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# AMNESTY PROGRAMME AND POLITICS OF REINTEGRATION IN NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is reputed for its rich crude oil deposits which account for 90 percent of the country's export earnings. The region has, however, remained highly underdeveloped, a situation that triggered restiveness until the administration of then President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua declared amnesty to the militants with a re-integration policy. There have been concerns whether the re-integration phase of the amnesty programme has, indeed, achieved its aims. This forms the objectives of this study which seeks to ascertain whether the reintegration policy has provided ex-militants with necessary vocatioal skills for self-employment as well as whether it empowered the ex-militants with capital grants to enable them set up survival enterprises. To achieve these objectives, the study adopted the Disarmament, Demobilization and Rehabilitation theory as framework of analysis. The study adopted survey design/method and employed both primary and secondary means of data collection. Among other things, the study found out that the Amnesty Programme has, to a great extent, achieved its aim having trained majority of ex-militants in different skills and vocation both in Nigeria and outside. It also found out that majority of the ex-militants in the Niger Delta have also been provided with capital grants to start up a business after training. The study, however, suggested speedy rehabilitation of the ex-militants who are yet to be accommodated in the training programme while those yet to get grants should be given such as soon as they graduate.*

**Keywords**: Amnesty programme, re-integration, ex-militants, Niger Delta, Nigeria



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## Introduction

The Niger Delta of Nigeria prides itself as a region with rich deposit of crude oil (Omuta, 2014). It is also a region rich in agriculture, aquaculture, solid minerals and the largest wetland in the world after the Patanal in South America and Mississippi in North America (NDAO, cited in Odubo & Tobor, 2016). Apart from its contribution to Gross Domestic Product of about 90 percent, its crude oil also accounts for about 95 percent of the expected revenue upon which national budget estimates are based (International Monetary Fund, 2003). As Nwanolue, Ezeamama and Okeke (2022a) put it, the Niger Delta region remains Nigeria's backbone as far as oil production is concerned. It is located in the Atlantic coast of the south and is adjudged the world's second largest delta with a coastline of about 450 kilometres. With these enormous contributions of the Niger Delta region to national treasury, the indigenes naturally expect that their lives will be made better through employment opportunities, infrastructural development, improved standard of living and above all, sustainable development. This is based on the contestation that any community with oil deposits has got unique blessings from the gods.

However, the situation in the region has become a paradox as its huge deposit of oil and other minerals has rather become source of problem instead of blessing. Thus, even though the Niger Delta region produces the greater percent of the wealth of Nigeria, the region has remained highly underdeveloped and heavily characterized by abject poverty, ecological destruction, polluted environments, impaired health, cultural destabilization, economic impoverishment, exploitation, dearth of serviceable infrastructure, inadequate provision of functional educational system, deprivation, destroyed source of livelihoods, and total neglect of the region by the Federal Government of Nigeria (Badmus, 2010; Ogbodo, 2010; Paki & Ebienfa, 2011; Anele & Omoro, 2012; Idowu, 2012; Okpo & Eze, 2012) thus, leading to unrests by the youths of the area and resulting in government's crackdown on the youths. The crackdown reached a crescendo with the extra-judicial hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others in November 1995 (Oshionebo, 2009).

The restiveness took the shape of armed conflicts and resulted in the abduction and kidnapping of oil workers, especially the expatriates, destruction and disruption of crude oil and gas installations, vandalization of oil pipelines, notably by certain militant groups which included the Egbesu Boys, Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality (MOSEIN), Joint Revolutionary Council, MENBUTU, Arogbo Freedom fighters, Niger Delta Volunteer Force and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). The restive situation led to a drastic reduction in the daily output of crude oil production from 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2004 to about 0.80 million bpd in the first quarter of 2009 which adversely affected revenue for the oil-dependent country (Etekpe, 2012). This ugly situation lingered until 2009 when the then President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua decided to follow the path of dialogue and peace by granting amnesty to the militants.

The amnesty programme was divided into four major phases: granting state pardon to the militants (to facilitate their voluntarily renouncing of violence), disarmament, rehabilitation, and re-integration. According to George (2006), the phases are designed to change the mind-set of the militants and facilitate their adjustment to normal civil life. Thus, they were trained in batches in different areas of skills and entrepreneurship in the Orientation and Rehabilitation Camp in Obubra in Cross River state, Nigeria. The training started on 1 June, 2010 and lasted for 13 months. The programme has brought about relative peace in the region and President Goodluck Jonathan (successor of Yar'Adua) has utilized the opportunity of the

prevailing peace to pronounce some key sustainable development programmes and projects in the region.

The reintegration phase of the amnesty programme, in particular, included counseling of the ex-militants to aid them psychologically and they were also given opportunity to decide on the kind of vocation or educational training they would embark on (Udegbunam, 2013). The programme also includes granting ex-militants capital for business and other necessary assistance. The programme was to help them in areas like sea fairing, piloting, ICT, ocean diving as those who have the interest of going back to school were also given the opportunity to study in vocational or educational training in countries such as United Arab Emirate, Ghana, Israel, Russia, Ukraine, Philippines, India, Sri-Lanka, Malaysia, South Africa, Singapore and others (Omokhoa, 2015). There is, however, scanty scholarly attention on the reintegration programme which is a gap this study seeks to fill.

**Statement of the Problem**

Ordinarily, oil discovery and exploration should come with some respite for host communities and a sustainable policy to safeguard the environment. This is premised on the fact that exploration and extraction of natural resources have been known to always affect and alter the geophysical environment of the areas where they are carried out. However, the environmental impact of oil exploitation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has contributed in no small measure to the destruction of the fragile ecosystem, thus making the region one of the world's most severely petroleum impacted ecosystems and one of the five most petroleum-polluted environments in the world.

Niger Delta region of Nigeria is a paradox that epitomizes both richness in crude oil and impoverishment of the people. The discovery and production of oil in the region have particularly resulted in diverse environmental curses (Nwanolue, Ezeamama and Okeke (2022b). Indeed, Nigeria presents a perfect example of a curse that natural resource can bring (Collier & Hoeffler, 2001). Even though, oil exploitation in commercial quantity began in 1958 in Oloibiri in the current Bayelsa State, the attendant increase in revenue generation to the federal, State and local governments has not reduced the level of poverty in the Niger Delta area and Nigeria as a whole as the latter has continued to increase. Almost 90 per cent of the local inhabitants of the Niger Delta fall below the poverty line of $1 dollar per day as they depend on the aquatic resources for their livelihoods (Watts, 2008). Hence, rather than the oil bringing blessings and fortune for Nigerians, its proceeds have resulted in impoverishing the masses and creating violent conflicts in the Niger Delta region. The most perplexing paradox is that, rather than better the lots of the host communities in the Niger Delta, development is skewed in their disfavour. The overall picture that pervades the region is that virtually all the host communities have one sad tale or the other to share about their miserable experience heaped on them by the multinational oil companies in return for exploiting crude oil in their lands. This is against the observation made by Nwanolue, Ezeamama and Okeke (2022b) that the discovery and production of oil in the Niger Delta region should provoke joy and provide gains for the country and her people while the Niger Delta people are supposed to be a major beneficiary of the accruing benefits. The situation therefore heightened the level of militant activities and crimes in the Niger Delta region such that in the first nine months of the year 2008, about 1,000 people lost their lives, 300 were taken hostage and the government lost $23.7 billion to attacks, oil bunkering and sabotage. Apart from the inability of Nigerian government to meet up with its OPEC quota and other negative economic effects, the oil multinational corporations on their part reportedly lost billions of dollars to the conflicts. For instance, between 2003 and 2007, Shell Petroleum

Development Company (SPDC) estimated that it lost US$10.6 billion, with a total loss of not less than US $21.5 billion by the oil MNCs as a whole since 2003 (Nwozor, 2010).

Again, the amnesty programme has lasted for more than seven years from the time of its proclamation. Billions of Naira have been budgeted and disbursed for the purpose of executing the programme, yet the militants appear not to be fully reintegrated, thereby posing a big threat to the envisaged sustainable peace in the region. Curiously, regardless of the plethora of scholarship on oil exploration in the Niger Delta region, the activities of multinational companies in the region, the rate of environmental degradation as well as the activities of the militants in the region, scholars were not able to exhaustively discuss the reintegration policy of the amnesty programme to ascertain if it has been adequately carried out by the federal government and ascertaining the challenges that still remain. This is the major concern of this study which seeks to ascertain whether the reintegration policy has provided ex-militants with necessary vocational skills for self-employment as well as whether it empowered the ex-militants with capital grants to enable them set up survival enterprises.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. Did the reintegration policy provide ex-militants with necessary vocational skills for self-employment?
2. Has the reintegration policy empowered ex-militants with capital grants to enable them set up survival enterprises?

**Significance of the Study**

This study has both theoretical and empirical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the existing literature on the Niger Delta region and the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta region. More specifically offers scholars and governments a theoretical aid in dealing with the reintegration of ex-militants to their home communities in the Niger Delta region. It raises some important issues that will lead to further research by scholars in the area of the subject matter.

Empirically, this study will offer to policy makers in Nigeria good insight into the pertinent issues in the Niger Delta which the amnesty programme has not really addressed especially as it concerns the re-integration of the ex-militants into their home communities. This will help them in the formulation of further policies and programmes that will address the important issues and also not only make the ex-militants better citizens but also contribute to achieving the desired sustainable development in the region.

## Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration theory as framework for analysis in this study. The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) framework derives its origin from the concept of peace building, first introduced by former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his proposals for reform in the United Nations (UN). In the report, otherwise known as ‘An Agenda for Peace’, Boutros-Ghali advocated for ‘comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people’ in a post-conflict environment. According to Boutros-Ghali, peacemaking and peacekeeping practices could only be truly successful when structures that create a lasting peace and a sense of confidence are identified and supported. He further stated that these

structures can be established through 'monitoring elections, advancing efforts to protect human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions and promoting formal and informal processes of political participation.

For these purposes, Boutros-Ghali identified the following strategies: disarming combatants, restoring order, destruction of weapons, repatriating refugees, advisory and training support for security personnel, human rights protection, strengthening of government institutions, and promotion of public participation.

Following Boutros-Ghali's report, the UN through its Security Council fully adopted the DDR strategy in 1999. By 2000, it was reported that the UN had implemented DDR in fifteen peacekeeping operations (United Nations 2006). The Brahimi report, an outcome of a high-level panel set up to review the peace operations of the UN in 2000, further emphasized the importance of the DDR, which was seen as 'key to immediate post-conflict stability and reduced likelihood of conflict recurrence' (United Nations, 2006). The report facilitated the widening of the scope of DDR to include socio-economic dimensions to post-conflict peace operations. This was concretized with the Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) report published in 2006.

In 2010, a further advance was experienced in the development of the concept following the introduction of the 'Second Generation' DDR. The Second Generation was conceived to address the shortcomings of the 'traditional model', somewhat narrowly concerned with addressing the military aspects of conflict. Thus, the Second Generation is designed to take a holistic approach to post-conflict peace-building and includes the whole community in its scope.

The Niger Delta area in Nigeria has been a region of conflict between the Nigerian state and oil companies operating in that region on one side, and the oil bearing communities on the other side which has led to the emergence of militant groups formed by the youth of the oil bearing communities who claim to fight on for the interest of their people. This conflict has become intractable over so many years. In the light of this, the amnesty programme was introduced by the government in 2009 in order to find a lasting solution to the conflict in the Niger Delta. The amnesty programme was eventually divided into phases: Disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation and the sustainable re-integration of ex-militants into the society. These no doubt, are in line with the UN Agenda for peace framework of analysis.

Furthermore, the Nigeria amnesty programme and the reintegration aspect of it in particular is captured in this Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) framework as it identified comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people' in a post-conflict environment as a necessary action and process that will ensure sustainable peace in post-conflict environment like the Niger Delta region in Nigeria. More so, the Second Generation DDR facilitated the widening of the scope of DDR to include the inclusion of the socio-economic dimensions to post-conflict peace operations. It further led to the idea of reinsertion which is a 'short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs. This explains vividly the whole process of the amnesty in Nigeria and more especially the reintegration process which is the major concern to this study. Thus, we adopted the UN Agenda for peace framework of analysis to assess the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the sustainable reintegration of ex-militants into the society where they belong as a post-conflict. Even though this framework has encountered various criticisms, it has remained relevant and is being using globally in addressing post-conflict peace-building.

It is the belief that this framework is very adequate for this research as it contains the basic tenets that would guide our assessment of the amnesty programme.

## Literature Review

### The Amnesty Programme in Nigeria

Having exhausted virtually available avenues at ensuring peace in the Niger Delta region, late President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua introduced the Amnesty initiative on June 25, 2009 as part of the implementation of the 2008 Mittee Committee report. The offer of amnesty was predicated on the willingness and readiness of the militants to give up all illegal arms in their possession, completely renounce militancy in its entire ramification within 60 days starting from August 6 and terminating on October 4, 2009. According to the President, the amnesty initiative was to restore peace, human and environmental security in the Niger Delta so as to create an enabling environment for accelerated and sustainable development. Against this background, the Presidential Committee on Amnesty was set up to design a framework for the amnesty programme. The amnesty package was designed with three fundamental programmes namely disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (Oyadogha, 2009).

The amnesty program primarily consisted of a declaration of Amnesty for all Niger Delta Militants that surrendered their arms within a 60-day period (from August 6th – October 4th 2009). The declaration promised that all militants that complied with this policy would not be prosecuted for the crimes committed during the agitation that was capable of crippling Nigeria's oil industry. To this end, the amnesty programme was set to run from 2010 to 2015. In addition, the ex-militants were to receive a monthly stipend of N65, 000 each and undergo trainings on various vocational skills both at home and abroad. This was aimed as securing gainful employments for them on completion of the trainings and become reintegrated into the society. According to (Ajaero, 2009), the projects to be carried out by the Federal Government in line with the amnesty programme included the establishment of a Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas in Ekowe, Bayelsa State; upgrading of the Petroleum Training Institute (PTI), Effurun in Delta State to the status of University of Petroleum and Gas; dualization of the East-West high way; construction of an Atlantic Coastal high way; construction of East-West rail line running from Calabar through Uyo, Port Harcourt, Yenagoa, Warri, Benin to Lagos; development of the Inland Water way; clean up of oil spillages from the environment; commencement of massive land reclamation; and development of new towns while retaining the history and culture of the people.

The reintegration programme in particular was in two phases. The first phase was the rehabilitation programme where over 19,000 ex-militants were trained in Obubra Camp in a period that lasted for about 3 to 18 months. The second phase includes counseling to aid ex-militants psychologically and also giving them opportunity to decide on the kind of vocation or educational training they would embark on (Udegbunam, 2013). Again, the financial outlay by the Federal Government for the programme was much. The Federal Government paid each militant a minimum of N65,000/month. This amounts to N105 billion/month or N14 billion for the 13 months.

Notwithstanding the achievements of the programme at the initial stage, reports from the panel set up in January 2010 to review the rehabilitation aspect of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Rehabilitation (DDR) revealed some inadequacies thus leading to calls by elders in the Niger Delta region for the dissolution of the Presidential Amnesty Committee. Some of these include the fact that about 80 percent of the budget had gone on payments of consultants and contractors, with 20 per cent committed on rehabilitation of the

ex-militants; the over bloating of the numbers of registered ex-militants; the continued detention of several militants; some of the training centers falling short of acceptable standards and operating with inadequate facilities.

Furthermore, the amnesty programme has been also criticized on many grounds by scholars and analysts. For example, scholars like Aderogba (2016) as well as Ushie (2013) argued that the amnesty programme did not address the plight of the Niger Delta people which is the major cause and reinforcer of violent agitations in the region. In other words, the amnesty programme has not been able to remove the people from what has often been referred to as poverty trap – a situation in which degraded environment, poor health, poor education, poor infrastructure and poor standard of living reinforce one another. Also, Aderogba (2016) as well as Ushie (2013) maintained that achieving sustainable development also requires an environment and ecosystem that is productive and replenishing. Conversely, in the Niger Delta region, oil exploration activities have caused serious damage to the environment and the ecosystem to the extent that no agricultural activity can thrive in the land. The amnesty programme has not been able to address this problem in the Niger Delta region and this has made the people to remain in abject poverty and depending on consuming what others have produced.

More so, efforts at recovering the damaged ecosystem in the Niger Delta region by the government of Nigeria have been minimal, sporadic and inadequate. The sheer scale of monumental environmental damage to the local fishing and farming, habitat and biodiversity, and the means of livelihood of the people in the region was of such magnitude that it called for initial $1 billion fund to set up an independent fund to clean up pollution in Ogoniland which it believed may take 25-30 years to remediate. Alohan (2012) has posited that implementing the UNEP roadmap will require political will from government, commitment from the company responsible for the spillage and change of attitude from host communities. Addressing the militants alone while neglecting the deplorable situation, the underdevelopment and poverty, governmental and corporate mis-governance, all of which led to the militancy and later criminality in the region no doubt spelt doom for the amnesty programme. This is because the number of militants that were reintegrated under the programme constituted only a small percentage of the Niger Delta population, which under the 2006 population figure is 31, 224, 577 million people.

Furthermore, in the works of Ajumobi as cited by Adeyemo and Olu- Adeyemi (2010), he questioned the code and principle guiding the Federal Government's 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 decided to settle their difference politically. The second contexts 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, Adeyemo and Olu-Adeyemi (2010) further expressed concern to the effect that there is neither a negotiated 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?

**Amnesty and Vocational Training for Ex-Militants**

Ajibola (2015) investigated the role of the amnesty program in sustaining peace and development in post-conflict Niger Delta. He found that the reason for embarking on

educational and vocational skills training as rehabilitation and socialization strategies in the amnesty program is because it is only through education and skills training that the Niger Delta people can be truly and fully empowered." With education and skills acquisition, a majority of the youths will become gainfully employed on graduation, and they will be able to provide for themselves and their families. The provision of educational and vocational skills will also keep Niger Delta youths busy and out of the clutches of powerful third-party stakeholders who normally use them to prosecute their own political and personal agenda. Results from a survey research also show that making use of both education and vocational skills acquisition as instruments of rehabilitation and reintegration of youths is a positive in the disarmament-demobilization-rehabilitation (DDR) process; though many respondents preferred education (55.3%) to skills acquisition (31.9%) because there is an almost 70% chance of ex-militants getting good jobs on graduation, while fewer persons (12.8%) preferred both.

On the other hand, the reintegration phase was directly coordinated by the Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta (OSAPND), under the then Hon. Kingsley Kuku. A committee was set up to coordinate the reintegration phase which comprised consultants from different backgrounds with skills in development and security projects, key stakeholders, and government officials. The Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta (SAPND) was the Chairman of the Amnesty Committee. Through the committee, a working plan was developed and the project is designated as an intervention project where amendments to its components are regularly reviewed and updated as its Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The committee operated as a consensus building platform of the DDR project.

The reintegration process was anchored by two important agencies: the Presidential Amnesty Office and the Oil and Gas Industry Foundation (OGIF). The Presidential Amnesty Office is the governmental agency solely established under the presidency to administer the reintegration programme. On the other hand, the OGIF was the foundation created by twelve notable oil companies operating in the area (Oando PLC, Niger Delta Petroleum Resources Limited, Chevron, Exxon-Mobil, Shell BP, Total, Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas Limited, Schlumberger Oilfield Services, Pan Ocean Oil Corporation, Nigerian Petroleum Development Company, Nigerian Agip Oil Company, and Addax Petroleum) in partnership with the Presidential Amnesty Office to train and empower three thousand ex-combatants and youths. The reintegration programme was designed in two dimensions. First, the government formulated the strategy of constructive engagement with the leadership of the combatants by employing them to establish their own private security firms that would be hired to secure oil pipelines and other installations on multi-billion Naira contract agreements. However, there were criticisms against this move-that the state is empowering the ex-militant leaders and this could be counterproductive in the long run. Notwithstanding the criticisms, the logic behind this strategy was to find a meaningful means of constructive engagement with the militant leaders. These leaders had been exposed to stupendous wealth and lifestyles given their incomes from ransom kidnapping, oil bunkering and political patronage to have alternative and legitimate source of income after they renounced violence. This would prevent them from returning to their violent past. In addition, it was believed that these individuals, given their experience with vandalising oil pipelines and installations, would better provide the needed security in that regard. According to the Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta and Amnesty Affairs, Kingsley Kuku, there is a belief that only the people of the communities where the pipelines crisscross their backyards can conveniently work with the security agencies to stop oil theft and protect the facilities.

However, this package was considered as a temporary arrangement, and it is believed that this task would naturally revert back to the state as peace is strengthened and consolidated in the region. Thus, with the inauguration of President Buhari's administration on May 29th 2015, the government was determined to allow the state security agents to take over pipeline protection, thus it is tactically considering reviewing some of the oil pipeline protection contracts awarded to the former militants. Recently the government has refused to renew the contracts and some of the militant leaders like "Boyloaf" have said they will not return to their initial place of hiding in the region where criminality is perpetrated because they have already accepted amnesty.

The second dimension is a direct one, targeting the general combatants, non-combatant and youths of impacted communities for socio-economic empowerment. It should be noted that one of the major criticisms of the traditional model of DDR is its focus on combatants only in the reintegration process while neglecting the other members of the society. This gap is addressed in the Niger Delta's reintegration programme as the programme also includes non-militant youths of the Niger Delta. During the interviews conducted with the Head of Reintegration, Mr. Lawrence Pepple, he said that over 742 women were included in the programme. To ensure that the programme is well accepted by the people, state governments were required to support the rebuilding of communities destroyed by military invasion, and establish youth development centres and community demobilisation and reintegration committees to enhance reintegration and capacity-building. State governments were also required to provide social amenities, including health centres and schools at the site of former militant camps. Corroborating the above narration, the technical assistant and head of reintegration, Mr. Lawrence Pepple reported that in July 2009, a budget of N52 billion (US$145 million) was announced for the amnesty deal, the money was intended to cater for the training and rehabilitation of 20,192 registered militants. According to him, the budget did not state clearly how the money was to be expended. The proportion that was to be allocated to monthly allowances versus the proportion allocated to a broader reintegration and rehabilitation package were not clearly stated.

The reintegration process also involves vocational skills training and formal education programmes for its beneficiaries. The vocational skills training involved a wide range of skills that would potentially empower the ex-combatants after reintegration into the society. The skills include piloting, carpentry and furniture making, welding, boat building, marine operations, heavy duty operations, automobile technology, agricultural operations, oil and gas technical operations, electrical and mechanical engineering, and other relevant skills. In formal education, the reintegration process creates the opportunity for ex-combatants willing to pursue formal education to acquire quality education up to the tertiary levels (undergraduate and postgraduate) in local and foreign universities. A document from the Amnesty Office indicates that the education and skills training programmes cover 157 universities and 22 vocational skills training centres in thirty countries across the world. The local education and skills training programmes involve nine universities and nineteen vocational training centres in eight states in Nigeria.

The universities in which demobilized combatants and youths of the Niger Delta are offered places comprise some of the most high-profile and academically excellent universities in the world. These include Coventry University, Portsmouth University, Salford University, Bradford University, University of Liverpool, University of Reading, University of Newcastle, University of Dundee, University of Kent, Leeds University, Kings College and others in the United Kingdom. Others include high-profile universities in Malaysia, Dubai and Sweden. This also applies to some of the vocational and skills training institutes available

to the beneficiaries of the reintegration programme. Some of the training centres include Schlumberger Technologies based in France (for drilling engineering), Lufthansa Aviation Academy based in Germany (for advanced pilot training), CAE Oxford Aviation Academy in the United Kingdom (for advanced pilot training), Schneider Electric in France (for electrical engineering), Institute of French Petroleum in France (for petroleum industry technicians), Airstar Flight School in Italy (for pilot training), Com Air in South Africa (pilot training), Flight Simulation Company in Netherlands (for pilot training), Afrika Union Aviation Academy in South Africa (pilot training), Adcorp Technical Training in South Africa (mining industry technicians), Furntech Furniture in South Africa (for furniture making), and a host of others in different parts of the world.

According to the director, with regard to the reason why most of the training is located abroad, and only a few options are located in the country, the Head of Reintegration said it was due to the paucity of spaces and institutions that have the capacity for the kind of training they wanted to give to the youth (ex-militants and non-militants alike). According to him, considering the sensitivity of the programme, any delay in posting these people for skill acquisition may provoke undue apprehension. Moreover, because the scheme is time bound, they needed a place where there is guarantee that somebody who is suppose to spend three or four years for his/ her studies is not hindered by unforeseen circumstances. The amnesty programme and more especially the reintegration phase faced different challenges. One of such problems was corruption. This manifests in several ways. By its design, the Amnesty Office contracts out to private agencies the training of the ex-combatants at training centres, including universities and vocational skills training centres, both locally and internationally. In bidding for the contract, which is usually competitive, accounts suggest that bribes are usually offered to the government officials in order to secure the huge budget contracts. As a result, inexperienced people who lack the capacity to train the ex-combatants sometimes secure the contracts. In an interview with an evaluator of the programme, he also gave examples that some trainees were flown abroad ostensibly for training, only to be stationed in hotel accommodation where they received the monthly stipend for a long period of time without being trained. According to him, this partly explains the reason for setting up of independent monitoring and evaluation teams to sanitize the system. In similar vein, some news reports suggest that the money budgeted for the reintegration programme is being embezzled by government officials and contractors. For example, a news report claimed that eighty percent of the N50 billion budgeted for the take-off of the reintegration process was pocketed by consultants and contractors.

Another challenge to the reintegration programme was the issue of inclusion and placement of ex-combatants for training programmes. Official reports indicate that 30,000 combatants were demobilised in different phases after the declaration of amnesty in 2009. Of this number, only 18,706 demobilised combatants have been included for reintegration programmes (out of which 15,392 have graduated while 3,314 are still undergoing training). This suggests that only 62 per cent of the ex-combatants have been considered for reintegration (Strides of Presidential Amnesty, 2015), while the government has indicated that the programme will officially end in 2015. On the other hand, the Head of Reintegration stated that the winding down of the programme by the end of 2015 will not in any way affect the training of those who are already included in the programme. While this could be true, the fact that those who originally were responsible for the training and posting of the former militants may no longer be directly responsible for their training may affect the smooth running of the programme.

More so, the politicisation of the government's management of the reintegration policy was another problem bedeviling the programme. This manifests in the way the programme is perceived by other ethnic groups, regions and political actors in the country given the huge budget allocation the programme attracts, namely, as a project used to specially empower youths of the Niger Delta.

**Amnesty and Capital Grants Programme**

Ajibola (2015) has contended that majority of the people feel that empowerment of ex-militants will stimulate peace and development in post-conflict Niger Delta. This is because evidence from the situation of things in the region during the amnesty period shows that, the level of violence in the region and militancy has decreased as a result of the intervention. The energies of ex-militants who are the major beneficiaries have been re-channeled into other avenues. They have been engaged positively through the empowerment program. However, and more importantly, more than half of the respondents (53%) feel that empowerment is not enough to stimulate peace and development in post-conflict Niger Delta because the problem in the Niger Delta is multi-dimensional. Other areas pertaining to the development of the region, which are very fundamental to the problem, have not been addressed. It is also believed that the program is selective, in that it catered only to ex-militants rather than for the generality of youths in the region; environmental challenges such as gas flaring and improving the lives of the people in the Niger Delta have not been addressed, and allegations of corruption have dogged the entire amnesty program.

Again, it is indicated that most of the participants successfully utilized the training, skills, and education they received in the amnesty training camps to improve themselves by way of obtaining gainful employment, starting up their own businesses, participate in civic and community activities, and have become productive citizens of their respective communities rather than getting involved in militant activities. While some of the graduates have not been gainfully employed, they have availed themselves to other opportunities including contract awards and running for a political office.

In line with the above action by the amnesty office, the reintegration of the militants and found out that no fewer than 300 ex-militants from the Niger Delta region were empowered in that year with business set up materials and finance to start their small and medium scale businesses as part of efforts to reintegrate them into society. The delegates are beneficiaries of empowerment programmes initiated by the Presidential Amnesty Office for ex-militants of the region, which include sales of building materials, electronics, fisheries, super markets. The ex-militants were also urged to learn how to plough back profits into their businesses. According to him, the empowerment scheme was aimed at assisting the trained delegates and equiping them to be the new generation of entrepreneurs.

However, in spite of the government's efforts in rehabilitating and reintegrating ex-militants, some of them were repatriated from their countries of training for misdemeanors while some were punished in the countries of training. For instance, 27 out of 212 ex-militants were apprehended by the Ghana authorities for unruly behaviour at the National Vocation Training Institute, Ghana. The apprehended 27 trainees did not like the kinds of food being served and therefore, requested for food-for-money, which was disapproved by the hotel management. There was an argument, which later culminated in fighting and heckling of hotel staff. On their release by the authorities, they were repatriated back to Nigeria. Again, on 15 August 2011, eight out of fifty ex-militants who were sponsored for vocational training in undersea wielding and boat building at the Topher Zhang Maritime Vocational Centre in Sri Lanka on

22 July 2011, were ordered repatriation following their expulsion from the training centre for offence ranging from fighting to willful destruction of training equipments. These are just a few of the repatriation exercises conducted by the Amnesty office (Oluwaniyi, 2011).

Ikelegbe & Onokerhoraye (2016) pointed out that there have been difficulties with the useful engagement or absorption of the ex-militants for full and productive lives after the completion of their post rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. Efforts have not been substantial and have not resulted in the generation of much employment opportunities. Altogether, PAP has only facilitated employment of 113 former militants as at early 2014. On the other hand, in 2014, the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) began a pilot scheme for post- training employment and start up business packs and funds in which only about 300 were provided support for specialized businesses such as welding, fish farming and retail business. Thus, most ex-militants remain jobless and un-productively engaged, relying solely on monthly government stipends and aid from family members and friends.

More so, the programme has been quite expensive particularly because of an extensive system of payments to ex-militants and a large-scale reintegration programme of education, skills acquisition and training within and outside Nigeria. As at February 2014, over $1.65 billion has been expended on the programme. Of the budgeted sum of about $.57billion in 2013, about 35% was spent on stipends and allowances of 30,000 ex-militants, while over 55% was allocated for reintegration of ex-militants (http:thecitizenng.com, as cited by Ikelegbe & Onokerhoraye, 2016). Furthermore, the names of those who have completed their training or education is placed on the website of the amnesty office. This, according to the Head of Reintegration, is to pave the way for intentional job placements for the ex-militants. Additionally, government is also encouraged to build local capacity to accommodate the very large number of youths who require employment.

## Methods

This research adopted the survey research design. For the purposes of data collection, it adopted both primary and secondary methods of data collection. For the primary sources, it relied on the survey method of data collection using questionnaire, in-depth interview and official documents and on the primary sources of data to generate primary and quantitative data. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were applied in this study.

## Population of the Study

The main target population of this study comprises all ex-militants of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria who have duly participated or are still participating in the amnesty programme from 2009. To be more particular, we shall be targeting those of them who have gone through the phases of the amnesty programme and have participated or still participating in the reintegration phase of the amnesty prgramme. This reintegration stage involves the training of the militants in different skills and career which include education- sponsorship of first degrees in different higher institutions, welding and fabrication, fashion and design, agriculture, oil and gas drilling, automobile technical training, crane operation, aviation, catering and food production, under water welding and others.

Official reports indicate that 30,000 combatants were demobilized in different phases after the declaration of amnesty in 2009. Of this number, only 18,706 demobilized combatants have been included for reintegration programmes (out of which 15,392 have graduated while 3,314 are still undergoing training) as at 2015 when the amnesty programme was supposed to end. Based on the above information, our target population for this study is the 18,706 ex-

militants who passed through the reintegration phase of the amnesty programme. It is from this population that we shall select our sample size for the distribution of questionnaires.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

Our total population is 18,706 ex-militants. However, this population is a very large population to study in this type of study. We therefore selected a sample population out of the above total population. In order to select the sample population for this study, we employed the Taro Yamane's Statistical Formula due to the high level capacity of the formula to control sampling error. Yamane (1973) Statistical Formula is stated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$$

Where n = the sample size

N = the total population

e = tolerable error (which is usually 0.05%)

Therefore,

$$n = \frac{18706}{(1+18706\ (0.5)^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{18706}{1+18706\ (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{18706}{1 + 46.765}$$

$$n = \frac{18706}{47.765}$$

$$n = 391.625667$$

$$n = 392$$

From the above statistical calculation using the Taro Yamane's formular, we got sample population to be 392 after applying the approximation function theory to the number, 391.625667. Thus, we distributed 392 questionnaires to 392 respondents who are ex-militants that participated or still participating in the rehabilitation phase of the programme. To this population, we asked questions that helped us ascertain if the Amnesty Programme has been able to provide ex-militants with necessary skills for self-employment and also provided grants to ex-militants to enable them set up SMEs and if the grants have enabled them achieve the set objective. The 392 respondents were selected based on simple random sampling since all the ex-militants who have participated in the reintegration programme will be able to supply us with the needed information. We shall also ensure that the respondents will come from all the states of the Niger Delta from where the ex-militants who participated in the amnesty programme came originated. We used convenience sampling technique in administering the questionnaire since all the ex-militants do not stay in a particular place.

Again, some of them are still undergoing training and studies outside the country. So the questionnaire distribution was based on availability of the respondents.

Furthermore, we visited the Amnesty Office located at 37A Nile Street Maitama, Abuja. There, we engaged the staff and management of the office in in-depth interview. The purpose of the interview was to gather data on what the office has been able to achieve in line with the reintegration programme as well as future plans, challenges and other important information that may be useful to this study. We also interviewed the 6 Deputy-Directors of the office. These include: Deputy-Directors Accounts, Procurement, Admin, Information, and Budgeting. The total number of civil servants staff there is 30. Out of this number, we interviewed 10 percent of them to add to the information we shall get from the Deputy-Directors.

**Empirical Verification**

The hypotheses stated in the previous sections were tested in order to either validate or invalidate them. Following our methodology, we shall carry out the empirical verification using data collected from both primary and secondary sources. We distributed 392 questionnaires to ex-militants and we were able to collect all back. Thus, the analysis below is based on responses gotten from 392 respondents.

**HYPOTHESIS I: THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME'S VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHEME AND SKILLS ACQUISITION BY EX-MILITANTS**

Demography of Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 380 | 97 |
| Female | 12 | 30.6 |
| Total | 392 | 100 |

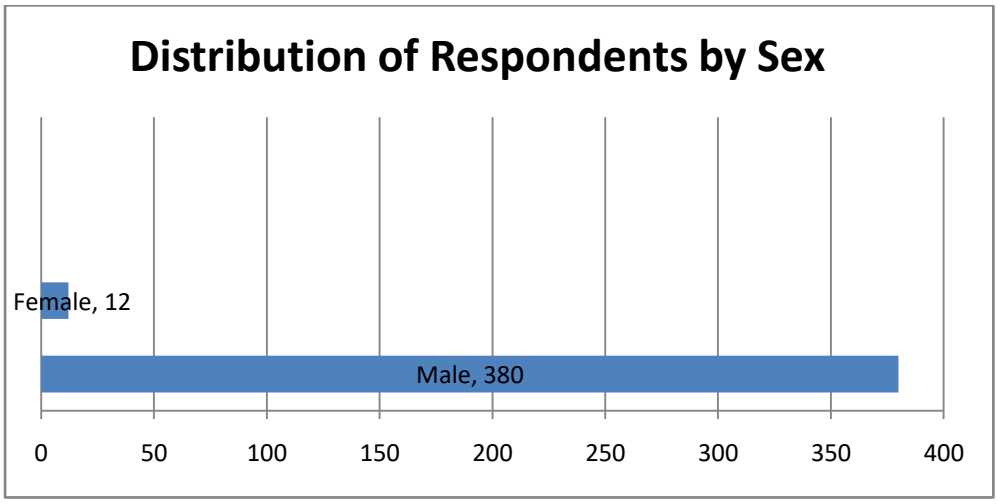


Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

| Age Bracket | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 18-25 | 10 | 25.5 |
| 26-39 | 300 | 76.5 |
| 40-55 | 60 | 15.3 |
| 56 & above | 22 | 56.1 |
| Total | 392 | 100 |

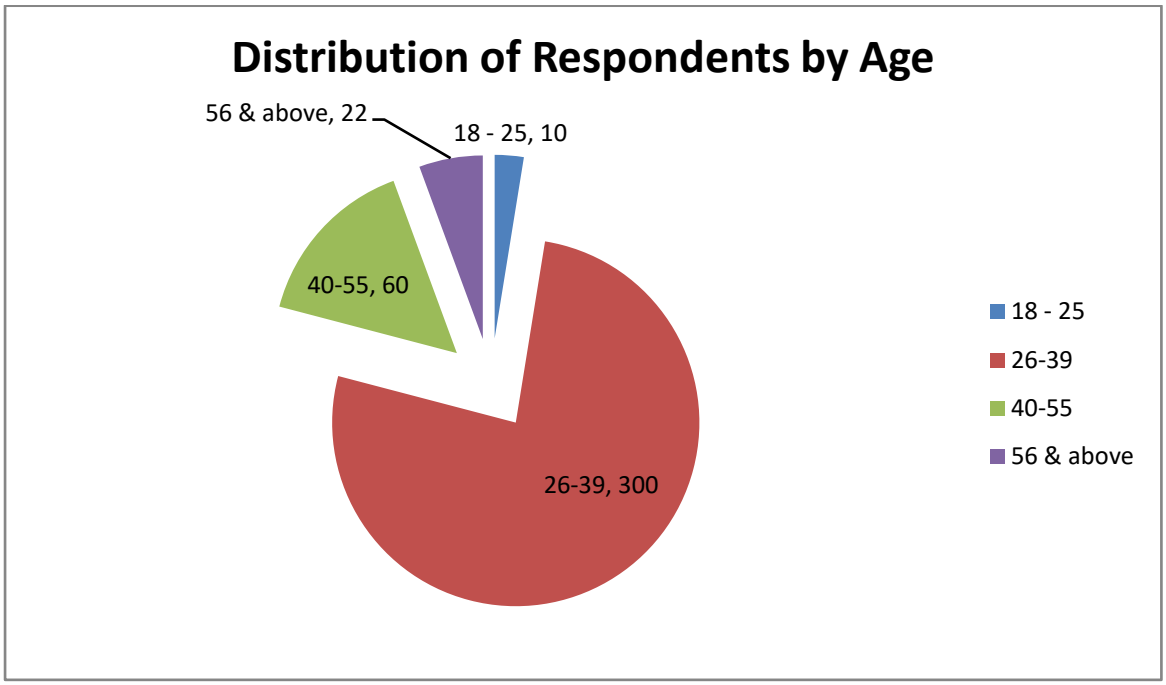


Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by State of Origin

| State | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Abia | 50 | 12.7 |
| Bayelsa | 50 | 12.7 |
| Akwa Ibom | 50 | 12.7 |
| Edo | 20 | 5.1 |
| Delta | 100 | 25.5 |
| Rivers | 50 | 12.7 |
| Ondo | 30 | 76.5 |
| Cross River | 20 | 5.1 |
| Imo | 22 | 5.61 |
| Total | 392 | 100 |

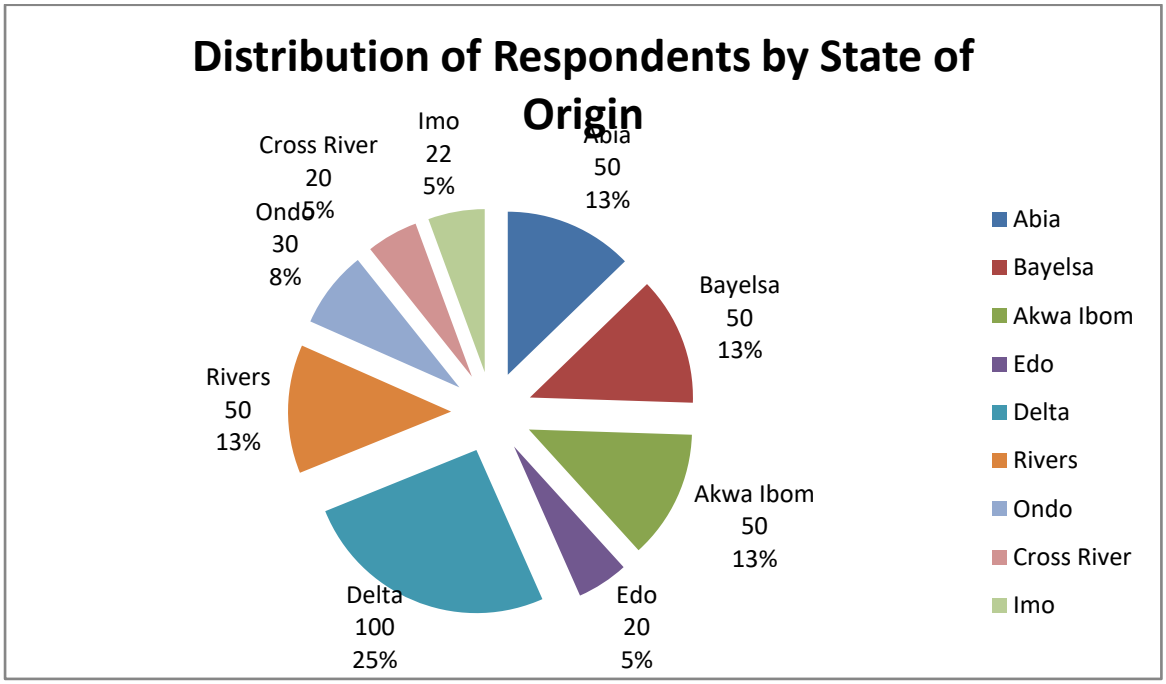


Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification

| Qualification | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| G.C.E and O& A Level | 100 | 25.5 |
| SSCE | 100 | 25.5 |
| HND | 92 | 23.4 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 100 | 25.5 |
| Master's Degree | Nil | 0.51 |
| Ph.D | Nil | NIL |
| Total | 392 | 100 |

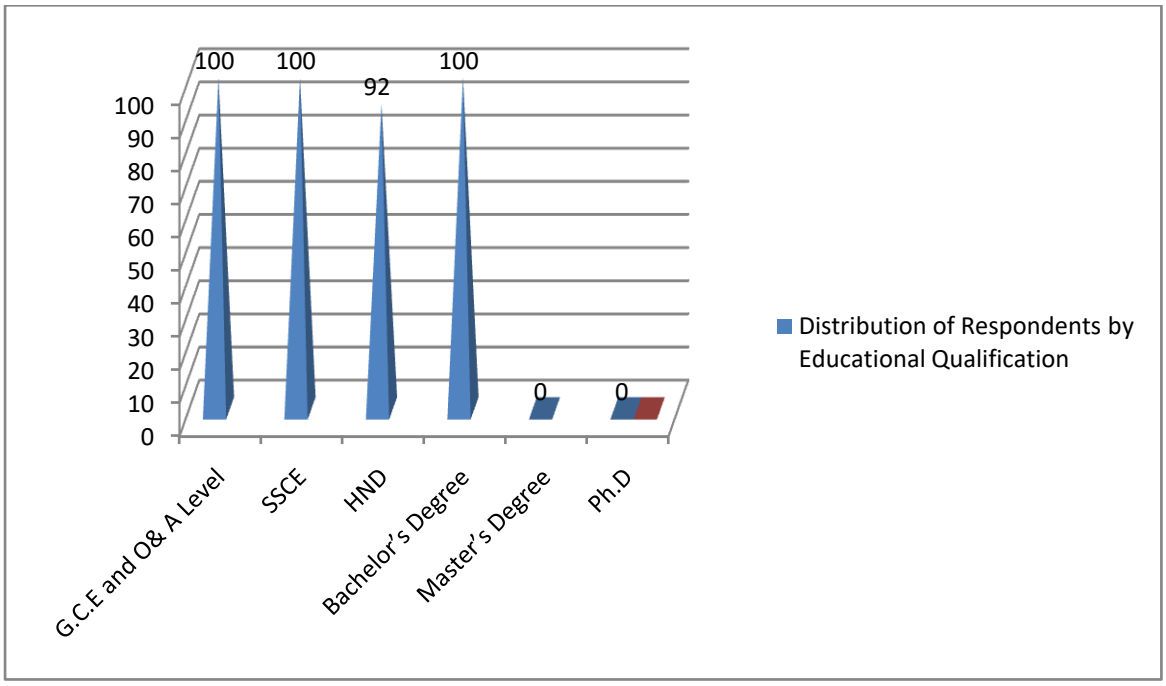



Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by time spent in the Amnesty Programme

| Duration | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 0-2 years | 50 | 12.7 |
| 2-4 years | 50 | 12.7 |
| 4-6 years | 100 | 25.5 |
| 6-8 years | 100 | 25.5 |
| 8 years and above | 92 | 23.4 |
| Total | 392 | 100 |

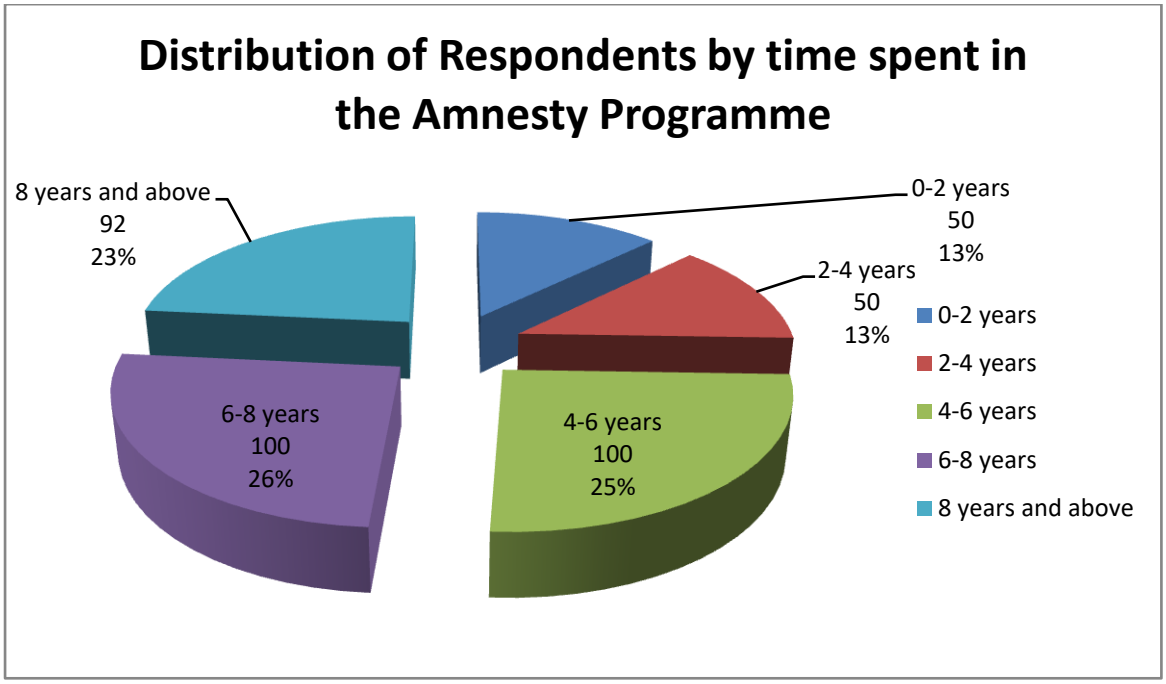



Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by their current phase in the Amnesty Programme

| Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Rehabilitation Phase | Nil | NIL |
| Graduated from the rehabilitation phase | 392 | 100 |
| Total | 392 | 100 |

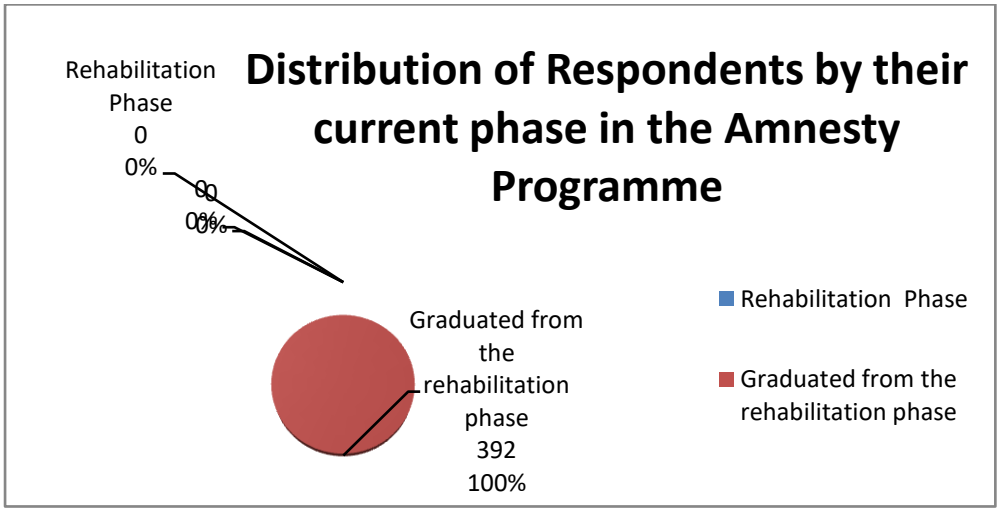
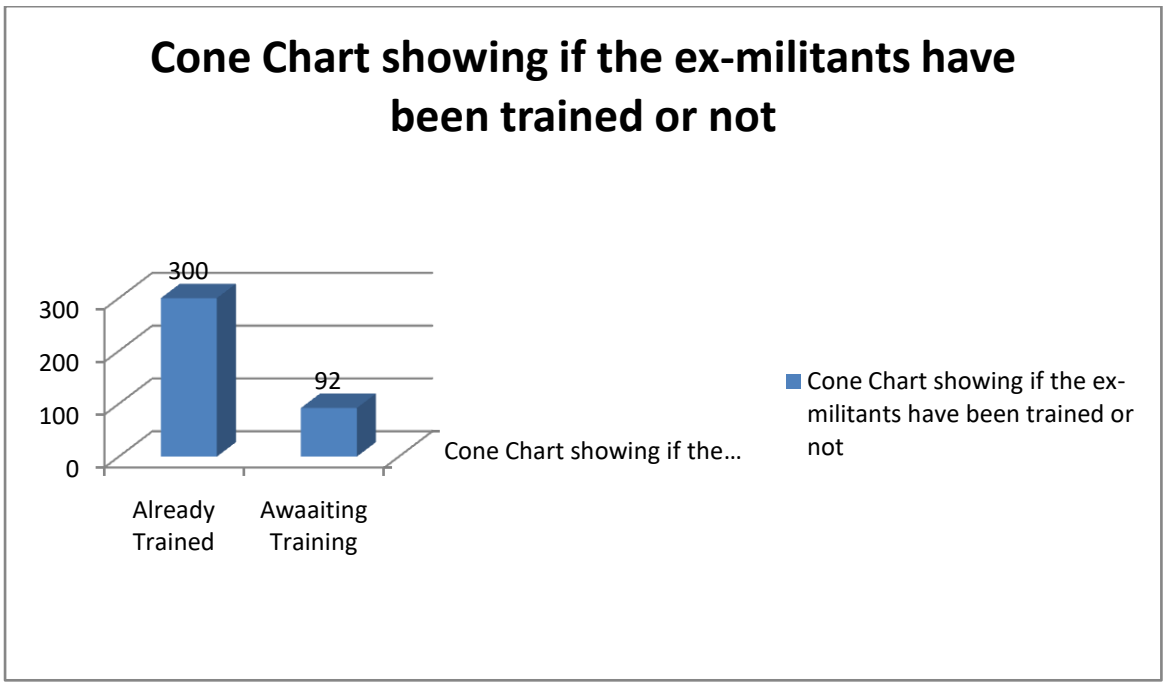


Table 7: Distribution of ex-militants on the number of them that have been trained and those still awaiting training

| Trained or awaiting training | Number of Ex-militants |
|---|---|
| Trained | 300 |
| Awaiting training | 92 |
| Total | 392 |

In assessing provision of skills to the ex-militants by the amnesty office, we found out that great number of the ex-militants have actually been trained in different kills to enable them become self-employed. This is shown in the responses we got from the respondents as 300 ex-militants indicated that they have been provided with skills for self employment under the vocational scheme of the Amnesty while 92 were currently waiting for the next batch to be posted to vocational centres towards skills acquisition. This is shown in the chart below.




Initially, these ex-militants were sent to private-owned skills acquisition centres located at warri, calabar, Akure, Eket and Port Harcourt. However, it cost the amnesty office and the country a lot of money to manage. Thus, the amnesty office embarked on building its own skills acquisition centres in different parts of the country. Some of these centres are presented below.

Table 8: Some vocational and skill training Centres where ex-militants were trained or still being trained

| **Centre** | **State of Location** |
|---|---|
| Oil and Gas Vocational Training Centre, Agadagba | Ondo State |
| Power and Energy Vocational Centre, Bomadi | Delta State |
| Maritime Vocational Training Centre, Oboama | Rivers State |
| Basic Skills Vocational Training Centre, Boro Town, Kaiama | Bayelsa State |
| Agricultural Vocational Training Centre, Gelegele | Edo State |
| Innoson Kiara Academy, Nnewi, | Anambra State |
| Topher Zhang Vocational Institute | Colombo, Sri Lanka |
| IFP Training School | Paris, France |

Source: Compiled by the author from https://www.osapnd.gov.ng/prof-charles-dokubos-100-days-in-office/and https://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/07/1019-ex-n-delta-militants-in-training-overseas-kuku/

Apart from the 392 ex-militants to whom we distributed our questionnaire to, we also relied on secondary sources to ascertain the number of ex-militants that have undergone skills acquisition training. However, as at March, 2018, according to The Amnesty Programme Office (2018), out of the 30,000 persons enlisted in the Presidential Amnesty Programme, 11,297 persons are yet to be placed in either vocational training facilities or deployed for formal education. The table below showed the data of already trained ex-militants and the skills they were trained in.

Furthermore, Prof. Charles Dokubo who is the Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta and Coordinator, Amnesty Programme, maintained that the training centres build by the Amnesty Programme Office are also linked to universities and institutions somas to achieve proper certification for the trainiees. Thus, the Ondo centre is affiliated to the Petroleum Training Institute, Effurrun. He further disclosed according to Alemma (2018), that a total of 1,537 former agitators have graduated from institutions of learning abroad, while 207 others are currently studying various courses abroad. He said between 2017 and this year, 2,633 Amnesty Programme students were studying in higher institutions in the country among whom 556 have graduated. He said 34 law graduates would be called to Bar this month, adding that 4,903 ex-agitators have been empowered by the programme since its inception.

More so, some of the ex-militants were sent to different institutions of higher learning to study different courses. Among the ones that responded tou our questionnaires, 10 of them indicated that they were sent to a school of higher learning to acquire a degree. They further said that they attended the Benson Idahosa University, Benin City. Out of the 10 of them, 5 ex-militants studied International Studies and Diplomacy, 3 read Accounting and 2 read Political Science. It is also worthy of note that all the 392 respondents submitted that they actually mace the choice of the skills they were trained in and not chosen for them by the amnesty office or any other body.

We further to gather data through the secondary sources on the number of ex-militants that have been trained in various skills since the commencement of the amnesty programme till date. Below is a table showing the number of ex-militants already trained in various skills.

Table 9: Ex -Militants trained in different vocational skills

| S/N | Skills | Number of ex-militants trained |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Agriculture | 239 |
| 2 | Automobile | 207 |
| 3 | Welding and Fabrication | 2,204 |
| 4 | Entrepreneurship | 2,279 |
| 5 | Carpentry and Plumbing | 298 |
| 6 | Oil Drilling & Marine | 916 |
| 7 | Electrical Installation | 89 |
| 8 | ICT | 273 |
| 9 | Crave & heavy duty machine | 1,030 |
| 10 | Boat building | 299 |
| 11 | Pipe fitting | 250 |
| 12 | Entertainment | 60 |
| 13 | Others | 618 |
| 14 | Education in institutions of Higher Learning Abroad | 1,537 |
| 15 | Total | 10,729 |

Compiled by the author from Business Day (2014) http//businessdayonline.com/2013/04youthempowerment\ Accessed 18/6/2023**;** Vanguard (2018) https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/11/amnesty-office-activates-rivers-edo-bayelsa-ondo-delta-training-centres/ Accessed on 29th November, 2018

More so, the ex-militants were further asked how long it took them to learn the skills from the centres. From this we found that learnt 70 ex-militants among the respondents learnt fashion and design within the duration of 6 months; 150 ex militants learnt fishing under agriculture within the duration of 3 months; 48 ex-militants learnt Oil and Gas drilling within the duration of 1 year; 20 ex-militants learnt crane operation within 6 months; 2 ex-militants learnt piloting within the duration of 3 years; 50 ex-militants learnt catering and food production within the duration of 6 months; while 59 ex-militants learnt under water welding within the duration of 1 year. The above data is tabulated below.

Table 10: Ex-militants and the duration they spent in learning their various skills

| **Number of Respondent Ex-militants** | **Skill Learnt** | **Duration Skill was Learnt** |
|---|---|---|
| 70 | fashion and design | 6 months |
| 150 | Fishing | 3 months |
| 48 | Oil and Gas drilling | 1 year |
| 20 | crane operation | 6 months |
| 2 | Piloting | 3 years |
| 50 | catering and food production | 6 months |
| 59 | under water welding | 1 year |

Compiled by the author from field research (Survey)

We further wanted to ascertain when they actually graduated from the amnesty programme. Thus, the table below shows the different years of graduation of the ex-militants from the skills acquisition centres.

Table 11: Distribution of ex-militants according to their years of graduation from the skills acquisition centres.

| **Nature** | **Frequency** | **Year of Graduation** |
|---|---|---|
| Sponsorship for first degree in different higher institutions | 10 | 2016 |
| Fashion and Design | 60 | 2012 |
| Agriculture | 150 | 2016 |
| Oil and gas drilling | 48 | 2017 |
| Automobile technical training | 2 | 2016 |
| Crane Operation | 20 | 2015 |
| Aviation | 2 | 2015 |
| Catering and food production | 50 | 2018 |
| Under Water welding | 50 | 2017 |
| Total | 392 | |

Compiled by the author from field research (Survey)

The respondents were then asked if they think the skills they have acquired will help discourage them from going back to the creeks. 300 ex-militants respondents affirmed that the skill acquired will help them to live a fulfilled life, while 92 ex-militants disagreed and maintained that the skill acquired is not sufficient or a fulfilled life for them. This means that training alone cannot guarantee good

livelihood and life success for the ex-militants. More is required for proper rehabilitation from the government of Nigeria.

Table 12
Ex-militants responses on the expected outcome of the skill acquisition training

| **Number of Respondent Ex-militants** | **Responses** |
|---|---|
| 300 | the skill acquired will help them to live a fulfilled life |
| 92 | the skill acquired is not sufficient for a fulfilled life for them |

Compiled by the author from field research (Survey)

In summary, having answered our first research question, we found out that the amnesty programme has actually provided skills to majority of the ex-militants, while some of them are still going through the training. More so, we also found out that some of the ex-militants are schooling both in Nigeria and outside Nigeria in various institutions. It is also part of our findings that the ex-militants actually love the skills they were trained in because the made the choice of the skills by themselves.

Based on the above findings, we uphold our hypothesis I which says that the Amnesty Programme's vocational training scheme has been able to provide ex-militants with necessary skills for self-employment.

**HYPOTHESIS II: THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME PROVIDED CAPITAL GRANTS TO EX-MILITANTS TO ENABLE THEM SET UP SMES.**

In this section, we tried to ensure that the same respondents who responded to the posed questions based on our first research question are also in a good position to supply adequate answers that will enable us answer our second research question. Thus we tried to ascertain once more from the respondents whether they have actually graduated from the integration phase of the amnesty programme as well as the skills they learnt and the year of graduation.

To the above questions, we ascertained that all our 392 respondents have actually graduated from the integration phase of the amnesty programme. The skills they graduate from and the years of graduation are already stated in the tables above.

Based on the above, we wanted to know if the ex-militants actually received certificates of graduation from the skills acquisition centres after their graduation. The table below shows the number of respondents that have graduated from different skills and the certificates they received after graduation.

Table 13: Distribution of ex-militants according to the skills they graduated from and the certificates they received

| **Nature** | **Frequency** | **Certificate** |
|---|---|---|
| Sponsorship for first degree in different higher institutions | 10 | B.sc/B.A |
| Fashion and Design | 60 | NBTE approved modular certificate |
| Agriculture | 150 | NBTE approved modular certificate |
| Oil and gas drilling | 48 | NBTE approved modular certificate |
| Automobile technical training | 2 | NBTE approved modular certificate |
| Crane Operation | 20 | NBTE approved modular certificate |
| Piloting | 2 | Nil |
| Catering and food production | 50 | NBTE approved modular certificate |
| Under Water welding | 50 | NBTE approved modular certificate |
| Total | 392 | |

Compiled by the author from field research (Survey)

It is expected that this certificate will serve as an evidence of engagement in and completion of the acquisition of such skills or knowledge and also serve as a tool for helping them secure jobs fro those who wish to work in already established businesses.

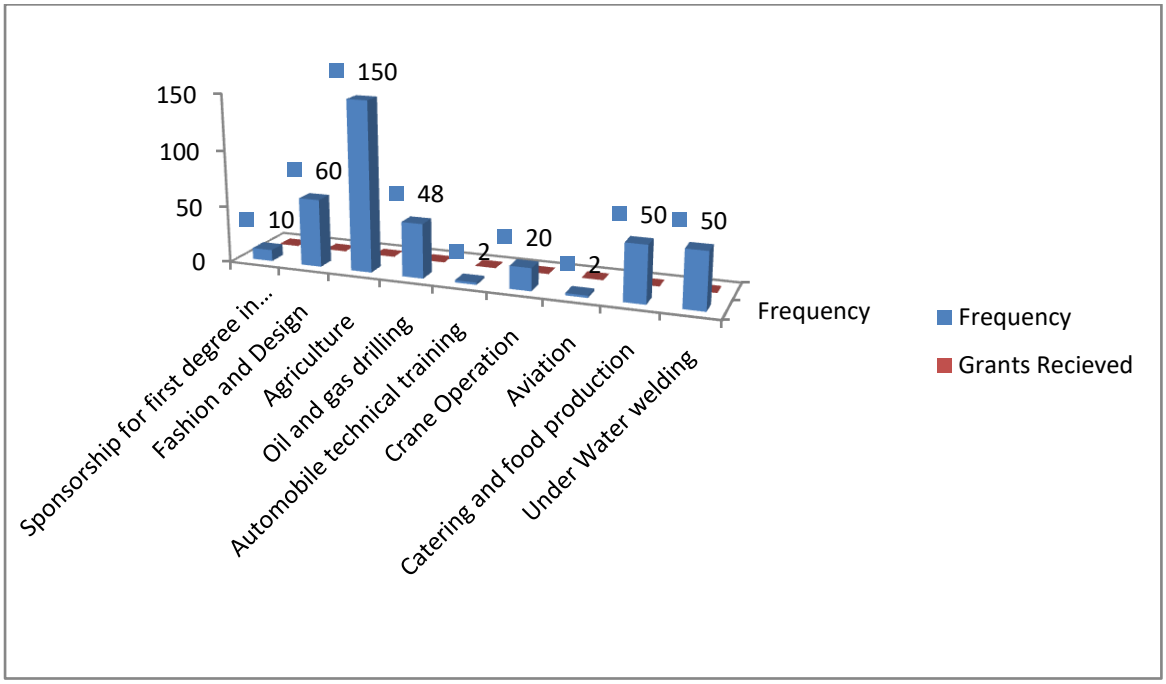
In line with the above, according to Amnesty Programme Office (2018), the Special Adviser to the President on Niger Delta and Coordinator, Amnesty Programme, Prof. Dokubo has submitted that as part of the Amnesty Office's determination to facilitate job placement for beneficiaries of the Amnesty Programme, a Job Placement and International Development Partners Engagement Unit (JPIDPEU) has been created on May 2, 2018. As at late 2018, the unit has profiled 28 delegates for underwater welding jobs in oil servicing companies; 100 delegates for civil service jobs and 10 delegates for aviation crop spray pilot jobs. It has also concluded profiling of 25 delegates for catering services, hotel and fast food jobs and 75 delegates for other job opportunities. He maintained, as stated by the Amnesty Programme Office (2018), that this is just the beginning of an action plan of the Post Training Engagement and Job Placement units of the Amnesty Office for the next two years. The 28 successful delegates for underwater welding jobs in oil servicing companies are among 53 delegates profiled for selection after a data verification of 103 beneficiaries on the list of those trained in welding.

Furthermore, the ex-militants were asked if they were provided with grant to start small or medium scale business. All of them indicated that they were provided with grants in different forms and amounts. The table below, thus shows the different amounts which the respondent ex-militants were given at the end of their skills acquisition training programmes:

Table 14: Distribution of ex-militants based on the different amounts they were given after their graduation from skills acquisition training

| **Nature of skill** | **Frequency** | **Grants Received** |
|---|---|---|
| Sponsorship for first degree in different higher institutions | 10 | Still awaiting placement in the Federal Civil Service and other government parastatal by the Civil Service Commission/ as signed in the MOU of the Amnesty office. |
| Fashion and Design | 60 | #3,000,000 to each ex-militants |
| Agriculture | 150 | #3,000,000 to each ex-militants |
| Oil and gas drilling | 48 | #5,000,000 to each ex-militants |
| Automobile technical training | 2 | #5,000,000 to each ex-militants |
| Crane Operation | 20 | #7,000,000 to each ex-militants |
| Aviation | 2 | 2015, Awaiting grants |
| Catering and food production | 50 | 2018, Awaiting grants |
| Under Water welding | 50 | 2017, Awaiting grants |
| Total | 392 | |

Compiled by the author from field research (Survey)




The above data shows that majority of the ex-militants actually received grants of different amounts after their graduation from the skills acquisition training. The above data was meant to be supported by data from the Amnesty Programme Office. However, we could not lay our hands on the data due to bureaucratic bottleneck and secrecy of confidential documents maintained by the Amnesty Programme Office.

Further related to the above is the provision of starter packs and other support packages for the ex-militants after their graduation from the skills acquisition programmes. From the questionnaires, we gathered that the ex-militants were also provided with other packages like starter packs to also enable them start up a business. The table below shows that different support packages made available to our respondents based on the different skills they have been trained on.

Table 15: Distribution of ex-militants based on the nature of grants they have received from the Amnesty Office

| **Nature of skill** | **Frequency** | **Grants received** |
|---|---|---|
| Sponsorship for first degree in different higher institutions | 10 | Still awaiting placement in the Federal Civil Service and other government parastatal by the Civil Service Commission as signed in the MOU of the Amnesty office. |
| Fashion and Design | 60 | Sewing Machine, Weaving machine, Generator Set, Pressing Iron, 1 bundle of assorted fabric materials, 2 bundles of hangers, 5 human dummy for displaying finished handwork, business name registration certificate to each ex-militants. |
| Agriculture | 150 | Generator Set, Pumping machine, 5 bucket of finger lens fish, 10 bags of fish feed, 5 plastic rubbers, 2 tarpaulin fish pond, , business name registration certificate to each ex-militants |
| Oil and gas drilling | 48 | Awaiting support package |
| Automobile technical training | 2 | Air compressor, jack stand, oil drain and oil caddy, battery charger and jumper, engine hoist, brake lathe, strut compressor, air conditioning machine and transmission jack, business name certificate to each ex-militants |
| Crane Operation | 20 | Awaiting support package |
| Aviation | 2 | Awaiting support package |
| Catering and food production | 50 | Gas cooker, Oven, Generator set, Cake mixer, 5 big pots, Freezer, Serving dish, business name certificate. |
| Under Water welding | 50 | Awaiting support package |
| Total | 392 | |

Compiled by the author from field research (Survey)

More so, 10 ex-militants initially indicated on table 11 above, that they received sponsorship for first degree in institutions of higher learning. These ex-militants further submitted that they were awaiting placement in Federal Civil Service Commission and other government parastatal as signed in the Memorandum of Understanding of the Amnesty office. Based on

this, we could not ascertain the level they were placed in the civil service and the amount they are paid currently. On the other hand, Adetayo (2018) reported that the Federal Government has offered employment to 350 Niger Delta ex-agitators who graduated from various tertiary institutions across the world (https://punchng.com/fg-offers-jobs-to-350-niger-delta-ex-militants-2/).

Again, in line with the aims and objectives of the amnesty programme, the respondents were asked if they see the skills acquisition programme and the grants and other support packages they have gotten as something that can discourage them from going back the creeks and resuming militancy. In summary, their responses show that with the orientation given to them in the whole amnesty programme as well as the trainings and other supports in respect to the job specifications, allowances and staff capacity building, ex-militants believe they will be contented with the pay and not return back to militancy. This answer is also coming based on the sad experiences they have been involved in during the days of militancy.

Finally, we asked the respondents what they think are the problems of the amnesty programme as a whole having been participants in the whole process. In their responses, they submitted that such problems as: delayed payment of stipends; Lack of adequate funding for the amnesty programme; subsisting under-developed nature of the Niger Delta till date; Psychological effects of the environment on other indigenes of the Niger Delta region; lack of adequate compensation for conflict-affected communities, victims and those who lost their properties, mothers who have lost children, children who had lost fathers, families that have lost homes and persons who had been displaced by the conflict are not compensated .Unfortunately, to cap it up, the Niger Delta region is being starved as the golden goose that lays the golden eggs. It was found out that the Amnesty Programme has trained majority of the ex-militants and has gone further to provide financial and other forms of empowerment to them. The starter packs and the financial support is expected to help the ex-militants start a small or medium scale business. Again, those of them who went to higher institutions of learning and have graduated are yet to be absorbed in the civil service.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study examined the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria which was instituted in 2009 by the President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's administration and the effectiveness of its reintegration policy. The following research questions were posed in order to achieve the objectives: (1). Did the reintegration policy provide ex-militants with necessary vocational skills for self-employment? (2). Has the reintegration policy empowered ex-militants with capital grants to enable them set up survival enterprises? The study adopted the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) theory as framework for analysis in this research. Methodologically, it utilized the survey research design and adopted both documentary and survey methods of data collection. The study found out that the amnesty programme has actually provided skills to majority of the ex-militants, though some are yet to receive such training while some are still undergoing the training. Again, it was discovered that some of the ex-militants who have been trained have also received some financial support and other starter packs that will endable them start a small or medium scale business. Majority of those of them who went to higher institutions of learning and have graduated have also been absorbed in the civil service.

The study, however, makes the following recommendations:

1. There is need for quick rehabilitation of the ex-militants who are yet to be rehabilitated. It is unimaginable that since 2009, there are still some ex-militants who

have not received any form of training and still depend only on the monthly stipend from the government. This could be an avenue for the affected ex-militants to rethink staring militancy.

2. The starter packs given to the ex-militants as well as the funds are good, but more still needs to be done in terms of increasing the amount and for proper monitoring of the ex-militants to ensure that the funds provided to them are judiciously used for the intended purpose.

3. More so, those of them who want to take up civil service jobs should be expeditiously absolved by the government. There is no acceptable reason for leaving such persons to stay unemployed for a long time after graduation if the amnesty programme is actually for reintegration purpose.

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