



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Amnesty Policy Inconsistency and The Re-Emergence of Militant Groups in The Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

Chukwudi Charles Ezikeudu<sup>1\*</sup>, Ikechukwu Jonathan Opara<sup>2</sup>, Chrisantus Kanayochukwu Ariche<sup>3</sup>, Chimaobi Okorie<sup>4</sup>, Nneka Sophie Amalu<sup>5</sup>, Brown Isokon<sup>6</sup>, Iwaara Eno Iwara<sup>7</sup>, Okwu Augustina Onyema<sup>8</sup>, Anthony Ekpoudo<sup>9</sup>, Benedict Ejikeme Odigbo<sup>10</sup>, Raymond Amanzie Njoku<sup>11</sup>, Enyioma Chinwendu Iwuanyanwu<sup>12</sup>, Nnenna Eme Ukandu<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1,8</sup> Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Nigeria

<sup>2,11</sup> Department of Public Administration, University of Calabar, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup> Department of Philosophy, University of Calabar, Nigeria

<sup>4,6</sup> Department of Social Work, University of Calabar, Nigeria

<sup>5</sup> Department of History and International Studies, University of Calabar, Nigeria

<sup>7</sup> Department of political science, university of Calabar, Nigeria

<sup>9</sup> Department of Commercial and Industrial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Calabar, Nigeria

<sup>10</sup> Department of Marketing, University of Calabar, Nigeria

<sup>12,13</sup> Department of Business Management, University of Calabar, Nigeria

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**\*Corresponding Author:**

ezikeuduchukwudi@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

Notwithstanding the amnesty programme implemented by the federal government, violent and militant activities continue in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. This study examined amnesty policy inconsistency and the re-emergence of militant groups in the Niger Delta Region, Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study were to examine the insincerity of the local chief, ascertain environmental degradation, and investigate marginalization and the re-emergence of militant groups. Amoateng (2020) admitted that the elders and chiefs are playing a mixed role in the Niger Delta issue and that some traditional leaders have exacerbated it via patronage politics. A mixed method was employed to obtain information from a sample of 1000 respondents. The study found that insincerity of the local chiefs, environmental degradation, and marginalisation were associations between the amnesty policy inconsistency and the re-emergence of militant groups. The study concluded that policy inconsistency which is evidenced by the insincerity of local chiefs, marginalization, environmental degradation, concentration on the existing militant groups and most importantly the neglect of one of the major amnesty policy direction which is the initiation and development of projects that have a direct benefit to the local community led to the re-emergence of militant groups, but reiterated that the authorities concerned should deal with the problem in a more inclusive manner-via inclusive development policies. Therefore, the study suggests that if the Niger Delta peace and security challenges are to be achieved, it is necessary to address all the detrimental factors that make insurgency both preferred and unavoidable, hence government should address such social problems as environmental pollution, poverty, unemployment, insufficient infrastructure, resource deprivation, insincerity of local chiefs and marginalization as against using kinetic military measures to lessen the desire to be recruited into militant groups.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria faces several hindrances in achieving decrease in militancy and insurgency, the general reduction of crime and criminality as well as its economic and developmental goals' but one of the most profound is policy inconsistency and discontinuity. Little wonder the National Council on Development Planning (NCDP) recognized that the lack of permanence and continuousness in programmes and policies by succeeding governments as the bane of Nigeria's stunted growth and development. This is not unconnected to fact that very few policies and programs have continued to be useful. What make up militancy is ambiguous and devoid of consensus. Designed for this paper, the act of militancy in the Niger Delta will be restricted to kidnapping and taking hostage, cult and gang violence, piracy, pipeline vandalism, oil theft, and killings. To bring to an end militancy and insurgency the former late 13<sup>th</sup> president of Nigeria put forward amnesty, vocational training, monthly cash payment, as well as other recompenses to close to thirty thousand militants at a staggering cost of about five hundred million dollars yearly of tax payers money. It is on record that the programme brought peace and stability to the region hitherto hit by militancy and insurgency and the decreasing petroleum export increased and there was a corresponding increase in government revenue. In the same vein, several repentant militants were compensated with lucrative contrasts among which include guiding oil pipelines. However, to pursue its programme to the fullest the amnesty programme was extended to December, 2017 as against its termination year of 2015.

As a result of policy inconsistency, the immediate former president Buhari terminated the repentant –militants oil pipeline security contrast and subsequently initiated criminal proceedings against them. More so, the immediate former president Buhari began to cut down funding for the amnesty programme by around 70 percent in the 2016 year budget, citing corruption as its greatest undoing. Consequently with this policy development and the non-preparedness of government to address holistically the problem of the Niger Delta Region such as marginalization, poverty, infrastructural development, relative deprivation, environmental degradation, the insincerity of local chiefs who served as a mediator between the local people and the government constitute a cog in a wheel of amnesty policy implementation in the Niger Delta Region.

Before late 13<sup>th</sup> president of Nigeria announced the Amnesty Programme, there were over 35 militant youth camps with more than 12,000 militants dispersed around the Niger Delta Region (Ebiede, 2017., Ojo, 2011., Oyewo, 2016). These various camps attracted idle, jobless youths who learn criminal agog and expanded their criminal activity, damaged oil pipelines installations as well as other important state assets. There were increased instances of abductions and hostage taking as this act jeopardised security and safety of lives and property in the Niger Delta Region (Oyewo, 2016). Due to the menace of militants, daily oil output was reduced from 2.5 million barrels to around 700,000 barrels (Obi, 2014b; Osaghae, 2015). The Federal Government announced the amnesty programme as a means and strategy to disarm, demobilise, and reintegrate combatant youth into regular civil life under the direction of the late 13<sup>th</sup> former president of Nigeria (Agbibo, 2015b; Aghedo, 2015; Eke, 2016). According to Agbibo (2013) and Obi (2014), the militant youth camps and their individual leaders disbanded their camps and sanctioned the offer for peace and amnesty. Couple of years after the amnesty programme was introduced, conversely, youth-led violence once more broke out in the Niger Delta Region (Ojatorotu, 2016; Tobor, 2016b) as a result, frustrating the socio- political, and economic efficacy of the amnesty programme (Oluwafemi et al., 2013). Kinetic military operations to hunt for new militant groups encouraged the growth of new militant youth organisations and gave organisations like the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) the confidence to plan acts of violence and criminal activity in the Niger Delta Region (Nnadi & Isung, 2016; Tobor, 2016a; Victor, 2006). Organised youth militants affected the local communities negatively, including the loss of lives and property, increased instability and susceptibility among women and children, and a decrease in daily oil output by 25% (Ikein, 2017; Imhonopi et al., 2016; Nwagboso, 2016). Researchers such as Ascher and Mirovitskaya (2016), Bello and Olukolajo (2016), and Eke (2016)

noted that Nigeria experienced losses as a result of a reduction in the distribution of electricity owing to a lack of fuel and gas sources to produce energy occasioned by the wanton destruction of oil pipe line in addition to the kidnapping of oil expatriate by the new wave of militancy. It is on record that more than fourteen new militant organisations emerged after the expiration of amnesty program in the year 2016.

Oil exploration and exploitation activities have changed the ecosystem of Niger Delta Region over many years, degraded and polluted the environment, and reduced opportunities for indigenous people to make a living. Due to the contamination of water sources and arable farmlands, the traditional vocations of farming and fishing are no longer sustainable. Oil exploration and exploitation activities have also resulted in the loss of farmland and water bodies, which is complicated by the crisscrossing pipelines, canalization, channelization, and dredging by oil companies without providing adequate compensation and sustainable alternative livelihoods to the local population. Amoateng (2020) admitted that the elders and chiefs are playing a mixed role in the Niger Delta issue and that some traditional leaders have exacerbated it *via* patronage politics. Osaghae et al., (2008) observed that business, political, and ethnic leaders are thought to be fighting mostly for "selfish aspirations and gains," such as for profit, contracts, appointments, and individual recognition. Some of these leaders view the conflict as a "business," a means of making money, or an opportunity to profit. They are given counsel, support nonviolent protest and campaign, but are also "responsible for the spread of guns and ammunition" and "employ militants against their perceived opponents." In many ways, they act as "agents and intermediaries of the government and oil firms," and they regularly betray the people and their cause. The theory of relative deprivation was used as a theoretical anchorage. The idea of relative deprivation is derived from Aristotle's teachings on political upheaval and de Tocqueville's essays on the French Revolution (Brush, 1996). Stouffer et al., (1949) clearly established the idea as a hypothesis in their research of US Army attitudes and behaviour. Gurr (1970) expanded on this, laying the groundwork for this study. People have a sense of injustice, according to Davis (1959), when they are unable to get what others have despite believing they are entitled to it. As a result, relative deprivation refers to "actors' perceptions of a discrepancy between their value expectations (the goods and conditions of life to which they believe they are justifiably entitled) and their value capabilities (the amounts of those goods and conditions that they believe they can get and keep)" (Gurr, 1968). This indicates that a population's unjustified loss in social, economic, and political standing, as measured by the weight of perceived value expectations against value capabilities, has the potential to destabilize a society. The semblance of the relative deprivation to the study is that in the face of marginalization, deprivation, neglect, backwardness, and extreme poverty individuals are likely to join militant and insurgency groups to address their concerns.

As a result of former 15<sup>th</sup> President of Nigeria policy direction that was not in consonance with the late 13<sup>th</sup> President of Nigeria policy statement on insurgency and militancy. Precisely in the year 2016, unknown gun men began attacking oil facilities in the Niger Delta region notable among them is the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) which was formed in February 3, 2016. Notable among the attack by NDA include the Trans Forecaddies Pipeline (TFP), which transport oil, water, and associated gas from field in the Western Delta to the 400, 000 bpd forecados oil terminal, the militant group in May 4<sup>th</sup> 2016, struck and blow up the Chevron Value platform located in Warri, Delta State. More so, on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016 NDA carried another attack on chevron well D25 in Abitaye along with gas lines feeding the Kaduna and Warri refineries, even as the group reiterated that unless government addresses its grievances it will continue to hit out facilities. There were also increase on the attacks, killing and kidnapping of oil expatriate for ransom while the military was busy scouting the region for militants affiliated with the NDA on the order of the immediate past 15<sup>th</sup> president of Nigeria and their futile hunt for the militants behind the new wave of attack, on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2016, the Red Egbesu water Lions (REWL), surfaced. This new militant group maintained that that they are corroborating with the

Indigenous People of Biafra and NDA. This militant group gave ultimatum to release Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, the detained leader of IPOB among other demands to the federal governments.

Consequently these attacks and aggressions by new militant groups are not without its consequences. The renewed attacks by the new militant groups increases maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) and also undermine Nigeria's economic stability and development. More so, the interest of foreign investor is compromised as they always come under severe destructive attacks even as their staff is threatened.

Despite the amnesty program implemented by the federal government, which offers youths who are beneficiaries of the program opportunities for vocational training, educational scholarships, and other recompenses (Aghedo, 2013; Ajayi & Adesote, 2013; Gruenbaum, 2010; Omede, 2011), youth violent activities continue in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. Numerous lives are lost as a result of the revival of youth militancy, which also increases crime in Nigeria and transnational crime along the coast of West Africa (Nnadi & Isung, 2016; Ojatorotu & Idowu, 2016; Ojione, 2010; Tobor, 2016a). However, the study raised the following questions: what relationship exists between the insincerity and attitudes of local chiefs and the re-emergence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria; does environmental degradation relates to re-emergence militant groups involvement in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria; and what relationship exists between marginalisation and the re-emergence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria? Also, the following hypotheses guided the study; there is no significant relationship between the insincerity and attitudes of local chiefs and the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region. There is no significant difference between environmental degradation and the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region. Marginalisation does not significantly relate to the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region.

Inconsistencies in amnesty policies as well as program and the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta area has received minimal attention from experts who have studied the Niger Delta conflict. Against these backdrops, the study set to address amnesty policy inconsistency and the re-emergence of militant groups in Niger Delta Region. By examining amnesty policy inconsistency and the re-emergence of militant groups in Niger Delta Region a more robust understanding of the causes of militancy will be laid bare. This comprehensive understanding will help towards building a synergy for sustainable peace and development as well as reduction in crime rate in the Niger Delta Region. Understanding the inconsistent in amnesty policy and the resurgence of militant organisations in the Niger Delta area is the lacuna this study is set to fill.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature. Section 3 analyses the methodology. Section 4 takes care of the results and discussion of findings. Section 5 presents the conclusion and recommendations.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Local chiefs are defined in this study as traditional or communal leaders (kings and chiefs) who are acknowledged by the state to have authority over the local populace and who sit on a throne or stool in line with local traditions and customs and who oftentimes serve as middle man between the people and the government. They are expected to serve as mediators between the community and the government, resolve land disputes, advance cultural values and peace, and offer judicial or intermediary services to those who reside in their traditional lands (Mawere, 2014). The significance of traditional authority in post-colonial Africa has been hotly contested, with most discussions focusing on whether or not traditional leadership and democratic principles can coexist. For instance, the modernist perspective has decried traditional African leadership as being undemocratic and has recommended its transformation to meet the demands of a modern, non-sexist, and non-racial democracy (Mthandeni, 2012). On the other hand, van Kessel and Oomen (1997) noted that traditional African authorities have demonstrated the ability to adjust to changing conditions.

In post-independence African nations that have seen several political regimes, including dictatorships and democracies, traditional leaders are still respected and venerated, indicating their adaptability to societal changes. As Logan (2008) explains, having favourable feelings towards leaders is not incompatible with democracy, and the opposite is also true. Due to their easy access to local communities and the roles they play in managing and resolving crises, traditional African leaders often continue to have broad public support in African states (Logan, 2013).

Local chiefs have participated in the resource-based conflict in the Niger Delta in a number of ways, including serving as mediators between the insurgents and the government (Asuni, 2009; Ikelegbe, 2005). Recognised community leaders have campaigned to advance regional interests, in particular through the Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF). Since 2016, PANDEF has actively participated in a number of discussions with the federal government in an effort to come to an agreement to bring back long-term peace and security in the Niger Delta. In order to achieve long-term peace and security in the Niger Delta Region, the organisation submitted 16 demands in this direction to the federal government in late 2016. PANDEF's 16 demands included getting the military out of the towns that produce oil in the area, giving poorer communities access to development aid, cleaning up polluted areas, and giving young people jobs (Nigerian Tribune, 2016). Contrarily, PANDEF has had difficulty having a significant influence on local politics, as seen by the group's warning to end peace negotiations with the government if its 16 demands are not met by November 1, 2017 (Reuters, 2017; Vanguard, 2017).

Consequently, Van Kessel and Oomen (1997) observed that traditional leaders who connect with patronage networks are easily swayed by political and business elites. Some Niger Delta traditional leaders have principally contributed to the oil conflict by collaborating with powerful government figures and oil company executives for their own benefit (Iwilade, 2017). In this context, Human Rights Watch (1999) noted that money connected to corruption flows in Nigeria to traditional leaders, who are typically local contractors, in addition to the federal and state levels. Amoateng (2020) admitted that the elders and chiefs are playing a mixed role in the Niger Delta issue and that some traditional leaders have exacerbated it *via* patronage politics. According to Osaghae et al., (2008), business, political, and ethnic leaders are thought to be fighting mostly for "selfish aspirations and gains," such as profit, contracts, appointments, and personal recognition. Some of these leaders view the conflict as a "business," a means of making money, or an opportunity to make profit. In many ways, they act as "agents and intermediaries of the government and oil firms," and they regularly betray the people and what they stand for.

Since local leaders tend to prioritise their own selfish interests above regional concerns, thus, the masses in the Niger Delta Region are more dubious of their views. Little wonder, Muri Effiong Mbukpa, the traditional head of the Efuts in Calabar, Cross River State, has described some of the traditional leaders in the Niger Delta as "militants in traditional dress" (The Guardian, 2016).

The patronage system that has led to the rise of insurgencies in the Niger Delta also includes traditional leaders. The official activity of PANDEF in the region has been eclipsed by the favourable interaction between traditional leaders and important players. Agbiboa (2013) also claims that common Niger Delta inhabitants are beginning to identify local elites as being part of the corrupt national elites of Nigeria. Sadly, many of the Niger Delta opposition movement's leaders have "settled" in Abuja, the Nation's capital, and have amassed fortunes to them. This shows a lack of vision and depth in their fight for justice and survival. It is obvious that these leaders require an appraisal of their functions.

Due to the marginalisation of the area, the resurgence has become more challenging. The Persistent neglect, deprivation, and marginalization coupled with environment degradation and uneven distribution of natural resources revenue has been responsible for the resurgence of violence in the ND (Omokhoa, 2015; Osumah, 2013). In this regard, marginalised people are often condemned for

making their living in marginal environments despite the fact that they are likely to have resources needed to overcome restrictions imposed by marginal environments (Omede & Akhanolu, 2013). Obianyo (2007) submits that marginalization depicts neglect, non-involvement or inequality in the distribution of the socio-economic and political resources of the state or indices of development culminating to the re-emergence youths militancy in the region.

Onwunyi and Mba (2019), believes that marginality is an effect of exclusion, is a phenomenon that prevents or limits the enjoyment of certain rights. The authors observed that marginalisation manifests itself in all social relations including politics. In politics the enjoyment of certain right to the people are limited or not granted and when such becomes the case, there is always yearnings and agitation which has been caused by frustration on the part of the deprived section or sections of the country or society.

One of the major issues the programme is dealing with is the lack of an effective implementation strategy (Oluduro & Ouldoro, 2012). Studies have shown that amnesty alone cannot ensure long-term peace in the area without complementary programmes addressing environmental remediation and restoration, community reintegration and healing, alternative livelihood opportunities, and infrastructural development (Agbibo, 2013; Agbibo, 2015a; Aghedo, 2013; Ering et al., 2013; Ubhenin, 2013; Ugor, 2013).

According to Aghedo (2015), the amnesty programme was primarily intended to appease militant youth and provide a stable supply of oil without addressing the underlying reasons for violence in the area. Ering et al., (2013) claimed that, despite its limited success, the amnesty programme cannot ensure long-term peace in the area without addressing other societal problems. Iwilade (2015) argued that without socioeconomic development, initiatives meant to address growing youth militancy and violence could not promote lasting peace in the region. The participation of grassroots stakeholders is necessary for sustainable peace building initiatives (Acey, 2016; Tobor, 2016b).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Design and scope**

This study adopts a survey design. The study opted for the design because it uncovers, interprets, synthesises, and integrates data (Cohen, Mansion, & Marrison, 2000). Survey design allows data to be collected from a sample to discover the relative incidence and interactions among sociological and psychological variables. Survey design is directed towards determining the nature of the situation that exists at the time of investigation. The population of the study comprises people from two out of the nine states: Bayelsa with a total population of 4,112,445 and Delta State with a total population of 1,704,515, giving a total population figure of 5,816,960 (National Population Census, 2006). The reason for the selection of this population is based on the assumption that the states have more experience with militancy activities and have indigenes that are in a better position and knowledgeable enough to supply reliable information on the activities of militancy in the study area.

### **Sampling technique**

The sampling technique adopted in this study is purposive sampling. The technique was adopted because it is very useful in explorative studies of this nature, as it encourages the researcher to go directly to respondents who have useful information that would aid the research work. Here, the research purposefully selects eight (8) local government areas from Bayelsa State and seven (7) local government areas from Delta State for the study. A total of fifteen (15) local government areas were selected. They include Ekeremor, Kolokuma/Opokuma, Yenagoa, Nembe, Ogbia, Sagbama, Brass, and Southern Ijaw from Bayelsa, Aniocha North, Aniocha South, Bomadi, Burutu, Ethiope East, Ethiope West, and Ika North-East from Delta State. One thousand (1000) respondents (mostly affected

communities, especially women, youth, government officials, and other stakeholders) were selected through a purposive sampling procedure from the selected local government areas.

### Sampling size

Ali and Denga (1989) averred that there is no single rule that can be applied to cases regarding the size of a sample, although statistically, a sample should be 40% of the population. Therefore, the sample of this study was made up of one thousand respondents selected from each of the fifteen local government areas in the two states. Sixty seven (67) participants were selected from each of the 15 local government areas purposively selected for the study.

### Data sources

For the purpose of this study, the researcher exploited primary as well as secondary sources of data collection. Kothari (2003) defines a questionnaire as a document that consists of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms. For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire was used.

### Method of data analyses

Before the analyses were carried out, the dependent and independent variable were identified as this enabled the researcher to ascertain the best possible statistical technique to use for the analyses. Consequently, the data collected was analysed using simple linear regression statistics to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

**Hypothesis 1-** There is no significant relationship between the insincerity and attitudes of local chiefs and the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region.

**Table 1: Summary of simple linear regression: insincerity of local chiefs and resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region**

| Model      | Sum of Square | df         | Mean of Square | F                 | R    | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Sig |
|------------|---------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|------|----------|-------------------|-----|
| Regression | 4766.274      | 4766.274   | 30.242         | .172 <sup>a</sup> | .029 | .028     | .000 <sup>a</sup> |     |
| Residual   | 156976.625    | 15697.625  |                |                   |      |          |                   |     |
| Total      | 161742.899    | 161742.899 |                |                   |      |          |                   |     |

a. Predictors: (Constant), insincerity of local chiefs

b. Dependent Variable: resurgence of militant groups

The independent variable in this hypothesis is insincerity of local chiefs while the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region is the dependent variable. Both variables were measured continuously, and simple linear regression statistics were used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 presents the result of data analysis on the contribution of insincerity of local chief to the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region. Results revealed an R-value of .172a, R<sup>2</sup> = .029, adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .028, p = .000a for insincerity of local chief and the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region. The correlation coefficient is a standardised measure of the observed degree of relationship between variables; it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect, and a value of .1 represents a small effect, .3 is a medium effect, and .5 is a large effect.

The R<sup>2</sup> value of .029 implies that 2.9% of total variance is accounted for by the predictor variable (environmental degradation). The regression ANOVA revealed that F (2, 996) 30.242; p.000 is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a linear association (contribution) between the predictor variable (insincerity of local chief) and the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> (.028) shows some shrinkage compared to the unadjusted value (.029), indicating that the model could be generalised to the population.

Data from hypothesis 1 indicated that the inconsistent and misdirection of amnesty policy had a substantial impact on the rebirth of militant organisations in the Niger Delta area. The study's conclusion showed that the amnesty policy is inconsistent and misdirected *ab initio* as it was directed to only existing militant groups without recourse to addressing the problems of poverty, marginalization, and unemployment, and infrastructural development, insincerity of local chiefs and deprivation which is the root cause of formation of militant groups in Niger Delta Region. Evidently, one of the major amnesty policy was neglected which is the initiation and development of projects that have a direct benefit to the local community. One of the respondents drove home the point thus:

The late president had genuine intentions for the Niger Delta's population. We believed it would benefit our region, but the programme's administrators twisted it. Our leaders have deceived us and imprisoned us (In-depth interview respondent ).

Another respondent observed thus; The Amnesty initiative is not being carried out, for the benefit of all parties but rather for their own personal gain. The managers of the programme are very corrupt and cannot be trusted to administer the programme effectively and efficiently. The majority of them are avaricious and self-centred, and the managers and programme administrators mismanage the budget. Corruption is the main issue with the amnesty programme. Nobody in the programme's operations can be trusted; the leaders and managers are enriching themselves at the expense of the ex-militants' pay, there is financial mismanagement, and there is corruption. This programme is not adequately monitored and appraised. The staff members are acting independently ( In-depth Interview respondent)

Field interview with the ex-militants in different study locations during revealed that some ex-militants regret their participation in the Amnesty Programme and observed that it was a complete failure and misdirection. They are unhappy with the project and fear turning to militancy if caution is not exercised (In-depth Interview with ex- militants)

**Hypothesis 2-** There is no significant difference between environmental degradation and the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region.

**Table 2: Summary of simple linear regression: environmental degradation and resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region**

| Model      | Sum of Square | df  | Mean of Square | F      | R                 | R    | Adjusted R | Sig               |
|------------|---------------|-----|----------------|--------|-------------------|------|------------|-------------------|
| Regression | 13519.140     | 2   | 13519.140      | 90.843 | .289 <sup>a</sup> | .084 | .084       | .000 <sup>a</sup> |
| Residual   | 148223.758    | 996 | 148.819        |        |                   |      |            |                   |
| Total      | 161742.899    | 998 |                |        |                   |      |            |                   |

c. Predictors: (Constant), environmental degradation

d. Dependent Variable: resurgence of militant groups



The independent variable in this hypothesis is environmental degradation while the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region is the dependent variable. Both variables were measured continuously, and simple linear regression statistics were used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 presents the result of data analysis on the contribution of environmental degradation to the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region. Results revealed an R-value of .289a,  $R^2 = .084$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .083$ ,  $p = .000a$  for environmental degradation and the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region. The correlation coefficient is a standardised measure of the observed degree of relationship between variables; it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect, and a value of .1 represents a small effect, .3 is a medium effect, and .5 is a large effect.

The  $R^2$  value of .084 implies that 8.4% of total variance is accounted for by the predictor variable (environmental degradation). The regression ANOVA revealed that  $F(2, 996) = 90.843$ ;  $p.000$  is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a linear association (contribution) between the predictor variable (environmental degradation) and the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region. The adjusted  $R^2 (.083)$  shows some shrinkage compared to the unadjusted value (.084), indicating that the model could be generalised to the population.

The analysis of these hypotheses two revealed that environmental degradation relate to the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta Region. The study findings revealed Oil exploration has led to the massive environmental devastation of the Niger Delta Region. The devastation of the Region resulted to the loss of livelihood of the people as their farmlands and rivers for agricultural and fishing activities were destroyed. All stakeholders in the oil business cannot deny their involvement or the part they played in the destruction of the Niger Delta ecosystem. In fact, the blame directly goes to the government, multinational oil companies, militant groups, political leaders and the community chiefs for the destruction of the Niger Delta ecosystem. This study corroborates Bodo and David (2018) findings that Oil spillage causes damages to the environment and suffering to the people as in many instances, lives have been lost. A typical example is in 1998 where more than 100 youths, women and children perished in the Jesse inferno leaving the community highly devastated and improvised; and the Idobo platform spillage that affected five communities leading to ecological damages of flora and fauna (Bodo & David, 2018). Aside from the oil spillages, this study also corroborates previous studies that revealed that flares have negatively affected vegetation growth, animal life and ecological equilibrium in the Niger Delta area (Ana, 2011; Bodo & Gimad, 2020). The heating up of the environment from pollution sites kills vegetation around the heat area. It suppresses the growth of flowering plants and reduces agricultural productivity and wild life biodiversity (Ana, 2011). Obviously, Oil exploitation in the Niger Delta has led to massive land degradation (Bodo & Gimad, 2020). This finding represents one of the root causes of militancy that was not addressed by the amnesty policy even though it was captured in the policy statement of the programme. Hence, the study corroborate the findings of Agbiboa, 2013; Agbiboa, 2015a; Aghedo, 2013; Ering et al., 2013; Ubhenin, 2013 and Ugor, 2013 who observed that amnesty alone cannot ensure long-term peace and security in the Niger Delta Region without complementary programmes geared towards addressing a more teething problems of environmental remediation and restoration, community reintegration and healing, alternative livelihood opportunities, as well as infrastructural development.

**Hypothesis 3-** Marginalisation does not significantly relate to the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region.

**Table 3: Summary of simple linear regression: marginalization and resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region**

| Model | Sum of | df | Mean of | F | R | R | Adjusted<br>R |
|-------|--------|----|---------|---|---|---|---------------|
|-------|--------|----|---------|---|---|---|---------------|

|            | Square     | Square | Square    | Square  | Sig   |
|------------|------------|--------|-----------|---------|---|
| Regression | 15250.279  | 2      | 15250.279 | 103.686 | .307 <sup>a</sup> .094 .093 .000 <sup>a</sup> |
| Residual   | 146492.620 | 996    | 148.819   |         |   |
| Total      | 161742.899 | 998    |           |         |   |

- a. Predictors: (Constant), marginalization
- b. Dependent Variable: resurgence of militant groups

The independent variable in this hypothesis is marginalization while the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region is the dependent variable. Both variables were measured continuously, and simple linear regression statistics were used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. Table 3 presents the result of data analysis on marginalisation to the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region. Results revealed an R-value of .307<sup>a</sup>, R<sup>2</sup> = .094, adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .093, p = .000<sup>a</sup> for marginalisation and resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region. The correlation coefficient is a standardised measure of the observed degree of relationship between variables; it is a commonly used measure of the size of an effect, and a value of .1 represents a small effect, .3 is a medium effect, and .5 is a large effect.

The R<sup>2</sup> value of .094 implies that 9.4% of total variance is accounted for by the predictor variable (marginalisation). The regression ANOVA revealed that F (2, 996) 103.686; p.000 is significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a linear association (contribution) of the predictor variable (marginalisation) and the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta region. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> (.093) shows some shrinkage compared to the unadjusted value (.094), indicating that the model could be generalised to the population.

The findings of Hypothesis 3 revealed that marginalisation significantly relates to the resurgence of militant groups in the Niger Delta Region. It is observed from the study that the Niger Delta has long been a place where minorities and ethnic groups have felt oppressed politically and economically. This finding corroborates the findings of Omokhoa, 2015 and Osumah, 2013 who observed that Persistent neglect, deprivation, and marginalization coupled with environment degradation and uneven distribution of revenue accruing from natural resources has been responsible for the resurgence of violence in the Niger Delta Region. To further corroborate the study findings, Obianyo (2007) submits that marginalization depicts neglect, non-involvement or inequality in the distribution of the socio-economic and political resources of the state or indices of development culminating to the re-emergence of militancy in the Niger Delta Region. This finding echoes the submissions of the theory of relative deprivation which formed the study's theoretical anchorage which argued that relative not absolute deprivation is most likely to lead to pressure for change. In the seeking for change individuals who see themselves as been marginalized are predisposed to militancy and insurgency.

Onwunyi and Mba (2019) noted that marginality is an effect of exclusion, is a phenomenon that prevents or limits the enjoyment of certain rights. The authors observed that, it manifests itself in all social relations including politics. In politics the enjoyment of certain right to the people are limited or not granted and when such becomes the case, there is always yearnings and agitation which has been caused by frustration on the part of the deprived section or sections of the country or society.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Niger Delta area has witnessed a rise in militant organisations since 2016, which has mostly been engineered by policy inconsistency evidenced by how the amnesty programme was primarily

targeted to appease only militants to pave the way for stable supply of oil without addressing the root cause of the problem of militancy in Niger Delta Area. The resurgence of militancy in the region is not without its consequences. It has hindered economic progress and overturned the social order. This study concluded that policy inconsistency which is evidenced by the insincerity of local chiefs, marginalization and environmental degradation and concentration on existing militant groups as well as the neglect of one of the major amnesty policy direction which is the initiation and development of projects that have a direct benefit to the local community led to the re-emergence of militant groups that orchestrated new wave of attack, but reiterate that the authorities concerned should deal with the problem in a more inclusive manner-*via* inclusive development policies.

By examining amnesty policy inconsistency and misdirection, a more robust understanding of the causes of militancy will be laid bare. This comprehensive understanding will help towards building a synergy for sustainable peace and development as well as reduction in crime rate in the Niger Delta Region. The major limitation of this study is that its scope is limited to amnesty policy inconsistency which is evidenced by the insincerity of local chiefs, marginalization, environmental degradation, concentration on the existing militant groups and the re-emergence of militant groups in the Niger Delta Region, specifically in Bayelsa and Delta States. As a result, data collected and analysed in this study is solely on information obtained from primary sources within the study area. Consequently, due to focus on some selected variables caution must be exercised when attempting to generalize the findings of this study outside the study population.

Based on our findings and analyses, the following recommendations were proffered to assist Nigeria address the persistent issue of militancy in the Niger Delta region: Government as a matter urgent concern should design program and policies that will ensure inclusive development of the Niger Delta Region. This can be achieved through development plan which will run in phases. Urgently address the concerns of poverty and unemployment. This can be achieved through prompt release of funds for infrastructural development in the region as this will help stimulate economic activities and job creation to the teeming youths who may wish to join militant groups rather than dissipating more energy in settling existing militant groups. Address the menace of corruption and insincerity which have eclipsed the local chiefs who served as a mediator between the government/oil companies and the people. This can be achieved by reappraising amnesty programmed and activities to check their efficiency and effectiveness. Urgently convene local and regional summit to enable stakeholders and divergent voices the opportunity to chart a road map for diffusing the simmering tension. Deemphasise the idea of settling ex- militants and dissipate more energy in tackling one the major areas of amnesty policy which is the initiation and development of projects that have a direct benefit to the local community. This can assuage the problem of marginalization and deprivation. Moving forward, if Nigeria is to witness any form of decrease in militancy and insurgency as well as the general reduction of crime and criminality in the study area, there must be a political will among politicians and public servants to maintain the policies put in place by their predecessors; except when it becomes indispensable to make adjustments.

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