

THE IMPACT OF SEA ROBBERY ON ARTISANAL FISHING IN RURAL SETTLEMENTS IN NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact of sea robbery on artisanal fishing in rural settlements in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The study is survey based; Questionnaire and oral interview were used as methods of data collection. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to select respondents from three littoral states in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The population consists of 410 fishermen/women including maritime business operators selected purposively. The data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC). The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between sea robbery and artisanal fishing which implies that the continuing existence of the activities of sea robbers in our territorial waters will result to poor fish harvest because fishermen are scared of fishing in deep waters where there is fish abundance. Consequent upon this, it is recommended, among others, that ensuring a safe fare for all waterways users through a change of focus from the criminal to the location of crime occurrence will go a long way to identify sea robbers' hotspots and mobilize security operatives' in hotspot policing of Niger Delta Waterways .

Key words: Impact, sea robbery, artisanal fishing, rural settlement, Niger delta.

INTRODUCTION

According to Article 101 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, defined sea piracy as attack that occurs on “the high sea” “outside the jurisdiction of any state” (United Nations, 1982). Attacks that take place within the territorial waters are regarded as armed robbery. Therefore, for a crime to qualify as piracy, which is an international crime, the illegal act or crime must be carried out on the high sea, which is outside the twelve (12) nautical miles limit of the territorial waters of a maritime state.

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It is evident from the above definition that an act of violence against artisanal fishermen/women, ferryboats, speedboats and ships, especially those that happen in ports or

territorial waters are not regarded as “piracy” under the international law. They are therefore classified as “armed robbery”.

However, a large number, of the incidents recorded occurred in territorial waters (Onuoha and Hassan, 2009). There is a general agreement in the global maritime industry that the magnitude of unlawful acts against vessels around the world, especially in the Gulf of Guinea, has been on the increase in recent years. However, information on the accurate nature of such unlawful acts in the region is distorted and unreliable with confusing statistics – hampering efforts to suppress the menace. There are confusing definitions of piracy and armed robbery at sea, coupled with weak legal mechanisms for dealing with and prosecuting apprehended suspected offenders. There is also evidence suggesting that most unlawful acts against vessels in the region, irrespective of their nature or location, are erroneously being classified as acts of piracy. There have also been various allegations of low prosecution rate for apprehended offenders (Rinkel, 2015).

Anyiam (2014) submitted that it is important that the exact nature of the unlawful acts against vessels, which is regarded as sea robbery,

be established from a legal perspective so as to determine whether any counter measures, including apprehension and prosecution of offenders, should be international or nationalistic in approach or a combination of both. It seems that the confusion over the legal nature of robbery crimes against vessels is due to the different definitions of piracy adopted by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

The IMB is an agency established by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) with the support of the IMO for the purpose of gathering, exchanging and publishing information on maritime crimes for the benefit of international commerce. Until 2009, the IMB defined piracy in its annual reports as: An act of boarding (or attempted boarding) with the aim to perpetrate theft or any other crime and with the intent or ability to use force in furtherance of that act (IMB, 2009).

The IMO is the United Nations agency saddled with the responsibility of safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution emitted by ships. IMO has adopted the international law definition of piracy under the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982. Article 101 of UNCLOS 1982 provides that Piracy consists of any of the following acts:

- a. Any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed: (i) on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft; (ii) against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State;
- b. Any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a pirate ship or aircraft;
- c. Any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b).
- d. The IMO code of practice for the

investigation of crimes of piracy and armed robbery against ships (Resolution A.1025 (26)) adopted on 2nd December 2009 clarifies the position further with a distinct definition for armed robbery against ships as follows:

- e. Any illegal act of violence or detention or any act of depredation, or threat thereof, other than an act of piracy, committed for private ends and directed against a ship or against persons or property on board such a ship, within a State's internal waters, archipelagic waters and territorial sea;
- f. Any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described above (UNCLOS, 1982).

It is worthy to note that the IMB's definition of piracy above makes no distinction as to the nature or location of unlawful acts against vessels, including unlawful acts against vessels whether in internal waters, within or outside port facilities, and whether within or outside territorial waters. On the contrary, the IMOs' definition recognizes a distinction between the concept of sea piracy as only happening in international waters and all other unlawful acts within internal and territorial waters and port facilities as armed robbery. This study therefore adopts IMO Resolution. A.1025 (26) and define all attacks that occurred in Nigeria territorial waters as sea robbery. For this purpose, international waters mean all maritime zones, including the Contiguous Zone, the EEZ, and High Seas, but excluding the Territorial and Internal waters. Thus the distinction between Territorial Waters and International waters is crucial in establishing whether a criminal act against a vessel constitutes piracy under international law.

Fishing is an important occupation of the people of Nigeria and the Niger Delta region in particular. After the oil industry, the fishing industry is a huge foreign exchange earner for the country. Besides this, fishing also provides a great part of the protein needs of the country (Jamabo and Ibim, 2010; Tawari and Davies, 2010). The fishing industry in Nigeria also provides employment and engenders economic growth (Pittman, 2011). However, the activities of the

multinational oil companies have so polluted the environment that the fishing industry is in a state of decline (Nurudeen, 2015). As if this is not a bad enough blow to the industry, the activities of sea robbers have added a new dimension to the difficulties confronting fishing business in Nigeria especially in the Niger Delta region. Violent attacks by sea robbers against the fishing industry in Nigeria have caused the fleet of fishing trawlers to dwindle (Usim, 2016). The immediate effect of this situation has been loss of income and unemployment (Terzi, 2012; Wajilda, 2013; Ezem, 2012, 2013).

In Nigeria, sea robbery and other types of maritime criminal behaviour have not only negatively affected the oil and gas industry but have also affected local fisheries (Mpi, 2011; Ochai, 2013; Ships and Ports, 2014) and international trade (Sanga, 2010). Fishing constitutes one of Nigeria's most significant non-hydrocarbon exports, yet sea robbery and other types of violence have devastated the sector (Perouse de Montclos, 2012). Fishing is the second highest non-oil export industry in Nigeria, and pirate attacks on fishing trawlers have reached the point that many fishing boat captains refuse to sail. Nigeria stands to lose up to US\$600 million in export earnings due to piracy threats to its fisheries (George, 2015).

There are no good statistics on the number of attacks on fishermen in Nigeria territorial waters, but newspaper articles and studies show that hundreds of attacks are launched on fishermen each year. Consequently, it appears that fishermen are relatively suffering the highest economic losses because of sea robbery and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing attacks. Both artisanal and industrial fishermen are often the victims of sea robbery attacks (Ships and Ports, 2014; Zircon Marine Ltd., 2014). Attacks on trawlers show that this industry loses millions of naira each year and many fishermen are killed during attacks. Attacks on fishermen involve stealing their catch, engine, fuel, personal belongings and, at times, even their vessels (Graf, 2011; International Peace Institute, 2014; Zircon Marine Ltd., 2014). Sea robbers also use fishermen as human shield or disguise during their attacks on more profitable targets. Fishermen already suffer the consequences of overexploitation

of fish and often cannot afford to replace their stolen items. This has forced many fishermen to give up their occupation, and due to their limited employment opportunities, this has forced some of them to engage in illegal activities, including sea robbery (Orji, 2013).

It is estimated that Nigeria loses about 26.3 billion US Dollars annually to various criminality including piracy and sea robbery (Oyetunji, 2012).

Specifically, Ezem (2012) in his report quoted Mr. Joseph Overo (The President of the Nigeria Trawlers Association) to have raised alarm over the menace of sea robbers, saying "the industrial fishing sub-sector in Nigeria lost in excess of 119 billion Naira in the last eight years in fishing revenue alone". In his opening remarks during a workshop on "Harnessing the Potentials of Nigeria's Maritime Sector for Sustainable Economic Development", former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Goodluck Jonathan (represented by the then Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister for the economy, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo -Iweala), lamented that piracy in the Gulf of Guinea has threatened about 600 million US Dollars' worth of fishing exports. According to him, the cost of piracy to our economy is unacceptably high. Pirates frustrate fishing activities and threaten investments prospect in the West African Coast (Oyetunji, 2012).

Usim (2016) reported that Nigeria's multi-million dollar fish trawling business is in danger of total extinction as incessant sea robbers' attacks have continued to scare away trawler owners and seafarers from their lucrative business. This situation has resulted in maritime stakeholders lament that the nation's territorial waters are now dangerous for seafarers on commercial ferry boats, fish trawlers and other crafts for fear of losing their consignment and lives in most cases. Usim (2014) further reiterated that the patrol operations by the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and the Nigerian Navy are grossly inadequate and unsatisfactory given that much of Nigeria's territorial waters are poorly policed. Only recently in January 2016 as reported by Usim (2016), dare-devil robbers abducted two out of 14 crew members – the Captain and Chief Engineer, aboard a trawler vessel, MV KULAK IX, off Dodo River in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Despite the fact that much of the cargo aboard the vessel belonging to Barnaly Fisheries Nigeria Limited were not stolen by the sea robbers, the incident frightened other seafarers fishing along the nation's waters as they reportedly fled the sea even without any catch. Economic experts say fish-trawling business employs thousands of Nigerian youths and contributed significantly to the nation's economy between the early 1980's up till early 2000's when sea robbers' attacks were much less (Aderigbola, 2015). But local trawler operators are alleging that foreigners who are eyeing the business are now sponsoring mercenaries to attack them with a view to taking over the business (Usim, 2016).

On the effect of piracy on fish trawling business, Margaret Orakwusi, the former President of the Nigeria Trawlers Association (NITOA), lamented that continued robbers' attacks has forced a lot of indigenous operators out of the business. She further noted that the number of companies operating in the sector in 2005 and 2006 was about 39, but this has drastically reduced to nine by 2014 (Usim, 2016). Ojo (2016) in a study stated that fish trawling is a capital-intensive project and it also brings the much-needed foreign exchange. There was a time the industry ranked second to the oil industry in foreign exchange earnings. In 2005/2006, there were about 250 trawlers, but in year 2014, it had depleted to 124. During its boom, there were about 35 companies operating in the sector but over the years, it has reduced to just nine. Regarding sea robbery attacks, it is noteworthy that most of the attacks are not being reported, probably out of frustration by the owners of the vessels who get discouraged when the reported cases fail to yield any positive results or bring succour (in financial terms) to the victims (Ojo, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Niger Delta region of Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed in selecting 3 littoral states which include: Akwalbom, Bayelsa and Delta States respectively (see appendix 1). In each of these states, 3 fishing settlements were purposively selected which comprises 70 fishermen/women, with a total number of 135

fishermen/women including maritime business operators who are victims of Sea robbery attack. Four hundred (400) copies of questionnaires were administered, it is noteworthy that out of the 400 copies of questionnaire that were administered to the respondents, 389 copies were found useable for data analysis as 11 copies were not useful. Thus the study achieved 97.3% questionnaire response rate. Additionally, since it would have been impracticable to conduct interview with all the respondents, selected fishermen, as well as specific market women and speed boat drivers in each of the sample states were interviewed. The respondents answered each statement on the questionnaire and interview schedule based on scales that best described the current situation in their various communities. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, simple percentages (%) and tables were used to analyse the demographic characteristics of respondents. Inferentially, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the research hypotheses in order to make a sound statistical decision. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at 0.05 (α) level of significance was used to help in determining the relationship existing between the variables being investigated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Socio-Demographics

The socio-demographic distribution of the sampled respondents (Table 1) indicates that the total number of respondents is 389, constituting 225 (57.8%) male and 164 (42.2%) female. Thus, the views being expressed in this study are representative of both male and female with the male respondents in the majority. The result also reveals that the majority of respondents (38.0%) were between ages 33-50. Similarly, 33.4% of respondents were aged 26-32years, 21.1% of respondents were 18-25years of age, and 7.5% were aged 51years and above. This suggests that majority of respondents in this study were considered young, energetic and still in their productive age. Based on these characteristics, they were expected to be of sound mind and in a position to understand the central theme of this study and make meaningful contribution

accordingly.

The educational status of the respondents could be categorized into five groups: (a) Those without any formal education (b) Primary- those who had only 1- 6 years of formal education; (c) Secondary education – those who had 6years of post primary education; (d) Tertiary - those who had 6 – 12years of formal education and may include those with diploma certificate, bachelor and post graduate degrees; (e) those with additional qualification. Consequently, 44 (11.3%) of respondents in this study had no primary education. 120 (30.8%) had primary education since they were First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC) holders, 155 (39.8%) had secondary education with GCE/SSCE certificate. In like manner, 64 (16.5%) of respondents were National Certificate and Diploma (NCE/ND) holders. There were 4 (1.0%) respondents in the qualification category who had Higher National Diploma and

Bachelor Degree (HND/BSc) as well as 2 (0.5%) who had Masters’ Degrees. The educational distribution of the respondents implies that most respondents in this study were of average educational status.

The number of years of experience in the maritime business environment is also an important socio-economic factor that could influence the perception of respondents on the subject matter of this study. Therefore, results in Table 1 show that 154 (39.6%) respondents have spent below 5 years in the Nigerian maritime industry, 123 (19.7%) have spent over 5-10 years, and 112 (28.2%) have spent 10 years and above working in the maritime business environment. With the level of experience in the industry, it is safe to conclude that issues concerning sea robbery would not be strange to the respondents, but would be clearly understood.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (N=389)

Demographic Profile	Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	225	57.8
	Female	164	42.2
Age of Respondents	18-25yrs	82	21.1
	26-32yrs	130	33.4
	33-50yrs	148	38.0
Educational Status	No Formal Education	44	11.3
	Primary Education	120	30.8
	Secondary Education	155	39.8
	National Diploma	64	16.5
	Bachelor Degree	4	1.0
	Master Degree	2	0,5
Occupation	Speedboat operator	75	19.3
	Fisherman/woman	155	39.8
	Trader	103	26.5
	Maritime Union worker	56	14.4
Years of Maritime Business Experience	Below 5yrs	154	39.6
	5-10yrs	123	31.6
	Above 10yrs	112	28.8

Source: Field Survey (2016).

The distribution of the respondents' primary occupation was grouped into four occupational categories namely Speedboat operators, Fishermen/Women, Traders, Maritime union workers. As indicated in Table 1, fishing was the primary occupation of the respondents under survey with 155 (39.8%) of fishermen engaged in the business. Apart from fishing, traders were 103 (26.8%), speedboat operators constituted 75 (19.3%) of the total number of respondents, and 56 maritime union workers constituting (14.4%) of the respondents were the least in the occupation distribution statistics.

Accordingly, it is clear that the study cut across various occupations. This is important in obtaining a balanced and unbiased data from respondents who gave their occupational perspectives on the theme of study.

How does sea robbery affect artisanal fishing in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?

Artisanal fishing constitutes an important occupation of the people of Nigeria, and the Niger Delta region in particular is noted for its viability in commercial fishing activities. As part of its objectives, therefore this study sought to examine and analyses the effects of sea robbery on fishing business operations in the Niger Delta. The results of the data analysis revealed that sea robbery has affected fishing business operations in diverse ways as summarised in Table 2. To be concise, data are presented on two-ordered scale (Agree and Disagree) and were obtained by aggregating the values of "strongly agree and agree" on one hand, and "strongly disagree and disagree" on the other.

Table 2: Respondents' opinion on the effect of sea robbery on artisanal fishing categorized by sample groups

Parameters	Sample Grouping					
	Fishermen and Women		Speed boat operators		Traders	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Dwindling means of livelihood	84(98.8)	1(1.2)	57(95.0)	3(5.0)	136(98.5)	2(1.5)
Abandonment of fishing business.	68(80.0)	17(20.0)	53(88.4)	7(11.6)	123(72.1)	15(10.8)
Poor fish catch	67(71.6)	18(21.2)	43(71.6)	17(28.4)	121(87.7)	17(12.3)
High cost of fish and other sea foods	75(88.2)	10(11.8)	53(88.4)	7(11.6)	124(89.9)	14(10.1)
Molestation to pay illegal fees	65(76.5)	20(23.5)	34(56.6)	26(43.4)	86(62.3)	52(37.7)

Source: Field Survey (2016); NB: Figures in parenthesis are percentages

Table 2 show a cross-tabulated result on the opinion of respondents (fishermen, speedboat operators, and traders) concerning the effect of sea robbery on artisanal fishing. It is clear that 98.8% of fishermen indicated that their means of livelihood has crumbled owing to sea robbery activities, 95% of speed boat operators agreed that they experienced something similar, and the experience of 62.3% of traders was not different. To a considerable extent, sea robbery often lead to abandonment of fishing business as indicated by the opinion of 80% of the fishermen, 88.8% of

speed boat operators, and 72.1% of traders. As long as fishermen abandoned their fishing crafts and other fishing gear owing to sea robbery attacks, there is bound to be depletion in fish supply. Clearly 88.2% of fishermen affirmed to low fish yield, 71.6% of speedboat operators had the same view, and 87.7% of traders shared the same opinion.

Owing to fish depletion, poor catch, dwindling income and low level of investment in fishing business resulting from sea robbery activities, respondents were strongly of the view

that the persistent high costs of fish and other sea foods in the region could be attributed to robbers at sea. About 88.2% of fishermen, 88.4% of speedboat operators, and 89.9% of traders along the coast of Niger delta waterways supported this view. Finally, most respondents disclosed that they are often forced to make some illegal payments to sea robbers to assuage their predicament. This view cut across 76.5% of fishermen, 56.6% of speedboat operators, as well as 62.3% of traders in the Niger delta region.

Notably, it appears that fishermen along the Niger Delta Seashore are the worst hit by the mayhem of sea robbers. Indeed, statistical evidence (Table 2) indicates that fishermen recorded the highest figure in all dimensions of effects of sea robbery activities. For instance, the response for dwindling means of livelihood = 136 (98.5%); abandonment of fishing business = 123 (72.1%); poor fish catch = 121 (87.7%); high cost of fish and other sea foods = 124 (89.9%); and molestation for fees = 86 (62.3%).

Qualitative information also corroborates the data collected through the questionnaire instrument. One of the respondents said that:

The problem of persistent sea robbery has tremendous negative effects on artisanal fishing business. Such effect include poor catch, declining income and low level of investment in fishing business resulting in persistent high costs of fish and other sea foods in the region.

In the views of the respondents, the activity of sea robbers has not only crumbled their businesses, but has chased, robbed them of their means of livelihood. One of the respondents submitted that:

Owing to the frequent seizure of our engines, lack of money to replace our stolen engines and the risk associated with doing fishing business these days, many of us have abandoned fishing altogether. Right now, some of my friends whose engines were forcefully collected at gunpoint and who cannot replace the engine are out of business.

For example, a brand new 75 horsepower Yamaha outboard engine is sold at about 1.3million in the market, while fairly used one cost 700, 000 thousand naira. So, where is the money to replace the ones stolen by sea robbers?

A director of fishing business at Iwuo-Okpom beach in Ibeno Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State shared the same opinion with the above respondent:

On the last Sunday of a certain month, we went fishing but did not make any catch that day. The next day, I was attacked by sea robbers who hijacked my engine and demanded for #100,000, a roll of Indian hem which costs (#5,000) one bottle of 501 drink which costs (#2,500) and #2000 recharge card. The robbers gave me a phone number to call when coming to pay the ransom for my engine and instructed me not to come with more than two people in the boat.

From the above position, it is evident that the activity of the sea robbers tends to have a significant negative impact on the lives of maritime business operators. As observed during the fieldworks, most maritime business operators affected, who were breadwinners of their families, became handicapped due to the loss of their means of livelihood to sea robbers in the course of their routine business. In an attempt to save their lives, most of these hitherto maritime business operators have abandoned their businesses.

In another interview, one of the respondents from Akwa Ibom State on 28/4/2016 noted that:

Most fishermen have abandoned fishing business due to regular attacks by sea robbers. I was among the promising directors at Esin-Ofof beach until I was attacked by sea robbers. They carted away all my catch, 200 horsepower Yamaha engine and the fibre, including foodstuffs and cooking utensils and I was abandoned with my boys in the

mangrove forest. As a result, I am now handicapped and depend on family members for survival. My 200 horsepower engine, though fairly used was bought with contribution money. Where will I raise money to replace my engine and the boat?

As a result of this incessant maritime criminality, the level of commitment in terms of fishing has significantly depleted such that fishermen tend to restrict their fishing business to shallow waters for security reasons. The effect of this, has been observed in poor fish catch. This is likely to impact negatively on deep sea fishing business. During another the interview conducted on 26/3/2016 in Bayelsa state, a respondent lamented that:

The continuous attacks on business operator in the waterways is life threatening. As such, we limit our activities to shallow waters with very poor catch that is not enough to feed ourselves and our family members. If you happen to fish with fibre boat, the robbers will seize the engine and fibre and abandon you in the nearest mangrove forest. If you are using a local boat, the robbers will steal only the engine and allow the water to carry you to any direction of the tide. Most times, the robbers come to our

camps and demand for money. If it coincides with when you just returned from the market and have spent all the money on you, they will seize all your foodstuffs including fuel and then take with them either or destroy any fish they find on the alter or the ones reserved for use.

Based on the results so far analyzed, it can be inferred that sea robbery has had a devastating effect on the fishing business operation in the Niger delta. However, the need to further confirm this assertion calls for testing the hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between sea robbery and artisanal fishing as shown on Table 3

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant relationship between the activities of sea robbers and depletion of artisanal fishing in Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Pearson correlation analysis was applied on the relevant data to test whether a significant relationship exists between the activities of sea robbers and artisanal fishing. Correlation statistical analysis is an inferential statistics that estimates the magnitude and direction of relationship between two or more variables. The correlation coefficient (r) ranges from -1 to +1 and the closer the r-value to +1, the stronger the relationship between the variables under study.

Table 3: Pearson’s correlation matrix showing relationship between sea robbery and artisanal fishing
 **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

		Sea Robbery Activity	Artisanal Fishing
Sea Robbery Activity	Pearson Correlation	1	.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	389	389
Artisanal Fishing	Pearson Correlation	.521**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	389	389

The result of the statistical analysis in Table 3 indicates that there is a significant relationship between sea robbery and artisanal fishing ($r=0.612$; $p<0.01$) which necessitates to the rejection of the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Given the strong negative correlation of 0.612, this implies that a percentage change (increase or decrease) in sea robbery activities would lead to a corresponding change in artisanal fishing and vice versa. In other words, the more fierce the menace of sea robbery in Nigeria territorial waters, the greater the havoc done to fishing as a business in terms of poor fish catch, substantial loss of income, downturn in means of living, and high cost of available sea foods in the market.

Findings from data analyzed above revealed that sea robbery has adverse effect on the fortunes of artisanal fishermen in the Niger Delta region. For instance, fish depletion, which is responsible for poor catch and the high cost of fish and other sea food currently experienced by Nigerian living in littoral states and its attendants consequences such as dwindling means of livelihood, has prompted some fishermen to abandon their lucrative fishing business. These findings gain support from the works of Usim (2016); Ochai (2013); Mpi (2011) among others.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The importance of fishing activities on the economy and livelihood of rural dwellers cannot be overemphasized, especially as its survival is threatened by maritime criminality. This study revealed that the activities of Sea robbers in Niger Delta waterways have impoverished fishing activity which is the mainstay of most rural communities in the region. This crime has indirectly influenced some fishermen and other maritime business operators into criminality especially those whose means of livelihood have been hindered. The finding that respondents make some illegal payments to sea robbers to assuage their predicament constitutes an unhealthy national security challenge which could further enhance criminality along the waterways in Niger Delta region.

Base on the above conclusion, the following recommendations are paramount:

- i. There is need to increase surveillance and patrol along waterways in the Niger Delta especially rural fishing settlements. This will assist to abate the surge of sea robbery which has high level of negative interference with fishing activities in the study area.
- ii. Most of the sea robbers disguise as fishermen/women, speedboat operator whose engine has developed fault or military personnel in other to perpetuate their aim, thus, there is need to build capacity in fishermen/women through community education so that they could be enhanced with some measures of security consciousness which could help them dictate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities.

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APPENDIX 1
MAP OF NIGER DELTA REGION SHOWING SAMPLED AREA

