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Vulnerabilities and the Threat of Armed Insurrection in the Niger Delta Region

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Abstract: This study examined vulnerabilities and the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The study was motivated by the persistence of violent conflict, militancy, environmental degradation, and socio-economic deprivation within the region despite several government intervention programmes aimed at restoring peace and promoting development. The study adopted a survey research design involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study was conducted in selected oil-producing states within the Niger Delta region, specifically Rivers, Bayelsa, and Delta States. A sample size of 300 respondents was selected using cluster and purposive sampling techniques, while 284 completed copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and used for analysis. Data were collected through structured questionnaires, interviews, and focused group discussions. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and tables were used to answer the research questions, while Chi-square statistical analysis was employed in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that socio-economic vulnerabilities such as poverty, unemployment, political marginalization, infrastructural decay, and inequality in the distribution of oil wealth significantly contribute to armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region. The study also found that environmental degradation resulting from oil spills, gas flaring, destruction of farmlands, and pollution of rivers significantly influences violent agitation and insecurity within the region. Furthermore, the findings showed that government intervention strategies such as the Presidential Amnesty Programme, youth empowerment initiatives, and dialogue mechanisms contributed to reducing militant activities and improving relative peace within the region, although many socio-economic and environmental problems remain unresolved. The study concluded that sustainable peace and security in the Niger Delta require genuine socio-economic transformation, environmental justice, transparent governance, and active participation of local communities in development processes. The study recommended sustainable youth empowerment programmes, improved environmental protection measures, and greater accountability within intervention agencies.

Keywords: Vulnerability, Armed insurrection, Niger Delta, Environmental degradation, Militancy, Socio-economic deprivation

1. Introduction

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria occupies a strategic position in the political and economic structure of the country because of its enormous deposits of crude oil and natural gas. Since the discovery of oil in commercial quantity at Oloibiri in 1956, the region has remained the economic backbone of Nigeria through the generation of foreign exchange earnings and government revenue. Despite its vast natural wealth, the Niger Delta continues to experience widespread poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation, poor infrastructure, insecurity, and socio-political instability. This contradiction between resource abundance and persistent underdevelopment has generated deep frustrations among the people of the region and contributed to recurring violent agitations and armed.

resistance against the Nigerian state. Humanity somehow perfected the remarkable ability to extract enormous wealth from a region while simultaneously leaving many inhabitants debating whether functioning healthcare, roads, and clean water are unreasonable demands.

Vulnerability has emerged as one of the most significant factors influencing social instability and violent conflict in the Niger Delta region. Vulnerability refers to the condition in which individuals, groups, or communities are exposed to social, economic, political, and environmental risks that weaken their ability to cope with hardship or achieve sustainable livelihoods. In conflict-prone societies, vulnerability is often associated with poverty, unemployment, inequality, political exclusion, weak institutions, environmental insecurity, and lack of access to basic social amenities. According to the United Nations Development Programme [1], the Niger Delta region remains highly vulnerable because of severe environmental degradation, youth unemployment, poor governance, and inadequate development policies despite decades of oil exploitation.

The socio-economic vulnerability of communities in the Niger Delta has been intensified by the activities of multinational oil companies operating in the region. Oil exploration and exploitation have resulted in oil spills, gas flaring, water pollution, destruction of farmlands, and loss of traditional means of livelihood such as farming and fishing [2]. These environmental challenges have negatively affected the living conditions of local communities and increased feelings of deprivation and injustice among residents. Obi [3] argued that the extraction of oil in the Niger Delta has produced dispossession, environmental destruction, and social exclusion, thereby creating conditions that encourage resistance and violent conflict.

Historically, agitation in the Niger Delta dates back to the colonial and post-colonial periods when minority ethnic groups in the region protested against political marginalization and unequal distribution of national resources [4]. The struggle became more intense in the 1960s through the activities of Isaac Adaka Boro, who led an armed rebellion demanding self-determination and resource control for the Niger Delta people. In the 1990s, the environmental activism of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) further exposed the environmental degradation and neglect suffered by oil-producing communities. The execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni activists in 1995 intensified anti-government sentiments and contributed to the radicalization of youths within the region [5].

The persistence of socio-economic vulnerability and political exclusion in the Niger Delta has contributed significantly to the emergence of armed insurrection in the region. Armed insurrection refers to organized violent resistance against state authority by individuals or groups seeking political, economic, or social change through the use of force. In the Niger Delta, armed insurrection manifested in the form of militancy, kidnapping, hostage taking, pipeline vandalism, illegal oil bunkering, attacks on oil facilities, and confrontations with security agencies [6], [7]. Militant groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) emerged largely as responses to perceived state neglect, exploitation, and environmental injustice [8].

Scholars have argued that armed insurrection in the Niger Delta cannot be separated from issues of poverty, unemployment, and unequal distribution of oil wealth [9]. Gurr [10], through the frustration-aggression theory, explained that persistent deprivation and denial of expected benefits often generate frustration that may lead to aggression and violent resistance. This theoretical perspective is relevant to the Niger Delta situation where many youths perceive themselves as excluded from the economic benefits generated from oil resources extracted from their communities. Similarly, Ikelegbe [11] observed that youth unemployment, poverty, and socio-economic exclusion contributed significantly to the rise of militancy and violent conflict in the region.

The Nigerian government has introduced several intervention strategies aimed at reducing vulnerability and managing violent conflict in the Niger Delta. Such interventions include the establishment of agencies such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, and the implementation of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) in 2009. The Amnesty Programme was specifically designed to disarm, rehabilitate, and reintegrate ex-militants through vocational training, educational support,

and financial incentives. According to Ogege [12], the programme contributed to temporary reductions in militant attacks and stabilization of oil production in the region. However, critics argue that the programme focused more on disarmament and financial compensation without adequately addressing the root causes of vulnerability such as unemployment, environmental degradation, poverty, and poor governance.

Environmental degradation remains one of the most critical factors sustaining vulnerability and insecurity in the Niger Delta. Oil spills and gas flaring have destroyed agricultural land, polluted rivers, and threatened public health in many communities. The inability of both government and oil companies to effectively address environmental concerns and compensate affected communities has intensified resentment among local populations. Watts [13] described the Niger Delta as a region where oil wealth has produced both economic dependence and violent resistance because local communities experience the burdens of oil extraction without enjoying corresponding developmental benefits.

The threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta continues to pose serious implications for national security, economic stability, and sustainable development in Nigeria. Armed attacks on oil facilities and pipeline vandalism have disrupted crude oil production, reduced government revenue, discouraged foreign investment, and increased insecurity within the region. Furthermore, the proliferation of small arms and the rise of organized militant networks have contributed to criminal activities such as piracy, kidnapping, and illegal oil bunkering. Collier and Sambanis [14] argued that weak institutions, economic inequality, and poor governance often increase the likelihood of violent conflict in resource-rich societies.

Although several studies have examined militancy, resource control, and conflict in the Niger Delta, there remains inadequate empirical attention on how socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities contribute to the threat of armed insurrection within the region. Many previous studies focused mainly on the political economy of oil conflict without critically examining the relationship between vulnerability and violent resistance among affected communities. Consequently, there is a need to examine the extent to which vulnerability contributes to armed insurrection and insecurity in the Niger Delta region.

It is against this background that this study examines vulnerabilities and the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region with a view to understanding the socio-economic and environmental conditions that sustain violent conflict and insecurity within the region.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has remained one of the most vulnerable and conflict-prone regions in the country despite its enormous contribution to national economic development through crude oil production. Over the years, the region has experienced persistent socio-economic deprivation, environmental degradation, political marginalization, unemployment, poverty, and infrastructural decay. Communities within the region continue to suffer from the devastating effects of oil spills, gas flaring, destruction of farmlands, polluted rivers, and loss of traditional means of livelihood such as farming and fishing. These conditions have increased frustration, hardship, and insecurity among residents, particularly youths who constitute a significant proportion of the population.

The continued existence of these vulnerabilities has contributed to the emergence and persistence of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region. Armed militant groups have engaged in activities such as kidnapping, hostage taking, pipeline vandalism, illegal oil bunkering, attacks on oil facilities, and violent confrontations with security agencies. These activities have disrupted oil production, reduced government revenue, threatened foreign investments, and increased insecurity within the region. The proliferation of arms and militant networks has also contributed to organized criminal activities including piracy and communal violence across the Niger Delta. Human societies repeatedly express surprise when communities facing unemployment, environmental destruction, and political neglect eventually stop responding with patience and begin responding with armed resistance.

Successive Nigerian governments have introduced several intervention strategies aimed at reducing vulnerability and managing violent conflict in the region.

Such interventions include the establishment of agencies like the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, and the implementation of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP). These programmes were expected to reduce militancy, create employment opportunities, improve infrastructure, and promote peace within oil-producing communities. However, despite huge financial allocations and repeated government interventions, many communities in the Niger Delta still experience severe poverty, unemployment, environmental pollution, poor healthcare services, and inadequate infrastructure.

One major problem is that many intervention programmes have failed to adequately address the root causes of vulnerability in the region because of corruption, political interference, poor implementation of policies, weak institutional accountability, and abandonment of development projects. As a result, feelings of marginalization, injustice, and exclusion continue to persist among residents of the region. The inability of government institutions and multinational oil companies to effectively address environmental degradation and socio-economic hardship has intensified resentment and distrust toward the state.

Another important concern is that previous government responses to armed insurrection in the Niger Delta have focused largely on military operations and temporary peace agreements without adequately addressing the structural factors sustaining violent conflict. Although the Amnesty Programme reduced militant attacks for some time, unemployment, poverty, and environmental insecurity remain widespread across many communities. Consequently, the threat of renewed militancy and violent agitation continues to exist within the region.

Furthermore, although several studies have examined militancy, resource control, and conflict in the Niger Delta, limited empirical attention has been given to the relationship between socio-economic vulnerability and the threat of armed insurrection in the region. Many previous studies concentrated mainly on oil politics and environmental degradation without critically examining how vulnerability contributes to violent resistance and insecurity among affected populations.

It is against this background that this study seeks to examine vulnerabilities and the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region with a view to understanding the socio-economic and environmental conditions that sustain violent conflict and insecurity within the region.

1.2. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine vulnerabilities and the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. examine the socio-economic vulnerabilities contributing to armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region.
2. assess the influence of environmental degradation on the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region.
3. investigate the effectiveness of government intervention strategies in reducing vulnerabilities and violent agitations in the Niger Delta region.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What socio-economic vulnerabilities contribute to armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region?
2. How does environmental degradation influence the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region?
3. How effective are government intervention strategies in reducing vulnerabilities and violent agitations in the Niger Delta region?

1.4. Hypotheses

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic vulnerabilities and armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region.
- H₀₂: Environmental degradation does not significantly influence the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region.
- H₀₃: Government intervention strategies do not significantly reduce vulnerabilities and violent agitations in the Niger Delta region.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study adopted a survey research design. The survey design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain relevant information from respondents concerning vulnerabilities and the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region. The design also provided an opportunity to collect data from a large number of respondents across different communities within the study area. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were utilized in order to ensure comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic and environmental factors contributing to armed insurrection in the region. Academic research continues its longstanding tradition of converting years of instability, frustration, and institutional failure into organized tables, percentages, and carefully worded chapters that politely describe deeply chaotic realities.

2.2. Area of the Study

The study was conducted in selected states within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, specifically Rivers, Bayelsa, and Delta States. These states were selected because they are major oil-producing areas and have historically experienced high levels of militancy, violent agitation, environmental degradation, and government intervention activities. The study focused on communities directly affected by oil exploration and conflict-related activities within the region.

2.3. Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised residents from selected Local Government Areas within the three states, including youths, community leaders, ex-militants, civil servants, environmental activists, security personnel, and representatives of civil society organizations. The target population consisted of individuals who possessed adequate knowledge of the socio-economic and environmental conditions affecting communities in the Niger Delta region.

2.4. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 300 respondents was used for the study. The sample was selected through cluster and purposive sampling techniques. Cluster sampling was used to group communities within the selected states into manageable units, while purposive sampling was adopted to select respondents who were directly connected to issues relating to vulnerability, militancy, environmental degradation, and conflict management within the region. Out of the 300 copies of questionnaire administered, 284 completed copies were retrieved and used for analysis.

2.5. Sources of Data and Research Instrument

Data for the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through structured questionnaires, oral interviews, and focused group discussions. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A focused on socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, while Section B contained items relating to socio-economic vulnerabilities, environmental degradation, armed insurrection, and government intervention strategies in the Niger Delta region. Secondary data were obtained from textbooks, journal articles, conference papers, government publications, newspapers, and internet materials relevant to the study.

2.6. Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument was ensured through expert review and evaluation by specialists in peace and conflict studies, sociology, and research methodology. The experts examined the questionnaire items to ensure clarity, relevance, and adequacy in relation to the objectives of the study. Corrections and adjustments were made based on their recommendations before final administration of the instrument.

2.7. Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's Alpha statistical technique through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.91, indicating a high degree of internal consistency and reliability for the study.

2.8. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out through field visits to selected communities with the assistance of trained research assistants who were familiar with the local environment and

languages. Respondents were adequately informed about the purpose of the study, while confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process.

2.9. Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and tables were used to answer the research questions, while Chi-square statistical analysis was employed in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Results

3.1. Research Question One: What socio-economic vulnerabilities contribute to armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region?

Table 1: Mean Responses on Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities Contributing to Armed Insurrection in the Niger Delta Region (N = 284)

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Poverty contributes to armed insurrection in the region	156	98	20	10	3.41	Accepted
2	Youth unemployment increases violent agitation	162	92	18	12	3.43	Accepted
3	Political marginalization encourages militant activities	145	104	24	11	3.35	Accepted
4	Lack of infrastructural development increases frustration among youths	150	100	22	12	3.37	Accepted
5	Inequality in distribution of oil wealth contributes to violence	160	89	23	12	3.40	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2026.

The findings in Table 1 indicate that respondents strongly agreed that socio-economic vulnerabilities significantly contribute to armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region. Poverty and youth unemployment recorded the highest mean scores, suggesting that economic hardship and lack of employment opportunities are major factors driving violent agitation and militancy within the region. Respondents also agreed that political marginalization, infrastructural decay, and unequal distribution of oil wealth contribute to frustration and resentment among local populations. The findings suggest that persistent socio-economic deprivation creates conditions that encourage violent resistance and insecurity within the Niger Delta. Entire communities continue to watch enormous oil revenues leave their environment while many residents remain trapped between unemployment and polluted livelihoods, a situation that predictably weakens confidence in peaceful state responses.

3.2. Research Question Two: How does environmental degradation influence the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region?

Table 2: Mean Responses on Environmental Degradation and Armed Insurrection in the Niger Delta Region (N = 284)

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	Oil spills destroy local sources of livelihood	170	86	18	10	3.47	Accepted
2	Gas flaring contributes to health and environmental problems	164	92	19	9	3.44	Accepted
3	Environmental pollution increases community grievances	158	95	21	10	3.42	Accepted
4	Destruction of farmlands and rivers promotes social unrest	152	101	20	11	3.39	Accepted
5	Failure to compensate affected communities encourages violent resistance	166	88	19	11	3.41	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2026.

The results in Table 2 reveal that respondents agreed that environmental degradation

significantly influences the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region. Oil spills, gas flaring, destruction of farmlands, polluted rivers, and inadequate compensation of affected communities were identified as major sources of grievance and social unrest. The findings indicate that environmental insecurity has negatively affected traditional means of livelihood such as farming and fishing, thereby increasing frustration and hostility toward both the government and multinational oil companies. Communities often experience the paradox of living in resource-rich environments while struggling with contaminated water, damaged ecosystems, and declining economic survival.

3.3. Research Question Three: How effective are government intervention strategies in reducing vulnerabilities and violent agitations in the Niger Delta region?

Table 3: Mean Responses on the Effectiveness of Government Intervention Strategies in the Niger Delta Region (N = 284)

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1	The Amnesty Programme reduced militant activities	148	96	28	12	3.34	Accepted
2	Youth empowerment programmes reduced violent agitation	130	108	31	15	3.25	Accepted
3	Development agencies improved infrastructural development	118	110	40	16	3.16	Accepted
4	Government dialogue initiatives contributed to peacebuilding	140	102	28	14	3.30	Accepted
5	Government intervention programmes addressed socio-economic vulnerabilities	112	115	38	19	3.13	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2026.

The findings in Table 3 show that respondents generally agreed that government intervention strategies contributed to reducing violent agitation and improving peacebuilding efforts within the Niger Delta region. The Presidential Amnesty Programme recorded the highest mean score, indicating that it played a significant role in reducing militant attacks and stabilizing the region temporarily. However, the comparatively lower mean scores relating to infrastructural development and socio-economic improvement suggest that many intervention programmes have not fully addressed the root causes of vulnerability and insecurity. Government responses appear to have achieved partial stability, but many residents still perceive development outcomes as inconsistent, unevenly distributed, or insufficient to produce lasting peace.

3.4. Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic vulnerabilities and armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region.

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis of Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities and Armed Insurrection in the Niger Delta Region

Variables	N	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 -crit	df	Level of Significance	Decision
Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities and Armed Insurrection	284	41.26	9.49	4	0.05	Reject H ₀

Source: Field survey, 2026.

The result in Table 4 shows that the calculated Chi-square value of 41.26 is greater than the critical table value of 9.49 at 4 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value exceeds the critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between socio-economic vulnerabilities and armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region. The finding suggests that poverty, unemployment, inequality, political marginalization, and lack of infrastructural development significantly contribute to violent agitation and militant activities within the region. Communities repeatedly exposed to deprivation while witnessing continuous extraction of local resources tend to develop deep frustration toward state institutions and oil-related structures.

H₀₂: Environmental degradation does not significantly influence the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region.

Table 5: Chi-Square Analysis of Environmental Degradation and Armed Insurrection in the Niger Delta Region

Variables	N	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 -crit	df	Level of Significance	Decision
Environmental Degradation and Armed Insurrection	284	44.38	9.49	4	0.05	Reject H ₀

Source: Field survey, 2026.

The result presented in Table 5 revealed that the calculated Chi-square value of 44.38 is greater than the critical value of 9.49 at 4 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Based on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that environmental degradation significantly influences the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region. The finding indicates that oil spills, gas flaring, destruction of farmlands, pollution of rivers, and inadequate compensation of affected communities contribute greatly to resentment, insecurity, and violent resistance within the region. Environmental destruction appears not merely as an ecological issue but as a direct trigger of social instability and armed confrontation.

H₀₃: Government intervention strategies do not significantly reduce vulnerabilities and violent agitations in the Niger Delta region.

Table 6: Chi-Square Analysis of Government Intervention Strategies and Reduction of Violent Agitations in the Niger Delta Region

Variables	N	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 -crit	df	Level of Significance	Decision
Government Intervention Strategies and Reduction of Violent Agitations	284	36.92	9.49	4	0.05	Reject H ₀

Source: Field survey, 2026.

The findings in Table 6 show that the calculated Chi-square value of 36.92 is greater than the critical value of 9.49 at 4 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that government intervention strategies significantly reduce vulnerabilities and violent agitations in the Niger Delta region. Programmes such as the Presidential Amnesty Programme, youth empowerment initiatives, and dialogue mechanisms contributed to reducing militant activities and improving relative peace in some communities. However, the continuing presence of poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation suggests that these interventions have achieved only partial success in addressing the deeper structural causes of conflict within the region.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that socio-economic vulnerabilities significantly contribute to the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region. Respondents strongly agreed that poverty, unemployment, political marginalization, lack of infrastructural development, and inequality in the distribution of oil wealth are major factors encouraging violent agitation and militant activities within the region. The study established that many youths in the Niger Delta experience severe economic hardship despite living in communities that generate enormous revenue for the Nigerian state through crude oil production. The persistent inability of government institutions to provide employment opportunities, quality infrastructure, and equitable socio-economic development has created frustration and resentment among residents, thereby increasing the tendency toward violent resistance and armed insurrection.

This finding supports the frustration-aggression theory advanced by Gurr [10], which explains that prolonged deprivation and denial of expected benefits often generate frustration that may lead to aggression and violent conflict. The finding also agrees with the study conducted by Ikelegbe [11], who found that unemployment, poverty, and socio-

economic exclusion contributed significantly to youth militancy and violence in the Niger Delta region. Similarly, Obi [3] argued that inequality, marginalization, and exclusion from the benefits of oil wealth remain major drivers of conflict and violent agitation within the region. Communities continue to observe the strange economic ritual where vast natural wealth exits their environment while local development remains trapped somewhere between unfinished projects and political speeches.

The study further revealed that environmental degradation significantly influences the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region. Respondents agreed that oil spills, gas flaring, destruction of farmlands, pollution of rivers, and inadequate compensation of affected communities contribute greatly to social unrest and violent resistance. The findings indicate that environmental insecurity has negatively affected traditional means of livelihood such as farming and fishing, thereby increasing hardship and resentment among local populations. The destruction of natural resources and the failure of both government and multinational oil companies to adequately address environmental concerns have intensified feelings of injustice within host communities.

This finding is consistent with the position of Saro-Wiwa [5], who emphasized that environmental destruction and exploitation of oil-producing communities were major causes of conflict and agitation in the Niger Delta. The finding also corroborates the report of the United Nations Development Programme [1], which identified environmental degradation, poverty, and weak governance as major sources of insecurity and instability within the region. Similarly, Michael Watts [13] described the Niger Delta as a region where environmental destruction and oil exploitation have produced both economic dependence and violent resistance. The present study therefore confirms that environmental degradation remains a critical factor sustaining vulnerability and armed insurrection in the region.

The findings also revealed that government intervention strategies contributed significantly to reducing violent agitation and armed conflict within the Niger Delta region. Respondents agreed that the Presidential Amnesty Programme, youth empowerment initiatives, dialogue mechanisms, and intervention agencies contributed to temporary reductions in militant activities and restoration of relative peace in some communities. The Amnesty Programme in particular was identified as one of the most effective intervention measures in reducing attacks on oil installations and stabilizing oil production within the region.

This finding aligns with the study conducted by Ogege [12], who found that the Presidential Amnesty Programme significantly reduced militant activities and improved security conditions in the Niger Delta. Similarly, Ibaba [15] observed that peaceful engagement, negotiation, and rehabilitation programmes produced better outcomes in conflict management than excessive reliance on military operations. The findings also support the argument of Osaghae et al. [16], who maintained that sustainable peace in the Niger Delta requires inclusive governance, socio-economic development, and active participation of local communities in development processes.

However, the study further revealed that despite the relative success of government intervention strategies, many socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities remain unresolved within the region. Poverty, unemployment, environmental pollution, corruption, abandoned projects, and poor implementation of development policies continue to undermine sustainable peace and stability in the Niger Delta. This finding agrees with Temitope [17], who argued that corruption, weak accountability systems, and political interference significantly reduced the effectiveness of intervention agencies such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The finding also supports Rodney [18], who explained that underdevelopment in resource-rich societies often persists because political and economic systems fail to distribute resources equitably among the population.

Overall, the findings of the study indicate that armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region is closely connected to socio-economic vulnerability, environmental degradation, and weak governance structures. Although government interventions have contributed to reducing violent conflict temporarily, the persistence of poverty, environmental injustice, and social exclusion suggests that sustainable peace can only be achieved through genuine socio-

economic transformation, environmental protection, transparent governance, and meaningful community participation in development processes.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

This study examined vulnerabilities and the threat of armed insurrection in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The findings revealed that socio-economic vulnerabilities such as poverty, unemployment, political marginalization, infrastructural decay, and inequality in the distribution of oil wealth significantly contribute to violent agitation and armed insurrection within the region. The study also established that environmental degradation resulting from oil spills, gas flaring, destruction of farmlands, and pollution of rivers has intensified hardship, resentment, and insecurity among local communities.

The findings further showed that government intervention strategies such as the Presidential Amnesty Programme, youth empowerment initiatives, and dialogue mechanisms contributed to reducing militant activities and restoring relative peace in some parts of the Niger Delta. However, the study revealed that the effectiveness of these interventions has been limited by corruption, poor implementation of policies, environmental injustice, and the persistence of socio-economic deprivation within many oil-producing communities.

The study therefore concludes that armed insurrection in the Niger Delta cannot be effectively addressed through military operations or temporary peace programmes alone. Sustainable peace and security in the region require comprehensive socio-economic development, environmental protection, transparent governance, employment generation, and active participation of local communities in development and decision-making processes. Societies eventually discover that stability is difficult to maintain when people living beside enormous national wealth continue to experience unemployment, pollution, and abandonment as their most consistent public policies.

5.2. Recommendations

1. The Federal Government should prioritize sustainable socio-economic development programmes in the Niger Delta region through massive investment in youth employment, vocational training, education, healthcare services, and infrastructural development in order to reduce poverty and socio-economic vulnerabilities that encourage armed insurrection.
2. Government and multinational oil companies should strengthen environmental protection measures by addressing oil spills, reducing gas flaring, restoring polluted environments, and providing adequate compensation to affected communities in order to reduce grievances and environmental insecurity within the region.
3. Government intervention agencies such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs should improve transparency, accountability, and community participation in the implementation of development projects to ensure that intervention programmes effectively address the needs of local communities and promote sustainable peace.

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