

Obstacles Hindering The Effective Implementation Of Amnesty Programme To The Militants In Bayelsa And Rivers States

Okoli Annmarie Nkem

Mathias Bentina Alawari.

Egbue Ngozi G-

Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Nnamdi Azikiwe University,
Awka, Anambra, State

Abstract: Amnesty programme in the context of this study is defined as strategically planned policies, ideas, schedules and means through which the practical implementation of amnesty is made possible. The Niger Delta crisis is due to the denial and absence of development in the region in both human and infrastructure level. This attracted the attention of the people to struggle for survival and development of the region; eventually militant activities crept in, which escalated the struggle and degenerated to regional crises with reference to Bayelsa and Rivers states. This in turn affected the nation's economy and brought about insecurity. The Federal Government in order to curb militant activities and enhance development initiated amnesty by late president Umaru Musa Ya'ra dua in 2009. This policy and goal seems to have become a misapprehension. The study examined the obstacles hindering effective implementation of amnesty programme in Bayelsa and Rivers states. The objective of this study is to investigate the obstacles hindering the effective implementation of the amnesty programme to the ex-militants in Bayelsa and Rivers states. This research adopted the mixed method approach of data collection, which is the combination of quantitative and qualitative survey design. The study sample constituted seven hundred and ninety three (793) respondents, adults aged 18 years and above and it is considered adequate for statistical techniques applied. Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaire schedule administered to adults of 18 years and above while Focus Group Discussion and Key Informant Interview were used to generate qualitative data. The research finding presents respondents' views on the continuous misappropriation of funds as a serious impediment to the success of the amnesty programme for the ex-militants. Some respondents 40.53% from the chart below indicated that all the options, 25.83% sharing of funds by government personnel, 21.06% diversion of funds for private use while 11.66% maintained sharing of funds by community leaders. The study therefore recommended that the Federal Government agency in-charge of the ex-militants should directly pay them the stipulated stipends instead of through intermediary who always surcharge, delay or divert the funds meant for the beneficiaries.

Keywords: Amnesty, Amnesty Programme, Federal Government, Militants, Obstacles, Programme

I. INTRODUCTION

The Niger Delta community was at one point in our nation's history like a country at war that is to say, it has at least consumed many people including indigenous, security operatives and expatriates notable among them is late Ken Saro Wiwa. But the big question is; the notable Niger Delta war was between who and who? This war may have been with

the 'big and strange opponent' which was what necessitated the creation of amnesty and the popular Federal Government amnesty programme. The highly spoken amnesty programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria for the Niger Delta ex-militants did not come as a gift to the people neither was it a Federal Government developmental policy for the region but it is a mere response to a situation that seems to be getting out of their control. Niger Delta region has been plagued by

simmering grievances that blossomed over time into a popular insurgency against the Nigerian state and multinational oil companies (MOCs) which incidentally started having a very dangerous effect on the economy of the Nigerian State and the Multi-National Companies. As the exploration activity of the oil companies started having a toll on the economy with destruction of local livelihoods and severe environmental pollution and was visibly obvious that the government was not ready to remedy the situation through peaceful negotiation, the people saw arm struggle as the only way out.

According to Ekpo (2014) the incidence of militancy began when the people of Niger Delta started suffering unquantifiable losses in both human and natural resources due to oil exploration and perceived marginalization of the people of Niger Delta by the Nigerian government. Consequently, the region took to armed struggle in pursuit of self-defense and self-determination for the survival of their people. Many militant groups are still springing up, for example, the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) in addition to the already existing ones which include, Niger Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People MOSOP and many others (Ikpe, 2011). Youth militancy in the Niger Delta dates back to 26th February 1966, when Isaac Adaka Jasper Boro of the Niger Delta Volunteer Services (NDVS), consisting of 159 youths took up arms against the Nigerian government (Gilbert, 2013). According to Gilbert, (2013) the cause of militancy in the region was the injustice, marginalization and political exclusion suffered by the people of the region and the general argument that their God-given natural resources were being exploited and managed by outright strangers in the name of nationhood.

The amnesty programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced by the administration of late President Umaru Musa Ya'ra dua in 2009 with its intention of not only helping the ex-militants in Bayelsa and Rivers states to drop their illegally acquired arms but also for them to openly repent and drop the life of violence to embrace the life of peace and tranquility, also to ameliorate the hardship meted out to the Niger Delta region through exploitation and exploration of oil crude in the region by multi-nationals and Federal Government. The granting of amnesty was geared towards bringing development to the region but the people have continued to question the possibility of amnesty as a programme that will be able to restore their dislocated social order, resuscitate their traditional means of livelihood and correct Federal Government insensitivity to their plight.

The second face of this laudable initiative of the government is to equip the ex-militants with Entrepreneurial Skills with which their future without crime can be guaranteed before they are finally re-integrated into the society. This robust plans and ideas have been faced with the most debilitating obstacles that seems to have not only hindered the effective implementation of the amnesty programme in Bayelsa and Rivers states but has turned the whole programme into a conduit pipe with which unscrupulous individuals milked the economy of the Federal Government. The amnesty programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria for the Niger Delta ex-militants honestly ought to have been an outstanding instrument of peace building that emphasized on

the need for wider reforms that address underdevelopment and poverty in the Niger Delta region if implementation was religiously followed. While it is commonly believed that the amnesty programme has promoted stability in oil production, there are underlying socio-political contradictions that undermine its effectiveness and credibility.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since the introduction and implementation of amnesty programme, there have been series of loopholes in its implementation. The Federal Government has set up various programme in order to achieve the purpose for which amnesty was initiated, unfortunately, some of these programme have only achieved slight positive result while some proved abortive. Consequently, the perception of the people as observed by Egwemi (2010) remains that the amnesty programme has recorded short-term success of curbing the militancy, but the sense and experience of insecurity and uncertainty in the area has continued. In spite of the implementation of amnesty programme in Bayelsa and Rivers, development in the area is still minimal. This can be related to lack of political will by the Federal and State Government and the stakeholders of the region to keep to the negotiations made with the Niger Delta region, site critical infrastructure, promote employment, especially among the youth and others. These buttress that, the pre militancy normalcy is yet to be restored. Therefore, the prevailing state of affairs despite amnesty programme has negatively impacted on flow of investment and development in Bayelsa and Rivers states. In the same vein, notwithstanding the importance accrued to the Niger Delta region and effort in eradicating militancy in the area, there has been resurgence of militancy and incessant security issues which have hampered development in a very huge way. This research is out to reveal those obstacles hindering effective and efficient implementation of amnesty programme.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to investigate the obstacles hindering the effective implementation of the amnesty programme to the ex-militants in Bayelsa and Rivers states.

STUDY HYPOTHESIS

H₁: Urban dwellers are more likely than rural dwellers to have a more positive perception of the impact of the amnesty programme on Bayelsa and Rivers states.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

CONCEPT OF AMNESTY

The term amnesty is derived from the word *amnestia*, meaning a pardon extended by the government to a group or class of persons, usually for a political offence or the act of a sovereign officially forgiving a class of persons, who are subject to trial but have not yet been convicted (Gardener,

2013:345). An amnesty may be extended when the authority decides that bringing citizens into compliance with a law is more important than punishing them for past offences.

Aside from conceptual definition of amnesty, studies across the globe shows that amnesty can be granted based on what the nation or government tends to achieve. The United Nation Publication on amnesties sees it as exemption from criminal prosecution and, possibly, civil action achieved through amnesty is typically limited to conduct occurring during a specific period and/or involving a specified event or circumstance, such as a particular armed conflict. For example, the Ouagadougou Political Agreement of March 2007 between representatives of the President of Côte d'Ivoire and of Forces Nouvelles includes a provision embodying the parties' decision to adopt: "a new amnesty law covering crimes and offences related to national security and arising from the conflict that shook Côte d'Ivoire and which were committed between 17 September 2000 and the date of entry into force of the present Agreement (United Nation Publication, 2009).

Omadjohwoefe (2011) notes that amnesty requires the recipients to perform certain tasks such as providing information, admitting the truth about their actions, showing remorse or surrendering weapons as in the case of the militants in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. The conditional amnesty could be individualized, so that the recipients can only benefit from an amnesty programme upon successful compliance with its conditions. Amnesty is categorized into individual amnesty, amnesty movement and mass amnesty. Individual amnesty has to do with a pardon that is extended to an offender.

Some features associated with amnesty are as follows:

- ✓ Immediate release of all political prisoners
- ✓ Right of political exiles to return
- ✓ Relinquishment of civil and political rights
- ✓ Reinstatement in jobs of persons dismissed for political reasons
- ✓ Right of victims of inhuman treatment or their families to compensation (Azinge, 2013).

Peterside & Watts (2012) attested that the vision of the amnesty programme is to transform the youths from militancy to gainful employment, and the Niger Delta from abject poverty, marginalization and deprivation to a region populated and designed with modern cities, with heading edge environmental management practices, economic prosperity, skilled, healthy, secured and harmonious region. But according to Robert (2015) holistic assessment of the present state of the Niger Delta region would point to the fact that despite the declaration and implementation of the amnesty programme, that region remains a keg of carbide that is waiting for explosion; if adequate attention is not given and permanent structures are not put on ground to forestall a reoccurrence of militancy, hostage taking and pipe lines vandalism in that region will be inevitable. Amnesty programme as conceptualized may be palliative enough in all cases as it has been and can still be used as a means of political patronage or a conduit pipe to siphon government finance as in the case of amnesty for the Niger Delta militants where emergency billionaires have been created (Nwankpa, 2014).

Though amnesty allows the government of a nation or state to forget criminal acts, usually before prosecution has occurred, it is not just given amnesty for the mere sake of given it but the whole idea of amnesty comes up when punishment or reprimand is perceived to cause further crises as in the case with Niger Delta militants. For instance, in the case of Niger Delta militancy, amnesty is still in place but today the area is witnessing a disastrous dimension of economic sabotage probably because "somebody somewhere" has been called upon to explain some issues bordering on misappropriation of funds and fraudulent activities by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). If an amnesty result from government deciding to forget or pardon criminal activities of militants, the resurgence of militant's code named Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) would not have been possible. The amnesty process opened a door for stabilization but did not reduce the long-term potential for violence or deal with root conflict issues (Newson, 2011).

CONCEPT OF MILITANCY

Militancy, though not just a new political concept seems to gain more prominence since its incursion into Niger Delta environment. It could also be seen as an act of using or the preparedness to use force or strong pressure to achieve ones aim, especially to effect social and political change. The primary objective is to effect socio-political change in a direction they feel will benefit them. There are some traits associated with militancy which include grievance-motivated, militancy as adversarial, confrontational and mob action. Militancy has different modes such as symbolic defiance, physical confrontation, property destruction and institutional disruption. Thom-otuya and Eremie (2011) in their study stressed that militancy in most cases is a struggle for those who engage in it as a liberation movement but what we presently see in the Niger Delta lately seems to have betrayed this understanding as the struggle made few of their field commanders stupendously rich while the people they claim to be liberating remained very poor and their environment unattended to.

Against this background, Collier (2007) has referred to the activities of the militants in the Niger Delta as mass criminal groups offering only an ideological façade of political grievances and concern for their communities. The picture of marginalization and developmental deficit associated with the Niger Delta made the youth to engage in militant activities by carrying arms to protest against oil companies and the Nigerian State (Kio- Lawson & Dekor, 2014). Similarly, Etemike (2012) opined that the inability of successive Nigeria government to address perceived injustice and a sense of deprivation among the people of the Niger Delta has led to protests, violence, and militancy uprising.

Militancy has enmeshed the Niger Delta in violent conflict over oil. There are not just pervasive conflicts, violence, insecurity, but a breakdown of socio-economic and political order (Lubeck, Watt & Lipschutz, 2007). Arong and Egbere (2013) attested that some factors responsible for spurring militancy are marginalization, abject poverty, massive unemployment, environmental degradation, etc. They also observed some negative results of militancy which are

loss of income for the country or the region involved, kidnapping, destruction of national unity and disruption of individual peace.

In all of these, the picture created by Collier (2007) seems to capture more what is happening in the Niger Delta Area, where these groups have turned themselves into criminal groups for the purpose of enriching themselves as against their clamor for the liberation of their people. In the same vein, Nimenibo, Aminadokiari, Nimenibo, Emmanuel and Iyerikabo (2018) maintained that militancy in the Niger Delta Region has led to the loss of revenue accruable to the Federal Government of Nigeria. The activities of militants in the Niger Delta Region have significantly affected business life, create unemployment and devastated human lives in the Niger Delta region; insecurity and illegal bunkering have thrived.

Considering the definitions and conceptualizing of militancy above, the act of militancy can be as confrontational effort to turn the tide of a prevailing political, economic or legal situation. But record shows that most militant operations end up in chaos and catastrophe (Okonkwo, 2014).

CONCEPTUALIZING DEVELOPMENT

Development as a word has also been variously defined by different authors in relation to their discipline or profession. Giving a general perception of the word, Hornby (2010) defines development as the gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced. In doing this as it affect human social environment, it translates to improving on the structures and institutions originally in such environment to make them better and more modern. Todaro (1979) describes development as "a means to freely exercise one's economic, social, political and religious rights". According to Odor (2002), development in human society could be seen on the levels of individuals and that of the society. At the level of individual, it implies increased social skill and capacity to interact effectively and efficiently with ones environment. In this context, development brings positive changes in individual's material and non material well being. However, an aspect of personal development should be considered on the state of the society as a whole.

On the second level of development, Odor (2002) asserts that development implies how individuals cooperatively cultivate the capacity to regulate both internal and external relationship. On a general note, development is specifically regarded as a process of positive structural changes in the institutions and sectors of a society which may include economy, infrastructure, education, health, politics and the overall awareness of human rights, its protection and awareness. With reference to development in relation to the policy on amnesty of the Federal Government, the concept may obviously attract divergent views. The reason remains that there is a general belief that the expectations of the people seem not to have been captured by the amnesty programme.

Development as it affects the Niger Delta area and amnesty programme mean more than just personal development, it emphatically concerns infrastructural development of the area. This generally has to do with the provision of such facilities as Hospitals, Electricity, Road network, Markets, Housing, Pipe borne water etc, which are

obviously in great demand. Orhioghene (2011) stated that development experts and policy makers have engaged in many debates about the Delta's human development dilemma, questioning why abundant human and natural resources have had little impact on poverty in the region. Why do conflict and youth restiveness simmer despite years of development interventions, including granting of amnesty to the militants in the region? What should be done to calm the situation in the region? In fact, scholars such as (Eweremadu, 2008; Ibeanu, 2005; 2008; Ibeanu & Ike, 2006; Imobighe, 2004; Kelegbe, 2006; Osaghae, 1995; Okonta, 2005) explained that Niger Delta is a contradiction in terms of level of poverty, underdevelopment and difficulties amidst plenty (Orhioghene, 2011).

Studies on development as postulated by scholars like Rostow, the assumption that undeveloped countries have no history of development, since they are at the first stage of being a traditional society is a historical proposition. The fact still remains that no society remains where they are at the formative stage without advancement, no matter how slow and unsustainable (Onyesom, 2005).

THE CONCEPT OF OBSTACLE AND HINDRANCE AS THEY AFFECT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S AMNESTY PROGRAMME IN BAYELSA AND RIVERS STATES

Obstacle according to Hornby (2010) is defined as a person or thing that opposes or hinders operations, activities, progress or things. Obstacle, obstruction, hindrance, impediment refer to something that interferes with or prevents action or progress. An obstacle is something, material or nonmaterial, that stands in the way of literal or figurative progress: Lack of imagination is an obstacle to one's advancement. An obstruction is something that more or less completely blocks a passage: A blood clot is an obstruction to the circulation of blood in human body and if not properly managed can eventually lead to death. This is to emphatically state that, anything that obstructs the natural or normal course is a catastrophic impediment that must be avoided at all cost. A hindrance is a term according to Hornby (2010) keeps back by interfering and delaying: Interruptions are a hindrance to one's work. An impediment interferes with proper functioning: an impediment in one's speech. The term hindrance means the state of being interfered with, held back, or slowed down.

III. REVIEW OF THEORY

The Theory of Post-Colonial States was used in this article as the major foundation and bases for discussion. This theory was popularized by Third World scholars like Ake (1985), Ekekwe (1975), and Ibeanu (1998). The theory suggests that the post-colonial state is a creation of imperialism. As such, it has followed a developmental strategy dictated by the interests of

imperialism and its local allies, not by those of the majority of the indigenous population. This post-colonial state has created for itself a deep crisis from which it can hardly extricate itself without fundamentally changing its present

nature. According to Ekekwe (1975), the post-colonial state rests on the foundation of the colonial state, which, in turn, had incorporated some important elements of the pre-colonial rudimentary state structures. The main goal of the colonial state was to create conditions under which accumulation of capital by the foreign bourgeoisie in alliance with the ruling elite would take place through the exploitation of local human and other natural resources. It was on the basis of this that the post-colonial state emerged.

One basic character of the post-colonial state is that it has very limited autonomy (Ake, 1985). This means that the state is institutionally constituted in such a way that it enjoys limited independence from the social classes, particularly the hegemonic social class, and so, is immersed in the class struggles that go on in the society. This lack of relative autonomy is one reason why the post-colonial state in Nigeria is incapable of mediating political conflicts (Ake, 1985). In other words, to the extent that there is highly limited autonomization of the state, the possibility of resolving contradictions and crises like that of the Niger Delta region is severely limited.

Thus, the theory of post-colonial state as a tool of analysis is very suitable in explaining and understanding the amnesty offer granted by the Federal Government to the Niger Delta militants and the hindrances against its implementation. In fact, when Nigeria is put in its proper perspective as a neo-colonial state that is not only characterized by low autonomy, but also solely dependent on the exploration, exploitation and sale of oil, we begin to understand why the reliance on oil royalties is inevitable and why government should resort to conciliatory approaches such as amnesty since the use of force to quell the crisis has not yielded any positive dividend.

IV. METHODS

The study adopted a mixed method approach that is the combination of quantitative and qualitative research design. The study was focused on Bayelsa and Rivers states of the Niger Delta. This area was purposively chosen because of the need to comprehend the amnesty programme for ex-militants and the obstacles hindering the effectiveness of its implementation in the study area. The Niger Delta region as a geo-political zone measures about 70,000 square kilometers and lies in the southern part of Nigeria (Ekpo, 2004). Moreover, the region consists of six states in the south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria. They are Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers states. However, for the purpose of revenue sharing, states like Abia, Imo and Ondo that are among the oil producing states are listed among the states in the Niger Delta region, making it a total of (nine) states (Okafor, 2004).

Furthermore, this study specifically focuses on Bayelsa and Rivers states as the form part of the core states of the Niger Delta. The people of Bayelsa are predominantly Izon with a handful of Isoko, Itsekiri and Urhobos. In the same way, Ikwerre is the predominant tribe and language in Rivers state with a handful of Ibibio, Igbo and Efik. Fishing and farming are the dominant occupations of the people of Bayelsa and Rivers states. Bayelsa state has total population of about

1,704,515 while Rivers state is densely populated with the total population of about 5,198,716 (NPC,2006). Geographically, Bayelsa is located between latitude 4.15 north and longitude 5.23 south while Rivers lies at latitude 4.45 north and longitude 6.50 east and covers 10, 432. 3sq km. Bayelsa state was created on October 1, 1996 out of the old Rivers state with Yenagoa as its capital city. It has an area of 2682sq km. Bayelsa currently has 8 local government areas. In the same vein, Rivers state was created in 1967 with the splitting of the eastern region of Nigeria and the capital is Port Harcourt. It is currently made up 23 local government areas.

The research sample constituted 793 respondents, adults 18 years and above. The sample accommodated geographical spread and rural-urban bias at the ratio of 2.1. The sample was statistically estimated from the target population and represented 0.15% of the target population. Multi-stage sampling technique made of simple random sampling and systematic sampling techniques were adopted in selecting the sample for the study. Questionnaire was the major instrument used for data collection for the study and it consists of multiple-choice questions. For qualitative data collection, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interview were used. So, 8-12 participants were involved in the FGD per session and they were grouped along gender. KII was the second qualitative tool and it was used to interrogate the community leaders and ex-militants on the issue at hand. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) soft ware was used for processing the quantitative data. The qualitative data generated through FGD and KII were analyzed descriptively. The research hypothesis was tested using chi-square inferential statistic (χ^2).

V. FINDINGS

The analysis finding shows the distribution of respondents by age, sex, religious affiliation, and marital status, type of marriage, annual income, occupation, and educational attainment, place of residence, geo-political zones, and location of the respondents. This analysis shows the location of the respondents, Bayelsa state constituted 50.7% of the total respondents while Rivers state constituted 49.2%. The occupational distribution of the respondents stated above shows that the professionals constituted 8.1% of the total respondents, the civil servants constituted the greater number of 38.8%, self-employed were made up of 12.6%. The apprentice, business/trading, artisan and farmers were few. They constituted 1.1%, 4.0%, .5% and 2.1% respectively. Other unmentioned occupations constituted 29.9%, while those without responds were 2.8%.

Based on religious affiliation, the analysis makes it clear that more than three-quarter of the respondents (93.8%) was Christians. A few of the respondents belong to other religious groups who are Islam (2.1%), traditional religion (1.3%), unmentioned group (.8%) and unspecified (2.0%).

With respect to the actual income earned per year, many of the respondents (49.3%) earned lower income. They include the students, apprentices, some artisans and the unemployed. More than two-third of these respondents that earn little, or no income were from both urban and rural areas

of Bayelsa and Rivers states. Moreover, only 13.6% earn #1,001,000 and above per year. This shows that the income status of many individuals within the area of study is low.

The respondents who had lived from 5-20 years in their residence constituted 70.4% of the total respondents. Those who had lived from 21-36 years constituted 13.2% of the respondents. Others include 37-52 (5.5%), 53 years and above (3.7%), and other unspecified were 7.2%.

In terms of highest formal educational attainment, those who have tertiary education certificate constituted 52.6% of the respondents. Other categories of educational attainment/certification were secondary school certificate (20.9%), certificate equivalent (4.9%), and first school leaving certificate (3.7%). Only 5.5% of the respondents were without any form of formal education, while 2.4% were unspecified.

SUBSTANTIVE VARIABLES

To know the greatest problem confronting the effective implementation of amnesty programme, it was verified through item which sought to know the greatest problem confronting effective implementation of amnesty programme. Table 1 below shows the distribution of the responses from the respondents.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Stakeholders share funds meant for the programme	200	25.2
Some ex-militants are denied of stipends due to them	136	17.2
Some ex-militants are denied of scholarship opportunities which they qualify for	47	5.9
Stakeholders divert funds meant for infrastructural projects	90	11.3
All of the above	266	33.5
Others	9	1.1
No response	45	5.7
Total	793	100.0

Table 1: Respondents' view on the greatest problem confronting effective implementation of the amnesty programme in Bayelsa and Rivers states

Table 1 reveals that 33.5% of the respondents sustained that stakeholders share funds meant for the amnesty programme, some ex-militants are denied of stipends due to them, some ex-militants are denied of scholarship opportunities which they qualify for and stakeholders divert funds meant for infrastructural projects construct the greatest problem to effective implementation of amnesty programme. In the same vein, 25.2% showed that share the funds meant for the programme, 17.2% opted that some ex-militants are denied of stipends, 11.3% said the stakeholders divert funds meant for infrastructural projects and 5.7% did not respond while 1.1% gave other problems. This result shows that the effective implementation of amnesty programme is being confronted with stakeholders sharing funds meant for amnesty, the ex-militants are denied stipends and some that merited scholarship were not granted. This is in line with the KII and FGD results which reveals that insincerity of the leaders is causing problem, some of the put the name of their children

and relatives in the pay list even though they are among the ex-militants.

An FGD participant at Sii in Khana in his own words said that *"Insincerity from the leaders is causing problem, some of them put the name of their children and relatives and they enter the pay list even though they are not among the ex-militants while the names of the real ex-militant are not there"* (Male, 47 years, A Teacher). Another FGD participant at the same location voiced that *"the way money has been leaving from the news we hear is another complication, so corruption on the part of the government and our people on top is not encouraging"* (Male, 38 years, Civil Servant). During KII a respondent at Yenaka in Yenagoa said in his own words that *"The challenge we are facing is the representative who goes to the government and collect money meant for the communities, some of our leaders especially the chiefs, community leaders you went there and collect what belongs to the community and pocket it, sent their own children abroad leave others to suffer"* (Male, 36 years, Ex-militant).

Another KII respondent corroborated with the above assertion saying that *"lack of sincerity, the people handling this project they are not sincere, in fact it is corruption, so as far as I am concern that is the problem"*.

To understand more the problem confronting effective implementation of amnesty programme, respondent's views were sought in this item which implies the continuous misappropriation of funds as a serious impediment to the success of the amnesty programme for ex-militants. The findings are shown below in figures 1 and 2 and in table 2 respectively.

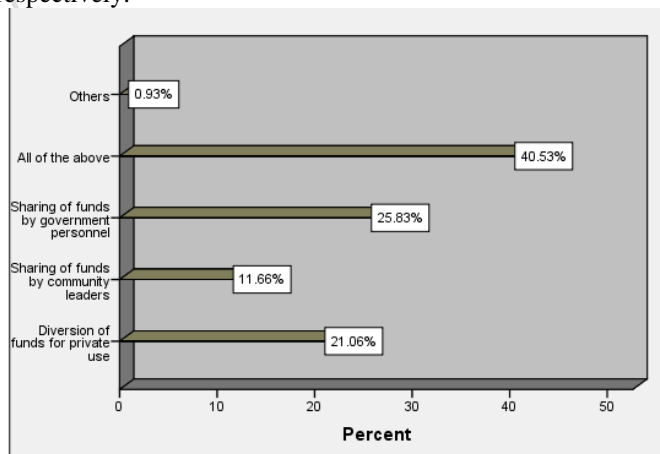


Figure 1: Respondents' views on the continuous misappropriation of funds as a serious impediment to the success of the amnesty programme for the ex-militants

Figure 1 presents respondents' views on the continuous misappropriation of funds as a serious impediment to the success of the amnesty programme for ex-militants. Some respondents 40.53% from the chart indicated that all the options above contribute to the serious impediment to the success of amnesty programme, 25.83% sustained sharing of funds by government personnel, 21.06% shows diversion of funds for private use while 11.66% maintained of sharing of funds by community leaders. The result above shows that there is misappropriation of amnesty funds by some government personnel and some stakeholders.

The FGD result supported the above result. For instance, during the FGD sessions, a male FGD participant at Esanegonu in Nembe said that:

“It is amnesty people, their leaders that are causing problems, the call some of the ‘Generals’ they collect this money, they don’t give other people what they are entitled to. Somebody will get the whole money 60,000.00 go and give someone 20,000.00, some don’t even get” (Male, 68 years, Retired Civil Servant).

Similarly, a FGD participant from the above location a transporter commented that, “the leaders promised to send these boys to school to acquire skill but some of them were abandoned there. They don’t finance them with the money instead they pocket it” (Male, 49 years, A Transporter). The KII result also aligned with the above result. This was evidenced in the comment of one of the KII respondents at Esanegonu in Nembe he said: “we are the stakeholders; we have not appointed anybody to be our stakeholder or to speak for us. They are using it to enrich themselves” (Male, 32 years, Ex-militant). Another KII respondent at Sii in Khana said in his own words that, “because the government does work to up to the expectation, even our leaders, they are truthful, they are not straight some of them steal and eat the money belonging to everybody. They build houses and other things for themselves” (Male, 31 years, Ex-militant).

To understand more the consequences of poor implementation of programme, questionnaire item 45 was used to seek the opinion of the respondents. The responses are shown in figure 2 below.

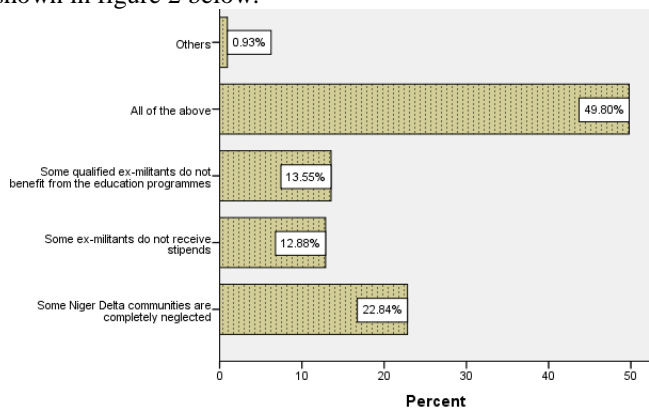


Figure 2: Respondents’ view on the most obvious consequences of the poor implementation of the amnesty programme

Figure 2 shows the most obvious consequences of poor implementation of amnesty programme in the Niger Delta. Responses of the respondents were as follows; almost half of the respondents 49.80% were of the view that all of the above options are obvious consequences of the poor implementation of amnesty programme, 22.84% indicated that some Niger Delta communities are completely neglected, others are 13.55% some qualified ex-militants do not benefit from the education programme, 12.88% opted that some ex-militants do not receive stipends. From the results, majority of the respondents were of the opinion that all the options mentioned are consequences of poor implementation of amnesty programme. The FGD and KII results were in line with this. An FGD participant at Sii in Khana reacted as follows, “the government is not prompt to the payment, they promise they

will pay them they are not paying them when due, these boys will come up to protest”(Female, 47 years, civil servant).Based on the above, another FGD participant at Yenaka in Yenagoa also voiced in this way, “another thing is that these boys are going to the creeks also causing panic in the communities anytime they wait for money and don’t see it, so government should fulfill their promise well” (Male, 63 years, Retired Civil Servant/Farmer). A KII respondent at Esanegonu in Nembe reacted on giving money to the ex-militant in his own words,

“my daughter how much is the stipend, how regular is it and what is the use of that type of free money that does not give dignity to the person you are giving it to? This is just cosmetic measure which still has corruption under it. And they do not go the grass root to fish out the real ex-militants, they siphon and pay money to the wrong people” (Male, 71 years, community chief).

Questionnaire item 46 deals with the perceived insincerity of the government as one of the major causes of lack of commitment on the part of the locals and was used to elicit responses from the respondents. The table 2 below presents the responses.

Response	Frequenc	Percent
Government does not release funds	95	12.0
Government does not release adequate funds	121	15.3
Government personnel and community leaders divert funds	216	27.2
All of the above	312	39.3
Others	9	1.1
No response	40	5.0
Total	793	100.0

Table 2: Respondents’ views on the perceived insincerity of government as one of the major causes of lack of commitment among the locals in the Niger Delta

As revealed on table 2, 39.3% of the respondents indicated that all the options are causes of suspicion that shows the insincerity of government as major causes of lack of commitment on the part of locals in the Niger Delta; 27.2% of them said it is government personnel and community leaders diversion of funds, 15.3% are of the opinion that government does not release adequate funds, 12.0% maintained that government does not release funds, 1.1% indicated other suspicions and 5.0% were unspecified. From the above results, it is evident that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that all the above options cause suspicion that government insincerity is one of the causes of lack of commitment on the part of the local in the Niger Delta with regard to amnesty programme. The FGD and KII results were in line with this. An FGD participant at Esanegonu in Nembe in her own words said that:

“because the government always sides and protects the multinational companies, so when they want to compensate the community they go through one, two or three persons and give them lesser than what they agreed with the community, before you know it those people will share the money with some others and nothing will be done” (Female, 39 years, A Teacher).

A KII respondent at Palm Lane in Port Harcourt reacted this way, “the government does not want to live up to their expectation, they are not truthful, they don’t want to be straight. They hide under the amnesty programme and share money any how sometimes with our people” (Male, 33 years, Ex-militant).

VI. CONCLUSION

Amnesty programme granted to the Niger Delta militants by its nature was created to curb insecurity and increase development in Bayelsa and Rivers states. However, the programme is yet to achieve maximum result which informed the establishment of amnesty programme in the Niger Delta. This study has provided information elicited through FGD to affirm the strong links between socio-economic variables and the development of Bayelsa and River states. It identified diversion of funds, hoarding stipends meant for the ex-militants and other factors that hinder effective implementation of amnesty programme and from achieving optimum results. The study thus concludes that curtailing and containing these hindrances are crucial to the effectiveness of amnesty programme, implementation and development in the states of Bayelsa and Rivers in the Niger Delta area of the country. This is important since information has clearly shown that activities of individuals and some groups involved in the implementation and management of amnesty funds are hindrances to positive result. To this effect, a total commitment by the Federal Government and its agencies and representatives from Bayelsa and Rivers states is highly needed to surmount the challenges confronting amnesty programme.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the present study, the following recommendations can be made:

- ✓ The amnesty programme projects should be monitored by the agencies of the Federal Government, to ensure effective and efficient implementation and also help to discourage diversion of funds. Punitive measures are very necessary, in order to checkmate both individuals and agencies involved in the amnesty programme implementation.
- ✓ The Federal Government agency in-charge of the ex-militants should directly pay them the stipulated stipends instead of through intermediary who always surcharge, delay or divert the funds meant for the beneficiaries.
- ✓ Upon the completion of training of the ex-militants in oil related courses and skills, the oil companies and the Federal Government should ensure that they are recruited and engaged in the industry through the reservation of some employment quota for the local people. This will help to curtail militancy to the barest minimum and enhance development in Bayelsa and Rivers states.
- ✓ Finally, the Federal Government should intensify efforts in not only to identify criminals acting as cog to the effective wheel of implementation of the amnesty

programme of the Federal Government but harsh punishments should be enshrined into the amnesty law.

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