

Amnesty Programme and the Challenge of Poverty and Insecurity in the Niger-Delta of Nigeria

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Abstract

The decades of violence in the Niger Delta region has prompted several initiatives aimed at addressing the causes of unrest in the region. In spite of the contributions of these initiatives, the crisis appears to have persisted which points to the fact that the initiatives have failed to satisfactorily solve the problems in the Niger Delta. This led to the introduction of amnesty programme by the late President Yar'Adua led-administration. This study critically looks at amnesty programme and the challenges of poverty and insecurity in the Niger Delta. It argued that in spite of the fact that amnesty has halted violence in the Niger Delta, high expenditure on reintegration of ex-militants without a corresponding infrastructural development, poverty reduction and physical environmental transformation will doom the current fragile peace. The paper concluded that the prevailing fragile peace seems not to have only been plummeted but exclusively not driven by amnesty programme rather other political considerations such as sympathy for a Nigerian President of Niger Delta extraction and financial empowerment of the former militants. The study used content analysis and adopted the Marxian political economy approach as a theoretical guide. It recommended among others that the government should exert more efforts generally at building human capacity and infrastructural development in Niger Delta so as to dissuade and avert future slide back to crisis especially at the end of President Jonathan's leadership.

Keywords: Amnesty programme, Poverty, Insecurity

Introduction

The prominence of the Niger Delta area in Nigeria is premised on its strategic relevance and resource endowment. With the discovering of oil in the region prior to independence, the Niger Delta remains the preferred destination for investors especially oil explorers and oil investors. By 1950, the Shell had already begun production at the rate of 5,100 barrels per day in the Niger Delta (Oromareghake, Arisi & Igho, 2013). The Mobil, Chevron Texaco and other indigenous oil companies later in the 1960s and 70s joined oil exploration which led to the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in the Niger Delta. This has led to the increased output of oil production in the area and subsequently Nigerian reliance on the proceeds accruable from oil market. In fact, as at 2004, the region accounts for over 80% of government revenue, 95% of export receipts and 90% of foreign exchange earnings (Imobighe, 2004). The high level of production notwithstanding, incidences of poverty, insecurity and underdevelopment remained despicable.

Thus, the increased production and earnings seem not to have been translated into effective utilization of funds. Incidences of poverty, insecurity and underdevelopment still remain high in the region that apparently provides over 80 percent of government revenue. In fact, scholars (Eweremadu, 2008; Ibeanu, 2005: 2008; Ibeanu & Ike, 2006; Imobighe, 2004; Kelegbe, 2006; Osaghae, 1995; Okonta, 2005) explained that Niger Delta is a contradiction in terms of level of poverty, underdevelopment and difficulties amidst plenty. Undoubtedly, the Niger Delta represents a sordid tale of squalor and underdevelopment in the centre of its tremendous wealth.

Ibeanu (2008) captured the Niger Delta contradictions within the context of “affluence and affliction” explaining how the wealth of a region has paradoxically become the instrument of oppression and poverty. In fact, oil has wrought only poverty, state violence and a dying ecosystem (Okonta, 2005). For instance, by 2004 the poverty incidences in the Niger Delta states were estimated as 45.35% in Delta state, 33.09% in Edo, 27.39% in Imo, 22.27% in Abia, 42.15% in Ondo, 29.09% in Rivers and 19.98 in the state of Bayelsa (National Bureau of Statistics 2004).

The consequence is youth’s restiveness, militancy, kidnapping, pipe line vandalism, oil theft and other forms of criminality and violent confrontation. Thus, the inability of the Nigerian state to address genuine demands of the people in the area stimulated long years of clashes and confrontations between several youth groups and security agencies as well as oil multi-nationals. With the return to democracy in 1999, the military approach to containing the unrest exacerbated the already hostile security condition in the area leading to loss of human lives, oil and increased environmental devastation. For instance, the Nigerian government claims that between 1999 and 2005, oil losses amounted to 6.8 billion USD and a report leased in late 2008 –prepared by a 43 person government commission entitled *The Report of the Technical Committee of the Niger Delta* – in the first nine months of 2008 the Nigerian government lost a staggering \$23.7 billion in oil revenues due to militant attacks and sabotage (Joab-Peterside, Porter, & Watts, 2012). They further explained that: this is added to the oil bunkering trade (on average 12% of production) which is a multi-billion business and the overall losses are astounding. Between January 2006 and the summer 2009 over 400 expatriate oil-worker hostages were taken; maritime piracy has shown a marked increase (even after the amnesty). Between 2005 and 2009 there were over 12,000 pipeline vandalization, and over 3000 oil spills. Over 1 million barrels of output were shut-in as a result of the deepening insurgency by the summer of 2009 (by some estimations output fell to around 1 million barrels b/d in the summer of 2009), 124 of 174 oilfields were shut, Shell’s western operation were closed and Nigeria as a consequence fell from its perch as the largest African producer (Joab-Peterside, Porter, & Watts, 2012:8).

As can be seen, the Niger Delta after over half a century of crude oil exploration has remained grossly underdeveloped and indeed suffers from both human and ecological devastation. Perhaps, putting into cognizance the fact that previous government establishment of specialized agencies (Niger Delta Development Board, Niger Delta Basin Development Authority, Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission, Niger Delta Development Commission), that appear to have failed to satisfactorily tackle the Niger Delta challenges, the late President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua led administration initiated amnesty programme.

Essentially, this programme is geared towards demobilizing the youths to ensure conducive atmosphere for development. As a result, a development plan which also necessitated the creation of the Niger Delta Ministry at the Federal level as part of frantic efforts to transform dilapidated infrastructures and ensure general development. However, whether this new approach is well founded still remains to be seen. This paper seeks to examine the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta and to determine the extent it has impacted on poverty and insecurity in the region.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted Marxist Political Economy approach. Our choice of political economy is predicated on the fact that the approach looks at the social laws of production and distribution (Lange, 1974). It is an approach that is traditionally rooted in Marxist historical materialism and it holds that any form of exchange inherent in human society depends on the production and distribution of surplus value (Pereira, 2009). Thus, according to Adler (2009) political economy refers to the combined and interacting effects of economic and political structures or processes, and by extension, to the scholarly study of this domain. It is an approach with holistic view point on the contradicting relationships that underlie social formation in every society. Scholars (Luckac, 1968; Marx & Engels, 1977; Ake, 1981; Libman & Borisox, 1985; Gilpin, 1987) have separately argued that the preoccupation of this approach is to scientifically study the society in its totality and takes into consideration the interconnection of social relations, class conflict and the organic relationship between the sub-structure (economy) and the super structure (politics).

Following from the above, it is important to note that over several decades, Nigerian economy relies on the proceeds accruable from crude oil for sustenance. This arises from the fact that the region harbours a huge amount of natural resources that has served as the mainstay of the Nigerian economy since the 1980s (Faleti, 2012).

The oil resources of the Niger Delta account for over 95% of the Nigeria's export earnings and up to 70% of the revenue accruing to the Federal Government of Nigeria annually (Davis, 2009 cited in Faleti, 2012).

Unfortunately, the Niger Delta region that provides the life wire of the nation's economy has remained grossly underdeveloped. Indeed, the political economy approach explains the contradictions of oil production and lack of development in the region that bears the burden of oil production. Part of these problems could be attributed to neglect and marginalization of the region by successive administration and more importantly the poor governance that seen to have lacked the capacity to harness numerous resources that Nigeria is endowed with. Evidently, the growing poverty incidences, years of neglect, the increasing awareness of people on the need to make legitimate demands on the political system coupled with several other internal and external factors contributed to the security challenges in the Niger Delta. This problem was exacerbated by the militarized approach adopted by the Nigerian state to tackle the menace of insecurity.

Conceptual Explication

There are preponderant number of studies on underdevelopment, poverty, violence and insecurity in the Niger Delta (Ibeanu, 2000; Ikelegbe, 2001; Ibeanu, 2005; Ikelegbe, 2005; Omotola, 2006; Joab-Peterside, 2007; Saliu, Luqman & Abdullahi, 2007; Ibeanu, 2008; Enu & Ugwu, 2011; Faleti, 2012; Obadan & Chokor, 2013; Oromareghake, Arisi & Igho, 2013). Some of these studies seek to establish the relationship and the interconnectedness of poverty and conflicts specifically as regards to the Niger Delta violence since the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta (Faleti, 2012; Okpo & Eze 2012; Ibeanu, 2005). Hence, other related positions that the end product of underdevelopment, neglect, marginalization and oppression of the people in the region is the manifest struggle to compel state authorities to address environmental difficulties confronting the people and indeed, ensure a corresponding improvement on development of the people in the Niger Delta.

Thus, poverty is generally seen as a global phenomenon. According to Aboyade (1976), poverty is a state of inadequate command over, or inadequate access to, resources to satisfy wants which are considered normal by the value system of a given society. In the same view, World Bank Development Report (2000) explained that poverty is an unaccepted deprivation in human well-being which comprises both physiological deprivations in human that also includes; inadequate nutrition, health, education, shelter and social deprivation which includes risk, lack of autonomy, lack of self-respect and powerlessness. In fact, Burton (1997), asserted that poverty is as a result of inability to meet basic human needs can generate reactions that lead to conflict.

Following from the above, it could be stated that the impact of poverty is negatively monumental especially where the political system lacks the political will, socio-economic, political and structural wherewithal to address poverty incidences. Poverty could be explained as lack, inadequacy, deficiency and inability of one to optimally surmount basic daily needs (Nwanegbo & Odigbo 2013b). Earlier, Obadan (1997) enumerated the main factors that cause poverty which goes beyond low income to include among others: "inadequate access to employment opportunities; inadequate physical assets such as land and capital and minimal access by the poor to credit facilities even on a small scale; inadequate access to the means of supporting rural development in poor regions; inadequate access to market where the poor can sell goods and services; low endowment of human capital; destruction of natural resources leading to environmental degradation and reduced productivity; inadequate access to assistance for those living at the margin and those victimized by transitory poverty and lack of participation"(cited in Nwanegbo & Odigbo, 2013b).

Evidently, it is the failure to draw the poor into the design and subsequent implementation of development programmes that affect their lives. These are mainly issues bothering on the capacity of the state to evolve credible processes to deal with the basic and fundamental needs of the people. Thus, the outcome of this haphazard and poor implementation process of development programmes in the Niger Delta is obvious complication of the existing poverty crisis to a more complex degree. Thereby augmenting the possibility of people unleashing grievances on the polity and sometimes resorting to arms struggle. This has made security conditions in the Niger Delta to become more precarious and terrifying. In fact, David (2000), argued that the roots of insecurity in the Niger-Delta lies in the history of struggles for self determination, local autonomy and democracy of the ethnic minorities in the region which goes as far back as the second decade of the 20th century (Oromareghake, Arisi & Igho, 2013).

On the other hand, Beland (2005) views the term insecurity from the perspective of situational uncertainty. In his view, Beland (2005) while examining the role of political actors in the social construction of collective insecurity posited that insecurity is “the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection.” According to him, insecurity refers both to the subjective feeling of anxiety and to the concrete lack of protection. It is a condition in which one obviously lacks physical, socio-economic as well as political protection from any sort of harm. It could be stated thus, that insecurity is the cumulatively aggregated possible fear whether identified or perceived that may be injurious to freedom. Insecurity limits freedom, endangers development and growth of any given society thereby making environment of human existence more perilous.

Indeed, insecurity could be seen as the existence of threat, vulnerability and the extent it affects habitation of a given environment. In fact, while insecurity is mainly seen as the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, we emphasize that the impact of such exposure determines the extent a condition could be seen as insecure. The emphasis on effects and impacts is attributable to the fact that reliance on indicators such as susceptibility, danger, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequate protection, instability, trouble, lack of protection and risk, as well as other descriptors appear inadequate in measuring the consequences of a particular situation of insecurity.

Interestingly, the major reason behind amnesty is to restore peace and lay a solid foundation for prosperity. It provides the bases for security and indeed reduces the incentives for the renewal of rebellious act. Generally, amnesty can be seen as a process by which a State grants pardon to a group of person or persons, individuals who seem to have committed an offence against the state and as well legally reinstates them to assume innocent status. Amnesty does not only strive to pardon, it disarms, demobilizes, reintegrates, reconciles and reinstates the belligerent groups. Though these processes tend to be complex and tasking, experiences over the years have shown that it helps societies to transit from a confrontational condition to a more peaceful and progressive state. Following from this, it could be stated that the amnesty programme embarked upon by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's administration in 2009, appears to have halted active conflict in the Niger Delta. For instance, oil production has risen since then from 800,000 to about 2.3 million barrels daily. Yet, it still appears that government seems not to have done enough in the areas of poverty reduction. Secondly and perhaps more importantly is to assert that amnesty programme in Nigeria seems not to have eliminated several dreadful conditions that necessitated its adoption. For instance, pockets of threat by former militants still point to the fact that the crisis is not yet over. This is important especially when put into consideration that cessation of hostilities and the end of vocalized or overt violence does not mean the achievement of peace (Malan, 2008).

The Challenge of Poverty and Insecurity in Niger-Delta

Prior to 2009 when amnesty was declared by the federal government, Niger-Delta seems to be widely referred to as a region in Nigeria with high poverty incidences and devastating insecurity condition. This is in spite of the fact that crude oil derived from the Niger Delta accounts for over 80 per cent of government revenue, 95 per cent of foreign exchange earnings, 40 per cent contribution of GDP and 4 per cent of employment (Tell, 2008). With the return to democratic governance in 1999, efforts at augmenting funds of States from Niger-Delta with the view to improving infrastructure, tackling poverty and insecurity tend to have failed to achieve desirable result. This could be attributed to poor governance arising from elitist subjugation of public interest with personal ambition. Yet, prior to 2009 when amnesty was declared, agitations directed towards addressing the challenges confronting the region appeared to have either been neglected by the state, treated with unseriousness and sometimes the state resorted to use of force. For instance, the incidences such as the military invasion of Odi tend to have aggravated poverty crisis and insecurity in the Niger-Delta. Beyond use of force, poor management of the funds accruable from oil receipt by State and Local Governments widened poverty crisis in the region. Thus, the table 1 below shows increases of net allocation to States and Local Government Councils in Niger-Delta between June 1999 and July 2004.

Table 1: States, Years and Net Allocation to States and Local Government Councils in Niger-Delta (1999-2004)

STATES	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Abia	N2.688 billion	N10.311 billion	N12.807 billion	N15.861 billion	N19.732 billion	N13.157 billion
Akwa-Ibom	N4.216 billion	N27.457 billion	N37.119 billion	N29.394 billion	N45.819 billion	N40.454 billion
Bayelsa	N2.671 billion	N19.087 billion	N24.518 billion	N21.637 billion	N37.329 billion	N36.502 billion
Cross River	N3.208 billion	N11.333 billion	N12.722 billion	N15.422 billion	N19.994 billion	N15.253 billion
Delta	N4.391 billion	N31.941 billion	N45.623 billion	N53.152 billion	N64.399 billion	N48.768 billion
Edo	N3.253 billion	N11.810 billion	N14.267 billion	N15.027 billion	N20.102 billion	N16.551 billion
Imo	N3.293 billion	N13.097 billion	N17.150 billion	N19.862 billion	N24.297 billion	N19.818 billion
Ondo	N3.026 billion	N14.656 billion	N20.151 billion	N19.990 billion	N25.696 billion	N20.256 billion
Rivers	N4.459 billion	N22.815 billion	N27.963 billion	N40.308 billion	N53.580 billion	N40.960 billion

Source: Adapted from Onah & Ifedayo (2010:277-279)

It is important to note that in spite of huge sums of money allocated to various States and Local governments in the Niger-Delta, incidences of poverty persisted. According to Onah & Ifedayo (2010) a look and analysis of the States with emphasis on infrastructural development/facilities, social capital and welfare programmes may lead one to infer that most of the States could barely justify the whooping allocation to them from the federation under this democratic dispensation. For them, after more than five years of continuous receipt of the derivation fund from the federation, poverty and miseration of the people fester, while the governing elite live in opulence and grandeur (Onah & Ifedayo 2010). Corroborating this view, Ojajorotu & Dodd-Gilbert (2010) posited that despite the substantial contribution of the Niger Delta region to the socioeconomic development of Nigeria, it is indeed paradoxical when one juxtaposes the monumental poverty and underdevelopment in the region vis-à-vis its colossal input to national wealth. For instance, the table 2 below shows persistent incidences of poverty in the Niger-Delta between 1996 and 2004.

Table 2: Poverty in the Niger-Delta Measured by Income and Food Intake

States	Per cent poverty level		Food poverty levels as measured by 2,900 calories, 2004	
	1996	2004	Per cent with calorie intake below 2,900	Per cent above 2900 calories
Abia	58.6	29.95	22.03	77.17
Akwa Ibom	72.3	39.86	31.60	68.40
Bayelsa	44.3	25.64	20.77	79.23
Cross River	61.4	52.60	42.30	57.70
Delta	61.9	41.88	35.57	64.43
Edo	53.3	41.40	35.24	64.76
Imo	53.6	24.80	12.75	87.25
Ondo	71.6	88.84	21.21	78.79
Rivers	44.3	40.65	37.56	62.44
Niger Delta	57.9	42.85	28.78	71.22
Nigeria	65.0	56.90	36.04	63.96

Source: Federal Office of Statistics (2004 cited in Duru & Ojong, 2008:183).

Following from the above, it would be stated that the causes of poverty in the oil rich Niger Delta are complex and sometimes subject to dispute. What is central and important, however, is that the State failure to provide basic amenities, narrow the gap between the poor and the rich and engage the people especially on policies that are geared towards transforming the environmental hazards arising from oil exploration seem to have disconnected the people from the state hence their agitation. Ibaba (2001) stated that farmlands, which is the major means of labour has been destroyed as a result of harmful activities of most oil multinational corporations in the process of drilling and processing of natural crude. For him, oil spills and gas flaring in the Niger Delta areas is an agent of underdevelopment and poverty.

Indeed, insecurity took a new turn with increasing criminalization of the conflict, leading to questions as to why the problem is seemingly spiraling out of control (Ojakorotu, 2010). The spate of criminality and several other dimensions of insecurity such as oil bunkering, kidnapping, armed robbery, theft and open confrontation between several militant gangs and government forces (JTF) quickly exacerbated already existing worrisome security condition in the region. The bloodiest fighting since the onset of the insurgency was sparked by a government raid on 13 September on three Rivers State villages – Soku, Kula and Tombia – in search of Farah Dagogo, a commander of a MEND affiliate group (International Crisis Group, 2009). It further explained that the 92 attacks on the oil industry in 2008 were about one third above the previous year. Also, the second half of 2008 witnessed an escalation of direct confrontations on land between the military's Joint Task Force (JTF) and the militants (International Crisis Group, 2009).

Thus, the worsening insecurity in the region over the years tends to be inextricably linked to the increasing rate of poverty and staggering under-development in the Niger Delta. This is because over the years it appears that the interest of the Nigerian State is to maximize proceeds from oil production with less attention on addressing challenges arising from oil production. This could explain why successive regimes prior to Yar Adua's government prefer to invest heavily on the strategy of use of force than dialogue. For instance, such dispositions led to the Egbena Crisis (1989-91), Oburu violence (1989), Umuechem Massacre (1990), Bonny tragedy (1992), Egi-Obaji mayhem (1994), Tai-Biara (Ogoni) Massacre (1994), Ubima tragedy (1995), Odi Massacre 1999 e.t.c (cited in Saliu, Luqman & Abdullahi, 2007). Indeed, it is important to note that government insensitivity and insincerity in tackling the Niger Delta challenge to a large extent stultified the progress of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and other previously crafted agencies that were saddled with the duty to ensuring speedy development of the region. In fact, these contradictions informed Ibeanu's position that it seems that every development strategy that has been developed for the Niger Delta has paradoxically underdeveloped the region (Ibeanu, 2008).

Appraising the Amnesty Programme in Nigeria Since 2009

With the return to democratic governance in 1999, efforts at providing conducive atmosphere for foreign investment, opening democratic space and reducing the magnitude of conflicts if not totally eliminating it, appeared to be a major concern of Nigerian people. Expectations were indeed very high. It was believed that democracy is endowed with inherent practices capable of resolving conflicts of different sort. Among these myriad of confrontations in Nigeria is the Niger Delta crisis that seems to have remained intractable since independence. Thus, Obasanjo's administration established Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) as a specialized agency to cater for development and transformation of the region. While it would be stated that the NDDC provided number of infrastructures, its activities appeared not to have successfully reduced or eliminated criminality, violence and militant confrontation in the Niger Delta. Even the Federal government decision to engage a minimum force of action by establishing a Joint Military Task Force (JTF) still remained unimpressive to the problems.

Indeed, the aforementioned efforts seem to have rather increased the complexity of the crisis in Niger Delta. Within the eight years of Obasanjo administration, the Niger Delta crisis degenerated from a "brush fire to an all consuming conflagration". Clashes between the JTF and militant groups left thousands dead and many more injured. For instance, Dodd Gilbert (2010) stated that some militant youths are known to have fought fiercely for the control of bunkering territories and routes leading to the death of several people, and carried out reprisal acts of vandalism against oil infrastructure when arrested by the state security services. Davies as in Dodd Gilbert (2010) further explained that according to JTF, out of an estimated 411 illegal refineries operational in the Delta region, 111 were destroyed in July 2008.

This shows the degree of oil theft and the persistent criminality in the region following the unrest. The implication is the loss of lives and resources for development. For instance, Dodd-Gilbert (2010) presented value of Nigeria's average daily oil production stolen from 2000 to 2008. This is shown below as follows:

Table 3: Value of Nigeria's Average Daily Oil Production Stolen and Shut-in 2000 - 2008

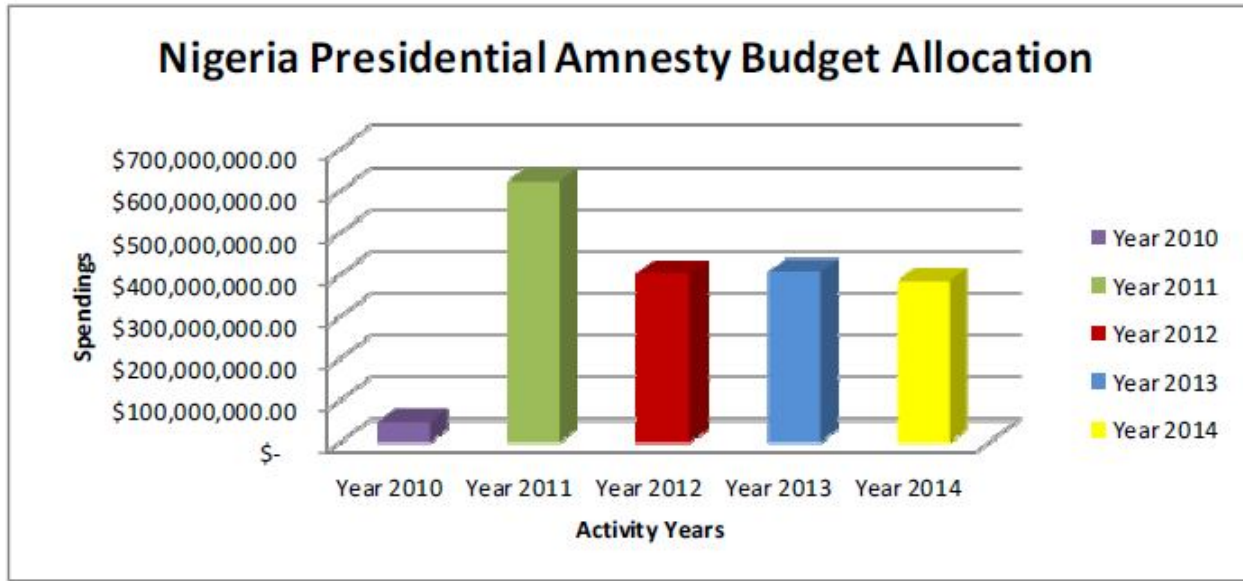
Year	Av. Price Bonny light crude (USD)	Volume stolen bpd	Volume oil stolen (USD)	Assumed production shut-in bpd	Value of production shut-in (USD)	Daily Av. Stolen & shut-in	Total Value (USD)
2000	28.49			250,000	\$2.6 billion		
2001	24.50			200,000	\$1.8 billion		
2002	25.15			370,000	\$3.4 billion		
2003	28.76	300,000	\$3.2 billion	350,000	\$3.7 billion	650,000	\$6.9 billion
2004	38.27	300,000	\$4.2 billion	230,000	\$3.2 billion	530,000	\$6.4 billion
2005	55.67	250,000	\$5.1 billion	180,000	\$3.7 billion	430,000	\$8.8 billion
2006	66.84	100,000	\$2.4 billion	600,000	\$14.6 billion	700,000	\$17.0 billion
2007	75.14	100,000	\$2.7 billion	600,000	\$16.5 billion	700,000	\$19.2 billion
2008	115.81	150,000	\$6.3 billion	650,000	\$27.5 billion	800,000	\$33.8 billion

Source: Davis (2009 cited in Dodd Gilbert, 2010: 60)

Also, oil theft seems to have also assumed a worrisome dimension. For instance, Obadan & Chokor (2013) stated that well over 10% of production losses are ascribed to theft which if not checked can seriously deplete income and pollute the environment through spills. For them, Nigeria is estimated to have lost N191 billion in the first three months of 2013 to oil theft (Obadan & Chokor 2013). Between January and August 2012, the Joint Task Force (JTF) raided illegal oil bunkering sites that led to the discovery of 2,700 illegal refineries in Bayelsa and Rivers states (Ubhenin, 2013). He further explained that in three months ending July 2012, the Delta State Police Command arrested over 150 persons for kidnapping, robbery and other criminal activities, averaging 50 persons in a month.

Arguably, the above human and economic loses, coupled with the intensified militancy in the Niger Delta and perhaps more importantly, the global economic meltdown in 2007 and the dwindling global oil price that confronted President Yar Adua's administration appear to have necessitated the need to prioritize peace agenda in the Niger Delta. As a result, Yar'Adua administration came with a solution of amnesty for the militants who are willing to lay down their arms for peace (Ogungbemi, 2010).

As can be seen, virtually after five years of amnesty, the Nigerian state appears to be basking by seemingly ephemeral peace in the Niger Delta. Undoubtedly, the programme has halted the violence in the Niger Delta. But more fundamentally is the fact that remote causes and major drivers of the conflict seem not to have been adequately addressed. Poverty has not in any manner been reduced in the Niger Delta neither has the Nigerian State improved the infrastructure to a reasonable standard. Indeed, huge sums of money have been expended and more are budgeted for the programme yet special agencies and the ministry saddled with the responsibility of providing the people the needed social goods appear to have performed below expectation. For instance, Oluokun (2012) pointed out that about N 127 billion was budgeted for the Niger Delta amnesty programme from 2009-2011. Since then, the government has maintained huge budgetary allocations to ensure sustenance and success of the programme. Also, the table below shows Federal Government of Nigeria budgetary allocation for amnesty programme from 2010 – 2014.

Table 4: Federal Government of Nigeria Budgetary Allocation from 2010 – 2014

Source: Abazie, (2014: 19)

Understandably, there seems to be reasonable level of sincerity in the disbursement of these funds. But this could not be attributed to the zealousness for success but the hostile and inexcusable character of the ex-militant on issues concerning their welfare and money that is rightfully their due. Thus, in spite of the financial commitment by the government, the task of rebuilding Niger Delta still remains enormous. Arguably, the state seems to have performed poorly especially in the areas of poverty eradication and infrastructural development.

Unfortunately, the amnesty has not petered out threats of resumption of hostilities. For instance, Nwajiaku-Dahou (2010) stated that in January 2010 MEND re-issued a threat to resume its war on the oil industry, although little action followed. On 15 March 2010, militants loyal to MEND also claimed responsibility for the detonation of explosives in Warri, Delta state, outside the hotel during a meeting of Governors from some Niger Delta states organized by *The Vanguard* newspapers, to discuss the modalities of the post Amnesty program (Nwajiaku-Dahou, 2010). Recently, the ex-militant leaders have unrepentantly continued to sing “war” songs and threaten to resume hostility if the incumbent President Jonathan is defeated in the 2015 Presidential election. Essentially, the state failure to holistically nib the problem of militancy in the bud would endanger modicum success already recorded. Truly, some of the militant groups have not erased the intention and possibility of returning back to the creeks and resuming militancy. Generally, the implication is that the failure to exploit the prevailing ephemeral peace to raise the living standard of the people (not only ex-militants), provide social amenities and services needed by the people will definitely replicate the conditions that generated the crisis in the first place.

Conclusion

From our analysis, we have explained that the economic conditions of the Nigerian State as a result of persistent youth restiveness and militancy and the dispositions of late President Yar Adua led to the declaration of amnesty programme for the Niger Delta. Thus, we further explained that the amnesty has helped to achieve ephemeral peace in the region hence the government has expended huge sums of money to drive the programme. However, the paper concluded that the grave danger is state inability to turn around the conditions in the Niger Delta especially those problems that instigated and sustained the violence. We emphasized that the prevailing fragile peace is not driven by amnesty rather by sympathy and sentiment for a President of Nigeria from Niger Delta extraction. Indeed, sustaining this fragile peace beyond President Jonathan’s administration means that Nigeria will rise to the challenge of ensuring concrete socio-economic and environmental transformation of the Niger Delta region. It is based on the above that this study recommended among others that the government should exert more efforts generally at building human capacity and infrastructural development in Niger Delta so as to dissuade people from resorting to violence and avert future slide back to crisis especially at the end of President Jonathan’s leadership.

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