

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION IN BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The amnesty programme was set up by the President Umaru Yar'adua administration to address the conflict in the Niger Delta Region. Its three core objectives are Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration. This paper focuses on Reintegration with a specific attention on training and job creation. The paper adopts both the conflict transformation and incremental theory and derives data using interview and questionnaires method as well as documented materials on the programme. The paper establishes that greed, pollution, resource control among others are all causes of the Niger Delta Conflict, and to camphorate this, the amnesty programme has trained several ex-militants in various areas of vocation, science and technology and the humanities both within and outside the country. But the paper identifies a major gap in the post-amnesty training especially in terms of poor infrastructure and job-creation. The paper hence recommends that beyond the ex-militants, the amnesty programme be broaden to accommodate other victims of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta, and that government should provide job opportunities for those trained to prevent them being drawn back bearing.

Key words: Conflict, Amnesty Programme, Reintegration and Niger-Delta

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Biafra war, there are indicators pointing to the fact that those fissures that triggered the war in the first place were still lurking around the Nigerian clime, restless to produce another war only this time with repercussion for Nigerian economic security and even African regional stability. The Biafra war was waged between clearly defined social unit and army, while the Niger Delta conflict is waged between a State army with identifiable landmarks, territory and assets and a fearless amorphous group of fighters with no clearly marked territory and assets, having a lot of violent rage and the means to do incalculable damage. At first the Niger Delta communities did not approach the issue of resource control violently; their interest was pursued through negotiation and dialogue. Osaghae, Eghosa, Andrew Ikelegbe, Olarinmoye, and Okhonmina, (2007), reports that the struggle over resource was pursued by two sets of actors, the elder/ elite and the youths. The elite demand was pursued using two movements; one of them is the socio-political movement and the other the ethno-cultural movement. The movement did not involve violence but use political and cultural influences to demand for change in resource allocation and provision of basic infrastructural facilities like road, health centers and schools in the Region.

As a result of the repression they suffered during the Abacha military regime and the annulment of the June 12, 2003 presidential election and the parlous state of the Nigerian economy that was characterized by unemployment, poverty, corruption and discriminations, the Niger Delta youths began to violently challenge the Nigerian State, oil companies and even the elite in the region. Their activities led to the formation of several militant groups; Niger Delta people Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Movement For The Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Martyrs Brigade (MD) among others (Okonta & Douglas 2003). The activity of these groups led to several killings and maiming, village houses burnt down, religious places and rape cases was in the increase etc. violent resistance had become the creed in the Niger

Delta forcing many oil companies to halt production and evacuate staff. Militants have shown equal resolve to violently challenge the prevailing extractive logics and the local and international coalition that sustain them. Nigeria is almost entirely dependent on the industry, prospects of a prolonged warfare in the region are especially troubling.

On assumption of office, late president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua realized that youths were the perpetrators of violence and militancy in the region, and that there was a need to address the crisis. His government identified that many of these militants were "able-bodied youths whose energy could be harnessed for the development of the Niger Delta and nation at large" (Kuku, 2012). He therefore set up a mechanism to tackle the problem and the mechanism set up is the Amnesty program, which was set up on June 25, 2009. The Amnesty program is made up of three components namely, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). The DDR component has direct bearing on the successful rehabilitation of armed youths in the region. DDR refers to the process of demilitarizing official and unofficial armed groups by controlling and reducing the possession of arms, by disbanding non-state armed groups and rightsizing state security services and by assisting former combatants to reintegrate into civilian life.

The Niger Delta militancy issue has been of serious concern to policy makers, scholars, business persons, the international community among other sector of the human life this is owing to the longevity of the problem which started as far back as 1966 as well as the trillion that had been lost to the crisis. Hence a study into programs that are aimed at providing sustainable peace in the area such as the amnesty program is a very important exercise. Scholars like Ikein (1990), Okonta (2003), have written on the causes and effects of the militancy in the Niger Delta; scholar like Etekepe (2007) have written on program including amnesty program aimed at stopping militancy. However, not much empirical study has been done to assess the performance of the amnesty program especially as it relates to the Reintegration perspective of the DDR this is the gap that this research set out to fill.

The objectives of this paper are on the multifaceted causes of the Niger Delta crisis, the performance of the amnesty program in areas of training and job creation, and the impact of the program in building a sustainable peace.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Conflict

A conflict is a clash of interest. The basis of conflict may vary but it is always a part of society. The basis of conflict may be personal, racial, class, caste, political and international. Conflict is an escalation of disagreement between individuals or group of persons. According to Micheal Nicholson, it is an activity which takes place when conscious beings (individuals or groups) wish to carry out mutually inconsistent acts concerning their want, needs or obligations. Conflict in this context is a disagreement between the Niger Delta militant group and the federal government of Nigeria on one hand and the Niger Delta militant group and the multinational cooperation on the other hand over allocation of authoritative resource to this end, the people of Niger Delta felt that they are being marginalized and exploited by the federal government of Nigeria in the management of the proceed of crude oil resource exploited from the Niger Delta region. Consequently, they revolted against the system violently in order to resolve the crisis the federal government under late president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua initiated the Amnesty Programme. What then is amnesty programme?

Amnesty

Amnesty is a pardon given to a particular person or group of persons by the government usually for committing a political offense. It includes more than pardon in as much as it obliterates all legal remembrance of the offense. Amnesty is increasingly used to express "freedom" and the time when prisoners can go free. Amnesty programme is initiated by federal government in 2009 and having three components: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. The essence of this operational trust of the amnesty programme is to disarm the militants, demobilize them from their various groups and finally to reintegrate the militant into the civil society as a process of conflict resolution and peace building.

Reintegration

It is the political, economic, and social integration of ex-combatants, their families, and primary support network into civil society (Nillson, 2005). Governments emerging from war frequently demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants into existing security structures and or civilian populations. This definition includes several components including:

Political integration: wherein ex-combatants, their families, and support structure become part of the decision making process of their community.

Economic integration: in which ex-combatants, their families, and support system are enabled to develop their livelihoods.

Social integration: wherein local communities accept ex-combatants, their families, and primary support system as members of the community.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper adopts the conflict formation and incremental theories. The conflict formation theory explains the conflict in the Niger Delta region while the latter explains the Amnesty programme.

Conflict Formation Theory

The study will examine four distinct ideas related to the emergence of the Niger Delta conflict. First is environmental security, Scholars like Tad Homer Dixon (1999), argued that eco-demographic pressure have created numerous emergencies within African State (including poverty and malnourishment). The violence in the Niger Delta results from environmental degradation including oil-induced pollution that has immense negative effects on the local economy. By this analysis, the Niger Delta militant use violence not only to force environmental rehabilitation and conservation, but also to achieve economic subsistence.

The second strand focuses on the tension between resources, politics and civil conflict. Collier (2000) observes that oil rent in Nigeria has historically sustained parasitic ruling elite and enabled the state to fraudulently purchase political consent from exploited minorities while maintaining the “delicate northern hegemony within a competitive multi- ethnic polity”. Watts, Michael, Ike Okonta, Dimieari Von Kemedi, (2004) argue that consent is obtained through a derivation principle that distributes oil rents and royalties to States and this complicated by massive institutional corruption, like the case of the Niger Delta.

The third strand of conflict formation theory addresses ethnicity, ethnic mobilization and ethnic conflict (Ijomah 1998, Sagay 2008). These works helps us to understand Nigeria’s pre-colonial and post-colonial political formations and its nascent federalism. Before colonialism there was no Nigeria as a sovereign entity. This implies that Nigeria is a British creation and consists of over 400 independent nationalities (Sagay, 2008). These societies often fight over cultures, religion, territory and opportunity. Ijomah (1998) accused the British of not creating clear behavioral assertions to foster nationhood. Watt et al (2004) examine local forms of community and ethnic mobilization that are vital aspects of the social relations of oil extraction. How these relations are forged, negotiated, and reconfigured including land use and reform, customary laws, territoriality, contact with oil companies and forms of identification (ethnicity, gender, age, chieftaincy, clanship) around traditional authority and have important implications for the Niger Delta conflict.

The fourth strand associate oil neither with incumbent politics nor predation proneness. Instead, it focuses on the link between violent intra- state conflict and state corporate enclave politics. Watts et al (2004) note the striking “lack of local level dynamics... and the total invisibility of both transnational oil companies (which typically work in joint ventures with the State) and with the intersection of local politics and petro-capitalism.” Instead of oil extraction being pursued as a source of predation or State military power Watts focuses on how petrol- capitalism produces particular kinds of enclave economies and governable spaces that are characterized by instability and armed violence. The case of the Niger Delta is not exceptional the demand for resource control by the Niger Delta people and which is the major export earning of Nigeria economy has created instability and violence in the region.

Looking at environmental security which is one of the distinct ideas of conflict formation theory is immensely useful in explaining the reason for the conflict in the Niger Delta region. The Multi- National Oil

Companies (MNOCs) indulged in degrading the environment by polluting the air, rivers and surrounding lands in a manner not found in other oil and gas producing regions of the world (Ikein, 1990) and this act motivated the youth of the region to pick up arms in order to make the government take urgent steps to stop environmental degradation. Also the conflict theory that focuses on the tension between resources, politics and civil conflict is also useful in analyzing the conflict and the tension on oil resource in the Niger Delta region. It is observed that oil rent in Nigeria has sustained ruling elite who are constantly exploiting the minorities. Oil is a lootable resource that engenders intense antagonisms amongst competing socio-political forces. However, they have limited application in explaining the peace building process or the transformation of destructive conflict to constructive conflict. The theory also has limited applicability in regards to connection to the implementation of the Amnesty program.

Incremental Theory

The theory has been applied with particular success in the study of public policy (Lindblom, 1959).

The incrementalist based their approach to budget behavior on models of decision making featuring consideration of limited rationality in the face of complexity and uncertainty. In that framework outputs are governed by Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and these SOPs are incremental in nature.

The amnesty programme was instituted in 2009 after several consultations with stakeholders within and outside of the Niger Delta. This wide consultation is in line with the premise that for a policy to be adjudged successful, it must be sufficiently inclusive. A good policy should involve key stakeholders in its design formation, this is in line with the premise of incrementalist postulation that policy are comprehensive and involves many stakeholders in its design development like the case of the amnesty programme the interesting element that make up the committee is what the OSAPND call the “leaders”. The so called leaders are the key stakeholders, also included are the warlords and militia commanders. Inherently, there is a typical form of social capital on which the members of the Niger Delta Youths base their positions and this is referred to as the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC). IYC were also strong stakeholdes in deciding of the amnesty program for the Niger Delta Region.

The premise that decisions are made in chronological series is equally satisfied by the policy under review. The policy clearly was an improvement on similar policy on the Niger Delta crisis such as Niger Delta Development Commssion (NDDC), Ministry of Niger Delta Affair among others.

Also, the premise that decision makers take decisions based on the limited resources, information and value available to them is found to be true within the context of the policy under review. The Federal Government did not have all the resources to settle the Niger Delta crisis that is why it has to spread the programme for a period of 5 years.

The theory is there for relevant for justifies the reason for other programs before finally arriving at the government amnesty program as the possible solution to end the Niger Delta crisis

Decisions by consent among partisans without a society wide regulatory center and guiding institutions should not be viewed as the preferred approached to decision making. Decision so reached would of necessity, reflect the interest of the most powerful, demands of the underprivileged and politically unorganized would be underrepresented.

Incrementalism tend to neglect basic societal innovations, as it focuses on the short run and seeks no more than limited variations from past policies, thereby wasting time dealing with the immediate problems and no overall strategy is developed (Yehezkel' 1964).

Research Methodology

Sources of Data

There are two sources from which data for this study was generated. They are; primary and secondary sources.

For the primary source, the data for this study was generated through: Open and close-ended questionnaires and In-depth Interview

For the secondary data, data was sourced from the existing literature documented in academic books, journals, periodical published articles, magazines, newspapers and internet materials. Also, the official

reports and documents on the Niger Delta conflict and other government gazette on the amnesty programme were utilized.

Population and Sample Size of the Study

The area of study is made up of 8 Local Government Areas and 105 electoral wards (INEC, 2011) due to size and the need for a concrete study, two of the LGAs were selected for the study. The selection was done using simple random sampling techniques where by the LGAs were selected using lottery system. Through this system, Yenagoa and Nembe LGAs were selected.

Yenagoa and Nembe being the area of study has a total combined population of 484,275 (353,344 for Yenagoa and 130,931 for Nembe) as at the 2006 census (National Bureau of Statistics, 2006)

Yenagoa Local Government has a total number of sixteen federal wards with 236 polling units

For this study, the sample size of 384 is chosen as representative of the total population of 484,275. This choice is arrived at using the Morgan and Kreiche's formula (Morgan and Kreiche, 1970). To arrive at that sample size, the formula:

$$S = X^2 NP (1-P) \div d^2 (N-1) + P (1-P)$$

Where:

S = required sample size.

X^2 = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

d = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05)

The study employs both the multi-stage cluster sampling technique and simple random technique.

The sample size for each of the wards is derived with the formula:

$$\text{Ward Sample Size} = \frac{\text{Number of Pollin Units}}{\text{Total Number of Polling Units}} \times \frac{384}{1}$$

Based on the size, Yenagoa with a total of 16 wards gets 212 of the questionnaire while Nembe with 13 wards gets 172 of the total 384 questionnaires for the study.

Target Population of the Study

The first category is the questionnaire which was administered to youth and elders of the two local government areas that is Yenagoa and Nembe which were selected for the study. The second category was interview with two staffs from the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), the two working at the admin department. Two staffs were also interviewed at the Amnesty office, one of them was an admin staff and the other was at the reintegration department. Community leaders from 2 of the communities selected for the study were interviewed. Three leaders from the militant camps namely Niger Delta Voluntary Force (NDFUF) Western Zone, Territorial camp and Ken Camp were interviewed and five other members of the militant group were interviewed, the members were from camp 5 and Niger Delta Voluntary Force (NDFUF).

Method of data presentation and analysis

The Data from the field work was presented in tabular form followed by a qualitative interpretation and analysis of the tables using a simple percentage. The interview was transcribed and the Data triangulated and analyzed.

Conflict and Amnesty Programme in the Niger Delta region: Reintegrative perspectives in Bayelsa State

Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-25 yrs	50	15.4
26-33 yrs	145	44.6
34-41 yrs	111	34.2
42 yrs and above	19	5.8
Total	325	100.0

Source: fieldwork(2018)

The table above shows that a total of 15.4% of the respondents are between 18-25 years, while 44.6% are between 26-33 years as against 34.2% that are between 34-41 years and the rest 5.8% are from 42 years and above. The data therefore reveal that majority of respondents are between the youthful age. This is demonstrated in the presence of 94.2% (that is 18-41 years) of respondents being of the labour force age and are the most active population for violence.

Occupational distribution of respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Civil servant	80	24.6
Business	233	71.7
Others	12	3.7
Total	325	100.0

Source: field work(2018)

A total of 71.7% are business persons as against 24.6% who are civil servants and the rest 3.7% are into other occupation including those who ticked unemployed. This shows that most of the respondents are either civil servants, business persons or into farming and fishing.

Educational qualification of respondents

Qualifications	Frequency	Percent
No formal education	110	33.8
Primary education	73	22.5
secondary education	102	31.4
tertiary education	40	12.3
total	325	100.0

Source: fieldwork (2018)

On respondents' educational qualification 12.3% have tertiary education, while 22.5% have primary education, as against 31.4% who have secondary education and the rest 33.8% who have no formal education. The data reveals that the population is moderately educated as demonstrated with the high number of secondary school and tertiary school holders.

Awareness of respondents on conflict in the Niger Delta

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	315	96.9
No	10	3.1
Total	325	100.0

Source: field work (2018)

An overwhelming majority of the respondents numbering 96.9% are aware of the conflict in the Niger Delta while the rest 3.1% said they are not aware. This implies that most of the respondents are aware of the conflict in Niger Delta. The response from the table is justifiably revealing based on the span of years that the area has been under conflict. It is therefore not surprising that the vast majority of respondents are aware of the conflict in the region. In historic perspective, agitation within the region has been there as far back as

1966 when Isaac Boro moved other comrades for the emancipation of the region. This trend was also followed by other Niger-Deltans notably, Saro Wiwa who was executed by General Sani Abacha due to his tenacious call for resource control in the Niger-Delta.(Osaghae, 1998)

Causes of the Niger Delta Conflict

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Unemployment	80	24.6
Poverty	118	36.3
Environmental degradation	45	13.9
Government neglect	69	21.2
Others	13	4.0
Total	325	100.0

Source: field work (2018)

The table above revealed that 24.6% of the respondents believe that the cause of the conflict is unemployment while 36.3% believe poverty is the cause of the conflict as against 13.9% who believe that environmental degradation cause conflict and 21.2% believe government neglect is the cause while 4% said other factors such as resource control, greed etc is the cause of the conflict. This implies that the main causes of conflicts include; poverty, unemployment, government neglect and environmental degradation. However, the major factor is poverty which is linked to other factors like government neglect, unemployment and others.

The informants from the interviews also agreed that the main cause of the conflict in the Niger Delta is that of resource control, environmental degradation, unemployment, and poverty. Other factors suggested by some key informants include; lack of development, youth restiveness and greed of governments. In an interview with one of the militant leader Gen. three lion of Niger Delta Cader in addressing the causes of the conflict stressed that:

Nigerian government practiced criminality, so we took arms for the whole world to know we are not satisfied. The major cause is environmental degradation but really unemployment was what really provoked us most in our group. Some states here existed before Abuja yet, they are backward. Everywhere here is polluted, no schools, no treated water, no hospitals... (Interview, 2018)

Another unique finding in the in-depth interview was the association between marginalization and the conflict. One respondent observed that:

“There are 15 obnoxious laws against the Niger Delta. 15 that we know, the land Use Decree, the Petroleum Act of 1959, amended in 1999, the exclusive Export Zone Decree, the Native Ordinances, 15 of them including the Obscure Land Law. All laws have enslaved the Niger Delta and enslaved the Niger Deltans. This is the abrogation of all these laws so that the Niger Delta people can have increased participation and authority over what rightfully belong to them”.

Suffice to say that in the in depth interviews, there were numerous indicators for the concept of marginalization.

Awareness of respondents on the amnesty programme

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	319	98.2
No	6	1.8
Total	325	100.0

Source: field work (2018)

The above table shows that 319 respondents representing 98.2% said they are aware of the amnesty programme while the rest 6 or 1.8% said they are not. This implies that almost all the respondents are aware of the amnesty programme. The data in this table is not surprising owing to the massive publicity given to the programme by the federal government at various stages of the programme.

The response above is also supported by the interview responses. An informant says “the programme has impacted greatly and restores peace. It is supposed to be a means to an end, to get people employed through training, to give room for investors to come into the country” (Interview, 2018)

The performance of the amnesty programme in terms of training of ex- militants

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Very good	31	9.5
Good	127	39.1
Fairly good	101	31.1
Not good	66	20.3
Total	325	100.1

Source: field work (2018)

On how the amnesty program has performed in terms of training ex-militant, 9.5% said it was very good while 39.1% rated it as good. Another 31.1% rated it as fairly good and the rest 20.3% rated it as not good. This shows that most of the respondents rate the amnesty programme in terms of training ex militant as good. The response by some of the interviewer indicates a partial agreement regarding the success of the training package. A respondent affirmed that the amnesty programme have succeeded partially in the area of training. The training is very slow. Every camp has a number of people and they all need to be considered even the community member and not just us the militants.

Also in an interview at the Amnesty Office, the interviewer affirms the fact that 30,000 militants signed up for the Amnesty Programme and since then, the amnesty office has been working to reintegrate them into productive society, primarily by placing (and sponsoring) them in vocational and higher education courses in Nigeria and abroad. As at march 2015, 15,451 had graduated, while 3,482 were still in training and 11,200 are awaiting training. By August 2015, 17,381 have graduated from the training, 3472 were currently in training, 877 were repatriated and 9,147 are awaiting training.

What form did the training take?

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Formal schooling	106	32.6
Vocational training	87	26.8
Skill acquisition	89	27.4
Others	43	13.2
Total	325	100.0

Source: field work(2018)

On what form the training took, a total of 32.6% said it took the form of formal training while 26.8% considers it as a vocational training. 27.4% said it took the form of skill acquisition and the rest 13.2% said it took other forms. This implies that majority of the respondents believe the training is in the form of formal schooling. The response tallies with the massive training of ex-militant educationally both within and outside the country.

The interview responses corroborated the table above. An informant said they have tried in the area of training our young ones in schools both in Nigeria and abroad. Although, he stressed that “government are using one hand to shake us and one hand to bite us” (Interview, 2018) The respondent further said they are learning to become carpenters and brick layers yet when they come back to the community they see no industry to apply their trade, he further went further to ask if these is what the government refer to has economic reintegration

There was a high degree of uniformity among respondents that the Amnesty programme despite its vocational and skills training effort was a failure. Respondent cited the non- availability of industries to absorb the trained or retained ex-combatants, as one reason for the failure.

Is the unemployment situation in the Niger Delta better now than before the conflict?

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Better	70	21.5
The same	150	46.2
Worse	105	32.3
Total	325	100.0

Source: field work (2018)

The table above shows that 70 or 21.5% of respondent sees the employment situation in the Niger Delta as better now than before the conflict while 150 or 46.2% respondents sees the employment situation in the region as the same and 105 or 32.3% of respondent sees the situation as worse. Opinion of respondents in the in-depth interview are strongly uniform, what appears to be the consensus was that apart from the reinsertion benefits paid monthly to ex-agitators, there was limited work space available to reintegrate ex-combatants into and also the 65,000 naira monthly stipend paid is well above the 18,000 naira national minimum wage and most entry-level salaries, many recipients would rather receive that payment than accept a job. Also the document of the Amnesty programme shows that only 233 of the delegates had found jobs with credible organizations as at August 2015.

In terms of medical care, oil- related pollution, and education, do you think the situation is better now than before the Amnesty Programme

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Better	30	9.2
The same	260	80
Worse	35	10.8
Total	325	100.0

Source: field work (2018)

The table above shows that 30 or 9.2% of respondent agree that the situation in the Niger Delta is better now in terms of medical care, Oil-Related pollution, and education than before the Amnesty programme while 260 or 80% agrees that the situation still remains the same. Only 10.8% of respondents agree that the situation is worse than before that Amnesty programme.

Whether the amnesty programme has had a positive impact on the peace process in the area

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	220	67.7
No	105	32.3
Total	325	100

Source: field work (2018)

The table above reveals respondents' view regarding the impact of the amnesty programme on the peace process in the study area 32.3% feel the amnesty programme had impacted negatively on the peace process in the area while 67.7% feel the programme had impacted positively. This shows that majority feel the programme had impacted positively on the peace process in the area.

The response here is however supported with most of the responses from the interview. One of the informants who were an ex-militant Mr.Dagogo of Territorial Camp affirmed that the programme has had a positive impact on the peace process because many of the militants laid down their weapons and embraced the programme. The production of oil that has been greatly disrupted because of the activities of the militants has greatly increased in the region and many of the youth involved in violence are now being trained in various areas of life. He however added that for the peace to be sustained, employment should be created for the youth, else, they will return to violence.

Impact on the peace process

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Surrendering of weapons	49	28.3
Sending youths to school	114	41.0
Reduce loss of lives	21	12.1
Reduced vandalization	32	18.6
Total	220	100.0

Source: field work (2018)

On respondents response on ways the programme has impacted on the peace process, 49 respondents representing 28.3% said it has made Surrendering of weapons by militants possible while 71 or 41% said it has enabled youths to be sent to school while 21 or 12.1% said it has reduced loss of lives and the rest 32 representing 18.6% said it has reduced vandalism of pipeline. This shows that the programme has impacted on peace process especially through Surrendering of weapons by militants which is the first step in the process of building peace in any community and the rehabilitation of erstwhile militants by sending them to school.

In an interview with an ex-militant leader, General three lions, he affirmed that the amnesty programme has had a positive impact on the peace process. According to him

‘The programme has brought about peace, many have now gone back to school and left the creek. Many of us have never entered airplane but today some of us are pilots’ (Interview, 2018).

Another informant stressed that “we all know the state of crime as of the crisis but after the Amnesty programme, there have been relative peace” (Interview, 2018)

Summary of major findings

The following are some of the major findings in this research work:

1. Many theories have been advanced that attempt to link the Niger Delta conflict to economic fissures including poverty and unemployment. It has been shown that Nigeria has some of the highest poverty and unemployment rates in the world (UNDP 2006). The situation appears to be particularly dire for the Niger Delta people because of the associated environmental problems resulting from oil production. This fact appears to be substantiated through these research findings. Both from the questionnaires and the interview responses, this research finds out that greed, pollution, resource control, infrastructural deficits, unemployment, poverty, marginalization, corruption, economic exploitation, are all causes of the Niger Delta conflict.
2. The amnesty offer training retraining and reintegration opportunities encouraged the insurgent groups to disarm; over 30,000 purported members signed up between October 2009 and May 2011. Since then, the Amnesty office has worked to reintegrate them into productive society, primarily by placing (and sponsoring) them in vocational and higher education courses in Nigeria and abroad. As of March 2015, 15,451 had graduated, while 3,482 were still in training. About 11,200 (37 percent of those who registered) were awaiting placement in academic or vocational training facilities and receiving a 65,000 naira(about \$350) monthly stipend. As of august 2015, 17,381 have graduated from the training, 3,472 are currently in training, 877 were repatriated and 9,147 are waiting training(interview at the reintegration department amnesty office, 2018). Judge by its primary objective of reintegration, the program according to the questionnaires has performed well but the response by the interview indicates a partial achievement. The number of militant still awaiting training is quite disturbing and the government needs to take action regarding that.
3. The paper finds out that employment situation in the region remains the same. Opinions of respondents in the in-depth interview are strongly uniform from that of the questionnaires. Also the document of the Amnesty programme shows that only 233 ex-militant had found jobs with credible organizations as at August 2015.
4. In term of oil related pollution, medical care and education, the paper finds out that the condition remains the same in the region.

5. Majority feels the Amnesty program has had a positive impact on the peace process in the region as many militant groups surrendered their weapons and accepted the Amnesty programme. Oil production in the region has greatly increased, kidnapping has been reduced to the minimum and vandalization has also been greatly reduced. Foreign expatriates that once vacated the region have returned to business.

Conclusion

The amnesty program, however, has been able to address areas of counseling and training, re-orientate ex-combatant, facilitate the voluntary submission of arms by ex-militant and the withdrawal of these arms from circulation, and put an empowerment process in place. This has spurred the escalation of violence in the region. There are concerns that the empowerment opportunities (job creation) are not provided for these ex-combatants after training. If the empowerment process fails, then youths in the region might revert to violence and militancy. So the government needs to provide means of incorporating other militant group who have not been trained into the training. Also the bitter complaints in the region that chronic poverty and catastrophic oil pollution, inadequate infrastructure, local demands for a bigger share of oil revenues, youth unemployment which fuelled the earlier rebellion, remain largely unaddressed and needs to be addressed so that the region can enjoy a long lasting peace.

Recommendations:

To halt this drift, this paper makes the following recommendations:

1. The DDR programme should be broadened so as to accommodate other victims of the environmental degradation suffered in the Niger Delta.
2. Government should take adequate action to train other ex-militant members who have not been trained
3. Also there is need for job creation in the region and Nigeria at large so that ex-combatant trained can have a good place to fit in the society.

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