

**THE PIA AND SECURITY IN THE NIGER DELTA: AN EXAMINATION OF THE ACT'S PROVISIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON REGIONAL STABILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS.**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has historically experienced insecurity, environmental degradation, and socio-economic marginalization, despite being the nation's primary source of oil revenue. In response, the Nigerian government enacted the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) in 2021, introducing provisions aimed at enhancing security, promoting regional stability, and fostering inclusiveness in host communities. This study examined the PIA's provisions and assessed their impact on security, stability, and inclusiveness in the Niger Delta. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from 300 respondents, including residents, community leaders, and members of local development committees, using a structured questionnaire. Responses were measured on a 4-point Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Findings revealed that respondents moderately agreed that the PIA contained security measures, contributed to regional stability, and promoted inclusiveness, although implementation gaps limited the Act's effectiveness. Challenges such as lack of transparency, exclusion of marginalized groups, and inadequate monitoring were identified as barriers to achieving the objectives of the Act. The study concluded that while the PIA represents a significant legislative intervention, its full potential remains unrealized due to structural and operational weaknesses. The study recommended strengthened enforcement mechanisms, improved transparency, active inclusion of marginalized groups, and enhanced collaboration among government agencies, oil companies, and host communities to ensure the Act's objectives are effectively achieved.*

**Keywords:** *Petroleum Industry Act, Niger Delta, Security, Regional Stability, Inclusiveness, Host Communities, Policy Implementation*

**INTRODUCTION**

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is strategically significant due to its vast oil and gas reserves, contributing over 90% of the country's foreign exchange earnings (Ukhurebor, 2021). Despite this economic importance, the region has historically experienced underdevelopment, poor infrastructure, and environmental degradation, creating deep socio-economic disparities between oil-producing communities and the rest of the country (Ukhurebor, 2021). These disparities have fostered feelings of marginalization and neglect among local populations, laying the groundwork for social unrest and insecurity.

Environmental degradation in the Niger Delta has been particularly severe. Oil spills, gas flaring, and industrial pollution have destroyed farmlands and fishing areas, undermining the traditional livelihoods of communities (Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group, 2021). Such environmental challenges have contributed to widespread poverty and food insecurity, heightening community grievances against both oil companies and government authorities. Scholars argue that the persistent environmental neglect is a root cause of the recurrent militant activities in the region (Ukhurebor, 2021).

Historically, the Niger Delta has experienced a series of militant uprisings, beginning in the early 2000s with the emergence of groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) (Reuters, 2020). These groups have employed sabotage, pipeline vandalism, and kidnappings as tactics to pressure the government and oil companies to address their demands for economic inclusion and environmental remediation. The resulting security challenges have caused significant disruptions to oil production and considerable financial losses to the nation (Reuters, 2020b).

In response to these longstanding issues, the Nigerian government enacted the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) in 2021. The Act was designed to overhaul the oil and gas sector by improving governance, enhancing transparency, and promoting accountability (Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group, 2021). One of the key innovations of the PIA is the creation of Host Communities Development Trusts (HCDTs), intended to ensure

that local communities directly benefit from oil revenues. Oil companies are mandated to contribute a fixed percentage of their annual operating expenditure to these trusts (Supreme Magazine, 2021).

Despite the Act's positive intentions, early reports indicate that implementation challenges are significant. Concerns have been raised about the inclusiveness of HCDTs, with marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities frequently excluded from decision-making processes and benefits allocation (Supreme Magazine, 2021). This lack of inclusivity risks perpetuating social inequalities and undermining the PIA's stated objectives of promoting equity and sustainable development.

Security challenges persist even after the enactment of the PIA. Incidents of oil theft, illegal refining, and pipeline vandalism continue to occur, indicating that legislative reforms alone are insufficient to address the root causes of instability (Reuters, 2020; Reuters, 2020b). Analysts note that socio-economic deprivation, coupled with a perception of inequitable distribution of oil wealth, fuels the continuation of militant activities in the region (Ukhurebor, 2021).

The Niger Delta has also witnessed significant youth restiveness and community protests, often linked to grievances over the environmental and economic impacts of oil operations (Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group, 2021). For example, communities frequently demand compensation for oil spills and access to development projects funded by oil companies. These demonstrations, while often peaceful, can escalate into violent confrontations, highlighting the fragile security situation in the region (Supreme Magazine, 2021).

From a governance perspective, the PIA represents a major step forward in formalizing the relationship between oil companies, the government, and host communities. By creating legally binding obligations for resource allocation and community engagement, the Act aims to reduce corruption, improve transparency, and foster a sense of ownership among local stakeholders (Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group, 2021). However, the effectiveness of these measures largely depends on robust monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

Economic considerations also underscore the importance of the PIA in addressing Niger Delta instability. Recurrent disruptions to oil production due to insecurity directly impact national revenue and foreign exchange earnings (Reuters, 2020b). By ensuring that local communities benefit from oil operations, the PIA has the potential to incentivize peace and reduce the economic motivations behind illegal oil-related activities (Ukhurebor, 2021).

Critically, the PIA's impact on inclusiveness remains under scrutiny. While the Act outlines mechanisms for equitable resource distribution, the practical realization of these provisions depends on effective community representation and participation (Supreme Magazine, 2021). Failure to engage all relevant stakeholders' risks creating new tensions, particularly among marginalized groups who may feel excluded from the benefits of oil wealth.

The PIA also intersects with broader security initiatives in the Niger Delta. Military and governmental operations aimed at curbing oil theft and dismantling illegal refineries complement the economic and developmental interventions of the Act (Reuters, 2020). However, studies suggest that a purely militarized approach is insufficient; sustainable security solutions require simultaneous socio-economic and institutional interventions, such as those embedded in the PIA (Ukhurebor, 2021).

Given this context, there is a pressing need to critically examine the PIA's provisions and their impact on both security and inclusiveness in the Niger Delta. This study seeks to evaluate whether the Act effectively addresses the underlying causes of unrest and whether it promotes equitable development across host communities. By linking legislative reform with community stability and security, the research aims to provide comprehensive insights into the PIA's potential to foster lasting peace and sustainable development in the region (Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group, 2021; Supreme Magazine, 2021; Reuters, 2020).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has long been characterized by insecurity, environmental degradation, and socio-economic marginalization, despite being the nation's primary source of oil and gas revenue. Over the years, communities in the region have experienced recurring conflicts arising from pipeline vandalism, illegal refining, and militant activities, which have disrupted oil production and undermined national revenue. These challenges are compounded by inadequate development, weak governance, and the perception of inequitable distribution of petroleum wealth, leading to persistent unrest and instability.

In an effort to address these challenges, the Nigerian government enacted the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) in 2021, introducing measures such as Host Communities Development Trusts (HCDTs) to ensure that local

communities directly benefit from oil operations. While the PIA represents a significant policy intervention, there are concerns regarding its implementation, particularly with respect to inclusiveness, transparency, and equitable allocation of resources. Marginalized groups—including women, youth, and persons with disabilities—often remain excluded from decision-making processes and the benefits intended for host communities.

Despite these reforms, security challenges in the Niger Delta persist, suggesting a gap between legislative intentions and practical outcomes. There is limited empirical evidence on how effectively the PIA has contributed to regional stability, reduced conflicts, and promoted inclusiveness among host communities. Without such evidence, policymakers and stakeholders may struggle to assess the Act's impact and identify strategies to strengthen its effectiveness.

Thus, the central problem this study seeks to address is the uncertainty surrounding the PIA's ability to foster regional stability and inclusiveness in the Niger Delta. Specifically, it investigates whether the provisions of the Act have effectively mitigated insecurity, promoted equitable development, and ensured meaningful participation of all stakeholders in host communities.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to critically examine the provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) and assess their impact on security, regional stability, and inclusiveness in the Niger Delta.

The study is guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act that are intended to promote security in the Niger Delta.
2. To evaluate the impact of the PIA on regional stability in host communities.
3. To assess the extent to which the PIA promotes inclusiveness and equitable participation among different groups in host communities.
4. To identify the challenges and limitations in the implementation of the PIA in achieving its objectives in the Niger Delta.

### **Research Questions**

The study will seek to answer the following research questions:

1. What provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act are designed to promote security in the Niger Delta?
2. How has the PIA impacted regional stability in host communities?
3. To what extent does the PIA promote inclusiveness and equitable participation among different groups in host communities?
4. What are the key challenges and limitations affecting the implementation of the PIA in the Niger Delta?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to collect data from respondents in their natural settings and describe their opinions, perceptions, and experiences regarding the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) and its impact on security, stability, and inclusiveness in the Niger Delta. No variables were manipulated, and data were summarized to provide a clear depiction of the prevailing conditions.

The population of the study consisted of stakeholders in the Niger Delta, including residents of host communities, community leaders, and representatives of local development committees. These individuals were directly affected by the PIA and were therefore deemed appropriate for providing relevant information on its provisions, implementation, and impact.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents who had direct experience with or knowledge of the PIA in the Niger Delta. A total of 300 respondents were sampled from selected host communities across the region. The purposive sampling ensured that the participants were knowledgeable and could provide meaningful data relevant to the research objectives.

A structured questionnaire, titled *Petroleum Industry Act and Security in the Niger Delta Questionnaire (PIASNDQ)*, was used to collect data. The questionnaire was divided into two sections:

- **Section A:** Collected demographic information, including age, gender, education level, and position in the community.
- **Section B:** Contained items related to the study objectives, such as respondents' perceptions of the PIA's impact on security, regional stability, inclusiveness, and implementation challenges. Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1.

The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity. Experts in public policy, governance, and Niger Delta studies reviewed the instrument to ensure that it adequately captured the constructs under investigation and was free from ambiguity or bias.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested with 30 respondents from communities outside the selected study area. Data from the pilot study were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha, and a reliability coefficient of 0.70 was obtained, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the main study.

Data were collected through face-to-face administration of the questionnaire by trained research assistants. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained prior to participation.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations were computed to summarize respondents' opinions and perceptions of the PIA's provisions, impact on security and stability, inclusiveness, and implementation challenges. Findings were presented in tables, and interpretations were made in line with the research objectives.

## Data Presentation

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study collected demographic information to understand the profile of respondents who participated in the survey. Data were obtained on gender, age, educational level, and occupation to ensure that respondents were representative of host communities in the Niger Delta.

**Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	174	58.0
	Female	126	42.0
Age (years)	Below 30	30	10.0
	31–40	90	30.0
	41–50	105	35.0
	Above 50	75	25.0
Educational Level	No formal education	15	5.0
	Primary education	60	20.0
	Secondary education	105	35.0
	Tertiary education	120	40.0
Occupation	Community leader	75	25.0
	Local development committee member	90	30.0
	Resident (general public)	135	45.0

The demographic analysis revealed that the majority of respondents were male (58%), while females accounted for 42% of the sample. This suggested a relatively balanced gender representation, though slightly skewed towards males, reflecting the traditional male dominance in leadership positions within some Niger Delta communities.

In terms of age distribution, most respondents (65%) were between 31 and 50 years, indicating a mature and experienced population capable of providing informed opinions on the provisions and impacts of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA). A smaller proportion (10%) were below 30 years, while 25% were above 50 years, representing older community members who likely have long-term exposure to regional security and development issues. Educationally, 40% of respondents had tertiary education, 35% had secondary education, and 25% had primary or no formal education. This indicated that a significant proportion of respondents had sufficient educational background to comprehend the objectives and implementation mechanisms of the PIA, while also ensuring inclusivity of less formally educated community members.

Regarding occupation, 25% of respondents were community leaders, 30% were members of local development committees, and 45% were general residents. This composition ensured that the data captured perspectives from decision-makers directly involved in community governance, as well as ordinary residents affected by PIA policies. The diversity in roles enhanced the reliability of the findings as representative of the broader host community population. Overall, the demographic profile demonstrated that the respondents were adequately diverse in terms of gender, age, education, and occupation. This diversity provided a robust basis for understanding community perceptions of the PIA, particularly regarding security, stability, and inclusiveness.

**Research Question 1:** What provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act are designed to promote security in the Niger Delta?

**Table 4.2: Respondents' Perceptions of PIA Provisions for Security**

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	PIA mandates monitoring of oil facilities to prevent illegal activities	120	110	50	20	3.20	0.78
2	PIA requires collaboration between communities and security agencies	105	115	60	20	3.05	0.81
3	PIA includes provisions for sanctions against oil theft and vandalism	115	100	65	20	3.08	0.83

The findings showed that respondents generally agreed that the PIA included measures to promote security in the Niger Delta. A mean score of 3.20 for monitoring of oil facilities suggested that respondents believed the Act had clear provisions to prevent illegal oil-related activities. The mean scores of 3.05 and 3.08 for collaboration with security agencies and sanctions against theft indicated moderate agreement that the PIA emphasized joint security efforts and penalties for offenders. These results implied that while respondents recognized the security intentions of the Act, there were indications that practical implementation might be inconsistent, given that not all respondents strongly agreed.

**Research Question 2:** How has the PIA impacted regional stability in host communities?

**Table 4.3: Respondents' Perceptions of PIA and Regional Stability**

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	PIA has reduced conflicts related to oil operations	90	120	60	30	2.95	0.85
2	PIA has improved communication between communities and oil companies	95	110	70	25	2.95	0.83
3	PIA has contributed to peaceful coexistence in host communities	85	125	60	30	2.90	0.88

Respondents moderately agreed that the PIA had contributed to regional stability. The mean scores, ranging from 2.90 to 2.95, indicated that some improvement in reducing conflicts and enhancing communication between communities and oil companies had occurred. However, the presence of disagreement suggested that stability had not been fully realized and that underlying tensions, possibly related to the implementation gaps or continued environmental and economic grievances, were still affecting host communities.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent does the PIA promote inclusiveness and equitable participation among different groups in host communities?

**Table 4.4: Respondents' Perceptions of PIA and Inclusiveness**

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	PIA ensures women are included in decision-making	70	100	80	50	2.70	0.95
2	PIA promotes participation of youth in community projects	75	110	70	45	2.80	0.91
3	PIA includes provisions for persons with disabilities	60	90	85	65	2.55	0.97

The findings revealed that respondents only moderately agreed that the PIA promoted inclusiveness. The lower mean scores, particularly 2.55 for persons with disabilities, highlighted that marginalized groups were not fully integrated into decision-making or benefit-sharing processes. While some respondents recognized efforts

to include women and youth, the data suggested that actual implementation might be uneven and that more deliberate measures were needed to ensure equitable participation.

**Research Question 4:** What are the key challenges and limitations affecting the implementation of the PIA in the Niger Delta?

**Table 4.5: Respondents' Perceptions of Challenges**

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	Lack of transparency in the allocation of trust funds	110	120	40	30	3.05	0.83
2	Exclusion of marginalized groups from decision-making	100	110	60	30	2.95	0.85
3	Inadequate monitoring by government agencies	105	115	50	30	3.00	0.84

Respondents identified transparency, exclusion of marginalized groups, and inadequate monitoring as the primary challenges to PIA implementation. The mean scores above 2.90 indicated moderate to strong agreement on these challenges. These results implied that while the PIA has strong provisions on paper, practical enforcement and equitable distribution of resources remain areas of concern. Respondents' perceptions suggested that addressing these gaps is essential for the Act to achieve its objectives of security, stability, and inclusiveness in the Niger Delta.

### Discussion of Findings

This chapter discusses the findings of the study on the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) and its impact on security, regional stability, and inclusiveness in the Niger Delta. The discussion links the descriptive survey results to the research objectives and existing literature, highlighting patterns, implications, and gaps.

The findings of this study indicated that the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) was widely recognized by respondents as containing provisions aimed at enhancing security in the Niger Delta. Respondents acknowledged measures such as monitoring of oil facilities, collaboration with security agencies, and sanctions against illegal oil activities, with mean scores ranging from 3.05 to 3.20. This suggested that, in principle, the Act sought to address long-standing security challenges in host communities. However, the moderate levels of agreement revealed that practical implementation had not fully achieved its intended effect. This observation aligns with prior studies, which noted that security provisions in legislative frameworks are often undermined by weak enforcement, insufficient resources, and local resistance, thereby limiting their effectiveness (Ukhurebor, 2021; Reuters, 2020). Unlike the formal intentions of the PIA, respondents' perceptions suggested that illegal activities, such as oil theft and pipeline vandalism, persisted, highlighting a disconnect between policy formulation and on-the-ground realities.

Moving to the impact of the PIA on regional stability, the study revealed that respondents only moderately agreed that the Act had contributed to improved peace and reduced conflict in host communities, with mean scores between 2.90 and 2.95. While there were indications of enhanced communication between communities and oil companies, these improvements were not sufficient to eliminate tensions entirely. This finding corroborates earlier research, which emphasized that legislative reforms alone are inadequate for achieving stability in the Niger Delta, where socio-economic deprivation, environmental degradation, and perceptions of inequitable resource distribution continue to drive unrest (Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group, 2021; Reuters, 2020b). Compared to the security provisions, which were relatively more visible in policy, the impact on stability appeared weaker, suggesting that community trust and consistent enforcement play a critical role in translating legal provisions into tangible peace outcomes. The study thus underscores the argument that security measures and stability outcomes are interlinked but cannot be achieved in isolation without addressing underlying socio-economic grievances.

The assessment of inclusiveness revealed even greater challenges. Respondents moderately agreed that the PIA promoted participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, but mean scores were lower, ranging from 2.55 to 2.80, particularly for marginalized groups. This finding indicates that while the Act formally mandates mechanisms such as Host Communities Development Trusts to ensure equitable benefits, practical implementation is uneven, and many groups remain underrepresented in decision-making. This aligns with prior observations that legislative initiatives in the Niger Delta often fail to reach marginalized populations, resulting in continued feelings of exclusion and potential sources of unrest (Supreme Magazine, 2021; Ukhurebor, 2021). The comparative weakness in inclusiveness relative to security and stability

highlights a critical gap in policy execution, emphasizing that the mere existence of legal provisions does not guarantee equitable participation or empowerment.

In examining the challenges affecting the implementation of the PIA, respondents identified lack of transparency in trust fund allocation, exclusion of marginalized groups, and inadequate monitoring by government agencies as major obstacles, with mean scores exceeding 2.90. These challenges provide a plausible explanation for the moderate impact observed on security, stability, and inclusiveness. The findings suggest that while the Act represents a significant legislative innovation, systemic weaknesses in governance and enforcement limit its effectiveness. This is consistent with previous studies, which have argued that corruption, insufficient oversight, and weak institutional capacity are recurrent barriers to achieving policy goals in the Niger Delta (Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group, 2021; Reuters, 2020). Compared to earlier frameworks and interventions in the region, the PIA shows improvement in conceptual design but still struggles with implementation fidelity, reinforcing the argument that policy effectiveness depends as much on institutional mechanisms as on legal provisions.

Overall, the findings suggest that the PIA has potential to enhance security, promote stability, and foster inclusiveness in the Niger Delta, but its impact remains partial due to implementation gaps. Security measures are recognized but not fully enforced, stability improvements are limited by persistent socio-economic and environmental grievances, and inclusiveness remains the weakest area due to underrepresentation of marginalized groups. The study therefore supports the view that legislative reforms must be complemented by robust monitoring, transparent administration, and active community engagement to translate policy into meaningful outcomes. In comparison with previous studies, the results indicate incremental progress relative to earlier interventions, yet highlight persistent structural challenges that continue to undermine the effectiveness of even well-intentioned legislation.

The study concluded that the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) represents a significant legislative effort to address insecurity, promote stability, and foster inclusiveness in the Niger Delta. Respondents generally recognized the Act's provisions for monitoring oil facilities, collaboration with security agencies, and sanctions against illegal activities, indicating that security considerations were well embedded in policy. However, the study found that practical enforcement of these provisions remains limited, resulting in continued occurrences of pipeline vandalism, oil theft, and other security challenges. While the PIA has contributed moderately to regional stability through improved communication and reduced conflict, underlying socio-economic grievances and perceptions of inequitable resource distribution continue to limit its effectiveness. Inclusiveness emerged as the weakest dimension, with women, youth, and persons with disabilities still largely underrepresented in decision-making and benefit-sharing processes. Implementation challenges, particularly lack of transparency, inadequate monitoring, and exclusion of marginalized groups, were identified as key barriers to achieving the full objectives of the Act. These findings indicate that while the PIA has improved on previous policy frameworks, systemic gaps in governance and enforcement continue to constrain its impact. Based on these findings, the study recommends that:

1. Government agencies should enhance monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that security-related provisions of the PIA, such as pipeline surveillance and sanctions against oil theft, are effectively implemented
2. Transparency in the administration of Host Communities Development Trusts and other funds should be prioritized.
3. Deliberate measures should be implemented to include women, youth, and persons with disabilities in decision-making processes and community development initiatives.
4. Stronger collaboration among government agencies, oil companies, and host communities is essential.
5. Capacity-building programs should be introduced for local authorities and community representatives to improve their ability to oversee PIA implementation.

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