



SUSTAINABILITY OF AMNESTY ENTREPRENEUR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: TEMPORAL SALVATION FOR POVERTY REDUCTION IN THE NIGER DELTA

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Abstract: *As the Nigerian government on January 13th, 2018 has started warning of her intention to end the Presidential Amnesty programme, this study sees it as a time bomb ready to explode. However, this study seeks to unravel the relevance of sustaining the amnesty entrepreneurial development programme introduced by the Nigerian state in 2009 as a silver bullet in reducing poverty in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Questionnaires were used to elucidate data from 855 respondents (171 each from the 5 selected states in the Niger Delta region). Analysis revealed that though the amnesty policy was introduced top-down leading to inundation of criticism, but empirical evidence from the field work revealed that the grassroots have felt the positive impacts, hence, the need to sustain the Amnesty programme. Therefore, the study recommends for the sustenance of the programme as a temporal alternative measure to address underdevelopment and poverty which are among the root causes of the agitation in the region.*

Keywords: *Sustainability, Amnesty Entrepreneur, Poverty Reduction, Niger Delta, Nigeria.*

Introduction

The oil-rich Niger Delta has been the mainstay of Nigerian's economy and the hub of conflict for the past 40 years. It is the third largest wetland in the world. Its oil deposit has attracted several oil and gas Multinationals Corporation (MNOCs) such as Shell, Mobil, Chevron, etc, whose extraction activities have adversely polluted the region's environment and destroyed the local livelihood. The above view was attested to by Agalamanyi (2008, p.247) who noted that "the Niger Delta region has been the major victims of ecological hazards, environmental pollution and soil degradation resulting from oil spillage and gas burning. Their crops and fishes are destroyed, while agricultural lands and fishing waters are rendered unproductive". In fact, over 65% of the people depend on the natural environment –living and non-living for their livelihood (Omoweh, 2005; Onakuse & Eramon 2007; Emuedo & Emuedo, 2013). This plagued the

region into simmering grievances that escalated into a full blown agitation against the Nigerian state and oil multinationals with deadly militants blowing oil pipelines, hostage taking, massacre and assassinations of security agencies.

However, different palliative measures have been proposed and put forward by Nigerian successive administrations as alternative to the regions' collapse economy. For instance, the Federal government established the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) in 1960 to manage the developmental challenges of the region; the Presidential Task Force was also established in 1980 and allocated with 1.5% from the Federal accounts to address the development of the region; the military government of General Babangida by Decree No. 23 of that year, established also the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) and committed 30% of the oil revenues to the commission. Also, on December 21,



2000, the former President Obasanjo, as well, inaugurated the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to also address the region's challenges. Furthermore, former President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua also created the Niger Delta Ministry headed by a technocrat, Obong Ekaette, from Akwa-Ibom State to as well address the region's challenges, and finally, the Amnesty Programme Offer to the militants in the Niger Delta attached to the office of the president. Nevertheless, this paper is strictly interested in the Amnesty programme offer by the Nigerian state to the militants in the Niger Delta region in 2009 because of its laudable policy in human capability development through entrepreneur development, which is gradually addressing some of the agitations in the region, especially poverty.

The amnesty offer granted by the former President Yar'Adua in 2009 between August 4th and October 4th 2009, especially the entrepreneur development efforts, has somehow brought a temporary stability in the region as most of the ex-militants have embraced entrepreneur training and becoming self-employed in a viable SMEs. It is therefore the argument of this paper that if Amnesty policy is sustained through prioritization of entrepreneur development programmes, poverty will be reduced drastically, SMEs will grow, youths will be self-employed with the consequent reduction of unemployment in the region. This will go a long way in addressing some of the root causes of agitations in the region which is underdevelopment and poverty.

However, there is a dearth of literature on this research work. Most of the available literature (Akinwale, 2010; Ushie, 2013; Oluduro, 2012; Oluwatoyin, 2011; Ibaba, 2011; Olubayo and Olubisi, 2012; Nwozor, 2010), failed to examine, analyze and evaluate sustainability of Amnesty entrepreneur development within the context of the recent (January 2018) warning by Nigerian government to end Amnesty. This shows that there is a gap in literature. Therefore, sustainability of amnesty *vis-à-vis* poverty

reduction were not adequately captured by the extant literature, hence the need for this research.

It is against this background that this study seeks to contribute to the literature on the sustainability of amnesty entrepreneur development *vis-à-vis* poverty reduction in the Niger Delta region in seven sections: the first is the introduction, followed by the second and third sections which examine the conceptual and theoretical framework. The fourth examines overview of amnesty entrepreneur development in the Niger Delta region. The fifth and sixth sections look at the methodology, results and discussion of the study. The final section concludes.

Conceptualizing Entrepreneurship and Development

There is lack of consensus among scholars on the definition and meaning of the word entrepreneur. This makes it imperative for researchers to provide a clear and distinct statement on the precise meaning of entrepreneurship when used. Ige (2007) defines entrepreneurship as a predisposition towards the establishment and operation of business ventures by any one or group of persons, including government for the sake of making profit or social surplus in order to accumulate wealth, social or real. Similarly, Okpara (2008) defines an entrepreneur as a human builder, who can convert a stumbling block into a stepping stone. To an entrepreneur, there is no mountain that is unmovable. He is a creative and aggressive innovator who promotes the necessary relationships required for the new business to come into existence. He is a risk bearer, he starts a business and brings about improvement on the methods of doing things and in that process generates employment opportunities for the teeming population. In the same vein, Ogbor (2009) sees entrepreneurship as a purposeful and an organized search for change conducted after a systematic analysis of opportunities in the environment. Also, Ogbor stresses that entrepreneurship entails a philosophy precisely, because it is the way one thinks, one acts and therefore



it can exist in many structures, be it business or government or in the field of education, science and technology or poverty alleviation. Entrepreneur historically has altered the direction of national economies, industries or markets, the importance of entrepreneurship and innovation to any economy is like that of entrepreneurship in any community. Entrepreneurial activity and the resultant financial gain are always of benefits to a country, Ogbor (2009).

However, for the purpose of this study, the definition of entrepreneur by Soyibo (2006) will be adopted for this study. According to him, entrepreneurship can be defined as the process of identifying an opportunity related to needs, satisfaction and converting it to a thing (product or service) of value.

On the other hand, there is no generally acceptable definition of development. This is because all the efforts to arrive at a concise and generally acceptable definition have seldom been distorted by individual prejudice and ideological proclivities (Ajih and Okolie, 2008). Todaro and Smith (2003) in Nwanegbo (2006) define development as the capacity of a nation's economy, which initial condition had been more or less static overtime, begins to generate and sustain annual increase in Gross National Product (GNP) at the rate of 5% -7% or more and income per capital benefit of which will invariably extend to all segment of the society. Similarly, Goulet (1977, p. xiii) holds that a country is developed, when it can be sustained, by its own effort and after having first reached a per capital GNP (Gross National Product) level of \$500 (for some observers) or \$1000 (for others), an annual rate of growth ranging from 5% to 7%. According to these criteria, certain countries are highly developed, while those on the lowest rungs of the ladder are either underdeveloped or developed. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study, we are going to adopt the definition of development by Goulet (1977, p. xiii) which is more prevalent today and commonly used by most social scientists. This

definition was summarized at the start of the United Nations' First Development Decade in U Thant's Phrase, "development = economic growth + social change". The trouble with this definition is that it either says too much or says too little since not any kind of growth and change may benefit the masses. Therefore, deducing from the above definitions of development, it follows that entrepreneur development is the expansion of the small medium enterprises (SMEs) of a firm over a given period.

Characteristics of an Entrepreneur

According to Mustapha (2013), some of the core characteristics of an entrepreneur include:

1. Creativity: This is the spark that drives the development of new products or services or ways to do business. It is the push for innovation and improvement. It is continuous learning, questioning and thinking outside of prescribed formulas.
2. Dedication: This is what motivates the entrepreneur to work hard, 12 hours a day or more, even seven days a week, especially in the beginning, to get the endeavour off the ground. Planning and ideas must be joined by hard work to succeed. Dedication makes it happens.
3. Determination: Is the extremely strong desire to achieve success. It includes persistence and the ability to bounce back after rough times. It persuades the entrepreneur to put extra effort. For the true entrepreneur, money is not the motivation. Success is the motivator; money is the reward.
4. Flexibility: Is the ability to move quickly in response to changing market needs. It is being true to a dream while also being mindful of market realities. A story is told about an entrepreneur who started a provision store, but customers wanted a barbing saloon as well. Rather than risking the loss of these customers, the entrepreneur modified his vision to accommodate these needs.



5. Leadership: Is the ability to create rules and set goals. It is the capacity to follow through to see that rules are followed and goals are accomplished.
6. Passion: Is what gets entrepreneurs started and keeps them there. It gives entrepreneurs the ability to convince others to believe in their vision. It can't substitute for planning, but it will help them to stay focused and to get others to look at their plans.
7. Self Confidence: This comes from thorough planning, which reduces uncertainty and the level of risk. It also comes from expertise. Self confidence gives the entrepreneur the ability to listen without being easily swayed or intimidated.
8. Smartness: Consists of some sense joined with knowledge or experience in a related business or endeavour. The former gives person good instincts, the later; expertise. Many people have smarts they don't recognize. A person who successfully keeps a household on a budget has organizational and financial skills. Education and life experiences all contribute to smartness.

Theorizing Economic, Anthropology and Entrepreneurship Theories

Entrepreneurship theories remain very important for the development and growth of entrepreneurs in Small and Larger firms in the world. Economic, psychology, sociology, anthropology and opportunity-based models are used to analyse or describe sustainability of Amnesty entrepreneurship development *vis-à-vis* reduction of poverty in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. These theories or models are often used in management and social science to explain and analyse ways to enhance entrepreneurship development. Let us examine them one by one.

Economic Entrepreneurship Theories

We have three theories under economic theories- classical, neo-classical and Austrian Market

Process (AMP) theories. These theories explore different economic factors that will enhance entrepreneurial behaviour for greater business achievement. These theories generally postulate that entrepreneur behave rationally toward some economic forces (business opportunities resources etc) that result to change in environment in the form of enterprise. They argue that changes either in the environment or organization are a transformation that can occurs as a result of the reaction of some economic forces. The above view was attested to by Kirzner (1999) who stated that economic theories see competition as a motivating factor for the acquisition of entrepreneurial skill. These economic entrepreneurship theories have a very deep link in the classical, neo-classical and the Austrian Market Process (AMP) theories. While the classical theory movement describe the directing role of the entrepreneur in the context of production and distribution of goods in a competitive market place (Say, 1803), Neo-classical theory emerged from the criticisms of the classical model and indicated that economic phenomena could be relegated to instances of pure exchange, reflect an optimal ratio, and transpire in an economic system that was basically closed (Simpeh ,2011,p.1). The Austrian Market Process (AMP) came up as a result of criticism of Neo-classical movement. The AMP model was influenced by Joseph Alois Schumpeter (1934) who describes entrepreneurship as a driver of market-based systems. In other words, an important function of an enterprise was to create something new which resulted in processes that served as impulses for the motion of market economy.

Psychological Entrepreneurship theories

These theories under psychological entrepreneurship are Personality Traits theory, Locus Control and Need for Achievement theory .These theories simply enumerate a set of characteristics that describe the entity known as the entrepreneur or rather emphasize the personal characteristics that define entrepreneurship. While Personality Traits theory,



according to Coon (2004), is defined as a stable qualities that a person shows in most situation, that is, those inborn qualities or potential of the individual that naturally make him an entrepreneur (Simpeh 2011, p. 3), the Locus of control, according to Rother (1966), refers to an individual's perception about the underlying main causes of events in his/her life. In other words, a locus of control orientation is a belief about whether the outcomes of our actions are contingent on what we do (internal control orientation) or on events outside our personal control (external control orientation). In this context, according to Simpeh (2011, p.3), the entrepreneur's success comes from his/her own abilities and also support from outside. The former is referred to as internal locus of control and the latter is referred to as external locus of control. While individuals with an internal locus of control believe that they are able to control life events, individuals with an external locus of control believe that life's events are the result of external factors, such as chance, luck or fate. The need for achievement theory, according to McClelland (1961), explained that human beings have a need to succeed, accomplish, excel or achieve. Entrepreneurs are driven by this need to achieve and excel. No wonder, Shaver and Scott (1991) noted that achievement motivation may be the only convincing psychological factor related to new venture creation.

Sociological Entrepreneurship theory

In sociological theories, the level of analysis is traditionally society (Landstrom, 1998). Four social contexts that relates to entrepreneurial opportunity has been identified by Reynolds (1991). They are social networks, the course stage, ethnic identification and the population ecology. While the social networks focuses on building social relationships and bonds that promote trust and not opportunism, the course stage analyzes the life situations and characteristics of individuals who have decided to become entrepreneurs. The ethnic identification emphasise one's sociological background as one of the decisive

“push” factors to become an entrepreneur. For example, the social background of a person determines how far he/she can go. Marginalized groups may violate all obstacles and strive for success, spurred on by their disadvantaged background to make life better. While the population ecology also emphasises that environment factors play an important role in the survival of businesses. The political system, government legislation, customers, employees and competition are some of the environmental factors that may have an impact on survival of new venture or the success of the entrepreneur.

Anthropological Entrepreneurship theory

This theory emphasises the origin, development, customs, and beliefs of a community. Anthropology is the study of the origin, development, customs, and beliefs of a community. In other words, the culture of the people in the community .The anthropological theory postulates that for someone to successfully initiate a venture, the social and cultural contexts should be examined or considered (Simpeh, 2011, p. 4). Cultural environments can produce attitude differences (Baskerville, 2003) as well as entrepreneurial behaviour differences (North, 1990; Shane 1994).

Opportunity-Based Entrepreneurship theory

This theory provides a wide-ranging conceptual framework for entrepreneurship research (Fiet, 2002; Shane, 1994). Drucker (1985) corroborates this view when he stated that Entrepreneurs do not cause change (as claimed by the Schumpeterian or Austrian school) but exploit the opportunities that change (in technology, consumer preferences etc.) creates. He further says, that this defines entrepreneur and entrepreneurship, the entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity. What is apparent in Drucker's opportunity construct is that entrepreneurs have an eye more for possibilities created by change than the problems.



These theories suit the analyses of sustainability of amnesty entrepreneur development programme *vis-a-vis* temporary salvation for poverty reduction in the Niger Delta because these theories enhance entrepreneurship behaviours for economic development and growth of their respective business. The entrepreneurs, not only appropriate the knowledge of the above theories, but also maximize the business opportunities and the resources the amnesty programme has offered to nurture and expand their respective businesses. One of the theories as well emphasises the entrepreneurs' environment as a major motivating factor that can spur him/her into entrepreneurship. On the other hand, psychological emphasises personality traits that define an entrepreneur which obviously result to business expansion and growth. Niger Delta amnesty programmes and the business opportunities it offered have spurred some Niger Delta youths to excel in their

respective business. Sustaining it becomes necessary to maintain the relative peace in the region.

Overview of Amnesty Entrepreneur Programmes in the Niger Delta, Nigeria

The Amnesty programme that was introduced between August 4th and October 4th 2009 by former President Yar'Adua was meant to curb the activities of the violent militants groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Essentially, the Amnesty programme entails 'Disarmament' 'Demobilization' and 'Reintegration'. It is meant to reintegrate the militants into the society by making available to them some daily food allowances, monthly stipend as well as overseas educational and entrepreneur trainings and empowerments. To ensure the success of the programme and to convince the ex-militants of her seriousness, the Nigerian government came up with a detailed structure of the amnesty programme (See Table 1).

Table 1: Structure of the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme.

Disarmament	Demobilisation/Rehabilitation	Reintegration
Duration: 6 August to 4 October 2009	Duration: 6 to 12 months	Duration: Up to 5 years
Collection of arms, ammunition, explosives	Ex-militants report to camp	Knowledge and skills acquisition
Biometrics	Verification and documentation	Financial empowerment
		Placement programmes
		Microcredit
	Transformational training	Education
	Peace building and conflict Resolution	Reconciliation with local Community
	Counselling	Conflict resolution Framework/mechanism



	Career guidance	Monitoring and evaluation
	Wellness assessment	Exit from amnesty
	Reintegration classification	
	Education and vocational Placement	
	Graduation and demobilisation	
Key enablers		
Disarmament camps		
	Transformational training Centres	Partnering government agencies, NGOs and private organisations
	Rehabilitation camps	Oil and gas institutions (OGIs)
		Tracking and support system

Source: Federal Government of Nigeria—PAO, Niger Delta Amnesty Programme: http://www.nigerdeltaamnesty.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id

*Accounts for only the first batch of demobilised ex-militants. ¼ 54& Itemid¼455.

Almost all the oil-producing states in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria participated in the amnesty (See Table 2).

Table 2: Participants in the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme.*

States	Male	Female	Registered
Akwa Ibom	155	8	163
Bayelsa	6,900	61	6,961
Cross River	159	1	160
Delta	3,361	-	3,361
Edo	450	-	450
Imo	297	3	300
Ondo	1,198	2	1,200
Rivers	6,958	39	6,997
NDDC	571	19	600
Total	20,049	133	20,192

Source: Federal Government of Nigeria—PAO, Niger Delta Amnesty Programme: http://www.nigerdeltaamnesty.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id¼454&Itemid¼455

In all, 26,358 militants accepted the amnesty offer and participated since 2009. For a successful take-off grant for the Amnesty, each militant receives N65, 000 (US\$420) monthly and another N3, 000 (US\$20) daily during the process of reintegration phases. It is interesting to note that the Nigerian government devoted huge sum of money to make sure the amnesty programme is a success. Ushie (2013, p. 33), detailing the amount of money so far spent on the amnesty, noted that,

between 2009 and 2011, the programme was allocated ₦127 billion (US\$ 819 million) in the national budget, of the amount, N3billion was the take-off grant, N30 billion was spent on militants stipends and N96 billion on feeding the militants. In 2012, massive ₦74 billion (US\$ 4177



million) was allocated to the amnesty programme.

Also, in 2017, ₦35 billion was released out of the ₦65 billion which was the actual budget for the year.

However, the amnesty programme has various integration programmes ranging from education, professional training in aviation and maritime, vocational training, entrepreneurial training, tourism and hospitality, automobile engineering, etc. Nevertheless, this study restricts itself to all those entrepreneurial activities or programmes undertaken by the Amnesty office that have led to self-employment and wealth creation through SMEs. Generally, the amnesty office has trained a lot of ex-militants in local and foreign entrepreneur skills acquisition centres and subsequently empowered them by giving them start up packages. According to the former Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta/Coordinator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme, Brig-Gen. Paul Boroh (rtd), noted that:

The services of 200 local and foreign skills acquisition centres were utilized to train 15,140 beneficiaries. Under its post training empowerment, 4,203 have been empowered and delegates have established their businesses, they are entrepreneurs and are helping to provide gainful employments to other youths. With these, it is obvious that the programme has met its strategic mandate. This was achieved with the efforts of the federal government, PAP, PANDEF and the youth leaders (cited in Elebeke, 2018, p.5).

Furthermore, the Amnesty office has deepened its agricultural empowerment programme to ex-militants in line with federal government green alternative initiative. To achieve this, they partnered the National Biotechnical Development Agency (NBDA), the Niger Delta Basin Development (NDBD), the Rivers State Songhai Farm, the Akwam Ibom, Bayelsa and Cross Rivers State governments, the Israeli

Embassy, and many other professional bodies. The result is intimidating. According to the Presidential Amnesty office,

They have trained and began to empower Amnesty Beneficiaries in crop farming, fishery and poultry. As at date, about 1,000 Amnesty beneficiaries across the nine Oil-Producing States are being trained in agriculture and will be empowered to establish their own farms. Over 300 have successfully graduated and more than half of them are already manning their own farms. The advantages of agriculture are numerous. Each empowered beneficiary will have the capacity to employ at least 4 others which will gradually reduce the unemployment rate. Produce gotten from these farms will easily be absorbed into the food market and gradually reduce food importation burden of the country (Idoniboyeobu, 2017, p.6).

Similarly, the amnesty office has trained some of the ex-militants on Agro based training in Agriculture. According to amnesty office also,

Some of the Agro based trainings carried out by the Amnesty office includes: 105 Beneficiaries undergoing training in Agro-Business with the Songhai Rivers Initiative at the Songhai Farms, Rivers State; 100 Beneficiaries training in fish farming at the Perecastle Fish Farm, Patani, Delta State. Also, an average of 25 Beneficiaries each are being trained in fish farming in six centres including the Delta State University by Gedisco Energy solutions, Infinite Farms in Ozoro, Delta State, Orus Resources Farm, Aluu,



Rivers State, Institute of Oceanography, University of Calabar, Cross Rivers State and 96 Beneficiaries are undergoing training in fish farming. The Ma-Atari Farms, Port Harcourt are training some Amnesty Beneficiaries in agriculture and poultry farming, the Ogbemor Leadership Institute, Ologbo, Edo State is training some in rubber processing, TSC Services is training 24 in General Agri-Business at the Edo State College of Education, Iguoriakhi, Edo State, while 18 beneficiaries are being trained in Cassava, Corn and Oil Palm at the Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State (Idoniboyeobu, 2017, p.7).

In the same vein, on January 17, 2018 press conference, Gen. Boroh, while alerting Nigerians, on the Nigerian Government desire to wind down the Amnesty programme, also outlined his future plan on agricultural programme for the Niger Delta region. According to him,

My office has projected to empower and create 10,000 new farms owners, who will then employ 40,000 farm workers, their logistics and processing agricultural value chain will also create additional 30,000 new jobs, thus making our Agricultural empowerment scheme to provide 80,000 new jobs” (Elebeke, 2018, p.2).

Finally, the amnesty programme has brought a temporary peace in the Niger Delta in particular and Nigeria in general. It has restored temporarily fraying nerves, hitch free exploitation of oil and restoration of the Nigerian battered image. The above view was corroborated by Ofehe (2012), as cited in Jegede and

Olu-Olu (2015, p.277), who among other thing, noted that,

The amnesty granted to Niger Delta militants can be seen from a tripod point as a temporary achievement looking back the last three years. First, it brought the current peace to the hitherto restive region. Secondly, it has restored Nigeria’s position as Africa’s leading oil exporter a position it had lost to Angola. Thirdly, the damaging international image of the region as a result of the kidnappings of oil experts has also improved. I say temporary because a few factors are inimical to the sustenance of these achievements. The major success story so far from the amnesty granted is the international training program that has brought exposure and higher learning opportunities to Niger Delta youths that had lost hope in life and become frustrated.

Methodology

The study adopted the questionnaire survey design where structured questionnaires were administered to selected male and female in the five (5) selected states that constitute the Niger Delta region. They consist of Bayelsa, Delta, Imo, Edo and River states. A sample of nine hundred (900) respondents (180 persons each from the 5 selected states) and the various Amnesty offices in these respective states were selected for the study. Using the 2006 census population of the five (5) states selected for the study were estimated at 5,185,400 (Rivers), (Delta): 4,098,391, (Bayelsa): 1,703,358, (Edo): 3,218,332 and (Imo States): 3,934,899 (National Population Census, 2006). The random sampling method was adopted in selecting the respondents. At the end, only eight hundred and fifty five (855) questionnaires representing 95.3% copies of the self-administered questionnaires were successfully filled and retrieved



from the study locations. The simple percentage was utilized for the analysis of the data while chi-square (χ^2) independence and homogeneity were used to test the hypothesis of the study.

The chi-square test statistics is:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{\sum f_e}$$

Where:

χ^2 = Chi-square

f_o = Observed frequency

f_e = expected frequency

The null hypothesis is accepted at 0.01 probability level if the critical/tabular χ^2 value is greater than the calculated χ^2 value and there will be no significant difference ($P > 0.01$). But null hypothesis is rejected if the critical/tabular χ^2 value is lesser than the calculated χ^2 value. At α 0.01 significance level, where $(r-1)(c-1) = (4-1)(3-1) = (3)(2) = 6$ is the degree of freedom.

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section tries to evaluate the presentation and analysis of data generated through the survey questionnaire administered on the respondents on the sustainability of amnesty entrepreneur development programme *vis-à-vis* poverty reduction in Niger Delta region.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualifications.

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
WAEC	227	26.5
OND	276	32.3
B.Sc./HND	190	22.2
MBA. M.Sc. & Above	162	19.0
Total	855	100

Source: Field work January, 2018.

Hypothesis one:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between amnesty entrepreneur development programme and a domestic name in the Niger Delta region.

HR: There is significant relationship between amnesty entrepreneur development programme and a domestic name in the Niger Delta region.

Table 2 Amnesty entrepreneur development programme is a domestic name in the Niger Delta region

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Strongly Agreed	480	56.1
Agreed	203	23.8
Undecided	97	11.3
Disagreed	67	7.8
Strongly disagreed	08	1.0
Total	855	100

Source: Field work, 2019.

Degree of Freedom: $DF = (r-1)(c-1) = (4-1)(3-1) = (3)(2) = 6$

Research Decision

Calculated $\chi^2 = 54.6516$

Critical $\chi^2 = 22.46$, $\alpha = 0.01$

Research Result

Calculated $\chi^2 >$ critical χ^2 , $\alpha = 0.01$. Therefore data are statistically significant at α 01% sampling. Therefore the null hypothesis H_o is rejected. This means that we should accept H_R .

Interpretation

There is significant relationship between amnesty entrepreneur development programme and a domestic name in the Niger Delta region. Therefore, amnesty entrepreneur development programme is a domestic name in the Niger Delta region.

Hypothesis Two

Ho: There is no significant relationship between many youths in my community/Niger Delta



region and benefiting from amnesty entrepreneur development programmes.

H_R: There is significant relationship between many youths in my community/Niger Delta region and benefiting from amnesty entrepreneur development programmes.

Table 3: Many youths in my community/Niger Delta region have benefited from Amnesty entrepreneur development programmes

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Strongly Agreed	479	56.0
Agreed	205	24.1
Undecided	96	11.2
Disagreed	66	7.7
Strongly disagreed	09	1.0
Total	855	100

Sources: Field Work, 2019.

Degree of Freedom: $DF = (r-1)(c-1) = (4-1)(3-1) = (3)(2) = 5$

Research Decision

Calculated $\chi^2 = 69.6366$

Critical $\chi^2 = 22.46$, $\alpha = 0.01$

Research Result

Calculated $\chi^2 > \text{critical } \chi^2$, $\alpha = 0.01$. Therefore data are not statistically significant α 01% sampling. Therefore, the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected. This means that we should accept H_a .

Interpretation

There is significant relationship between many youths in my community/Niger Delta region and benefiting from amnesty entrepreneur development programmes. This implies that many youths in my community/Niger Delta region have benefited from Amnesty entrepreneur development programmes.

Hypothesis Three

H₀: There is no significant relationship between amnesty development programmes impacting more on human capital development than any other agencies Nigeria government had set in the past.

H_R: There is significant relationship between amnesty development programmes impacting more on human capital development than any other agencies Nigeria government had set in the past.

Table 4: Amnesty entrepreneur development programme has impacted positively more on human capita development than any other agencies Nigeria government had setup in the past.

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Strongly Agreed	454	53.1
Agreed	248	29.0
Undecided	125	14.6
Disagreed	20	2.3
Strongly disagreed	08	1.0
Total	855	100

Sources: Field work, 2019.

Degree of Freedom: $DF = (r-1)(c-1)$

$= (4-1)(3-1) = (3)(2) = 5$

Research Decision

Calculated $\chi^2 = 190.7284$

Critical $\chi^2 = 22.46$, $\alpha = 0.01$

Research Result

Calculated $\chi^2 > \text{critical } \chi^2$, $\alpha = 0.01$. Therefore data are statistically significant α 01% sampling. Therefore the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected. This means that we should accept H_a .

Interpretation

There is significant relationship between amnesty development programmes impacting more on human capital development than any other agencies Nigeria government had setup in the past. This shows that amnesty entrepreneur development programme has impacted positively more on human capital development than any other agencies Nigeria government had setup in the past.



Hypothesis Four

Ho: There is no significant relationship between some youths in my community/Niger Delta region who benefited from the amnesty entrepreneur programme and excelling in their respective SMEs.

H_R: There is significant relationship between some youths in my community/Niger Delta region who benefited from the amnesty entrepreneur programme and excelling in their respective SMEs.

Table 5: Some youths in my community/ Niger Delta region who benefited from the Amnesty entrepreneur programmes have excelled in their respective SMEs

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Strongly Agreed	478	55.9
Agreed	206	24.1
Undecided	95	11.1
Disagreed	68	7.9
Strongly disagreed	08	1.0
Total	855	100

Sources: Field work, 2019.

Degree of Freedom: $DF = (r-1) (c-1) = (4-1) (3-1) = (3) (2) = 5$

Research Decision

Calculated $\chi^2 = 53.5516$

Critical $\chi^2 = 22.46$, $\alpha = 0.01$

Research Result

Calculated $\chi^2 > \text{critical } \chi^2$, $\alpha = 0.01$. Therefore data are statistically significant α 01% sampling. Therefore the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected. This means that we should accept H_R .

Interpretation

There is significant relationship between some youths in my community/Niger Delta region who benefited from the amnesty entrepreneur

programme and excelling in their respective SMEs. Therefore, it shows that some youths in the community/ Niger Delta region who benefited from the Amnesty entrepreneur programmes have excelled in their respective SMEs.

Hypothesis Five

Ho: There is no significant relationship between Nigerian government sustaining amnesty programme and temporary peace measure in the region.

H_R: There is significant relationship between Nigerian government sustaining amnesty programme and temporary peace measure in the region.

Table 6: Nigerian government should sustain Amnesty programme as a temporary peace measure in the region.

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Strongly Agreed	479	56.0
Agreed	207	24.2
Undecided	92	10.9
Disagreed	68	7.9
Strongly disagreed	09	1.0
Total	855	100

Sources: Field work, 2019.

Degree of Freedom: $DF = (r-1) (c-1) = (4-1) (3-1) = (3) (2) = 5$

Research Decision

Calculated $\chi^2 = 69.6366$

Critical $\chi^2 = 22.46$, $\alpha = 0.01$

Research Result

Calculated $\chi^2 > \text{critical } \chi^2$, $\alpha = .001$. Therefore data are statistically significant α 01% sampling. Therefore the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected. This means that we should accept H_R .

Interpretation



There is significant relationship between Nigerian government sustaining amnesty programme and temporary peace measure in the region. This shows that Nigerian government should sustain Amnesty programme as a temporary peace measure in the region.

Hypothesis Six

Ho: There is no significant relationship between scrapping amnesty programme and youths returning to the creeks.

Hr: There is significant relationship between scrapping amnesty programme and youths returning to the creeks.

Table 7: Scrapping Amnesty programme will obviously return the youths to the creeks

Responses	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Strongly Agreed	478	55.9
Agreed	208	24.3
Undecided	93	10.9
Disagreed	66	7.7
Strongly disagreed	10	1.2
Total	855	100

Sources: Field work, 2019.

Degree of Freedom: $DF = (r-1) (c-1)$

$= (4-1) (3-1) = (3) (2) = 5$

Research Decision

Calculated $\chi^2 = 70.1691$

Critical $\chi^2 = 22.46$, $\alpha = 0.01$

Research Result

Calculated $\chi^2 > \text{critical } \chi^2$, $\alpha = 0.01$. Therefore data are statistically significant α 01% sampling. Therefore the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected. This means that we should accept H_R .

Interpretation

There is significant relationship between scrapping amnesty programme and youths returning to the creeks. The result shows that scrapping amnesty programme will obviously return the youths to the creeks.

Findings

The findings of this study will be an eye-opener that will be useful for policy decision making in Nigeria. Nevertheless, this study reveals that amnesty entrepreneur development programme is a familial name in the Niger Delta region. In fact, one respondent told the researcher of this paper that it is the most common name more than all the other agencies set by the Nigerian government to address the challenges in the region. The result of the study conspicuously shows as well that many youths in most of the communities across the Niger Delta region have benefited from the amnesty entrepreneur development programmes. In fact, there was a consensus among all the respondents that amnesty entrepreneur development programme has achieved the highest human capability building more than any other agencies set by the Nigerian government. This view is consistent with that of Jegede and Olu-Olu (2015, p. 276) who noted that “the amnesty policy has been rated high, and in all ramifications, surpass all other agencies set up by the Nigerian state in the human capacity challenges of the Niger Delta region”.

Furthermore, there was a consensus among all the respondents that some youths through the Amnesty entrepreneur programmes have excelled in their respective SMEs and consequently become employers of labour in the region. Most of the respondents mentioned some youths in their respective communities in different cities, and even in the Niger Delta region, who have become employers of labour through the amnesty entrepreneur programme. Similarly, the respondents were of the consensus as well that Nigerian government should not contemplate scrapping the amnesty programme, but should sustain it. This is because the grassroots are benefiting from it. The amnesty has remained one the greatest avenue



Nigeria government is using to create more employment for the youths of the region. Therefore, the Federal Government and the National Assembly should synergise to ensure that the programme is well-funded to empower more of the youths of the region. Finally, if the amnesty programme is scrapped, it will undoubtedly return the youths to the creeks since 65% of their natural environment has been polluted by oil.

Understanding/explaining sustainability of Amnesty entrepreneur development programme vis-à-vis poverty reduction in the Niger Delta

Several explanations can be constructed for the sustainability of amnesty entrepreneur development programme in relation to poverty reduction in the Niger Delta. Specific reasons abound, but they are all embedded in different entrepreneurs' motivations that can help to spur/enhance Niger Delta youths into entrepreneurship. This will in fact serve as a veritable alternative to the collapse economy of the oil-rich Niger Delta region, as a result of oil pollution by Multinational Oil Companies (MNOCs). These MNOCs have caused environmental pollution and degradation which have affected fishing and farming which are the chief primary sources of occupation of most of the Niger Delta. For instance, the current Managing Director of Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) disclosed on March 6th, 2018 in Oloibiri, Baysala state that oil and gas firms operating in the Niger Delta are currently flaring 700 million standard cubic feet of gas per day (cited in Eboh 2018, p. 5). This gas flared daily in Niger Delta has resulted to a wide range of environmental degradation leading to poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment. Ikelegbe (2010, p. 27) corroborated the above view when he contended that,

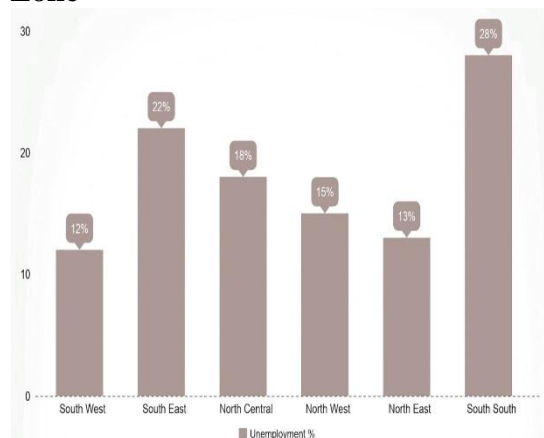
Their land (Niger Delta) was taken for exploration, exploitation, pipelines and platforms. The much that was left were polluted and degraded by numerous oil spillages. The rivers and water systems were polluted. The land was no longer arable and the rivers had been deserted by fish colonies. The air was polluted

by gas flares and acid rain was tormenting their house roofs just as the people had become plagued by numerous diseases. The people had become under-employed and unemployed.

That explains why alternative in the form of sustainability of amnesty through entrepreneur development in the region becomes imperative.

Closely related to the above is the alarming rate of unemployment in the Niger Delta region. The army of unemployed Youths in the region has, in fact, increased in magnitude and intensity more than other geo-political regions in Nigeria following the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) report. According to NBS Report (2018), the core Niger Delta (South-South) region has 28 percent which is the highest unemployed youths in the six (6) geo-political zone of the country (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Unemployment Rate by Geo-political Zone



Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2018).

That explains why some of the region's major stakeholders have likened the unemployment rate in the region as a time bomb. For instance, the current Chairman of the board of Niger Delta Development Commission (NNDC), Senator Victor Ndoma Egba, on June 10, 2017 has described the level of unemployment in the Niger Delta region as a time bomb waiting to explode. According to him:



The armies of jobless youths found in the region is a time-bomb ...we need peace in the region, but importantly, we need urgent development of the region in order to sustain the desired peace in the region. We owe our youths a responsibility of ensuring they remain resourceful and not a curse, like the oil (Onukwugha, 2017).

In fact, the unemployment rate is too severe in the region that sustaining Amnesty entrepreneur development becomes very crucial for the reduction of poverty and unemployment in the Niger Delta region.

Finally, if this amnesty entrepreneur development programme which engage most of the youths of the region are not sustained, invariably, the youths will return to militancy which will affect the free flow of oil which is the mainstay of Nigeria's economy. It is important to note that the Niger Delta militants are so powerful that they can cause serious oil production loss to the country that can put the economy of the country at an edge. For instance, the 2016 resumption of hostilities by the Militant,

the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) declared that N18.89 billion loss in the monthly financial and operations report for the month of March, 2016... the report indicated that the N18.89 billion loss was N22.03 percent lower than the N24.23 billion operational deficit in the month of February (Daily Sun, 9 May 2016).

Conclusion

The study examines sustainability of amnesty entrepreneur development as the yardstick for temporal poverty salvation in the Niger Delta region. Different means and ways for enhancing entrepreneur development for the growth of SMEs have been clearly and distinctly stated in the theories. Nevertheless, the sum of all the analyses and findings reveal that the Nigerian state should sustain the amnesty programme because it has gone a long way to touch some of the

root cause (s) of the agitation in the Niger Delta region. In fact, instead of scrapping the agency as the federal government is threatening now, rather it should be re-organized and refocused in such a way that the agency should do more of empowerment after training than training the youths without empowerment. With this method, many people will be employed, poverty will be reduced and temporal peace will return to Niger Delta.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are considered necessary:

- i. Nigeria government should encourage the amnesty programme instead of scrapping it.
- ii. The amnesty office should concentrate more on empowerment of the trained entrepreneur as the respondents complain of poor empowerment.
- iii. The state governments of the Niger Delta region should collaborate with amnesty office to create conducive atmosphere for entrepreneur growth in the region.
- iv. Moderate loan of single digit interest should be made available by Nigeria government to sustain and argument the amnesty efforts in entrepreneur development and growth of the Niger Delta region.

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APENDIX 1

Chi-square Computations of Hypotheses 2-7.

Table 2:

Fo	Fe	Fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
480	56.1	423.9	179.6912	3.2031
203	23.8	179.2	32.1126	1.3493
97	1.3	85.7	7.3445	0.6499
67	7.8	59.2	3.5046	0.4493
08	1.0	7	49	49.000
				54.6516

Table 3:

Fo	Fe	Fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
479	56.0	423	178.929	3.1952
203	24.1	180.9	32.7248	1.3579
96	11.2	84.8	7.1910	0.6421
66	7.7	58.3	3.3989	0.4414
09	1.0	8	64	64.000
Total				69.6366

Table 4

Fo	Fe	Fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
454	53.1	400.9	160.7208	3.0268
248	29.0	219.0	47.961	1.6538
125	14.6	110.4	12.1882	0.8348
20	2.3	17.7	313.29	136.2130
08	1.0	7.0	49.0	49.0000
Total				190.7284

Table 5:

Fo	Fe	Fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
478	55.9	422.1	178.1684	3.1873
206	24.1	181.9	33.0876	1.3729
95	11.1	83.9	7.0392	0.6342
68	7.9	60.1	3.6120	0.4572
08	1.0	7.0	49.0	49.00
Total				53.5516

Table 6:

Fo	Fe	Fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
479	56.0	423.0	178.929	3.1952
207	24.2	182.8	33.4158	1.3808
92	10.9	81.1	6.65772	0.6034
68	7.9	60.1	3.6120	0.4572
09	1.0	8.0	64.0	64.0000
Total				69.6366

Table 7:

Fo	Fe	Fo-fe	(fo-fe) ²	(fo-fe) ² /fe
478	55.9	422.1	178.1684	3.1873
208	24.3	183.7	33.7457	1.3887
93	10.9	82.1	6.7404	0.6184
66	7.7	58.3	3.3989	0.4414
10	1.2	8.8	77.44	64.5333
Total				70.1691