

The Establishment, Growth And Development of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Depot, Apir in Benue State, 1979-2015

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to assess and documents the establishment, growth and development of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Depot in Makurdi, Benue State from the date of its establishment in 1979 to 2015 when it was shut down from receiving product in Port Harcourt Refinery. The main purpose of establishing this Depot is to distribute NNPC Petroleum products such as Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) and Dual Purpose Kerosene (DPK) from port Harcourt Refinery down to the depot for easy access and up liftmen to Makurdi Depot and its environs by the petroleum marketers to the areas such as Kogi, Nassarawa, Benue and part of Taraba States. The Depot is headed by the Depot Manager who is assisted by the Deputy Depot manager, down to other Depot superintendents and supervisors of various departments. This work employs

the use of both the primary and the secondary data in its qualitative analysis. The Depot however encounters numerous challenges such as vanderlization of petroleum pipelines, poor management. And the depot cannot longer pump fuel to its Oil marketers. The stakeholders in the Oil marketing and distribution are calling on Federal Government to restore the depot to its optimal operation to save them from this caters trophy.

1.0 Introduction

Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC's pipeline and depot network is an integral national asset, the operation of which started in 1979 by the defunct Pipelines and Products Marketing Sector (PPMS). The organization was later renamed Pipelines and Products Marketing Company (PPMC) in 1988.¹ The NNPC Management however, with the support of the Federal Government, unbundled the old PPMC to, among others, have a separate entity overseeing the crude and product pipelines and storage network. The restructuring of PPMC in 2016 gave rise to the creation of Nigerian Pipelines and Storage Company (NPSC), which is charged with the responsibility of operations including maintenance of NNPC's pipeline and depot facilities, the one in Makurdi inclusive;²

However by its design, the pipeline network is also to move efficiently crude oil from terminals located at Bonny to Warri Refining and Petrochemical Company (WRPC) and Port Harcourt Refining Company (PHRC), respectively where it can later be moved to the various Depots (Port Harcourt Refining to Aba Depot, then to Enugu Depot, and passes from Makurdi Depot to Yola Depot in Adamawa State. Thereafter, refined petroleum products such as, Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), Dual Purpose Kerosene (DPK) and Automotive Gasoline Oil (AGO) are moved from the Refineries to the product Depots for truck up liftment.³

1.1 The Establishment, Growth and Development of NNPC Depot in Benue State 1979 – 2015

Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) was established in 1977 and its direct involvement in the marketing of oil did not begin until 1981, that was when the government started having its own equity interest in the operation of the oil companies. It has been the policy of government to put in place proper facilities in the downstream sector like refinery, distribution and marketing of petroleum products so as to embrace the value added to our petroleum resources.⁴

Presently, Nigeria has four (4) refineries with two Port Harcourt while Warri and Kaduna have one each. All the refineries have the total production capacity of four hundred and forty five thousand (445) barrels per day. To ensure the supply of available petroleum products throughout Nigeria, the NNPC built about three hundred thousand kilometers (300,000) the network of pipeline covering all points of the country, inter-connected to seventeen (17) Petroleum Depot in Nigeria. This is or was aimed at eliminating the perennial shortage and storage's of petroleum product in the country.⁵

The Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) is a commercial, integrated oil company that is engaged in exploration, production, processing transportation and marketing of crude oil, gas product and derivatives. Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) was established in 1977 by the NNPC Act No 33 of that year through the merger of the Nigerian National Corporation whose functions were mainly operational and the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources which performs regulatory function or role.⁶

NNPC has eleven (11) subsidiaries of which Pipelines Transportation of Petroleum Products, Marketing, Company (PPMC) is among them. The subsidiaries have the responsibility of transporting crude

oil from the sea all the way to the various refineries through pipelines and the transportations of the refined petroleum products namely: Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) and Dual Purpose Kerosene (DPK) and eventual distribution of the product to the various Depots across the country, making little profit in the process.⁷

The ever-lingering problem of scarcity of petroleum products could be directly attributed to the efficiency in the product and distribution.

NNPC Depot, Makurdi is one out of twenty one (21) Depots located throughout the country especially in major cities and towns, Persistent break downs of our refineries and the government inability to put them in a good shape is a serious problem. Makurdi depot was commission in 1979 and is one of the five (5) depots in the eastern area of petroleum products, marketing, company (PPMC).⁸

The function of this depot is to received petroleum products pumped through pipeline from Port Harcourt (PHC) or any of the four Refineries across the nation through bridging from other Depots like Enugu Depot, it also distributes product to Makurdi Transport Distribution Zone (TDZ) to around its environs such as Nassarawa, Kogi and Taraba States and this includes the whole of Benue state. The Makurdi Apir Depot has the responsibility of pumping products to Yola in Adamawa state.⁹

The depot distributes to over 300 Independent marketers and about 160 Major Marketers outlets, the depot also pumps Product to Yola Depot for distribution of petroleum products in the entire North Eastern part of the country. The distribution of petroleum products to the transport distribution Zone (TDZ) is done through Licensed Marketers outlines (Filling stations).¹⁰

1.2 Objectives of NNPC Depot Makurdi

The Pipelines and Product Marketing Company was set up with the objective to provide excellent customer services by transporting refined petroleum products and moving petroleum products to the existing and future markets efficiently and at low cost through a safe and well maintained network of pipelines and depots.¹¹ It is also part of the objectives of the company to profitably and efficiently market refined petroleum products in the domestic as well as export markets especially in the North-Central Nigeria, provides marine services and also maintains uninterrupted movement of Refined petroleum products from the local refineries, to Independent Marketers and Major Marketers in and around Benue State.¹²

Fig 1 Storage Tanks of NNPC Depot Makurdi



Source: Researchers Field Work 2021

Fig II. New Sign Post of NNPC Depot Apir Makurdi



Source: Filed Work 2018

1.3 Organizational Structure of NNPC Depot Apir, Makurdi

Any organization that wishes to carry out its mission successfully and achieve corporate goals must have a functioning internal structure, and must have systems that allow it to carry out its work effectively. Organization structure shows the relationship between the governance and management of the organization, an effective organization thinks carefully about the relations between its members, its volunteers, its staff, and its constituents. Naturally, it would include things like official job titles, descriptions, and objectives for employees, along with their conditions of employment or employment contracts, the official differentiation of divisions, departments, and work units;¹³ it also states standard operating procedures, and other documents establishing the legal basis of the organization etc. Almost on a par with these are derivative descriptions such as the organizational chart, official work-flow diagrams.

NNPC Depot outlets structure can be explained in the form of direct structure linked with NNPC, Refineries this involves the NNPC Depots which is headed by Depot Manager and assistance Depot Manager Head of this also

involves all other nine superintendents/supervisors respectively as showing in the figure below¹⁴

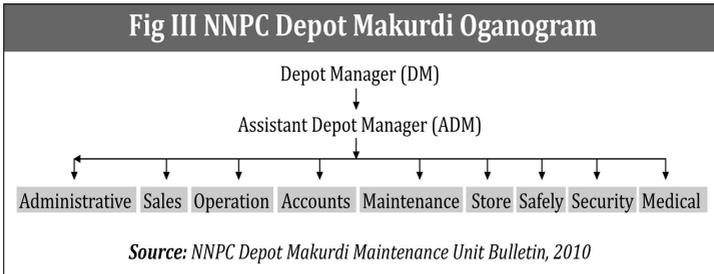


Fig IV Pipeline transportation of NNPC products to NNPC Depot, Makurdi



Source: Researchers Field Work 2021

Fig V Trucks loading PMS, AGO & DPK at NNPC Depot Makurdi



Source: Researchers Field Work 2018

1.4 NNPC Depot and its Social Responsibilities

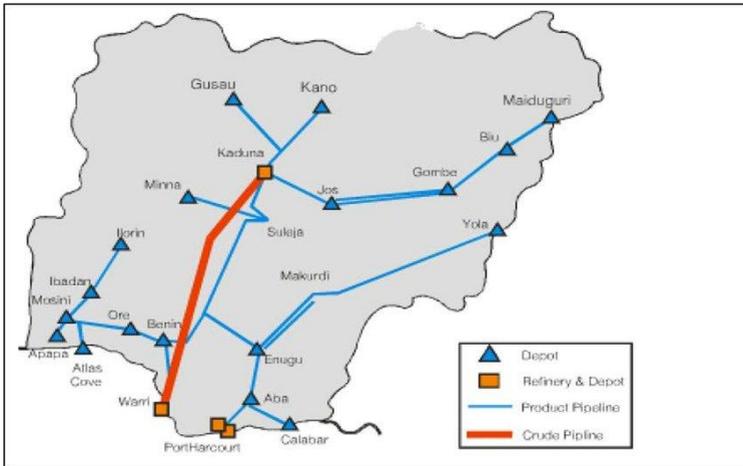
As a socially responsible organization, the NNPC Makurdi Depot delivers its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objectives in line with global best practices. The Corporation therefore, guided by social, environmental and safety standards as obtained in the Oil and Gas industry, operates safely and deals ethically with all our stakeholders.¹⁵ The most important of the Depot Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objectives are hinged or anchored on improving the overall well-being of the stakeholders and members of the host communities through the provision of sustainable projects and programmes in all spheres of life namely; Health, Education, Economic Empowerment, employment, Culture and Charitable/Professional donations. They also engage in activities to support the development of the local economies in many areas of operation.¹⁶

1.5 Products and Marketing

The production and distribution of petroleum products in Nigeria is an important factor in her domestic oil economy. From 1970 to date, the nation has invested substantially in Refineries, Storage Depots, Pipelines etc. The total pipeline network is 4500Km. Unfortunately, within the past few years, the supply of these petroleum product blends to storage depots and then to consumers have not been enough to meet the increasing demand due to the deplorable condition of the Depots.¹⁷ The areas of demand include: Domestic sector, Industrial sector, Marine sector, and the Military, Transport and Agricultural sectors. Proper schedules of the distribution through pipeline networks can facilitate the economical integration of refinery locations and Storage depots for easy shipment of the products from Refineries to Depot locations and then to consumers at minimum delivery cost.¹⁵ The Refineries in Nigeria are situated in Port Harcourt, Warri and Kaduna;

while Storage Depots are located in Aba, Enugu, Makurdi, Yola, Benin, Ore, Mosimi, Satellite town in Lagos, Ibadan, Ilorin, Suleja, Minna, Jos, Gombe, Maiduguri, Kano and Gusau.¹⁸

Fig VI Petroleum Pipeline System in Nigeria



Source: NNPC Depot Makurdi Maintenance Unit bulletin 2010

The activities of oil production and its bye-products marketing in Nigeria dates back to the early 1900’s when Shell ‘D’ Archy was engaged in the distribution of petroleum products. The present day kerosene was known as sunflower. The marketing of household petroleum products was dominated by the downstream arms of the Multinational Oil Corporation Companies: National Oil which was sold to Conoil, Mobil producing, Total-Elf, Nigerian Agip Oil Company¹⁹, British Petroleum which was bought over by African Petroleum (AP) and now Forte Oil, and Unipetrol which was sold in 2001 to Oando were among the major players. During this era, Royal Dutch/ Shell Petroleum, Philips Oil had 40% equity shares from former National Oil which later separated and the

government established her sole company NNPC with 40% shares while the remaining 20% of the equities shares was distributed to the Nigerian populace. With the enactment of the local content laws, it is conspicuous that the petroleum Marketing Sector is dominated by the indigenous companies.²⁰

The internal oil market in Nigeria is largely regulated by the Federal Government's policies. The pump prices of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) also known as petrol was twenty naira per litre in 1999 and reviewed incrementally to one hundred and sixty five naira per litre (165) currently, and Automotive Gas Oil (AGO) known as diesel ranges between seventy naira per litre in 1999²¹ to two hundred and seventy naira per litre (270), while Domestic Pure Kerosene (DPK) known as kerosene fluctuates between fifty naira (50) and two hundred and fifty (250) naira per liter respectively now. The irony is that after building the Four (4) Refineries at Warri, two in Port Harcourt and one in Kaduna in the late 1960s the bulk of domestic fuel demands were supplied locally but today about 90% of the domestic demands of refined products are being imported from foreign countries due to dilapidated infrastructure decay in our Refineries, broken down of depots facilities across the country and corruption in the system.²²

This trend of importation holds sway in the year 1996 under the Military Administration headed by Late General Sani Abacha. By the year 1998, General Abdussalami Abubakar (retired) announced its deregulation policy authorizing the Independent Markers to import petroleum products directly. Prior to this policy, petroleum importation was the sole responsibility of the government via NNPC.²³

This policy was not favorable to the marketing companies due to locally fixed and regulated price. However, it was mandatory for Major Oil Marketing Companies, Independent Oil Marketers and indigenous

companies to begin the importation process as directed by the policy.²⁴It is important to note that the policy helped in twiggling shortfalls in regular supplies which had caused actual economic hardship that aggravated the country's economic slump. The scenario of fuel queues all over the country was so rampant during the military regime. Due to international fall in crude oil price between 1989 to 1998, when crude oil hovered within \$6 – 10 per barrel favored fuel importation economically, the upshot in early 1990, hampered the importation of petroleum products, (PMS, AGO and DPK).²⁵ Before the end of March 1999, NNPC took charge of fuels importation to carter for domestic consumption; this reverse in policy was to avert some political hitches.

The Third Republic headed by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo continued the importation policy strategizing on restating the national refineries through revamping activities however, all the funds and investments to this measure was sabotaged by cabals. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's administration amplified pump price of petroleum products in the following orders; PMS N20 to N 65, AGO N 19 to N 70 and DPK N17 to N57 per liter²⁶. The unilateral increase in price by the President caused pervasive protests and work to rule actions across the country, orchestrated by civil societies and organized labor affiliates including Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). President Goodluck Jonathan and Yaradua's administration continued the importation policy but invested more to revamp the local Refineries. In 2012, President Jonathan reviewed the pump price of petrol from N85 to N97 per liter after several days of unravel with the organized labor and political oppositions.²⁷

The idea was to end fuel subsidy regime thereby deregulating fuel price to the actual cost of N145 per liter and to liberalize Independent Marketing and supply of petroleum products without governments interference which was thwarted by the public orchestrated by the

present day government, However in 2016, President Mahammadu Buhari took a board decision and increased the pump price to N145 claiming that the government shall no longer pay subsidy to importers, to a great surprise, the subsidy is still in existence after the price increase by the then leader of the government whom condemned the idea of former President Jonathan, and today the present administration has increase the pump price of PMS to 165 per Litre. Moreover today the fuel price at different stations ranges between 170 and above 200 per litre in most plumb stations.²⁸

Engr. Elijah Berry who was in charge of the Maintenance unit in the NNPC depot in Makurdi stated that the government estimated Refineries capacity to refine 445,000 barrels of crude oil per day, as at 1990. He argued that on paper 300,000 barrels of crude oil per day was allocated to local Refining and consumption but in reality it was far lesser²⁹. Berry estimated the average supply to about 240,000 barrels given to the local refineries on a daily basis within the mid - 90s. He attributed the breakdown of refineries and lack of adequate turnaround maintenance (TAM) between 1996 and 1998 to the military stratocracy, noting that maladministration contributed majorly to the reduction of local capacity in processing crude oil into refined petroleum products.³⁰ According to Berry Nigeria was planned to be self-sustaining in terms of petroleum by-products but due to negligence and poor maintenance culture the government resorted into importation of bye-products for local consumption. Major Oil Depots are recommended, installed and managed by NNPC, they are usually located by the sea/riverside in Port Harcourt, Makurdi, Mosimi-Shagamu, Maiduguri, Gombe, Jos, Lagos -Ejigbo, Kano, Ilorin, Enugu, Aba, Ore, Warri, Kaduna, Ibadan, and Benin.³¹

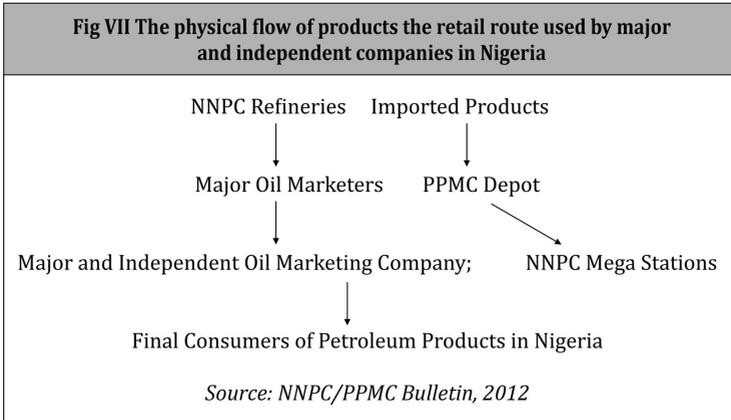
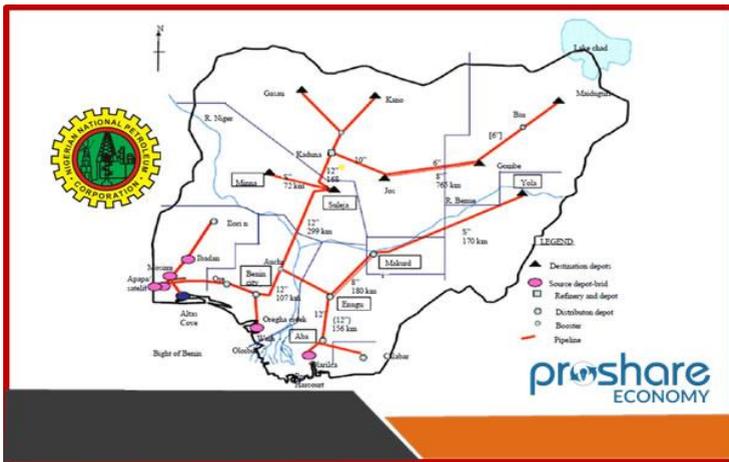


Fig Viii Map illustrating the movement of NNPC products in Nigeria



Source: NNPC/PPMC Bulletin, 2012.

1.6 Impact of NNPC Depot on the people of Benue State and its Environs

PROSPECTS

Petroleum Products, Marketing, Company PPMC's infrastructure represents the largest Oil and Gas network of Pipelines and Storages currently available within Makurdi and its environs. The organization was hitherto characterized by inefficiency and various acts of vandalism, partly because government had 100% ownership. With recent reforms in the economy, Pipelines and Depots have become the main arteries through which the bloodstream of the national economy will flow to different terminals. The potentials are enormous, including expansion into Benue State and its environs.

More specifically

1. The pipelines will assist marketers and refiners transport their products to the market and other points.
2. The Depots are located inland and at the coastlines, offering storages for products preparatory to making them available in the market.
3. The Jetties have already indicated high potentials; there is a temporary lease arrangement in place between users that were denied access and the Petroleum Products Marketing Company PPMC.³²

This time around the demands for petroleum products stand at nearly 30million litres. With more efficient operations, Petroleum Products Marketing Company PPMC pipelines can move up to 80% of these products. This is in addition to crude oil movement to the refineries. The Petroleum Products Marketing Company PPMC inland depots have a combined storage capacity of 2,138,000M3 (about 80 days reserve); while the export terminal at Bonny provides additional advantage for exports generally It is envisaged that after the privatization of the enterprise, utility output of the facilities would be raised by 30-40% in the first year. A 10% point annual rate of improvement will enhance the attainment of an optimal utility level within five years.³³

Petroleum Products Marketing Company PPMC has a leading position in distribution and storage facilities. The network would be difficult and costly for competitors to duplicate. This provides potential investors with strong customer base and the needed avenue for expansion within the areas of study. It is expected that the current, on-going round of reforms in the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) would enhance prospects for more business opportunities. Reforms should also yield significant growth in industrial capacity output, growth in population and enhancement of Nigeria's per capita income, all of which enriches business prospects.³⁴

However, the long closure of the Makurdi Depot a subsidiary of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, is no doubt hitting hard on oil marketers in Benue State and its environs who now source their products from far distances with the attendant risks involved. The Depot has been shut for over 20 years now, inflicting serious hardship on the dealers and consumers of the products, without hope of when it would be reopened.³⁵

Indeed activities at the once boisterous Depot have been grounded for over two decades following the closure³⁶. The long closure has exposed marketers in the Middle Belt Zone and beyond who used to load petroleum products from the depot to various risk such as accident on account of poor road network, robbers attacks as well as wear and tear suffered by their vehicles. In addition the heavy trucks exact their weights on the road there by contributing to the breakdown of the already deplorable condition of the road.³⁷

At the meeting, summoned by the new Executive Committee of IPMAN led by Ronald Aondowase Mnyim, the Marketers solicited for the help of the Middle Belt Governors in reaching out to the Federal Government to reopen shut down Makurdi depot, but to no aver. Since then, oil marketers operating under the Depot had resorted to travelling to Lagos, Port Harcourt, Warri

Calaba or Aba and others far Depots to lift products, a situation they said has left untold hardship on them.³⁸

The Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) President in Makurdi, Benue State, Ronald Aondowase Mnyim, said that it was also time to liaise with leaders of the Zone, especially the governors and National Assembly members to plead with them to urge the Federal Government to reopen the Makurdi Depot at Apir (the NNPC depot facility). He continued saying that the long disuse of the Depot has caused the Marketers across the four states that it covers enormous economic hardship thereby forcing many of their colleagues out of business. He added that the ripple effect was that many people lost their jobs just as many businesses that had depended on the viability of the depot were as well forced to close up soon after the depot stopped functioning. Iko further lamented that several of their members had died as a result of health complications that arose from shock over loss of their investments through accidents, tanker fire, and hijacking of tankers by bandits among others. Corroborating Iko Daniel's submissions.³⁹

Former IPMAN Secretary in Lafia Council area of Nssarawa State, Iko Daniel, noted that it has been hellish for marketers under Makurdi Depot as a result of the non-functional state of Makurdi NNPC Depot. He bemoaned the dormant condition of the depot pointing out that lifting products from far distances, exposes oil marketers and tanker drivers to immense hazards. "Our means of livelihood is under dangerous threat and I support the motion that we should cry to the government for help towards the resuscitation of the depot⁴⁰. "According to him the most recent experience was in January 2019. He said he lost over N70 million when his tanker was involved in road crash with 50,000 litres of PMS (petrol), and he lost everything.

The situation has caused many of them colossal losses. He further said that everybody knows the terrible state of our highways, most of which are death-traps. That is the cause of repeated incidences of tanker falls, tanker explosion and all that. "According to him " they just lifted the Premium Motor Spirit, PMS, at N165. 00k official uniform price, per liter, and they still compel us to sell at government's regulated pump price of N163.00 per liter. It costs us N460 thousand to transport a truck of PMS from Lagos to Makurdi and Lafia and N350,000 to convey a truck from Calaba to Makurdi, whereas, it takes just N50,000 to transport same truckload of the product from Makurdi depot to his station in Lafia.⁴¹ We are sweating and we have to cry out", Igwe Agana said. "It is to the knowledge of this association that his fully loaded tanker was once hijacked in Lagos by hoodlums who diverted it to Kwara State. By the time we traced the truck to Kwara, the criminals had sold everything but the skeleton of the truck which valued over N15,000,000 at the time. But I was only able to sell the skeleton for N900,000. "Again, in November 2019, his truck that was carrying 60, 000 litres of PMS to our station fell down at Onyeama Hill, near Enugu. Luckily, it did not catch fire and some content was saved through the effort of men of the Enugu State Fire Service.⁴²

Afo Adamu in Ayimgba Kogi State also narrated his ordeal saying, he would have lost about N8 million to that accident, outside the value of the truck", he said. On his part, the Grand Patron of PTD/NUPENG, Kogi branch, His Royal Highness, Chief Alabi Umanthe Mgajin Tuba in the State, noted that members were unanimous on the move to call on North-Central leaders for intervention. While expressing concern over the development, the monarch who owns A Arano Oil Nig Ltd regretted that the depot⁴³, which he said once burgled with economic activities and viability, become a ghost of itself "that they are all concerned about the neglect of that facility," P-Kura posit that "as they speak, most of their trucks are on transit to

and from Lagos, Warri Port Harcourt and others to lift fuel and his mind cannot be at rest until they return safely.

This is what we go through on daily basis and you find out that majority of our members are running high blood pressure as we speak. We need that facility to be brought back to life, as a matter of urgency⁴⁴. The Manager of Rain oil Makurdi, Chief Alabi, also said that he welcome the idea of meeting North-Central leaders for them to plead with President Muhammadu Buhari to review that old presidential order and direct that the depot be reopened". He said that although he has never recorded personal losses in terms of accident, loss of lives, product highjack of truck, but that all members usually share in the sorrow of affected ones owing to the saying that injury to one is injury to all.⁴⁵ Also the owner of P Kura Oil and Gas Chief P Kura described the state of the depot as very deplorable and unfortunate. He called on the federal government to show concern and revitalize the facility in order to alleviate the sufferings of oil marketers under Makurdi Depot Community, and, by extension, empower many residents of the four states that the depot services. "and he believed that Government could fix whatever that led to its decision to shut the Depot, which is very critical to the economy of the Benue and its environs, That they were all suffering and it has to do with bad roads⁴⁶, fire outbreak, criminality on our highways, among others. So, we beg the Federal Government to do the needful, which is to take urgent steps to reopen the depot," adding that the proposed meeting with Benue leaders was a good move that promises to yield positive result.⁴⁷

1.7 Conclusion

In conclusion the NNPC Depot Makurdi was established with series of responsibilities of supplying Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), Dual Purpose Kerosene (DPK) and Automotive Gasoline Oil (AGO) respectively within its areas of jurisdiction which include Benue, Kogi

Nassarawa and some parts of Taraba State. It was first known as Pipeline and Product Marketing Sector (PPMS). By 1988 it was again rename as Pipeline and Product Marketing Company (PPMC) and in 2016 it was again given another status as Nigerian Pipeline and Storage Company (NPSC) this is its current name till date. The NPSC got it supply from Port Harcourt Refinery through Aba down to Enugu and get to Makurdi and Makurdi push to Yola Depot subsequently. It however encounter it numerous challenges in the coast of operations and its now closed down, and the stake holders in this phenomenon are calling to government for the immediate restoration of the Depot in other to serve its intended purpose and serve them from the catastrophe.

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 39. Oral Interview Iko Daniel Former IPMAN secretary in Lafia council area of Nssarawa State 2021
 40. Ibid
 41. Oral Interview, Aondowase Ronald Mnyim...2021

42. Oral Interview Iko Daniel Former IPMAN secretary in Lafia council area of Nssarawa State 2021
43. Oral Interview Iko Daniel...2021
44. Oral Interview, P-Kura Oral Interview, P-Kura 58years, Manager & CEO P-Kura Oil Ltd Katsina-Ala 10th June 2021
45. Oral Interview Igwe Agana Secretary Tankers Drivers Makurdi Depot 10th June 2021
46. Oral Interview Afo Adamu in Ayamgba Kogi State IPMAN member Kogi State
47. Oral Interview, Chief Alabi Uman CEO Rain Oil High-Level Makurdi 10th June 2021