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Impact of militancy on human security in Niger delta: Evidence from food and environmental security

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Abstract

The inability to maximise the potential of nature in the Niger Delta; air pollution, unsafe drinking water, low yield of crops due to endless oil spillage and a threatened aquatic system mostly occasioned by the menace of Niger Delta militancy constitute threats to threats, fear and lack to individual wellbeing in the Delta region and this negates the narrative of human security. It is against this background, that this study leverages on relative deprivation theory to investigate the impact of food and environmental security on human security Niger Delta, Nigeria. The study measured human security with food security and environmental security. The study adopted descriptive survey research design and primary data were collected with the aid of questionnaire designed in a four Likert scale manner to extract information from purposively selected flashpoints of militancy in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria. The population of the study is 5,378,500. This study engages Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) scientific sampling technique determination which recommends a sample size of 384 for a population above a million. Ordinary least square regression analysis was employed to analyse the data. The study revealed that food and environmental security have negative significant impact on human security in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria. Based on these findings, the study concludes that a threatened food and environmental security predict human insecurity in Niger Delta, Nigeria. If food security and environmental security is assured and improved, then human security will be on a strong footing in the volatile region of Niger Delta. The study recommends that Federal and State Government should spend more on these critical platforms that explains human security by focusing on good governance as against militarization of the Niger Delta region.

Keywords: Environmental Security; Food Security; Human Security; Militancy; Relative Deprivation Theory

1. Introduction

The menace of militancy in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria and its attendant threats through environmental degradation from blown off flow stations, oil spillage, leading to low yield of farm produce, loss of marine and extinction of marine lives are all signposts of living in or residing in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria entails. The dreadful nature of involvements of these frustrated youths is causing fear not only in government representative, the residents and likewise investors in the region, whose means of livelihood is being perpetually endangered and mostly thrown into a state of wants; these want is not restricted to protection of lives and property education insecurity, economic security, community security, health security but also of environmental security and food security all which could fractionally account for the want of human security in the oil rich Niger Delta region.

Human security is development matched with human protection from fear and from wants and these are the very basics that militancy in the Niger Delta threatens to its foundation. The very deplorable environmental condition of the region

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due to oil spillage deprive occupants of the region access to safe drinkable water while both aquatic yield via fishing and agricultural yield for food production shrink further away from agriculture subsistence capabilities thus raising the food insecurity flag. Judging that agriculture itself is an employer of labour from which many are being forced away could also be responsible for economic insecurity as more resident could be seen thrown out of jobs either due to activities of the multinational or particularly the militancy operations of the restless youths in the Niger Delta.

The Niger Delta region known for its vast deposit of crude oil was also, long before Nigeria starts independence, a custodian of an unspoiled environment which supported substantial subsistence resources for the largely sedentary populations. Afinotan and Ojkorotu (2009), revealed that the region accounted for a large percentage of Nigeria's commercial fishery industry and has the third largest mangrove forest in the world. However, oil prospecting in the same Niger Delta has led to vast destruction of vegetation, farmlands and human settlements which has given room to severe environmental degradation (Eyinla & Ukpou, 2006).

However, one issue that has continued to attract national and global attention to the Niger Delta region in recent time is the spate of militancy in the Niger Delta. The frequent attacks on oil installations and facilities by militant groups in the region have become a source of concern to peace lovers, scholars and policy makers alike, (Fidelis *et al.*, 2011). The activities of several armed militant groups have cast a huge shadow of doubt on the safety of life, commerce and properties. Although their activities are said to be directed towards fighting for a good cause, the means adopted had caused threats to the lives of residents in the areas (Ajibola *et al.*, 2014).

It is noteworthy that the very core reason for the existence of the state and peoples' obedience to the state is the expectation that the state will provide the basic necessities of life. Consequently, in the environment of the states' inability or unwillingness to provide the basic needs for the citizens, armed groups may start to emerge as a means of getting answers to their agitation for the protection of their vital interests. Instead, the region has been rewarded with massive environmental degradation (Mgbonyenbi & Emeni, 2020). The destructive activities of the Niger Delta Militants are not a good predictor of growth or to human security of both the region and Nigeria as a whole. These non-state actors, through their nefarious operations have retarded the development of not just the directly affected regions but the nation as a whole. The bombings of oil installations and gas pipelines, killings of human potentials necessary for sustainable development, kidnappings of expatriates for ransom fee, piracy on the high sea with drugs and human trafficking, the destruction of private and government properties, and other sources of revenue to the state and federal governments have impacted negatively on the Nigerian economy (Awojobi, 2014).

The reactionary measures taken so far by the federal government has not in any way been helpful, rather it has further deepened the crisis and projects a failed state. Felbab-Brown (2016) maintains that the state is hardly always just in suppressing militancy, even as suppressing militancy is its key imperative. Access to good governance; provision of employment for the idle youths, access to relevant education security, economic security, food security and environmental security amongst others are languages against militancy and not raw force or outright militarization. The incontrovertible fact is that both the federal government and the multinational oil companies were grossly negligent for too long about the welfare of the people and the communities of the oil bearing areas of the region (Efeturi, 2016).

The frequent attacks on oil and gas installations, killings of human potentials necessary for sustainable development, piracy activities on the high sea, and marine space, kidnappings of expatriates and high profile workers for ransom, destruction of private and public properties coupled with the incessant oil spillage from multinational corporation activities, have all retarded the economic development of the region. Activities of these militants have untold impact on human security which cut across all spheres of lives in the region. Blown up flow stations and pipelines brings untoward crisis on food production and its sustainability in the region, resulting in low farm yields which also threatens the aquatic and fishing sector therefore forcing those in the agro sector out of gainful employment which further increases the cost of feeding in the region (Osuagwu and Olaifa, 2018; Ndubueze-Ogaraku *et al.*, 2017). Finally, the insurgents activities has debilitating effects on the region's environmental security with endless gas flaring, deadly soot's of immense health implications (Mgbonyenbi and Emeni, 2020; Inyang, 2018).

This study is guided by the following hypothesis in their null form;

- H₀₁: Militancy has no significant effect on food security in the Niger Delta region.
- H₀₂: Militancy has no significant effect on environmental security in the Niger Delta region.

The paper is structured into five sections. Following this introduction, section two is concerned with literature review. Section three discussed the methodology adopted for the study; section four discussed the results, while section five provides the conclusion and recommendations.

2. Conceptual Review

2.1. Militancy

Various definitions had been given to the term militancy. The word “militancy” can be understood as the acts of individuals, groups or parties displaying or engaging in violence, usually for a cause, whether religious, political, ideological, economic, or social. Nowadays, the term militant is synonymously used with the term ‘terrorist’ (Quamruzzaman, 2010). Militancy is a state or condition of being combative or disposed to fight for a cause or belief (Chindah & Braide, 2000). Militancy has also been defined as a violent response by an individual, group or sect in a region, community, state or nation due to claims of underdevelopment, political oppression, religious beliefs and segregation. The motive is that people want their rights and if they are not going to get it by negotiation, they simply will then have it by violence against the “powers that be.” A militant person or group expresses a physically aggressive posture while in support of an ideology or a cause. A militant person is confrontational regardless of physical violence or pacifistic methods. These forms of militancy are unique to the quest for resource control in the dealt oil rich region of Nigeria (Ashimolowo & Odiachi, 2012).

Not all rebellions are militant in nature. There have been many cases of non-violent rebellions, using civil resistance, as in the Ken Saro Wiwa’s 1990 Movement for the Emancipation of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) of which MOSOP applied no violent means at redressing the political and socio-economic wrongs imposed on the Niger Delta. MOSOP demanded local autonomy for the Ogoni people, and Ogoniland via calls for the recognition of the economic contributions of Ogoni to the Nigerian State, and restitution for poverty in Ogoni as well as the ecological damage to Ogoniland by oil and mining activities. MOSOP also protested the marginalization of the Ogoni and her people at the federal and state levels demanding equal citizenship rights as other groups in Nigeria (Saro-Wiwa, 1992).

2.2. Human Security

The UN General Assembly’s (2012) resolution 66/290 defines human security as an approach to assist Member States in recognizing and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people. It calls for “people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented. The human security approach was introduced in the 1994 global Human Development Report (HDR), wherein human security was relayed as ensuring “freedom from want” and “freedom from fear” for all persons is the best path to tackle the problem of global insecurity. The concept of human security is vital in building the resilience of civilian populations, not only in fragile States but world over, working towards the advancement of security before, during and after a crisis and building stability and peace.

Proponents of human security actually contest the traditional concept of national security through military security by asserting that the appropriate referent for security should be at the human rather than national level. Therefore human security reveals a people-focused and multi-disciplinary understanding of security which involves a number of research fields, including strategic studies, development studies, human rights and international relations. Prevention is the core objective of human security, thus it addresses the root causes of human vulnerabilities, by focusing attention on emerging risks and stresses early action. It actually strengthens local capacities to build resilience, and promotes solutions that enhance social cohesion and advance respect for human rights and dignity.

Concerningly, in failed States, there are several fault lines that are human threats to daily existence of the people, some of these threats include kidnapping, political violence and instabilities, insurgency, terrorism, economic instabilities involving bitter conflicts with loss of lives, prevalence of ethnic militias and dislocations. In turn, these instabilities, lead to failing of states, struggling to defend sovereignty and apparent incapability of guaranteeing human security. Where states don’t fail, people live under varied conditions of secured economic provisions to guarantee secure daily living which includes economic safety nets, health care, basic education, political and social inclusion. This inclusion augments security by enabling human dignity, in securing the continuation of daily lives.

No matter which topic is addressed, a guiding principle of the human security approach is that it requires understanding the particular threats experienced by particular groups of people, as well as the participation of those people in the analysis process.

2.3. Food security

Food security is of paramount necessity for the continuation of not only human existence but the peace and security of the whole world. There is no gainsaying that insecurity (kidnapping, militancy, oil spillage from blown up flow stations, arm robberies) cast shadows on national security in so much that insecurity crowds out agricultural productivity of

communities in the Niger Delta. In other words, the disruptions from the activities of insurgent, resource control agitators, armed non state actors and warring cult groups extensively undermine the capacity of farming communities to produce optimally thereby creating food shortages that ultimately undermine the nations national security profile of the country.

2.4. Environmental Security

Environmental security examines threats posed by environmental dealings and trends to individuals, communities or nations. It may focus on the impact of human conflict and international relations on the environment, or on how environmental problems cross state borders. Environment security considers the abilities of individuals, communities or nations to cope with environmental risks, changes or conflicts, or limited natural resources. Air pollution, oil spillage, gas flaring, poor waste management and climate change amongst others can be viewed a threat to environmental security impacting community, regional and global climatic and environmental changes and thus changes in agricultural output. This can lead to food shortages which will then cause political debate, ethnic tension, and civil unrest. Environmental security such as food security or water security, and energy security are recognised as Sustainable Development Goals at UN level (Farah, 2015).

3. Empirical Review

3.1. Militancy Activities and Food Security in the Niger Delta Region

Osuagwu and Olaifa (2018) explored the effects of oil spillage both from oil exploration and from insurgency activities on fish production in the oil producing Niger Delta region of Nigeria from 1981–2015. The study engaged Cobb Douglas production function on a time series with dependent variable as fish production proxy in metric tons and independent variables are oil spills proxy in barrel during production, transportation and vandalisation process. The findings of the study showed that oil production and spills negatively affect fish production. The study establishes the negative concomitance of oil spills and fish production and suggests a cautious approach to oil exploration activities as such has a consequential effect of food security in the Niger Delta region.

Ndubueze-Ogaraku *et al.*, (2017) empirically assessed the shocks from militancy with insecurity and farmers' resilience in the face of a decreasing agricultural productivity in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. The study identified insecurity issues in the region as environmental degradation from exploration or insurgency activities, conflicts and crime from cult fraternity groups (Icelanders, bush boys, Greenlanders), Insurgent groups (MEND, Niger Delta Avenger), organised crime and violent accumulation (kidnapping as business and piracy). The shocks experienced by the people as a result of security challenges were; high prices of food, low farm productivity and youth restiveness. Study established that improved agricultural inputs and technology, social protection and the provision of human security are resilience strategies adoptable by government for the people especially farmers, also give supports in form of subsidy on farm inputs and financial grants to farmers to increase food production.

3.2. Militancy Activities and Environmental Security in the Niger Delta Region

Mgbonyenbi and Emeni (2020) employed frustration aggression theory to analysed impact of militancy on sustainable development in the Niger Delta. Study engaged primary method of data collection. Results from the study established that reemergence of militancy has caused more environmental pollution the same reasons militants alleged foreign multinationals whose activities have ravaged the region through oil spills, fires, pollution, deforestation and poor waste management making the region a threat to wellbeing of the residents. The study was on sustainable development while this study harped on constructs that threatens human security in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria.

Inyang (2018) empirically investigated militancy and youth restiveness in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the challenges it poses to Nigeria's development. Findings showed that the Niger Delta region is vastly devastated by the ecological costs of oil spillage and the highest gas flaring rates in the world, of which in correcting these anomaly, the unemployed youths has seen violence as a bargaining weapon for violating oppressive public order. This resulted in formation of militia groups to seek redress against the government and the multinational corporations operating in the area. Study submitted that rather than solving the exacerbated environmental issues it becomes worsen from militancy activities. Effort of the study was on development while this study focuses on human security.

Oluwaleye (2013) examined the nexus between sustainable development dilemma and militancy in the Niger Delta region. The study engaged secondary data from journals, magazines, official publications, and the Internet. Findings which are descriptively analysed revealed that militancy in the Niger Delta affects sustainable development as the areas of Niger Delta had been left devastated by unprecedented environmental degradation occasioned by oil activities both

from the multinational and from militancy reacting to environmental neglect. The study focused on economic development while this study zeroes in on human security.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1. The State Fragility Theory

The fragile state as articulated by Sara (2008) is the term used for countries facing severe developmental challenges such as weak institutional capacity, poor governance, political instability, unemployment, poverty and low level of economic development. It is a theory that describes how extreme poverty is concentrated in a given state, how low level of human and social development are linked to weak institutional capacity, governance and to internal conflict, all of which undermine the capacity of the state to deliver basic social and infrastructural services and offer security to citizens. More fundamentally, a fragile state is the one that is trapped in a vicious circle of violent conflict and poverty or suffer from a natural resource curse; others face a legacy of not providing the most basic services to their citizens. Such basic services include among other things, good health facilities, good roads, quality education, electricity, good water supply. Slater (2012), a leading proponent of this theory has observed that a fragile state is significantly susceptible to crisis in one or more of its subsystems. According to him, a fragile state is a state that is particularly vulnerable to internal shocks as well as domestic conflicts.

Interestingly, this implies that in a fragile state, institutional arrangement embodies and perhaps preserves the conditions of crisis both in economic and social terms. In economic terms, this could be institutions, importantly property rights that reinforce stagnation or low growth rates, or embody extreme inequality in wealth, in access to land or access to the means to make a living. In social terms, institutions may embody extreme inequality or lack of access altogether to health or education. In fragile states, statutory institutional arrangements are vulnerable to challenges by rival institutional systems be they derived from traditional authorities or devised by communities under conditions of stress that see little of the state (in terms of security, development, or welfare).

The apparent abandonment visited by the Nigeria nation on Oloibiri after excavations and the town left desolate as a poor representation of a town that first gave Nigeria her first economic breakthrough is enough pictures to signal to other communities that in due time so shall their communities be left desolate and uncared for by both the multinationals and the federal government. From the standpoint of the assumptions of State fragility theory, this study could argue that the abysmal failure of the Nigerian government to address critical challenges to development in the Niger Delta give credence that Nigeria could be rated as a fragile State due to the poor functioning of her institutions.

5. Methodology

This study adopts the social survey design and utilised the mixed method approach. This method entails the mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative approaches for the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and partnership (Johnson *et al.* 2007). The reason is that, each component of the mixed method will serve as a check and balance on each other; to ensure correct results are obtained in the study. Mixed method is suitable for this study since the study will examine the impact of militancy on human security in Niger Delta region, Nigeria

The sites of this study is purposively made up of; Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers States due to the prevalence of youth led militancy in these four States and rich presence of flow stations making it flashpoints. The sampling technique will largely be proportional sampling technique due in part to proportion of each area of studies and to the sensitivity of the issues to be investigated, which warrant utmost caution. In Akwa-Ibom states four local governments' areas will be sampled; Eket, Esit, Ibenno and Onne in Bayelsa State four local governments areas will also be sampled, namely, Ekeremor, Kolokumo, Southern Ijaw and Yenagoa. While in Rivers State, five local government areas will be sampled; Bonny, Gokana, Khana, Obiakpor and Port Harcourt. Finally, in Delta State, three local governments areas were sampled; Burutu, Sapele, Warri-South. These specific areas of study are further purposively separated so as to arrive at the specific population of study.

Open-ended questionnaires was used to elicit information from community based organisation (CBO), Civil Society Organisation, security agencies involved in stemming the tide of militancy, multinational organisation, farmers, teachers, community members, religious leaders, youths, women, elders, past and present militants and opinion leaders. Oral interviews will also be conducted. The population of this study is a finite population and is large, therefore, the entire population will not be studied. This study employs scientific sampling technique determination of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) that recommends a sample size of 384 for a population above 1million.

This study adopts primary method of data collection; Questionnaire was used to collect the required data. A four points Likert-Scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) Agreed (A), Disagreed (DA) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) was used in collecting the data for sections. This study employs the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression technique to determine the impact of militancy on food and environmental security in Niger Delta, Nigeria.

The functional representation of the model for the study is given below;

$$MLAC = f(FOSC, ENVS) \dots\dots\dots \text{equation (i)}$$

Linearizing equation (1) above produces multiple regression model as thus:

$$MLAC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FOSC + \beta_2 ENVS + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots \text{equation (ii)}$$

Where;

MLAC = Militancy Activities.

β_0 = is the constant or coefficient of intercept.

FOSC = Food Security.

ENVS = Environmental Security

β_1, β_2 = the corresponding coefficients for the respective independent variables.

ε = stochastic error term

5.1. Reliability and Validity Test

Reliability of the primary data was checked through Cronbach’s alpha. Cronbach’s alpha is most widely used method. It has mentioned that its value varies from 0 to 1 but satisfactory value is required to be more than 0.6 for the scale to be reliable (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach value beyond ($\alpha = .7$) signifies acceptable reliability (Cuieford, 1965). Validity was determined by the use of face validity and content validity. Face validity tests if the questions appear to be measuring the intended sections.

Table 1 Summary of Cronbach’s Alpha Test Results

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
Militancy Activities (MLAC)	0.953	7
Food Security (FOSC)	0.969	7
Environmental Security (ENVS)	0.968	7
Total Questions	0.993	21

Source: Extracted from SPSS Output, 2021.

The measurement scales’ computed Cronbach’s Alpha (α) results in table 1 above indicates that Militancy Activities (MLAC) showed Cronbach’s Alpha (α) of 0.953, while 0.969 for Food Security (FOSC), whereas 0.968 for Environmental Security (ENVS). The overall questions had Cronbach Alpha (α) of 0.993. The measurement scales were reliable as all the Cronbach’s value are well above 0.6 threshold which is the recommended coefficient for a given research instrument.

6. Results

Table 2 below presents the correlation matrix of the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables in the model. It is observed that the variables correlate fairly well. The result shows a negative correlation between Militancy activities and food security, with the coefficient value of -0.963 and significant probability value of 0.000. This indicates that an increase in food security will transmits to reduction in Militancy activities in the Niger Delta region. The relationship between environmental security and militancy activities is likewise negative and significant because the coefficient of transport environmental security is -0.954 with significant probability value of 0.000.

Table 2 Correlation Matrix

		MLAC	FOSC	ENVS
MLAC	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	384		
FOSC	Pearson Correlation	-0.963**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	384	384	
ENVS	Pearson Correlation	-0.954**	-0.678**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	
	N	384	384	384

Source: SPSS Output, 2021.

Table 3 Test of Hypotheses

Model Summary ^b										
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	0.984 ^a	0.969	0.969	0.10424	0.969	2367.786	5	378	0.000	0.187

Source: SPSS Output, 2021; a. Predictors: (Constant), FOSC and ENVS; b. Dependent Variable: MLAC

The Coefficient of Determination (R^2) of 0.969 indicates about 96% of militancy activities in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria is likely explained by food and environmental insecurities while the remaining 4% are attributed to other independent variables not captured in the regression model.

Table 4 Analysis of Variance

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	128.634	3	25.727	2367.786	0.000 ^b
	Residual	4.107	378	0.011		
	Total	132.741	383			

Source: SPSS Output, 2021; a. Dependent Variable: MLAC; b. Predictors: (Constant), FOSC and ENVS

The F-Statistic of 2367.786 and its corresponding P-value of 0.000 indicates that the model is fit and the independent variables are properly selected, combined and used.

6.1. Multiple Regression Result

Table 5 Ordinary Least Square Regression Result

Coefficients ^a								
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	0.583	0.040		14.736	0.000		
	FOSC	-0.733	0.041		-17.770	0.000	0.031	10.768
	ENVS	-0.184	0.037		-4.950	0.000	0.032	9.557

Source: SPSS Output, 2021. a. Dependent Variable: FSRT

7. Discussion

The findings from hypothesis one is that militancy activities has a negative effect on food security in Niger Delta region, Nigeria. It indicates that militancy activities will likely translate to reduction in food security. This finding is consistent with the findings in previous works of Osuagwu and Olaifa (2018); Ndubueze-Ogaraku *et al.*, (2017).

The outcome from hypothesis two is that militancy activities have significant negative effect on environmental security in Niger Delta, Nigeria. Militancy activities aggravate flow stations blow up causing pollution, unsafe drinking water and endangered aquatic lives which expose residents of the region to health challenges. This finding is consistent with the findings in previous works of Mgbonyenbi and Emeni (2020); Inyang (2018); Oluwaleye (2013).

8. Conclusion

This study concludes that militancy activities aggravate food insecurity even as no agricultural extension workers will want to render services in crises prone areas. So also there exist environmental degradation as caused by the activities of the militant youths coupled with the unregulated oil spillage activities from the multinational oil corporation in the Niger Delta region, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made;

- The study recommends that the Federal Government should engage the region with good governance rather than the militarization of the region which have not yielded any positive results. Thus, more agric extension workers with improve seedling should be devoted to the Niger Delta region.
- The study recommends that Federal and State Government should show more concern to the environmental degradation of the region as evidence from the long-abandoned Oloibiri showed less concern of government after long years of oil prospecting. Severe measures should be taken against oil companies that do not stick to pollution free environment, carry out set corporate social responsibilities to their host communities or recompense adequately the host communities for oil spillage and properties acquired.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest.

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