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The Snags in Post Amnesty Militancy in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria: The Curative Therapy

Past. Prof. Abomaye - Nimenibo, Williams Aminadokiari Samuel [α], Dr. Umana, Emmanuel Amos [σ] & Inyang, Innocent E [ρ]

Abstract- The Niger Delta region of Nigeria, apparent said to be one of the richest and endowed deltas in the world and contributes about 80% of Nigeria's national wealth. The people of the area do not see and taste a diminutive of this wealth, rather faces a continues years of political and economic marginalization, environmental degradation, bad governance and policy inconsistency by the government, and the divide and rule policy of the oil companies which led to the emergence of militancy in the Niger Delta Region in early 2006. The various activities of militants have created a state of general insecurity in the region. This has led to the emergence of organized non-state armed groups, environmental activism and militancy in the Region. On assumption of office on May 29, 2009, the then President Musa Yar'adua announced Amnesty Programme for the Ex-militants as a means of bringing Peace to the Region. Moreover, this was strategic state policy for diffusing youth militancy in the Niger Delta and as a means of addressing the injustices in the Region. Despite this, the region still witnesses Post-Amnesty Militancy; this gave rise to this research, to find out the problems and remedies to the Post Amnesty Militancy. This study adopted the Marxian political economy approach as its theoretical construct, and used it, in the content analysis of secondary data on the subject matter. The paper argues that the methods of operation of the militants, which includes kidnapping and hostage-taking (with over 200 foreign nationals as victims), blowing/shutting down of oil installations and facilities, setting off of car bombs, and illegal oil bunkering (estimated at between 80,000 and 300, 000 bbl/day) has negatively impacted Nigeria's economic development. Militancy has been in the Niger Delta region for several decades. In carrying out this research, questionnaires were administered on 400 respondents from 5 states in the Niger Delta, in a proportion of 80 from each state. The result implies that the underlying facts that gave rise to militancy had not been solved. Issues like underdevelopment, unemployment, non-participation in resource control, illiteracy and others had not been addressed. This continuous Post Militancy posed a serious security threat and economic sabotage to Nigeria. The work recommends among others that, the Federal Government should first treat the underlying causes that have given rise to militancy has not been addressed as there are still underlying problems which the Amnesty Programme did not solve. The study further recommended that the FGN should develop the whole of the Niger Delta Region with other recommendations.

Keywords: conflict, amnesty, peace, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, rehabilitation, militancy.

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I. Introduction

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria, apparent said to be one of the richest and endowed deltas in the world and contributes about 80% of Nigeria's national wealth. The people of the area do not see and taste a diminutive of this wealth, rather faces a continues years of political and economic marginalization, environmental degradation, bad governance and policy inconsistency by the government, and the divide and rule policy of the oil companies which led to the emergence of militancy in the Niger Delta Region in early 2006. The various activities of militants have created a state of general insecurity in the region. This has led to the emergence of organized non-state armed groups, environmental activism and militancy in the Region.

The region named Niger Delta Region in Nigeria is situating in the Central part of Southern Nigeria which is located between the former Midwestern and Eastern Regions of Nigeria. This region is rich in oil, housing heterogeneous and multi-cultural diverse ethnic groups, covering an area of 70,000 square kilometres (Saro-wiwa, 1995:165; Tamuno 1999:51). There are over 20 different ethnic groups which include, Ibibio, Ijaw, Iteskiri, Urhobo, Annang, Bini Ukwuani, Efik, Ogoni, Igbo, Yoruba, Ogba to mention but a few (Ikime, 1972). The region is one of the largest wetland in the world (Manby, 1999a:53); and derives its name from the River Niger and is one of the world's largest wetlands, and Africa's largest delta. The Niger Delta is probably the third largest on earth. The region is regarded as one of the nine most difficult deltas of the world comparable to the Mekong, the Amazon and the Ganges. It lays between latitudes 4^0 and 6^0 north of the Equator and 5^0 and 8^0 east of the Greenwich (Azaiki, 2007; World Bank Report, 1993; Ile & Akukwe, 2001, Abomaye-Nimenibo et al, 2018).

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According to the Niger Delta Regional Development Master Plan (2007) and Abomaye-Nimenibo (2018), the area is said to have a population of about forty-five million people as per the 2006 National Population census figures reported also by the National Bureau of Statistics, (2006) with various autonomous ethnic groups numbering about forty-five, among which are the Ijaw, Edo, Igbo, Efik, Ibibio and Oron speaking tribes. The region is said to be rich in both renewable and non-renewable natural resources in terms of oil, gas, bitumen, etc., and accounts for 95% of the total revenue of Nigeria. This revenue is generated from oil and gas exploration with a contribution of not less than 80% of national wealth as was succinctly pointed out by Brisibie, 2001 and Tell Magazine No.33, 2008).

The swamp of the Niger Delta region is particularly blessed with crude oil and other mineral resources. Crude oil in commercial quantity was first discovered in Nigeria at Oloibiri, Niger Delta region situated in present-day Bayelsa State (Abomaye-Nimenibo 2015 & 2018). Crude oil from the Niger Delta has been the lifeblood of Nigeria's economic wealth, as about 2.6 million barrels of crude is extracted daily from the region, generating millions of dollars daily to the federation account of Nigeria (Ejibunu, 2007: 9-20).

Apart from the oil, agricultural resources are also found in this area with complex biodiversity and other biological and ecological features, with the presence of thick mangrove forest bordering the sandy coastal areas that in turn border the Atlantic Coast, supplying lumber and sea protein to the nation for both local and foreign consumption. There are also fresh-water swamps which had been polluted due to the operation of oil companies. The region is spread across nine states namely: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Rivers and Ondo, with 185 Local Government Areas. This region has over 800 oil-bearing communities and has an estimated population of about 31 million people (Kemedi, 2003:7).

Fishing and agriculture are the two major traditional occupations of the region. It is on record that during the Colonial era, the Niger Delta region was rich in forestry which was a third major economic activity in the country. The three occupations of the Niger Delta Region's occupations of fishing, agriculture and forestry accounted for 44% of Nigeria's employment, and contribute significantly to the GDP of Nigeria. It is, however, sad to mention that economic activities in the Niger Delta Region declined since the discovery of oil and establishment of the oil industry (UNDP, 2006:25).

The unquantifiable proceeds from crude oil are what the Nigerian government uses to build up its infrastructures such as the construction of dual carriage roads across the country, build extravagant physical structures and institutions in Abuja and other parts of the country, and even have fuel for her use. Irrespective of the fact that crude oil is produced in the Niger Delta region to sustain the Nigerian economy yet, contrary to expectations of its people, oil has failed to translate to regional prosperity and development in the Niger Delta" (Kimiebi, 2010).

Abomaye-Nimenibo (2018) stated that crude oil which is a great blessing elsewhere became a curse to the people whose land produced it. The people of the Niger Delta, who once had enough to eat both from water and land and spare, can now hardly fill their stomach with crumbs as oil activities pollute both the land and water, thereby impoverishing the area. The people were even too poor to travel elsewhere to buy food since they were not even employed by these oil companies who pollute their ecology. The people suffered both culturally, economically, psychologically and even spiritually as some of their shrines were devastated because of the oil field location. To add insult to injury, anybody who raises an eyebrow will be beaten, locked up by security operatives and even executed.

The primary occupation of the people before the discovery and exploration of oil and gas resources in the Niger Delta region was fishing and farming. The people's occupation in later years of oil exploration by the Oil companies was destroyed, thereby destroying the subsistent economy of the Niger Delta Region. Furthermore, environmental degradation occasioned by oil spillage has made life extremely difficult for the local people. Okonta & Oronto, (2001) has stated that the destruction of farmlands, fishponds and rivers had radically altered the economic life of the once self-reliant and productive region for the worst; which culminated into militancy in the Niger Delta Region.

a) Statement of the Problem

The militancy insurgency in the Niger Delta Region became stringent in so much that oil exploration activities were paralyzed. The economy of the nation was accordingly strangulated and the Federal government could no longer fold its hand and stand aloof. To face the economy of the country, the then President of Nigeria Musa Yar'adua initiated the Amnesty programme in May 2007 and nurtured by Goodluck Jonathan Administration by trying to rehabilitate the militants in the Niger Delta Region by sending them on various pieces of training both locally and overseas. It was believed that these Amnesty programme will virtually bring militancy in the Niger Delta Region to an end. Those of them that could not be trained were paid a monthly stipend for some time. Despite these laudable ventures to stop militancy in the Niger Delta Region, yet Nigerians still experienced Post Amnesty Militancy in the Niger Delta Region. The crisis continued to linger and appears to defy known solutions. There were concerted efforts made by crises analysts, scholars, mediators and commentators on the

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militancy in the Niger Delta Region in finding a permanent solution to the conflict in the region. Despite all these efforts geared toward ending the crises in the area, militancy in the post-amnesty era still surfaced and the big question that arises in the minds of the generality of people in Nigeria is why has militancy still subsist and when and how will this post-amnesty militancy end? These and other mind bogging questions have necessitated this research.

b) Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this research is to find out the reasons for the continued militancy in the Niger Delta after the post-amnesty period.

Specific research objectives are:

i. To investigate the relationship between continuous underdevelopment of the Niger Delta Region and Militancy in the Region.
ii. To find out whether the amnesty programmes have addressed the problems of the Niger Delta Region.

c) Research Hypothesis

In a further attempt to direct the study, the under listed hypothesis was formulated in the null form and tested.

H_0: There is no significant relationship between continuous underdevelopment of the Niger Delta Region and post militancy.

H_0: There is no significant relationship between the implementation of the amnesty programme and the post amnesty militancy.

d) Significance of the Study

This study is significant and relevant as it brings to focus on the reasons for continuous militancy in the Niger Delta Region. Secondly, this research brings to fore how the amnesty programme represents the total resolution of the conflict in the Niger Delta Region; and shows the reason why militancy continued in the Niger Delta Region despite the amnesty programme. Finally, the solution to reduce or solve the issue of militancy in the Niger Delta Region was proffered.

II. Review of Related Literature

a) Historical Background of Militancy in the Niger Delta

The history of conflict involving the Niger Delta people, which has to do with forced union and exploitation is dated back to the period before 1957, when testimonies were given in respect of marginalization of minorities in Nigeria, led to the setting up of Willink Commission of 1957, to allay the fears of the minority.

Accordingly, Afinotan and Ojakorotu (2009) stated that:

> *"The implications of continued conflict in the Niger Delta may be better appreciated against the background of the fact that, from historical experience, the Nigerian nation and especially the Niger Delta have a prolonged familiarity with the social struggle against colonial rule. The Niger Delta militants are drawing from this experience in prosecuting the current phase of confrontation with the Nigerian state and multi-nationals like the struggle against colonialism, the present phase of militancy and kidnapping incubated over long periods of unaddressed and disenchantments among communities in the region*.

It has been on record that despite all the clamour and protests for justice in the Niger Delta Region were to no avail. It is important to note that with all the protest from the minority group in the Niger Delta Region, fall on deaf ears of both the military and civilian governments of Nigeria who decided to ignore the outcries and protest of the Niger Deltans for fairness, equity and justice. The existing concept of Federalism in Nigeria was expected to cushion the harsh and turbulent treatment meted to the Niger Deltans has unto this day fallen short of prospects in both definition and practice, to the extent that it is being practised as quasi-federalism, which has been an overly concentrated control of resources by the federal government. This practice has made component units (states and local governments) of the Niger Delta to be completely dependent on the Federal Government for survival.

Speaking on federalism as it affects the Niger Delta Region, Okowa (2005) have this to say in his inaugural lecture – "Nigeria, intheory, operates federal system of governance. In practice, it is more unitary than federal.

Co-ordinate sovereignties are the crucial test and hallmark of a federal arrangement. This has been ably stated by one of the fore most authorities on federalism (Kenneth Wheare, 1943).

> Based on a study of the meaning of the concept "federal" ,*Okowa (2001:6)* has had to conclude that the application of the word federal to the contemporary Nigerian nation-stateis "a fundamental fraud". It is clear from *Okowa (1994)* that Nigeria's contemporary fiscal federalism is organised around the sole purpose of sharing out to the major ethnic nationalities, the oil wealth of the Peoples of the Niger Delta. It is a neo-colonial arrangement. The arrangement has implications in terms of social attitudes to wealth creation.
>
> State creation which originated as an instrument for the protection of national minorities changed into an instrument for sharing out of the so-called national cake. The majority nationalities, therefore, carved themselves into more states in order to get a larger share of the oil wealth of the minorities… Thus the logic of fiscal federalism that enabled the majority nationalities to expropriate the wealth of the minority nationalities engendered attitudes as opposed to

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working as a means of wealth creation, that is to say, Abdulistic attitudes. (Okowa 1994: 112 - 113).

This is how oil, prebendal and predatory fiscal federalism, and ethnic hegemony assisted in pushing Nigeria down the road to Abdulistic capitalism.

This abnormality continues to generate conflict in the Niger Delta region, especially from the dishonourable derivation principles for revenue allocation to the states in the region. The struggles of the Niger Deltans which have assumed violent dimensions in our recent history are explained to be the expression of grievances over neglects, marginalization, oppression, subjugation, exploitation and deprivation by the Nigerian government and its collaborators (multi-nationals) of the people's right to equity and justice of their resources. What the people of the Niger Delta are asking for is equity and justice and due recognition of their rights as citizens. These issues are contained in the Ogoni Bill of Rights, the Kaiama Declaration, and similar declarations by other groups in the region. The people are insisting on a cessation of destructive oil exploration activities which destroy the Niger Delta ecology and human lives. The present-day militancy started in 2006 as a result of a series of agitations.

It is further observed that the people of the Niger Delta region are earnestly looking for the abrogation of all laws which dispossesses them of their rights as a federating unit within Nigeria. They want the crisis of poverty in the Niger Delta to be addressed. Although the general poverty index of Nigeria has risen sharply, the worse poverty situations are found in the Niger Delta. The people also want the Federal Government to pay attention to their message and treat them with respect as equals in the Nigerian nation.

The situation in the Niger Delta is both curious and an annoying paradox. The people live in a difficult coastal area surrounded by water, and yet, do not have enough water to drink. The creeks are littered with pipelines bearing petroleum products being transported to other parts of the country, but in Niger Delta Region, fuel is scarce and expensive for example, fuel is costlier in Yenagoa than in Kano. The people of the Niger Delta also lamented that, before their very eyes, revenue from crude oil sales is taken away to provide infrastructure in other parts of the country such as the beautiful and smooth roads in Abuja, Skyscrapers and flyovers in Lagos, etc. while many communities in the Niger Delta are cut off from civilization because there are no link roads or bridges to connect them.

Since oil was struck in the Niger Delta Region in 1956, some salient fundamental issues arose in which the Federal Government has not summoned the much needed political will to tackle and they are as follows:

a. *Pervasive Poverty and Underdevelopment*

Over 60 years of ecological despoliation, the use of detestable legal instruments of subjugation and domination, intentional marginalization, denial and exclusion of the Niger Delta people, cumulatively foisted a spectre of unemployment, poverty and massive underdevelopment of the Niger Delta Region. Despite the substantial contribution of the Niger Delta Region to the socio-economic development of Nigeria, it is indeed paradoxical when one juxtaposes the monumental poverty and underdevelopment in the region vis-à-vis it's colossal input to national wealth. These are some of the underlying issues on which oil violence in the Niger Delta is predicated and unless they are realistically addressed, violence in the region will continue to resurrect and could become progressively engulfing and destructive tornado, the situation is potentially tragic.

b. *Environmental Pollution and Despoliation*

Massive oil wealth tat emanates from the Niger Delta has not translated into the development of the area, rather it has caused large-scale environmental contamination, dilapidation, and outright desolation through dredging, construction of access canals to create paths to oil installations, oil spillages, gas flaring, oil well blowouts, improper disposal of drilling mud, pipeline leakages and vandalization (Ojakorotu and Okeke-Uzodike, 2006:96-97). For example, between 1976 and 1996, it was estimated that well over 60,000 oil spills occurred in the region, and about 2,369,471 barrels of crude oil leaked into the environment. Besides, shell alone acknowledged that it spilt about 106,000 barrels from Jones creek between 1976 and 1996 (Eyinla and Ukpo, 2006). The unbridled exploitation of crude oil and natural gas beneath the lands of the Niger Delta has caused indescribable and irredeemable ecological devastation of the Niger delta land" (Azaiki, 2003). Okaba (2005) sums up the environmental impact of the oil industry in the Niger Delta of Nigeria as land deprivation, soil quality alteration, destruction of the aquatic ecosystem and air pollution.

According to Abomaye-Nimenibo (2020), the environmental problems of the Niger Delta are found in the literature. Ikein (1990), Omgbu (1993), Orubu (1999), and Omotor (2000) are but a few documentaries. The natural resource of the people in the Niger Delta has declined tremendously as a result of oil exploration, which has impoverished the region and widespread poverty and underdevelopment. The region was self-sufficient economically especially in terms of sea protein and forestation with animal protein insufficiency before the advent of oil exploration, relative to the immense wealth derived from the region as observed by Onosode (1997). Oil exploration and production have today created a deep feeling of alienation, degradation, underdevelopment, and anincrease in death toll due to oil protracted deceases and fumes inhaled from emitted gases into the atmosphere and soots by the people of the Niger Delta.

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c. *Legislation of Disempowerment and Subjugation*

Realizing the importance of oil, the Federal Government promulgated some questionable legislation, which was specifically used for the disempowerment and exploitation of the Niger Delta people. Some of these laws include Decree No. 51 of 1969, which was used to transfer the ownership of the totality of Petroleum products in the Delta region to the Federal Government of Nigeria. Similar legislation i.e. the Nigeria Petroleum Act of 1990 was enacted. This is an act that provides for the exploration of petroleum from territorial waters and the continental shelf of Nigeria and to vest the ownership of, and all on-shore and off-shore revenue from petroleum resources in the Federal Government. The act concerns Oil Exploration Licences, Oil Prospection Licenses and Oil Mining Licenses; Rights of Pre-Emption; Repeals; and Transitional and Savings Provisions.

d. *The Land use Decree of 1978*

This decree also vested the ownership of every land in Nigeria in the Federal Government and its accredited agents; thereby dispossessing the Delta people of ownership and occupancy rights to their lands. These laws are methodically deployed as instruments of subjugation, domination and expropriation of the resources in the Niger Delta Region by the Federal Government, which have been in the firm grip of the threesome major ethnic groups in Nigeria since the attainment of political independence in 1960. Remarkably, this detestable legislation is still operational in Nigeria till date, despite the strident violent condemnation against their continued appeal by the Delta people and some other well-meaning Nigerians, but to no avail.

e. *Politics of Marginalization and Exclusion*

Most of the people of this region hardly own oil blocks, they are excluded from enjoying the oil proceeds derived from their land. According to Babawale (2001), the domination, marginalization and exclusion of the people of this region was a colonial creation, which was perfected, legitimized and institutionalized by successive Nigerian administrations under the control of the three dominant ethnic groups, especially the Hausa/Fulani confederacy.

f. *Leadership*

Most leaders in the Niger Delta region are corrupt, selfish, avaricious, pharisaic and uninspiring. Achebe (1983), truly observe and commented that even over fifty years after Political Independence the trouble with Nigeria remains and that of Leadership. Even after the Amnesty Programme, the leadership problem persisted. There is no transparency and accountability in our leaders at all levels of government and administration. Instead of leading or governing the Niger Delta people well, our government officials crudely employ state power for primitive accumulation in oppression and application of capital punishment.

g. *Political Will*

One of the major issues is the lack of will power to prosecute individuals and corporate organizations who are perpetrating conflicts in the communities (Opukiri & Etekpe, 2008:145). With this, even after the Amnesty Programme, there was no political will to prosecute those who continued with conflicts and perpetuation of communal crises.

h. *Justice*

The people in the region had been looking for Fiscal Federalism and this will be a basis for revenue allocation in the country. If the states in this region are given the right to explore the oil and pay taxes to the Federal Government, or on the hand, where the derivative principle is well articulated and used in fiscal appropriation in the country more resources will likely flow into the region and this will on the long run help drench revolutionary sentiment in militant youths.

i. *Lack of Employment Opportunities for the Youths*

One of the fundamental problems that existed in the Niger Delta Region is the lack of employment opportunities for the teeming youths of the region. The adage that says: "an idle mind is the devil's workshop" is a truism that accurately worked in the region. The government must provide jobs as part of its responsibilities in the social contract paradigm. So many youths who had joined anti-social groups would have to choose decent jobs. Multinationals oil companies do not employ the youths of the area for fear of sabotage, even those employed were retrenched and employed outsiders and were happy declaring huge profits at their annual general meetings. This does not help the sustenance of peace in the region. The Amnesty Office anticipated that the private and public sectors would provide jobs for the thousands of graduates of the programme on their return to the Niger Delta Region, but progress seems to have been limited.

j. *Education*

Education, they say makes a man easy to lead and very difficult to be confused. In the case of the Niger Delta region, a lot of the people are not educated and what bedevilled the area is mass illiteracy. No good schools were built and even the few educated are not employed for obvious reasons and employed were either marginalized or sabotaged. A well-educated population will understand and appreciate their role in an organization better and may conduct themselves in passive resistance which in most times is more vocal and more effective than armed confrontation with the state by the aggrieved illiterates, who are ready to fight physical and blow-up pipelines and oil wells. There is also a lack of public enlightenment programmes which

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could have let down the tension between the government and the youths.

k. *Destruction of the aquatic ecosystem*

A major environmental disaster in the Niger Delta is the waste of aquatic ecosystem of the Niger Delta as this constitutes a grave threat to their major traditional economic lives of fishing. It is a common sight that in the process of oil exploration and production, such materials as drill cuttings, drill mud and other fluids that are used to stimulate production are discharged into the environment and in most times end up in the streams and rivers (Nwaomah, 2009a); and these chemicals according to Okaba, (2005) are not easily degradable and the skimming of oil on the water surface hardly solve the problem since most of the oil might have sunk to the bottom of the water surface leaving grave consequences such as: (a) surface and groundwater quality deterioration in terms of portability, aesthetic and recreation; (b) destruction and reduction of fish life and fisheries production of the waters; (c) destruction by acute and sub-legal toxicity of aquatic flora and fauna of spills on water and benthic macro.

l. *Soil Quality Alteration*

Soil quality alteration is another environmental problem that the Niger Deltans contend with as a result of pollution of the land by the oil industry whose spillages causes more harm in devastating the farmlands. It is also an environmental condition that alters the original use of the land as a result of the construction of flow lines and trunk line networks, terminals, digging of location waste pits and borrow pits, oil spillage either from equipment failure, human error, corrosion of pipes due to age and sabotage on the land (Nwaomah, 2009b). It is estimated that as of 2002 about 8581 oil spills, involving nearly 28 million barrels of oil occurred in the Niger Delta (Okaba, 2005).Other factors responsible for the soil quality alteration are the unceasing gas flares; drill cuttings, drill mud and refinery waste dung deposited on the land. The harmful effects of these elements on the soil are unquestionable (Nwaomah, 2009a). Owabu keruyele argued that the compounds from the numerous petroleum wastes contain organic chemicals such as phenol cyanide, sulphides which are suspended solids, chromium and biological oxygen that leave destructive effects on the land and water (Owabukeruyele, 2000).

m. *Air Pollution*

Gas flaring is a primary source of air pollution in the Niger Delta Region by the oil companies is wrecking the ecosystem of the region. Gases flaring takes place twenty-four hours and some are believed to have been in burning for over thirty years, thereby resulting in the release of hydrogen sulphide into the atmosphere of the Niger Delta Region. The oil companies are not only destroying the Niger delta, but they are also contributing to global warming (*Comet Newspapers*, 2001).



Source: Gas Flaring culled from Abomaye-Nimenibo (2020)

The pollutions released and the noises from the vibration are injurious to human health. It is also argued that the chemical emissions from the flaring contribute to acid rain, trigger skin diseases (Okaba, 2005) and the quick corrosion of roofing sheets in the Niger Delta area, and is a common sight in this region. A secondary source of air pollution in the Niger Delta is the incidents of fire resulting from leakages from the exposed and corroded oil pipes that are scattered all over the region (Nwaomah, 2009a).

Abomaye-Nimenibo (2020) also stated that various health surveys were carried out in the Niger Delta Regions to ascertain the health condition of the people following emissions causing several pollutions. Ana and Sridhar (2009) in his findings stated that those living and working in the Niger Delta Region where effluents were discharged into the air and aquatic life, revealed prevalent air pollution with related morbidities or sicknesses, which was confirmed by medical records of hospitals. The World Health Organization reported

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that 2.4 million people die every year due to air pollution and that 1.5 million of these deaths were as a result of indoor air pollution mainly from affluence. The list of deaths as a result of air pollution is endless. In the case of the Niger Delta Region, the number of deaths is inestimable, and yet various governments of Nigeria turned deaf ears to the cries of the people of the region for being a minority group. The health effects caused by air pollution include difficulty in breathing, coughing, wheezing, and the blocking of existing respiratory and cardiac organs etc. The lists of such effects were succinctly pointed out by Abomaye-Nimnibo, (2020). He went on to say that "huge flames puff in the air called black soot's over and above the housetops of the Niger Delta Region, and these black clouds leap into the sky, causing discomfort and illness of the bronchioles. The gas flared by Agip-Nigeria hiccup out toxic fumes or gases that loom over houses, farmlands, and shops. There are strange smells from these gases and an audible jeer in the air, and residents of the Niger Delta region of The Rivers and The Bayelsa States are worst hit, and gas flaring is ruining lives and livelihoods. Scarcity of Petroleum products especially the non-availability of Household Domestic Kerosene in the producing area calls forth the divergent local refineries in the Niger Delta region without which one wonders what would happen".



Source: Black Soot emission from oil explosion as in Abomaye-Nimenibo (2020)

n. *Arms in the Region*

At the time when amnesty was granted, there were allegations that many of the militants who were not militants registered as being militants, and whereas other militants registered without giving up all their arms. The amnesty programme was publicly orchestrated with displays of weapons for the benefit of the media, and initially, there was no independent attempt to verify what arms were being handed over or their provenance. So, estimates of the number of arms surrendered vary according to sources. It was alleged that the quantity of weapon handed in, did not reflect the quantity at the disposal of the armed groups who continue to operate throughout the Niger Delta Region.

o. *Lack of Transparency over the eligibility criteria in the amnesty programme.*

Poor Co-ordination and political rivalry between the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs and the Niger Delta Development Commission led to inertia in implementation of the programme. The conflict created gaps in the real implementation and achievement of the planned goals of the programme.

p. *Post-Amnesty Situation*

There are still enormities of work on the ground in terms of socio-economic needs of the people. The amnesty granted to the militants seems to serve as a strategy to enable the government and oil companies to continue with oil exploration to bring in revenue to the government; this made the public to tell the government to show the sincerity of purpose that was lacking. This strategy the government adopted amounted to throwing money at issues affecting the Niger Delta instead of addressing them head-on.

Fundamental problems as stated above, especially there have been numerous reports of dying marine life of severe impact of fishing communities which are not really and readily addressed (Okorie, 2005).

b) Theoretical Framework

i. *The Marxist political economy approach.*

This study adopted the Marxian political economy approach as its theoretical construct and used it in the content analysis of the secondary data collected on the subject matter. The paper argues that the methods of operation of the militants, which includes kidnapping and hostage-taking (with over 200 foreign nationals as victims), blowing/shutting down of oil installations and facilities, setting off of car bombs, and illegal oil bunkering (estimated at between 80,000 and

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300, 000 bbl/day) has negatively impacted on Nigeria's economy.

The choice of this approach is influenced by the fact that it scientifically studies the society as a whole and takes into consideration the interconnection of the social relations, class conflict and the organic relationship between the substructure (the economy) and the super structure (politics).

The approach gives enablement for anyone to understand the laws that govern the economic life of society. It explains the relationship between what man produces and how he benefits from the surplus he produces. Ake (1981) posits that a major advantage of this approach is that, it emphasizes the relatedness of social phenomena, exposing the links between the substructure and the superstructure. Furthermore, the approach helps to penetrate deep into the processes and policies, lay bare their essence and then explain concrete forms of their manifestation. As Marx & Engels (1977) puts it, the history of all hitherto existed society is the history of class struggle. Thus, the class analysis framework of the approach best explains the endemic struggle between the exploiters (the multinational oil companies and government) and the exploited (the Niger Delta people, including the militant groups).

Marxists hold that the dominated, exploited and marginalized groups, which paradoxically generated and bears the burdens of creating resources seeks to change the status quo when it becomes conscious (Libman & Borisox, 1985; Marx & Engels, 1977; Luckac, 1968).Therefore, militancy in the Niger Delta region is attributed to the consciousness of exploitation being perpetrated against the people, and the struggle to change the status quo. This struggle has also created a state of insecurity which has by extension affected Nigeria's economic growth, because of the monolithic nature of the national economy.

ii. *Social Movement Theory*

This theory akin to Marxist political economy approach was propounded by Habermas (2009). The theory provides a basis for an understanding of militancy in the context of a social movement. It focuses on collective actions as shown by major theorists in this field, which include Touraine, Castells, Melucci and Habermas. Habermas view is widely accepted in various scholarly communities. According to Edward (2009), Habermas' ideas have received considerable attention within social movement studies.

The main argument of these theorists was an offshoot of Lockwood's assertion that contradiction between the core institutional order and the material substructure of society gives rise to violence and change in the society. Relating it to the militancy in South-South of Nigeria, it is relevant for the understanding of militancy in this area. The history of militancy in this area flows from several contradictions in colonial and postcolonial structures of Nigeria.

iii. *The institution of Amnesty Programme*

In 2009, the federal government introduced a programme of amnesty for all the militants in the Niger Delta, in which they were to return their arms and enter into the amnesty programme. This was adopted to ensure that the activities of the militants which had defied military action in the region did not lead to the eventual collapse of the economy. The ex-militants were to receive N65, 000 each as monthly stipend while they were trained on various skills both at home and abroad, to enable them to gain employment and become re-integrated into the society. (National Mirror, 2011).

As part of the amnesty programme, several ex-militants were sent overseas to participate in skill acquisition programmes that would ensure their reintegration into society. (Awosiyan, 2011). However, despite the enormous amount being expended on stipends for the ex-militants, skill acquisition and their re-integration, several controversies have trailed the amnesty programme. Prominent among the controversies has been the neglect of the social infrastructure in the region which has been the major cause of the militancy in the first place; differences in the actual number of ex-militants involved in the programme (*National Mirror*, 2011); as well as violent demonstrations by ex-militants from the region alleging neglect following their non-inclusion in the amnesty programme or non-payment of their monthly stipend (*Punch Newspapers*, 2012; *Premium Times, 2012,* Tamuno, 2012).

The implementation of the amnesty programme for the ex-militants has not translated to an increase in government expenditure. The recent upsurge of the level of insecurity in the region, following agitations by some "ex-militants" and counterclaims by government agencies (especially the Amnesty programme office), shows that more needs to be done, to tackle the genuine demands of the people beyond "settlement" of the militants.

The impact of militancy on the inflow of foreign direct investment is brought out in graphic detail in the treatise of Timi Alaibe, who posits that;

By January 2009, militancy in the Niger Delta had virtually crippled Nigeria's economy. Investment inflow to the upstream sub-sector of the oil industry had dwindled remarkably. Exasperated foreign investors had begun redirecting their investments to Angola and Ghana as preferred destinations over Nigeria. At that point, Angola surpassed Nigeria as Africa's highest crude oil producer. This dwindling investments in the critical oil and gas sector threatened Nigeria's capacity to grow its crude oil reserves as planned …. Insecurity in the Niger Delta was identified as a key reason why investors were leaving for more stable business

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opportunities in Africa. For example, due to militant activities in the Niger Delta, Royal Dutch Shell by early 2009 saw its production drop from one million barrels per day (bpd) to about 250,000 bpd. … Sabotage, oil siphoning rackets and kidnappings of oil workers by suspected militants further threatened the operations of the oil companies and exerted immense pressure on the Nigerian economy. (Alaibe, 2010).

c) Empirical Literature

Nwogwugwu, N; et el (2012) carried a study about Militancy in the Niger Delta and its impact on the flow of foreign direct investment to Nigeria using Marxian political economy approach as its theoretical construct found that militancy in the Niger Delta Region has negatively impacted Nigeria's economic development; and that implementation of amnesty programme for the militants by the federal government has failed, and concluded that addressing the genuine needs of the people of the region, through good governance by the various levels of government, provision essential social infrastructure, as well as strict adherence to international environmental standards by the oil companies.

Abomaye-Nimenibo, et al (2018) investigated the activities of the Niger Delta militants and how such actions affect the developmental strides of the Nigerian economy using primary data with a target population of students, oil company workers, civil servants, public servants, farmers, and entrepreneurs in Bayels a State being the main hob of militancy and very rich in oil production than any other state. The results revealed that militancy has a strong significant effect on crude oil production/supply as well as the Nigerian economy. Their recommendations were those of correction of systemic error in administration or governance, the real development of the Niger Delta and not mushroom development, and that the federal government and oil companies should use security vote to develop the region; Youths of the Niger region be gainfully employed; the federal government should increase the budget of the Niger Delta to enhance real development; Continual implementation of amnesty programme; with review in terms of Post amnesty programs etc.

Similarly, a research carried out by Okuchukwu (2017) which was reviewed and compiled by CPED, revealed the resurgence of militancy in the Niger Delta region indicating that the Post- Amnesty period failed to lay concrete and massive development in the Niger Delta region, thereby resulting in renewed hostilities and a state of general insecurity since March 2016 with the resurgence of a new militant group known as the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA). There has been a continued under-development of the Niger Delta region which has resulted in resource control agitation by various people and groups of the region leading to the rise and emergence of militancy in the region especially since 2006.

Also, with the failure of the Post-Amnesty Period to lay concrete and massive development in the Niger Delta region, the feeling of relative deprivation, the people of the Niger Delta have now joined or formed social movements especially armed militant groups like the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) with the hope of redressing their grievances leading to the resurgence of militancy in the region. The frequent destruction of oil-producing facilities and installations by the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) has affected Nigeria's daily crude oil production and Nigeria is currently facing economic recession.

III. Method of Study

a) Research Design

According to Williams (2006) "A design is used to structure the research to show all of the major party of the research project. The researchers used a descriptive survey design as it is appropriate for this study. This is true because it makes it easier to understand the research study area of Post Amnesty Militancy in the Niger Delta Region, problems and remedies.

The survey design, however, guides the researcher to collect the primary data required to verify the hypothesis and answer the research questions. Cross-sectional survey method is used to obtain the data from a sample of elements of the study population.

b) Population of the Study

The target population of this study consists of inhabitants of five (5) States out of nine (9) that make up the Niger Delta Region. These are drawn from Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Rivers and the Delta States. Baridam (1990:74) analysed that the target population is the entire population to whom the findings of the study are held to be applicable.

c) Samples and Sampling Technique

A simple random sampling technique was used to select 400 respondents from 5 states in Niger Delta in a proportion of 80 from each of the 5 States. The 400 questionnaires were distributed by the researchers and two friends who also collected them in whole. 80 questionnaires were distributed to respondents as per the following sharing formula:

i. 2 amnesty officials
ii. 40 ex-militants
iii. 38 people from the public

The administration and distribution of the questionnaires were randomly done.

d) Research Instrument

The instrument for this study was the use of a prepared questionnaire known as Problems and Remedies of Post Amnesty Militancy Questionnaire. The

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questionnaire was made up of two sections, sections A and B.

Section A requires information on personal data of the respondents: such as the name of respondents, name of the state, age of respondents, marital status, educational qualification and gender of respondents.

Section B of the questionnaire was made up of some variables on continuous underdevelopment of the Niger Delta Region, Militancy in the Niger Delta Region, security, economic development, post amnesty militancy. The questionnaire was a four-point scale type ranging from Agree, Strongly Agree, Disagree, to Strongly Disagree.

IV. Research Findings

a) Test of Hypothesis

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between continuous underdevelopment of the Niger Delta Region and Post Amnesty Militancy in the Niger Delta Region. To test the hypothesis, regression analysis was performed on the data.

Table 1: Regression Analysis of the Relationship between the Continuous underdevelopment of the Niger Delta Region and Militancy in the Niger Delta Region.

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.94[a]	0.88	0.88	0.45	0.88

**Significant at 0.05 level; df= 998; N= 1000; critical R-value = 0.062*

The table shows that the calculated R-value 0.94 was greater than the critical R-value of 0.062 at 0.5 alpha levels with 998 degrees of freedom. The R-Square value of 0.88 predicts 88% of the relationship between the continuous underdevelopment of the Niger Delta Region and the militancy in the Niger Delta Region. It was also deemed necessary to find out the extent of the variance of each case of independent variable i.e. the continuous underdevelopment of the Niger Delta Region as responded by each respondent (see table 2).

Table 2: Analysis of Variance of the Relationship between the Continuous Underdevelopment of the Niger Delta Region and the Militancy in the Niger Delta Region

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1533.70	1	1533.70	7642.56	.000b
Residual	200.28	998	0.20		
Total	1733.98	999			

The above table presents the calculated F-value as (7642.56) and the P-value as (0.000) derived from the regression analysis. Being that the P-value (0.000) is below the probability level of 0.05, the result means that there is a significant relationship between the continuous underdevelopment of the Niger Delta Region and the militancy in the Niger Delta Region. The null hypothesis which states that Militancy in the Niger Delta Region has no significant implication on security, economic development and Peace of Nigeria is rejected and the alternate accepted.

V. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

a) Summary

Militancy in the Niger delta which was caused by the combined activities of the oil-producing companies and the government has created a state of insecurity in the region which has affected the Nigerian economy, especially with no revenue even foreign earnings from oil and the abrupt cessation of inflow of foreign direct investment which is needed for the achievement of economic development. The amnesty granted to the militants seems to serve as a strategy to enable the government and oil companies to continue with oil exploration to bring in revenue to the government; this made the public to tell the government to show the sincerity of purpose that was lacking. This strategy the government adopted amounted to throwing money at trivial issues without addressing the core issues that affect the Niger Delta. The impact isvery devastating especially as a result of the fact that Nigeria is a monolithic economy.

b) Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research work, the following conclusions are deemed necessary: There are still some levels of militancy in Nigeria. There is continuous underdevelopment of the Niger Delta Region and this has caused continuous militancy in the Niger Delta Region. It can also be concluded that post militancy in the Niger Delta Region has significant implication on security, economic development and peace of Nigeria. Lack of effort to identify the existence of residual arms caches significantly contributes to post amnesty militancy. Militancy in the Niger Delta Region has significant implications on the economic development of Nigeria. Therefore, militancy in the Niger Delta region is attributed to the consciousness of

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exploitation being perpetrated against the people, and the struggle to change the status quo.

c) Recommendations

i. The Federal Government of Nigeria should ensure that Niger Delta is effectively developed to reduce militancy in the region. There should be adequate funding for development projects in this region. The solution to the problem of youth restiveness in the region does not lie in the establishment of an amorphous Ministry of Niger Delta and Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) but in the genuine funding of the bodies and agencies charged with the responsibility of developing the area with effective monitoring of their roles.

ii. The Federal Government should carryout public enlightenment campaigns and carry out social rehabilitation of ex-militant. This will go a long way to reduce illiteracy in the region and curb to the barest minimum post amnesty militancy.

iii. Education, they say makes a man easy to lead and very difficult to be confused. A well-educated population will understand and appreciate their role in an organization better and may conduct themselves in passive resistance which in most times is more vocal and more effective than armed confrontation with the state by the aggrieved illiterates, who are ready to fight physical and blow-up pipelines and oil wells. Good Schools at all levels be established and built with fortified types of equipment and lecturers/teachers.

iv. The government needs to go beyond policymaking and rhetoric Ministry of Niger delta, or Niger Delta Development Commission & Amnesty programme, but rather put in place basicinfra structure in the Niger Delta region with constant electricity supply, provision of potable drinking water which will pacify the people.

v. Provide well-equipped hospitals in every sizeable community.

vi. Establish industries to absorb the teeming population and engage the youths especially and militancy shall cease.

vii. The government needs to immediately ensure that the Oil producing companies comply with international standards by stopping gas flaring and clearing all oil spillages with possible clean-up of the environment.

viii. The derivation quota from the federation account should be raised to 25%. 13% should be disbursed through the state governments, while the remaining 12% will be utilized in the direct development of the oil-producing communities through the provision of infrastructure according to need and human capital development.

ix. Niger Deltans should be given priority in areas where they are qualified in recruitments by the oil-producing and servicing companies operating in the Niger Delta region.

x. A good number of political posts/positions be given to qualified and God-fearing people of the Niger Delta Region and nation will have peace.

xi. Good roads and bridges are built to ease transportation in the Niger Delta with the provision of engine propelled boats and speed boats by the government and possibly run them under partnerships etc.

xii. Also, recreational activities are provided and banks are established in the Niger Delta communities/villages and not only in townships.

xiii. The federal government and oil companies should use security vote to develop the region, and also increase the budget of the Niger Delta to enhance real development.

xiv. Continual implementation of amnesty programme; with review in terms of Post amnesty programs agenda full implementation etc.

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