



Political Economy of the Amnesty Programme for Sustainable Peace and Development of the Niger Delta

Udoh, Ogbonnaya Nwafor¹ and Chijioke, Ndidiamaka Joy^{2*}

¹*Department of Political Science, Abia State University Uturu, Abia State, Nigeria.*

²*Peace and Development Programme, Salem University, Lokoja, Nigeria.*

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study adopted a two-level political psychological analytic approach towards understanding the amnesty programme and the sustainable peace and development of the Niger Delta. The objective of this paper is to bring to lime light the critical debates underlying militancy and the strategic interventions achieved by the Amnesty Programme. A combination of theoretical framework of political economy paradigm and frustration-aggression theory of conflict is explored. While the political economy paradigm captures discrepancy of good governance in Nigerian, it awakens the subtlety of armed confrontation by the restive youths of the Niger Delta. The frustration-aggression theory of conflict reverberate the socio-environmental frustration and challenges faced by the people of Niger Delta, expressed in militancy. The Peace Ideology underlying Amnesty Programme in the Niger Delta is positioned to harness the talents of the people and make entrepreneurs of them. The study evaluated the policy drive of the Amnesty programme, its potency as a build bridge of support, strategic leadership and a tool for sustainable peace and development. It concluded by observing that the proramme could not offer women and children psychological succor as victims, and insensitivity of the programme in not paying specific attention to training them on indigenous occupation as fishing and agriculture to bring about endogenous and sustainable development to drive the desired peace in these areas.

*Corresponding author: Email: favouramakachijioke@gmail.com, favouramakahijioke@gmail.com;

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Niger Delta region as the name implies, is associated with oil and gas and carved out its name from been situated around the delta that empties the interconnected River Niger and River Benue into the sea [1]. Its surface area is 70,000 square kilometers, with 2,370 square kilometer covered by rivers and creeks and 8,600 kilometers of stagnant swamps. The term Niger Delta was first used at the 7th World Petroleum Congress in 1967 to represent the region southwards from Onitsha, Benin and Umuahia, where the oil and gas was found in large quantities. He describes further that the Niger Delta region is among the world's major wetlands, with interactive fresh water, brackish and marine ecological zones biologically friendly for fish production. The oil field of the Niger Delta is equated with the South-South geopolitical zone and indigenously consisting of Rivers and Bayelsa States (Ikwerre, Ijo, Okirika, Ibani, Nembe, Ekeye, Ogba, Engenni, Epie-Atissa); Akwa Ibom State (Ibibio, Anang, Oron); Delta State (Urhobo, Igbo, Isoko, Itsekiri, Ijo); Ondo State (Ikale, Ijo, Ilaje); Edo State (Edo, Esan, Etsako, Yoruba, Igbirra, Okpameri); Cross River State (Efik, Bekwarra, Ejagham) and the Igbo in Abia and Imo States.

Pre-independence history has it that the British colonialist set up the Willincks Commission in 1957 so as to investigate aggrieved nerves and douse the tension of the Niger Delta and other ethnic/national minorities over underdevelopment, dominance and discrimination by the three major ethnic groups of Hausa-Fulani, Ibo and Yoruba ethnic groups in the North, East and West respectively. Surprisingly, the Sir Willincks Commission submitted that the existing political framework at that time was sufficient to attend to the fears of the minorities. He further recommended that the fears of the minorities in Nigeria could be contained by the entrenchment of fundamental human rights [2].

Prior to the Niger Delta Amnesty programme, several strands of palliative strategies were set up by successive governments to calm the aggrieved nerves of the oil communities, who took to armed militancy as a way of expressing their quest for resource control, true federalism, socio economic empowerment and demilitarization of the Niger Delta. According to a study conducted by the IMF on Nigeria, the genesis of

the armed militancy can be traced to the oil curse or the failure of the state to utilize oil wealth prudently, despite generating about US\$350 billion over a 35-year period [3].

Akpan 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 [4].

On the one hand, the Amnesty programme originates from a resolve by the Nigerian Federal Government to checkmate willful destruction of lives and properties, increasing crime of kidnapping and killing of oil workers, constant attacks and vandalism of oil facilities, which has rendered revenue loss to the Nigerian state [5,6]. 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 [7,8,9,10,11]. 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. Therefore, the present structure of Nigeria's political economy sustains a colonial legacy of divide and rule, manipulation, subversion, sustenance of the economic solutions of the West and its indigenous Nigerian capitalist cohorts, as the only recipe to resolving developmental problems. This seems to be the condition of the people of the Niger Delta region. In this connection, this article views the reformatory policy of Amnesty programme as an attempt by the Nigerian government to avoid the failure of the Nigerian state and give a human face to the evil legacies of colonialism and globalization cum capitalism.

As Ottoh asserts that the Nigerian state collaborates with the elites to swindle, extract, regulate and distribute surplus resources for their enrichment [12]. Such situation he portends distinguishes Nigeria as a failed state. In Ottoh statement, he views Nigeria as peoples' protector through governance [12]. But Alas, Nigeria has pulled its weight to support the educated elites in the nation who through organized and structured institutions, and have strategically denied the people access to the communal rights. He credits Sangmpam as describing a failed state as a patrimonial state, one which has the characteristically relate national means to policy end in such a way that there is inefficiency of the Nigerian public administration, security and economic policies. Secondly, Sangmpam describes a failed state as one which shrinks in its responsibility and creditability, expressed by a loss of belief by the people in the ability of the state to perform its traditional functions. This best describes present day Nigeria. Equally, Ezeibe views the Nigerian state suppression of vocal civil society groups as Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), and so on, as damaging state-civil society relations and threatening Nigeria's political economy [13].

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 [14,15,16]. It is therefore against this background, that an attempt will be made in this study to evaluate the

socio-psychological antecedents, intrigues, manipulations, biases and divisions generated by the Nigerian government policy of Amnesty programme. This is with a view to estimating if it largely favours the militants at the detriment of the social justice and equity among the entire Niger Deltans. Also, an attempt will be made by this study to examine the perceived ability of the Amnesty programme to strengthen human capital development and entrepreneurial skills among the repentant and disarmed militants. Hence this paper is delineated into five important sections: section one obviously is the introduction; section two deals with the theoretical perspective; section three attempts to examine the psychological antecedents of the militancy and the Amnesty programme; section four explores the effects of the Amnesty programme on sustainable development and peace of the Niger Delta people. The issues discussed are summarized and concluded in the fifth section.

2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Most studies and assessments on poor performance of oil-rich countries such as Nigeria, Angola and Gabon before the 1990s were empirically sensitive and guided by a belief that multinational companies are exploiting poor Africans. Similarly, in the 1990s, the academic and performance spectrum shifted to concerns about the environment and a governance curse analysis or corruption focused analysis that puts the bulk of the blame on the non-utilization of oil money to the advantage of oil host communities, latter to the issue of oil money flow that sustains the ruling class but neglects building sustainable social programmes within the oil bearing communities [3].

Therefore, given the adjudged capitalist dynamics of Nigeria's political economy, the analysis of the effects of Amnesty programme on social justice, sustainable peace and development is evaluated under the analytic context of the Marxian theory of social production and the Frustration-Aggression theory of conflict. The Marxian theory of social production is rooted in Karl Marx's political economy, dialectical materialism and class struggles. The centrality of the theory is in the inevitability of contradictions and crisis in capitalist class societies; a contradiction stemming from the material production of use values, a labour relation that produces value beyond its subsistence, with the surplus appropriated by the owners of capital. The dynamic flow of Marxism,

is that, it justifies the primacy of economic factors in the determination of the conduct of social groups, and at such social solidarity and economic conflict is coherently related to each other within a single explanatory framework, since both are products of the same mode and relations of production in material life [16,17, 18,19].

Notably, Marx frames this theoretical framework around the centrality of class struggle, the interface between the state and the economy. Its major thrust is that the nature of the role of state in economy directs the level of democracy and the extent of resolution of political economy crisis such as the armed militancy in the Niger Delta (emphasis mine). The analytical basis of this theoretical framework is understood in its ability to evaluate the persuasions of the contending classes and complex contradictions prevalent in the mode of production and appropriation of surplus value by the Nigerian state. Thus the analytical, methodological and theoretical strength of the Marxian theory to our study cannot be undervalued. The Nigerian economy is embedded in dependent capitalism, such that the major characteristics of the Nigerian state and its developmental experience from the 1980s to date is her relatively poor economic performance, lack of plans, squander mania, indebtedness, and dependence on world financial organizations and associations, multinational companies, heavy reliance on import with cumulative effects of deprivation, disillusionment, poverty, corruption, unemployment, disease and so on [20,21,22].

On a wider perspective, the activities of the Nigerian state and its partners-the oil prospecting multinational corporations (MNCs) had impaired the fundamental elements of democracy ingrained in corporate social responsibility and good governance through its lack of commitment to the yearnings of the oil bearing host communities of the Niger Delta for the entrenchment of rule of law, transparency and accountability, sustainable development, environmental peace and so on. This is because in a capitalist economy such as Nigeria, the dominant class made up of the government and the multinational companies has sacrificed the provision of basic infrastructural support of portable water, accessible roads, electricity and human capital development and so on, for the oil bearing communities of the Niger Delta on the altar of class struggle, rent-seeking, political and economic criminality of "godfatherism".

However, the above dominant class – the state and the multinational companies – have structured themselves for constant expansive forms of capital accumulation, exploitation and domination.

Remarkably, the fluidity of the Nigerian law is that it is engineered to respond to the biddings of the dominant class – the Nigerian state and the oil prospecting multinational companies – such that basic human rights and social protest (violent or non-violent) is conceived as a challenge to dominant class reaping inherent benefits from its productive and distributive activities. In maintaining the biddings of the dominant class, the Nigerian state, who have the monopoly of legal violence, utilize this coercive instrument to assault, intimidate and debase the oil bearing Niger Delta people. Similarly, the dominated class glamorized its fundamental frustration to the reckless abandon of its human rights and ecological damage of its environment by the dominant class by taking up arms against the dominant class reflected in repeated attacks and vandalism of oil pipelines and facilities, killings and kidnappings of domestic and foreign oil workers.

On the one hand, the above character of the dominant class, the Nigerian state and the multinational corporations, have fuelled "hate" in attitude and disposition towards the government from among the oil bearing communities in the Niger Delta. On the other hand, it has strengthened the dominant class claim to absolute power in socio-economic and political activities. Generally, the low level of autonomy of the Nigerian state has made good governance to become endangered political specie in Nigeria, which its multinational corporation collaborators has particularly utilized to assault the growth and development of the Niger Delta region. This explains why the quest by the Nigerian state and its multinational corporation partners at establishing programmes that will promote sustainable peace, development and progress in the Niger Delta is viewed as an avenue for sustaining the primitive accumulation of wealth and pursuing the common interest of the few. Basically, we could see from our analysis that the political economy paradigm helps to expose the corrupt and insincere nature of the Nigerian state, but is in denial of the behavioural convictions of the youth militancy and restiveness, the nature, dynamics and reactionary processes of the Niger Delta people to Nigerian government-led deprivations.

Therefore, the frustration- aggression theory of conflict will be slotted into our study to rescue the inadequacies prevalent in the political economy paradigm. The Frustration-Aggression theory of conflict was first espoused by Dollard and his colleagues' in a study carried out in Yale University in 1939. The frustration-aggression theory of conflict was described undoubtedly by these researchers as the most popular, explanatory, behavioural and integrative psychological model for the study of violence. The thrust of the frustration-aggression theory of conflict is in its ability to express the consequences of discontent of kind and also its ability to attribute human capacity to be violent to stem out of a frustration-aggression mechanism. This theory believes that anger induced by frustration is a propelling force that disposes man to be aggressive and such frustration is an interference with goal-directed behavior [23].

Unarguably, our use of the psycho-analytical strength of the frustration-aggression theory of conflict is premeditated on its ability to frame the problem study in terms of behaviour of the Nigerian state and individuals, thus given empirical strength and ideological guidance to our understanding of the rallying point of youth militancy and violence in the Niger Delta. The militants believe that the preying upon on their commonwealth by the Nigerian state, multi-nationals corporations and their local collaborations is a gross insult on the sensibilities of the Niger Delta people. Hence, militant activities are expressed in the form of aggression, violence; advanced through kidnapping, oil theft and other related activities are the consequences of maladaptive and defensive ways of coping with the stress and frustration experienced by the Niger Delta people. Accordingly, we predicate our analysis on the hypothesis that the manner in which the Amnesty programme is executed tends to reflect a pattern of programme that hampers sustainable development, equity, social justice and elusive peace. It is on this proposition that we frame our subsequent analysis.

3. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ANTECEDENTS OF THE MILITANCY AND THE NIGER DELTA AMNESTY PROGRAMME OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA

According to Eyo, when we deal with other people or groups, we consider those people's

intentions *vis-à-vis* our own and in relation our aims and objectives, we take into account their emotional reactions to what we are up to, we weigh their ideas, abilities and purposes against ours [24]. These factors are not only intensely human, but vital to human interactions. On this account, stress and frustration can come from external factors like pain and discomfort from physical condition such as environmental pollution. Stress can also come from physical factors such as anxiety and frustration from physical conditions in the environment. When stress is experienced, efforts are made to deal with it, which is referred to as coping strategies.

Many techniques for coping with stress such as aggression and violence are defensive and maladaptive. This is why in personality development the most significant aspect of a child's world is his socio-cultural environment. All individuals live in a society and interact with a group of people. Each society has a distinctive culture- a body of stored knowledge, characteristic way of thinking, feelings, attitudes, goals and ideas. Membership of a cultural group influences an individual's personality by prescribing and limiting what a child will be taught and what he will learn. Undoubtedly, culture delineates the personality characteristics, attitudes and values an individual will adopt and such cultural prescriptions must be communicated or taught to the child initially by members of his family who are representatives of the culture.

In the Niger Delta, the indigenes learn from generation after generation that the Nigerian government and the foreigners harness their oil resources, pollute their environment and fail to provide adequate measures to cushion the effect of the economic, social and psychological degradation of their environment. Thus, the Nigerian government and multinational corporations (MNCs) collaborated denial of the Niger Delta people of largely sharing in the oil resources generated from their environment, which the people have sacrificed at the altar of harvesting from the natural provisions made available to them through farming, fishing, animal rearing and so on. This collaborated denial has caused disaffection and disillusionment, hence the militancy. To this end, the older generation in the Niger Delta keeps communicating to the younger generation the level of destruction and neglect that had and is still meted out to them. This social learning process has continued to

sensitize these people and sustain their efforts (militant activities) to address the perennial problem. This is the case of the Niger Delta people who in a bid to tackle the stress and frustration meted to them take to aggression and violence (militancy). In a bid to curb the huge economic toll of oil production loss attributable to the militancy adopted a dispute resolution package called the amnesty programme.

According to the Webster's New World Dictionary, 'Amnesty' means "a general pardon or forgiveness for political acts against the government". Simply put an amnesty is a forgiveness programme meant to calm an aggrieved people in order to structure them towards the realization of building sustainable development of a particular area. The issue of Amnesty raises several first principle questions about the agitations of the Niger Delta categorized into four phases by Owugah, but cited in Ibaba as involving a first phase of between the early and mid 1980s, which was strategized in such a way that the host communities filed legal actions against the oil companies to pay adequate compensation for damages to their property [25]. The second phase involved the peaceful demonstration and occupation by the host communities of the doors of multi-national oil companies to compel them to fulfill their promises to provide basic amenities and employ indigenes of the host community. The third phase was in the mid 1990s to 1998, with resistance by the host oil communities taking the form of militancy and guerilla strategy of forceful seizure of oil vessels, closing down of flow stations and kidnapping of oil workers. The final aspect was the demand for resource ownership and control.

The genesis and the use of the Amnesty Programme by the Nigerian government as a vital instrument for diffusing youth militancy in the Niger Delta started in 1967 when General Yakubu Gowon pardoned late Isaac Adaka Boro and his key Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) commanders who were sentenced to death as a result of their insurgent activities in February 1966. The first Delta insurgent group to receive international attention was the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), led by Ken Saro-Wiwa, the group launched a non-violent campaign in 1990 against the government and Royal Dutch/Shell Petroleum Development Corporation to protest environmental degradation and the area's economic neglect. The group's

efforts led Shell to cease production but in 1993, Saro-Wiwa and eight other MOSOP members, the "Ogoni Nine", were executed by the military regime of General Sani Abacha in 1995. Before the present Amnesty programme of Late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, the militant groups were primarily composed of armed young men dissatisfied at their inability to find jobs.

Former President Olusegun Obasanjo's regime attempted to resolve the armed Niger Delta struggle in 2004 by creating an enabling environment for Asari Dokubo and Atake Tom, leaders of the armed militant Niger Delta People Volunteer Front (NDPVF) and Niger Delta Viligante (NDV) respectively to pencil down a peace accord with the Nigerian Government. The basis of their accord with Obasanjo's government includes a general pardon for all youths who took up arms against the Nigerian federation, with a promise to embark on a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme and create 4,000 jobs [26].

To further resolve the seemingly protracted and recalcitrant security and development challenges on June 25, 2009, the Late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, proclaimed a 60-day unconditional period for militants. The Amnesty programme revolves around a DDR period called the disarmament period of August 6 to October 4, 2009; the demobilization/rehabilitation period from 6-12 months and the reintegration period of about 5 years. As at August 30, 2011, about 26,358 agitated Niger Delta youths have accepted the amnesty. The first phase of the Amnesty programme was the disarmament and demobilization period. The second phase of the programme is the rehabilitation aspect, which is engineered towards providing basic education and skills acquisition including a two-week orientation course, and short skills training courses at one of the 56 centers in Nigeria or abroad. The Amnesty programme absolves giving a monthly payment of ₦60,000 (\$4,000) to the 'unemployed' ex-agitators by the Federal Government and training them on guarding of oil pipelines, deep sea welding and diving, fabrication and engineering, sea-faring, boat building in Sri Lanka, the United States of America, South Africa, Malaysia, Moscow, Poland, India, Ghana, the Philippines amongst others. [27,4,28,5]. With no available record of the militants obtaining training on non-oil related and key agricultural endowment.

<http://www.nigerdeltaamnesty.org/index.php?option=com;Ehigiator>,

Meanwhile, between June 2010 and August 2011 about 19,000 ex-militants had undergone non-violence transformational training at the Demobilization camp in Obubara, Cross River State, Nigeria, with 5,000 ex-agitators placed on formal education and vocational training centers within and outside the country. The Chairman and lead trainer of the Foundation for Ethnic Harmony in Nigeria (FEHN), Mr. Allen Onyema, reports that by the end of August 2011, 19,000 out of 20,192 youths have been trained [5,6,29].

These writers also add that the commencement of the Amnesty Programme has remarkably reduced the incidence of disruption of crude oil production, thus standing out as the sincerest and profound approach by the Nigerian government to reduce the incidence of kidnapping and insecurity, and addressing the demand by the Niger Deltans for fairness, equity, peace and development in their community.

Examined more closely, the Amnesty Programme is engineered by the need to adopt alternative to nation building and security challenges, able to deliver a 'friendly' form of state-society relations that will respond to issues of development, social justice and welfare in the Niger Delta. The Amnesty Programme is an attempt by the Nigerian State; the oil producing multinational companies (MNCs), a small band and mixture of hardcore indigenous capitalists and petty bourgeoisies to come together to address non-traditional security threats, such as the rupturing of oil pipelines by the armed militant and multitude of domestic and international bunkers, kidnapping of domestic and expatriate oil workers, trading in Small and Light Weapons (SALW) and so on.

Therefore, the character of the present Amnesty Programme reflects a realization by the Nigerian state to uphold order, prevent state failure and ensure that Nigeria's adjudged entrenched constitutional principles of maintaining the security and welfare of its people are sustained. From the foregoing, it will not be right for us to detain ourselves in the details of the Amnesty Programme without further attempting to explore if the programme is only achieving temporary headline socio-economic and political development.

4. THE EFFECTS OF THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE OF THE NIGER DELTA, NIGERIA

In explaining the damage the militancy has inflicted on the Nigerian economy before the Amnesty Programme. Akpan 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 [5].

Again, Ibaba 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) [25]; 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).

Looking more closely at Ibaba's write-up on these Niger Delta declarations, resolutions and accords, it can be said that their agitations are driven by the need to put to an end the dehumanizing social, economic and political order of environmental despoliation, infrastructural decay, marginalization, inhumanly imposed on the Niger Delta people by the Nigerian State, local and Western Multi-national corporation cohorts.

Therefore, proponents of development such as Rodney, Todaro, Seers, believe that development in all spheres – political, social, cultural and economic – involves increased skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and material well being. Also, in a developing country such as Nigeria, economic planners, researchers and professionals have agreed that socio-economic management and development should be

reflected in the improvement of the quality and standard of living of populace [29,30,31,32].

Given the stakes involved in delivering sustainable development and peace in the Niger Delta, a survey by the National Geographic, doubts the ability of Nigerian federal government, particularly the state governments in the Niger Delta to deliver any form of development because its revenue-sharing plan is one in which the federal government distributes roughly half of the country's oil revenues among state governors, such that the funds do not trickle down to about 30 million residents of the Delta, whose means of livelihood of fishing and farming has been poisoned by oil spills. The survey credits the head of Nigeria's anti-corruption agency, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, in 2003 as saying that some 70 percent of Nigeria's oil revenues have either been stolen or wasted.

More importantly, the Amnesty programme is motivated by the need to integrate and put to work the economic, political and social constituents within a society. As Eboh puts it, the yardstick for measuring the sustainability of any form of socio-economic development and peace is in its ability to rise up to present challenges and needs without hampering the potentials of upcoming generation to live up to its needs [33].

He adds that to capture sustainable development and peace through the Amnesty Programme (emphasis mine) depends on its ability to provide social progress, social justice, human welfare, environmental health and national development. From available evidence, the objectives of the Amnesty Programme have been hindered since 2008 by infighting, internal squabbles, unhealthy rivalry among operational action agencies within the Presidency, such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The NDDC top management staff have engaged in a power tussle and disagreement over the control of finance and award of contract, departmental budgetary allocation and signatories to bank accounts [15].

These situation questions the operational competencies and sincerity of these action agencies of the Niger Delta to execute the Amnesty Programme.

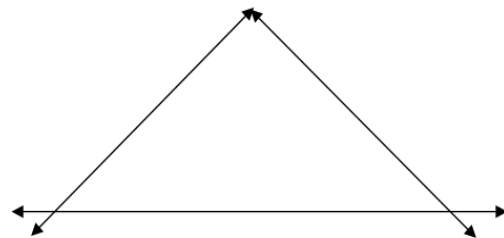
These among all other numerous examples have threatened the realization of objectives of the Amnesty Programme and has put to test the ability of Nigerian state to bring an all round

sustainable development to men, women and children in the Niger Delta region. Perhaps, we are forced to conclude that the reported physical fights among the rehabilitating militants in their various domestic and foreign skill acquisition and educational centers stems from the displeasure with the power projection and institutionalized corruption of these presidential action agencies. In fact, it is better suited to say that the internal squabbles among these rehabilitated militants originates from the primitive accumulation of state resources by the political class, officials of the action agencies on the Amnesty programme, which the former militants feels their corrupt activities, threatens their nationalistic drive to achieve fairness, equity and development of the oil-bearing community of the Niger Delta.

In further evaluating the effect of the Amnesty Programme on sustainable development, this study will submit after Eboh's, adaptation of Serageldin and Steer 1994 sustainable development triangle. Their triangular framework represents a cross disciplinary approach to examining sustainable development:

Economic

- ❖ Sustainable growth
- ❖ Capital and resource efficiency
- ❖ Employment generation
- ❖ Technological progress



Social

- ❖ Equity
- ❖ Social mobility
- ❖ Empowerment
- ❖ Participation

Ecological

- ❖ Ecosystem integrity
- ❖ Natural resources
- ❖ Biodiversity
- ❖ Carrying capacity

This above triangulation of sustainable development by these authors further gives directional guide to our interpretative analysis of the Amnesty Programme to evaluate how the fashioning of this programme will stabilize the Niger Delta area in the present and near future. Evidently, the skill rendered to these ex-militants by the Nigerian government is meant to ensure

the safety of oil workers and stem the tide of interruption of oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta. Thus, economically and ecologically, the success of the whole edifice of Amnesty programme depends on how successful the government is able to manage the gains derived from such skill acquisition by these ex-militants to promote creative independence and diversity from their home environment.

The Nigerian government is myopic to understand that the Amnesty programme should have been drawn up in such a manner that accommodates ex-militants from the Niger Delta acquiring improved skills training on other principal natural resources apart from crude oil and natural gas to skills in fish rearing, plantain, banana, rice, cassava, palm oil cultivations, timber production and so on, which they Niger Delta region are richly endowed in.

Undoubtedly, the lack of incorporation of agriculture and entrepreneurship training into the Amnesty package of the Niger Delta shows that the local governments, the local non-governmental organizations and the private sector, who are close to the youths, the grassroots and their leaders were not mainstreamed into its formulation or implementation.

Furthermore, on the social front the non-fashioning of the Amnesty programme to give physiological succor to women and children who were displaced by the fighting between the Nigerian armed forces and the militant groups places a question mark on the ability of the Amnesty programme to achieve lasting peace, equity, fairness, social mobility and empowerment, erase the trauma of the destruction of markets, schools and various sources of livelihood of these women and their families.

Nevertheless, the emergence and conduct of the Amnesty programme so far, validates some pertinent questions raised by Igwe (2011) on the ability of the post-Amnesty training to cover issues of short and long term employment, make available start-up capital for the reformed militants and weigh its commencement is encouraging the use of violence to express discontent and sustain criminality and lawlessness in Nigeria and so on.

Writers such as asserts that the Nigerian government surrenders to the dictates and antics

of a protectionist international monopoly capital and their internal collaborators whose activities favour social and economic injustice, environmental degradation, weakens social cohesion, punctures social order and solidarity, sustains armed militancy and tension among groups and communities [22]. Therefore, this study submits that the non-inculcation of displaced women and children and agriculture in the Amnesty packaging, further validates the postulations of the writers above and gives credence to our submission that the Amnesty programme cross-pollinates neglect and social injustice and institutionalizes the continuous domination of the oil bearing communities by the oil prospecting multinational companies and the Nigerian state, whose preferment fuels poverty, promotes inequality and differential access to the value of basic infrastructural facilities of water, education, roads, healthcare, available to the oil bearing communities of the Niger Delta.

5. CONCLUSION

The paper began by examining the various moves by past and present Nigerian government to undertake a non-violent standpoint to the myriad agitations of the protesting oil-bearing Niger Delta communities. In our theoretical perspective, we utilized the analytical instrument of the political economic paradigm which served as a guide to understanding the real motives and drivers of the Amnesty programme. The political economy paradigm helped our evaluation of the loopholes of the Amnesty programme viewed as suffering from problem of leadership and organizational dynamism because it is formulated to respond to biddings of the ruling class, the oil-prospecting companies and calm the armed militant, detaching the women and children.

On the one hand, the Amnesty programme pre-eminently rests on building peace and human capital development for the ex-militants. Its formulation and execution by the Nigerian government in 2009 is viewed variously as a new brand and model of socio-economic and political integration that ensures the uninterrupted drilling and flow of oil from the oil bearing communities that is free from disruptions by armed militants and retains the accumulation and distribution of oil resources by indigenous and multi-national oil companies, but neglects an all-round development that absolve all Niger Deltans including women and children. On the other hand, formulators of the Amnesty programme

believe that the programme is a recipe for growth and development. Thus, making the most out of the in-built incentive and initiative already located in the Amnesty programme is dear to Nigeria's oil-driven economy.

Finally, it is the submission of this study that the gravity and success of the post-Amnesty programme will be captured and measured if the skills acquisition trainings been imbibed into these ex-militants in various countries of the world proves to be sufficient in utilizing the agricultural advantage of the Niger Delta to create an endogenous agro-based Niger Delta economy that is self-sufficient and has creative renewal values of lasting employment. When this is done, we believe it will demystify the pressure; the bitter internal and external wrangling and scuffles associated with issues of oil resource explorations and allocations in the Niger Delta.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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