THE POSTCOLONIAL CHALLENGE OF OIL BUNKERING AND KIDNAPPING IN THE NIGER DELTA: A STUDY OF CHIMEKA GARRICKS’ TOMORROW DIED YESTERDAY

Tarkpegher Henry Terngu
Nasarawa State University Keffi. Nasarawa State

Abstract
This study is an in-depth analysis of illegal oil bunkering; pipeline vandalisation and kidnapping with specific reference to Chimeka Garrick’s novel, Tomorrow Died Yesterday. This study identifies poverty, unemployment land and water pollution, gas flaring, youth restiveness, inadequate compensation, lack of basic amenities like portable water, electricity and schools as some of the motivating factors of the mayhem in the Niger Delta. This study also attempts a detail analysis of the consequences of the crisis and ways in which this crisis will be tackled with specific reference to Chimeka Garricks’ novel, Tomorrow Died Yesterday. The study concludes that the Niger Delta experience is a paradox in which the people have all it takes to be rich but they are not; surrounded by water but have no water to drink, richly endowed with crude oil but experience petrol scarcity. This is a call on the leaders to address the issues that have led to the crisis in the Niger Delta.

Key words: kidnapping oil bunkering, pipeline vandalisation, environmental degradation.

Introduction
The South-south region of Nigeria (Niger Delta) is endowed with crude oil which is Nigeria’s main foreign exchange earner and has provided much income to the Nation. Petroleum finances not less than 80% of the annual budget. Bodo adds that “since the discovery of petroleum in the Niger Delta region in 1958; the region has been a source of wealth to Nigeria as a country” (2). This crude oil exploration in Nigeria is done by foreign companies licensed by the federal government. Bode and David sum it up that, “the oil industry is the pillar of Nigeria’s economy, as it is responsible for 90 percent of the country’s export revenues” (198).

This crude oil that is seen as a blessing to the country is a “curse” to those whose land is used for the exploration and exploitation of crude oil—since it has polluted their water and land—as a result of this, many of the affected communities have decided to rise against the government and the companies operating in their domain. Bodo and Gimah rightly argue that “many scholars … have reported that oil has increased the suffering and poverty of the people especially those at the source or origin of the oil” (143). The people in the region therefore feel cheated. This accounts for the crisis in this region. This uprising has taken the form of oil bunkering, pipeline vandalisation, bombing of oil installations and kidnapping.

The postcolonial Nigerian nation has experienced the challenge of kidnapping in the Niger Delta for up to two decades now. Cases of kidnapping and hostage taking have actually been experienced in the country since independence. However, cases of kidnapping were minimal and most people, who were criminally minded, took to cheating, advance fee fraud, pick-pocket, house breaking and theft, armed robbery at home and at high ways. These and few other criminal activities like hard drug consumption, drug trafficking have been in existence but cases of kidnapping increased when the people in Niger Delta started complaining of having been marginalised in the country. Few of those who felt dissatisfied with the condition of living in the Niger Delta took the laws into their own hands and began kidnapping oil workers in that region. Presently, there is peace in the region because government has started addressing their challenges and grievances through the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the payment of 13% derivation fund to all oil producing states. Garricks has chosen to examine the crisis in this region taking into consideration, the causes and consequences of pipeline vandalisation, oil bunkering and kidnapping in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

SYNOPSIS OF TOMORROW DIED YESTERDAY
Chimeka Garricks’ Tomorrow Died Yesterday is a novel set at Asiama, a small town in the Niger Delta. As a Niger Delta lawyer and novelist, Garricks presents the experiences of the Niger Delta people as the region is endowed with
the crude oil that the whole nation depends on—since oil revenue always finances about 80% of the Nigerian annual budget—yet the region appears to have been neglected for a long time. The protagonists of the novel, Kaniye, Tubo, Doye and Amaibi grow up at Asiam when crude oil has been discovered and it pollutes the water and land. As a result of this, there is no more clean water, all the fishes die in the river and the soil loses its fertility due to pollution of the land through the numerous cases of oil spillage in the region. Due largely to the leadership failure in Nigeria, the oil companies operate as they wish since the leaders in the region—both traditional and political—seek to loot the much they can at the expense of the growth and development of their society. The frustrated youth of Asiam become fed up with this nightmare and take to various criminal activities such as pipeline vandalisation, oil bunkering and kidnapping. Doye for instance becomes a kidnapper and handles bunkering jobs on behalf of Chief Ikaki. *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*, points an accusing finger at the government, the police, politicians, the military and State Security operatives for conniving with traditional leaders—like Chief Ikaki and the Amayanabo—to finance criminal activities such as kidnapping and oil bunkering thus denying the Niger Delta of its future. Considering this gory tales coming out from the Niger Delta, Garricks concludes that the region has no future (tomorrow) the tomorrow of the Niger Delta died yesterday. Though this may sound pessimistic, there is hope for the people of this region because the present government is determined to address all the issues in the Niger Delta so that the tomorrow that died yesterday will resurrect and live again in a reformed and chaos free Niger Delta region.

**Illegal OIL Bunkering and Kidnapping in the Niger Delta**

As a crude oil exporting nation, Nigeria is a member of Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Illegal oil bunkering refers to the stealing of crude oil from the pipeline or any other source where crude oil is preserved. To be able to bunker crude oil, the pipeline has to be vandalized first. This means that pipeline vandalisation and oil bunkering go together. Many Nigerians believe that oil bunkering refers to stealing of crude oil only but this is not so. The official act of moving crude oil from one place to another is oil bunkering the act of stealing of crude oil is also oil bunkering. The difference is that, the former is legal while the latter is illegal. This research is concerned with illegal oil bunkering only. Oshienemen Albert, Dilanthi Amaratunga and Richard Haigh explain that, oil bunkering is misinterpreted within the Nigerian context. The practice of oil bunkering which is the process of transporting the filled ship with fuel/oil from one shore to another is categorically different from the process of vandalising equipment for the bunkering activities. Thus, oil bunkering becomes illegal when unlicensed individuals, groups or organisation scoop/vandalise the petroleum product in diesel forms, fuel, etc. for its personal gains. (27).

Chimeka Garricks exposes the fact that those who are participants in this criminal activity believe that oil bunkering is different from stealing. Soboye who specialises in oil bunkering believes that it is different from stealing. He tells his brother “stop saying steal. The word is “bunker” (113). As a matter of fact, bunkering is now a euphemistic term. The word “bunker” is preferred to “steal” as far as the Niger Delta people are concerned but, the constitution of Nigeria is against this activity and the government insists that it is an illegal venture. Oil bunkering is taking place massively in the Niger Delta. Adishi and Hunga opine that,

there is a large scale of illegal international trading on crude oil, which is more sophisticated with the use of advanced technologies to tap crude oil and to navigate through the maze of hundreds of creeks, rivers, and streams. This practice has also graduated from ordinary boats and barges to ships and tanker in the high seas which has become extensive and on a large scale since the late
The irony of it all is that, other nations endowed with crude oil do not have the alarming cases of crude oil theft or bunkering as is the case in Nigeria. An e-dictionary consulted by the researcher defined “bunkering” as “chiefly in Nigeria: the illicit removal of oil from a pipeline or other distribution system”. This dictionary definition points an accusing finger at Nigeria as the main nation that has the highest number of cases of oil bunkering. Here in Nigeria, people stop at nothing to ensure that they acquire ill-gotten wealth no matter the consequence. Campbell observes that as a result of illegal oil bunkering, “Nigeria is a poor country despite the availability of oil” (5).

In the novel, Doye Koko, popularly known as Doughboy, emerges as a kidnapper. He and his gang are “credited with oil bunkering, kidnapping and bombing of oil installations” (4). These activities go on simultaneously at Asiama perpetrated by youths who see ‘the trade’ as a very lucrative one. Chimereka Garricks traces the origin of these challenges—oil bunkering and kidnapping—as they emerged in the Niger Delta. He identifies oil bunkering as an activity that came into existence even before different militia groups later emerged with weapons to start kidnapping. Soboye who is into bunkering explains how they do it.

There is an underground pipeline, a very long pipeline. It carries crude oil from Port Harcourt to Bonny for export. The pipeline passes through a tiny swamp island, just after Juju Island, up the Asiama River... every night, some people go up the river to that swamp Island. From there, they open the pipeline and divert the oil from it ... they load the oil in boats, come back down the river and sail into the ocean. There are ships already waiting on the ocean to buy the oil. (110)

This is a graphic portrayal of the process of oil bunkering in the Niger Delta. Highly placed men and women sponsor illegal oil bunkering in the Niger Delta. Kidnapping in the Niger Delta emerged after the people realized that kidnapping is another option to explore and this led to the emergence of many gangs and militia in the region. Tomorrow Died Yesterday presents Doye (alias Doughboy) as the gang leader of “the Asiama Freedom Army” (4). This is just one out of the many gangs (ethnic militia) that have emerged in the Niger Delta as Doye himself explains, “We the AFA [Asiama Freedom Army] were the most feared of all the ethnic militia in the Niger Delta. We were credited with oil bunkering, kidnapping, and bombing of oil installations”(4). The AFA specialises in kidnapping of foreign oil workers. The other militias are not named but the activities of Doughboy and his group still captures the predatory activities of all the other gangs. Garricks presents a brief summary of Doughboy’s activities as a dreaded kidnapper in the Niger Delta.

In the past three years, Doughboy has been credited with eleven kidnappings involving eighteen Imperial Oil expatriate staff. The most recent was in January when he snatched Tanowitz, Morris, and Betsen. As usual, Doughboy made a list of demands including the obligatory call for all oil companies especially Imperial Oil, to leave the Niger Delta, and Asiama in particular. (11)

The challenge of kidnapping in the Niger Delta is one that the nation cannot overlook or ignore since it creates a sense of insecurity and scares foreigners because in most cases, the Niger Delta boys prefer to kidnap foreigners. The kidnappers know Nigerian oil workers may not have the amount of ransom they expect. As a matter of fact, Doughboy targets mainly foreigners and he has graded the oil workers in the Niger Delta as follows.

There is a pecking order for the value of hostages. Americans, Britons and Western Europeans rank top, the grade A. Their ransoms are the most expensive. Next are the Eastern Europeans and some South-Americans. At the bottom of the pile are the Asians and Arabs. Nobody kidnap the Lebaneses. ... they are more Nigerian than we are and probably won’t fetch fifty thousand.
They are not worth the trouble. (197 - 98)
The idea of getting more money as ransom is the reason for kidnapping grade A oil workers by the Niger Delta militants, as a matter of fact, the events (plot) of the novel begins the with the kidnap of Brian Manning, a “grade A” (197) oil worker with Imperial Oil Company at Asiama River in an Engine boat. He dies of heart failure despite the fact that his ransom is paid. Manning represents the few foreign oil workers who have lost their lives in the Niger Delta since this crisis situation surfaced in that region.

Nigerians, who embrace crime or any other illegal way of life, carefully look for a suitable euphemistic name for their illicit professions. Those who are into oil bunkering for instance cannot come out openly to declare that they specialise in oil bunkering. Garricks also echoes this in *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. Doye who is into oil bunkering tells his friend that, he “is into the business of independent oil marketing” (338). The question is, Why engage in an activity if you know that it is not good or that you will not want others to know you are into it? Tubo concludes that, “independent oil marketing is a respectable moniker for oil bunkering” (338). Considering the challenges of illegal oil bunkering and kidnapping, Aluma Stephen, Chima Raphael Ofuegbu and Abu Edet conclude that, “this naturally endowed region has become a hot bed of hostage taking, violence, insurgency, crude oil bunkering and gang war” (49426).

**Reasons for the Emergence of Oil Bunkering and Kidnapping in the Niger Delta**

The main motivating factor for the oil bunkering in the Niger Delta is the fact that the market is there for those who want to go into illegal bunkering of crude oil. There are people always waiting to buy what the illegal oil bunkers are able to steal. Aside from the availability of buyers, Garricks presents the people who now embrace oil bunkering as people who have being pushed to the wall. They cannot go out and catch fish in the river. Crude oil production has polluted the rivers and killed the fishes. They cannot go out there to do farm work because the oil has damaged the land such that crops cannot grow there again. What then can they do aside from bunkering crude oil. This is the picture that Garricks has painted in the plot of *Tomorrow Died Yesterday*. The youth are poor and restless such that they are desperately in need of income whether legal or illegal. Soboye indicates that through illegal oil bunkering, youths who were seen as ne´er-do-well are now doing well. He says that Afonya who was wretched, is “beginning to do well for himself because he got into the business [oil bunkering]. He finally rented a room, bought a TV, video, and radio from Leventis Stores in Port Harcourt” (111). It then follows that poverty and the lack of modern technological gadgets like TV and radio, pushes young men into illegal oil bunkering and kidnapping. He further explains that Afonya has also bought a generator since there is no electricity at Asiama.

The absence of the basic amenities such as electricity, portable water, schools and good roads is another factor responsible for the illegal bunkering and kidnapping at Asiama Town and other towns in the Niger Delta. One would expect that if the government refuses to provide electricity, in the town where crude oil exploration takes place, the numerous oil companies operating here should have done so. Another observation is that if the government does not want to provide electricity to the people, the government should make it mandatory for the oil companies operating within these various towns and villages to provide electricity and other social amenities in these places. Now the only way that young men like Afonya can have electronics and have electricity to use them is by going into illegal oil bunkering and kidnapping. Garricks further establishes the fact that schools are not readily available for their children to attend despite the fact that crude oil is derived from their region. He accomplishes this in the novel as Asiama is without any government school and the oil companies also do not bother to build any. Asiama has to depend on the two schools built by church missionaries and even these schools lack manpower. One teacher is asked to teach many subjects because the government and the oil companies are not ready to assist. Catechist Akassa for instance, has no other option than to “teach Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics at St. Cyprian’s Grammar
School and … teach the Bible in St. Cyprian Church” (128).

The business of oil bunkering is always successful because people behind oil bunkering are politicians and other influential men in the country. Garricks further opines that oil bunkering was not introduced by the people of Asima. It was initially introduced by government officials, prominent men in Nigeria, generals in the Army and wealthy Northerners. They only employ the services of Afonya to work for them and he is paid stipends at the end. The main people behind the bunkering of crude oil according Garricks in Tomorrow Died Yesterday are, a few very powerful people in the country. I’m not sure who they are but the rumour is that they include Generals in the army, and some mainly Hausa civilians in government and business. Afonya and others merely work for them. ... the government has a hand in it. I know this because Afonya says the navy turns aside as they sail away with the oil. It is the biggest business in Nigeria. And except these people approve of you, you cannot enter the business. (112)

This means that the illegal bunkering is a “justified” crime since the high and mighty are behind it. What then will stop the boys from working for this cartel in other to better their lives. The Niger Delta youths see how lucrative the crude oil bunkering business is, they too boldly declared themselves as lords of the trade and began bursting pipelines at will to collect and sell crude oil in Asiam Town and all other towns in the Niger Delta.

Garricks identifies unemployment, tribalism and favouritism as other reasons why the Niger Delta youths embrace kidnapping and oil bunkering. This is because oil companies employ many people from other regions of the country and foreign expatriates, while the Niger Delta people sit and watch helplessly. Doye belongs to this category having found no job after many years of graduating from the university.

For three years, I was unemployed.

The last test at Imperial Oil, I passed it easily. I got called for an interview. I thought I did well at the interview…actually, I was the best at that interview. But they gave the job to one Yoruba boy who also had a two-one [degree]. The Personnel Manager at the time was his distant relative or something. (233 - 34)

Doye is left with no other option than to embrace oil bunkering. Soon upgrades himself to the status of a kidnapper since kidnapping has become a more lucrative venture. These Niger Delta kidnappers became millionaires instantly and other criminally minded Nigerians emulate them by also embracing the profession such that kidnapping has now become a serious contemporary challenge in Niger Delta in particular and Nigeria in general. According to Garricks, these kidnappers have discovered that “after the looting of public funds by government officials and oil bunkering, kidnapping is the next most profitable enterprise in the Niger Delta” (195).

Another factor responsible for the challenge of oil bunkering and kidnapping is sabotage occasioned by the politicians and traditional leaders. Garricks opines that kidnapping and other illicit activities cannot go on successfully if the government officials, traditional leaders and security agents do not facilitate these activities. This is the reason why, Tomorrow Died Yesterday, has traditional leaders like the Amayanabo and chief Ikaki who are ready to facilitate such activities as kidnapping and oil bunkering. As traditional leader, Chief Ikaki recruits boys who do illegal bunkering for him. This also explains why a corrupt security operative like Mr. Wali and many others promote kidnapping because they benefit from the ransom. Doye explains how these people benefit from ransom payment,

Previously, when I kidnapped expatriates, the middlemen I used were usually government security boys like Wali, and sometimes, the public affairs people in the companies, you know me, Kaniye. I may be a bad man, but I am generous. But my generosity
wasn’t enough for the middlemen. They got greedy. When I asked for a ransom of say, ten million, the middlemen told the companies that it was eighteen or twenty. It got to a point where they started earning more than me, including Wali and Tubo, that useless born-throway. [a child abandoned the mother]. (242)

This accounts for the fact that kidnapping has become a booming industry in the Niger Delta. Tubo, the PRO of Imperial Oil connives with Wali, a government security operative to make money from ransom payment and even get more money than some of the kidnappers. As a result of this, they come out to openly condemn kidnappers but secretly encourage the kidnappers to continue unleashing mayhem in the society. Garricks maintains that both the kidnappers and those who are involved in ransom payment are con men who use the plight of the Niger as a cover up. What they target privately is the huge money they collect and share. He uses the character, Tubo who is part of the ransom collectors to buttress this fact.

Kidnapping is the greatest con, the biggest wayo. This is how it works. For example, a militant group like say Doye and his boys, right? They kidnap a white man, and then make all sorts of reasonable demands—development for the Niger Delta, jobs for indigenes, compensation for spills; oil companies should leave the area etcetera. In reality, however, all it takes is a ransom. The companies usually cough up the ransom money. (195)

Tubo points out that Wali along with other government security men approach the companies for ransom on behalf of the kidnappers but “in reality, many of them are working for themselves or for some politicians in government. Wali works with Chief Ikaki”(196). This confirms that Chief Ikaki alone is a Chief in Asiama, he is also a Special Adviser to the governor, he owns an oil bunkering gang operated by miscreants in the Niger Delta, he also collects contracts from oil companies and does not execute them but he is fully paid. He also has a hand in the kidnapping industry where he and security officers and other politicians collect ransom and take their share before handing over a little amount to the real kidnappers. The oil company workers delivering the ransom also have their own share such that at the end of the day, all these con men in the government and out of government are settled. Garricks explains that this is the reason why “no one has been caught or charged for kidnapping. The militants are simply working for other people without knowing it”(197).

Garricks sees the politicians, government officials, traditional leaders, police, State Security men (like Mr. Wali) and the kidnappers as partners in crime whose business must go on smoothly because those whose responsibility it is to arrest and prosecute these kidnappers have simply become “share holders” in the business and have now taken a new responsibility, that of ensuring that the kidnappers operate freely because, the more people they kidnap, the more dividends will be available to share among all these share holders in the business. A business of this kind will always yield much profit and cannot suffer any form of loss because the system is perfect and everyone is settled. This accounts for the fact, that such illicit activities take place and culprits are not arrested.

Tomorrow Died Yesterday, portrays godfathers like the Amayanabo and Chief Ikaki in the Niger Delta as people who see the fight for the emancipation of the people as an opportunity to acquire ill-gotten wealth while deceiving the masses that they are protecting their interest or fighting for their rights. A kidnapper like Doye (Doughboy) himself confesses that he is now into these illicit activities to enrich himself. “you think I should be in some government job getting twenty thousand a month or whatever rubbish they pay as minimum wage. Will that make you happy, Kaniye?” (233). He explains why he has become a kidnapper, “I’m just taking my own share of the oil money… I didn’t start it, Kaniye. I can’t stop it either. I decided that since it’s my oil, my river and my land, that’s being raped, I might as well join in”(234) He confesses that though he is pursuing his own interest only, Asiama people “believe in me and the justice of my fight. To them, I’m more than a hero, I’m an
ideology. Most of their children and young men either beg to join me or imitate me”(238). Garricks uses a kidnapper like Doye to express the the fact that most of the militants in the Niger Delta are no longer fighting for the emancipation of their region. They are only into bunkering and kidnapping to enrich themselves. Those who still believe that kidnappers are fighting for the masses are the unenlightened and gullible people.

The enlightened people in the Niger Delta represented in the novel by Catechist Akassa and Sir James know that what Doye and the other kidnappers are doing in the Niger Delta is not in the interest of the masses. Catechist Akassa for instance advises Doye to give up kidnapping and oil bunkering thus: “my son, many say you fight for justice. They say you do what you do because you want good things to come to our people. If what they say is true, then you need to learn. You cannot bring good, by doing bad”(289). (my emphasis). Many other issues are responsible for the chaos in this region. Mernyi summarizes the factors responsible for the continuous existence of crisis situation in the Niger Delta and other regions in Nigeria.

The persistence upsurge of these illegal oil operations in the Niger Delta is due to high levels of youth unemployment, armed ethnic militia, ineffective and corrupt law enforcement agencies and other state actors who are often part of an international syndicate. Theft and pipeline vandalism continue to thrive in Nigeria in spite of government’s efforts because of some vested interest of powerful persons involved in the business and the lack of political will to deal with it... Nigerian leaders especially the political class and oil personnel are benefiting from illegal oil bunkering hence lack political will to confront it. If the leaders are not benefiting directly or indirectly, they must have come up with measures or legislation to stop the menace. (25)

The Consequences of Oil Bunkering and Kidnapping in the Niger Delta

The postcolonial and contemporary challenge of vandalism of pipelines in Nigeria is not limited to the Niger Delta only. It all began in the Niger Delta as seen here but now vandalism of oil pipelines take place in different parts of the country where oil pipelines are installed for conveyance of petroleum products to different parts of Nigeria. The first consequence of pipeline vandalism and bunkering is that it may lead to death and this is because there may be fire to burn the people involved and people in that locality. Many have lost their lives while vandalizing pipelines for purpose of oil bunkering. This is so because when pipelines are burst, there may be an explosion. Garricks depicts this dangerous aspect of the illegal oil bunkering in Tomorrow Died Yesterday as Soboye and his companions are immolated after bursting oil pipeline.

A roaring fire, about ten feet high, marked the tiny uninhabited island where Soboye and twelve other people had gone to steal, or rather, bunker oil. The fire, bright and brilliant, gave enough light for us to see their deep-roasted corpses which littered the shore. The corpses were contorted into violently grotesque positions in death. Death, from the pipeline explosion, had been immediate. We smelled the heavy aroma of burnt flesh. (122)

Apart from the loss of lives, the destruction done to the entire Asiama community is unimaginable considering the fact that, “it took the government six days to put out the fire” (123). The negative impacts of the contemporary challenge of pipeline vandalisation and crude oil theft in Nigeria cannot be over emphasised. The consequence of this activity on the economy of the country must be noted here. These activities deny Nigerians access to their oil wealth. The resources of the nation should be there to be used for the good of all but those who take part in bunkering do not reason this way. The economic effect of illegal oil bunkering is further reiterated by Adishi and Hunga who state that, due to the loss of revenue to illegal
bunkering, Nigeria is no longer selling enough crude oil to meet her budgetary provisions. The government is failing to meet some of its obligations. The negative impacts of vandalism and crude oil theft include the destruction of aquatic and farm lands, economic sabotage which explains the shortfall of Nigeria’s budget and divestments by some International Oil Companies, IOCs, with attendant job losses thereby compounds the unemployment situation in Nigeria. (55)

Aside from the economy, the pollution of rivers and land by the crude oil when it spills as a result of the vandalism destroys the land such that it loses its fertility and no longer useful for farming. This leads to food insecurity. Where will the people get food if this crude oil destroy their land as a result of bunkering? This is a question that still begs for an answer. Oil bunkering is also a serious challenge to the government and people of Nigeria because it further tarnishes the image of the country. Consider a situation where the only way a dictionary can define oil bunkering is by making reference to oil theft in Nigeria. This e-dictionary is on the internet and can be accessed worldwide. Whoever wants to know what illegal oil bunkering is, must understand that it is in Nigeria that this takes place most.

Conclusion

This study has established the fact that the nation has not been fair to the people whose land provides the finances needed for the growth and development of the nation. A conclusion can be done taking in to consideration, the fact that the Niger Delta crisis has come to existence as a result of many years of neglecting the region by the leadership of this country—both civilian and military—thus creating a sense of dissatisfaction among these people whose land and water is polluted by crude oil and gas flaring. Tomorrow Died Yesterday has identified some of the grievances of the Niger Delta people. This includes: unemployment; poverty; bad governance; criminal impunity in the country; the destruction of the land and water as a result of oil spillage and pipeline vandalism; the neglect of the region by the oil companies; and the neglect of the region by the government. Chimeka Garricks portrays these challenges in the Niger Delta as that which provoked the people and has now led to the emergence of oil bunkering, pipeline vandalisation and kidnapping.

This study maintains that the nation has much to do, so as to put in place measures that will pacify the people and curb criminality in the region. The government has already initiated a process of bringing peace to this region. The creation of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 2001 by the Obasanjo regime is a step in the right direction. The commission will function better if corruption in the commission is checked. This is so because much money is given to the NDDC but they have little or nothing to show the people of the region. Much of the money may have been mismanaged at one point or another. The horrible stories of massive graft emerging recently as the audit of the NDDC is been done explain why the Commission’s impact is felt in the Niger Delta region.

Government should therefore, alleviate the suffering of the people of Niger Delta by providing the basic amenities that will make life more comfortable. They should be offered jobs in the oil companies operating in their domain so that the dissatisfaction of the unemployed youths will be taken care of, and they may not be tempted to go back to crime. Traditional leaders like the Amayanabo and Chief Ikaki in Tomorrow Died Yesterday should no longer consider their selfish interest above that of their people. The police and other security organisations should be more patriotic and refuse to take part in the criminal activities so that they can fight crime effectively. This is very important because Tomorrow Died Yesterday indicts traditional leaders in the region, the oil companies, the politicians, the police and other law enforcement agencies as partners in crime as they all connive to pursue their own interests at the expense of the impoverished and degraded Niger Delta people. The militants should also be taught various trades and encouraged to shun all criminal activities in their own interest and the interest of the region in particular and the nation in general. When this is done, the Niger Delta will pursue the path of
peace and development.

**Works Cited**


