

Youth Unemployment and Crime Rate in the Niger Delta: A Comparative Analysis of Its Intensity in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers State

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Abstract: The study investigated youth unemployment and crime in the Niger Delta; with focus on comparative analysis of its intensity in three states, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers State. The purpose was achieved through purposive sampling design. The sample size consisted of 614 respondents drawn from the three states under study. The data collected were analyzed using Standard Deviation. Two hypotheses were formulated for the study. The findings of the study demonstrate that youth unemployment is common to the three states. However, there are variations in the intensity of crime in the study states. It is low in Akwa Ibom, and very high and frequency in Bayelsa and Rivers. The study noted further that the presence of job seekers, skill labour with large population of unskilled youths and above all, the urge for quick money making, created high rate of crime in Bayelsa and Rivers State. Based on these, the study suggests holistic development in the area.

Keyword: Youth Unemployment, Crime

I. Introduction

Crime is one major problems, a burning issue that Nigeria, as a country is confronted on daily basis. It is not peculiar to Nigeria, as many other countries of the world suffered various crimes. One major cause, universally agreed, is the rising or increasing nature of youth unemployment. This perhaps explained why problem of extreme unemployment and its related sister-hunger are number one good of the MDGs, a global framework to address basic issues that threaten the survival and continue existence of the human society. In this effort, holistic development is recognized as the real anti dot to crime. That is, deve lopment enables people to fully realize their potentials and so if achieve, crime in the society will be controlled. Put this in another way, unemployment constitute a major hindrance to one's full realization of his or her potentials, thereby making them to go into communality.

Paradoxically, while the Niger Delta is richly endowed with resources, the degree of unemployment among the people is alarming; a situation the World Bank describes as unemployment in the midst of plenty (World Bank, 1996).

The region is confronted on daily basis with criminal related activities in different manifestation. One obvious fact that seeks to explain the prevailing crime in Niger Delta States is the vulnerable nature of the country's socio-economic and political structures. However, that these attributes seem correct; lend credence to the argument that the causes of crime are complex. But, if the school of thought that links crime to unemployment is proven to be correct, then, Nigeria as a whole would provide ample fertile soil for crime to take root and increases, why? Because Nigeria ranked high among nations with highest number of people living in poverty with youth large proportion unemployment youths.

The increase incidence of crime in the Niger Delta region despite the deployment of large contingent of security officers is of great concern. While there are consensus on the cause, there are divergent opinion, however suggests variations on the rate of crime in the region while many believe it is not in all the states of Niger Delta, others argued that crime rate is on the increase in all the Niger Delta States hence this study.

Arising from the analysis above, the study hypothesizes that:

1. There is no difference in the rate of crime in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers
2. Significance difference in youth unemployment level have no relationship with crime rate in the study states.

The objective of the study is to compare the rate of crime in three states: of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers State. And to find out if youth unemployment indeed is responsible for high rate of crime in the region.

Method of Study

In every research, one needs a specific structure and strategy for investigating the relationships among the variable of study. For it is through an observation of the tangled web of relationships among variables that the necessary data for our research are generated (Nnandi, 1999). The sample comprises of 614 respondents

purposively sampled from Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers State. Therefore, the study employed survey research method. One major features of survey research method is that the researcher gathers data from sample respondents, usually selected from a population. This method is used when attempting to find out correlational relationship between variables, and when attempting to connect activities, theory, objectives with outcome through empirical analysis. For this reason, survey research method is conducted in a natural setting where the researcher gathers data, analyses then inductively, and describes a process that is both expressive and persuasive. It is participant's perspective, as it uses the opinion and assessment of people engages in the problem at hand. Besides, survey method is flexible to permit the use of data collecting technique.

The Study Sample

It is difficult, if not impossible to study the entire population of the study the entire population of the study states. Faced with this problem, the researcher draw samples from the three states. The sample comprises of 614 respondents purposively selected from Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa and Rivers State. To ease analysis, respondents from Bayelsa and Rivers State were grouped together. Reasons for the group of centers on shared common characteristics of both states. These features include presence of oil multinational companies, common geographical features and high presence of jobless migrants in both states.

Conceptual Analysis

Unemployment is one concept that seems to enjoy consensus in terms of definition. Okafor (2009), World Bank (1993), and International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2012) agreed that unemployment describes the condition of people who are without job, the unemployed are those economically active population who is without work but available and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. Various forms of unemployment have been identified by scholars. They include seasonal, structural, frictional and cyclical unemployment (Adebayo, 1999, Dameelie 2001. Itelloster and Goldstein, 1994, Tadaro, 1992).

Unemployment is a global trend with more complex problems. Statistically, youth unemployment is on the increase. In 2007, the Middle East and North Africa were the region with highest unemployment rate, about 12.2 percent. This was followed by sub-Saharan Africa – 10 percent and East Asia 3.6 percent, the lowest. This situation was caused by increasing population in the face of limited jobs.

There are 1.2 billion youths (between 15 – 24 years old in the world (ILO 2010, UNO, 2009). 80 percent live in developing countries, with 60% in Asia, 17% in Africa, (14 in Sub-Saharan and 3 in North Africa) (ILO, 2012).

According to National Bureau of Statistics (2000 – 2011), the national unemployment rate for Nigeria showed that, in 2000, unemployed youths constituted 13.1% 13.6% in 2001, 12.6% in 2004, 11.9% in 2005, 13.7% in 2006, 19.4% in 2009. The statistics further revealed that 41.6% of these aged between 15 and 24 were unemployed, while 17% were those between 25 and 44 years old. On educational status, the statistics put 14.8%, for those with primary education, 28.8% for secondary education, while 21% never attended either primary or secondary school. The manpower Board (2012) puts youth population at 80 million that is 60% of the total population of the country.

Despite efforts to address the unemployment crisis and the inspiring growth rate of 7% per annum since 2001, Nigeria remains crippled with high level of youth unemployment that continue to affect the socio-economic activities in the country. Causes of youth unemployment in Nigeria, according to scholars varied. Okafor (2011) blamed the situation on rapid rural-urban migration, rapid population growth and inappropriate school curriculum. The Agufor (2013), attributed it to rapid expansion of the educational system, decline in the manufacturing sector and corruptions.

The unemployed youths are led to crime because of their relative deprivation and acute sense of want. The social environment of the jobless often leads to crime. According to Oxford Dictionary, a crime is held to be an offence which goes beyond the personal, and into which legitimate punishments or sanctions are attached, and crime required the intervention of a public authority. For crime to be known as such, it must come to the notice of, and be processed through an administrative system or enforcement agency. It must be reported and recorded by the police (or investigator). Crime is seen as a violation of the rules agrees to be respected by all members of the society. Crime is a huge threat to public, safety. It causes great personal sufferings, vast material damage, and place enormous burden on their victims.

II. Result And Discussion Of Findings

Hypothesis 1

There is no significance difference of crime rate in Akwa Ibom State, Bayelsa/Rives State.

Table 1: Test of Hypothesis 1

State	N	Mean	SD	S.EM	T.Value
Bayelsa/Rivers	52	78.27	9.547	1.324	
Akwa Ibom	96	59.9	9.935	1.014	11.443

df = 146, Significant at 5%

The mean score of Bayelsa/Rivers is 78.27 and SD is 9.547. The S.EM of High rate is 1,324. Akwa Ibom is 96. The Mean score is 59.19 and SD is 9.935 and the S.EM is 1,014. The T.value between both groups is 11.443 at 146 degree of freedom. The t-value is significant at 05 level of significance. Hence the hypothesis is rejected. It means that there is significance difference in crime rate between both groups.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significance differences of youth unemployment between Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa/Rivers.

Table 2: Test of Hypothesis 2

State	N	Mean	SD	S.EM	T.Value
Akwa Ibom	284	68.84	12.087	717	
Bayelsa/Rivers	330	67.63	12.089	666	1235

df 612 Not significant

From Bayelsa/Rivers group, we have 330. The mean score is 67.63 and SD is the 12.089. The EM is 666. On the other hand, 284 is of Akwa Ibom. The mean score is 68.84 and SD is 12.087. The SEM is 717. The t-value between groups is 1235 at 612 degree of freedom. The value of t is not significant at 0.5 level, hence the hypothesis is accepted. It means that there is no significant level. On conspiracy, it is found that the means of both groups are almost the same.

The result noted that youth unemployment in Oil producing states like Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Rivers are higher than the national average. However, the rate of crime in these states varied. As revealed in the analysis, the rate of crime in Bayelsa and Rivers are higher than the rate of crime in Akwa –Ibom State. The differences, as aptly discovered by the study is that Bayelsa and Rivers experienced high incidence of criminal activities because the oil industry that dominate economic activities in these areas is a capital intensive industry that has very limited space for unskilled labour which is abundant in the affected states.

Again, unemployed persons tend to migrate to Bayelsa and Rivers thereby increasing the job question and invariably crime in these areas. Another factor that explained the prevailing high crime rate in Bayelsa and Rivers is the fact that, unemployed youths in these states derived much benefit from oil theft and illegal bunkering and other wholesome activities that made them accessed huge amount of money in a short time. This makes the urge to look for paid employment very low, yet, they declare themselves unemployed when asked about their job status. This finding, find support in Sama (2013)'s observation. He made this point clearer when he said:

Basically, when you look at the situation in the country, you will discover that a lot of youths are unemployed. This has contributed to the increase in crime rate, especially in the Niger Delta region in general and particularly Bayelsa and Rivers.

Hashmu (2012) also observed that Bayelsa and Rivers experienced higher crime rate due to large proportion of youths that are not engaged in any meaningful employment. Similarly, Zone 5 Crime records, which Bayelsa State is a part, indicates that of the three states in the Zone, Bayelsa state have high rate of crime. In this record, kidnapping, arms robbery, and oil theft are major crimes.

The fact that Bayelsa and Rivers ranked high in crime is never a surprise, as the figure of the National Bureau of Statistics lend credence to the fact that, Akwa Ibom and Bayelsa youths unemployment rate of 38.4 percent is higher than the 19.7 percent national average, followed by Rivers State in the region with 30.8 percent. Accordingly, this incidence of youth unemployment is due to what Obade (2013)'s called structural deficiency. By this, he meant that, youth unemployment emanates from a present and/or past process of impoverishment by which resources, opportunities and economics surplus have been substantially remove from people who are currently poor. This line of thought, link crime to poverty consider in terms of deprivation in some material wellbeing including access to gainful employment.

The inability to attain a minimal standard of living, and lack of command over basic consumption needs naturally push the young people into crime. From the political angle, the study attributed high rate of crime in Bayelsa and Rivers to the political class abused of political process in these areas. Young people with skills, certificates and energies have nothing to offer as a result of mass unemployment, but dance to the tune of the politicians who in turn provide use them will be given to manipulate, rig and destabilized elections. In most cases, after they have been used by their politicians, they are dumped or left to face their fate whenever the law catches up with them. The glaring fact is that guns provided for them are not retrieved, making them to use it

for criminal business. The few available jobs for youth job-seekers are politicized, making the unemployed persons embarked on unlawful means of survival.

The foregone analysis do not in any way suggests that Akwa-Ibom State is crime free. It only revealed the magnitude of crime in these states. However, Akwa Ibom, of the three states under investigation experienced low crime rate probably because the rate of urbanization is low, and that the present of oil multinational is much felt. But the fact that, youth derived legitimate means of livelihood, grow up in a culture that encourages criminal behaviour, this makes Akwa Ibom State a “potential risk crime state.” Today, lack of employment opportunities encouraged prostitution as means of survival in Akwa Ibom State, bounded labour is and so on the increase in Akwa Ibom State.

Table: Prevailing Crimes Rate in the Study States

Type of Crime	Akwa Ibom	Bayelsa	Rivers
Kidnapping	Low	High	High
Bank robbery	High	High	High
Car snatching	Low	High	High
Oil theft	Low	High	High
Illegal bunkering	Low	High	High
Sea pirates	Low	High	High
Cultist activities	High	High	High
Blowing up oil pipelines	Low	High	High
Pipelines	Low	High	High
Female prostitution	High	High	High
Child trafficking	Low	Low	Low
Drug trafficking	High	High	High
Political thuggery	High	High	High

Source: Field Study 2016

The result of the above table shows that Bank robbery, cultist activities, female prostitution, drug trafficking and political thuggery are common to the three states under study. While kidnapping, car snatching, oil theft, sea pirates, cultism, pipeline vandalism, child trafficking and political thuggery are peculiar to Beyelsa and Rivers.

The rate of youth unemployment in the three states is relatively equal (30 – 38.4) though, Akwa Ibom seems to have higher level of youth unemployment (38.4), yet, the intensity of crime is low when compared to Bayelsa and Rivers.

The reasons as revealed by the study include:

- (i) Youths of Bayelsa and Rivers are exposed to huge oil money, which they could not accessed due to the high skilled labour required for engagement.
- (ii) The activity of the political class created quick money making avenue to the extent that, formal engagement appear to delay access t basic life facilities.
- (iii) Crime incentive is much higher than rewarding them monthly stipend.
- (iv) Movement of job seekers to both Bayelsa and Rivers, who could not find job take to crime as means of survival.
- (v) Large population of youth in Bayelsa and Rivers accessed light and small weapon that induces them to crime.

Given this position, it is therefore, clear to argue that the rate of crime in the Niger Delta states are not the same as there are variation, not only in the intensity but also that, some crimes are peculiar to certain states.

Youth’s unemployment and its relationship with attendant crime are part of major social problems affecting the growth and development of the Niger Delta region. Desperation to survived drive the unemployed youths into living outside the law. Resources that would have otherwise been invested in education and other life sustaining facilities are diverted to crime control and prevention. From the table above, it is obvious that crime rates are low when compared to Bayelsa and Rivers. This situation obviously agreed with analysis in the preceding paragraph of this study that discussed causes of crime variation between Akwa Ibom on one hand and Bayelga/Rivers State on the other.

III. Concluding Remark

Based on this, it is concluded that factors that increase youths’ unemployment in Bayelsa/Rivers State should be addressed to reduce criminality in the area.

Based on this, the study suggests proactive youths employment and holistic development of the region, while advocating for the restrcuting of the society mode of economic production and political engineering, to guarantee equitable distribution of wealth and incomes and means to reduce crime in the study areas.

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