



Governance and public safety in Nigeria: A study of the rivers state amnesty programme, 2015 to 2019

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Abstract

Over the past fifty years, oil exploration and exploitation has been carried out in total disregard of basic principles of sustainable environmental management in Rivers state which is part of the Niger Delta region. This neglect engendered the crisis of development occasioned by youth militancy which became a major excuse for criminality and threat to public safety and peace in Rivers State. In an attempt to address this, the governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike in September 2016, inaugurated the Rivers State Amnesty Programme with Mr Kenneth Chinda as the chairman of the State Amnesty Committee. Three years after the State amnesty programme, the political and social climate of Rivers State has not been free from the burgeoning challenges of insecurity and these have impacted negatively on the provision of developmental projects in the state. This study examined the amnesty security threat arising from the Rivers State's amnesty programme that has affected the States government capacity to public safety and reduce the incident of cult and gang clashes within the Port Harcourt Metropolis from 2015 to 2019. The longitudinal survey research design, with primary and secondary methods of data collection, and quantitative and qualitative descriptive methods of analysis were adopted as the methodology of the study. Anchoring our discourse on the theory of Post-Colonial State findings amongst others revealed that the amnesty program which lasted for only two months was not broad based as it was handled by the amnesty committee set up by governor, has not been able to resolved the challenges of criminality and improve public safety in Port Harcourt metropolis. The study also recommends amongst others that the amnesty programme should be expanded to accommodate both the repentant criminals and non-criminals in Rivers State; and Political leaders within the state should put an end to cults and gangs related activities by not providing them with money and weapons within the Port Harcourt metropolis.

Keywords: public safety, rivers state amnesty

Introduction

Over the past fifty years, the Niger Delta terrain has been overrun through exploration and a deliberate over exploitation of petroleum resources carried out in total disregard of basic principles of sustainable environmental management. Even though the exploration activities of all these oil companies enabled the country to export 2 million barrel per day (bpd) in since 1972 (Mebbine, 2000) cited in (Ering, Bassey & Odike, 2013), generating huge revenue to government, yet the host communities, from which this "black gold" petroleum is gotten continue to live in abject poverty and with devastated socio-economic environment. This situation of impoverishment and heinous environmental crimes led to the emergent of agitations and contentions in the region. These agitations and contentions took various dimensions and approaches, but to the detriment of the people of the region and indeed the country as a whole.

At one point, (in the 60s), it was led by Jasper Isaac Boro under the umbrella of Niger Delta freedom fighters, at another time, it was championed by the late publisher, environmentalist and activist Late Ken Saro Wiwa who not only lost his life through execution alongside some members of his kinsmen. In spite of these, the condition of the people remains devastated, deplorable and unbearable leading to the emergent of militant forces whose activities brought devastating effect not only in the region but across the nation. Many persons, including traditional leaders from the various ethnic nationalities who were seen as collaborators with the multinationals and government were killed while some oil companies were closed down, affecting seriously the revenue accruing to the federal government. These crises continued throughout the 1990s and persisted to 2007 despite the conversion to democracy and the election of the Obasanjo government in 1999 (Ering, Bassey:. & Odike, 2013).

With the emergence of a pan-Niger Delta militia group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) in 2006, the struggle for local control of Nigeria's oil assumed a more violent dimension. Apart from MEND that appears to have clearly articulated grievances namely environmental insecurity and socio-economic marginalization of the Niger Delta people, sundry groups emerged in the Niger Delta as well. Some of these groups, it would appear, were driven not by liberation ideology but crime and criminality. Independently the activities of these groups created a difficult security challenge in Nigeria's oil belt of which Rivers State is one

of them (Aaron, 2010). Oil installations were attacked and oil workers particularly expatriate staffs, at any rate, initially, were taken hostage for ransom. All these were happening, in spite of the heavy presence of the Joint Task Force (JTF), comprising of the Navy, Army and Air force, who were sometimes over run by the superior fire power of the militants (Aaron, 2010). The implications of this parlous security were grave. Oil production figures plummeted to all time low, as many TNCs announced production shut-ins. Specifically, average production figure for 2009 was around 1.6million barrels per day(bpd), down from 2.7million bpd (NNPC, 2009). The country lost an estimated \$92 billion in oil export earnings to production shut-in and crude oil theft associated with the activities of militants (Davis, 2009). The cumulative effect of this was a drastic fall in the country's oil exports. Consequently, public finance was subjected to one of the worst crises since independence. The crisis engendered by youth militancy has been a major threat to peace and security in Rivers state. The need for peace and sustainability remains the backbone of human and societal existence, a harmonious environment where there is peace, security, increase in socio-economic activities and political stability becomes a necessity both in developed and in developing countries. Governments around the world today are concerned with the protection of life and property of its citizens and to this have adopted various measures to ensure that peace and security among members of the public is guaranteed following this trend, the Nigeria government adopted some measures to combat her security challenges so as to maintain peace and tranquillity (Udoh & Chijioko, 2017) ^[47]. In what appears an admission of the futility of violent response, late President Umaru Yar'Adua, on 25th June, 2009, announced an amnesty for militants who were willing to surrender their arms. The amnesty programme was proclaimed on 25th June 2009 and was expected to run for a period of 60 days (from August 6th to October 4th 2009) (Idonor, 2009; Ikelegbe & Umokoro, 2014). The amnesty programme was in phases: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) Aaron (2010). Disarmament of militants entailed the physical removal of the means of combat from ex belligerents (weapons, ammunition). Demobilization is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed groups, followed by processing of individual combatants in temporary centres with provision of support packages. Reintegration entails the process of reintegrating former combatants/militants into civil society ensuring against the possibility of a resurgence of armed conflict (Nwachukwu & Pepple, 2011).

During this period, opportunity was given to ex-agitators to surrender their arms in exchange for presidential pardon and it was a deliberate effort to address the restive nature of youths in the region and empower them through training in different skills at home and abroad. Although, the amnesty programme has been hailed by many as successful given the quantity of arms surrendered by the militants, the programme has not been able to totally restore peace and security in the region which has hampered development ranging from kidnapping, illegal oil bunkering, piracy, bombings, disruption of pipeline facilitates and other crimes (www.wikipedia.org). The significance of Rivers State to the Nigeria economy cannot be denied or underestimated. From 1958 when oil was found in commercial quantity in Oloibiri, in present day Bayelsa State to the present, both the federal government and the multi-national oil companies doing business in the state had reaped enormous benefit. Despite her salient contribution to the Nigerian economy, a large proportion of her people remain predominately cut off from the basic amenities of descent existence (Kio-Lawson & Dekor, 2014) ^[31]. Years after the presidential amnesty programme, the political and social climate of Rivers state like many other Niger Delta States has not been free from the burgeoning challenges of insecurity and these have affected the rate of infrastructural provision of developmental projects in the state. As Onwukwe (2016) is at pain to point out Rivers State's case has been unique. Incidents of cultism, militancy and high rate of killings have given the state a bad image. In an attempt to address this, the Rivers State, Nyesom Wike in September 2016, inaugurated the Rivers State Amnesty Programme with Mr Kenneth Chinda as the chairman of the State Amnesty Committee (Thisday News, 17th September, 2016). In unveiling the amnesty programme, Eromosele (2016) ^[15] asserts "the Rivers State government has explained that the amnesty programme initiated by the administration of Governor Wike in the State, is not meant to enrich repentant cultists and criminals with cash rewards, instead the act is to provide responsible rehabilitation that would integrate them back into the society". In line with the government initiative to sustain peace and security in the State, Damgbor (2016) ^[12] noted that the state government's economic empowerment programme is a deliberate effort designed to economically empower Rivers State youths towards the upliftment of their standard of living as well as boost the economy of the state. This study examines the amnesty security threat arising from the Rivers State's amnesty programme that has affected the States government capacity to public safety and reduce the incident of cult and gang clashes within the Port Harcourt Metropolis from 2015 to 2019.

Statement of the Problem

The basic components of the amnesty programmes of the Rivers state government are disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). Though laudable, issues of socio- economic reconstruction still remain grossly unaddressed and cast shadows of doubt about government's sincerity to drive the peace process through.

Beside the praise and promise of the amnesty programme, it is flawed both in planning and implementation. As a result, there is threat to the security and development of the state. Apart from the flawed implementation of the programme, several issues that affect community reintegration are yet to be addressed. Oil-producing communities still suffer from extreme poverty and underdevelopment, two years after the emergence of the amnesty programme.

On the other hand, the DDR process which is a means to achieving peace and development by helping to reintegrate repentant youths in the communities of the State has not been diligently followed and fully implemented, and this leaves much to be desired.

Like the Amnesty programme granted to the militants of Niger Delta, Omadjohwoefe (2011), Ibaba (2011) ^[20, 21], and Egwemi (2010) argued that, the amnesty initiative, though a unique approach, does not have what it takes to answer the question of security in Rivers State. Olatoke and Olokooba (2012) argued that the amnesty programme is yet to be passed into law and as such unconstitutional. Smoke (2009) opined that managers of the Nigerian system should develop strategies to deal with the post amnesty challenges and that all stakeholders need to be involved in actualizing the implementation of the post amnesty programme. Aluede (2012) argued that the way the programme has been implemented to cost several billions of naira to benefit a few people who have committed crimes against the state is wrong.

The political and social environment of Rivers State like many other states of the federation is not free from challenges of insecurity. As Onwukwe (2016) is at pains to point out that Rivers state case is unique in the sense that, incidence of cultism, militancy and aspects of killings 'have given the state a bad image and made the state's environment unsafe for residence in Port Harcourt and in the rural areas even after the amnesty offer to criminals, cultist etc by the Governor Wike's administration. The amnesty program which ran through the year 2015-2017 was intended to restore peace and security to the state and ameliorate the security challenges arising from cultism, militancy and kidnapping. According to Eromosele (2016) ^[15] the amnesty program was not intended to give cash reward to repented criminals and cultists in the state, rather it was intended to provide a responsible rehabilitation for them.

Conceptual and Theoretical Review of Extents

The Concept of Amnesty

The word Amnesty is derived from a Greek word Amnestia meaning forgetfulness. It is therefore defined as a grant of general pardon or as a general pardon granted by a government especially for political offences (Free Dictionary, 2011). International law, amnesty is defined as the act of effacing and forgetting past offences granted by the government to persons who have been guilty of neglect or crime (Encarta, 2009). In this context, amnesty is a pardon granted to members of all militant groups who have been involved in different nefarious activities that made the nation looked insecure and un-conducive for foreign investment which impinged on the growth and development of the nation's economy and which also dragged the nation's international reputation to the mud. It is an unconditional pardon granted to all persons who directly or indirectly participated in committing offences associated with militant activities in the Niger Delta as well as all persons presently being prosecuted for offences associated with militant activities (Compass News Paper, 2009).

Amnesty is a pardon extended by the government to a group or class of persons usually for political offence, the act of a sovereign power officially forgiving certain classes of persons who are subject to trial but have not yet being convicted. It is the action of a government by which all persons or certain groups of persons who have committed a criminal offence usually of a political nature that threatens the sovereignty of the government are granted immunity from prosecution. Examples of such offences are treason and sedition. According to the free Encyclopaedia, Wikipedia amnesty allows the government of a nation or state I to forget criminal acts, usually before prosecution has occurred. Amnesty has traditionally been used as political tool of compromise and reunion following a war. An act of amnesty is generally granted to a group of people who have committed crimes against the state such as treason, rebellion or desertion from the military. The history of amnesty dates back to 403B.C. According to Greek and Roman law, one of the documented ones was the long-term civil war in Athens which was ended after a group dedicated to reuniting the city took over the government and arranged a general political amnesty. The amnesty which was effected by loyalty oaths taken by all Athenians and only later made into law, the amnesty proclaimed the acts of both warring functions officially forgotten. The amnesty which was also known as the Act of Oblivion was specifically to heal the wounds resulting for the civil war between democrats and oligarchs, the amnesty prevented the prosecution of those who were considered political enemies having supported the reign of the thirty. Athenians jurors were required to swear "we will remember past offences no more". The amnesty of 403B.C. was passed by majority vote and affected almost everyone that participated in the war.

An amnesty is an exoneration and pardon from punishment for certain criminal, rebel and insurgent actions committed usually against the state and society. An amnesty is always backed by law and has a specified period of time for the assumed offenders to admit the offence and accept pardon. Amnesty guarantees an interregnum of peace, cessation of hostility and a state of unsecured quiet which necessitates a post conflict scenario for peace building. Goldman (2002) sees amnesty as a general pardon of offence by government, a deliberate overlooking of offences against a government. Weisman (1972) sees it as an act of sovereign power designed to apply the principle of 'Tabula Rasa' to past offences usually committed against the state.

In Nigeria the concept of amnesty was first introduced and initiated by the late president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in 2009 in order to restore peace and stability to the Niger Delta Region. The amnesty encouraged militants of the region to surrender their weapons and it lasted for 60 days (from 6th August to 4th October 2009) while in Rivers state amnesty was initiated by the former governor Rotimi Amaechi's administration to rehabilitate militants of the state's origin.

The Effect of Amnesty Are as Follows

- Immediate release of all political prisoners
- Right of political exiles to return
- Relinquishment of civil and political rights
- Reinstatement in their jobs of persons dismissed for political reasons
- Amnesty can also be granted for political reasons during transitions of government
- Amnesty can also serve to neutralize opposition groups.

In other words, an amnesty is a guarantee of exemption from prosecution and pardon from punishment for certain criminal, rebel and insurgent actions hitherto committed usually against the state. It indemnifies affected persons in terms of safety and protection from punitive actions, retributions and associated losses. An amnesty is usually within a specific time within which offenders admit crime and take advantage of the general pardon. There are however certain commitments or remediative actions such as hand over of illegal arms and confession of illegal actions. An amnesty is often backed by law.

The Amnesty Programme and DDR

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) is one of the most important ways of resolving conflicts and managing post - conflicts situation in the world to ensure peace. This has been variously used by the United Nations and other similar bodies as an instrument for achieving sustainable peace (Ibaba, 2011) ^[20, 21]. This was adopted by the Nigerian government in its amnesty programme in the Niger Delta. There are three phases to the amnesty programme, *viz*, the disarmament and demobilisation of militants, the rehabilitation and integration of ex-militants and the final stage is the post-Amnesty package of huge infrastructural development.

Post conflict transition ensures comprehensive changes in terms of structures, institutions, orientations and attitudes. It is very sensitive and involves socio-political engineering, economic recovery and military and security interventions. Collier, Hoeffler and Soderbom (2006) ^[11] have found that post conflict economic growth and economic recovery for example reduces substantially the risk of conflict reversion. Unresolved grievances, poverty, decay of trust, intention and confidence and unfocused leadership are among the factors which can cause relapse to conflict. Post conflict reversion is very costly and dreadful. Stages in the management of post conflict transition to peace are sequentially disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. (DDR) Peace building is an all-encompassing whole process of facilitating and strengthening enduring peace.

According to Fisher *et al.*, (2000:14) peace building involves “understanding programmes designed to address the causes of conflict and the grievances of the past and to promote long term stability and justice”. It is an effort to ensure socio-political and economic stability of the society. Peace building is proffering durable solution to a conflict ridden society to achieve durable peace. They further stated that peace building does not only address conflict behaviours but more importantly the underlying context behaviours that gave rise to violence. (The causes and triggers) Disarmament is a form of weapons control strategy both at production and circulation. In a post conflict society, it is the surrender of arms by ex-combatants at designated sites or camps which signifies end to fighting. Disarmament is essentially a military operation, designed to manage the instruments of violence (arms and ammunition) such that a secure and stable environment (Gwinyayi, 2007) is made possible for post conflict transition and implementation of peace agreements. The success of disarmament is determined first by the quantity of arms surrendered in relation to the estimated stockpiles and available arms, secondly by ensuring inaccessibility of arms and arms flow which guarantees no possibility of rearmament. While disarmament controls the physical tools of violence, demobilization controls the human tools of violence.

Demobilization is the first step of transition from combat and militarized life to civilian life. It involves dismantling and disbandment of non-state fighting forces and paramilitary forces that are usually assembled in camps for a change of life orientation. The transition process is usually managed through pre-discharging and post-discharging orientations which includes counselling on non-violent life and life career. Disarmament and demobilization are part of a military process but reintegration is a civilian process and the overall success depends on the proper execution of each phase.

Reintegration involves the absorption of ex-combatants into the society through gainful training and empowerment. It is geared towards economic independence and self empowerment and peaceful and civil roles of ex-combatants in the society. Reintegration addresses the specific needs of ex-combatants by offering support in terms of skills development, education, professional training, micro credit and assistance to return to peaceful and sustainable livelihoods. It is broader than disarmament and demobilization cutting across economic and social life of the demobilized persons. Reintegration goes far beyond ex-combatants to include war veterans, families and communities of ex-combatants and veterans and disabled combatants. It takes years to achieve reintegration.

Theoretical Review

Some scholars have tried to define what is meant by resource control. While one group conceives it as the total take-over of the resources located in the resource producing states by the people of those states, others understand it to mean that the stakeholders in the resource-bearing area should manage greater proportions of the resources harnessed in those areas (Roberts & Oladeji, 2005). Nevertheless, as presently used in Nigeria, resource control may be taken to mean ‘the substantive powers for the community to collect monetary and other

benefits accruing from the exploitation and use of resources in its domain and deploy same to its all purposes' (Ya'u, 2001). Bannon and Collier (2003) have argued in their study that countries dependent on natural resources for governance are most likely to be blighted by conflict. Also, according to Benjamin (1997), conflicts over the distribution of state resources and the control of resources within communal territories add to the difficulties of political accommodation in many federations. Resource control can be broadly defined as the way and manner the government revenue is share among the various tiers of government. In another way round, how the resources available are harnessed and determined.

According the Ifedayo (2010), resource control involves the access of communities and state governments to natural resources located within their boundaries and the freedom to develop and utilize these resources without inference from the federal government. Douglas (2005) observes that it is an "actual control of resources by the people who live in communities with these resources for the support of life.

According to Ikporukpo (2002), a common thread linking all the protests is the feeling of the people in spite of their oil resources and the governmental deterioration consequent on the resources exploitation.

Ofeimum (2005) captured the concepts of resource control as the principle that every federating unit must be empowered to be self governing. To him, the resource control amounts to an expression of self determination by the zone which places a collaborative duty on other parts of the country to assist the zone in realizing their objective. Ofin-Esin (2005) posited that "the demands for resource control clearly demonstrate that (fiscal federalism) is still an inserted issue. Yet it is an issue we must find a way to resolve if we are to continue as a federation".

Ikelegbe (2001), asserted that "the tempo, activity, cohesion and commitment of the civil groups indicate that, the state-resource authority and the state regional resource distribution world have to be negotiated, redefined and reconstituted if national stability and unity is to be sustained. According to Akpan Ekpo and Enamidem Ubok-Udom (2003), the wealth of the nation devolves on its owners, but in their own case, they have nothing to show for it, except for paradoxical poverty. In addition, they also argue that in the United States of America, the oil producing states control their oil resources and wonder why the same principle could not be applied to Nigeria.

Moreover,' existing studies on erritorial conflict (Gilpin, 1981; Coackley, 1993; Diehl, 1999) have concluded that governments are less likely to seek peaceful functions or play a critical role in the country; they will peaceful relinquished lands that do not. The nature of the states under dispute therefore predicts how the dispute will end. Also, empirical evidence in federal states shows that the federal states with diversified industrial economy tends towards decentralization of fiscal powers and control of critical national resources, whereas federal states with weak mono-cultural economy tends towards centralization of fiscal powers and control of resources.

However, in both models the central government collects the largest share of natural resources. It also enjoys a wide range of jurisdictional powers over critical national resources and uses taxation powers to limit the powers of the federating unit, jurisdictional power over any resources in their locality. It is equally important to note that in federal states, if the essence of federalism is a tool for managing conflicts in plural societies and correcting vertical imbalances generated by revenue and expenditure assignments are to be achieved the federating units cannot be economically and politically stronger then central government (Okediji 2006; Osaghae 1991; Eliagwu 1979; Aaron and Samuel, 2005).

Akpan (2011) observed that militancy in the Niger Delta has crippled Nigeria's oil investment flow to the upstream sub-sector such that Angola surpassed Nigeria as Africa's highest crude oil producer with oil companies in Nigeria such as the Royal Dutch Shell seeing its production levels of one million barrels per day drop to about 250,000 barrels per day. On the one hand, the Amnesty programme originates from a resolve by the Nigerian Federal Government to checkmate wilful destruction of lives and properties, increasing crime of kidnapping and killing of oil workers, constant attacks and vandalisation of oil facilities, which has rendered revenue loss to the Nigerian state. On the other hand, the Amnesty programme of the Federal Government questions the collapse of such socio-economic developmental organizations as the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC), set up in 1992 and puts on trial the supervising organizations of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) set up in 2000 and the Ministry of the Niger Delta set up in 2008. Moreover, studies on the Amnesty programme and developments in the Niger Delta have not adequately addressed the underlying processes and problems that shape and condition Nigeria's developmental policies. These studies have in various ways concentrated on the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) cum efforts to reduce illegal arms flow and rehabilitate the militants; the effects of corporate social responsibility of prospective multi-national corporations such as Royal Dutch Shell on host communities in the Niger Delta; the conduct of the Nigerian military in the conflicts in the Niger Delta; issues of the kidnappings, ethnic militias and national security (Udoh & Chijioke, 2017) ^[47]. The inadequacies of these studies is reflected in its narrow emphasis on the determinant and impact of the past and present corporate and governmental socio-economic programmes on all round social justice and sustainable development of the Niger Delta people. More importantly, the above scholarly contributions have failed to deliver a veritable system and intellectual approach that is consistent with the developmental imperatives and objectives of the Niger Delta region.

Moreover, the workability of the Amnesty programme which is led by the Presidency is in doubt because 55 percent of the corrupt practices is perpetuated by the Presidency, coupled with a Nigeria ruling class that is built

on a belief that governmental programmes are avenues to duplicate functions, sustain political patronage and complicate governmental policies so as to institutionalize corruption (Udoh & Chijioke, 2017) ^[47].

In explaining the damage the militancy has inflicted on the Nigerian economy before the Amnesty Programme. Akpan (2011) reports:

Militancy in the Niger Delta has virtually crippled Nigeria's economy. Investment flow to the upstream sub-sector of the oil industry had dwindled remarkably such that Angola surpassed Nigeria as Africa's highest crude oil producer. Niger Delta Royal Dutch Shell by early 2009 saw its production drop from one million bpd to 250,000 bpd. ExxonMobil also experienced increased insurgency activities in its Nigeria operations...It got to a point that Nigeria's export dwindled as low as 800,000 bpd, compared with the targeted 2.2million bpd for the first quarter of 2009. In 2008 alone, it was estimated that Nigeria lost over three billion naira as a result of the militancy in the Niger Delta.

Again, Ibaba (2011) ^[20, 21] discovers that the call for sustainable development for peace and participatory involvement by the Niger Delta people in their oil resources can be found in the Ogoni Bill of Rights (1990); the Kaima Declaration (1998); the Resolution of the First Urhobo Economic Summit (1998); the Bill of Right of the Oron People (1999); the Aklaka Declaration (1999) and the Warri Accord (1999).

The disarmed militants were Six Niger Delta States, with a promise of a payment of N65, 000 (Approximately 407USD) monthly, the payment of rent and offering of Vocational training (Oluwaniyi, 2011) ^[36, 39]. During the first phase which has already been implemented several militants turned in several arms and ammunitions (Kuku, 2011). Indeed, it was recorded that about 26,358 ex-militants accepted the Amnesty offer (first phase - 20,192 militants representing those that accepted the offer on or before 4th October 2009, while the second phase of the Amnesty Programme that occurred in November 2010 comprises of 6,616 militants representing those that accepted the offer post 4 October 2009).

This appeared to have reduced the incidence of conflict and the accumulation and influx of arms, by 'militants in the region. Some rehabilitation centres were provided for the second stage which was tailored to meet training needs of the ex-militants. The trainings were to be done in batches as the Centres could only accommodate few numbers of registered ex-militants. It is expected that each batch would spend four weeks in the rehabilitation programme which involves re-orienting, counselling and moral/spiritual regeneration of the ex-militants (Akinwale, 2010) ^[3]. A survey of the career aspiration of the ex-militants reveals a great preference for about Ten (10) sectors ranging from Oil/Gas, maritime services, Fabrication and welding Technology, Exploration and Production and Processing Engineering which duration of training programme is projected to last between 3-18 months and Olu Adeyemi, 2010; Okumagba, 2014) ^[37]. The consensus is that addressing the fundamental issues which underline the transformation and sustainable development is crucial to achieving peace and development in the Niger Delta and the Nigeria State.

Studies such Walts (2008); Osaghae (2008); Adebayo (2009); Aghalino (2009) ^[2]; Obi (2010); Nwozor (2010); Okumagba (2014) ^[37]; and the host of others have all examined the crises in the Rivers state and government's responses towards addressing these crises, however these studies failed to show the post amnesty security threats and how these threats manifesting in cult clashes, kidnapping armed robbery, political violence, etc., have all combined to obstruct the provision of infrastructural development in Rivers state. Also, how the struggle for resource control and corruption have impeded the successful implementation of the postamnesty programme of DDR in Rivers state. This forms the lacuna or the gap in knowledge which this study seeks to fill.

Theoretical Framework

This study is principally anchored on the theory of the Post-Colonial State. This theory is imperative to the research because of its effectiveness and merits among other means for the study and understanding of the social system and related phenomena. The theory of post-colonial state was developed by Alavi (1972), and popularized by third world scholars like Ake (1985), Ekekwe (1985) and Ibeanu (1998). The theory suggests that the post-colonial state is a creation of imperialism. As such, it has followed the developmental strategy dictated by the interest of imperialist and its local allies, not by those of the majority of the indigenous population. This post-colonial state has created for itself a deep crisis from which it can hardly extricate itself without fundamentally changing its present nature.

According to Ekekwe (1985), the post colonial state rests on the foundation of the colonial state, this, in turn, had incorporated some important elements of the pre- colonial rudimentary state structures. The main goal of the colonial state was to create conditions under which, accumulation of capital by the foreign bourgeoisie in alliance with the ruling elite would take place through the exploitation of local human and other natural resources. It was on this basis that the post-colonial state emerged.

As Ibeanu (1998) has also noted, despite anti-colonial struggles, the post-colonial state altered very little in the arbitrariness of its predecessor. This is especially the case in a country like Nigeria where independence was negotiated with the colonialists. Negotiated independence, according to him, implied that the structures of the colonial state were not changed in any fundamental sense; it was just a change of personnel. Therefore, the state that now emerged, though ostensibly independent and sovereign, was not only a creature of imperialism, but also sought to dovetail its interest with the foreign bourgeoisie. This is why the Nigerian state consistently protects the interest of the multinational oil companies operating in the Niger Delta as against the interest of the host community.

One basic character of the post-colonial state is that it has very limited autonomy (Ake, 1985). This means that the state is institutionally constituted in such a way that it enjoys limited independence from the social classes, particularly the hegemonic social class, and so, is immersed in the class struggle that goes on in the society. This lack of relative autonomy is one reason why the post-colonial state in Nigeria is incapable of mediating political conflicts (Ake, 1985). In other words, to the extent that there is highly limited autonomization of the state, the possibility of resolving contradictions and crises is severely limited. This explains why government efforts (through repression, persuasion, negotiation, pacification) have always failed to resolve the Niger Delta crises. The post-colonial state is also constituted in such a way that it reflects and caters for a narrow range of interest (Ake, 1985). The post-colonial state as regards the Nigeria state, caters mainly for the interest of the Nigerian bourgeoisie and metropolitan capitalist. Ekekwe (1985) has noted that in any discussion of the post-colonial state, there is need to consider capital and the state as being closely related. This is because foreign capital plays dominant role in postcolonial states.

The Application of the Theory

The theory of post-colonial state as a tool of analyses is very suitable for explaining and understanding the Amnesty offer granted to the criminal gangs and cult groups in Rivers State. When Nigeria is put in its proper neo-colonial state that is not only characterized by low autonomy, but also solely depends on the exploration, export and sale of oil, we begin to understand why the reliance on oil royalties is inevitable and why government resorted to conciliatory approaches such as the amnesty programme since the use of force to quell the crises has not yielded any positive dividend. This theory enables us understand that, in as much as there is a symbiotic alliance between the state and the multinational oil companies, the interest of the latter, irrespective of the approaches adopted, will always take precedence over the indigenous population. In the light of this, we can see that the granting of the amnesty was borne out, in first instance, for the interest of the foreign capital that wants an increase in the daily production of crude oil, secondly, ensure the security and safety of foreign oil workers. In furtherance of this theory, it is quite obvious that the Nigerian state with regard to the amnesty programme considers the interest of the indigenous population secondary to enhancing security in Rivers State and maximizing oil production. It is within this context that we conclude that the amnesty programme granted to the restive youths in Rivers State was not intended to address the political, economic, and socio- environmental problems that are the main drivers of crises in the Niger Delta region in the first place. Rather, the policy was designed to allow the Nigerian state unhindered access to more oil and gas resources in the state. Secondly, ensure the security and safety of foreign oil workers not minding environment and human security.

Methodology

A research design is a plan that shows how a researcher intends to fulfill the goods of a proposed study. It indicates what observation will be made to provide answers to the questions in the statement of the problem, i.e., how the observations will be made and the analytical and statistical procedures to be used once the data is collected. In conducting researches, research designs are indispensable. It also defines the domain of generalizability, that is, whether they obtained interpretations can be generalized to a larger population or to different situations (Bailey, 1978; Nnabugwu, 2006).

For Asika (1991), research design means the structuring of investigation aimed at identifying variables and their relationship with one another. This is used for the purpose of obtaining data to enable the researcher test hypotheses or answer research questions. Legee and Francis (1974) also noted that in logic, each research design is like a blue print that tells us how to reach plausible answers to research problems. Research design serves as a useful guide in our efforts to generate data for the study. Bassey and Ndiyo (2016) ^[9] posit that research design is a scheme or blueprint for investigating the relationship among the web of variables of the study.

Deriving from the above, the study adopted the longitudinal survey design. A longitudinal study refers to an investigation where participant outcomes and possibly treatments or exposures are collected at multiple follow-up times. Longitudinal design is concerned with progress and change in status; this implies that the term "longitudinal data" denotes repeated measurements of the same variables over a time span long enough to encompass a detectable change in their developmental status. There are three basic types of longitudinal designs: trend studies, cohort studies, and panel studies. Longitudinal designs have natural appeal for the study of changes associated with development. Longitudinal studies come into the category of what are called 'quasi experimental designs.' Longitudinal research designs describe patterns of change and help establish the direction and magnitude of causal relationships. Measurements are taken on each variable over two or more distinct time periods. This allows the researcher to measure change in variables over time. It is a type of observational study sometimes referred to as a panel study.

In this study, the longitudinal survey design was used in respect to its descriptive usage. This entails the careful observation of the extent the state government post-amnesty programme enhance the security of oil facilities in Rivers State seen in the area of using the repentant militants who have undergone capacity building through the DDR programme to guard the oil installations and pipelines. Also, the application of the design entails observation of the extent Rivers State government amnesty programme has not reduced the rate of cultism and kidnapping in the state seen in the area of increased in cult clashes especially sponsored by politicians and other public officials. Furthermore, the application of the design entails observation of how the post amnesty programme of the state government has failed to enhance the provision of public infrastructure in Rivers State

seen in the area of lack of access road or bridges linking up or connecting communities and towns, lack of stable power supply, clean water supply and poor infrastructural facilities in the state.

Study Area

The study area is Port Harcourt metropolis. Port Harcourt is the capital and largest city of Rivers State, Nigeria, it lies along the Bonny River and is located in the Niger Delta. As of 2016, the Port Harcourt urban area has an estimated population of 1,865,000 inhabitants, up from 1,382,592 as of 2006. Port-Harcourt is also the home of Bole festival. The area that became Port Harcourt in 1912 was before that part of fishing settlements (fishing ports) also called Borokiri in Okrika language and the farmlands of the Diobu village group of the Ikwerre, a tribe in the larger Igbo nation. The colonial administration of Nigeria created the port to export coal from the collieries of Enugu located 243 kilometres (151 mi) north of Port Harcourt, to which it was linked by a railway called the Eastern Line, also built by the British.

In 1956 crude oil was discovered in commercial quantities at Oloibiri, an Ijaw settlement, and Port Harcourt's economy turned to petroleum when the first shipment of Nigerian crude oil was exported through the city in 1958. Through the benefits of the Nigerian petroleum industry, Port Harcourt was further developed, with aspects of modernization such as overpasses, city blocks, taller and more substantial buildings. Oil firms that currently have offices in the city include Royal Dutch Shell and Chevron.

There are a number of institutions of tertiary education in Port Harcourt, mostly government-owned. These institutions include, Rivers State University, University of Port Harcourt, Kenule Besor Wiwa Polytechnic, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Ignatius Ajuru University and Rivers State College of Health Science and Technology. The current mayor is Victor Ihunwo. Port Harcourt's primary airport is Port Harcourt International Airport, located on the outskirts of the city; the NAF base is the location of the only other airport and is used by commercial airlines Aero Contractors and Air Nigeria for domestic flights. Figure 9. Was the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process followed by the Rivers State government in the implementation of her amnesty programme?

From the table and figure above, the researcher try to find out whether the Rivers State amnesty programme followed the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process in integrating the repentant criminals or cultist back into the society. The result as displayed in the table shows that 71 respondents representing 17.75% agreed that the amnesty programme of Rivers State followed the laid down process of DDR, while 329 of the respondents representing 82.25% were of the NO response which assert that the amnesty programme of the Rivers State government did not carry out the DDR process on the repentant criminals and cultist.

Discussion of Findings

From the research findings, the program did not totally curb the menace as related to militancy, as some cult related activities are still going on in the State, According to Isaac Anumihe (2018) ^[4] a report given in The Sun News that there is still insecurity on the '!' waterways in Rivers state, according to the report on Saturday April 21 St 2018, militants or pirates attacked crew members on a Dutch cargo ship that was nearing the port Harcourt port, the ship owner Forest wave Navigation Rapide confirmed that 12 of 14 were taken from the vessel. Also there is an increase in oil theft popularly known as bunkry in different local communities of the state which has brought about soothe in Port Harcourt making the atmosphere & unsafe for humans. The program has not been able to curb this menace of cultism and kidnapping as there is high rate of cultism and kidnapping activities in the state.

In Port Harcourt some of these cultists have formed robbery gangs and they rob houses, cars, public transports, shops etc and during their clashes several lives are been lost. According Victor Azubike on the Daily Post report on July 8, 2018 there were records of violence at Rumuolumeni in Obio/Akpor local government area and in some communities in Emohua local government area due to cultism clashes. According to Davies Iheamnachor (2018) a report given in the Vanguard Newspaper on July 25th 2018, the police command in Rivers state arrested 20 high profile criminals and recovered 16 exotic vehicles from them.

The police commissioner of the state, Mr. Zaki Ahmed said 11 of the 20 criminals were kidnappers while others were armed robbers and car snatchers, He further said 15 cars of different makes, 9 pump action guns and 20 locally made pistols and several ammunition were recovered from the criminals. Also a report given by the Punch Newspaper on August 16th 2018 written by Sampson Itode in Port Harcourt noted that 28 criminals were arrested for armed robbery, kidnapping and other crimes. Also a report given by Tony John on the Sun Newspaper states that from July 1st to August 12th 2018 about 22 armed robbers and 30 cult members were apprehended and among the kidnappers were those who have been abducted; a traditional ruler in Okporo Mini, seven and five years old boys in Ozuoba and Qyigbo respectively in Obio/Akpor and Oyigbo local government areas of the state. Up till now residents of Port Harcourt particularly in the Diobu and old Port Harcourt township areas have continued to live under the threat of some of the vicious cult groups. The Icelanders and The Greenlanders and of course the affiliates, the Deygbam and deywell. Cultism has also been prevalent in Abua / Odual local government area, where there have been reports of clashes between Greenlanders and Icelanders in some communities like in Emughan. Although the siege of some of these cult groups over some communities like Aggah community and Omoku in Ogba/ Egbema/ Ndoni have been lifted due to the amnesty program, these cult members have devised several other means of making the state environment unsafe for economic activity to

take place peacefully. A Criminologist, Onyeka Ajie said the active participation of some ex-militants, kingpins in cult groups in the political process in 2015, remains part of the reason for the upsurge in cult-related crimes and shootings in recent times. According to him the proliferation of firearms during the elections is the reason guns are now being used even in petty theft of items such as smart phones, electronics, jewellery and ladies bags on the streets of Port Harcourt and Obio-Akpor. The massacre of 17 persons in Omoku by unknown gun men on their way back from church in the early hours of January 1st 2018 has shown that the amnesty program was not totally a success.

Table 1: Compared: 2016 crime stats for 6 Nigerian states

State	Population (est 2016)	%of crime total	Offences against persons	Rate	Offences against property	Rate
Lagos	12,550,598	36	15,426	123	22.89	182
Kogi	4,473,490	0.60	294	6.60	480	10.70
Kaduna	8,252,366	0.8	338	4.10	502	6.10
Kano	13,076,892	3.90	1,981	15.10	2.38	18.2
Rivers	7,303,924	2.40	1,683	23	897	12.3
Benue	5,741,815	0.87	463	8	497	8.6

Source: <https://africacheck.org/reports/oil-rich-rivers-state-safer-lagos-kano-3-others-governor-claimed/>

The table above indicated that Rivers State ranked third in terms of crime against persons and properties behind Lagos and Kano States. The implication here is that if the population of Rivers State was to be the same with that Lagos and Kano States, Rivers State would have had the highest rate of crime, indicating that the amnesty programme of the State government has not actually promoted public safety as indicated by the tables below.

Table 2: Crime Rate in Port Harcourt City

Type of Crime	Percentage	Rate
Level of crime	78.85	High
Crime increasing in the past 3 years	62.50	High
Worries home broken and things stolen	67.31	High
Worries being mugged or robbed	64.58	High
Worries car stolen	64.58	High
Worries things from car stolen	65.38	High
Worries attacked	67.31	High
Worries being insulted	41.67	Moderate
Worries being subject to a physical attack because of your skin colour, ethnic origin, gender or religion	42.31	Moderate
Problem people using or dealing drugs	63.46	High
Problem property crimes such as vandalism and theft	73.08	High
Problem violent crimes such as assault and armed robbery	80.77	High
Problem corruption and bribery	80.77	Very High

Source: https://www.numbeo.com/crime/country_result.jsp?country=Nigeria

Table 3: Safety in Port Harcourt City

Safety	Percentage	Rate
Safety walking alone during the day	60.42	High
Safety walking alone during the night	30.77	Low

Source: https://www.numbeo.com/crime/country_result.jsp?country=Nigeria

The table above indicates that walking around Port Harcourt metropolis during the day is safer than during the night. But it is not safe to walk around Port Harcourt metropolis during the night, except when the person have his or her personal security details that are fully armed and ready to defend the person. This is in line with the finding of Ome-Egeonu & Kinikanwo (2014) ^[40] which states that Youths in Port Harcourt in particular are really in a serious business of kidnapping and hostage taking, robbery, militancy etc, as an indirect form of protest for their unemployment status. Also, there are officials of the government who are accomplice to this crime of kidnapping and hostage taking, based on expectant percentages from the handouts.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Processes of the Rivers State Amnesty Programme

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) is one of the most important ways of resolving conflicts and managing post-conflict situation in the world to ensure peace. This has been variously used by the United Nations and other similar bodies as an instrument for achieving sustainable peace (Ibaba, 2011) ^[20, 21]. This was

adopted by the Nigerian government in its amnesty programme in the Niger Delta. There are three phases to the amnesty programme, *viz.*, the disarmament and demobilisation of militants; the rehabilitation and integration of ex-militants and the final stage is the post-amnesty package of huge infrastructural development. The disarmed militants were taken to designated collection points and camps in six Niger Delta states, with a promise of a payment of N65, 000 (approximately \$407 USD) monthly, the payment of rent and offering of vocational training (Oluwaniyi, 2011) ^[36, 39]. During the first phase which has already been implemented, several militants turned in several arms and ammunitions (Kuku, 2011). Indeed, it was recorded that about 26, 358 ex-militants accepted the amnesty offer (first phase-20,192 militants representing those That accepted the offer on or before 4 October 2009, while the second phase of the amnesty programme that occurred in November 2010 comprises 6,166 militants representing those that accepted the offer post 4 October 2009).

This appeared to have reduced the incidence of conflict and the accumulation and influx of arms by militants in the region. Some rehabilitation centres were provided for the second stage which was tailored to meet training needs of the ex-militants. The trainings were to be done in batches as the centres could only accommodate few numbers of registered exmilitants. It was expected that each batch would spend four weeks in the rehabilitation programme, which involves reorientation, counselling and moral/spiritual regeneration of the ex-militants (Akinwale, 2010) ^[3]. A survey of the career aspiration of the ex-militants revealed a great preference for about ten (10) sectors ranging from Oil/Gas, Maritime Services, Fabrication and Welding Technology, Exploration and Production and Processing Engineering, which duration of training ranges is projected to last between 3-18 months (Akinwale, 2010) ^[3]. Those desirous of going back to school for further education were also given the opportunity under this programme.

In the case of Rivers State the amnesty programme was not to offer cash reward to militants but to rehabilitate and reintegrate them in various activities and restore them back to the state to give them the opportunity to contribute to the social, economic, and political growth and development of the state. The Rivers State amnesty programme has yielded little outcomes as it only led the restive youths handing over some of the arms in their custody and this still pose serious challenges that may worsen the crises in the metropolis and the State in the near future rather than to avert it. In terms of favourable outcome, the state of violence reduced while the production of oil increased. Some of the challenges in the post amnesty period include; high rate of robbery within Port Harcourt metropolis, emergence of fresh cultism clashes, inability of government officials to properly manage the programme and lack of sufficient fund to run the post amnesty programme, poor managerial skills.

After the offer of amnesty in Rivers State, the Federal government recorded a good number of successes like increase in the production of crude oil. Notwithstanding the success of the amnesty programme, the state had continued to experience same form of violence ranging from cultism, armed robbery, kidnapping to sea piracy etc. After the implementation of amnesty, the conditions that gave rise to militancy still exist in Rivers State, particularly the high rate of unemployment among youths, political marginalization, etc. in Port Harcourt metropolis.

Efforts to address security challenges that gave rise to criminal activities in Rivers State tend to be undermined by the weak capacity of the security forces to control illegal activities, arms trafficking, kidnapping, armed robbery, and other security challenges especially in Port' Harcourt metropolis. The police, armed forces, and other security organizations lack the training and equipment necessary to overcome these challenges. Most security units in the metropolis lack the helicopters, boats, GPS, and communication technology necessary to detect and control activities carried out by criminal organizations, which many times are better equipped and trained than they. Furthermore, large dividends from illegal activities have permeated the security forces, leading to the involvement of some of their members in such crimes.

Summary

The crisis of development engendered by youth militancy as a result of years of neglect by the government has been a major threat to peace and public safety in Rivers state. Despite the salient contribution of Rivers state to the Nigerian economy, a large proportion of her people remain predominately cut off from the basic amenities of descent existence. Three years after the presidential amnesty programme, the political and social climate of Rivers State especially Port Harcourt metropolis has not been free from the burgeoning challenges of insecurity and these have affected the rate of infrastructural provision of developmental projects in the state. Deriving from the above, this study examined the issues of governance and public safety deriving from the Rivers State amnesty programme with particular emphasis on Port Harcourt metropolis from 2015 to 2019. Review of extant literature was done and a lacuna found which guided the discourse of the study. The longitudinal survey research design, with primary and secondary methods of data collection, and quantitative and qualitative descriptive methods were adopted as the methodology of the study. The discourse of the study in the analysis was anchored on the theory of Post-Colonial State.

Conclusion

Findings among others revealed that; even though the programme seemed to focus especially on the people who carried arms, it was not thorough and systematic in doing so. The amnesty programme had not recognised the physical damage to communities where fighting took place, or the psychological trauma suffered by community members whose loved ones were killed by known militants from the same community. So, the Rivers State

amnesty programme did not provide for the reconstruction of communities and for the reintegration of the ex-militants into their communities within the Port Harcourt metropolis. Participants in the focus group discussions told repeated stories of family separation, the loss of children, parents, homes, and entire neighbourhoods, reprisals against family members, torture, rape and disappearances.

The amnesty programme formulation and implementation processes did not involve the critical stakeholders (CBOs, traditional leaders, local governments) in the communities and it did not take advantage of experiences from other West African where similar programmes had been implemented.

The programme have not been able to demobilise, disarm and reintegrate the repentant criminals in River state. There was no agency created to implement the amnesty programme of the Rivers State government. Rather, the programme was domiciled in the office of the special adviser to the governor on amnesty. The level of transparency and accountability of the programme is called to question because it was between the special adviser and the governor who knew what was really going on. No auditing of the financial records of the Rivers State amnesty programme has taken place since its commencement. Secondly, the challenges of insecurity of which the amnesty programme was supposed to help address is still staring the people of the State on their faces as people cannot move about freely in the State without being at risk of being robbed, kidnapped, beaten or killed, especially within the Port Harcourt metropolis, thereby leading us to the conclusion that the Rivers State amnesty programme has not been able to address the challenges of public safety in the State.

Recommendations

In a bid to proffering solutions to the present security challenges encountered in the state after the amnesty program as there is now a rise in armed robbery, oil theft, cultism clashes especially in Rivers state, the study put forward the following recommendations as stated below;

1. The programme should be expanded to accommodate both the repentant criminals and non-criminals in Rivers State, especially in Port Harcourt metropolis.
2. Government should intensify border security and patrol in order to control the influx of foreigners into the state especially through its waterways
3. The government should partner with relevant agencies for the sustainability of the amnesty programme
4. Relevant laws should be put in place for the sustainability of the amnesty programme. Political leaders within the state should put an end to cults and gangs related activities by not providing them with money and weapons within the port Harcourt metropolis.
5. Security agencies should be well trained and equipped to carry out their activities with sincerity and honesty especially when dealing youth militancy in Rivers State.
6. Lack of education, health care, employment opportunities and government service delivery in general is also the cause of the rise in crime, government should respond to these needs of its citizens in order to enhance public safety in Rivers state.

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