

Poverty and Increase in Crime Rate in the Niger Delta

Achinulo, E.C

Department of Political and Administrative Studies

Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Port Harcourt.

Email: achinemmac@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Niger Delta is a wetland in the Southern part of Nigeria with a lot of human and material resources. The resources from the area marks a lot to the federal government as a major means of revenue generation. But the federal government has deprived them of such benefits, hence the declaration for resource control. The aim of this paper is to examine the linkage between poverty and increase in crime rate in Niger Delta. While the objectives are to evaluate the happenings and proffer solutions to easily ameliorate the extent of harm the situations has caused after all. Then study adopted the actualization and attribution theories which are used to evaluate the linkages of poverty and increase in crime rate in the Niger Delta. It also adopted descriptive research method and made use of secondary data. The study found out that in Nigeria, the land use decree of 1978 alienated the people of Niger Delta from the management of the resources that comes out from their land; that bad political leadership that is parochial without the interest of the people, was one of the major challenge; high level of fraudulent corruption in the country stands as a hindrance to development of the Niger Delta area; lack of control on environment and implementation of environmental laws is also a challenge and that poverty is in the increase in the Niger Delta region. The study therefore recommended: Abolition of Nigeria land use decree of 1978, qualitative education, participatory process involving the people of Niger Delta community members in decision-making, appropriate skill knowledge to ameliorate poverty, strengthening of anti-corruption agencies among others.

Key Words: Poverty, Crime and Niger Delta.

INTRODUCTION

Niger Delta Comprises Rivers, Bayelsa Cross-Rivers, Delta, Akwa-Ibom, Edo, Abia, Ondo and Imo states with the largest wetland in Africa and third globally (UNDP, 2006). Poverty is seen as a more serious hindrance to the development process in Nigeria which is more especially felt by the people of Niger Delta. It has made it quite uneasy, if not impossible, for the nation to achieve the level of development in accordance with its set goals of attainment. The Niger Delta that serves as the nation's treasure depot is worst heat because the oil exploration and the exploitations going on in that region impoverish the people of the area the more.

This is worsened by the fact that the nation has concentrated on the oil alone as a major source of revenue without considering how the region can be taken care of as to cushion the effects of such operations. The mono-economic practice resulted to the centralization of production line mainly on oil. It diverted the attention of very many Nigerians to the oil sector, thereby relegating the agricultural production sector that even attracted the outside world particularly the British government to colonize the territory-Nigeria in her early years before its formation as an entity by British arrangement known as Nigeria.

Be it as it may, it is categorical to affirm that agricultural produce are the major source of raw materials required for industrial production and a major source of employment too. Therefore, it is pertinent to acknowledge the fact that, for an improved development to occur in Nigeria there is every need, as a necessary condition, for the federal government to refocus to the agricultural sector as a way of diversification of the economy. This will create a lot of jobs that will help to reduce poverty and ameliorate crime in the nation. It has been proven to be ideal because in other developing countries, agriculture has helped to improve their economic growth for instance, in Malaysia, Brazil, India, Ghana, etc.

In addition, it is obvious that agricultural sector do improve economic growth that will create the enabling opportunity for a nation to achieve human capacity training which will result to human capacity development (HCD). Realizing that a jobless and unengaged person is prone to evil thoughts, that usually lead to indulging in criminal activities that will disrupt the peaceful existence within any society; agricultural sector helps to engage a lot of people which possibly helps to ameliorate the number of people unengaged as to be criminal minded.

Consequently, a synergy of both economic growth and human capacity development culminates to national development, and if the tempo is maintained, will eventually guarantee the attainment of quality level of development. To this end, there will be a drastic reduction of the incidence of poverty in the country that have been there over time and it is even worst in some parts of the country than the rest, mostly where it is caused like the north by Boko Haram and in Niger Delta by multinational cooperation's and frustrated and angry youths of the religions that in a way to protest and draw the attention of government go to blow up oil pipes that pollutes the environment and degrade it the more.

Furthermore these conditions and situations impoverish the people of the region the more because they are majorly farmers, fishermen and hunters. Whereby the rivers and soil are polluted, the animals find it difficult to survive. And even the human beings will face hunger and starvation that will eventually result to anger. Obviously, whenever one is hungry, he or she becomes more irritated and at such times can do anything to put food on the table. At that point, they justify their criminal actions more especially in this case of the Niger Delta that stand as the nation's wealth depot as at this present time and their environments are just uncondusive for quality life to be achieved. It has been because of these alienations and imperialization of the people of Niger Delta that has resulted to increase in abject poverty and increase in crime rate as well.

However, it is believed that an individual determines his or her faith in any society because it is a matter of decision and action that is focused at a particular direction which with perseverance he or she will arrive at that destination or position aspired to in that societal setting. In most cases, people are reluctant to make a move towards success rather they relax and feel contented with the menial condition believing that it is their destiny to be poor. Whereas in another perspective, some persons also believe that government should provide jobs and almost everything and that disparities and poverty that is ravaging people are caused by government. The idea is that the societal structure, government development focus and the cultural norms constrains some set of people from having the same opportunity to be rich through the emancipatory process provided by the government of that country. Implying that unequal opportunity breads or increase the chances of being or remaining poor. This situation appears to be in line with the practice in Nigerian political system that indulges in prebendalism and clientelism in political process.

Conspicuously, poverty, inequality and environmental deterioration are viewed as major factors that constraints the possibilities of achieving even development. Because of their interconnectedness and interdependence in their relationship, that mass poverty

culminates to adverse inequality, which results to the poor having no choice than to resort to the environmental/natural resources.

This in turn leads to the depletion of the environment that amounts to environmental degradation, which ought to be expunged possibly or ameliorated drastically (Popoola, Olaniyan, Wahab, Ana and Olayide 2011). Unlike the Niger Delta region where the pollution is almost covering the entire place, leaving the people with no other alternative, than to resort to crime against government, people of the region and the environment in the end. Poverty has equally frustrated a lot of Nigerians at large, to the extent that a good number of the population have turned deviantic and engage in all manner of fraud to ensure survival. Some indulge in illegal migration from Nigeria to the developed western world (Europe and America), others into deceitful corrupt practices, illicit drug peddling and other criminal vices to survive.

In this regard various policies and programmes enunciated by the federal government to ameliorate the sufferings of the people of the region are as follows: Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB), 1961, the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA) in 1976, O' Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) in 1992 and Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in 1999. (UNDP, 2006). Still despite all these, the people of Niger Delta are wallowing in abject poverty that appear to be perpetuating. Most of the projects by the boards are been high jacked by the rich and jobs were not executed properly rather the funds were misappropriated and embezzled by the various contractors due to the ways and manner they passed through to get these jobs.

Moreover, looking at Niger Delta being where about 97% of Nigeria revenue comes through oil production and on the contrary, it minimally affected the community people, mostly the women residing in the areas where the oil is produced is enough to cause crisis due to the persistent poverty (Agboola and Amo, 2008). Income and consumption levels determine the quality of life whether to be classified low or high quality of life. With regards to world bank report (1995) the GNP per capita in Niger Delta region was less than US\$4, 280 qualifying the area to be called impoverished zone despite its abundant natural resources (Agboola and Amoo, 2008). Obviously, hardship deepens poverty with women and children being the most affected. These are the reasons why Nigerian democracy is heralded will so many challenges. Democracy with thrive where most of the people live above poverty line. This will at least make such people generally immune to presenting themselves for hire for mere pittance as political thugs and miscreants who contribute to the insecurity of life and property. There will be political sustainability when the majority of the masses are rational enough to enhance democracy.

Again, the role of the state institutions and its operators can cause an individual or group of people to be vulnerable. In the cause of government implementing policies and programme that will alleviate the poor, the society has a wrong impression about the state with their administrative bottle-necks within the bureaucracy that are parochial in nature and always compromising with unlawful dealings (Sabr, 2005). In Nigeria poverty is increasing in the North because of the unjust course of Boko Haram but, that of the Niger Delta areas have tangible reasons to grudge over their resources taken away without care about their welfare and environment. All these have resulted to insecurity in the region caused by the poor who are now expose to risk and even those in the category of relative poverty, their vulnerability are engendered by their material lack and deprivations. This is why any possible opportunity that seems right for them to take advantage and emancipate themselves despite the fact that it is criminal to do such, they easily delve into it without minding the danger.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

It is pertinent to conceptualize these variables for clarifications and proper understanding of the connectivity within them. Poverty is a universal phenomenon because inequality is in every society implying the rich and the poor. The poor are those who have low, lower and lowest quality of life because poverty is in gradation, the abject, the relative and the conventional poverty.

However, poverty is a precarious situation that is hopeless due to lack of necessary needs of life. It is a state of lack of material things of life that results to social exclusion which culminates to relegation that results to voicelessness, vulnerability and less relevancy in any society. Poverty connotes a situation that humiliates, weakens one and inability to fend for oneself. More importantly, is that the level of income determines the status of one, whether to be poor or rich.

Therefore, income is a basic tool of measuring poverty in any society because to income determines what you can be able to afford in terms of material things to use or acquire. Looking at the indices of poverty such as shanty shelters, tattered clothing's, illiteracy, menial job workers, inability to pay health or education bills, voicelessness, little or no income and poor diet. It all centered on level of income to be able to fix all the above and menial job workers earn small wages that can hardly see them through without resorting to seeking for financial assistance at all time. The situation can be temporary or in perpetuity depending on the system of governance that is in operation within that particular society. Conversely, it is good to look at deprivation from social amenities as another major cause of poverty, mostly in the rural communities.

On the other hand, crime is attributed to bad behaviour, conduct that is unlawful in any society. Hence, crime is any type of deviantic attitude that is seen to affect society and hampers or disrupts the peaceful and orderliness in a society that is punishable by law as a deterrent to further negative feelings to act or behave wrongly (Igwe, 2002).

Again, people do join cults and sees it as an umbrella that covers them in their criminal activities in the society. The cultist are usually pushed to join the cult as to have a voice, power and protection that poverty situation denied them. The fraternal aim is to protect the interest of their fraternal members with the objectives to fight whosoever that mess up with their member, intimidate any that goes contrary to their demands, cause commotions, crisis and even violent acts to create their awareness and most often indulge in other criminal activities (Igwe, 2002). Cult is a particular type of spiritual worship with a specific belief system known only by the members (Udeorah, 2012). These set of people indulge in all kinds of crime ranging from robbery, rape, killings, intimidation and harassment of non-members, all kinds of destructive activities too. Such cults are; "Ekpe" cult known for ensuring harmonious existence in the society, "Ogo" cult of Amasiri and Afikpo in Ebonyi State, the Oboni and "Ogbudu" cults in Ikwerre in Rivers State, the "Amanikpo" cult in Ogoniland in Rivers state, etc they all carry out their influence to maintain peace and sanction where necessary (Udeorah, 2012). Their major reason for joining the cult in most areas is to escape from poverty and belong to the most respected class (Anele, 2001).

A crime such as robbery mostly is caused by poverty of that person that makes him to take such a life risk act. Robbery is an act of stealing with or without threats and violence to the victim, and it could be done at any time conducive to the robber. Also, forgery is a criminal act which poverty can drag one into it in a bit to survive in life. Evidential to this type of crime is the 419 obtaining by tricks, a counterfeit signatory, seal or mark that is without legal authority of genuity which is liable to punishment (Criminal code Act, 2010).

Even the corrupt acceptance of gift in a monopolized service delivery is a crime, necessitated by the poor state or condition of the operator. The situation which is caused by

lack of incentive and better condition of service in terms of remuneration and workers welfare.

Furthermore, the Niger Delta situation and condition of their poverty was caused by the mistakes Abini to when Nigerian state started with a unitary system that concentrates political, economic and social powers at the centre. This centralized mode of administration took over the control of Niger Delta oil resources without consideration of the welfare of the oil producing communities. Rather, resources from these minorities are used to better the majority ethnic groups (Okoko, Nna and Ibaba, 2006). This pattern was made possible by the land use decree of 1978 act (CAP 202) which is the main tool the federal government uses to dispossess the people of the region of their own lands and the proceed. Worst still is that the compensation is so meager to be compared to the land and resources taken by federal government. For instance, economic trees worth N10,000.00 in the process of compensation goes at the rate of paltry N600.00 (Okoko, Nna and Ibaba, 2006). This condition makes it impossible for poverty to be emancipated in that region that made their youths to resort to all sorts of criminal activities to survive. Federal government ought to empower the people of Niger Delta by giving them the enablement to operate to their fullest as to bet economically politically and socially relevant to participate in the society effectively and efficiently.

OVERVIEW OF NIGER DELTA

Nigeria has six geopolitical zones which in the south-south one of the six, situates the Niger Delta states such as Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-Rivers, Delta, Edo and Rivers States as the core Niger Delta states. Then for eco-political reasons, three other states where few oil locations are found were included to make Niger Delta States to be nine. The States are Abia, Imo and Ondo States Summing up Niger Delta States to be nine on the whole. The regions area measured 20,000 sq.km and stand as one of the largest wetlands on earth (Udeh, 2008). There are four zones that are conspicuous in Niger Delta which includes; mangroves forest and lowland rain forests, coastal barrier islands and fresh water swamp. In addition, Swamp Forests Research Centres are located within the Niger Delta areas for instance Swamp Forest Research Station, Onne in Rivers State, Most Forest Research Station, Benin in Edo State and Eastern Research Station, Umuahia in Abia State; these are out stations of Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN).

However, there has been quest for secession of Niger Delta region from Nigeria starting from 1966 by Isaac Adaka Boro and his Niger Delta Volunteer Service (NDVS). This was prior to the known Nigerian civil war of 1967 that lasted up until 1970 without success of the Biafran secession (Udeh, 2008). Series of protests and agitations have taken place in Niger Delta region led by different prominent people of the region, examples are Saro-wiwa, Obiwali, etc prior to KAIAMA DECLARATION in December 1998 by the Ijaw youths demanding for self-government and resource control by the Ijaws. These have been followed by subsequent emergence of armed militias controlling and trying to regulate the oil company's operations within the zone. Such militates are the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Movements for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), the Avengers, etc (Udeh, 2008).

Moreover, these agitations for resource control are caused by the neglect of the people of Niger Delta and their environment by government. By the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria sections 140(6), 153 and 158, 1960 and 1963 respectively guaranteed "the right to control, determine and use natural and other resources within the respective territories of the states of the Nigerian Federation until 1966 before being temporarily suspended (by General Gowon) and later permanently extinguished by centrifugal philosophy and egocentive sanctimony of Unitary Federalism" (Wokocho, 2005:5-6). The cheating is far too

much hence, a call for resource control because their marginalization of the minorities by the majorities are overwhelming. Nigeria's major problem is the merging of these different nationalities as one without due consultation and agreement of the people concerned. It is because of all these that Nigeria is said not to be a nation rather a mere territorial entity that is foisted and fused together and expressed as a nation quite unlike France, etc that are one people (Amanyie, 2006). Considering various laws and legislations by different governments of their time necessitated a meeting by 17 southern governors in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State on 20/Sept/2001 where the governors affirmed unimaginable neglect and marginalization and called for the tenets of true federalism and fiscal autonomy to be maintained by the federating states with the powers to formulate and execute policies programmes also, control their own resources as well (Ekpo, 2004). Presently this is the more reason why government appealed to the agitating youths of Niger Delta for peaceful negotiation as to dialogue on the better way forward to manage the resources instead of destroying everything (Adetayo, 2016). Government equally believe that persuasion and dialogue on modalities of management are better than fighting the Niger Delta militants for the control of oil resources (Nwabughio, 2016).

THEORETICAL MODEL

Theory triangulation was adopted for clear and proper understanding of the research. The actualization theory by an American psychologist Abraham Harold Maslow (1908-70). The theory holds that people will do whatever it takes to be whosoever and whatsoever they want to be in life. This is due to the human needs in life and not necessarily what they prefer to do in life. Maslow went on to postulate a gradation of needs which esteem needs and self-actualization needs were among, and these two basically warrants people to do whatever to achieve their self-esteem and self-actualization even if it has to do with committing crime. This theory culminated to the actualization therapy (Bothamley, 1993).

Furthermore, attribution theory postulated by an Austrian-American Fhedder (1896-) synergizes with the actualization theory in this research. It is mainly concerned with societal view, how people perceive themselves in relationship with the features of other people. This theory is of the views that in certain situations in the society people do watch others behaving in a manner and based on the information gathered tend to adhere to others intentions and way of life which in turn affects their behaviour (Bothamley, 1993). The implication of all these is that some people's behaviour is capable of turning others into such character and that has been the way and means that results to people indulging in crime and even joining cults as a way to belong to a class of respected and well to do, not remaining in the class of impoverished people. To this end, both theories are proper and classic for this research.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive research that relied on secondary sources of data which include; text books, journals, magazines, newspapers, government publications, published academic papers such as seminars, conference proceedings and research materials from the internet. This method will certainly aid the evaluation and the extent to which poverty has led so many Niger Delta youths into all kinds of crime within the region.

EVIDENTIAL TABLES ABOUT NIGER DELTA SITUATIONS

Table 1: Analysis of poverty and access to land in the Niger Delta

| States | Land area Kms | Male | Female | Male and female | Yr. 1996 | Yr.2002 | Yr.2005 | Yr.2010 | Yr.2015 | Yr.2020 |
|--------|---------------|------|--------|-----------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Abia | 4,877 | 1,123,754 | 1,210,013 | 2,333,767 | 2,667,762 | 3,026,623 | 3,230,000 | 3,763,000 | 4,383,000 | 6,106,000 |
| Akwa-Ibom | 6,806 | 1,167,829 | 1,241,784 | 2,409,613 | 2,746,748 | 3,131,230 | 3,343,000 | 3,895,000 | 4,537,000 | 6,285,000 |
| Bayelsa | 11,007 | 584,117 | 537,576 | 1,121,693 | 1,327,488 | 1,571,540 | 1,710,000 | 1,992,000 | 2,320,000 | 2,703,000 |
| Cross Rivers | 21,930 | 956,136 | 955,159 | 1,911,295 | 2,206,105 | 2,546,388 | 2,736,000 | 3,187,000 | 3,712,000 | 4,325,000 |
| Delta | 17,163 | 1,271,932 | 1,318,569 | 2,590,491 | 2,952,900 | 3,365,881 | 3,694,000 | 4,186,000 | 4,877,000 | 5,681,000 |
| Edo | 19,698 | 1,085,156 | 1,086,849 | 2,172,005 | 2,475,352 | 2,826,004 | 3,018,000 | 3,516,000 | 4,096,000 | 4,871,000 |
| Imo | 5,165 | 1,166,448 | 1,319,187 | 2,485,636 | 2,798,238 | 3,150,050 | 3,342,000 | 3,894,000 | 4,535,000 | 5,283,000 |
| Ondo | 15,086 | 1,121,898 | 1,127,650 | 2,249,548 | 2,532,535 | 2,851,293 | 3,025,000 | 3,524,000 | 4,105,000 | 4,782,000 |
| Rivers | 10,378 | 1,655,441 | 1,532,423 | 3,187,864 | 3,772,738 | 4,466,293 | 4,858,000 | 5,659,000 | 6,592,000 | 7,679,000 |
| Niger Delta | 112,110 | 10,132,711 | 10,329,210 | 20,461,712 | 23,479,866 | 26,935,302 | 28,956,000 | 33,616,000 | 39,157,000 | 47,715,000 |

Source: Niger Delta Human Development Report (2006).

From table 1, shows Niger Deltans rate of access to land areas by km² per state that makes up the region, considering the way and manner federal government with their land use decree appropriated their lands. Followed by the totality of male and female population per state are more than poverty rates starting from 1996-to-2015 with a speculation of what might be in the year 2020. Going by these figures, poverty is increasing every year as the land/environment are being polluted every now and then by the activities of the multinationals and these various agitating youths that blow up oil pipes in the region. This situation requires urgent attention by the government in power.

TABLE 2: CRIME INDEX BY TYPE IN NIGERIA

| S/NO | TYPE OF CRIME | INDEX |
|------|---|-------|
| 1. | People using and dealing on drugs | 71.49 |
| 2. | Vandalism and theft | 76.74 |
| 3. | Violent crime such as assault, armed robbery and kidnappers | 79.74 |
| 4. | Corruption and bribery | 88.36 |

Source: Onuchuku, (2016).

From table 2, shows the index of various crimes committed in Nigeria which is quite alarming in Niger Delta where poverty is ravaging the people, mostly the women and the youths that resulted to them indulging in these crimes as to actualize themselves and gain self-esteem in the society. Obviously excessive lack is capable of pushing one into crime which ordinarily the person wouldn't have.

TABLE 3: RANKING OF COUNTRIES BY CRIME INDEX (2016)

| RANK | COUNTRY | CRIME INDEX |
|------|------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Venezuela | 84.44 |
| 2 | South Sudan | 81.32 |
| 3 | South Africa | 78.43 |
| 4 | Papua New Guinea | 77.58 |
| 5 | Honduras | 76.43 |

| | | |
|----|---------------------|-------|
| 6 | Nigeria | 74.14 |
| 7 | Trinidad and Tobago | 72.60 |
| 8 | Elsavador | 72.04 |
| 9 | Brazil | 71.23 |
| 10 | Kenya | 69.49 |

Source: Onuchuku, (2016)

From table 3, shows ten countries and the various level of crime which Nigeria falls in the second category aside from Venezuela and South Sudan that are in the first category. Kenya among them all is the least at 69.49. By implication, these are all developing countries where poverty situates and a lot of people are struggling to at least escape from poverty, so to them, anything goes so long as it is for survival.

TABLE 4: FRAUD LEVELS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES 2012

| S/NO | COUNTRY | FRAUD LEVELS |
|------|--------------|--------------|
| 1 | Nigeria | 82.77% |
| 2 | Egypt | 70.54% |
| 3 | Ethiopia | 68.57% |
| 4 | Sierra Leone | 46.21% |
| 5 | Sudan | 30.94% |
| 6 | Ghana | 24.68% |
| 7 | Guinea | 23.81% |
| 8 | Liberia | 17.93% |
| 9 | Cameroon | 11.64% |
| 10 | Ukraine | 71.91% |
| 11 | Bangladesh | 78.95% |

Source: Popoola, Olaniyan and Olayide (2012)

From table 4, shows eleven developing countries that have high levels of fraud with Nigeria as the top most followed by Bangladesh and Egypt before others. Out of them, Cameroon stand as the least fraudulent country as stated above. One thing that is common in all is that they are impoverished countries with large number of their population living in abject poverty that might be perpetual if not checked.

TABLE 5: RATE OF SATISFACTION WITH GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN THE PROVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN NIGER DELTA.

| DIFFERENT VIEWS | HOUSING | EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES | POVERTY REDUCTION INITIATIVES | COST OF LIVING | PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING | THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN THE | CONDITION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN YOUR |
|-----------------|---------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Very dissatisfied | 26.0 | 46.0 | 40.7 | 28.7 | 28.7 | 31.3 | 32.7 |
| Dissatisfied | 46.7 | 44.0 | 40.7 | 44.7 | 38.7 | 31.3 | 33.3 |
| Uncertain | 7.3 | 5.3 | 10.0 | 12.0 | 17.3 | 19.3 | 8.0 |
| Satisfied | 18.0 | 3.3 | 6.7 | 12.0 | 13.3 | 15.3 | 24.0 |
| Very satisfied | 2.0 | 1.3 | 2.0 | 2.7 | 2.0 | 2.7 | 2.0 |

Source: Alapiki, Ekekwe and Joab-Peterside (2015).

From table 5, shows the dissatisfaction of the people of Niger Delta over government interventions in the provision of social services. In all none was satisfarily done, most of the executions were quite uncertain because of the way and manner government do take decisions over the regions needs without involving the people of the area as to participate both in the formulation and implementation processes. Rather politicians with parochial interest that always in profligate spending, who do not feel what the poor is passing through to be incharge. And at the end of the day, the same song will be echoing with anger that results to frustrated bost in a bit to actualize their objectives.

TABLE 6: URBAN/RURAL INCIDENCE OF POVERTY BY DIFFERENT POVERTY MEASURES INCLUDING FOOD POOR.

| SECTOR | FOOD POOR | ABSOLUT E | RELATIV E | DOLLA R PER |
|--------|-----------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| Urban | 26.7 | 52.0 | 61.8 | 52.4 |
| Rural | 48.3 | 66.1 | 73.2 | 66.3 |

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, (2010)

From table 6, shows that poverty is more predomination in the rural communities than in the urban. This goes to tell about the condition of the remote areas in the Niger Delta knowing that in Nigeria poverty is a rural phenomenon.

TABLE 7: POVERTY NUMBERS WITH 2011 ESTIMATES

| | 2004(%) | 2010(%) | 2011(%) |
|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Estimated population | 126.3 | 163 | 168 |
| Relative poverty | 54.4 | 69 | 71.5 |
| Absolute poverty | 54.7 | 60.9 | 61.9 |
| Dollar per day | 62.8 | 61.2 | 62.8 |

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, (2010)

From table 7, show the increase in the number of people in poverty by percentage starting from 2004 to 2011. Instead of a positive change of poverty reduction, poverty is still on the increase.

TABLE 8: POVERTY RATE IN NIGERIA, 2000-2013/14

| POVERTY RATE OF THE YEAR | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------|------------|
|--------------------------|------------|

| | |
|--------------|-------|
| Year 2000 | 74.0% |
| Year 2001 | 83.0% |
| Year 2002 | 88.0% |
| Year 2004 | 54.7% |
| Year 2005 | 55.5% |
| Year 2008 | 55.5% |
| Year 2010 | 60.9% |
| Year 2011 | 67.1% |
| Year 2013/14 | 64.2% |

Source: Nwaorgu, (2014).

From table 8, shows different years poverty rate that fluctuates in the years starting from 2000 to 2013/2014. It shows also that poverty was at its worst state in the year 2001 and 2002 respectively.

TABLE 9: POVERTY AND HUNGER INDICATORS IN NIGERIA 2012.

| S/N | CATEGORY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----|--|------------|
| 1. | Rural poor as percent of total poor population | 70.3% |
| 2. | Rural hungry as a percent of total hungry population | 65.5% |
| 3. | Rural extreme poor as a percent of total extreme poor population (2012). | 74.1% |
| 4. | Undernourished people on total population (%) (2012) | 24.2% |

Source: Ekekwe, (2015).

From table 9, shows categories of rural poverty and the undernourished people of Nigeria in 2012 to proof the extreme level of poverty in the country which is more pronounced in the Niger Delta and in the North East of Nigeria.

TABLE 10: POPULATION IN POVERTY (MILLION)

| YEAR | POPULATION IN MILLION |
|------|-----------------------|
| 1980 | About 20 million |
| 1985 | About 38 million |
| 1992 | About 40 million |
| 1996 | About 63 million |
| 2004 | About 65 million |
| 2010 | About 110 million |

Source: National Bureau of Statistics, (2010).

From table 10, shows the Nigerian population in poverty starting from about 20 million in 1980 to about 110 million in 2010 proving that poverty is on the increase in Nigeria, hence, the increase in crime rate especially in the Nigeria Delta region.

TABLE 11: NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN POVERTY CIRCLE IN THE NIGER DELTA

| State | No of settlements (2006) | Projected population (2010) | Poverty rate/ usd per day (2010) | Estimated population living in poverty |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Abia | 950 | 3,763,000 | 42.2 | 1,587,986 |
| Akwa-Ibom | 2,387 | 3,895,000 | 46.2 | 1,799,490 |
| Beyelsa | 696 | 1,992,000 | 53.0 | 1,055,760 |
| Cross-Rivers | 681 | 3,187,000 | 47.1 | 1,501,077 |
| Delta | 1,449 | 4,186,000 | 36.4 | 1,523,704 |
| Edo | 1,248 | 3,516,000 | 34.0 | 1,195,440 |
| Imo | 1,796 | 3,894,000 | 49.3 | 1,919,742 |
| Ondo | 1,814 | 3,524,000 | 53.9 | 1,899,436 |
| Rivers | 1,258 | 5,659,000 | 49.4 | 2,795,546 |
| Niger Delta | 12,277 | 33,616,000 | 45.7 | 15,362,512 |

Source: Ibaba, (2016)

From table 11 shows the number of people in poverty circle in the Niger Delta with a high projection of the number that certainly (as the alienation and denial of progressive development is the order of the day in the Niger Delta region by Federal government) will fall into the poverty circle the more. Out of the wine states, Imo and Rivers States were the worst heat, having a greater number living in poverty. This situation elucidates a lot of reasons why out of frustration and hunger, many people will device criminal ways of actualizing their dreams which in turn attracts others to follow suit, hence, increase in crime rate.

CONCLUSION

In this research paper, we argued that poverty is a major reason for the increasing rate of crime in the Niger Delta region. There are different types of crime practiced in Nigeria which are more experienced in the Niger Delta part of Nigeria and Nigeria was one of the most notorious countries identified with crimes and fraudulent activities been practiced in other to survive. This scenario is very much seen as a daily affair in the Niger Delta region.

This research paper has also revealed that in Nigeria the land use decree alienated the people of Niger Delta from the management of the resources that comes out from their land. It has equally shown the high level of dissatisfaction by the people of Niger Delta with government's interventions in the provision of social services in the Niger Delta. Again, it revealed that poverty is predominant in the rural areas much more, than in the urban areas. And that poverty generally is on the increase in millions in Nigeria starting from 1980 till date with a greater number of people in poverty circle in the Niger Delta region.

Moreover, it was discovered that it was bad political leadership that does not have interest in the plights of the people of Niger Delta region that is one of the challenges,

followed by high level fraudulent corruption in the country. The lack of involvement of the community members from Niger Delta region in decision making and implementation processes rather, politicians of selfish interest were those involved; stand equally as a challenge to the development of the area.

Again, lack of control on environment and implementation of the environmental laws as to convict offenders such as the multinational co-operations operating within the region packs way for them to pollute the environment and care less about its effects on the people of the area. To this end, there should be measures that will be put in place as to cushion the negative effects of the polluted environment and drastically reduce poverty in the Niger Delta region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the challenges and problems in the Niger Delta region with particular reference to the increase rate of poverty that has influenced crime rate in the area, there should be; qualitative education should be freely made accessible and costless to the people of the area as to improve their human capital development.

- Niger Delta communities should be involved in the policies and programmes formulations and implementation processes as to have a sense of belonging that government is carrying them along. This will enable them to suggest what they need which they in the end will protect such as their own and see to its protection and maintenance.
- Strengthening of anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria
- There should be adequate sanction on pollution matters against any offender as it is universally acceptable in other to keep the environment of the area conducive and quality enough to provide for the people of the area.
- Environmental Impact Assessment Agency (IAA), and other agencies concerning the environment, should be strengthened and funded properly.
- Provisions for unemployment reduction should be profoundly made available because if with skill acquisition scheme and other opportunities provided by government are not provided in the Niger Delta and as to engage the youths in a meaningful activities to ensure that crime rate is reduced, the crimes will exacerbate for worst.
- The youths should be thought about reliance on appropriate skill knowledge and self-reliance to avert gross dependence and ameliorate the rate of poverty.
- Access to credit facilities should be made available and accessible to the Niger Delta people to assist them in their life improvement in anything they engage into in life, be it farming, fishing or hunting.
- Introduce and practice a regenerative practice on agriculture and friendly activities on the environment.
- Abolition of the land uses decree in Nigeria, so that Niger Delta people can have control over their land and resources and other regions of Nigeria as well.

REFERENCES

- Adelayo, O. (2016). Let us talk, Buhari tells Niger Delta Militants. Abuja: Punch Newspaper.
- Agboola F.A O and Amoo, E. (2008). Poverty Situation among women in Niger Delta: The way forward. Yenagoa: Harey Publications Company.
- Alapiki H.; Ekekwe, E.N. and Joab-Peterside, S. (2015). Post-Amnesty Conflict Management Framework in the Niger Delta Port Harcourt: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt.
- Amanyie, V. (2006). The Struggle of the Niger Delta, Nigeria Owerri: Springfield Publishers.

- Anele, K.A. (2001). *Social Change and Social Problems in Nigeria*, Revised Edition, Owerri: Springfield publishers.
- Bothamley, J. (1993). *Dictionary of Theories*. London: Gate Research International.
- Criminal code act (2010). *Economic and financial crime commission act*. Abuja: Princeton Publishing Company.
- Ekekwe, E.N. (2015). *Between Power, Parties and Principalities: where are the people? An Inaugural Lecture*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Ekpo, U. (2004). *The Niger Delta and Oil Politics*. Lagos: International Energy Communications.
- Igwe, O. (2002). *Politics and Globe Dictionary*. Enugu: Jamoe Enterprises.
- Ibaba, S.I. (2006). *From Militia Combatants to Civilians: Notes on Post Insurgency Reintegration Challenges in the Niger Delta*. African Conflict Profile. Port Harcourt: Centre for Conflict and Gender Studies, University of Port Harcourt.
- National Bureau of Statistics, (2010). *Population in Poverty and Urban Rural Incidence of Poverty Report 2010*.
- Nwabughio, L. (2016). *We'll persuade Niger Delta Militants to Dialogue rather than fight*. Abuja: Vanguard Newspaper.
- Nwaorgu, O.C. (2014). *Inactive Squares and the Rumbling State. An Inaugural Lecture*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Okoko, K: Nna, J.N. and Ibaba, S. I. (2006). *The politics of oil and the development in the Niger Delta*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Onuchuku, O. (2016) *War of Supremacy between Unemployment and Inflation in Nigeria: who is the actual loser? An Inaugural Lecture*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Popoola, L., Olaniyan, O; Wahab, B; Godson, A & Olayide, O. (2011). *Global Change and Sustainable Development, Challenges and Oportunities for South-South Cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan centre for Sustainable Development.
- Popoola, L; Olaniyan, O; & Olayide, O. (2012). *Building Resilience in Sustainable Development in a Changing World*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Centre for Sustainable Development.
- Sabry, S. (2005). *Environment and Urbanization Volume 17, Number 2*, Nothingham UK: Russel Press.
- Udeh, C.S. (2008). *Oil Poverty and Insecurity in Nigeria: The case of the Niger Delta*. Yenagoa: Harey Publications Company.
- Udeorah, S. (2012). *Cultism: Death Trap on our campuses, the way out*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2006). *Niger Delta Human Development Report*. Abuja: United Nation Development Programme.
- Wokocha, R.A (2005). *Resource control in Nigeria, the Legal and Regulatory Challenges and Implications*. Owerri: Civinics Publishers (Nig).