

Sea Piracy and Security Challenges of Maritime Business Operation in Bayelsa State, Nigeria: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

No less than 80 percent of the world's trade is carried out globally through sea. This signifies the significant role the sea plays in the economic development of many nations including Nigeria. Of recent, sea trading has faced serious threats due to sea piracy. Hence, this study examined sea piracy and security changes of maritime business in Bayelsa State, South-South, Nigeria. To achieve the objective of this study, three research questions and three research hypotheses were formulated. A cross sectional survey research design was adopted and the study population comprises sea business operators in the State. Sample of 215 sea business operators in 9 waterfronts in Bayelsa State was selected by simple random sampling and "Sea Piracy and Security Challenge Questionnaire SPSCQ" developed by the researcher was used in data collection. This instrument was validated and tested to be reliable using Cronbach alpha reliability method. Reliability coefficient of 0.08 was obtained for the whole instrument. Research hypotheses were tested using regression analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20.0) was used to enhance data analysis and all hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Result showed significant negative effect of pirate attacks on sea business operation. Also, the effect of sea robberies was also obtained to be negative while sea security surveillance showed a significant positive effect on sea business operation. Hence, adequate security should be provided for sea business operation so as to facilitate sea business operation in Nigeria.

Keywords: Sea piracy, security challenges, maritime business operation, Nigeria

Introduction

No fewer than 80 percent of world's trade carried out globally travels by sea. This represents around 93,000 merchant vessels, 1.25 million seafarers and almost six billion tons of cargo yearly (Bowden, 2010). These figures show an increase in seaborne trade in recent times. Presently, the International Communities have witnessed one of the world's oldest crimes against sea trade- sea piracy. In the main, African waters harbor important seaways of growing maritime concerns, namely the Coast of the Horn of Africa (HoA) and the Gulf of Aden (GoA); East Coast of Africa, and the Gulf of Guinea (GoG); West Coast of Africa. These waterways and availability of ports have become mine field for sea pirates. From 2007 to date, maritime operators have witnessed intense attacks. The attacks have been largely concentrated in waters off the coast of Nigeria and Somalia. In view of this, Nincic (2009) avers that maritime insecurity in Africa and in Nigeria waters in particular, has grown at a disturbing rate and threatens the global flow of goods and services across the world's shipping lines. To Potgieter (2009), this portrays a pervasive maritime insecurity and a threat to economic growth in Africa.

Consequently, the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) and the surrounding ports and waterways suffer from a substantial amount of maritime criminal activities, ranging from illegal fishing, to robbery and militant activities against commercial assets. In Nigeria, piracy and maritime militant activities are particularly prevalent in the waters and around the coast of the Niger Delta. It ranges from poaching and robbery especially in the waters off Lagos and within its ports, to attacks on ship and offshore facilities and the hijacking of vessels for ransom notably in the area near the Niger Delta including the Bayelsa waterways, Utawa – Opobo, Opobo- Andoni and Oron-Calabar waterways in Rivers and Akwa Ibom States.

According to Perouse De Montclos (2012), the main victims of pirates in the Nigerian context are sea business operators particularly speed boat drivers, fishing trawlers and petty traders. The frequent attacks on the fishing activities led to the reduction of the numbers of trawlers from 250 to 150 in 2003 according to the chairperson of Nigerian Trawler Owners Association (NITOA). This poses significant challenge and enormous cost on local fishing economies. In the same vein, Oyetunji (2012) reported the Nigerian Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister for the Economy (Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala), to have lamented that piracy in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) have threatened about 600 million Dollars worth of fishing exports, as well as leading to a loss of over 2 trillion Naira yearly in capital flight to foreign countries.

Given these, there is a need for an uncompromising obligation to safeguard the territorial waters against all forms of threats including piracy, sea robbery, poaching, among other criminality along Nigeria waterways. This will not only impact positively on the socio-economic lives of maritime business operators but will also contribute significantly to the national economic growth of the country. Although studies exist on sea-piracy (Ochai, 2013; Oyetunji, 2012; Onuoha & Hassan, 2009), but only anecdotal empirical research exist in the area of study linking insecurity nay criminality to business growth in the maritime sector. Findings of previous studies (Badejo, 2000; Igbokwe, 2001; Onuoha & Hassan, 2009; and Ezem 2012) revealed that studies on sea piracy tend to focus mainly on attacks on “big” commercial boats and the oil industry; as a result, “small” trawlers and fishermen, speedboat operators and traders are ignored whereas they are most times the first- victims of pirate’s onslaught. This study therefore contrast previous ones by studying sea piracy and security challenges of small maritime business operation in Nigeria by so doing, fills the fissure that exist in the literature. The study is imperative in view of its aim at improving maritime industry’s business operation and harnessing Nigeria’s economic growth through adequate security framework. To achieve this it:

- (a) Investigated whether attacks by pirates pose security threat to sea business operation?
- (b) Examined whether sea robbery affects fishing business operation?
- (c) Assessed whether poaching affects sea faring operation?
- (d) Found out if security surveillance along the waterways significantly influence safety of sea business operation?
- (e) Suggested strategies that could be adopted to reduce water ways criminality and promote sea business operations

The following hypotheses guided the study:

- i. Pirate attacks do not pose any significant threat to sea business operation in Bayelsa state.
- ii. Sea robberies do not significantly affect fishing business operation in Bayelsa State
- iii. Poaching does not significantly affect sea faring operation in Bayelsa State?
- iv. Security surveillance does not significantly influence safety of sea business operation?

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Meaning of Sea Piracy

No definition holds sway on what constitute sea piracy. A number of definitions exist in the literature (Neethling, 2010; Onuoha, 2009; UN, 1982; IMB, 2009; Gilpin, 2007). In an attempt to find a universal understanding of the term, The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982; Part vii, article 101) states that piracy consists of any of the following acts:

1. 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 on the high seas, against another ship or aircraft, or against persons or property on board of such ship or aircraft; Or against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any states;
2. Any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft with knowledge of facts making it a private ship or aircrafts;
3. Any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (1) and (2).

The UNCLOS (1982) definition limits sea piracy to crime against ship at high sea which according to Vogt (1983) must be outside the twelve (12) mile limit of the territorial waters of a maritime state. Thus, the piracy context of Bayelsa from the UNCLOS (1982) claim is regarded as raiding in territorial waters in that it is carried out few miles away from the coast (Pugh & Gregory, 1994).

According to Onuoha (2010) piracy is a term used to describe acts of armed robbery, hijacking and other malicious acts against ships in international waters. Acts carried out with the intent of stealing valuables onboard or extorting money from ship owners or other third party interests by holding the ship or crew interests to ransom.

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB, 2009) in its annual report, defined piracy as an act of boarding or attempting to board any ship with the apparent intent to commit theft or any other crime and with the apparent intent or capability to use force in the furtherance of that act. Issues arising from the definition of IMB above, is that, intent, specification, extent and the use of force are principal elements to be considered in what constitute piracy and not necessarily where or location of occurrence. This definition is adopted in this study for the sake of analytical convenience, and due to the fact that it encapsulates both the features of sea piracy, armed robbery, and sea theft. Hence, this study sees sea piracy simply as sea theft or robbery.

Sea Piracy and Maritime Transport

The increasing cases of piracy, sea robbery, illegal bunkering and unauthorized midstream discharges, among several other criminalities according to Ezem (2012), constitute a major source of concern to maritime administration in the Gulf of Guinea (GoG), including Nigeria. These acts constitute security threat to maritime transport. According to Igbokwe (2001), maritime transport which is also called waterborne transport, is one of the modes of transportation of goods and persons. This is essential to the proper operation of any country's economy and a vital part of a nation's transport infrastructure.

Igbokwe (2012) decried the increasing menace of piracy and armed robbery on Nigerian's territorial waters particularly, Bayelsa waterways. He contends that piracy and robbery within Nigeria's maritime domain was a disincentive to the needed inflow of foreign investment (including local businesses) to develop the economy.

To drive home the magnitude of attacks of sea pirates on seafarers in Nigerian waterways, the IMB reports (2012) show that 56 piracy cases were recorded on Nigeria's territorial waters off the Gulf of Guinea in 2010 and 119 in 2011. In September 2012, 37 attacks were recorded, and this account for an average of about four per month. NITOA (2008) fact finding also show that from 2003-2008, members Vessels that were attacked by pirates and armed robbers in Nigerian waters were 4, 11, 34, 57, 107 and 60 respectively. The above reports show the severity of the menace on maritime transport. According to Igbokwe (2012), Ezem (2012), Badejo (2000), looking critically at the figures has far reaching implications on maritime transportation and seafaring business which is vital to the nation's economy.

Igbokwe (2001) summarized the importance of sea transport to include facilitation of trade and commerce, revenue generation and availability of finance, promotion of tourism, development of related economic activities, employment and job opportunities, enhancement of industrial growth and development, institutional development, international relations and peaceful co-existence. Hence, these benefits should not be deprived of by pirates.

Sea Piracy and Fishing Business

It is estimated that Nigeria losses 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 that "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". The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (represented by 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 frustrating fishing activities and threaten investments prospect in the West Africa Coast (Oyetunji, 2012).

Onuoha and Hassan (2009) have also noted the viability of fishing business to the nation's economy. Maritime trade is a significant contributor to Nigeria's economic development, especially in the area of fishing business. Ochai (2013) further observed that the price of sea foods is likely to increase soon if steps are not taken to check the increasing rate of sea pirates on the Nigerian waters.

According to him, the activities of sea pirates have made fishing difficult; consequent upon this, some of the fishermen have abandoned their trawlers because of insecurity. Equally, NITOA (2008) has also raised alarm over hijacks on fishing trawlers by pirates within Nigerian territorial waters. Ochai (2013) blamed these attacks on vessels on the inadequacy of security and management.

Security Challenges and Maritime Operation

Security challenges in the Nigerian waterways has been intellectually discussed (Zabadi and Onuoha, 2009; Onuoha, 2009, Ochai, 2013). It has been found that security has enormous impact on business operations within this sub-sector of the Nigeria's economy (Zabadi & Onuoha, 2009; Onuoha, 2009, Ochai, 2013). According to Ochai (2013), since May 2013, there have been increasing reports of pirate attacks in the Gulf of Guinea including the waters of Nigeria and Bayelsa State. In addition to this, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has rated the coastal parts bordering Lagos and the Bonny waters as one of the most piracy attack – prone areas of the world. According to the IMB (2013) report, Nigeria and Benin Republic have recorded more than 22 incidents of piracy in 2013 only, the highest ever recorded on the West African Coast.

Severally, these attacks have been aimed at oil tankers, cargo vessels, fishing trawlers and speed boats conveying passengers from one destination to another (Onuoha & Hassan, 2009). Also, (Ochaia, 2013) reports that speed boats were attacked with passengers onboard along Nembe waterways in Bayelsa State. In the same vein, pirates according to the report attacked four of the passengers speed boats which were conveying traders to Yenagoa, the capital of Bayelsa State. Some of the passengers were ordered by the hoodlums to jump into the water after being dispossessed of their cash and other valuables. These scenarios paint an ugly picture on maritime business operations and reveals the state of security in the Nigerian waterways..

In view of the above, fear and anxiety has become a constant companion of people living in the coastal areas of Bayelsa state, following the upsurge of criminal activities and frightening security challenges along its water ways. The incessant attacks by pirates on travelers, traders, fisher men/women, and inhabitants of the water ways around Brass, Nembe, South Ijaw, Ekeremor, and other hotspots route have made sea business operation more challenging than ever before.

These incidences occur on daily basis, leading to either loss of life or maiming of persons and hijacking of fishing trawlers. Others who are simply fortunate to be alive, had to part with their hard earned income, or trading capital. Reports by (IMB, 2012) show that sea piracy often attacked and robbed vessels, kidnapped crews, attacked trawlers and water ways traders, travelers and displaced them of their valuables and monies along the coast, rivers and surrounding waters of Akwa Ibom, Rivers and Bayelsa. Available data from IMB and Crime Diary of the Bayelsa State Police Command indicates that, of the over 8062 cases of attacks on sea between 2003-2013 (the comparison of the total sea attacks on Nigeria), sea robbery attacks on Bayelsa water ways stood at about 48 percent, while other water ways in Nigeria accumulate the remaining 52 percent (IMB, 2003 – 2013; NPF, 2010 – 2013).

The state of insecurity on Bayelsa water ways have generated concerns on the adequacies of the various policies and strategies adopted so far by the Nigerian Maritime Security comprising the Joint Military Taskforce (JTF), Marine Police, Nigerian Navy, National Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Nigerian Maritime and Safety Agency (NIMASA) among others to combat or arrest water ways criminality in the area. Maritime business operators and stakeholders have attributed their situation to security inadequacies and incomprehensive security surveillance along the water ways. Others attribute it to government insensitivity, corruption among maritime security stakeholders, coupled with lack of alternative road networks.

Theoretical Framework

The basic perspective for analyzing the substantive issues under study is anchored on the theory of Routine Activity Theory (RAT). The Routine Activity Theory (RAT) is an offshoot of the socio-structural theory, advanced by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson. It is however a new paradigm and a Meta -theory in the 1970s crime discourses (Igbo, 2008).

The Routine Activity Theory explains crime as a product of the combined result of three essential elements:

1. Potential offenders or persons who are motivated to commit crimes
2. Suitable targets, that is, the presence of things that are of some economic value and which can be easily transported;

3. Absence of capable guards or persons who can prevent a crime from taking place.

The foregoing propositions put forward by RAT crystallize the factors that prompt the occurrence of pirate attacks in Bayelsa waterways and its attendant threat on the waterways. Principally, the availability of suitable targets (oil installations of multi-national oil companies, trawlers, boat drivers, fishermen, local businesses that patronize the water transport) according to the routine activity theory is a motivator and sustained factor. Too, the inadequacy nay unavailability of competent security networks to safeguard the territorial waters of the study area. Based on this, serial attacks by pirates on maritime business operators could be attributed to weak maritime security. Given this, the Routine Activity Theory concerned itself with explicating the individual motivational factors in crime causation which other traditional sociological theories of crime do not. Its main preoccupation is to emphasize how ordinary or normal lawful, conventional, routine activities of individuals increase the probability of criminal activities (Igbo, 2008).

Methodology of the Study

Research design: This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The independent variables were not manipulated but are rather measured the way they occurred as it is usually seen in a survey design. The survey was carried out through the administration of questionnaire to speed boat drivers, traders and fisher men's operating within the 9 selected water front's which cut across the three senatorial districts of Bayelsa State. On the other hand, officers and men of maritime component of Joint Taskforce command (JTF) and maritime workers Union were sought and secured.

Research area: The study was carried out in Bayelsa State, South-South Nigeria. Bayelsa State has border with the Atlantic Ocean. The State is one of the oil rich States. It is also blessed with other abundant water resources such as fish, crayfish, shrimps and snails. Oil was first discovered in this state in Nigeria.

Population of the Study: The targeted population of the study was 270 persons doing businesses in Bayelsa State waters. These cut across speed boat drivers, traders and fisher men operating in the area; men and officers of Maritime Component of Joint Taskforce Force Command (JTC) as well as trade union members' resident and operating within Bayelsa state water ways.

Sample size and sampling procedure: Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select sample for the study. Simple random sampling was used to choose the water fronts. The fish-bowl method was used, while Purposive sampling was used to select the study respondents. Out of 12 waterfronts in Bayelsa State (Ogbia, Emekalakala, Olobiri, Nembe, Ogbolomabiri, Basambiri, Okopma, Brass, Swali market, Amassuoama, Kolokuma, Kiama, Sagbama and Ekeremo), 9 waterfronts (Ogbolomabiri, Ogbia, Okopma, Brass, Amassuoama, Kolokuma, Kiama, Sagbama and Ekeremo) were selected using simple random sampling technique. While 6 persons each were selected in category of speed boat drivers, traders, fisher men/women, union members and members of Joint Task Force were purposively selected. The purposive sampling technique was adopted due to the uncertain nature of the population. The sample design is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Design

Waterfront/category of operators	Traders	Fishermen	Speedboat operators	Union members	Members of Joint task force	Total
Ogbolomabiri	6	6	6	6	6	30
Ogbia	6	6	6	6	6	30
Okopma	6	6	6	6	6	30
Brass	6	6	6	6	6	30
Amassuoama	6	6	6	6	6	30
Kiama	6	6	6	6	6	30
Sagbama	6	6	6	6	6	30
Kokoloma	6	6	6	6	6	30
Ekeremo	6	6	6	6	6	30
Total	54	54	54	54	54	270

Instrumentation: The instrument used for data collection was a self developed questionnaire titled "Sea Piracy and Security Challenge Questionnaire, SPSCQ". The items in the questionnaire were measured using Likert Scale. The questionnaire consisted of 24 items. Section 1 assessed personal data of respondents and section 2 assessed the substantive issues.

Two hundred and seventy (270) copies of questionnaire were administered of which 215 were found useful for analysis. This represents about 80 percent response rate and also an indication of the interest of the respondents on the issue under investigation. Union members assisted in the distribution and return of the questionnaire. Interview was also conducted on 2 JTF and 2 Union members in each of the selected waterfronts to complement areas not covered by the questionnaire. A total of 36 persons were interviewed.

Validity and reliability of the Instrument: “Sea Piracy and Security Challenge Questionnaire, SPSCQ”, was validated by two experts in the maritime industry and two experts in Test and Measurement. This instrument was also tested for reliability by administering 25 copies of the questionnaire to 25 maritime business operators in Akwa Ibom State with similar business line and peculiar security challenges. The data obtained was subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis and reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained which showed that the instrument was reliable.

Method of data analysis: Regression and Simple percentages were used to analyze the data. Simple percentages and frequency counts was used in analyzing the background characteristics of the respondents while regression was used to analyze the hypotheses. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, 2.0 version), facilitated the analysis of the study hypotheses.

Table 2: Demographics Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Sex		
male	133	61.9
female	82	38.1
Total	215	100
Age		
21-25	13	6.0
26-30	24	11.2
31-35	64	29.8
36-40	73	33.9
Above 40	41	19.1
Total	215	100
Academic Qualification		
WASC/Equivalent	89	41.4
Diploma/ NCE	21	9.8
B.Sc. / Equivalent	32	14.9
Post graduate Degrees	18	8.4
Professional certificates	55	25.5
Total	215	100
Year at the waterfront		
1-5yrs	101	47.0
6-10yrs	80	37.2
More than 10 years	34	15.8
Total	215	100
Water front's / respondents		
1.Ogbolomabiri	30	14.0
2.Ogbia	25	11.6
3.Okopma	29	13.5
4. Brass	24	11.2
5.Amassuoama	22	10.2
6.Kolokuma	20	9.3
7.Kiama	27	12.6
8.Sagbama	21	9.8
9. Ekeremo	17	7.9
Total	215	100
Categories of Respondents		
Sea farer/ speedboat operators	38	17.7
Fishermen/trawlers operators	43	20.0
Maritime traders	51	23.7
Maritime union members	46	21.4
Joint task force members	37	17.2
Total	215	100

Source: field, survey 2014

Results

Pirate Attacks and threat to Sea Business Operations in Bayelsa State

Table 3: Regression Summary of Effect of Pirate Attacks on Business Operations in Bayelsa State

Variables	B	SE	Standardized coefficients	t-value	t- crit.	p-value
Constant	25.020	0.280		94.88		<0.001
Pirate attack	-0.778	0.020	-0.934	-40.30*	1.96	<0.001

$R^2=0.884=88.4\%$ significant negative effect ($p<0.05$).

Table 3 shows the effect of pirate attack on Sea business operation in Bayelsa State. The result reveals that pirate attacks has a significant negative effect on sea business operations ($\beta = -0.778$, S.E=0.020, t-value=40.20, $p<0.05$). The absolute value of (t-cal) t calculated (40.20) is greater than its corresponding (t-val.) tabulated value at 0.05 level of significance with 213 degrees of freedom. This result indicates that the issue of Sea pirate attacks has an adverse effect on Sea business operation in Bayelsa State.

Effect of Sea Robberies on Sea Business Operation in Bayelsa State

Table 4: Regression Summary of the Effect of Sea Robberies on Sea Business Operation in Bayelsa State

Variables	B	SE	Standardized coefficients	t-value	t- crit.	p-value
Constant	24.748	0.261		94.88	1.96	<0.001
Sea Robberies	-0.708	0.018	-0.940	-40.30		<0.001

$R^2=0.884=88.4\%$, significant negative effect ($p<0.05$).

Effect of Sea robberies on Sea business operation in the study area was also investigated and the result obtained is as shown in Table 4. Result presented in Table 4 revealed negative effects of Sea robberies on sea business operation ($\beta = -0.708$). The t calculated (t-cal) is (1.96) at the 0.05 level of significance with 213 degrees of freedom. Hence, the effect of sea robberies on sea business operation in Bayelsa is significantly negative. This result indicates that when incidence of sea robberies is not managed, the success of sea business operation will be affected negatively.

Security Surveillance and Safety of Sea Business Operation in Bayelsa State

Table 5: Regression Summary of the Influence of Security Surveillance on Safety of sea Business Operation

Variables	B	SE	Standardized coefficients	t-value	p-value
Constant	0.800	0.572		1.40	<0.001
Security Surveillance	0.933	0.037	0.864	25.10	<0.001

$R^2=0.747=74.7\%$, significant negative effect ($p<0.05$).

Furthermore, the study also examined the influence of security surveillance on the safety of sea business operation. The result obtained as summarized in Table 5 reveals that security surveillance has a significant positive influence on sea business operation in Bayelsa State ($\beta = 0.933$, t cal.=1.96, $p<0.05$). Therefore, when adequate security surveillance is provided, the growth of sea business operation in Bayelsa State will be enhanced and sea piracy reduced.

Discussion of Findings

The result of regression analysis of the effects of pirate attacks on Sea business operation in Bayelsa State reveals that pirate attacks has a significant negative effect on sea business operations. This finding suggests that sea pirates activities significantly affect sea faring, sea poaching and fishing business.

This result confirms findings of studies by Ezem (2012); Igbokwe (2012) and Badejo (2000), who are of the opinion that the extent to which water users are comfortable to utilize the waterways in transacting businesses, is a reflection of the type of waterways safety and security availability.

Also, the Result of whether Sea robberies do not significantly affect fishing business operation in Bayelsa State found in Table 4 shows that there is a significant negative influence of sea piracy and fishing business and in Bayelsa waterways. The result of the analysis reveals the activities of sea pirates do affect fishing business, particular fishermen's fear of being robbed, vandalized maimed or even shot by pirates. This finding supports previous studies by Ochai, (2013); Oyetunji, (2012); Onuoha & Hassan, (2009) who are of the opinion that anxiety and fear resulting from intermittent pirates' onslaughts is having its toll on the financial economy of fishing business and maritime operations.

Lastly, the result of the influence of maritime security surveillance and sea safety reveals that security surveillance has a significant positive influence on sea business operation in Bayelsa State .The result from interview reveals that if security surveillance is made available along Bayelsa state waterways and its surrounding waters; will result in the reduction in pirates' attacks. Onuoha, (2009); Zabadi and Onuoha, (2009) have earlier noted that safe guarding territorial waterways in the study area is the only and sure way of stemming the tide of pirates. As noted by Potgieter (2009), the quality of security surveillance available will determine the extent to which the waterways are secure for faring and other sea businesses. Potgieter (2009), therefore call for the enforcement of maritime policing and security and most importantly to equip officers and men of the Joint Task Force at the ports. This study confirms that the availability of quality security presence in the nation's waterways will positively influence maritime business and operations.

Recommendations

This paper investigated sea piracy and security challenge of maritime business operation in Bayelsa State. The study found that piracy, sea robbery, and poaching is causing grave threat to sea business operation such as sea faring, trading, and fishing along the waterways of Bayelsa state. The paper discovers that the operators of these businesses are experiencing coastal insecurity, fear and anxiety due to the criminal activities of pirates. To this end, this paper recommends the following:

1. Since sea pirates and robbers are mostly made up of youths who believe that lack of employment predispose them to criminality, government and well to do individuals therefore should generate employment and build capacities for self sustenance of the youths in the area.
2. Recruitment of youth leaders and ex-militants into the joint taskforce and surveillance team should be considered. In view of their knowledge of the pirates, the creeks and geography of the area.
3. The Nigeria Police, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps and the Armed Forces should make strenuous efforts to check the proliferation and illegal possession of fire arms. Arms bandits should be prosecuted, sanctioned and punished in line with extant laws.
4. Equipping the security agencies particularly the Naval Officers with modern surveillance gadgets and combatant firearms and warships will go a long way in reducing sea piracy and threat to maritime business operation.
5. The need to introduce radar technology in monitoring the sea and the establishment of Regional Maritime Awareness Centre are not only imperative but a desire.

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