).”*

From the foregoing analysis, data from the research areas agree with Obi (1999) and Tar's (2008) position to a great extent. First, facts from the research areas demonstrate the supremacy of the various government laws over local arrangements villagers apply in drawing on the land resources. In different circumstances, the government was the major beneficiary to the detriment of the villagers who become more powerless even where the

villagers attempted to draw on other arrangements such as discussing with officials of the government, political representatives from the villages and the village assembly. In terms of weighing the scale of power, the government was more strategically positioned than the local villages in terms of accessibility to land and the power advantage gives more benefits to the government from the resources taken from land (oil) while the villagers suffered the pains of displacement, dispossession and loss of economic benefits arising from compulsory appropriation of their land.

### **7.2.2. State and Local Arrangements for Accessing Financial Resources**

The state actors are comparatively better off in terms of access to financial resources relative to the local villagers. Facts from the research areas revealed that the federal government draws on the financial resources through selling of oil licenses to multinational oil companies like Shell oil Company and Agip Oil Company. The federal government also draws on royalties, petroleum profit taxes, government share of profit from oil revenue and non-oil revenue as bundle of mechanisms to support its financial operations. These sources of finance enable the federal government of Nigeria to meet its financial commitments as and when due. The state government on the other hand draws on revenue from registration of land (land titling) by which land holders in the village make payment to the government for issuance of certificate of occupancies, which confers ownership on land holders. Data from the research areas revealed that the holders of certificate of occupancy are able to draw on credit facilities, loans and advances from financial institutions depending on the value of the



property. The possession of certificate of occupancy (C of O) in the Delta region is a form of security in landed property, which easily attracts the sympathy of Nigerian banks to grant loans and advances to local actors. The main argument here is that once the borrower defaults from conditions of term guiding the credit facility, then the certificate of occupancy which serve as a collateral can be mortgaged to recover the loan together with interest accruable to the creditor (Cotulla, *et al*, 2006:20).

The local government authorities draw on financial resources to support their respective fiscal operations through collection of tolls from markets, revenue from council tax and fines from environmental offences by villagers. Data pointed out that the environmental officers always visit different villages during and after every monthly environmental sanitation exercise to find whether villagers are complying with environmental sanitation regulations. Villagers found guilty of breaching the rules are fined accordingly. The fines realised from environmental offences at the village level constitute part of the arrangements fashioned by the local government institutions to draw on financial resources. The multinational oil companies on the other hand draws on financial resources to support their business operations through revenue from sale of oil to dealers in the international market.

The arrangements for drawing on financial resources to support livelihood at the local level is more complex due to unequal relations which villagers bear in comparison with the state actors. In financial terms, data from Bori village showed that a vast majority of the villagers lack easy access to savings and credit facilities as community banks are located in the main cities. These locations are considered not easily accessible by villagers.

Whenever the villagers approach the community banks in the cities for access to financial support, villagers are constrained from getting credit facilities due to lack of land security (certificate of occupancy) which can serve as collateral for banks to grant credits, loans and advances to these villagers to start or expand their farming businesses. On account of this, villagers are confined to limited cash being realized from selling the surplus produce from agriculture after satisfying their subsistence needs. Facts from Bori also showed that some of the villagers draw on bundle of financial arrangements through friendship, relatives and political network to resolve their financial problems. One of the participants interviewed lamented on the difficulties villagers persistently encounter drawing on financial resources from time to time. The summary of his comments are presented as follows:

*“The villagers into farming, fishing and related activities suffer from not accessing the financial resources (loans, credit, etc). Even if you have ideas on how to improve your business, there is no finance. The government is not helpful either despite setting up agricultural credit schemes. The credit scheme mostly supports farmers in the good book of the government. However, a number of the villagers including myself get financial assistance from good friends with financial power, relatives in high places and local politicians supported during campaigns to take care of our financial needs.”*

(Interview with Jude at Bori, 09/10/09)

Data from the research areas revealed that a number of villagers in the employment of government at all levels also engage in labour farming on a part time basis. In order to avoid a clash of interest between official working hours and labour farming, facts from both villages has it that these villagers

employ full time sub- labourers to work for them during weekdays. At weekends, the labourers assume full co-ordination of the activities of the sub-labourers. For these categories of villagers, they draw on a combination of arrangements including monthly salaries from the government, returns from labour farming and bargaining agreement to support their financial needs. Facts from the research areas showed that the returns which labourers earn for labour farming vary from village to village depending on the bargaining agreement between the land owner and the hired labour. Data from Bori village revealed the daily cost of hiring labour for cultivating land for cassava varies between three hundred to five hundred naira (~~₦300-₦500~~: £1.2-£2) only, while to accomplish same task in Agbere, it cost between four to six hundred naira (~~₦400- ₦600~~: £1.6- £2.4) only to hire labour for the same task. The reason for the cost difference is attributed to the cost difference in bringing labour to both villagers. In the case of Bori with a relatively better topography, cost of transportation is cheaper compared with Agbere with higher transportation fare for farmers to bring in their hired labourers to work on the farm.

The traditional rulers are not left out in terms of the catalogue of the arrangements they employ to draw on financial resources. Data from both villages also revealed that the monthly income traditional rulers receive from their respective local governments based on their grade level<sup>42</sup> is considered as one of the major arrangements for supporting their financial needs. The level of education, experience on the throne and political influence

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<sup>42</sup> The grade level of traditional rulers in the Delta region determines their seniority and monthly salaries from their local government council (see Nigerian Constitution, 1999).

commanded determines how the traditional rulers are hierarchically and economically positioned. Data from the field also showed the receipt of regular gifts and personal donations by the traditional rulers from the state officials as reward for patronage, receipt of payments for granting of honorary chieftaincy titles to wealthy villagers and politicians and execution of contracts from contacts in high places as bundle of arrangements which supports the financial needs of the traditional rulers. The multinational oil companies as data showed reward the traditional rulers during festive periods as a means of building good public relations with the monarchs, given the belief that the traditional rulers have a lot of influence in shaping access to resources and maintaining peace in their localities. During the data collection from Agbere village, one of the participants described the numerous arrangements which shape the access of the traditional ruler of Agbere to financial resources. The summary of his position is presented as follows:

*“Traditional rulers are supposed to be the custodian of culture in every sense. But most of the traditional rulers in the Delta region are custodian of favour, gifts, benefits from the award of contracts and financial benefits for the granting of honorary chieftaincy titles. Our traditional leader in this village is friendlier with officials of the governments, multinational oil companies, wealthy villagers and people in high places than the common people of Agbere. All we see are big cars, big contracts, scholarships being awarded on behalf of our traditional ruler to the princess, princesses and some highly placed chiefs as rewards for their role in providing the government and oil companies easy access to our resources at the detriment*

*of our economic interest. Anyway, our ancestors will judge!* (Interview with Timothy at Agbere, 11/09/09)

### **7.2.3. Local Arrangements for Drawing on Infrastructure Resources**

In terms of relationship with poverty, scholars are of the view that access to basic infrastructure services such as good roads, affordable transport, housing, electricity, water supply and sanitation and waste management enhances the well-being and ability of actors to escape the clutches of poverty. For instance, improvement of water supply and sanitation decreases incidence of illness. The good health of actors can be translated into high productivity where the benefits from good health are translated into economic activities (SIDA, 1996, Masika and Badin, 1997). The linkages between well developed infrastructure and poverty offered by these scholars sound conceptually right, but in practice it requires investigation to find how it works in both Bori and Agbere villages.

Apart from the main roads which linked directly to the Bori village, the roads within the village are generally in deplorable conditions. This makes transportation of agricultural products very difficult and expensive due to high transportation cost. Comparatively, the topography in Agbere environment made the transport fare more expensive and very frustrating as villagers can only link the market through speedboat from the village to other parts of the local government.

With respect to the cost of transportation and its effect on livelihood of villagers, the participants interviewed from Bori village identified bad roads as a constraining factor which increases the cost of transportation. Data from

Bori showed that bad roads discouraged transporters from plying the village. For few transporters that ply the village, they charged exorbitant fares because of the need to be able to meet the maintenance cost of their vehicles or motorcycle whenever it develops mechanical fault. Therefore, the question of affordability in Bori is associated with bad roads, high transport fares and high maintenance cost of transporters' vehicles. Given that most villagers cannot pay for high transport fares, data from Bori village revealed that the alternative bundle of arrangements which villagers have to adopt include selling their agricultural produce (such as yam, cassava, garri, vegetables and so on) at prices below the market price for wholesalers in agricultural produce that come into the village to buy directly from the local farmers, head-loading their agricultural produce in local baskets through physical efforts to the market and the use of bicycle transport to take their agricultural produce to the market. However, facts from Bori villagers revealed that selling agricultural produce below the market price results in loss of profits and reduction in income of the farmers. In addition, the head-loading method has the advantage of reducing the transport fare Bori villagers would have paid where vehicle or buses were to have been used. However, the data collected identified the disadvantages associated with head-loading as general pains of the body particularly the neck, dislocation of the back and neck and waste of time as the efforts which should have been channelled into productive use by farmers are wasted on head-loading agricultural produce from the village to the market. Apart from the fact that the bicycle arrangement saves the villagers reasonable cost, using it by farmers also requires a lot of physical effort which constrain the capability of

villagers to get involved in any other productive work within a short space of time. During the course of interaction with the villagers, one of the farmers who fashioned out a number of alternative arrangements for managing the high cost of transport fare in Bori passed the following comments:

*“The cost of transporting farm produce to the market for sale is very high. In the alternative, a reasonable number of us sell our agricultural produce directly to wholesalers, use bicycle to take the produce to the market or even use the bicycle to take the produce to the market to save some money and increase our income. The situation is worse off whenever I have to head-load the produce to the market because I always have general body pain and back pain for days whenever I returned home.”* (Interview with a villager at Bori, 10/10/09)

Data from Agbere revealed villagers cannot individually afford transporting their agricultural produce to the market due to the high cost of chartering a speed boat. Therefore, the alternative arrangements Agbere farmers adopt to draw on the transport system comprise co-operation, collective contribution for payment of transport fare and negotiation of the price of the chartered boat in order to reduce the price being charged by the speedboat driver. Whatever fare that is charged by the speed boat driver, the fare is divided according to the amount of space occupied by each farmers' produce. One of the local farmers from Agbere who was interviewed in relation to the alternative arrangements available to local villagers from drawing on the transport system expressed the following comments:

*“It is not easy to pay for transporting our agricultural produce from Agbere to the bigger market like Patani where buyers will pay good price.*

*Because of the higher cost of speedboat, a number of us come together based on co-operation, understanding and negotiation to hire either one or two speedboat to take our agricultural produce to Odi. Then we have to share the fare between ourselves depending on the size and weight of every farmer's produce. Through this medium, some of us have been able to cope with the problem of affordability.”* (Interview with a farmer at Agbere, 13/10/09)

The housing patterns in the research areas are presented in figure 7.1 (see below). Data from the field shows houses where villagers live in Bori are built of mud and supported by bamboo tree. The bamboo tree reinforces the shelter from collapse. On the average, about five to six villagers live in a small room. During the rainy season, villagers usually encounter problems with floods and leakages from the roof because of the low quality of roofing sheet covering the house. The situation villagers face during the rainy season undermines their livelihood as most villagers lose their assets such as clothes, crops, livestock and other belongings to flooding. The situation with shelter in Agbere was more terrible because housing units were built with wood with no reinforcement to prevent it from collapse. The Agbere villagers were often displaced during rainy season. During this period, villagers explained they lost a lot of their belongings like their counterparts in Bori. Data from the research areas revealed that the villagers draw on a combination of arrangements such as temporary shelter support from friends, relatives and better temporary shelters provided by the highly placed villagers to support their living whenever villagers are displaced by either rain or flooding. It is evident from the analysis above that lack of access to standard



shelter constrains the actions of the villagers in many respects. First, villagers are exposed to discomfort due to lack of access to decent shelter. Second, villagers are further exposed to shocks from wind, flooding and theft which also constrain their living conditions (Chambers, 1995).

The state of water supply, electricity, sanitation and waste management from both research areas was appalling. Data from both villages revealed that villagers lacked access to pipe-borne water. The few taps I found within the villages were not functional. Villagers interviewed confirmed those taps were only there for decorative purposes (see figure 7.1). On account of this, villagers from both Bori and Agbere villagers draw on other sources of water supply such as the streams and rivers.

**Figure 7 1: Infrastructure Resources at Bori and Agbere Villages**



Housing unit at Bori village



Housing unit at Agbere



Tap water supply at Bori village



Tap water supply at Agbere



Waste location at Bori village



Waste location at Agbere village

The arrangements for drawing on the water were head-loading by children and women. For those villagers who can afford the cost of private water, data from the research areas shows that private water providers charge an average of ₦15 (6 pence) and ₦20 (8 pence) for a bucket of water from borehole at Bori and Agbere respectively. In some parts of Bori, villagers draw on physical labour and wheelbarrow as a way of transporting water from the place of purchase to their homes. Villagers, who are physically constrained, need to draw on paid physical labour of dealers for the supply of water.

Power supply in the research areas was non-existent. Data showed that the villagers lack access to electricity all the time. Therefore, villagers draw on different arrangements to access light in their homes particularly in the evening. In both research areas, villagers draw on candle, traditional lamp, modern lantern, generator and torchlight to provide support for their power supply. Most villagers consider the use of traditional lamp being the cheapest to maintain. It only requires locally moulded container containing palm oil and traditional wool. The traditional wool is lighted to provide villagers with light. Data collected showed a number of villagers, who considered the traditional

lamp dangerous to human life and property especially when left overnight draw on other alternatives such as generator and torchlight. In some cases, some financially buoyant villagers shared the light from generator by contributing collectively to the cost of its purchase price and maintenance. Whenever the fuel finishes or there is any fault with the generator, the users contribute collectively to put it back to action.

Like other components of infrastructural facilities, both sanitary and waste management facilities are very poor. For the use of sanitary facilities, villagers from the research areas draw on a number of arrangements to use the facilities. Data pointed out that the villagers draw on different arrangements to access sanitary facilities. In the case of Bori, villagers collectively contribute to the construction and maintenance of local pits used for defecation. Data revealed that villagers contribute collectively to buy required materials for the construction of the pit. These materials include bags of cement, building blocks, sand and roofing sheet. Besides, the villagers arranged for payment of labour who handles the digging of the ground to be able to construct the local pit. After completion of the pit, every family involved in the collective contribution is given a key which allow them to use the pit toilet whenever necessary. Data from Agbere showed that villagers also contributed collectively to the construction of local toilets on top of nearby rivers or the use of privately constructed toilets where tokens have to be paid by villagers to defecate. Unlike Bori, the construction of local toilet on top of a river is cheaper because it does not involve the cost of digging the ground, buying cement and building blocks. Informal observation revealed that villagers used planks and roofing sheets to construct local toilet. The

toilet is positioned between the ground and nearby river so that the water from the river can channel human defecation into other parts of the river. Facts which emerged from the field also revealed that solid waste is dumped indiscriminately in the villages as there were no formal waste management facilities. During rainy season, these waste travels from different parts of the villages and meet at the streams and rivers at Bori and Agbere respectively (see figure 6.1). Furthermore, liquid waste also comes from the multinational oil companies either from oil exploration activities or through leakages of oil pipelines. Therefore, both solid and liquid waste which flows from actions of villagers and oil companies are responsible for water pollution and incidence of malaria and waterborne related diseases in the selected research areas (Olawoye, *et al*; 2003).

It is evident from the research areas that lack of infrastructure for the villagers means they are unable to move between rural and urban areas effectively. Furthermore, a weak infrastructure also exposes villagers to lack of better opportunities and constrains their mobility and integration into other parts of the cities either temporarily or permanently (DFID, 1999).

#### **7.2.4. Physical Arrangements for Supporting Livelihood at the Local Level**

Data revealed that for villagers with physical disability, their survival becomes difficult as they have to be supported by bundle of arrangements from families, relatives, friends or neighbours to support their livelihood. Lack of physical ability by the physically challenged villagers means the affected are financially constrained whenever family support becomes insufficient.

During the course of FGDs in Bori, one of the participants explained how physical disability of his father attracted blend of arrangements for support from other villagers to enhance the livelihood of his father. His comments are summarized below:

*“Farming requires hard physical labour and one requires regular medical treatment due to the physical challenges involved in farming. My father has had his back dislocated due to hard labour involved in farming using the traditional farming techniques. Worse still, he has no access to hospitals where he would have got a better treatment. Therefore, he has been at home receiving traditional treatment while the support he receives from his kids, friends and sometimes our neighbours to cultivate different crops on his land has become helpful to his livelihood.”* (Sam during FGDs at Agbere, 18/10/09)

The situation with physical arrangements in Agbere for the villagers with inadequate intellectual wherewithal to ventilate their views on local issues related to natural resources was worrisome. Data showed that the affected villagers draw on a bundle of arrangements such as the voice of their children in universities or colleges of higher education, support of some educated villagers to help express their minds, support from friends and sometimes support from their neighbours to get their messages passed across to the public gathering. Even where the villagers with no knowledge are represented at the local level, then questions arise as to the reliability of such representation. The problem of misrepresentation is difficult to resolve at the local level where English is the means of communication. But where Ijaw language is the medium of communication, villagers find it very easy to

understand one another. The reaction of a participant interviewed in Agbere expressed how lack of knowledge by villagers attracted other arrangements to help them partake in decisions on resources management. The summary of his comments are expressed as follows:

*“A lot of people at the village level hardly attend meetings due to illiteracy. Most people can neither read nor write. In most cases, villagers draw on various help such as their educated children, few educated members of the village, their neighbours or even their relatives in various representative capacities at the village level. In some cases, these representatives misrepresent us for their personal interest. All these reinforce marginalization of the poor.”* (Interview with James at Agbere, 07/09/09)

It is glaring from the facts above that most villagers became constrained in drawing on the physical arrangements to support their livelihood either due to failing health or on account of lack of intellectual disposition (knowledge) to take part in village meetings, where issues related to resources management decisions are taken. For educated villagers who offered to represent the less physically constrained villagers, they misrepresented the villagers for economic gains. Therefore, misrepresentation of villagers further compounded the marginalization of the physically constrained villagers from getting out of the threshold of poverty. The experience of the physically constrained villagers supported Sen's (1985, 1993) and CPRC's (2004) positions where poverty was attributed not only to lack of ability to meet basic needs but largely as a result of capabilities deprivation, poor education, illiteracy and bad health.

### 7.2.5. Arrangements of Access to Institutional Resources

At the state and corporate institutional levels, data from the research areas showed that actors shape the access of institutional resources through bundles of arrangements including reciprocity of favour, professional networks, political contacts and public relations building. For example, the officials of the multinational companies draw on networks in high places to obtain approval for oil licenses from the government to be able to operate in the Delta region. In return, data revealed that the officials of the oil companies return the favour through the award of contracts and award of scholarships to government officials as long as the network of contact and favour of reciprocity continues. During the course of interaction with the official of an oil company, the official explained the extent to which drawing on blend of arrangements from institutional resources helped to shape economic gains of his oil company. The summary of his submissions are as follows:

*“To be successful in oil business in the Delta region, multinational companies usually draw on various forms of support, exchange of favour, political network and contacts with any government in power to get approval for oil licenses and remaining in the good book of the government at all levels. That is what people out there do. Otherwise, getting things at the top, which is from the government, becomes very difficult. Anyway nobody will tell you except you have an informant within government circle. In order for us to remain in good network, we must also boost our PR with the government officials through juicy means.”* (Interview with official of Multinational Oil Company at Agbere, 30/09/09)

The role which local institutions like the resource users group (farmers association and fishermen association) played in shaping resources management to support villagers' livelihood in the research areas cannot also be downplayed. The members of these resource users group drew on a range of arrangements to support livelihood. One of the members of the association interviewed did confirm that co-operation and understanding remained the driving factors for increase in the membership of the association with the inclusion of women. During interview, the leader of the association expressed a number of challenges which constrained the association from shaping the institutional resources to support their livelihood. The problems raised included lack of access to loans and advances resulting from high cost of obtaining land titles from the government to use as collateral in banks, lack of support from getting modern agricultural inputs like fertilizers from the government and the exorbitant cost involved in renting tractors to enhance agricultural productivity. These constraints weakened the capability of the farmers group to meet their target from time to time.

Despite the challenges raised above, the members of Bori farmers association were able to shape the institutional resources through alternative arrangements to support their livelihood. The common arrangements which members of the association drew upon included helping one another during cultivation/ planting season, supporting members during social ceremonies, providing rotational guard to safeguard the members' farm from theft and request for financial assistance from their patron (the wealthy people within and outside the village) to support their cultivation needs. The members draw



support from the association during cultivation/planting season and ceremonial period of any member of the association. For any villager to share the resources of the association, such villager must have been a registered member for at least a year and half and must be financially active in terms of payment of seasonal dues. Data revealed that all members of the association are treated equally. Any member of the association who violates the basic rules of the association in relation to non-payment of financial dues, contribution for providing support to other members and indiscipline is only issued oral warning by the executive officers of the association. If the wrong doing is repeated, such member is suspended for six months, after which the erring member requires two-third support of other members of the association to be reinstated. Otherwise, the erring member becomes removed from the association. During planting season, the members of the association provide voluntary labour to other members who could not afford the cost of hiring labour. This assistance provides relief to the members in need from time to time. Data collected from Bori indicated that the members who received help from other members usually return the favour to other members who might be in need at a later time. Through reciprocity of help, the members of the farmers' association were able to support their livelihood. Besides, the rich amongst the members provide support to the financially challenged members during ceremonial period. Data from Bori also revealed that the financially capable within the association provide additional support to other members in form of cash in addition to whatever other members of the association collectively provides. Through co-operation, every member is directly involved in taking part in the security of cultivated lands belonging to

other members of the association. During the course of data collection, one of the members of the association provided information to the arrangements through which others members draw on the farmers association to support their livelihood. His comments are presented below:

*“The farmers’ association provides a lot of help to our members irrespective of their financial situation. We are one united family. For example, the association provided two rams to my family plus large sack of cassava, yams and vegetables during the naming ceremony of my last child. At times, when any member fall sick, other members help in cultivating crops of his choices. I am also a beneficiary in this case. Besides, the association has been helpful in providing rotational guard for its member farm to protect theft and sharing whatever financial gifts that come from our patron equally to support ourselves during planting season. It is a blessing being a member of this association.”*

(Interview with a member of the farmers’ association at Bori, 13/10/09)

Unlike Bori village, data gathered from Agbere village showed fishing was more prevalent in the village due to its closeness to water, streams and rivers. Notwithstanding, the Bori villagers also engaged in fishing, but not as much as the villagers in Agbere. Facts from the research area revealed that Agbere is a strategic location for getting different species of fishes because of its adjacency to River-Nun. Apart from ordinary Agbere villagers who are allowed to fish on occasional basis, outsiders are prohibited from fishing except they comply with the rules and conditions set by both the Agbere Fishermen Association and the council of chiefs. Therefore, for any outsider to fish in Agbere, the approval of the executives of Agbere fishermen

association is required upon payment of a specific fee where the fishing is to be carried out for a limited number of times. Where the time required for fishing by an outsider is longer than required, then such outsider must obtain the consent of the council of chiefs subject to payment of specific fee in addition to one granted by the Fishermen Association. Apart from the revenue the Agbere Fishermen Association derives from outsiders, the executives of the Association pay their homage to the traditional ruler of Agbere on occasional basis to show appreciation and strengthen their relationship with the traditional rulers and highly placed chiefs in the village. During this period, the executives of the association provides basket of fishes to the traditional rulers and the highly placed chiefs. The traditional rulers and the local chiefs in return provide support to the Fishermen Association during the annual fishing festival by taking active part in the rites performed during the festival. Despite the rules governing fishing in the village, members still draw on various forms of support within themselves to enhance their livelihood. In order to make the rules governing fishing more flexible, members ensure they vote for executives with more flexible leadership approach where rules can sometimes be waived to recognize some uncontrollable situations which may constrain members from complying with the rules all the time. Such cases include illness of members, bereavement of a family or relatives and so on. The interaction I had with one of the executive members of the Agbere fishermen association showed the range of diverse arrangements which its members adopt to support their livelihood. The summary of his comments is presented below:

*“Fishing in Agbere comes with its rules. Therefore, for you to be able to fish, you need to have lineage relationship with the village in addition to your membership of our Association to fish for consumption basis while outsiders require the approval of our association for at least limited fishing upon payment of agreed fee for the usage of our water. The fee becomes much where outsiders have to fish for long including approval from the council of chiefs. But for members of our association, we can fish for as long as we want because that is our occupation. However, there are cases where the executives stop members who fail to comply with our rules from fishing. But the affected members continue fishing the moment they sort themselves out. In order to ensure we make the rules guiding fishing easy for our members, we always ensure we elect dynamic executives that will understand individual problems of members so that things can work based on mutual understanding. The factors above helped our members to be able to fish. ”*

(Interview with a member of Fishermen Association at Agbere, 29/09/09)

Facts from Agbere revealed the arrangements which fishermen employed to support their livelihood were not restricted to membership of the Association, election of flexible executive and drawing on the support of council of chiefs. The Association also draws on the support of local organizations such as the Fish Sellers Association (FSA) and Fish Farmers Co-operative Society (FFCS) established in 1995 and 2008 respectively. Data from the field confirmed most of the members of the Agbere Fishermen Association are registered members of the FFCS. Therefore, the FFCS provides inputs for fishing such as baskets, nets, hook, paddle and canoe of different sizes to its financially active members to be able to fish effectively.

The active members of the Agbere Fishermen Association who are able to draw on the support from FFCS sell the fishes caught directly to the FSA, who in turn resells the fishes directly to the final consumers. In view of this, the Agbere Fishermen Association also draws on the supply of fishing tools from the FFCS and buying patronage they get from the FSA members to support their livelihood. The interaction I had with the secretary of the Agbere Fishermen Association during the field study generated the comments below:

*“Our members draw on both financial and materials support (provision of credit for nets, baskets, paddle and canoes from the Fish farmers Co-operative Society and the buying support from the members of Fish Sellers Association. Without this group, our survival would have been very difficult.”*

(Interview with the Secretary of the Fishermen Association at Agbere, 30/10/09)

#### **7.2.6. Arrangements of Access to Resources of Rights and Entitlements**

The contest over rights of access to resources and the benefits actors derive account for the struggle between the powerful actors and the poor in every social system. The struggle between the actors reveal the extent to which the dominant actors promote their interest at the expense of dominated actors and explains the arrangements taken by the dominated actors to challenge the excesses of the dominant actors (Newell and Wheeler, 2006).

Data from the research areas identified membership of community based organizations, claims, protest and dialogue as the common arrangements actors used to draw on resources of rights and entitlements.

Through these arrangements, villagers at Bori and Agbere were able to fight for their rights against the dominant actors on issues such as land acquisition without payment of compensation and environmental abuses. Data showed that the Ogoni Bill of Rights (OBR) was the effort made by the Bori people and other villages in Ogoniland through protest in order to demand for political autonomy of the Ogoni ethnic groups from the state actors so that the local people can participate fully in the affairs of their ethnic group as a distinct and separate unit since the early nineties to date. This development was supported by other ethnic division within Ogoni, the traditional leaders and MOSOP. This protest came in the light of several years of neglect, environmental abuses and separation of the Bori people and other Ogoni people from the land which originally belongs to them. In similar light, the Agbere youths also contributed significantly to the historic protest called “the Kaiama Declaration” on the 11<sup>th</sup> December, 1998 where 40 clans was represented to demand for immediate control of all the resources found within the territory of Agbere and other Ijawland in the light of injustices being meted to the people of Ijaw. The interactions I had with the villagers pointed out that the aforementioned arrangements have been helpful to the villagers in realizing part of their rights as people of the Delta region. But in some cases, such protest attracted repression and mass killings of innocent villagers thereby promoting intense conflict. One of the villagers interviewed in relation to effects of statutory laws on the local people reacted as follows:

*“The use of collective efforts during protest, membership of villages association and sometimes kidnapping has been of help to the villagers in fighting for our rights against the enemies of our land. It is through these*

*efforts that we get part of our rights from the government and multinational companies. Though, it might be difficult going through the process of protest, but we have no option other than to do it to save our rights from oppressors.”*

(Interview with a villager at Bori, 04/10/09)

Data collected from the research areas indicated that the villagers also draw on protest to express their displeasure on decisions taken at times by the council of elders especially when such decision were taken to promote the interest of the council of chiefs at the expense of the interest of the common villagers. In the course of interaction with the villagers during field study, I learnt protest always bring about dialogue by the highly placed local chiefs whenever the youth protest against oppressive act from the powerful people in the village. One of the participants interviewed pointed out that:

*“Protest is the best approach youths of Agbere always adopt to fight for our rights against the excesses of the powerful people of this village. If they see us protesting, they will call us for dialogue. Through dialogue, the powerful people will correct their wrongs and allow peace to reign. Otherwise, there will be trouble.”* (Interview with a villager at Agbere, 30/09/09)

### **7.3. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have critically analysed how actors draw on local resources to fashion out bundles of arrangements of access to support their livelihood at the local level. It was evident from the analysis that the arrangements for accessing resources at the local level were complex given that actors are not equally placed at the local level. The ability of actors to draw on local resources depends on the extent to which they are able to

draw on blend of arrangements including power, different property rights, family support, elders' support, kinship, and friendship, social and institutional network to support their livelihood. While these factors work to the advantage of some actors, they constrain the livelihood of others due to non-possession of bundle of arrangements of access to draw on local resources. In recognition of the foregoing position, the explanations that follow provided answer to the factors which explained inequalities between actors over access to local resources.

The chapter showed how the customary tenure system traced the ownership of land to every lineage at the local level. Through the customary tenure system, different families were able to draw on family support and family networks to fashion their access to land to support their livelihood. At the village level, the approval of the village land committee, traditional village ruler and network of influential chiefs within the village significantly supported the access of some local villagers to village land relative to ordinary villagers that lacked bundle of arrangements of access to land. The patrilineal system at the village level created inequality between men and women over their accesses to land resources because such system confers lineage authority over men as custodian and managers of family lands.

The chapter also discovered different property rights which shape the access of different actors to local resources. The supremacy of the federal government and other tiers of government in terms of the application of enactment of acts, rules and regulation, military might and partial payment of compensation enable their access to land resources at the expense of ordinary villagers whose capabilities become very weak relative to



governments' arrangements of access. The chapter also realized the supremacy of both the state and corporate actors in terms of possession of financial resources due to high level of transactions carried out by these actors in the most valuable resource endowment (crude oil) in the Delta region relative to local villagers whose survival depends heavily on farming and fishing. Furthermore, the ordinary villagers resort to the use of traditional lamp and sometimes torch as arrangements for supporting their access to electricity while the financially empowered villagers draw on the use of generating plant in order to lighten their domains. The chapter also revealed how the conditions of the physically challenged deprive the affected from supporting themselves from access to various capabilities which would enhance their voice and independence to live a valued life. It was evident that various arrangements employed by actors at the institutional level are more favourable to the powerful actors (government and multinational oil corporations) through the command these actors have over reciprocity of favour and political contacts through which they derive mutual support from each other. The ordinary villagers rely on their membership of various local associations to draw on collective co-operation, financial and material support to support their livelihood.

In conclusion, this chapter has provided explanations for the inequalities which surround the access of different actors to local resources. Judging from the above analysis, the state and corporate actors command stronger capabilities, reciprocity of favour and control the most valuable resource endowment in order to shape better economic opportunities. In comparative terms, the bundle of arrangements employed by the ordinary villagers

becomes weaker due to unclear property rights, lack of physical embodiment, lack of financial resources and inadequate network to take advantage of mixture of arrangements which would improve their livelihoods.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **GOVERNANCE OUTCOMES IN THE DELTA**

#### **8.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I intend to reveal the outcomes of the local governance systems on the livelihoods of different actors at the local level. The main argument in this chapter is that governance outcomes are interwoven even though these outcomes vary from place to place for different actors. The chapter draws on Cleaver and Franks (2005) water governance framework to illuminate how outcomes in terms of access to basic supplies, support for livelihoods, social cohesion and exclusion, political voice and representation for different actors and outcomes for the ecosystem explains the impact of water governance for different people .

The chapter illustrates how outcomes for natural resources governance in the Niger Delta were partly related to the outcomes from water governance framework. Unpacking the outcomes of governance in the research areas will reveal how various actors are differently positioned as to who benefits or who loses. This is particularly important in understanding governance outcomes for the poor and how the poor are able to cope with the challenges of these outcomes. The next section briefly explains the governance outcomes arising from resources, agency and arrangements through which actors draw on resources to fashion out their access to resources. The sections that follow analyze the identified outcomes based on data from the research areas.

## **8.2. Governance Outcomes at the Local Level**

The governance outcomes in the Niger Delta are multidimensional and sometimes overlap. That means outcomes are discussed either in terms of benefits (positive) or losses (negative) for different actors. The governance outcomes at the local level are differentiated according to status, gender, age and locations of different actors. In discussing governance outcomes, efforts are directed to outcomes from resources, agency and arrangement of access to resources (see the framework for governance of natural resources in section 2.6).

In analyzing outcomes from resources, I place emphasis on outcomes for differentiated access to resources and outcomes for differentiated livelihoods at the local level. Outcomes from actors' agency are discussed along outcomes for political voice and outcomes for representation. The outcomes from arrangement of access are analysed from the view point of outcomes for unequal relationships between actors and outcomes for conflict. Finally, in analyzing the outcomes for the environment, this chapter place emphasis on the outcomes generated from the interaction of different actors at all levels with environmental resources where they derive economic benefits. The next section presents the governance outcomes in turn.

### **8.2.1. Outcomes for Differentiated Access to Resources at the Village Level**

The ability of people to achieve different livelihood strategies is premised on the availability of basic material and social, tangible and

intangible assets at their disposal. In order to construct livelihoods, the asset endowments which people control must be combined. The implication is that the more access people have, the greater their propensities of securing livelihood and escaping poverty (Scoones, 1998 and DFID, 1999).

In relating the above position to governance outcomes, results from the research areas showed that local actors have different accesses to resources and this have implications for people differentially positioned in the social system. Therefore, outcomes for differentiated access to resources will be analyzed in terms of natural resources, financial resources, infrastructural resources, human resources, institutional resources, socio-cultural resources and resources of rights and entitlements.

With respect to natural resources, data from the study areas revealed that a large segment of the villagers rely on farming, fishing and non-timber forest products including firewood, snails and medicinal plants as primary sources of their livelihood. But the government attached more importance to the oil deposit being extracted from the research areas. The negative outcome arising from the conflict of interest between these actors was attributed to reduction in the land size, water and forest resources of the local villagers by the government either through use of law to displace the villagers from their lands or through concession of original lands owned by villagers to multinational oil companies for explorative purposes. The FGDs I had with participants from Bori pointed to the depletion of natural resources of the village which used to exist in abundance prior to the intervention of the powerful actors such as the government and multi-national oil companies on the local natural resources. The participant identified both the use of law for

land seizure and explorative activities of the multinational oil companies as the outcomes which resulted from the use of the resources. The summary of the participant's comment is presented below:

*“The presence of oil in Bori and the entire Niger Delta has its consequences. I can confidently say the villagers were better off before oil discovery because our natural resources were in good state. I remembered those days when my grandad used to take us into the forest to draw on herbal leaves whenever anyone is sick. In those days too we had different species of fishes, snails of different sizes, etc. Where are parts of those natural resources today? Oil pollution of our wells, land seizures, etc has taken them away from us. These losses explain why so many villagers in Bori are poor.”* (Anderson during FGDs at Bori, 18/10/09)

The impact of land seizure and explorative activities by the oil companies has negative outcomes for the access of ordinary villagers to natural resources through which these villagers derive their primary sources of livelihood. The impact of the government and the multinational oil companies on the natural resources in Bori village constitute a direct source of poverty to Bori villagers on a number of grounds. First, the use of law to take possession of land previously cultivated for farming by villagers mean villagers can only farm on the reduced size of available land. Second, the impact of pollution from the explorative activities by the oil multinational reduces the quality of agricultural productivity.

Despite that villagers in Agbere have access to firewood and medicinal plants, the outcomes which emerged from the village also showed the level of depletion of firewood and medicinal plants due to deforestation by

villagers. Similarly, outcome also showed weak crop yield of agricultural output of villagers by the impact of oil pollution from Agip Oil Company. The extent of damage done to the quality of natural assets of the villagers by both corporate and the local actors was captured by a participant during the FGDs as follows:

*“The damage done to our forest resources is very difficult to determine. Whenever I think about those good days of different crops we get from the forest, tomatoes, mango, coconut, bamboo, yam, etc, my heart bleeds that now the growth of these resources has become affected. The quality we used to get from agricultural productivity has reduced due to oil pollution in a number of lands with the consequences of weak crop yield in the affected areas. Our villagers have also overstretched the cutting of trees for firewood and commercial logging. These are the devastating results from land degradation.”* (Tina during FGDs at Agbere, 20/11/09)

It is evident from the narrative above that local villagers from Agbere over-stretched the use of firewood being the most accessible and the most affordable sources of energy. Due to non-affordability of other sources of energy for cooking (domestic gas and stove), findings from Agbere indicated that most villagers draw excessively on the use of firewood by cutting trees in the forest without corresponding replacement of these trees. The situation is compounded with a number of villagers involved in illegal logging brought on by increased their accessibility to the forests through their network with the local chiefs. Findings from the village indicated that extensive use of firewood and illegal logging promoted deforestation of trees which threatens the survival of villagers and animals. First, deforestation has consequences for

reduction in the quality of carbon-dioxide which provides support to the villagers' lives. Second, deforestation destroyed the habitats where different species of animals' lives with negative outcome for loss of biodiversity. The pollution from oil affected the development of planted crops by villagers because as the oil spills on the farmland, it reduces the quality of soil. This has unfavourable implications for cultivation and development of agricultural crops which in turn reduces agricultural productivity and economic benefits rural villagers would have earned.

Turning to infrastructural resources, the use of generator as an alternative by some villagers to lighten up their homes produced a number of outcomes for different villagers. It was reported that a number of villagers died of suffocation from excessive carbon mono-oxide inhaled from the use of generator overnight. This experience was common in both Bori and Agbere villages. In order to support this finding, I also observed how one of the victims who became suffocated from the carbon-monoxide during my visit to Bori Hospital was brought to the hospital under unconscious condition of health. During my interaction with a number of patients in the hospital, I also found a number of people had died from same problem due to excessive deposit of carbon-monoxide in their systems. Secondly, a number of fire accidents were also reported to have destroyed villagers' property as a result of electrical faults from the use of generators by villagers.

Narratives from participants in the research areas also considered the use of generators posed serious environmental challenges to the health of the villagers through noise and air pollution. The table below presents the consequences villagers faced from the use of generators:



<p><b><u>Interview with Dago at Bori, 22/09/09</u></b></p> <p><i>“I lost three of my cousins due to the excessive smoke they inhaled from the generator they used overnight on a particular Sunday night to the following day. Their dad was only lucky to have escaped death because he travelled to the nearby city to visit his first daughter over the weekend. It was a sad day I cannot forget in my life.”</i></p>	<p><b><u>Interview with Willy at Agbere,11/10/09</u></b></p> <p><i>“The exposure of my wife to the noise from generator we normally use all the time was responsible for her regular headache (migraine) until one of my cousins who works as a medical doctor examined her condition. Afterwards, he advised that we should put a stop to the generator to avoid worsening her conditions.”</i></p>
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Findings also revealed negative outcome for lack of access of Agbere villagers to other modes of transport other than water. Data from Agbere showed that a number of villagers drowned and later died as a result of capsized boats while commuting from Agbere to Odi in 2004. I also observed the level of risk involved when I took a speed boat from Odi to Agbere which lasted for an hour during my fieldwork. From observation, the speed-boat I boarded was not well maintained and the speed-boat driver became stocked in the course of our journey when the boat engine developed mechanical fault. But the problem became resolved when the driver of an empty speed-boat stopped based on the request for help from our speed boat operator.

The driver of the empty speed-boat evacuated us from the faulty boat into the empty boat and later took us to Agbere.

However, the experience of one of the villagers I interviewed revealed a negative outcome of access of villagers to differentiated speed-boat services. Findings from the study area revealed that the extent of quality of speed-boat services villagers enjoy depend on their affordability of fares. The fares for speed-boats where life-jackets are distributed to passengers prior to commencement of every trip are relatively higher than the speed-boats where passengers have no access to life-jackets. Due to non-affordability of fares to a safer speed-boat, a villager that opted for a cheaper speed-boat instead of a safer speed-boat eventually settled for loss of life of his two year old baby who drowned in a river along with other victims. The summary of his reaction is presented below:

*“The only means of travelling out of our village is through speedboat. This system of transport has a lot of risk. I lost my two year old baby in 2004 when I was taking her along to visit a family friend in Odi community. The problem started when the speedboat that took us from Agbere was affected by heavy wind which changed the position of the boat. All I noticed was that we found ourselves inside water and everyone cried for help. By the time we were rescued, about three passengers had died including my two year old baby girl while only six of us survived. It was a sad day for my family. After the rescue operation, I regretted I did not take the alternative boat where life-jackets were given to passengers in case of eventualities. But I later accepted fate because I could not afford the fare (₦300:£1.2) for taking such special speed boat meant for the comfortable villagers. Passengers were not*

*provided with life-jackets in the speed-boat I took because a trip from Agbere to Odi or otherwise only cost (₦120: 48pence).”* (Interview with Solomon at Agbere, 20/10/09)

Outcomes related to financial resources showed that the powerful actors (local chiefs, politicians and traditional leaders) were able to shape several livelihood and economic opportunities due to diverse access to financial resources. The power and influence, social and political network these actors commanded provide them with multiple accesses to financial resources. Data from both Bori and Agbere villages also reinforced the argument that the possession of collateral securities (in form of land titling and valuable assets) by these actors put them in an advantageous position over the less powerful actors from accessing loans and advances from the banks. Through collateral securities, the actors are able to expand the frontiers of livelihood opportunities on a large scale basis for realization of supernormal profit. The narrative from a farmer in Bori village reveals how certain individuals such as the rich and powerful in privileged positions shape access to resources in both research areas:

*“The wealth commanded by Chief Godwin has given him advantage over other farmers within the village. I learnt he has a number of his land titles to get loans from the bank. I think I can now understand why unlike common farmers in the village, he has been able to hire a lot of farm labourers to grow different crops and fruits.”*

(Interview with Jimba at Bori, 22/09/09)

During the period of disaster, findings from Agbere indicated that ordinary villagers encounter financial difficulties to cope with their livelihood.

Narrative from Agbere revealed the challenges a cassava processor encountered as a result of the fire disaster which burnt her stock of processed cassava. The fire disaster rendered her family livelihood difficult and all efforts made by her to explore other networks of social and institutional resources for financial support to commence another business proved abortive. Her contributions are expressed below:

*“I started trading in processed cassava in 2005 in a shop I rented from the local government council. Since the market was burnt overnight in 2007 by unknown person where all goods in my shop became destroyed, survival has become difficult for my family. The most regretful part was that I only bought bags of Gari (processed cassava) with all the business money in my possession the day before the fire incident happened. The hardship my family is facing now is because I do not have ways of getting finance to start a new business. I later made efforts to contact friends, relatives and local government officials for financial support to start another business but the situation has not changed up till now. But I know things will not continue like this forever.”* (Interview with Palmetta at Agbere, 27/10/09)

The outcomes for differentiated access of actors to local resources in the research areas is favourable to the wealthy villager and unfavourable to the common villager who could not recover from the shock created by the fire incident which burnt her stock of processed cassava. The shock compounded the survival of the trader in processed cassava and subjected her to clutches of poverty. The livelihood failure which the processed cassava dealer suffered from fire disaster provides the reason for her classification as

a victim of poverty in accordance with the contributions of CPRC (2004) and Smith (2004).

Data from the research areas is helpful in analyzing the outcomes for the villagers in terms of their differentiated access to human resources. Findings from Bori revealed the poor and the marginalized local people only have limited access to formal and vocational skills at the village level due to neglect and poor planning machineries of the powerful actors such as government and its agencies. Even where the villagers from Bori village attempted to acquire formal training, their efforts became constrained due to inadequate schools in the village. Unlike the children of the powerful actors, the situation was found to be more challenging for local villagers who could not afford the cost of training in tertiary institutions. However, a number of the ordinary villagers only tapped from the little training they derived from community-based organizations like MOSOP in order to support livelihood. The narrative from a participant during FGDs is presented as follows:

*“We understand that sound training and skills acquisition will promote livelihood conditions of the local people. But the problems start from foundation with the government’s failure not providing adequate primary schools, secondary schools and deliberately raising the tuition for those who may want to go to higher institution such as Polytechnics or Universities. If not for the little training we get from community based organizations like MOSOP, the situation would have gone down completely. But for the children of the highly placed politicians or influential Traditional Chiefs, the situation is different because they receive the best training and end up getting the best jobs, positions and political office. It is about power and he that is in powerful*

*position controls the financial resources.”* (Smith during FGDs at Bori, 18/10/09)

The outcomes which flowed from Agbere due to limited access of villagers to human resources are also worthy of analysis. Lack of financial resources at the disposal of ordinary villagers minimizes their desire to attend tertiary institutions where they would have acquired necessary skills and knowledge to earn their livelihood. In consequence, inadequate knowledge and skills acquisition by ordinary villagers undermined their chances to compete equally with the children of the traditional chiefs and other influential figures at the village level on account of differentiated access to financial resources and positions. This added more pains to the poverty situation of the less competitive villagers (UNDP, 2006). During the FGDs exercise in Agbere, I gathered from a participant that in most cases, ordinary villagers might need to draw on the influence of the powerful actors like the government officials in order to secure admission in higher institutions of learning.

Findings from the study areas identified unfavourable outcomes for lack of modern medical facilities in public hospitals. Non-provision of modern facilities worsens the health conditions of different villagers who lack financial power to consult private medical practice where they would have received better treatment. It was reported that lack of modern health facilities and medical personnel was responsible for high prevalence of still birth among women, sexually transmitted diseases like gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV. Besides, the narratives from women in Bori and Agbere pointed out how

differentiated access to medical facilities affected the quality of health care services women receive from hospitals during delivery.

<b><u>Interview with Tina Thomas at</u></b>	<b><u>Interview with Benitta Charles at</u></b>
<p><b><u>Bori, 18/08/09.</u></b></p> <p><i>“I lost my set of twins even before delivery in our general Hospital in 2008 due to inadequate availability of medical personnel on duty. By the time I was taken to the hospital, the only doctor on ground was operating a patient in the theatre. By the time I was to be taken into the labour room, the babies had developed complications from delay I had in delivery. Later on, I was taken into the theatre for operation. Unfortunately, I lost the babies. My situation would have changed if I have got strong financial resources to use good private hospital.”</i></p>	<p><b><u>Agbere, 15/08/09.</u></b></p> <p><i>“I usually deliver my babies in Divine private Hospital outside the village. Though the hospital is very expensive but they have good facilities. As at 2007 when I had my last baby, my husband and I paid about ₦120,000 (£480) after delivery. The hospital has modern facilities and there has never been problem with power failure or lack of medical personnel. Delivery rate of women in the hospital is excellent.”</i></p>

The narratives above have shown how differentiated access of villagers to medical facilities generated different outcomes. In the case of the participant from Bori, inadequate medical personnel accounted for the loss of lives of the participant's twins. Her situation would probably have changed where she had commanded enough financial resources to foot her medical bill in a standard private hospital during delivery. In contrast, the Agbere participant enjoyed better medical treatment during her baby deliveries due to collective financial contribution between her husband and herself. Their co-operation has favourable consequences for her access to better medical personnel and facilities.

Furthermore, findings from the research areas discovered that most villagers lack access to information from the local government councils which should have been the closest institution from which local people can receive advisory support. The access most villagers have to the local government councils is differentiated by the extent of contacts, network and relations different villagers have with council officials. During the field work exercise, different villagers complained of drawing on network of friendship, families and contacts of local chiefs to be able to reach their local government councilors.

Data from the research areas revealed that villagers derived positive outcomes from access to socio-cultural resources as benefits for augmenting the negative outcomes from other forms of resources. For example, participants expressed that their access to their local deities (such as Kwonwopodon and Owuamapu) improved their livelihood as a result of the cultural significance villagers attached to these deities.



### **8.2.2. Outcomes for Differentiated Livelihoods at the Local Level.**

Findings from Bori village showed that farming is the most significant means of livelihood for different classes of villagers. The villagers also engage in other sources of livelihood such as farm labour, child labour *et cetera*. The data revealed that the local farmers were mostly involved in cultivation of lands using the traditional methods due to lack of financial and human resources to carry out modern farming techniques. Findings from Bori revealed that a number of the crops (yams, maize, cassava, plantain, coconut, paw-paw, etc) planted were found not to be properly developed and sometimes infected by pests. This reduces their income earning power and productivity. For those categories of villagers that engaged in farm labour, findings from Bori showed that the farm labourers had low income because the price of farm labour was negotiated downward due to availability of many farm labourers in the village. Data also showed that the poor farmers spend more time in the farm with consequences for their health conditions. Findings from Bori village showed that a number of villagers ended up with walking sticks as a result of regular backache and complications from backbones in their late forties as a result of long years of exposure to hard labour in the farm.

The livelihood outcomes for ordinary villagers in Bori are revealed by the fact that some parents engaged their children in child labour in order to enhance their survival. The children from Bori engaged in hawking of food items or agricultural produce like banana, plantain, groundnut, oranges, pineapple, pawpaw, bread and butter, popcorn, fries and yam between the

village and the nearby city in order to support their family. In some cases, these children took local buses to the city whenever they had many things to sell. The findings revealed that a number of these children hardly go to the school because the frequency of their school attendance is negatively associated with the volume of daily sales. The regular practice is that these children accounted for daily sales they made to their parents. Informal observations revealed that a larger number of hawkers in Bori and nearby city were predominantly under aged mostly found hawking on the streets when their counterparts were undergoing training in the primary and secondary schools.

During the course of interaction with participants on the outcomes for differentiated livelihoods, the following submissions were made:

<p><i>“My monthly income working as a hired labour (₦12,000, approximately £48) is too small when compared to the pains involved in manual farming. The pains of manual farming have resulted in the use of walking stick by a number of villagers as early as forties and more in their fifties due to problems with back pains. All efforts to demand for increase in the wages for farm labour have</i></p>	<p><i>“I am sixteen years old and lives with my mother (a widow) and three little brothers. Our father died five years ago. Since then survival has been the most difficult. Two of my younger brothers and I have had to hawk to enhance the survival of the family. It is whatever gains we make from these efforts that determine how quick we pay our house rents, feeding and other petty expenses. We stopped schooling the moment we realized our incomes</i></p>
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<p><i>not produced any positive result as wages of hired labour are priced very low due to availability of many farm labourers.”</i></p> <p><i>(Interview with Douglas, Youth leader at Bori, 11/10/09)</i></p>	<p><i>was insufficient for our education. We might probably go back to school when situation changes.”</i></p> <p><i>(Interview with Chris at Bori, 03/10/09)</i></p>
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Comparatively, the financial power commanded by the medium scale farmers enabled them to use modern farming tools and techniques (such rented tractors, fertilizers, harvester and pesticides) to boost productivity in order to earn better income. During an interview with one of the local chiefs, I discovered the factors which accounted for favourable livelihood outcome for the medium scale farmers in Bori village. The narrative below summarises the position of the participant:

*“I usually apply modern farming approach in my farming business. During planting and harvest season, I usually make use of rented tractor. The use of fertilizer and pesticides were useful to increase my agricultural output. This might be responsible for the good comments I get from my customers about the quality of the crops they buy from me. Through these efforts, I have made more income from agric business. At times, I pull my resources together with my fellow medium scale farmers to rent tractor in order to reduce my production cost. After harvest, I ensured the crops are properly stored in a locally built storage to prevent my crops from damage. These methods have consequentially raised my business profitably”* (Interview with a local chief at Bori, 29/09/09)

From the narratives above, inadequate income, inadequate financial resources and child labour affected different villagers in different livelihood situations. Each situation generated negative outcomes for the affected villagers. First, inadequate income from farming was incapable of sustaining the livelihood of farm labourers in addition to backache complications from long years of exposure to farm labour. Second, inadequate financial resources also have unfavourable consequences for local farmers from exploring the economic benefits associated with modern farming techniques. This factor was responsible for low income and livelihood difficulties encountered by the local farmers. Third, the use of children for child labour also explained the outcomes which several villagers faced with survival as the daily sales, rents and feeding of these children were tied to their sales from daily hawking. Therefore, lack of income and assets to support livelihood in this regard undermines the ability of the affected actors to move out of the poverty trap (Scoones, 1998; Smith, 2004). The narratives from Bori is also supportive of the views of Giddens (1997) and Morvaridi, (2008) when the scholars suggest that the existence of poverty in a system implies that individuals are drawn into differentiated livelihood conditions creating distinctions between the highly placed and the poor. This means that the structured inequalities between different groupings of people in societies consist of strata in a hierarchy with the more favoured at the top and the less privileged at the bottom (ibid).

In the case of Agbere, fishing is considered significant to the livelihoods of the villagers due to their proximity to rivers and streams. Villagers that depended on fishing occupation did lament on the negative outcomes they

faced which damaged their livelihood. During my interaction with one of the fishermen in Agbere, he admitted the proximity of Agbere village to water was an asset which gave the villagers edge over other villages in the Niger Delta. However, a fisherman complained of the extent to which the actions of some local actors affected the livelihood of his fellow fishermen. The summary of his submissions are stated as follows:

*“Fishing is a good livelihood in Agbere but for certain impact some powerful actors have over us which sometimes affected the reasonable part of our gains. Apart from the fact that our association pays yearly dues to the local government council, their officials still collect weekly dues from every fisherman through our executives. Except you pay for their weekly ticket, you will not be able to fish. We hardly get support from the local government council. Whenever we ask the local government officers about what they do with the money, the officers usually say it is order from above. The local chiefs and our traditional rulers also price our fishes low due to the power and influence they command in the village. If you refuse to sell the fish to them, they will refuse you favour whenever you need their help. We also faced big problem whenever the water where we fish is polluted with oil spills. This experience affect our catches negatively and drives our income and profits down.”* (Interview with Nnamdi at Agbere, 20/09/09)

For the energetic men engaged in boat business, data showed favourable outcome for them because the boat drivers make reasonable income from the business given that speedboat is the only means through which villagers from Agbere are conveyed to neighbouring villages like Odi, Kiama, Patani, Yenagoa (Bayelsa’s capital city). The boat operators make

reasonable income from this venture but at a very high risk in cases where the speed boat capsized or where it suddenly develops technical fault on the journey. During interactive sessions with one of the leaders of the speed boat operators, I obtain the following comments:

*“The speed boat business is a good business as far as transportation in Agbere is concerned. For people to go to other villages or the city for businesses or work, they have to take the speed boat, which is considered as the fastest means of transport in Agbere. For those of us into the business, we make some money with higher risk. But now some of us give life jacket to passengers before the commencement of every journey. At least there is slight improvement than the past”* (Tom during FGDs at Agbere, 20/11/09)

The outcome from commuting in a speedboat by Agbere villagers was unfavourable on several accounts. Data which emerged from informal observation was a clear pointer to the huge risk involved in commuting between the villages to other parts of the environment. My observation also found loss of labour hours of local villagers who might need to wait for boats at times for several hours to be able to commute from the village to other parts of the state. The situation is even worse whenever there is scarcity of fuel or diesel where local villagers have to pay triple or quadrupled transport fares to be able to link up cities for livelihood survival. The outcomes which emerged from Agbere was what Sen (1985) described as lack of capabilities. The villagers from Agbere are deprived of several choices of mode of transport from which they can choose. Therefore, the deprivation villagers from Agbere faces expose them to unquantifiable risks which constrained their propensity to widen livelihood opportunities.

### **8.2.3. Outcomes for Political Voice.**

Data from the field showed how different actors were constrained from expressing their voice at different times on decisions related to resources management. Findings from the research areas revealed that a reasonable number of the villagers became excluded from political voice on a number of grounds. First, the exclusion of most women in decision making process in resource management has negative outcomes for local governance system in the Delta region. Second, data also identified other category of villagers whose level of political voice was affected due to poor condition of health. Third, a number of villagers deliberately excluded themselves due to lack of trust in the decisions taken at the village level.

At the village level, data revealed that a large number of women were more affected from participation in village meetings on account of heavy domestic burden such as cooking, raising children and family care. In an interaction with a woman villager in Agbere, she explained that she hardly have time in the last ten years to attend village meeting due to the challenges associated with farm work and raising her six children. Lack of participation in village assembly or community development meetings by most women undermines their rights to speak. Data showed that local women constituted the primary users of village resources. Through this, women have been able to gain knowledge and skills from their daily interactions with local resources. Despite this experience, women that are willing to participate in local decision making process are marginalised or excluded from local institutions and processes that govern the management of resources at different levels. Local women were marginalised from political voice at least to express their views

and contribute the knowledge acquired from daily interaction with local resources in enhancing resources efficiency. These outcomes undermine the role of women in the development of local governance of resource management.

Evidence from the study revealed that sickness and disability had consequences for the depth of voice within the decision making arena. During an interview with a villager in Bori, she stated her mother used to have a voice in various village development activities in Bori. But her situation only changed when she had accident in the farm where a big tree fell on her while farming and dislocated her backbone. Since then she has been at home, being incapacitated from taking part in any village development activities. Findings from Agbere also revealed how a villager lost one of his legs to cancerous infection. Given his disability, he became physiologically constrained from taking part in any village meeting. His mechanism for getting information revolved around feedback from his household or friends.

In analyzing the outcomes associated with mistrust in local voice, data from the research areas revealed that villagers' lack of trust for the powerful actors in charge of the decision guiding resources management had negative consequences for lack of political voice. For example, one of the participants from Bori narrated how he stopped taking part in local decisions at the village assembly because the powerful actors such as the traditional leaders, local chiefs and local councilors only think about their economic interest and offer no meaningful value to promote the interest of ordinary villagers. A participant from Agbere also expressed his reservation against speaking at



the village assembly because whenever collective decisions are taken by the majority of villagers for the benefits of the village, the influential actors always put different things into practice. The participant narrated his experience in 2004 when it was decided in a village assembly meeting attended by the councilors, council chairman, council of chiefs and villagers that borehole projects be provided in different parts of Agbere village in order to overcome the difficulties of water supply. Since then, the participant explained that only the traditional ruler and his local chiefs have benefitted from the borehole projects while the ordinary villagers are left with the option of empty promises.

The local level institutions such as the traditional rulers and resource-users group (farmers association and fishermen association) are not left out in terms of expression of their voice in resources management at the formal institution of local government council. Findings revealed that the traditional rulers are recognized by both Khana and Sagbama local government councils as custodians of local culture and as mechanisms through which different levels of government institutions reach the local villagers. Findings from the field recognized the rights of traditional rulers to express their views at the meeting of the council of traditional rulers in the formal institutions of the state. However, data showed that the extent of voice every traditional ruler commands at the local government council or state level depends on his influence, power, position and political network. Data revealed that these factors collectively determine the level of financial support every traditional ruler receives from the local government council for village development and their voice in shaping local governance outcomes. Findings from Agbere

revealed that the voice commanded by the Amanana-Owei at the local council level is responsible for the respect he earns from local politicians at the local level even though such voice has not impacted significantly on the village development. These political links strengthen the sources of power and influence of traditional rulers supported by their control over village resources

The study also discovered that the resource-users group such as the Bori Farmers Association and Agbere Fishermen Association had no voice to contribute to decision making process at the local council level. Findings from Bori revealed that deprivation of voice of members of the Bori farmers Association in the decisions which affected farming programmes at the Khana local government council impacted negatively on their productivity and livelihood survival. During an interactive process with a farmer, he narrated how their deficiency in political and social networks worked against their voice at shaping decisions in the local government council. Similarly, the Agbere Fishermen Association was recognized by the Sagbama local government council only by the amount of council toll the council authority collects from its members. Other than that, the association had no voice to contribute to relevant decisions at the Sagbama local government council. Whenever the association requires the support of the local government, its members have got to draw initially on the office of the traditional rulers or influential politicians to reach the local government officials. For example, one of the members of the association interviewed narrated how an influential politician from Agbere consulted to help the association reached

the local government officials in order to checkmate the excesses of toll collectors demanded for gratification.

#### **8.2.4. Outcomes for Representation**

At the village level, data pointed to how unequal representations between different actors produced different outcomes. First, findings at the village level revealed how the traditional rulers and local chiefs whose responsibility should have been channeled towards the enhancement of justice, accountability and transparency in the management of local resources entrusted to them misrepresented the villagers at the council of chiefs meetings. For example, a participant from Bori did narrate how the village youths challenged the members of the council of chiefs in Agbere through protest to give an account of all transactions related to village lands in 2008. The participant expressed that the youths became agitated on account of lack of stewardship of the council of chiefs to give proper account of the uses to which the village resources entrusted in their care have been managed.

Findings from the research areas discovered the determination of traditional rulership brought disrespect to the traditions and devalued the customs of the villages because representation of traditional rulership were based on power, influence and social networks commanded by the selected princes in contestation for traditional rulership. Data from the research areas considered this development as total departure from the traditional norms where representation of traditional rulership was based strictly on traditional rites. One of the participants interviewed in Bori did expressed that the

challenges the Menebon faces today cannot be divorced from the shaky process that led to his selection. The participant complained that disrespectability for traditional rites in the selection of traditional rulership in Bori has consequences for the diminished value which villagers place on the office of the Meneboh. Local villagers no longer respect the Meneboh because the position is not based on merit.

The outcomes for representation at the family level in Bori and Agbere also promoted personal aggrandizement and mistrust by family representatives for different families. Data from the study areas revealed that the male representatives in every family commanded much power and influence over resources belonging to every family. In some instances, the male family heads utilize family resources (land, farm produce, etc) for personal gains without necessary feedback to other family members. During the data collection exercise, a participant gave an account of how mismanagement of family resources by their family head and his cohort generated disputes within the family members. The summary of the participant's comments is presented as follows:

*“The head of my family gets lion share from the big farm belonging to our family. Other members of the family are always at loggerhead with him on account of lack of transparency. All the gains realized from the farming business belonging to the family cannot be accounted for. He lacks probity. The former late head of the family was better for his transparency over every dime spent and unspent during his life time. But the situation now with our family resources is very disappointing. Other family members know a wrong person is in charge of family asset. He is not doing it alone; he has got few*

*other elderly members of our family backing him.”* (Interview with Binta at Bori, 28/10/09)

Findings from the research study also revealed that representation at the formal institution of the state bred outcomes such as corruption, breaches of electoral law, manipulation of electoral results, use of force, imposition of candidates and disrespect for the political rights of common villagers. These outcomes emanated from the overbearing influence of the powerful politicians and public office holders over the electoral officials. The outcomes for representation at the formal institution of the state is supported by the contribution of Lukes (2005) which explained the manner in which the powerful actors undermined the representative rights of the common villagers contrary to the interest of the common villagers.

#### **8.2.5. Outcomes for Unequal Relationships between Actors at the Local Level**

The outcomes for unequal relationships between actors vary because actors are differently positioned in relation to social status, wealth, occupation and social network (Haralambos and Holborn, 1995; Giddens, 1997).

Data showed that the traditional rulers, local chiefs, local honorary chiefs and wealthy villagers are into strong social network and exchanges of reciprocity because of the huge influence these local actors have over the local resources in the selected research areas. For example, decisions affecting the land belonging to the entire village are entrusted in care of the traditional rulers. But the decisions over the uses to which these lands are put are taken by the council of chiefs with little or no consultation with the

village assembly in areas affecting accountability of the village resources. Due to the nature of relationship between these actors, resources like land exchange hands in consideration for other benefits. Information gathered from one of the participants revealed that the traditional ruler of Bori provided some plots of land belonging to the village as a gift to the son of a highly reputable honorary chief that married his daughter. The honorary chief in return provided the traditional ruler a brown jeep to mark the birthday of the ruler during the following year. The summary of the participant's submission is presented below:

*“The relationship between the traditional rulers, local chiefs, honorary chiefs and the rich within Bori village is very strong. Such relationship most times leads to exchange of gifts, favour and benefits between these actors even where it is to the detriment of common villagers. During the last wedding ceremony between the daughter of the Bori traditional ruler and the son of his honorary chiefs, the villagers became agitated as two acres of land belonging to the village was offered as gift to the married couples. The following year, the honorary chief presented our traditional ruler with a brown Toyota jeep as a birthday gift. The rich always associate with the rich. The rich always get favour easily from the rich. The rich often dominate the less privileged to the latter.”* (Interview with Andrew at Bori, 17/10/09)

In analyzing the outcomes for relationships governing resources in Agbere, Amanana-Owei and his council of chiefs are the major beneficiaries from the resources in Agbere. Data from the research area also showed how favours arising from human resource opportunities are distributed between the powerful actors without any consideration to the interest of common

villagers. In the course of conducting the FGDs with one of the participants from Agbere, I gathered that all favours which flows from the jobs slots from either all government parastatals, government agencies and multinational oil companies which should have left open to all villagers in respect to skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled jobs are usually filled by the powerful actors such as the traditional rulers in collaboration with other influential villagers. Given that the powerful actors are found within same network, distribution of favours and resources revolves around exchange of benefits between the groups within their chain of network. The summary of the information I got from the participant through the FGDs is summarized as follows:

*“The situation with distribution of favour or opportunities within villagers was very fair in the last fifty-sixty years in this village. During this period, there was equity in the distribution of resources belonging to the village irrespective of the social class of every villager. I was one of the few villagers who got scholarship through membership of this village. But the situation now is completely different. Nowadays, the powerful people, I mean the traditional rulers, council chiefs and big people in the village enjoy the benefits from the resources of the village and opportunities which requires sponsorship of the villagers at the government institutions are filled by the traditional chiefs to the advantage of their anointed ones. The powerful people share larger part of the resources while nothing or peanut goes to other less powerful villagers.”* (An NGO official during FGDs at Agbere, 20/11/09)

In view of the analysis above, the powerful actors are the greater beneficiary of the resources from actors' relationship at the village level. The role played by power influence, prestige and wealth are central in the

distribution of benefits accruable to highly influential actors. The findings support Haralambos and Holborn (1995:33) view that both the ruling class and the subject class characterized a stratified system. The essential feature of this system is that the ruling class controls the ownership and means of production through possession of adequate level of both material and non-material resources (ibid).

The outcomes for actors' unequal relationship in the research areas also affected the activities of actors in both social and cultural institutions. The role of actors in the churches located in Bori village such as Pentecostal and white garment churches resulted to divided interest between various actors within different denominations. Data gathered from the field showed the pastors, chairmen of various church committees (fund raising committee, welfare committee, prayer warrior committee, etc) are united because of the specific committee functions they usually perform. These actors are regarded as superior to ordinary church members. In terms of distribution of leadership of this committee, data revealed the head of this committee are sometimes not selected on the basis of merit rather than the relationship some of the chosen leaders had with the pastors or highly positioned actors within the church hierarchy.

Therefore, the relationship between the pastor, heads of various committee and highly positioned members of the church was found to be very cordial. These actors shared similar views, communicate effectively and place trust in one another in relation to management of material and non-material resources. The ordinary church members are into lower level of relationships where they interact with one another either during church



activities or outside the church. However, decisions affecting operational, financial and spiritual activities of the church are determined by the powerful actors in the church during closed door meetings where interests of the key decision-makers are approved. The ordinary members are required to attend the gatherings for weekly services, contribution of tithes and offering of voluntary services to the church other than areas where vital decisions affecting church are taken. Therefore, inequality between different classes of church members empowered the pastors, chairmen of various strategic committees and highly placed church members as managers of the resources belonging to all whereas ordinary church members are left with no control over the major decisions affecting their lives. Besides, the contributions from one of the participants point the degree of class structure within the church he attends. The summary of his contributions are stated as follows:

*“The church is supposed to be a place of worship where everyone supposes to be equal. But different relationships exist in my church. The relationship between the pastor, the rich church members and the elders is very close. Decisions are taken by these top church officials. They are regarded as superior officers while those of us who choose not to belong are called “common members”. The politics of division in the church nowadays speaks volume about how people we call men of God pursue their economic interest rather than worshipping God. Inequality which was rare in those days now determines distribution of responsibility and favour in most churches.”*

(Interview with Dickson Kpakpo, a family head and church member of St.Andrew at Bori, 17/10/09)

The outcomes for the villagers' relationship with the local community based organizations differ from those which operated with other institutions of governance. Data showed that the villagers had good relationship with major community based organizations such as the MOSOP, INC and IYC respectively. These organizations provided the avenue where local villagers were openly represented irrespective of their social background. Data from Bori revealed that most villagers have absolute trust in the actions of the MOSOP because the organization is generally considered as the hope of less privileged villagers in areas related to capacity development support, struggle for the liberation of the villagers from excessive power influence from the highly placed actors from Bori village. Data also revealed that the relationship between local villagers and MOSOP has remained positive because communications with primary officers of the organisation were conducted in Bori local language that is Khana-Ogoni. Besides, MOSOP have also served as a meeting point for all Bori villagers for resolution of conflicts where the village assembly becomes ineffective. During interview with one of the local council official to find about the impact MOSOP has made in the development of Bori village, he provided the following contributions:

*“Without double standard, the existence of MOSOP in all Ogoniland (including Bori) has been a blessing to the entire villagers. MOSOP has come to correct the injustices left behind within the system, I mean fighting inequality within the village. Most villagers have absolute trust in MOSOP than other institutions in Bori. MOSOP listens to the plights of the common villagers. It makes practical efforts to resolve common problems. It has*

*worked since its existence with the local people. It speaks the language of the villagers and uses its resources to solve the problems of the local people. MOSOP promotes justice and unity which bind all the Bori people together. The question of inequality is never seen because it is a grassroots community based organization. Whenever the apparatus of government at the local level fails to bring peace at the local level, MOSOP sometimes intervenes to restore peace because it earns a lot of respect from the villagers.”* (Interview with local government officer at Bori, 12/09/09)

Similarly, the outcomes for the relationship which the Agbere villagers had with both the INC and IYC is also worthy of analysis. Data showed that villagers of different ages (young and old) affirmed the impact these local based organizations have had on the lives of the villagers. With respect to collaborative efforts from the duo of INC and IYC, a number of villagers expressed the free trainings they received from these organizations account for the improvement they now enjoy in their small scale businesses. Data from the field revealed how some participants got out of poverty trap through some training provided free of charge to Agbere villagers on reading, communication, computer and modern farming techniques. These training positively transformed the livelihood of a number of villagers in Agbere. One of the local government officers whose immediate son benefitted from the computer training did account for the positive impact such training made in the livelihood of his family. His contribution is summarized as follows:

*“The impact of both INC and IYC on the human resource capacity development of the local people is economically beneficial. A number of villagers today have got out of poverty through the free training these local*

*organizations have provided. My son was one of the beneficiaries of the free computer training programme provided by these local based organizations. In all fairness, I have also benefitted in basic computer knowledge through personal coaching I received from my son.”*

(Interview with Sagbama Local Government officer, 16/10/09)

However, while these local based organizations have been helpful to the livelihood transformation of the local people, data revealed that the organizations are more of ethnic based than being collectively driven in the struggle for the transformation of the Delta region. Data showed that while MOSOP represents the interest of the entire Ogoni (including Bori) ethnic nationality, INC and IYC protects the general interest of the Ijaw ethnic nationality (including Agbere) of the Delta region. However, findings from the research areas discovered a negative outcome in terms of the differences in the ethnic direction of these organizations which sometimes raise the problem of supremacy between them.

Outcomes also exist for the relationships within the hierarchy of the local organizations in the research areas. For example, MOSOP is the parent umbrella of other affiliate such as the National Youth Council of Ogoni Youths (NYCOP)<sup>43</sup>. Data revealed that within the hierarchy of MOSOP, some members of NYCOP considered MOSOP as a powerful parent body characterized by influence to manipulate the decisions of the NYCOP. This sometimes brings MOSOP in conflict with the youths who considered that NYCOP should be separated from MOSOP in order to remain independent.

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<sup>43</sup> The NYCOP was formed by Ken Saro-wiwa in 1993 as a youth and militant wing of MOSOP to provide local support to strengthen the operation of MOSOP by the youths (Kagbara, 1995).

INC is also to IYC what MOSOP is to NYCOP. Data from Agbere also pointed to similar outcome in terms of the domineering influence of INC over the IYC in decision making and areas of coverage. Findings from Agbere revealed that the over bearing influence of INC over IYC was responsible for the separation of the executive leadership of the local based organizations in order to minimize the power conflict between both organisations.

#### **8.2.6. Outcomes for Conflict**

Various forms of conflicts affect the local people of the Delta. While the micro-micro conflict exist between two or more villagers over land boundaries or disputes over resource ownership, the micro-macro conflict occurs between villagers group and external groups such as the government, government agencies and multinational oil companies often due to the conflict between the recognition of customary and statutory rights (Meinzen-Dick and Pradhan, 2001; Warner, 2000).

Evidence showed that both micro-micro and the micro-macro conflict were prevalent in the research areas. Data indicated how favourable outcomes for the micro-micro conflict resulted from the disputes between villagers over family land ownership. In resolving the dispute, a participant from Agbere narrated how the head of Clifford's family settled with other family members over twelve years of dispute related to control over the family land ownership. The participant identified how different arrangements such as negotiation, accommodation and village values worked together for the resolution of family land dispute between the affected parties. These

arrangements saved the parties the financial resources which would have gone into filing litigations against each other in a formal court of law.

Findings from the research areas revealed that the micro-macro conflicts generated negative outcomes for the villagers based on the brutality they suffered in the hands of more powerful actors. The interview I had with a villager revealed how he lost his four year old boy, his wife and personal belonging during the conflict between the Shell Oil Company and Bori villagers in the early nineties. His comments are presented as follows:

*“I travelled to Lagos on a business trip with a friend for a week. On my return, I learnt the government military forces which were directed to protect the Shell office and its officials launched an attack against my village while searching for the leaders of the protesters that attacked Shell oil workers. In the process of searching the village, the military officers open gun shot at innocent villagers including members of my family. The sad experience still affects me till now”*

(Interview with Monday, a Bori villager, 09/10/09)

Furthermore, the supremacy of statutory powers by the government in collaboration with the multinational oil company also took its toll on the local people of Agbere given the power advantage the government has over the villagers. The use of force by the government generates negative outcomes for the local people. For instance, an Agbere villager who inherited six plots of land from his late father confirmed how he lost it to the government and later realized the land was used by Agip Oil Company for laying its oil pipelines after getting license from the government. The summary of his submissions is presented as follows:

*“My father left six plots of land for me, being part of what I inherited from him. But we grew to know this land belongs to my ancestors. Suddenly, the government used military personnel to take the control of the property from me and we later found pipelines laid across the land by Agip Oil Company. All efforts or steps taken to seek redress proved abortive. But I had to take to faith because I did not want the military personnel to shoot or kill me.”*

(Interview with a villager in Agbere, 15/09/09)

The situation with conflict between customary rights and statutory rights presented above is supported by Bejaminsen and Lund (2002). They observed that the relationship between formal and informal rights to land remains competitive and often fuels conflict which brings into maneuvering position of dominance over each other. This is likened to the relationship between the dominant and the dominated with the dominant as gainers on account of economic benefits realized by the dominant and the dominated as the losers given the economic dislocation impacted on the livelihoods of the dominated villagers.

#### **8.2.7. Outcomes for Environment at the State and Local Level**

Different actors interacted with the environment to produce different outcomes where they derive economic benefits. The first outcome which data revealed was the lowering of environmental standards by the government agencies such as FEPA and DPR segment of the NNPC. Facts from archive showed that many of the laws formulated to address environmental breaches by the oil companies in the Niger Delta were not implemented. Whenever these laws were implemented, their implementation was found to be partially

carried out, apparently to the advantage of the multinational oil companies (see Table 8.1 below). This situation in my view questions the integrity, independence and the administrative will which the officials of government agencies possess to implement environmental laws governing oil operations in the Niger Delta.

Table 8 1 Laws Protecting Environment in the Niger Delta

S/N	Laws	Year
1.	Mineral Oil safety regulations	1963
2.	Petroleum Regulations	1967
3.	Oil in Navigable Water Regulations	1968
4.	Oil in Navigable Water Act No 34	1968
5.	Petroleum Decree Act	1969
6.	Petroleum Drilling and Production Act	1969
7.	Petroleum Drilling and Production Amendment Regulation	1973
8.	Petroleum Refining Regulation	1974
9.	Nigerian National Policy on Environment	1989
10.	Nigerian Management Act on Environment	2000

Source: Compiled by the author from NNPC archive

Data from the field identified lack of sophisticated monitoring facilities by the government agencies to account for the extent of damage caused by the



oil companies to the research areas. Findings from previous research conducted by the UN (2006) also agree with my data. The summary of the findings is stated as follows:

*“The multinational oil companies particularly Shell has operated in the Niger Delta for over thirty years without appreciable environmental regulation to control their activities by the Nigerian government. FEPA did not start operation until 1998 while environmental quality standard never became enforced until early 1990. The gap above was responsible for some of the environmental damage the Niger Delta suffered in the hands of the oil companies. Unlike government agencies, the oil companies have better quality monitoring devices such as: up to date maps, satellite images, remote sensing techniques, software for data gathering and analysis, sophisticated computer software for display, etc (P.81).”*

In my opinion, lack of modern monitoring equipment by the government officials to monitor environmental actions of the multinational oil companies could not have been attributed to lack of financial capability. Rather, weaknesses in the procurement of modern monitoring capabilities by the government officials were deliberate to weaken the transparency in oil business between the government and the multinational oil companies. This is evident in the light of the developments in other oil producing countries like Saudi Arabia where modern sophisticated equipment exists to monitor activities of multinational companies involved in oil exploration.

Data also revealed that the powers conferred on DPR unit of the NNPC to control and regulate the operations of the multinational oil companies has sometimes been lowered to shield the oil companies from being penalized

whenever it breaks environmental rules. Data obtained from participants during interview showed that the DPR sometimes shield the oil companies from being brought to book when it comes to enforcing petroleum laws being breached by these oil companies. The argument provided by the participants during fieldwork centered on strong network between the officials of the federal government and the oil companies. Data revealed that the DPR officials lack total independence from taking decisions affecting their relationships with the oil companies. Since the DPR officials takes directives from the federal government officials, the extent of the powers related to enforcing environmental rules flow from directives from the federal government. All these have negative outcomes for environmental standards.

Environmental degradation also produced negative outcomes for the affected villages. In Agbere village, data collected identified oil spillage as a major environmental outcome which damaged the survival of the villagers. The spillage increased the incidence of air, water and land pollution. A number of villagers interviewed expressed that oil spillage occur occasionally from obsolescence and inadequate maintenance of the oil facilities owned by the multinational oil companies. In other cases, data from Agbere village revealed that spillages were attributed to vandalism of oil pipelines by both aggrieved and desperate villagers. In the case of aggrieved villagers, the oil pipelines were destroyed as retaliation against environmental degradation meted to villagers. The situation which explained the other case of vandalism was outright desperation of deprived villagers to create livelihood niche to support their survival through oil bunkering. Data from participants' interview in Agbere acknowledged multiple outcomes arising from oil pollution. A

reasonable number of participants from Agbere identified food poisoning and extinction of aquatic vegetation as a result of heavy concentration of hydrocarbons. Oil pollution has also been responsible for the destruction of the substantial livelihood of the villagers on one hand and destruction of the health of several villagers on the other hand. The outcomes which the data from Agbere produced comes in form of extinction of variety of specie of fishes, low soil quality where local people farm, heightening of water borne diseases and burning of property of the villagers. The villagers are always involved in the first instance to clear all sort of environmental problems affecting their livelihood based on their co-operation and communal understanding. The information gathered from one of the participants during the field study is presented as follows:

*“The effects caused by the oil pollution to different species of fishes I bred were difficult to mention. I started the fish farming business in 2004 with the ₦150,000 (£600) loan I got from my uncle after graduation from the university. The business was doing pretty well for a number of years until I woke on the morning of 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2009 to realize all the fishes in the two fish ponds were dead as a result of pollution of the pond. The moment I found this, I became weak immediately and did not regain consciousness until the third day. I became frustrated given the efforts I invested in the fish farming business and the losses that came from it.”*

(Interview with Kevin at Agbere, 08/10/09)

I gathered from the participants interviewed in Agbere that whenever Agip oil is informed of any occurrence of spillages, they are usually slow in responding to the problems. They are always insisting on verifying the

causes of the problem before cleaning up the affected environment even where lives are involved. Another dimension to the environmental issue in Agbere is in the problem of identifying the actual damages meted to the affected areas. In this case, the oil company tries to be economical and sometimes evasive on grounds of cutting the compensation (damages) to be paid. All these are done in collaboration with the DPR. The villagers with genuine cases of compensation from oil spillage are sometimes financially dislocated considering the cost involved in filing litigations against the erring oil companies in federal courts. It is only the federal courts that have jurisdiction to determine cases related to oil compensation. This experience completely throws numerous villagers affected by oil spillage into long period of economic shock and stress.

In Bori, the major environmental degradation which affected the local people was gas pollution and oil spillages. Data from Bori showed that outcomes from gas pollution were responsible for increased temperature in Bori. The heat which comes from the gas pollution has been responsible for extinction of vegetation, plants, animals and agricultural productivity. Data also revealed that gas pollution altered the economic configuration of the livelihood means of the local people. Given that the Bori people are completely rural, the degradation from gas pollution completely affected their ability to earn their living from farming as the quality of the soil where they farm became barren as a result of the gas pollution. More so, the able-bodiedness of a number of the villagers became very weak and in other cases, local villagers became susceptible to cancer related to diseases from long years of exposure to gas flaring. Data collected from a participant gave

an account of the excruciating pains which his mother went through until she later died from lung cancer as a result of several years of her exposure to air pollution from gas flaring. The summary of his submissions is presented below:

*“Precisely in 2005, my mother late Anna complained of pains in her lung. Initially, we thought it was a minor problem until she had a swell on the right part of her neck. We treated the swollen neck with local herbs for some months after which her younger brother who just arrived from the United Kingdom decided to take her to a standard private hospital in Port-Harcourt. At the end of the day, she was diagnosed for lung cancer which was traceable to her long years of exposure to the dangerous substance from gas flaring from Bori. All efforts made by uncle to save her life proved abortive as my dear mother died a year later.”*

(Life account with Steve Phillip at Bori, 12/10/09)

Data also identified improper treatment of waste generation as another outcome for the environment. Findings from both villages revealed that wastes generated from the local markets and residences are thrown carelessly within the village, on the land, in the streams or sometimes in the river by different villagers. This method of waste management led to contamination of ground water and spread of communicable diseases like cholera, typhoid and dysentery.

### **8.3. Conclusion**

This chapter has revealed the outcomes of the local governance systems on the livelihoods of different actors at the local level. In analyzing

governance outcomes, the chapter focused on outcomes from the interactions of different actors with resources, agency and arrangements of access to local resources in the research areas. Outcomes were analysed in terms of outcomes for differentiated access to resources, outcomes for differentiated livelihood, outcomes for political voice, outcomes for representation, outcomes for unequal relationships between actors, outcomes for conflicts and outcomes for environment. These outcomes provide explanation as to whether all actors are equally affected by the governance outcomes or not.

The chapter shows that outcomes for differentiated access to resources at the village level are shaped by the extent to which different actors command basic material, tangible and intangible assets to support their livelihoods. With respect to natural resources, the value the state and corporate actors place on crude oil has resulted in land seizure and depletion of medicinal plants. These impacts have direct consequences for the survival of the poor whose livelihood revolves around farming. The chapter also demonstrates differentiated livelihood outcomes for actors at the local level. In this case, the ordinary villagers are mostly involved in hard farm labour and hawking in order to support their livelihood while the enormous financial power commanded by the wealthy farmers enhances their profitability due to their investment in modernized farming techniques (use of tractors, and good storage facilities) which resultantly boosts their agricultural productivity. The outcomes for political voice reveal the extent to which domestic activities constrain women from having active voice in local participation. The situation is more challenging for the local resource-users group who lack the voice to

express their views at the local government council level out of lack of political and social network of their representatives (members). The chapter also demonstrates the extent of damage which the traditional rulership at the village level brought to the culture and traditions of the villages at the local level as rulership of these villages was based on power and influence rather than respect for cultural values. In consequence, the ordinary villagers who lack reasonable command of power and influence lose out in their desire to contest for the traditional leadership position.

In dealing with the outcomes for unequal relationships between different actors, the chapter discovered how the traditional rulers, local chiefs and highly placed actors (church executives) manipulated various capabilities to create favourable outcomes for themselves at the expense of less privileged actors (poor). In the same way, the state and corporate actors such as the government, government agencies and multinational oil companies also become comparatively better-off through the deployment of power and relations of reciprocity to enhance favourable governance outcomes. At both ends, the poor became worse-off as a result of the capabilities of the more powerful actors except in areas where the poor became supported by the community based organizations or through relations of social network. Therefore, the extent of losses suffered by the ordinary villagers as a result of the capabilities of powerful actors contributed in no small measure to their incidence of poverty. The chapter also unraveled how various forms of conflict between the state and local actors result in the use of military power by the state actors to suppress and undermine the rights of the ordinary villagers. In some case, the actions of the military officers led to the death of

innocent ordinary villagers. The outcomes for the environment also affected the ordinary villagers more relative to the state and corporate actors particularly in areas where the relevant government agencies fail to enforce environmental compliance by the oil companies on oil spillage and gas pollution.

In conclusion, it is evident from the above that governance outcomes are not equal for different actors. It produces both favourable and unfavourable outcomes. The powerful actors who command sufficient level of tangible and intangible resources derive better governance outcomes relative to the ordinary villagers, particularly the poor who have to pay for heavy losses of the governance outcomes. The losses the ordinary villagers encountered were attributed to inadequate access to resources, weak livelihood system, constrained political voice, poor representation, weak social status and network and unfriendly environment where local villagers have to live.



## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

The thesis questions the relationship between governance, poverty and natural resources management in the Niger Delta. The main intention of this study is to unravel the actual practice of governance within a particular local context in order to provide a deeper picture of the dynamics which have shaped the processes and outcomes of governance at all levels.

Apart from the general background, literature review and research methodology which governed the study, the thesis presents an historical analysis of the governance of resources and development discourse in the Niger Delta from the pre-colonial era to date. The main argument was that power was not static but was full of domination, dynamism, and resistance and highly embedded in relation to different circumstances which shaped the structure of power relations between different actors during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era.

Apart from the monarchical political system which shaped collective resources management at the village level, the study also recognized the importance of both economic and socio-cultural factors in the analysis of the power relationships which governed the activities of the villagers in the Niger Delta during the pre-colonial period. The economic activities during the pre-colonial period were subsistent and non-monetised. The livelihood of the local villagers centred on agricultural resources and the medium of exchange was carried out with the help of commodity currencies such as cowries,

native salts, palm oil and bangles. The level of understanding and co-operation which existed between different villagers promoted robust trading relations between neighbouring villages. However, the transition from slave trade to trade in palm oil changed the power relationships between the middlemen (local kings) in palm oil business and the European traders on account of the struggle for the control of the palm oil production and profit. The deployment of stronger capabilities by the Royal Niger Company subdued the middlemen that used to control the supply of palm oil business in the Niger Delta. The situation with control of the oil business did not change when the British government took over the direct control of the region from the Royal Niger Company in 1900. The socio-cultural context which governed the activities of villagers during the pre-colonial period placed strong importance on the supreme God as the highest in the structure of their traditional religion. The study found the trust villagers placed in the local deities as an intermediary between the supreme God and the local people. The study also found the extent to which local deities (Igbadai) supported local villagers to provide explanations for strange occurrences such as the untimely death of any villager.

The governance of resources in the Niger Delta during the colonial period provided the opportunity for the British government to realize its economic interest in the Niger Delta. The assumption of the control of Nigeria (including the Niger Delta) in 1900 by the British government provided the foundation for bringing several regions of Nigeria together in 1914. The efforts made by the British government to bring component parts of Nigeria together produced a number of challenges. The colonial state failed to

recognise the rights of the local villagers in the Niger Delta and the importance these villagers attached to their socio-cultural practices. Therefore, lack of consultations with the local villagers in areas related to change of currencies, introduction of western religion (Christianity), and imposition of tax on women promoted conflict and disequilibrium in the hinterland and other parts of the Niger Delta. The study also found that the Eastern region where the Niger Delta belonged was unfavourably treated relative to other regions under the allocation of resources during the Chicks Commission of 1953. These challenges led to widespread demands of the people of the Niger Delta in 1957 when Willink was commissioned to carry out a study into the development challenges of the people of the Niger Delta in order to resolve the socio- economic and political difficulties in the Delta region.

The study discovered a turning point in the governance of resources started during the post-colonial period when the state became the most powerful actor relative to the indigenous people of the Niger Delta over the ownership, control and management of resources. Despite the return of Nigeria to democratic rule in 1999, the study found a deep source of disconnectivity between the resources in Nigeria and its poverty level as a consequence of the failure of governance at the federal, state and local level. In the words of Clinton (2009), governance failure at all levels undermined the legitimacy of the government and accounted significantly for the unprecedented wave of anti-government movements (such as MOSOP, INC, NDVF, NDPVF and MEND) at the local level. In response, the government set up various institutions whose responsibilities were to address the

development challenges in the Niger Delta. However, these institutions such as NDDB, NDBDA, OMPADEC and NDDC respectively ended up working as appendages of the government rather than focusing on the development needs of the local villages in the Niger Delta. The study found that the activities of these institutions became limited due to dearth of funds from the federal government to support their operational activities. The study also realized these institutions were apron strings to the presidency because they lacked the power to make independent decisions without first taking directives from the Nigerian presidency. The failure of the government institutions to genuinely address the development problems at the local level generated the struggle for resource control by different militia groups (anti-government groups) against the state actors in the Niger Delta. The actions of the militia groups had consequences for the loss of revenue, displacement of the ordinary villagers, destruction of properties and oil facilities at the local level.

The next section shows how the application of governance for natural resources framework in the research areas has helped to achieve the specific objectives and provides answer to the research questions of the study.

## **9.2. The Complexities of Resources for Governance**

The first specific objective of the thesis was to determine the extent to which resources support the local governance systems at the local level. The thesis explored the context for the research areas, reasons for choosing the research areas and provided rigorous analysis of various institutions which

shape the governance of local resources. Other areas explored to gain in-depth understanding of the way resources shape the governance dynamics was the determination of what constituted resources between different actors at the local level. The study also provided deeper insight into the complexities of natural resources management through differentiation into allocative and authoritative resources in order to analyse how local resources support local governance systems.

In order to provide an answer to what constitute resources at the local level, the study revealed that the state and corporate actors have different interest in the local resources compare to the local actors. The study has shown that the state (federal government) and corporate (multinational oil companies) actors considered crude oil as the most significant resource endowment in the Delta region from where these actors derive their major income. The economic significance of oil to the government and multinational oil companies confirm mainstream institutional theory which treat resources as the material economic values characterized with direct use value (Mehta *et al*, 2001).The interpretation of resources at the village level was found to be symbolic and socio-culturally constructed with resources linked with social and historical values (ibid). The discussions and narratives of participants supported the symbolic, socio-cultural and historical interpretation of resources. The study found how the fruits from the land in Bori village, particularly yam, were honoured annually through the performance of traditional sacrifices during harvest season by the “Karikpo” cultural group to boost the productivity of yam.

By classifying resources into both allocative and authoritative types, the study provided explanations of how local resources supported the local governance systems. The study discovered how the state, corporate and local actors manoeuvred different capabilities to gain the control of local resources in order to enhance their survival. Findings demonstrated how the villagers drew on the land and water resources to support their livelihood. The study also revealed how different villagers benefitted significantly from various outputs from the forest resources. However, the Bori villagers realised better livelihood from land resources through farming while fishing is the most significant livelihood from water resources which supported the livelihood of Agbere villagers.

The study showed how lack of infrastructural resources compounded the livelihood of different villagers at the local level. Findings from Agbere revealed how participants became deprived from access to water supply and how the untreated alternative water supply from the river generated water borne diseases and affected the health conditions of the villagers. The study found that the Agbere villagers lacked choices of different modes of transport other than water. Lack of infrastructure to support the livelihood of local villagers was what scholars such as Sen (1993), Smith (2004) and Bradshaw (2006) considered as failure to have certain opportunities (capabilities) to live tolerable lives.

The study found that the state actors relatively commanded reasonable level of power to control both the allocative and authoritative resources. The strong network between the state and corporate actors was responsible for exchange of financial favours and investment opportunities relative to actors

at the village level. Data from Agbere also showed how the livelihood diversification of villagers became constrained due to lack of financial resources to change their occupation when the water from which their livelihood (fishing) derive became affected by oil spillage from Agip Oil Company. Unlike the state and corporate actors, villagers from the research areas contended with low levels of medical and educational facilities on account of weak administration of managers of these facilities. Data revealed the extent of deprivation and low health condition villagers have had to face at the village level.

The institutions at the local level had different interests in resource management and provided the arrangements for social interaction based on the flow of authority, power influence, favour and operation of networks. Data revealed how the state actors generated diverse revenue from sources such as property tax, tolls from local markets and royalties from sale of oil. The study also found that the revenue which the local government council generated from the villagers translated into poor quality of service delivery to the villagers. Findings revealed that lack of support from the state actors shifted the direction of local villagers to the CBOs, local churches and the traditional institutions of village life to support their livelihood.

In unpacking the socio-cultural resources, findings from Bori showed the allegiance which villagers conferred on the worshipping of “Kwonwopodon”, a deity linked as an intermediary between the villagers and God and also responsible for enhancing crop development. The study also found the extent of respect and devotion the Agbere villagers provided to their deities, particularly “Izon” during annual festivities by offering sacrifices

in order to enhance their livelihood. The findings above were supported by Douglas (1987) and Cleaver (2000) who showed the relevance of credible socio-cultural institutions such as “Kwonwopodon” and “Izon” as being characterized with some natural legitimacy. The relationships local villagers had with socio-cultural resources reinforced their trust, respect and confidence in these institutions. This has a considerable influence on the local governance practice which promotes the livelihoods of villagers in the research areas.

The study found that genealogical relationships of the villagers from both Bori and Agbere villages supported their rights to partake in these activities while those villagers with non-genealogical rights risk their lives for taking part in the cultural and traditional activities due to the negative impacts (such as spell) which the local deities might have on them. Findings from the Ogoni Bills of Rights of 1991 and Kaiama Declaration of 1998 also supported how the villagers drew on their collective rights to agitate for resource control to be able to take active control of their local resources on account of neglect, mistrust and mismanagement which pervaded resources management by the state and corporate actors in the Delta region. By contrast, the state actors also drew on statutory rights through which the federal government transferred the right to use land either on temporary or long term basis to the multi-national oil companies for explorative purposes at the village level.

### **9.3. The Dynamics of Agency in Local Governance**

The second specific objective of the thesis questions the extent to which actors' agency affects local governance systems. In order to achieve



this objective, the study employed the contributions from scholars such as Giddens (1984), Long (2003), Bourdieu (1977), Mehta, *et al* (2001), Mahmud (2004), Cleaver (2000, 2002, 2005), Dasgupta and Beard (2007) and related work to place agency for natural resources in a wider context. The study drew on the contributions from the scholars above to strengthen the analytical gaze of agency for natural resources beyond the context of fixed institutions to incorporate analysis of various strategies which actors employ to interpret and change the existing institutional rules and to construct their livelihoods. The study identified participatory spaces at the village level, representation at the village level, accountability in collective action, among others as the fundamental factors which shape actors' agency in relation to local governance systems.

These factors were helpful for providing answers to why some actors were able to exercise agency while other actors were constrained from exercising agency. In analyzing participatory spaces at the village level, the role played by cultural values enabled different actors to exercise their agency in decision making process at the local level. The study found that the traditional rulers, council of chiefs and the family heads manipulated the participatory spaces to their advantage at the expense of common villagers. The narratives from the research areas supported how the traditional rulers used power and influence behind closed doors to influence the minds of other members of the council of chiefs in order not to be opposed when issues are tabled at the general house. Similarly, the study also revealed how the head of the family depended on selected family members as part of his inner caucus who provided some level of support to enhance his agency in

terms of how the resources belonging to the family were being utilized or managed. This experience constrained other family members outside the inner family caucus to contribute significantly to the manner in which family resources are managed.

The study discovered how the agency of actors such as well placed politicians and electoral officers became enhanced by manipulating the electoral process to their advantage while the agency of the ordinary villagers became constrained due to lack of respect for their electoral decisions. Representation in the formal institutions of the state was determined by godfatherism, high level power and influence from electoral officials rather than the power every villager has to freely choose their local representatives. The constraints from representation at the state level eroded the confidence of the villagers in the independence and integrity of the state and federal electoral systems. The use of metaphysical means in addition to political networks and economic power enhanced the agency of contestants in consideration for the determination of traditional rulership in the research areas. The study discovered how local customs and traditional values became instruments of substitution for financial, social and spiritual resources through which the representatives for the traditional rulership from the most powerful ruling houses construct their agency to ascend to the position of rulership.

The study revealed how collective action facilitated the agency of villagers through co-operation in the provision of basic community services, construction of local pathways, flood control and collective labour in farming to support livelihood. However, findings from Dasgupta and Beard (2007)

explained that agency from power differences between different actors make accountability very challenging to analyse in resource management. The writers argue that the powerful actors might employ power advantage to overwhelm the poor who lack the drive to construct agency at the local level (ibid: 223). Narratives from the research areas revealed how villagers individually contributed toward a trusted local community development committee in order to fund development projects. The study realised villagers' contributions were unequal due to differences in their economic and political powers. Findings from the village revealed that the traditional rulers, local chiefs and powerful villagers contributed more financially to the activities of the Community Development Committee (CDC) relative to the ordinary villagers that significantly provided their physical labour.

In analyzing the critical importance of able-bodiedness, the study discovered how lack of good health constrained the actions of villagers to draw on local resources in order to support decent lives. Narratives from the research areas showed the extent of constraints which different villagers encountered from their lack of able-bodiedness to derive financial, psychological and physical support to live independent lives. In certain instance, some villagers could not recover from shock as a result of physical dislocation of their families. In other cases, the sick were subjected to mental torture as a result of the stigma from their ailments while the children of the sick were discriminated against on account of the critical state of health of their relatives. The study revealed how different dimensions of the chronically poor constrained their actions to draw on local resources from supporting their livelihood. Data identified polygamous lives amongst men as major

constrain which prolonged the poverty trap of villagers from realizing their potential to live decent lives. Findings also showed how domestic violence against the women subjected Agbere women to slaves or second class citizens relative to men.

The study discovered how the role of relations with neighbours and associational life enhanced the agency of local villagers to draw on social networks. Narratives from Bori village revealed the benefits which the family of a deceased villager received from the reciprocity of favour through good relations the deceased had with his neighbours while he was alive. The neighbours of the deceased provided food and financial support to the deceased family after the funeral to support the family cope with the recovery of his death. By contrast, the study found how a villager drew on the influence of a social network to construct her agency in associational life. The villager received financial and social support from both Tari social club and Bayelsa Ladies club during the funeral of her husband. However, the study discovered that the agency of other neighbours to enjoy similar benefits became constrained due to their financial incapability to become members of the social clubs.

#### **9.4. Multiple Arrangements of Access to Local Resources**

The third specific objective of the thesis explored the understanding of how actors draw on resources to fashion out bundles of arrangements of access to support livelihood at the local level. The main areas explored by the study to gain insight into multiple arrangements of access of various

actors to resources at the local level comprise: arrangements of access to land resources, gender and access to land at the local level, among others.

The above bundles of arrangements of access to local resources provide an explanation of the inequalities between actors over access to local resources. The study demonstrated how different bundles of arrangements by both the state and local actors shaped the access to land resources. Within the family lineage, villagers draw on the support of family members, family friendship, decisions taken at family meetings, support of village leaders, and support of family head to gain access to land resources to support their livelihood. At the village level, villagers draw on the support of the traditional rulers, council of chiefs, collective decisions through voting in order to have access to land to support their livelihood.

On gender and access at the local level, the study revealed how men were better placed to use land for farming, fishing and productive purposes relative to women based on patrilineal system, which confers power on male by the lineage authority. The secondary accesses of women to land through male relatives become threatened, where there are breakdowns in their relationships with influential male family members of her family or her husband's family or divorce. The study found that women were subjected to discrimination, exclusion and inequitable access to land which worsen their livelihood positions.

Findings from the study identified village assembly, religious institutions (such as churches and traditional confraternity groups), family relationships and the formal legal system (formal court) as bundle of arrangements for the resolution of conflicts. Narratives from Bori demonstrated how elders'

intervention which drew on oral tradition about families' historical antecedents became helpful in resolving over four decades of land's conflict between the Kpakpol and Stephen's family. Unlike the legal resolution of conflict which has a culture of dragging too long coupled with high cost of litigation, the study revealed how the intervention of elders' brought the two families that were hitherto divided together through which both families accepted peace, co-operation and reciprocity as benchmarks for collective use of the land to support their livelihood.

The study found how the government being the most powerful actor drew on the Land Use Act of 1978, Oil Pipeline Act of 1966 and Petroleum Act of 1969 to gain strategic control and access to land at the expense of common villagers in the research locations. Data showed how villagers lost the access of their original lands to the superior capabilities of government. The study revealed how the Dickson family that was not fully compensated by the government lost larger part of their land resources to the military government despite intervention from the MOSOP officials, traditional ruler, officials of the church and highly placed indigenes to prevent the military administrators from taking possession of the land. Narratives from Agbere village also found how a villager parted with ten plots of land in favour of the government from where the livelihood of his family hitherto derived. The study discovered how superior military capability of the government displaced the rightful owner of the land despite consultations with officials of the Department for petroleum Resources (DPR) through the village assembly and contacts of local politicians. The statutory powers at the disposal of the government subordinated the villagers to government's control and gave the

government more benefits to tap more resources from land (oil) even where the villagers suffered the pains of displacement, dispossession and economic benefits arising from losses of their land.

The study also showed how the state actors drew on multiple arrangements including selling of oil licenses, royalties, petroleum profit taxes, government share of profit from oil and non-oil revenue to support their financial operations. By contrast, the state government drew on revenue from land titling through the issuance of certificate of occupancies, which confers ownership on land holders. The study discovered that the local government drew on tolls from markets, revenue from council tax and fines from environmental offences by villagers to support its financial operations. The multinational oil companies on the other hand drew on financial resources to support their business operations through revenue from sale of oil in the international oil market. By contrast, the study showed that the villagers relied on cash made from sale of surplus agricultural produce, financial support from friends and relatives, returns from labour farming, monthly income, and gifts from festivities to support their livelihood. Unlike the state and corporate actors, lack of financial powers from villagers to effect titling of their land for issuance of certificate of occupancy constrained villagers' accessibility to loans, overdraft and credit facilities from local financial institutions.

The contributions of SIDA (1996) and Masika and Badin (1997) revealed that access of actors to good roads, affordable transport, housing, electricity, water supply, sanitation and waste management enhance well-being and ability of actors to get out of poverty. However, findings from the research areas revealed that infrastructural facilities such as roads, sanitation

and waste management are unequally available to different actors. Unlike the ordinary villagers, the study discovered that the state and corporate actors commanded greater power which places them in control of financial resources to draw on better infrastructural facilities.

The study discovered the role physical labour played to help villagers to engage in farming, fishing, and palm-wine tapping to support their livelihood. By contrast, findings from Agbere showed how the physically challenged villagers were supported by a number of arrangements from families, relatives and friends to live an independent life. The study discovered how lack of physical capability by the physically challenged villagers affected their financial position where family support became insufficient. Villagers with communication problems draw on the support of their children in universities or colleges of higher education, friends, and neighbours to get their messages passed across to the public gathering. The findings above was supported by Sen (1985, 1993) and CPRC (2004:40) which attributed poverty not to lack of ability to meet the basic needs alone but largely as a result of capabilities deprivation, poor education, illiteracy and bad health.

The study revealed how the government officials and officials of the multinational oil companies draw on reciprocity of favour, professional network, political contacts, award of contracts and public relations building from each other to support their survival, for example oil licenses. The arrangement of rotational guard of farm provided by the farmers' group was also instrumental in safeguarding agricultural crops from local theft in Bori village. By contrast, findings from Agbere village revealed how fishermen



draw on the combination of arrangement such as membership of the different associations, election of friendly executives of Fish Sellers Association (FSA), drawing on the support of council of chiefs, support from FSA and financial support from Fish Farmers Co-operative Society (FFCS) to support their livelihood.

The study found that protest and strikes were two most effective arrangements local villagers employed to fight for their interest either against the government and the multinational oil companies in areas which related to pollution of the land from where villagers derived their livelihood. Data from Bori village showed how one of the participants lost three of his children to protest from excessive oppression from the government over seizure of the land where the participant's livelihood hitherto derived. By contrast, findings from Agbere showed how the efficacy of protest by the ordinary villagers against oppressive behaviour of the powerful villagers helped the former to realize their demands.

#### **9.5. Multiple Domains of Outcomes for Local Resources**

The fourth specific objective of the thesis revealed the outcomes of the local governance systems on the livelihood of different actors at the local level. The main argument in this discussion was that governance outcomes vary for different actors in the research areas. The governance outcomes revealed how different actors are positioned as to who benefited or who lost. For resources, the study identified outcomes for differentiated access to local resources and outcomes for differentiated livelihoods at the local level. In the case of analysing outcomes from agency, the study focused on outcomes for

political voice and outcomes for representation while outcomes for unequal relationships between actors and outcomes for conflict flowed from arrangements of access. The governance outcomes identified above provides answer as to whether all actors are equally affected by the local governance outcomes of resources or not.

In analyzing differentiated access to resources, the study focused on the outcomes which arose from the access of different actors to natural resources, financial resources, and infrastructural resources, among others. The study discovered that the state and local actors had conflict of interest in relation to their access to natural resources. The study found that the government enforced the use of law for land seizures and explorative purposes in order to displace local villagers from access to natural resources. Beside the damage done to natural resources through deforestation by the local villagers, the villagers also suffered weak crop yield of their agricultural productivity due to the impact of oil pollution from the multinational oil companies.

Unlike the ordinary villagers, the possession of power, influence, land titles and social network by the powerful actors facilitated their accessibility to draw on loans from the banks to explore livelihood opportunities. The study discovered that villagers had negative outcomes for human resources resulting in low skills acquisition, lack of access to training institutions and lack of access to sound medical practice as constraining factors which raises the level of poverty of villagers in the Niger Delta. However, a number of villagers derive benefits from the cultural significance they placed on local deities in order to support their livelihood.

The study showed that outcomes for differentiated livelihoods for the villagers generated both favourable and unfavourable outcomes. Unlike the financially capable local chiefs, the study found the livelihood of common villagers into farming produced negative outcomes as farmers lacked financial and human resources to engage in modern farming techniques to support their livelihood. These outcomes compounded constraints to the livelihood of villagers as the villagers encountered inappropriate crop development and infection of their crops by pest which undermined their economic power to earn income. For the villagers that relied on supply of farm labour to earn additional income, the study discovered their earning power became low because the demand for farm labour is lower than the supply. The outcomes analysed above collectively deepened the state of poverty of the local villagers. The study realised the importance which local villagers attach to their proximity to rivers and streams because of the positive outcome it had on their ability to fish.

The outcomes for political voice indicated that the voice of most women was not well heard due to heavy domestic burden. The study also found that the knowledge women acquired from being the primary users of local resources would have added value to the management of local resources but for their marginalisation by local institutions at least to express their views and knowledge acquired from daily interaction with local resources in promoting resource efficiency. The study found how sickness and disability generated unfavourable outcomes for different villagers from lack of voice at the village level. The study found that villagers expressed lack of trust in the powerful actors because of their history of promotion of self interest and non-

implementation of collective decisions in village meetings. Outcomes also differed in terms of how the traditional rulers and the resource-users group expressed their voices. Unlike the resource-users group, the study discovered that the level of power, influence and political network commanded by the traditional leaders determine the level of their voice in decision making at the formal institution of the state. Lack of voice of the resource-users group in decision making affected their productivity and subjected them to paying tolls without commensurate impact on their livelihood supportive systems.

The study also found how the deployment of power, influence and social networks damaged the place of traditions and customs in the determination of representation of traditional rulership at the local level. At the family level, the study discovered how mistrust and corruption promoted the personal desires of the family heads at the expense of the interest of ordinary family members. Findings for representation in the formal institution of the state revealed how actors such as powerful politicians with strong networks in high places infringed against the rights of the villagers through manipulation of electoral results, imposition of unpopular candidates and flagrant disregards for the electoral rights of common villagers. Borrowing from Lukes' (2005), representation at the formal institution of the state mirrored the manner through which the powerful actors undermine the rights of the ordinary villagers to choose their representatives contrary to their interest.

The study found different outcomes for the relationships between actors in relation to resource management. Findings revealed how inequality in the

social status, power, wealth and social networks commanded by different actors promoted social stratification. The study showed how the traditional rulers, local chiefs, church officials and powerful villagers drew on different capabilities to exploit the local resources to improve their well-being at the expense of the interest of common villagers (Giddens, 1997). By contrast, the study found good relationship between the community based organisations (MOSOP, INC and IYC) and ordinary villagers based on trust, understanding, capacity development support and protection of the rights of the common villagers against excessive power and influence from the powerful actors at all levels. However, the study discovered these local organizations (MOSOP-NYCOP and INC-IYC) are different in terms of ethnic representations which sometimes weakened their ability to achieve collective results.

Findings from the research areas showed that both micro-micro and micro-macro conflicts had favourable and unfavourable outcomes for common villagers. The study discovered how negotiation, accommodation and local values worked together to resolve conflicts at the micro-micro level. The study found the extent of brutality afflicted against the common villagers which resulted to a number of deaths of villagers following gun attack from the government military forces.

On outcomes for the environment, the study found that the government agencies such as FEPA and DPR contributed to environmental outcomes through poor implementation of environmental laws in order to favour the operations of the multinational oil companies in the research areas. The study also discovered that the government officials lacked modern monitoring facilities to regulate oil operations which put the transparency in the oil

business into question. In all cases, the incidence of gas and oil pollution impacted negatively on the survival of human and aquatic species.

### **9.6. Stretching the Frontiers of Local Governance: Implications for the Study**

The thesis investigated local governance in the research areas by recognizing how the relationships between different actors shape resource management at the state, corporate and local institutional levels. It has provided further insight into the role culture, social organisations and day to day practices of actors play in shaping governance of natural resources in the Delta region. The involvement of local institutions enables the state to be able to negotiate more productively with other actors of governance (see Pierre, 2000).

Therefore, the way forward for local governance of natural resources in the Niger Delta requires more collaboration between the state, corporate and local actors, more accountability of actors and redefinition of access of actors to local resources. The recommendations articulated for the establishment of sound local governance of natural resources in the Delta region comes with a number of difficulties in the implementation of such agenda. First, the challenges include significant power imbalances between the state, corporate and local actors, lack of trust, differing decision making authority among the actors and problems of co-ordination between different actors (see: Yafee, *et al*, 1997 Campbell, 2006). In the case of achieving more accountability, a challenge arises from lack of trust of the local people in the financial reporting of state and corporate actors. Other challenges include poor service delivery

by the government and its agencies to the local people, lack of confidence of the local actors in the electoral systems, poor feedback to local actors by both state and corporate actors and eroded independence of government agencies (see: Newell, 2006). The difficulties anticipated for the implementation of redefinition of access to resources in the Delta region include the supremacy of statutory rights over customary rights, infrastructural failure and gender inequality. However, the challenges for implementing the agenda above can be surmounted if the recommendations advanced in the sections below are followed.

#### **9.6.1. Charting a Collaborative Course for Actors in Local Governance of Natural Resources**

It is evident from this study that local governance of natural resources in the Delta region is a multi-actor approach where different actors employ different capabilities to gain the control of resources. The struggle for local resources by different actors has numerous livelihood implications for the poor. The poor were found to be comparatively disadvantaged relative to the powerful actors from the research areas. For local governance in resources management to achieve its potential in the Delta region, the gap between the powerful and the less powerful actors needs to be bridged through a genuine collaborative approach. The collaborative approach to local resources management will promote transparency, management of power differences, negotiation and renegotiation affecting change and recognition of multiple institutions that shape resources use and management (Campbell, 2006). Fiszbein and Lowden (1999) argued that collaborative approach to resources management facilitates the ability of different actors to inject new resources

both material and non-material into resources management. This has the potential to improve the accessibility of the poor to local resources and the creation of income generating activities.

By implication, the collaborative efforts will work well where there is effective co-ordination between the state, corporate and local actors such that all actors in the governance of resources address areas of concern which fall within their responsibility. First, the state actor (the government) needs to widen its orientation and focus about the resources of the Delta region beyond the gains from crude oil and recognise the importance of non-oil natural resources as major assets of the poor. Through this recognition, government can incorporate the needs of the poor into policy formulation in order to strengthen the poor's use of local resources. Besides, if local governance is to realize its full potential in the Delta region, the federal government needs to revisit a number of its laws (Land Use Act of 1978, Oil Pipeline Act of 1966 and Petroleum Act of 1969) which keep generating tension and raising the poverty situation of the local actors. These laws have impacted negatively on the livelihood of the villagers. This is evident from land loss, loss of resources on the land and sudden displacement of villagers from their ancestral villages, all for the sake of the economic benefits the government derives from crude oil. In revisiting these laws, the government should utilise the dialogue approach where the local people will be genuinely represented in order to reduce the incidence of tension and conflict in the region. In order to reduce institutional failure, the agencies of the government (FEPA, NNPC, NDDC, *etc*) require independence from the federal government to discharge their responsibility in relation to



environmental regulations of oil production in order to protect the local people against the oil and gas pollution. It is also important that these agencies are provided with modern and sophisticated technological capabilities to be able to improve the standard of pollution control and enforce breaches of environmental regulations by resource-users in the Delta region. The poor performance of the government agencies was not due to lack of finance to procure the required technological capabilities. Rather, these agencies have become weak in their responsibilities due to excessive intervention of the federal presidency in their activities.

Participation is also important for sound decision making at the local institutional level. Therefore, the local actors, particularly the traditional rulers, council of chiefs and family heads, need to embrace open participatory spaces at the villages and family units' level on land resources management. A broader participatory approach at these levels will minimize mistrust and foster peace amongst local actors for the promotion of sustainable resources management. The traditional rulers, in collaboration with the council of chiefs and the villagers should reposition their cultural values. By getting villagers more involved in the decision making on cultural and traditional issues, the traditional leaders and council of chiefs will earn villagers' trust, respect and confidence in collective management of local resources.

By similar token, the local villagers (incorporating the youths and women) require a change of culture, self-confidence, information, political consciousness, intellectual skills and negotiating skills in order to participate effectively at the local level. The community based organisations such as MOSOP, INC and IYC should be integrated to have a broader based impact

on the livelihood of villagers. Findings from the study revealed that MOSOP focused on protection of the overall interest of the Ogoni people (including the Bori people) while IYC directed its efforts and resources to the protection of the Ijaw people (including Agbere villagers). If these local organisations were to operate through collaboration and resources integration, then their activities will become better in terms of protecting the rights and enhancing the livelihood of the Niger Delta people. Through collective efforts of the CBOs, they can engage in the observation and monitoring of participatory processes at the villages level to promote youths' participation for political, social and economic empowerment in the Niger Delta.

#### **9.6.2. Strengthening Accountability of Actors**

Accountability is an issue which all actors need to improve in the Delta region. In order to strengthen financial accountability, the state actors (government at all levels) need to ensure all disclosures that are materially relevant to the local resources are made strictly in line with the NEITI<sup>44</sup> policy. In the case of political accountability, the federal and state electoral bodies should be independent from the presidency in order to minimize electoral influence. These will improve accountability, transparency and reduce opportunities for resources mismanagement at all levels.

In order to strengthen local accountability, the traditional rulers, village land committees and family heads need to improve the uses to which the

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<sup>44</sup> NEITI was first set up by former President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2004 with membership of representatives of government, extractive companies and civil society. It received statutory backing in 2007 when the federal government signed the NEITI bill into law (NEITI Act) to promote due process and transparency in extractive revenues paid to and received by government as well ensure transparency and accountability in the application of extractive revenues (NEITI, 2011).

lands and other resources entrusted in their care are managed. Findings related to the study showed that the village assembly is the meeting point where the village land committee, subject to the approval of the traditional rulers, provides an account of stewardship to the villagers on the utilization of land. At the family level, the head of every family in collaboration with other family elders provides stewardship related to land management on behalf of all family members. The feedback process should be sustained in order to improve the quality of accountability at the village level. In addition, CBOs should maintain a good relationship with the state and corporate actors and develop legitimate approaches for seeking redress for injustices meted to the villagers by the government at all levels and the oil multinationals through sustained consultations. This is to bear in mind that it is only in a peaceful environment that business and livelihood can triumph.

### **9.6.3. Redefining Access of Actors to Local Resources**

Redefining access of the poor to natural resources is fundamental if poverty is to reduce significantly in the Delta region. The extent to which the poor can have enhanced access to local resources is dependent on the rights at their disposal to make the best out of natural resources. In order to achieve this, both the statutory and customary property rights should be reviewed through collaborative efforts of concerned actors to improve the access of the local people to land. Findings from the research areas revealed that the statutory rights have more power and legal support than the customary rights in the Delta region. It is fundamental to review the differences in the application of these rights to enhance access of the poor to

land resources in the Delta region. The integration of customary and statutory rights will be helpful in backing the claims of the poor to land and in return facilitate their access to credit facilities. Besides, the property rights at the local level should be reviewed to provide access of women to land ownership in order to remove cultural barriers, discrimination, injustice, inequality and oppression against women.

Access of the poor to infrastructural facilities is also required to minimise the incidence of poverty. This position is supported by the findings of Masika and Baden (1997) who found access of the poor to infrastructural services, improvement in water and sanitation, subsidies of utilities, better transportation and access to markets to have stimulated employment. In the light of this, the state and corporate actors should work together in addition to local support from the villagers to upgrade the facilities in the Delta region in order to improve the power supply, water supply and waste management, roads and bridges construction, good housing and development of markets in order to accelerate local development and enhance business opportunities within and outside the villages. In addition, the local villagers should strengthen their social contacts and networks to gain wider access to local resources.

### **9.7 Suggestions for Further Studies**

Researching local governance in the Delta region where power relations shape resource management is time consuming. However, if I have had more time during the fieldwork I would have delved deeper into the cultural values of the Bori and Agbere people beyond the practices of

“Kparikpo” cultural festival and “Owuamapu” cultural legitimacy in order to further understand how such cultural practices shape resource management.

It is also suggested that future studies on local governance should conduct deeper investigation into livelihood outcomes. This will facilitate better understanding of the strategies through which the poor can cope with shocks, vulnerability and migration at the local level.

Accountability raises question about the level of transparency in the management of local resources in the Delta region. In order to have in-depth knowledge in accountability, it is suggested for further studies to conduct research in relation to social, state, corporate and social accountability of resources in the Delta region. This will reveal the rights and politics of accountability of resources by various actors. Such study will also unearth the range of rights available at the disposal of the poor for challenging the accountability of the powerful actors at different governance levels.

Governance has both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. This study employed a qualitative methodological framework to investigate the impact of local governance on poverty and resources management in the Delta region. It is suggested for future studies to employ a combined methodological framework to improve research outcomes in the field of governance.

## **9.8. Contributions to Knowledge**

This study contributes to knowledge in a number of ways. First, the study has engaged with multiple debates in governance taking it beyond the practice of government to broader level of partnerships, networks,

relationships and multiple spheres within which governance takes place (Dean, 1999; Agrawal, 2005). This has enhanced our understanding about various interpretations which have shaped governance debates in theory and practice.

Second, the study has developed a framework for governance of natural resources which stands as a building block for investigating the local governance practice in relation to poverty and resources management in the Delta region. The contribution of this study to knowledge is in increasing our understanding of how local governance systems operate at different institutional levels in the very specific context of resource management in the Delta region. In particular, the study increases our understanding of how dynamics of power relations influence the agency of local institutions and people, and hence the systems of local governance in the Delta region.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Institutions at Bori and Agbere Villages

S/N	Category	Names	Impact on the Village
1.	State institutions	Federal government of Nigeria, Rivers state Government, Khana Local Government Council, Bayelsa State Government, Sagbama Local Government Council,	Maintenance of law and order, Provision of basic amenities
2.	Government Agencies	Niger Delta Development Commission, Federal Environmental Protection Agency, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation,	Rehabilitation of degraded facilities and provision of social amenities. Protection of the environment. Regulation of the activities of oil companies.
3.	Corporate institutions/Private sector	Nigeria Agip Oil Company, Shell Petroleum Development Company of	Economic empowerment. Human capital

		Nigeria Limited.	development Provision of gifts to the traditional leadership.
4.	Local Institutions (Community Based Organisations, Religious institutions, Traditional Institutions	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Bori Farmers Association, Bori Community Development Committee, Ijaw National Congress (INC), Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), Community Development Committee, Agbere Fishermen Association, Fish farmers' Co-operative Society, Fish Sellers' Association, Agbere Women's group (Ere-ebe), Tari social club, Bayelsa Ladies club.	Grassroots representation, consultations and protection of the rights of Bori people, self help and support to members, Collective welfare development of villagers.

Source: Compiled by the author during field study in 2009.



## Appendix B: Research Instruments and Data

S/N	Research Instrument	Qty	Data Sources
1.	Semi structured interview:49 each from Bori and Agbere	98	NNPC officials, state government officials, local government officials, officials of the NDDC, officials of Multinational corporations (Shell and Agip), members of the civil society (MOSOP, INC, IYC, NGOs, villagers), traditional leaders, youth leaders, village heads.
2.	Focused Group Discussions: 12 each from Bori and Agbere	24	Males and females drawn from the villages to discuss issues bothering on gender, determination of the poor, participation, partnership and how these issues affects local governance of resources
3.	Informal observations		Informal observation from Bori and Agbere with respect to livelihood, social, cultural and political lives of the villagers, actions of politicians towards the villagers, actions of the government at all levels and agencies of the government towards the people, observation related to infrastructure: health, roads, electricity, housing, water supply, safety of the local people and strangers, actions of the oil companies

			toward the local people, observation from spillages, land degradation, waste management site, observations from kidnapping and demands of the militants, etc
4.	Life histories, oral tradition, etc	10	Males and females, all elderly gave detailed account of traditions, origins, settlement, rights and socio-cultural practices in the selected research locations, changes which have taken place in the lives of local actors, et cetera.
5.	Archival research: reports and publications from: government, academics, NGOs, oil companies, NDDC, NNPC, historical and grey literature.		Government publications gathered from national, states and local libraries in Rivers, Bayelsa and Lagos states. Other governmental data were collected from the British Council office in Lagos. MOSOP library, INC library, Public affairs departments of NNPC (Rivers and Lagos), Shell and Agip (Rivers and Lagos), et cetera.

Source: Author's Field Research, 2009

### Appendix C: Data Sources, Objectives of Study and Research Instruments

s/n	Data sources	Sample Bori	Sample Agbere	Objectives	Research Instruments
1.	Members of civil society: -MOSOP/INC -NYCOP - IYC -Villages Dev. Association -Farmers' Association -Fishermen's Association Religious/cultural/ Social organisation. -NGOs, -village members b. Traditional leaders/local chiefs c. Youth leaders	1 1 - 1 1 2 - 2 2 2 26 2 1	1 - 1 1 - 2 2 2 26 2 1	To find: -The interaction (relationship) between local people and how such relationships affect village development issues. -How community based organizations and local people interact to solve local problems -The extent of co-operation between the local and state governments and local people in dealing with local matters. -How village people work together to promote the livelihood conditions of one	SSI, FGDs, Informal observation, oral traditions, archival information

	<p>d. Village heads</p> <p>f. FGDs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Men</li> <li>-Women</li> <li>-Men and Women</li> </ul>	<p>1</p> <p>6</p> <p>6</p> <p>-</p>	<p>1</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>12</p>	<p>another.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-How power relations affects access to resources at the socio-cultural valued institutional level.</li> <li>-The activities of the government agencies and multinational oil companies affecting the livelihood conditions of the local people.</li> <li>-The nature of support provided by various actors in addressing livelihood situation at the local level.</li> <li>-The arrangements for tackling environmental problems by various actors at the local level.</li> <li>-The determinants of participation at the local level</li> </ul>	
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					<p>-The arrangements which determines access to the use of local natural resources</p> <p>-The arrangements for conflict resolution in the use of natural resources at the local level</p>	
2.	<p>Gov. agencies.</p> <p>-NNPC:south-south headquarters</p> <p>-NDDC</p> <p>state and local authorities</p> <p>-State government</p> <p>-Local government</p> <p>Multinational Companies</p> <p>-Shell/Agip oil companies</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>5</p> <p>1</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>5</p> <p>1</p>	<p>To find:</p> <p>-The nature of relationship which exist between government agencies, local and state agencies and local people in dealing with local problems</p> <p>- How do local agencies work with the local people to tackle local issues</p> <p>-What form of legal arrangements affect environmental related issues at the local level</p>	<p>SSI,</p> <p>informal observation, archival information</p>	

			<p>-The extent of support provided by government, its agencies and multinational oil companies in supporting livelihood condition of the local people.</p> <p>-The extent of power relations which determines the access of actors to the use of resources at the corporate level</p> <p>-The extent of responsibility assumed by the agencies of the government and multinational corporations in dealing with local issues.</p> <p>-The level of participatory spaces provided by the government in promoting representation at the local level</p>	
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				<p>-The arrangements provided by the government agencies, local and state authorities as well as the oil companies for handling conflicts at the local level over the use of resources.</p> <p>-The extent of co-operation between the actors for managing natural resources at the local level</p>	
3.	Total	61	61		122

Author's Field Research, 2009.

**Appendix D: Past Reports Submitted to the Federal Government on the Niger Delta**

Date	Title of Report	Nature of Report
1958	Willinks Report	Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the fears of the minorities and the means of allaying them
1963	Republican Constitution	The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
1992	Belgore Report	Judicial Commission of Inquiry into causes of fuel shortage in Nigeria.
1994	Don Etiebet Report	Report of the ministerial fact-finding team to the oil-producing communities in Nigeria.
1996	Vision, 2010	Report of the Vision 2010 Committee.
1997	United Nations Report	Report of the United Nations special rapporteur on Human Rights situation in Nigeria.
1998	Popoola Report	Presidential Committee on the development options for the Niger Delta.
2001	Ogomudia Report	Report of the Special Security Committee on Oil Producing Areas.
2003	Presidential panel on National Security Report	White Paper on the Report of the Presidential Panel on National Security.
2003	Sustainable Development	Report on First International Conference on Sustainable Development of the Niger Delta.



	Report	
2004	Niger Delta Development Commission Report	Niger Delta Regional Development Master plan.
2005	Niki Tobi report	National Political Reform Conference Report.
2006	United Nations Development Programme Report	Niger Delta Human Development Report.
2006	Presidential Council Report	Report of the presidential council on the Social and Economic Development of the Coastal States.
1998-2008	Ethnic Nationalities and Communities Petitions to the Federal Government	<p>The Ogoni Bill of Rights, 1990</p> <p>The Charter of Demands of the Ogbia people, 1992</p> <p>The Kaiama Declaration, 1998</p> <p>The Resolution of the First Urhobo Economic Summit, 1998</p> <p>The Akalaka declaration, 1999</p> <p>The Warri Accord, 1999</p> <p>The Ikwerre Rescue Charter, 1999</p> <p>The First Niger Delta Indigenous Women Conference, 1999</p> <p>The Oron Bill of Rights, 1999</p> <p>The Niger Delta Peoples' Compact, 2008</p>

2008	Technical Committee Report	Report of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta.
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Source: Technical Committee Report on the Niger Delta, 2008.

**Appendix E: Principle of Derivation on Revenue Allocation (1946 to Date)**

S/N	Year	Derivation(%) for producing state	Distribution Pool Account/ Federation Account
1.	1946-1960	50%	
2.	1960-1967	50%	50%
3.	1967-1969	50%	50%
4.	1969-1971	45%	55%
5.	1971-1975	45% minus offshore Proceed	55% plus offshore Proceed
6.	1975-1979	20% minus offshore Proceed	80% plus offshore Proceed
7.	1979-1981	-	100%
8.	1982-1992	1.5%	98.5%
9.	1992-1999	3%	97%
10.	1999-Date	13%	87%

Sources: Field research, 2009; UNDP Report (2006) and MOSOP (2009).

### Appendix F: Anti-Government Movements in the Niger Delta

s/n	Year	Names of anti-government movements	Founders/Leaders
1.	1966	Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF)	Isaac Jasper Adaka-Boro
2.	1990	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP)	Ken Saro Wiwa
3.	1991	Ijaw National Congress (INC)	Kimse Okoko
4.	2004	Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF)	Mujahid Asari-Dokubo
4.	2006	Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND)	Henry Okah

Source: compiled by the author during field study in 2009.

### Appendix G: Selected Timeline of Crises in the Niger Delta

Date	Incidents	Location	Losses
11-01-06	Attack on Royal Dutch/Shell's oil facility by unidentified militant group	Offshore E.A.field, Rivers State	Four foreign workers kidnapped and losses of 120,000bpd
15-01-06	Royal Dutch/Shell facility was attacked by MEND fighters.	Port-Harcourt, Rivers state	17 Soldiers were killed. Unknown numbers of militants and Shell's employees also died.
10-05-06	An executive with the United States based oil company;	Port-Harcourt,	1 death

	Baker Hughes was shot and killed.	Rivers state	
21-08-06	Clash between MEND and security agencies	Bayelsa state	10 MEND fighters killed
03-10-06	Western oil workers taken hostage	Bayelsa state	7 western oil worker taken hostages
16-01-07	Militants attacked an oil vessel near Bonny Island.	Bonny Island, Rivers state	187,000bpd
08-05-07	Three major oil pipelines (one in Brass and two in the Akasa area) run by Agip were attacked.	Brass/Akassa, Bayelsa state	170,000bpd
11-01-08	Petroleum tanker ship was attacked at the Nigerian Ports Authority, Port Harcourt by elements within MEND, know as Freedom Freelance Fighters (FFF).	Port-Harcourt, Rivers state	2 persons were reportedly injured. 3 naval officers were killed.
03-02-08	MEND fighters attacked a military house boat stationed at the Shell Petroleum TARA manifold	Shell Petroleum TARA manifold, Bayelsa state	2 killed
18-06-09 to 21-06-09	MEND launched attacks on three oil installations belonging to Royal Dutch Shell in a campaign labeled by the group as "Hurricane Piper Alpha	Rivers state	Destruction of oil equipment an losses of thousands of oil bpd

Source: Compiled by the author during fieldwork from the Report of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta, 2008.

### Appendix H: Mythical Significance of Animals in Delta Villages

s/n	Villages	Mythical significance of Animals
1.	Agbere and ogbia Ijaw people in Bayelsa state	Shark is regarded as a barge for rescuing the sons and daughters of the land during boat mishaps.
2.	Bonny people of Rivers State	They worship Python because it repels marine demonic forces
3.	The Bori people of Ogoni	The Marikpo mask worn during the celebration of Karikpo festival represents animals worshipped during planting and harvesting seasons for fertility, new yam festivals and burial ceremonies of members

Sources: Omoweh (2005) and Otuka (2007)

### Appendix I: Sources of Key Informants

Name	Research Area	Date	Name	Research Area	Date
Tamu	Bori	18-09-09	Aloy	Agbere	24-09-09
Ebie	Bori	26-10-09	Akpabio	Agbere	30-09-09
Magnus	Bori	20-08-09	Dokubo	Agbere	21-09-09
Angella	Bori	23-09-09	Ebele	Agbere	26-09-09

Benjamin	Bori	05-10-09	Ebube	Agbere	28-09-09
Debra	Bori	10-10-09	Romeo Clifford	Agbere	30-09-09
Omeha	Bori	12-10-09	Dan Wilberforce	Agbere	24-09-09
Peterson	Bori	19-09-09	FGDs with men and women	Agbere	20-11-09
Tam	Bori	12-10-09	Alexander	Agbere	06-10-09
FGDs with men	Bori	18-10-09	Johnson	Agbere	18-09-09
FGDs with women	Bori	18-10-09	Theresa Goodwill	Agbere	15-10-09
Abraham	Bori	01-10-09	David Yobo	Agbere	19-09-09
Mrs. Thompson	Bori	13-09-09	Isaac	Agbere	15-09-09
Stephen	Bori	10-10-09	Timothy	Agbere	11-09-09
Richard Dickson	Bori	08-10-09	Willy	Agbere	11-10-09
Jude	Bori	09-10-09	Solomon	Agbere	20-10-09
Dago	Bori	22-09-09	Palmetta	Agbere	27-10-09
Jimba	Bori	22-09-09	Kevin	Agbere	08-10-09
Douglas	Bori	11-10-09	Benitta Charles	Agbere	15-08-09
Chris	Bori	03-10-09	Nnamdi	Agbere	20-09-09
Binta	Bori	28-10-09			
Andrew	Bori	17-10-09			
Dickson Kpakpo	Bori	17-10-09			

Monday	Bori	09-10-09			
Steve Phillip	Bori	12-10-09			
Tina Thomas	Bori	18-08-09			



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