

AMNESTY PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA: UNDERSTANDING JUSTICE AND EQUITY IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to examine the Nigeria amnesty programme within the context of understanding justice and equity in the Niger Delta Region of the country. Unarguably, this is because the region produces the bulk of mineral wealth of the nation. The study tends to look at the amnesty, a critical analysis of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), and the security interpretation of the Niger Delta crisis. More specifically, the use of secondary data is used for data collection and interpretation which is explanatory in nature. This study will also look at the conceptual clarification as regard the subject matter. The study seek to buttress the fact that the people of the region have long being exposed to socio-economic and ecological problems without little or no compensation that has led to neglect, environmental degradation and, infrastructural decay that brought social injustice without equitable wealth distribution available to all in the region. The study will further examine the exclusion of non Ijaw groups, reasons for dissatisfaction and the measures which justice and equity can be achieved. Therefore, as long as these problems remain unaddressed peace will continue to elude the region without any prejudice to the prospect of the amnesty programme.

Keywords: Amnesty, Equity, Ex-militant, Justice, Programme

Introduction

In recent times, one of the major discourses in Nigeria that have drawn both local and international attention in the 21st century is the Niger Delta crisis. The region has long been at the centre of struggle for a number of issues pertinent to the people of the area as late President Yar' Adua sees it as a matter of urgency for the proclamation of the Amnesty Programme. Thus, the amnesty is more than five years since its commencement and implementation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Consequently, after the post amnesty period, the programme has brought some economic benefits to the Nation. This is as a result of the daily increase in oil production (Aghedo, 2013). However, the Niger Delta now appears rather peaceful as there is relative peace in the oil rich region.

One of the efforts by Late President Yar' Adua administration was his good intention to address the agitation in the region by granting unconditional amnesty to militants hoping the gesture would effectively stop the ranging restiveness in the oil bearing area. The amnesty was announced on the 25th June, 2009 with an expiration of 60 days period which was expected to run from August 6 to October 4, 2009 (*The vanguard newspaper*, 2009). This was done after consultation with the Council of State and other relevant bodies such as governors, stakeholders and leaders of the Niger Delta Region.

The proclamation was an opportunity for ex militants in the region to embrace amnesty and surrender their arms and ammunitions in exchange for presidential pardon. Similarly, the amnesty programme is based on four developments. Firstly, the Legislative Retreat sponsored by the South-South States held in Port Harcourt, August 2008. The communiqué was anchored on the abrogation of some petroleum laws as they affect the region and amnesty for militants, this was presented to the President and Chaired by Justice Karibi-White (Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2014:30).

Secondly, Ikelegbe and Umukoro buttress that series of consultation between government officials, regional and militant leaders in 2007 and 2008, and the efforts of the then Vice President Goodluck Jonathan

between 2007 to 2009 embarked on a peace missions to the militants camps in the region (Camp 5) convinced some of the ex-militants leaders and persuade them on the need for cessation of hostilities and the need to embrace peace. Thirdly, it was the Ledun Mittee Committee among others that recommended amnesty programme for the ex-agitators. Finally, it was the failure of the attempt at military solution by the decisive attack on Gbaramatu Kingdom and the military camps therein in May 2009. More so, scholars like Ojione (2013); Imongan (2015) agreed that there were series of attacks on oil facilities/installations by militants which drastically brought down oil production to 700,000 barrels in 2009 but the post amnesty production level has significantly risen to about 2.6 million barrel per day.

The Federal Government through the Presidential Amnesty Programme is to managed, supervised and implement the amnesty programme. At the end of the 60 days period on October 4, 2009, a total of 20,192 repentant militants surrendered their arms and ammunitions to the Federal Government and accepted the programme. In November 2010, another 6,166 ex-agitators were enlisted into the PAP this constitute the second phase and brought the numbers of persons enlisted to 26,358. More importantly, in 2012 the Federal Government also approved the inclusion of 3,642 transformed ex-agitators who were excluded in both the first and second phases these, bringing the total number of ex-militants to 30,000 that have so far embraced and accepted the amnesty programme proclaimed by the Federal Government (Kuku, 2012; Ovuakporie & Nwabughio, 2014). In line with the Amnesty Proclamation, the Federal Government instituted a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme for as many who has accepted the offer of amnesty on or before the deadline.

The programme has also brought several unpalatable side effects to the nation including wide spread kidnapping, increase in oil theft, high rate of piracy and other violent crimes. This insecurity threats was as a result of the high rate of injustice and inequity (social injustice without equitable wealth distribution available to all) in the absence of peace that characterized the lack of development due to negligence, deprivation as the people are living in abject poverty. Also, there are no good roads, water, electricity, employment opportunities, education and health care systems which everybody should have equal access to in the region.

Objective and Methodology of Study

The aim of this study is to examine the Nigerian amnesty programme within the context of understanding justice and equity in the Niger Delta Region of the country. Also, it will critically look at the DDR programme, security interpretation of the crisis, reasons for dissatisfaction and the measures which justice and equity can be achieved in the region. More specifically, this research will make significant contribution to knowledge and existing literature in other areas and in the entire Niger Delta Region. This research will also be of great importance to the implementation and formulation of policy as scholars, academia and researchers in this field of study will find it useful.

To achieve this aim, the use of secondary data that is qualitative was used for data collection and interpretation which is explanatory in nature. The reason is that it is unique in the collection of data for better interpretation and understanding.

Conceptual Clarification

Amnesty

The word amnesty is a Greek word derived from “amnestia” which is an act of grace by which the supreme power in a state restores those who may have been guilty of any offence against it to the position of innocent persons (Novus homo) and it includes more than pardon, in as much as it obliterates all legal remembrances of the offences. It is also the act of authority by government in which pardon is granted to persons especially for political offences, and release from guilt or penalty of an offence (Ikelegbe & Umokoro 2014:20). Amnesty has also been defined by Ikelegbe (2010) as:

A guarantee of exemption from persecution and pardon from punishment for certain criminal, rebel and insurgent actions hitherto committed against the state. It indemnifies affected persons in terms of safety and protection from punitive actions, retributions and associated losses. An amnesty is usually within a specific time which offenders admits crime and takes advantage of the general pardon (Ikelegbe, 2010:11-12).

Justice

Justice is a Latin word “Latin jus” which means doing things rightful or lawful. It consists in what is lawful and fair, with fairness involving equitable distribution and the correction of what is inequitable (www.iep.utm.edu). The word justice is also tied to peace and it enables the easing of pains, grief and abuses of victims, it denote the absence of conflicts, violence, war and the conditions that warrant, induce and sustain oppression, repression exclusion, deprivation discrimination and corruption which mostly emanate from unjust systems of governance and resource management (Ikelegbe, 2008). Thus, there are four types of justice that people can seek redress when wronged for a better and social co-existence.

i) Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is a simple form of restitution and this is straight forward apology. The first thing a betrayed individual may seek from a betrayer is some form of restitution, (amnesty) apologizing and putting things in the proper manner the way they should be. This may include action and even extra payment to the offended party.

ii) Retributive Justice

Retributive justice often work on the principle of punishment, while the intent may be to dissuade the perpetrators (ex-militants) or others from future wrong doing, the re-offending rate of many who committed various crimes indicate the limited success of this.

iii) Distributive Justice

Distributive justice is also another form of economic justice. It is about fairness in what people receive from good and attention. If the people are not getting their fair share of something, they will seek first what they believe they deserve and as well seek other form of justice.

iv) Procedural Justice

Procedural justice is the principle of fairness that is found in the idea of fair play (as opposed to the fair share of distributive justice). In most cases, if people believe that a fair process was used in deciding what is to be distributed, they may then accept an imbalance in what they receive in comparison to others. Perhaps, if they see both procedural and distributive injustice, they will likely seek restorative and/or retributive justice, (Malan James, 2008).

This is not far from the situation of the people of the Niger Delta Region where they have been neglected, deprived, marginalized as the region remain underdeveloped for more than five decades as their God given wealth is unequally and inequitably distributed. This is as a result that they are not having a fair share of the resources in their domain.

Equity

Equity is derives from the concept of social justice which as a concept is fundamental to sustainable development. Everyone in the community which they live is suppose to have equal access to the resources and opportunities, and that no individuals or groups of people should bear the burden than the rest of the community as a result of government actions. It is therefore, generally agreed that equity implies a need for fairness in the distribution of gains and losses and everyone to an acceptable quality and standard of living (www.uow.edu.au).

Critical Analysis of the DDR Programme

Over the years, DDR has become an integral part of the post-conflict peace consolidation however; there are three main strategies of bringing peace as encapsulated in the DDR framework. These are Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration.

Disarmament

Disarmament is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of both small arms, explosive, lights and heavy weapons from combatants and they are most often from civilian population (Egbeme, 2015).

This process is majorly conducted by military personnel, the Nigerian Army (NA). Prior to the ex-militants being enlisted into the post-amnesty programme, large caches of arms and ammunitions were stored in 82 Division of the Nigerian Army in Enugu State in compliance with the DDR code as spelt out by the United Nations (*Nigeriamasterweb.com*).

There are over 2,500 sophisticated guns and 300,000 rounds of ammunitions lay down by 15,000 ex-agitators (Udegbumam, 2013). The arms surrendered also include a total number of 39,880 assorted arms and ammunitions. A breakdown include 482 automatic arms, 20,132 ammunitions, 295 magazines and 18,971 locally made guns which were recovered from ex-militants in Delta and Bayelsa State. Similarly, 82,406 ammunitions were recovered from Rivers State, 9,748 from Cross River, 9,725 from Ondo, 959 from Akwa Ibom and 722 from Edo State (Uzodinma, 2013).

On the contrary, the arms and ammunitions surrendered by ex-militants are certainly low compared with the ones lay down at the screening centres. Despite these, there were series of attacks carried out during the disarmament exercise. According to Operation Pulo Shied, active militants' camps are still being operated in the creeks where weapons such as Medium Machine Gun, AK47, light machine gun and automatic rifle were recovered. Also, included were 1 single barreled gun, 1 fabrique national, SMI 7.6mm Nato special ammunition, 11 improvised explosive devices and G3 rifle amongst others (Odiegwu, 2015). The ex-agitators only surrendered few arms and ammunitions and the question is what happened to the remaining arms left? So long as the remaining arms are still at large there is the likelihood that the oil rich region remains unsafe and at risk of relapsing into violent conflict (Oluduro & Olubisi, 2012:53).

Demobilization

The demobilization process proceeds reintegration and this is the second components of the DDR programme. The process involved conducting biometrics for ex-militants who were in designated camps for the Programme. The amnesty made available monthly stipends for each agitator. During the process, Aluu camp was the designated centre for the disarmament which could only accommodate not more than 800 out of an estimated 7000 ex-militants, (Ikelegbe, 2010). There was also shortage of bed space and facilities for accommodation that were only made for few due to the poor organization and supervision. Most of the centre for rehabilitation were empty and not in use simply because of the accommodation system.

The number of ex-militants demobilized and registered (males and females) according to their various States includes Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, Rivers and the NNDC. They are a total number of 20,192 ex-militants Rivers State recorded the highest number of ex-militants with 6,997 and Cross River State the lowest with 160 demobilized and registered ex-militants (Adebowale, 2010). **See Table 1 at appendix;** Demobilized ex-militants Edo and Delta state did not record any female ex-militant respectively.

The demobilization camp for disarm ex-militants was the Orubu camp where ex-militants had non-violence transformational training and re-integration programme. Security in the camp was tight as security agents numbering about 200 with 13 Amphibious Brigade, 120 Soldiers, 60 mobile policemen, 20 conventional policemen and 10 Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). The process involves thorough screening of ex-militants by security personnel before they go in to make sure that no one enters the camp with arms and ammunition and, to ensure a smooth demobilization process during this period.

Subsequently, the camp is not devoid of protest and agitation registered in different quarters including Benin/Port Harcourt ranging from poor facilities and accommodation, poor conditions of living, unpaid stipends and allowances, and neglect of ineffective rehabilitation programmes amongst others. The process did little to remobilize them as ex-militants were sent back after weeks to be reintegrated into the larger society. The Amnesty has no doubt made significant impact and success in the lives of the ex-militants in the Niger Delta. It has though exposed them in various skills acquisition and developmental programme at home and abroad. It has also helped to reduce the vandalization of oil facilities. The challenge perhaps is when the youths are back home will they have the zeal and enthusiasm to practice what they have learnt?

Therefore, the Federal Government inability to set up industries and factories pose great challenges because some of the skilled ex-militants will be self employed while most trainees on graduation from skills acquisition have/will not been able to secure employment. As a matter of fact, they need a robust starter pack from the government but will the government who has sponsored these ex-agitators abroad for various training programme be able to provide them with money to start up their businesses?

There is also the challenge of constant electricity supply in Nigeria. The ex-agitators who might have acquired various skills in welding/fabrication and other entrepreneurial development skills need an enable environment and stable power supply for their businesses to thrive. In fact, Nigeria power supply over the years till date has been embarrassing and humiliating. The Nation is bedeviled with poor electricity supply as the Federal Government has spent over \$30 billion on power yet, Nigerians still live in darkness, (*The vanguard newspaper, 2015*). This however, has a direct impact on the production of goods and services as well as in the rising cost of living.

Nigeria as a rich nation cannot boast of constant electricity supply in spite of billions of dollars being realized from the sale of crude oil. More so, considering many countries in Africa with little resources have done better. For example, Egypt in spite of all her challenges in the past few years can generate over 70,000 Mega Watt (M W) of power and South Africa generates more than 40,000 MW of electricity, while Nigeria still struggles to generate and produces 4,000 MW (Onwuemenyi, 2012). Presently, she has a capacity of almost 10,000 MW which most developed and developing nation's have longed solved (*The punch newspaper, 2015*).

Reintegration

The reintegration and reinsertion phase by PAP was important to train ex-agitators having gone through transformational training. These training include vocational skills, entrepreneurial training and development, technical capabilities, formal educational and an opportunity for them to be employed as many ex-militants were offered to work as change agents in a larger community.

More importantly, the programme is in two phases. The first phase is the rehabilitation programme as ex-militants were over 19,000 who were trained in Obubra Camp that lasted for about 3 to 18 months. They taught them violent conflict and non-violent method and, they were also taught conflict management as a tool for peace with the aid of a councilor.

In the light of the above, the programme gave opportunity to those who have the interest of going back to school to do so. It has helped about 711 ex-militants to pursue careers in various universities/colleges around the world. While 2,922 delegates graduated from offshore centres, 5,145 had already completed vocational training within the shores of the country ranging from welding, boat building, electrical installation, information communication technology (ICT), sea fairing, safety management, piloting, oil drilling and marine related courses, carpentry and ocean diving (Osah & Amakihe, 2012). The various countries where ex-militants were trained in vocational and other programmes include Ghana, Israel, Russia, Ukraine, Ukraine, Philippines, India, Sri-Lanka, South Africa, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirate (UAE) and amongst others. The programme also includes helping ex-militants, granting them capital and other necessary assistance to establish them into sustainable livelihood. Akinwale (2010), this is done in conjunction with the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Development Association of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and the National

Directorate of Employment (NDE). **See Table II at appendix**; Reintegration report of ex-militants in the amnesty programme.

With the efforts of the PAP, no fewer than 834 were placed and enrolled in about 100 higher institutions in Nigeria and abroad. In the 2013 academic session, 459 ex-militants were also in some private universities across the country (www.leadershipn.com). In 2013, more than 2,000 ex-agitators were successfully enrolled in vocational training centres within and outside the country as part of the reintegration and rehabilitation process (www.vanguard.com).

Egbeme (2015) assert that in 2014, no fewer than 15,171 recipients graduated from vocational schools, while 221 graduated from 40 universities at graduate and post-graduate levels across Europe and Nigeria. Through the PAP 3,482 benefitted through the programme in about 77 training centres in Nigeria while those abroad includes a total number of 5,217 ex-militants.

The second phase includes counseling to aid ex-militants psychologically where they decided on the kind of vocation or educational training they would embark on (Udegbunam, 2013). The programme also includes helping ex-militants, granting them capital and other necessary assistance. It is also necessary to know that a couple of ex-militants are still being trained at home and abroad.

Security Interpretation of the Niger Delta Crises

The security of lives and property is the sole responsibility of the government hence, where the government fails it then become problematic whereas, the insensitivity of the government and the Multinational Oil Company (MNC) has led to series of agitation and security challenges in the region.

Hazen and Horner (2007) are of the opinion that the heart of the Niger Delta crises is the struggle for access to resources and control over wealth that has led to injustice and inequitable distribution of benefits that gave rise to security threat in the region. Thus, the question is whose security? Mukoro and Egbadju (2010:100) attempt to answer this question that the crises in the region have been that of oil-related issues. It has elicited serious national security challenges as it concerns the oil crises in the region. This issue of insecurity in the Niger Delta as it concerns the oil crises is problematic. The issue of security in the Niger Delta in relation to oil exploration and exploitation on the one hand, and the reactions of irate youths of the oil bearing communities on the other hand. Put together, they constitute security challenges.

The FG in protecting the oil wealth which is the lifeblood of the Nigerian economy is regarded as a matter of national interest/security which those in the Niger Delta (especially militant youths led the vanguard of revolt and rebellion) sees the environmental degradation and pollution resorting from exploitation and exploration of oil as security threat to health (life) and means of livelihood to secure the basic needs (food, water, shelter) for the people. These divergent interests have therefore brought security contradiction which serve as threat to life itself.

According to Hough (2004:7) in Ullman, given the consideration to this fact he maintained that a threat to security arises when: An action of events that threatens drastically over a relatively brief span of time to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state or that threatens significantly to narrow the range of policy choice available to government of a state, or to private, non governmental entities (persons, groups, corporations) within a state.

The security contradictions have posed different dimension (traditional state centre security and non-traditional human security) to the meaning of security as it concern the Niger Delta crises. The stand of the FG, it agents and allies has captured state-centric traditional security which equate security with peace and prevention of conflict by military means like deterrence policies and no-offensive defence through public policy and law to continually protect the existence of the state.

It is noteworthy that for the people of Niger Delta, it is human security (non-traditional) interpretation that views security from the perspective of human well-being and includes broad issues of human concern, such as the security from poverty, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and unemployment which add to injury of human existence.

As Uzodike and Isike (2009:2) put it, it is the clash of the security interpretation of the Federal Government, using the security operatives the Joint Task Force (JTF), in pursuing state centric interpretation

of security against the Niger Delta people pursuing the human security interpretation that has brought the Niger Delta crises. With the lingering violent conflict over the ownership and control of oil resources, the FG has on its own decided to thrust the amnesty deal to the Niger Delta Militants who took up arms to challenge the Federal Government legitimacy as a road map to ending the injustice and inequity in the region.

With series of attacks on oil infrastructure by militants, it became glaring to the Nigerian Government that oil production has drastically reduced because of the militants activities on oil installations. To save the scenario, the Federal Government decided to embark on a non violent confrontation and offered an unconditional amnesty package to the militants so that there would be peace and sustainable development in the region.

The amnesty package as it is well known gave ex-militants the ample opportunity to surrender their arms and ammunitions, and willingly sign the amnesty deal. Besides, the proclamation was welcomed by a large segment of the people, groups, civil society and the international community that pledges its support for the programme. However, there is relative peace but securing peace in the region was not an easy task as the FG thought the programme will put an end to the neglect, injustice and inequity (distribution of wealth) in the region. President Musa Yar'Adua in his statement put the amnesty declaration this way:

The offer of amnesty is predicated on the willingness and readiness of the militants to give up all illegal arms in their possession, completely renounce militancy in all its ramifications unconditionally, and depose to an undertaking to this effect. It is my fervent hope that all militants in the Niger Delta will take advantage of this amnesty and come out to join in the quest for the transformation of our dear nation, (Aghedo, 2013:273).

In the works of Adeyemo and Olu- Adeyemi (2010:45) citing Ajumobi questioned the code and principle guiding the FG amnesty deal when he stated that:

Political amnesty is usually a product of two contexts. The first is a negotiated settlement in which two warring parties have arrived at a dead-end in their conflict, and decide to settle their difference politically. The second context is one of a victor's amnesty in which a party overwhelm the other, claims victory and decided to be magnanimous in victory by offering amnesty to some or all of the combatants on the defeated side.

In line with this statement, Adejumbi, Adeyemo and Olu-Adeyemi (2010:45) further expressed concern that:

There is neither a negotiate settlement in the Niger Delta or a victor's benevolence of any kind. There is no peace truce and the Federal Government has not won the military battle in the creeks in spite of its heavy artillery and weaponry. Why then offer amnesty in a vacuum?

From the last statement, it is obvious that what the Federal Government has referred to amnesty programme was indeed faulty and does not constitute amnesty as the basic condition of amnesty have not been met for the simple reason of not resolving the root causes of the Niger Delta crises by interacting with those whose interest have been affected in the violent conflicts by reaching a political settlement.

The exclusion of MEND from the amnesty deal and the increasing number of acclaimed militants still attacking oil facilities after the deadline of the amnesty shows that what transpired was virtually a vacuum amnesty. This is so because there is no peace deal or formal agreement between the FG on the one hand and the people of the community and the ex-militants on the other hand rather, the FG made consultations with the governors, regional and traditional leaders on the Niger Delta crises. In fact, the manner in which the amnesty was offered carried the semblance of a threat to militants to surrender their arms and ammunition by imposing a deadline on them without really winning and convincing the minds of the militants.

Another critical elements of the amnesty aside the sufficient and necessary conditions of granting amnesty, is the violation process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process and the way it is being carried out (poor management/leadership) by the amnesty managers (IRIN news, 2010).

The Exclusion of Non Ijaw Groups

The PAP is now seen as narrow by a large section of the people that is regarded by many as an Ijaw programme or affairs. The payment for reinsertion and economic empowerment for 30,000 ex-combatants is likened to be a settlement for the Ijaw youths. After some time, other tribes like the Urhobo and Itsekiri youths and others were incorporated and were part of the Ijaw led struggle (Ikelegbe & Umukoro, 2014).

It is seen from this perspective that the leadership and beneficiaries of the programme are pro Ijaw which favour the Ijaw and excluded other ethnic nationalities in the region. Thus, however the amnesty and the DDR mainly accommodated youths from Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers and Ondo States. While the non Ijaw groups like those from Edo, Akwa Ibom Cross River to mention but a few agitated for inclusion in the activities of the amnesty programme in the areas of appointment and development. For example in April, 2012 there was demonstration by aggrieved youths in the amnesty programme over neglect of the oil communities in Akwa Ibom (*Saharareporters.com*). The question to answer is if other ethnic nationalities are not incorporated in the scheme of things as it is in the aforementioned scenario or situation, will there be justice and equity in the equitable sharing and distribution of wealth in the Niger delta region?

Reasons for Dissatisfaction of the Amnesty Programme

There are several reason why the ex-agitators are dissatisfied with the amnesty programme among them are;

- Lack of job opportunity
- Lack of inclusion of ex militants
- Unemployment remains extensive even among reintegrated ex-militant
- Lack of attention to the development of the region
- Lack of prompt monthly stipends
- Payment of stipends through ex-generals/war lords
- Exclusion of female associates/members
- Exclusion of some militants groups

Measures which justice and equity can be achieved in the Niger Delta Region

There are measures which justice and equity can be achieved in the Niger Delta Region. Thus, some of the measures amongst others are the following.

Resources control/Management of the resources

The agitation for resources control in Niger Delta Region is one of the major issues that has brought heated argument in Nigeria for decades. Among the agitation is that government should increase the derivation to about 50 per cent in order to avoid resources control struggle as the region is the major producer of the nation's mineral wealth. As a matter of fact, the only way justice and stability can be achieved is when the people of the community can take part, and be in control in the management of their God given wealth within their domain as it is the goose that lay the golden eggs.

Amnesty to an extent has not seemed to be the solution to the Niger delta problems. It was supposed to be a permanent solution to the Niger delta people but now, it has not been able to solve the poverty, environmental degradation and the youth unemployment in the region. It is a short term programme to security and peace (relative peace) because it has not addressed problems at hand.

The programme does not accommodate the true majority that suffers the most whereby creating a form of injustice where the resources are not equitable to all. The post amnesty need of the people has not

been met and some of the promises made by the FG during consultation has not been redeemed. However, the resolution to the crises goes beyond amnesty programme the substantive solution is for the FG to create employment and develop the region. Amnesty has only benefitted a few, despite this, the solution still remain resources control and true federalism.

Compensation of victims of the Niger Delta struggle

Compensation of victims of the Niger Delta struggle will ensure justice, stability and equity in the region. However, this was done without considering the victims of militancy and hostage taking (Akinwale, 2010). Mothers who have lost children, children who had lost fathers, families that have lost homes and persons who have been displaced by the conflict should be compensated. This should be done otherwise it will send a wrong signal to others that crime/violent pays and may serve as a driving force for others who want to carry arms.

Development of the region

In any given society, programmes geared towards or that is focusing on development is central to ensuring peace. To achieve development, the importance of infrastructural development is a priority. Among these are; connectivity through telecommunication, quality roads, water and sanitation, and energy are basic requirement for development.

The Niger Delta is unarguably the richest and most endowed region in Nigeria. In fact, it produces the vast majority of the oil and gas wealth of the country. Its also accounts for 95 per cent of the foreign exchange earnings, about 83 per cent of the Federal Government revenue (Omuta, 2014). Yet, the Niger Delta people remain poor, unemployed and the region remain underdeveloped. Its important that the government should holistically develop the region because it is one of the major factors that gave rise to the Niger Delta conflict.

Job opportunity/Employment grant

The unemployment rate in the Niger Delta Region is alarming. According to a report, about 1.8 million fresh graduates, yearly enter into the ever swirling labor market (Agambi, 2015). A permanent solution to these problems is included in several components of the amnesty programmes such as vocational training, job for the unskilled, economic empowerment and employment grant for the restive youth as these will eventually address the problem of militancy in the region. Therefore, this is a way whereby justice and equity can be achieved in the region.

Environmental Remediation programme

Environmental quality and it sustainability of resources is fundamental to the overall wellbeing and development of the Niger Delta people. This is attributed to the fact that more than 70 per cent of the inhabitants depend on the natural environment for survival. The environment serves as a source for agriculture, forest products and fishing. For example, the Bonga oil spill that affected several communities where fishing is the main occupation in the region as Shell Nigerian Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCO) were ask to pay \$11.5 billion for compensation till date the communities is yet to be compensated (*The nation newspaper, 2014*). This was regarded as one of the worst oil spill in the country.

According to CPED (2011), the rivers and creeks are used for bathing, washing and it is a major source for drinking has been polluted with oil spillages. The people do not have safe drinking water as ponds and farmland has been destroyed. This has impacted negatively on human health and environment. These requests call for the immediate attention of the government, Multinationals Oil Companies or land remediation authority to deal with the removal of pollution or contaminants such as soil, groundwater,

sediment, or surface water etc (*Wikipedia.org*). This will help to eliminate environmental injustice, inequity and deprivation to the people/inhabitants of the region.

Human Capacity Building

These are basic conditions that allow citizen a good quality of life that sustain the human and collective spirit. Human capacity building that has to do with building up of human capabilities through investment in the education, health, and skills of the people as prime movers of change, and with full utilization of those human capabilities. The FG should periodically organize skill acquisition workshops, capacity-building seminars for indigenes of the region (Akpabio, 2009). An effective programme that will protect, strengthen the vulnerable to reach the remote and inaccessible areas that will bring about stability in the region.

Continuation of the Amnesty Programme

The amnesty has helped the Niger Delta youths in no small measure. A continuation of the programme has helped to curb youth restiveness in the region while terminating the programme may pose a great challenge to the nation as there may be a relapse of the conflict. The programme has helped to secure jobs for the unemployed graduates. More so, it has helped to pay monthly stipends, engage ex-agitators in vocational training/skills acquisition and entrepreneurial development. Consequently, it has helped to reduce the violation and vandalization of oil facilities and, brought relative peace in the region which has boosted crude oil production in the country (Oyedongha & Ewepu, 2015).

Conclusion

Today, the Niger Delta represents one of the worst degraded and improvised environments for over five decades. This paper seeks to examine the Nigerian amnesty programme within the context of understanding justice and equity in the Niger Delta Region of the country. It further looked at the amnesty and the security interpretation of the crisis. The period before the post-amnesty in the region there was total neglect, environmental degradation and infrastructural decay without little or no compensation. Thus, the people have long being exposed to socio-economic, political and ecological problems (social injustice without equitable wealth distribution available to all). The paper further examines the exclusion of non ijaw groups, reasons for dissatisfaction and measures which justice and equity can be achieved. It is on this note that this paper submits that the crises will prevail if there is no justice and equity to the people in the region, and may even degenerate the more, until the organic context which precipitates and sustains it is adequately addressed. As long as these remain unaddressed, peace will continue to elude the region without any prejudice to the prospect of the amnesty programme.

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APPENDIX I

Table I. Numbers of Ex-militants demobilized and registered (males and females) in the Niger Delta States.

S/N	States	No. of Males	No. of Females	No. of Ex-militants Registered
1.	Akwa Ibom	155	8	163
2.	Bayelsa	6,900	61	6,961
3.	Cross River	159	1	160
4.	Delta	3,361	-	3,361
5.	Edo	450	-	450
6.	Imo	297	3	300
7.	Ondo	1,198	2	1200
8.	Rivers	6,958	39	6,997
9.	NDDC	571	19	600
	Total	20,049	133	20,192

Source: Adebowale, Y. (2010), Reinventing ex-militants. <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/reinventing-ex-militants/80616>/Accessed 30/11/2015.

APPENDIX II

Table II. Reintegration Report of ex-militants in the amnesty programme

Graduated ex-militants from skill acquisition	No. of ex-militants	Vocational Training	Numbers	Educational Training Programme	Numbers
On shore & off shore	2,922	Off shore	1,431	Off shore	711
Welding /Fabrication	2,350	On shore	1,341	On shore	466
Entrepreneur	2,709	-	-	Remedial courses	90
Pipe fitting	75	-	-	-	-
Carpentry & plumbing	140	-	-	-	-
Oil drilling & marine related course	823	-	-	-	-
Electrical installation	189	-	-	-	-
Information communication technology (ICT)	225	-	-	-	-
Crane duty operation	912	-	-	-	-
Boat building	149	-	-	-	-
Others	440	-	-	-	-
Total	8,067	-	2,772	-	1,267

Source: Osah, G. & Amakihe, B. (2014) IOSR Journal of Economics and Finance. www.iosrjournal.org. Accessed 25/11/2015