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IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL MARITIME SECURITY THREATS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF COASTAL AREAS IN DELTA AND RIVERS STATES

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Abstract

International maritime security threats in the region, especially sea piracy and oil theft, make Nigeria lose huge sums of money in export revenues and this reverberates on the wellbeing of residents of coastal areas whose major means of livelihood depends on the maritime sector. The purpose of this paper was to assess the impact of international maritime security threats on economic development in coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States with particular reference to unemployment and poverty levels in the areas. This paper is built around the structural conflict theory of Marxism paradigm at state-level of analysis. The sample size of the study was 385 respondents drawn from a population of 9,925 people comprising of staff from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Police Force and Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency in delta and Rivers States. The population of the study equally includes staff drawn from Togolese, Benin republic and Senegalese embassies Abuja as well as operators of shipping businesses, fishing groups and oil servicing firms in Warri, Port Harcourt, Oporoza and Bonny. Primary data were collected from close-ended and open-ended questionnaire and in-depth interview. Also, data were collected from secondary source. Data from questionnaire were analysed using simple percentages and absolute frequencies, while data from in-depth interview were analysed using narrative analytic technique. Data from secondary source were analysed using relational-content analysis. Findings [redacted] showed, among other things, that international maritime security threats in Nigeria maritime domain increases poverty and unemployment levels in coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States. Among other things, it was recommended that the federal government should urgently activate the use of relevant international instruments for combating sea piracy and oil theft in the coastal areas in Rivers and Delta States for enhanced economic development.

Keywords: International, Maritime Security, Development, Economic Development, Coastal Areas

Introduction

International maritime security threats in the Nigeria maritime domain has raised huge concern in the Gulf of Guinea given the increase in the number of attacks off the country's coast as well as in the surrounding waters in the sub-region's coastlines. A cursory examination of international maritime security threats in Nigeria reveal that out of 53 sea piracy attacks that have occurred in the Gulf of Guinea in 2016, representing 28 percent of the total number of attacks universally, 36 attacks took place in Nigeria, making the country the worst maritime domain in West Africa. In 2017, 31 sea piracy attacks occurred in Nigeria, but only 1 attack took place in Somalia within the same period. Between January and June 2018, 75 percent of 107 sea piracy attacks

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took place in 6 countries with Nigeria having the highest number of attacks (International Maritime Bureau, 2019).

The economic development of coastal areas in Delta and Rivers States is largely dependent on the level of international maritime security threats on its maritime domain. The coastal areas in Delta and Rivers State have large deposits of oil and gas which contribute largely to the economic development of not only the coastal states, but of Nigeria generally. With pervasive international maritime security threats in the region, especially sea piracy and oil theft, Nigeria loses about $600 million in export revenues and this reverberates on the wellbeing of residents of coastal areas whose major means of livelihood depends on the maritime sector (Onuoha, 2012).

With reduction in the revenue accruing to the country from crude oil and other maritime businesses in Delta and Rivers States, households in the coastal areas engaged in the maritime sector begin to experience loss of incomes through loss of jobs, and this could make them poorer and unable to meet their basic needs. From 2019 to 2021, artisanal fishermen in Nigeria coastal areas lost about $106.6 million affecting each state in the Niger Delta region. In 2021 alone, 20 fishermen were kidnapped in the Nigeria coastal waters, resulting in the payment of ransom amounting to $2,484 per annum (Okereke, 2022). With the increase in kidnapping activities by international criminal gangs in Nigeria coastal areas, many people in the local communities lost their means of livelihood that largely depend on the seas.

A number of multilateral mechanisms including the Yaunde Code of Conduct and Inter-regional Coordination Center (ICC) which is backed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been used to tackle international maritime security threats in Nigeria maritime domain to combat maritime criminalities in Delta and Rivers States, but such efforts have not been largely successful, hence maritime security challenges continue to fester in the country's maritime domain in the coastal areas. The huge threats in the Nigeria's offshore domain have many implications for social and economic development at both the continental and global levels which invariably affects economic development of Nigeria. In the coastal areas of Bonny and Oporoza coastal areas, there is widespread incidences of oil theft and sea piracy which impact in diverse ways on poverty and employment levels in the areas. The residents of the coastal areas depend largely on maritime businesses for their survival. With piracy attacks on their fishing businesses and maritime transportation, their level of income is bound to dwindle. This may have implications for the level of poverty and unemployment in the coastal areas, which can invariably worsen the spate of sea piracy and oil theft in the coastal areas as individuals who have lost their means of livelihood to international maritime criminal gangs indulge in the crime. Therefore, this paper is geared towards the examination of how international maritime security threats have affected economic development in the Nigeria, with particular reference to the coastal areas of Oporoza and Bonny in Delta and Rivers States respectively.

Conceptual Framework

International Maritime Security

According to Nwankwo, Anaere, Ayuba, Okinwuyi and Oluroda (2014), defined security as a concept does not often involve the use of military might in combating security threats or purchase as well as use of arms and ammunitions in the protection of the state and the individuals. The authors defined security in terms of development and argued that without adequate development in a state, lives and properties of the people cannot be largely secured. Nevertheless, the authors did not define security to include whose responsibility is it to provide security, which is needed in this paper.

Ngwube (2016) noted that security is the capacity of a state to cater for the basic needs of the people, while at the same time safeguarding the important interests of the individuals and the state from threats which could be economic, social, military, political or environmental in character. The author equally defined security to include human security as well as state security. Human security is individual-centric and involves ensuring health security, social security, food security as well as other components of human security. On the other hand, state security is defined as protection as well as promotion of the safety of the citizens of Nigeria who

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live in the country or abroad. However, the author did not clearly define international maritime security, which is needed in this paper.

In the contribution of Malu (2011), national security in the modern epoch is defined from the perspective of development. National security means promotion of the survival of a state as well as the utilisation of economic power, military power, political power and diplomacy. The author further defined national security as the safeguard of the lives of the people and protection of properties of the people and those of the state. National security is geared towards the protection of national values such as national assets, national interests and other areas of strength on which the state rests. However, the author did not define international maritime security, which is the focus of this paper.

Similarly, Okereke (2022) asserted that international maritime security is concerned with the absence of acts that adversely affect the natural integrity s well as the resilience of any navigable waterways. Such effects on the international maritime environment in the seas as well as security of individuals carrying out legal businesses in international waters shows that having an adequate maritime security policy would go a long way in enhancing the protection of oceanic trade, protect coastal communities and their livelihoods, ensure the safety of navigation as well as protect the fauna and flora in the ocean. The foregoing further shows that maritime security is vital in facilitating international trade which could ultimately leads to economic development of a state. However, the author did not define international maritime security to show that it is better prosecuted through multilateral arrangement.

Similarly, international maritime security issues are major aspects of collective security because it plays a pivotal role in economic development. The oceans support states along its coasts, but countries that are landlocked equally depend on the ports for their majority of their supplies (Dannreuther, 2008). However, the author did not identify the manifestation of international maritime security in coastal areas of Delta and Rivers State, which is vital to this paper. Therefore, international maritime security is defined as sea piracy and oil theft involving activities of trans-border organised criminal elements hampering unemployment reduction and poverty reduction in coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States.

Economic Development

According to Abuiyada (2018), development is underpinned by change, and change in this context means progress from one state of affairs to another state of affairs, which is vital in this paper. However, this definition of development did not meet our requirements in this paper because it did not specifically identify poverty and unemployment as indices of development.

Neatu and Ciobanu (2014) noted that development is used to describe the level of improvement in the quality of lives of individuals in the areas of positive changes in housing quality, increase in the standard of living, freedom of expression, improvement in the access to education, among others. Irrespective of the dimensions of development, individuals are its victims and beneficiaries. Though the author defined development as a positive change which is needed in this study, the definition did not specifically identify poverty and unemployment levels as indices of development as required in this paper. Therefore, development is defined in this paper as quantitative and qualitative changes involving reduction in unemployment and poverty levels in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States arising from mitigation of the nature of international maritime security threats plaguing coastal areas.

Feldman, Hadjimichael, Kemeny and Lanahan (2017) defined economic development as the kind of change that brings about improvement or increase in the resources of individuals in a state and decrease the degree of dependency of individuals in a state on the extended family system. The foregoing also includes those things that enable the people to freely make choices in pursuing autonomy as well as in taking care of their individual responsibilities. At the societal level, economic development facilitates the development of uniqueness as well as responsibility among the individuals. This shows that economic development helps in the building of cultural autonomy and spirit of egalitarianism amongst the citizens of a state. However, the author did not define economic development to include reduction if unemployment and poverty levels in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States, which is needed in this paper.

Panth (2020) noted that economic development is regarded as crucial to a state in reducing the level of poverty, provision of more employment, engendering higher incomes, improved goods and services as well as the use of the latest technology in production. Economic development is accompanied by improvements in the level of infrastructure, and promotion of political, institutional and social factors that facilitate positive changes in the economy. The foregoing definition of economic development is related to this study since it incorporated poverty and employment as critical variables in the understanding of the concept, but the definition is not focused on coastal communities of Rivers and Delta States which is related to this paper.

For Bilgaev, Dong, Cheng, Sadykowa, and Mikhowa (2020), economic development cannot be defined without linking it to sustainable development, which means judicious utilisation of natural resources, growth of social as well as economic indicators and safeguarding of the lives of individuals. The author further stressed that economic issues include inequality, poverty as well as issues relating to health of people in the country. Though the author defined economic development to include poverty, the important variable of unemployment in the coastal waters of Delta and Rivers was omitted. Therefore, economic development is defined in this study as progressive reduction of poverty and unemployment levels in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States through mitigation of international maritime security threats especially sea piracy and oil theft plaguing the coastal areas of the states.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on structural conflict theory of Marxism paradigm at state-level of analysis. The theory has two major strands championed by liberalist and radicalist scholars. In this paper, structuralist conflict theory by radical scholars led by Karl Marx was adopted. Radical scholars blamed all societal conflicts on the capitalist structure, which produced bourgeoisies and proletariats. The relationship between the two groups is characterised by dependence and conflict (Ngomba, 2016).

The major assumption of the structural conflict theory by radical scholars is that conflict mirrors the way all societies are structured. Radical scholars argued that societal challenges such as poverty, crimes, security threats, unemployment, inequality, among others, are sources of conflict. For them, exploitation by bourgeoisies against proletariats is the major source of conflict in all societies (Adeleke, 2021). This theory is relevant to this paper because it laid bare the fact that the nature of international maritime security is related to the exploitative nature of the capitalist system, which enabled economically advanced countries to buy cheap stolen crude oil from coastal areas in Nigeria.

Methodology

The design of this paper is a mixed design involving descriptive and historical research designs. The population of the study was 9,925 comprising of respondents from Nigeria Ministry of Foreign Affairs (815), Nigeria Customs Service (1,658), Nigeria Police Force (3,477), Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (1,133), from Delta and Rivers States. This also includes staff in Togolese (61), Benin Republic (57) and Senegalese Embassies (53) in Abuja. The population of study equally includes operators of shipping businesses and fishing groups in Warri and Port Harcourt (262) and oil servicing firms in Oporoza and Bonny (186).

Rakesh sample size formula was adopted in arriving at a sample size of 385. Proportional random sampling was used in allocating questionnaire to population units because of the heterogeneous character of the population units, while purposive sampling was used in tentatively selecting 15 experts for in-depth interview from the population units using saturation theory. Out of 361questionnaire administered to the respondents, 318 questionnaire were dully-filled and returned to the researcher for analysis. Secondary data were collected from reports of International Maritime Bureau, Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, among others, on sea piracy, and oil theft affecting economic development in Nigeria. Data collected from questionnaire were analysed using simple percentages and absolute frequencies, while data from in-depth interview were manually-transcribed and analysed using narrative-analytic technique. Data from secondary source were analysed using relational content analysis.

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Results and Discussions

Research Proposition i: International maritime security threats in Nigeria maritime domain increases poverty and unemployment levels in coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States

Findings from questionnaire showed that 129 representing 40.6% of the respondents strongly agree that oil theft impedes increasing access to job opportunities in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States, while 120 representing 31.7% of the respondents agree that sea piracy largely increased job losses in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States. Also, 115 representing 36.2% of the respondents strongly agree that sea piracy impinges on maritime transportation in the coastal areas of Rivers and Delta States, while 118 representing 37.1% of the respondents strongly agree that oil theft pose huge threats to the oil servicing jobs in coastal areas in Rivers and Delta States. In view of the foregoing, 120 representing 37.7% of the respondents strongly agree that international maritime security threats largely hamper job creation in coastal areas in Nigeria, especially in Delta and Rivers States, while 123 representing 38.7% of the respondents opined that sea piracy hampers sea transportation and international trade, hence leading to job losses in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States.

Findings from in-depth interview largely support the findings from questionnaire on the impacts of international maritime security threats, especially sea piracy and oil theft on the wellbeing of the people or economic development in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States. Accordingly, it was found that sea piracy and oil theft have harmful and destructive impacts on the coastal states of Delta and Rivers States. Piracy was found to be responsible for massive shutdown of maritime transportation businesses by some shipping companies as well as increased the level of youth unemployment, especially for those engaged in fishing, maritime transportation and oil servicing businesses in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States. Also, sea piracy and oil theft were found to have led to reduction in the potency of government through its security agencies to adequately protect livelihood of people in the coastal areas of Rivers and Delta States. In addition, oil theft and sea piracy negatively impact on the coastal areas of Rivers and Delta States by making some of the companies that provide ancillary services to major shipping companies in the area to shut down. This is connected to the fact that oil theft and sea piracy deprive people in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States the ability to adequately cater for their families in terms of reducing their access to education and healthcare facilities through increase in poverty level in the coastal areas.

The study by Okoronkwo, Okpara and Onyinyechi (2014) focused on national security and maritime piracy using sociological discourse approach, which is related to this study in terms of variables studied, but differ from it in terms of depth of coverage of issues. The study by Okoronkwo, Okpara and Chieke (2020) found that corruption drives maritime piracy and insecurity in Nigeria, which is largely different from the findings of this study. On the other hand, a study by Nnadi, Nwokedi, Nwokoro, Ndikom, Emeghara and Oyemechi (2016), it was found the there is significant difference between sea piracy and armed robbery attacks among Gulf of Guinea countries, which is largely different from the findings of this study.

The study by Onuoha (2012) focused on sea piracy and maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea with particular reference to Nigeria. The study found that sea piracy in the Gulf of Guinea constrains shipping businesses and reduces imports of manufactured goods and food items, which are largely related to the findings of this study in terms of issues covered, but differed from it in terms of geographical spread of the study.

Findings by Amadi and Abdullahi (2012) showed that sea piracy attacks on Bongo Oil facility, which used to produce 225,000 barrels of oil per day almost got grounded due to piracy attacks on Nigeria's offshore gas platforms, which is largely related to the findings of this study. This shows that sea piracy reduces the volume of revenue that would have accrued to Nigeria. This equally affects the Nigerian economy since it is import-dependent as 95 % of all imported goods into the country are seaborne. Due to oil theft, majority of global stable food such as grain and rice have either been delayed or stolen in transit through Nigeria coastal waters. Also, due to sea piracy, Nigeria lost about $600 million in export earnings. Maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea has equally cost Nigeria about £7.2 billion per annum in oil theft alone. According to findings by Onuoha (2013), Nigeria loses 3,000,000 barrels of oil per day to oil theft. Sea pirates attacks equally resulted in the killing of 45 sea farers, while 459 were held hostage, out of which 60% of the attacks occurred in Nigeria in

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2013. These findings are largely related to the finding of this study in terms of identification of impacts of oil theft on Nigeria's economy, but differ significantly from it in terms of depth of issues covered.
This is further buttressed by impact of international maritime security on Nigeria's economy, especially in the coastal areas as shown in Table 1.
Table 1

Cost of International Maritime Security to Nigeria's Economy

Year	Number of piracy Attacks	Insurance Premiums paid by Ship Owners ₦ 000,000	Maritime Industry Revenue in fishing sector ₦000,000,000	freight Charter Rates ($ per day)	Revenue loses to shipping Sector ₦000,000,000
2011	10	22.56	284.33	19,000	3
2012	27	26.08	322.26	22,000	3.5
2013	36	14.73	366.79	23,000	4.5
2014	18	23.95	425.25	24,000	3.6
2015	14	25.67	476.14	22,500	4
2016	36	30.1	455.6	23,000	-
2017	48	23.07	610.20	21,000	-
2018	36	28.6	441.3	24,000	-
2019	21	-	-	-	-
2020	41	-	-	-	-
2021	6	-	-	-	-
2022	0	-	-	-	-

Source: Sackey, Lomotey, & Bansah (2022); IMB (2022); NIMASA (2022)

Findings from Table 1 show that Nigeria economy has lost a lot through maritime insecurity in the fishing sector. The cost of premiums paid to sea pirates, delay in transportation of goods through the high seas due to ship hijack and money paid for hiring of the ship lost during the period of the hijack are totally lost from the Nigerian economy. Through revenue loses to shipping companies, the level of their contribution in the Nigerian economy is lost and this would increase the level of unemployment in the country. When the people lost their jobs due to piracy attacks, such people are not likely to be able to take care of his or her family.
Similarly, international maritime security threats have equally increased the costs of deterrence equipment as well as personnel in Nigeria maritime sector. The total cost for providing security in order to deter maritime criminal gangs from perpetuating their activities is $2.5 billion per annum. The money includes expenses on the procurement of licensed security guards, sonic deterrence equipment, barbed /razor wire, sand bags and electric fences. The foregoing expenses would have not arisen in the first instance if there was no maritime criminal activity in the Nigeria's maritime domain.
Similarly, sea piracy and oil theft have equally brought about loss of crude oil and its attendant loss of job opportunities as oil companies in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States lose revenue as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Time Series Data on Quantity of Crude Oil Produced and Quantity Lost from 2011 to 2022

Year	Quantity of Crude Oil Produced	Quantity of Crude Oil Lost from Trailers	Number of Pirate Attacks on Crude Oil Vessels
2011	185,100	18,420	15
2012	919,285	11,240	16
2013	813,950	31,428	12

2014	900,600	30,246	42
2015	299,790	19,438	40
2016	255,910	38,241	29
2017	227,900	5,883	19
2018	217,030	18,204	10
2019	655,060	21,100	27
2020	789,500	34,683	18
2021	912,500	328,000	12
2022	817,160	145,220	12

Source: Onwuegbulam, Okeke, Aponjolosum, and Igboanusi (2021); Okereke (2022)

Table 2 showed that from 2011 to 2022, coastal areas in Delta and Rivers States lost huge quantities of crude oil through oil theft. This resulted in loss of revenue to those engaged in maritime businesses especially those that are engaged in maritime transportation and oil production. Given the loss of revenue and loss in business, the organisations and individuals that loss revenue through sea piracy attacks reduced their work strength in order to remain afloat in business. This brought about increase in poverty to those engaged in the sectors that have lost their jobs and could not adequately take care of their families.

In 2004, MT African Pride stole 11,000 tons of crude oil. Findings equally showed that sea piracy and oil thieves reduced daily oil production of Nigeria by 650,000 barrels per day in the global oil market. Maritime insecurity in Nigeria coastal areas made Nigeria lose portfolio investment and foreign direct investment, which declined to $4.6 billion and $1.44 billion respectively (Okereke, 2022). Nigeria lost over $105 million USD through oil theft. Oil theft equally made oil production to drop by 20 % in the country. Sea pirates also attack traders, travelers, fishermen and women and residents of coastal areas (Okereke, 2022) in Rivers and Delta States, hence reducing their efforts at economic production. The foregoing findings are related to the findings of this study in terms of issues covered, but differ from it in terms of scope of the coverage. This shows that majority of the findings from questionnaire, in-depth interview, and previous studies support research proposition 1. Therefore, research proposition 2, international maritime security threats in Nigeria maritime domain increases poverty and unemployment levels in coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States, was accepted.

Findings from this study are largely in support of research proposition (i). In this regard, the findings that oil theft impedes increasing access to education as well as the findings that sea piracy largely increased job losses in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States are valid. The findings that sea piracy impinges on maritime transportation in the coastal areas of Rivers and Delta States as well as the finding that oil theft poses huge threats to job creation amongst the people in coastal areas in Rivers and Delta States are valid and are aligned to research proposition (i). The foregoing findings are reinforced by the fact that sea piracy largely hampers job creation of coastal areas in Delta and Rivers States. This is because of the nature of sea piracy and oil theft that have been found to the disruptive of economic activities in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States, and this is further buttressed by findings from in-depth interview which showed that sea piracy and oil theft are largely responsible for disruption of shipping businesses, fishing businesses, among other challenges, hence increasing the level of unemployment in the coastal areas of Rivers and Delta States. Generally, findings from this study further showed that sea piracy and oil theft are largely responsible for increase in poverty in the coastal areas as well as makes life difficult for the residents of coastal communities in Rivers and Delta States, which further reinforces research proposition (i).

Findings from previous studies by scholars such as Oluyemi (2020); Okoronkwo, Okpara and Onyinyechi (2014); Nnadi, Nwokedi, Nwokoro, Ndikom; Gomez (2014); and Onuoha (2012) support the findings of this study by pointing out the impacts of international maritime security threats on economies of different economies, which are largely similar to the findings of this study. However, findings from this study are broader than findings from previous studies in terms of coverage of issues as well as depth of issues covered.

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Apart from difference in depth of coverage and focus of the studies, both findings from previous studies and findings from this study support the position of this study and research proposition (i).

More so, the findings of this study are in line with the basic tenets of neo-functionalist theory regarding the fact that it is not usually easy for states to separate functional and political matters in tackling the impact of sea piracy and oil theft in the coastal areas of Rivers and Delta States since the crimes are driven by economic, political, strategic and geopolitical factors. This shows that sea piracy and oil theft have destructive impacts on economies of states that reverberate beyond national maritime borders. Therefore, research proposition (i), international maritime security threats in Nigeria maritime domain increases poverty and unemployment levels in coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States, was validly accepted.

International maritime security threats and Economic Development in Coastal Areas of Delta and Rivers States

Research Proposition (ii) Transnational cooperation as well as collaboration are among the effective measures in combating international maritime security threats in Nigerian coastal waters for enhanced development of coastal areas in Delta and Rivers States

Findings from questionnaire showed that 125 representing 39.3% of the respondents strongly agree that sea piracy and oil theft are largely responsible for increase poverty level in the coastal areas in Rivers and Delta States, while 106 representing 33.3% of the respondents strongly agree that sea piracy impinges on maritime transportation in coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States. Also, 125 representing 39.3% of the respondents agree that oil theft is responsible for job losses in oil servicing firms in coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States, while 110 representing 34.6% of the respondents strongly agree that oil theft is largely responsible for increase in poverty level in the coastal areas of Rivers and Delta States. In view of the foregoing, 130 representing 40.9% of the respondents agree that sea piracy largely impinge on efforts at job creation in the coastal areas of Delta and Rivers States, while 141 representing 41.2% of the respondents were of the opinion that the implication of sea piracy and oil theft for economic development in Nigeria is that both crimes increase poverty in the coastal areas of Rivers and Delta States through job losses.

Findings from in-depth interview largely support findings from our questionnaire. It was found that sea piracy and oil theft have huge implications for maritime businesses in Rivers and Delta States. Accordingly, sea piracy poses huge threats to the economic security of the people in Rivers and Delta States, especially in coastal areas where major means of livelihood of the people depends on the seas and its resources. Sea piracy negatively impacts on economic development in the coastal areas through job losses in sea transportation and oil exploration and production sectors in the coastal areas. Sea piracy reduces the income and revenue that would have been accrued to fishermen and women in the coastal areas, while at the same time narrows the level of opportunities for employment in the coastal areas due to the fact that some of the companies and organisations involved in maritime businesses have relocated to other environments due to threats to their lives and businesses. It was found that sea piracy and oil theft negatively impact on the number of companies investing in oil businesses in the coastal areas. Sea piracy and oil theft equally reduced the level of FDI flowing into the coastal areas of Rivers and Delta States, hence narrowing opportunities for employment and poverty reduction among the residents of coastal communities. It was equally found that sea piracy and oil theft are responsible for increasing level of underdevelopment of infrastructures as well as increased level of impoverishment and poverty in the coastal areas of Rivers and Delta States.

Findings from this study are slightly similar and different from the findings from previous studies. In this regard, Onyeabor (2018) focused on the importance of maritime transportation to Nigeria's economy, which is slightly related to the focus of this study. The study by Onyeabor (2018) equally found that inadequate infrastructure; lack of indigenous carrier vessels; lack of sea worthiness of indigenous vessels; and poor integrated water transport system are impacts of sea piracy on Nigeria's economy, which is slightly related to the findings of this study in terms of issues covered, but differ from it significantly in terms of depth of issues covered.

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Similarly, Onuoha (2020) examined socio-economic development and maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, and found that maritime criminality negatively affected revenues from fishing, and other sea-related businesses, which is slightly similar to the findings of this study in terms of focus of issues covered. However, the study is significantly different from this study in terms of depth of issues covered.

Anele (2015) focused on economic effects of piracy in Nigeria with particular reference to fishing industry in Nigeria, which is slightly related to the focus of this study. Just like the findings from this study, the study by Anele (2015) found that sea piracy hampered employment and food production in the fishery sector of Nigerian economy, which is slightly related to the findings from this study. Also, study by Adongoi, Aniekan and Udensi (2017) focused on the impact of sea robbery on artisanal fishing in rural settlements in Niger Delta region of Nigeria, and found that there is a nexus between sea robbery and artisanal fishing in rural settlements in the region, which is slightly related to the findings of this study.

The study by Onuoha (2013) and Ejo-Erusa (2020) focused on sea robbery and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, which is slightly related to the findings of this study. The study equally found that between 1991 and 2012, 734 pirate attacks occurred in the Gulf of Guinea, with attacks in Nigeria accounting for 46 % of the total attacks. The study found that sea piracy has negative implications for energy security, increased insurance premiums as well as terrorist financing, which is slightly related to the findings of this study. Also, oil theft and sea robbery are found to be responsible for capital flight worth over ₦ 2 trillion per annum from Nigeria to foreign countries. Nigeria equally loses over $26.2 billion per annum to maritime criminal activities, especially sea piracy and oil theft, which is related to the findings of this study in terms of issues covered, but differ from it in terms of method adopted in the study. Since 95 % of goods imported into Nigeria are sea borne trade (Onuoha, 2013), sea piracy and oil theft largely hamper international trade between Nigeria and other countries, which has negative implications for the economy of coastal areas in Nigeria.

Findings by Artan (2015) collaborated the findings of this study by pointing out that 80 % of global trade is done through the sea, pointing out that with increase in pirate attacks, international trade is hampered. This results into increase in insurance premiums for vessels passing through the Horn of Africa. The foregoing findings are related to the findings of this study in terms of issues identified, but differ significantly in terms of depth of coverage of the issues.

Findings from a study by Osinowo (2015) focused on combating piracy in the Gulf of Guinea which is slightly related to this study in terms of focus of the study. The study found that building collective maritime security response could combat piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region which is largely related to the findings of this study in terms of policy recommendations. Findings by MSP (2017) focusing on international and regional policy environment in the Gulf of Guinea showed that adoption of Sustainable development Goals 16 focusing on peace, justice, strong institutions, and partnerships could ensure improved maritime security governance, which is similar to the recommended strategies in this study by implications. Similarly, a study by Babatunde and Abdulsalam (2021) focused on the development of international as well as municipal laws on maritime safety as well as security, which is related to the focus of this study. The findings by the authors showed that functional, legal, institutional and policy measures for tackling maritime insecurity in Nigeria would mitigate the challenge posed by maritime criminality in the country, which is largely related to the findings from this study. In view of the foregoing, findings from questionnaire, in-depth interview, and previous studies support our research proposition (ii). Therefore, research proposition (ii), transnational cooperation as well as collaboration are among the effective measures in combating international maritime security threats in Nigerian coastal waters for enhanced development of coastal areas in Delta and Rivers States, was accepted.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The paper examined the impact of international maritime security threats on economic development of coastal areas in Delta and Rivers States with a view to proffering solution to the challenge of poverty and unemployment in the States. the paper found that international maritime security threats adversely affected the revenue of operators of shipping businesses, fishing groups, and oil servicing firms in coastal areas of

Delta and Rivers States. this resulted in increase in the level of poverty and unemployment in the coastal areas through job and revenue losses. Therefore, it is concluded that unless the adverse impact of international maritime security threats is checkmated, unemployment and poverty would continue to hamper economic development in the States.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were found relevant in the paper:

i. The National Assembly should come up with legislations aimed at poverty alleviation and job creation with a view to cushioning the negative implications of sea piracy and oil theft on the livelihood of people in coastal areas of Rivers and Delta States; and

ii. there should be immediate declaration of war against sea piracy and oil theft in the coastal areas of Rivers and Delta states by the federal government through multilateral actions with a view to mitigating the challenges confronting the government in combating international maritime security threats in the country.

iii. the federal government should urgently activate the use of relevant international instruments for combating sea piracy and oil theft in the coastal areas in Rivers and Delta States for enhanced economic development.

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