

**A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVELS OF
PROPERTY THEFT DURING AND POST FLOOD DISASTER
PERIODS IN YENAGOA METROPOLITAN CITY OF BAYELSA
STATE**

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Abstract

From a comparative point of view, the study examined the levels of property theft during flood disaster and post flood disaster periods in Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa state. Built on the Routine Activity Theory (RAT), it adopted the survey research design, employing the multi-stage sampling technique. The data obtained from two hundred and fifty (250) residents of the study area were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results revealed that there is a relatively high level of property theft during flood disaster periods in Yenagoa metropolis. Interesting, the level of property theft reduces drastically during the post-flood disaster periods, becoming very low. Furthermore, the study discovered that there is a generally poor security condition in flood affected areas in Yenagoa metropolis, indicating that there is urgent need for government at all levels to heighten security measures in flood ravaged areas so as to curtail the incidents of property theft in such places with the aiming reducing the economic implications of flood disaster.

Keywords: Flood Disaster, Property, Property Theft, Post-flood Disaster, Yenagoa Metropolis.

1. Introduction

Man's existence in his physical environment has continued to be impeded by several socio-environmental conditions that tend to disrupt his daily activities including his economic activities that form the bedrock of man's existence and survival. One of these hazardous conditions is flooding. According to Othman, Sharip, Kasim, Kamdari and Baharuddin (2022), flooding is believed to have occurred when a sizable land or areas of lands which was normally dry suddenly or with time gets overwhelmed with water. Floods may occur as a result of heavy rainfall, when oceans waves come on shore, when snow melts rapidly or when even when dams and levees break. Floods indeed can occur within few minutes or over an elaborate period, and may last for days, weeks, or months. Miller (2002) asserted that floods are the most common and widespread of all weather-related

natural disasters and among the top ten natural disasters in the world in terms of people affected and property damaged.

Flood incidents are basically the product of climate change, thus making them natural occurrences. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2012 predicted that climate change is expected to increase the incidence of extreme weather events through the altering of average climatic conditions bringing about greater climatic variability and increasing extreme weather events including floods. No doubt, climate change has greatly influenced recurring incidence of flooding across various parts of the globe. Several incidents of flooding were reported in 2011 across different countries including Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Uganda (in Africa), Brazil, Columbia, Mexico and the United States (in the Americas), Cambodia, China, India, Korea, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand (in Asia). In each of these flood incidents, fatalities exceeded fifty and over one thousand in the Philippines and Colombia and with high material damage particularly in the developed countries from the list above (Kundzewicz, et al., 2014).

Killer floods occurred in 2012 in Bangladesh, China, India, North and South Korea, the Philippines and Russia in Asia; Argentina, the United States and Haiti in the Americas and Madagascar, Niger and Nigeria in Africa resulting in over fifty fatalities in each of these countries (Kundzewicz et al, 2014). Though the 2012 flood disaster in Nigeria was mainly attributed to the release of water from Lagbo Dam in Cameroon (Mayomi, Dami, & Maryay, 2013), it was worsened by factors such as urbanization and population growth, poor infrastructure, poor urban land use planning, violated building codes, blockade of drainage channels with refuse, elimination of drainage facilities and encroachment on wetlands and flood plains (Ojanuga & Ekwoanya, 2002 cited in Kwanga, Shabu & Adaaku, 2017). In Nigeria, the incident of flood after a decade reoccurred in 2022 with greater magnitude.

It is pertinent to state that, perennial flood disasters have continued to put individuals, communities and establishments in danger in Nigeria. Millions of Nigerians have been dislodged from their homes due to flood disasters which has also damaged businesses, contaminated water supplies, and increased the risk of disease outbreak across various regions of the country (Usip & Jimmy, 2020; Othman et al, 2022). Onah, Adaaku, and Shabu (2021) asserted that floods disaster further increases the vulnerability level of households to crime and at the same time, crime rates increased during flood disaster and decreased significantly after the flood disaster in urban centers in Nigeria. People indeed are displaced during flood disaster, forcing them to abandon their homes to seek refuge elsewhere. Hence, criminal elements often take advantage of this and break into such abandoned homes and steal properties of flood victims. This, the reports of destruction and displacement of lives and properties and reports of stolen properties by unknown personalities were recorded particularly in the Niger Delta region (Onah et al., 2021).

It is worthy of note that the Niger Delta area of Nigeria is usually associated with flood disaster. This accounts for why Temi and Ademola (2005) asserted that flooding events are recorded annually in the coastal Niger Delta states that are located along the river Niger and its tributaries with accompanying rise in criminal activities. Therefore, property theft has in recent times attracted another shade of attention to the many problems of flood disasters. Hence, this study seeks

to bring about a comparative assessment of the levels of property theft during and post flood seasons in the Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa state.

2. Problem Statement

Flooding has continued to be a recurring phenomenon in the Niger Delta in general and Yenagoa, the Bayelsa state's capital city in particular. Indeed, flood disaster has become an annual occurrence in most states and communities of the Niger Delta region as virtually all the states and many communities of the region witness flood disaster and its accompanying effects yearly as a result of the region's topographic predisposition as a low-lying, swampy area of alluvial disposition by which the tributaries of the Niger Delta meander (Agbonkhese, Aka, Joel-Abaya, Ocholi & Adekunle, 2014). Thus, the Niger Delta man expects flooding to occur virtually in every year and therefore see its occurrence as a normal phenomenon. Often, flood disaster experience is an ugly one that comes with catastrophic effects on human life. Besides the physical and natural implications of flood disaster, the socio-economic impacts of flooding cannot be underestimated. Indeed, the 2012 and 2022 flood disasters, the most devastating incidents of flooding have left a lifetime memory with the inhabitants of the Niger Delta region. These ugly implications of flood disaster are however further exasperated by detrimental human activities that are criminal and inimical to human wellbeing.

Victims of flood disasters often vacate their residential homes to attempt to seek refuge areas that are not affected and in refugee camps. Their absence from their homes becomes an opportunity for criminal elements to break into such uninhabited homes to steal owners' properties. People, during flood disaster periods often cry out for help as a result of their properties being stolen from their abandoned homes by criminals who according to Renee et al. (2017) see the suffering of others due to flood disaster as an opportunity to enrich themselves through property theft. According to Onah et al. (2021), study has shown significant increases in property crime during flood disaster in affected places and reduces after the flood disaster. Often, victims of flood disaster even in refugee camps where they seek refuge cry out due to their properties being stolen right in the refugee camps. Of course, it is an ugly situation to see or hear that those who are supposed to be their brothers' keepers add more pains to flood victims through property theft by stealing properties of such victims that have vacated their residential homes for refuge elsewhere.

It is pertinent to note at this juncture that several scholars have conducted research on flood disaster, analysing both of physical and socio-economic impacts of flooding. For instance, according to Miller (2005), floods are the most common and widespread of all weather-related natural disasters and among the top ten natural disasters in the world in terms of people affected and property damaged. Furthermore, Mayomi, Dami and Maryay (2013) reported that the 2012 flood was primarily attributed to the release of water from Lagdo Dam in Cameroon. However, Kwang, Shabu and Adaaku (2017) discovered that it was aggravated by urbanization (Raimi, 2011) and population growth, poor infrastructure, poor urban land use planning, violated building codes, blockade of drainage channels with refuse, elimination of drainage facilities as well as encroachment on wetlands and flood plains. Usip and Jimmy (2020) observed that flood disaster has displaced millions of people from their homes and has damaged businesses, contaminated water supplies, raised the risk of disease in different parts of Nigeria. Also, Kundzewicz et al (2014) discovered that the 2012 killer floods led to more than fifty (50) fatalities in each of the countries that experienced it. Furthermore, Onah,

Adaaku and Shabu (2021) averred that flood disaster increases the vulnerability level of households to crime and at the same time, crime increased during flood disaster and decreased significantly after the disaster in urban areas in Nigeria. They further reported incidents of destruction and displacement of lives and properties as well as stolen properties by unknown personalities during flood disasters especially in the Niger Delta region.

In spite of the availability of literature on flood disaster and property crime/theft, very little or nothing has been done regarding the experience of the Yenagoa metropolitan city. Also, none has adopted a comparative approach on the basis of level of property theft during and after flood disaster which suggests that there is still a gap in literature which this study seeks to bridge. It is against this backdrop that this study was designed to assess the levels of property theft during and after flood disaster in Yenagoa metropolitan city. Essentially, the study provides answers to the following questions: What is the level of property theft during flood disaster periods? What is the level of property theft during post-flood disaster periods? What is the general condition of security in flood affected areas?

3. Review of Literature

Property Theft during Flood Disaster

Flood disasters expose large numbers of people to a range of strains and negative emotions conducive to crime such as anger, frustration, and fear creating pressure. These strains may reduce social control, foster belief favourable to crime and lead to criminogenic traits (Onah et al, 2021; Iwarimie-Jaja & Raimi, 2019). In a field study conducted by Onah et al (2021), it was found that among the property crimes understudied, property theft was the most experienced crime in affected urban areas during 2012 flooding in Nigeria. It is of course a common thing to hear people and, in some cases, see them cry out during flood disaster not just because of the natural effects of such flood disaster but as a result of their properties being looted during such periods. Accordingly, exposure to severe flood disaster significantly increases the incidence of home burglary and other related types of property theft (Onah et al, 2021; Anumo, Anumo, Naomi, Eze, & Lasisi (2024)). The Niger Delta region of Nigeria which is often characterized by annual flooding is no exemption to this ugly trend. During flood disaster many people and communities face uncertainty about the security and safety of properties left in their homes and business against looters. Such looters sometimes carry out their evils under the disguise of looking after such properties. However, even if property appears to be lost or abandoned due to floods or any other natural disaster, persons other than the owner are not entitled to take it for their own benefit (Miller 2005).

Effects of Property Theft on Flood Victims

No doubt, flood disaster, like most other types of disaster comes with a significant rise in criminal activities, especially looting and property theft. Such criminal acts of property theft leave devastating effects on the victims. According to Miller (2005), flood victims who abandon their homes for refuge elsewhere generally face the problem of uncertainty about the security and safety of properties left in their abandoned homes, while waiting for the flood to recede. Hence, they live in constant fear while they are away from their homes due to possible burglary and looting of properties.

Furthermore, there is also socio-economic impact of property theft on flood victims. While battling to be adjusted to the post flood life, they are also faced with the problem of replacing properties that were stolen from their homes which

imposes huge financial burden on them. According to Onah et al (2021), the financial implication of property crime (theft) on flood disaster victims and communities is enormous. In addition to financial costs, crime also has profound emotional and psychological effects upon the victims, causing behavioural alterations that may bring serious consequences for the whole community (Harries, 2000; Raimi, 2019). These include fear, anxiety and insecurity (Raimi, 2017), the outcome of which may drastically alter their daily routines. Santana, et al (2008) examined the relationship between feelings of insecurity and community mental health, and found that this perception has a significant negative influence on the self-assessed health status of the population, affecting their general wellbeing.

Flooding and Household Vulnerability to Crime

During flood disaster, households tend to be vulnerable to crime and criminal activities. Onah, Shabu and Adaaku (2021) noted that, flood disaster increased the vulnerability level of households to crime and that crime rate increased during flood disaster and decreased significantly after the disaster in urban areas in Nigeria. Furthermore, the implication of flood induced crime includes anxiety and depression, social dysfunction as well as loss of confidence. Thus, there is the urgent need for flood disaster prone areas and disaster management agents in the country (Nigeria) to incorporate security measures to flood disaster pro-activeness, coping and recovery mechanisms so as to minimize the security challenges arising from flood disaster in the country.

Flooding does not only result in human, economic activities and property violent but also property crime in disaster affected places particularly places used as refugee camps or shelter for people who are displaced. Of course, crime is hazardous due to its uncertain probability for most households, communities as well as organizations that suffer from shocks/stresses of flood disaster, wars and terrorism which affect their coping capacity (Ogadi, Raimi, & Nwachukwu, 2012; Kwanga, Shabu & Adaaku, 2017; Raimi & Ene, 2019).

Vulnerability refers to the degree to which a system or unit is likely to experience harm due to exposure to perturbations or stresses (Wisner, Blaike, Cannon & Davis 2003). According to Shelley and Peek (2009), flood disaster and other natural disasters weaken agencies of formal and informal social order, leading to rise in criminal opportunities and behaviours. The availability of suitable targets (i.e property to steal or individuals to victimize), the absence of guidance (i.e police, neighbours or surveillance) and the presence of motivated offenders (i.e criminal minded people) are basic elements that allow crime to take place. Indeed, study has revealed that there is increase during and post disaster violent and property crimes (Roy, 2010).

According to Onah et al (2021), the concept of vulnerability emerged from the recognition by research communities that, a focus on perturbations alone (i.e, environmental, socio-economic, technological) was not sufficient for comprehending the responses of and impacts on systems (i.e social groups, ecosystems, places) exposed to perturbations. However, with the development of the concept of vulnerability, it becomes glaring that the ability of a system to calm stresses or cope with the consequences through different mechanisms form a key determinant of system response and by extension, system impact.

According to Santana, Santos, Costa, Rogue (2009), the effects of flood induced crimes leads to direct material costs, which include not only the financial costs suffered by the victims but also experiences relating to the judicial system.

Therefore, Fasubaa (2007) suggests that, the effect of vulnerability and crime incidences in any society requires comprehensive assessment to understand household vulnerability associated with violent and property crime which inter-play between space and society through risk analysis of offence; offends and effects of the crime.

Government's Efforts towards Securing Properties during Flooding

Flooding exposes more property as victims vacate their house and property in affected areas, thereby opening up opportunities for burglaries and theft of properties. Available evidence suggests that there is usually high level of property theft and insecurity in the Niger Delta area (Wokocha, Ogoro, & Obafemi, 2023). Despite various complaints and reports of these crimes, not much has been done by government as flood time policing is thought to be extremely low in the Niger Delta, especially in the study area (Wokocha, et al, 2023; Iheriohanma, Opara, & Raimi, 2020). This is because flooding weakens the strength and capacity of both formal and informal agencies saddled with the task of ensuring social order in a given locality/society, thereby giving crime and criminal behaviors to have their ways (Onah, Shabu&Adaaku, 2021). It can equally be deduced that security of property decrease because both government and law enforcement officials focus attention solely or more on rescue and emergency response activities. This explains why government and law enforcement agencies make series of efforts in providing palliatives, relocations of victims from flooded areas, the early warning system (Nemine, 2015; Iwarimie-Jaja & Raimi, 2018; Briseimo, 2022; NEMA, 2022) but little or nothing is heard in the area of security of properties left behind by victims.

4. Theoretical Framework

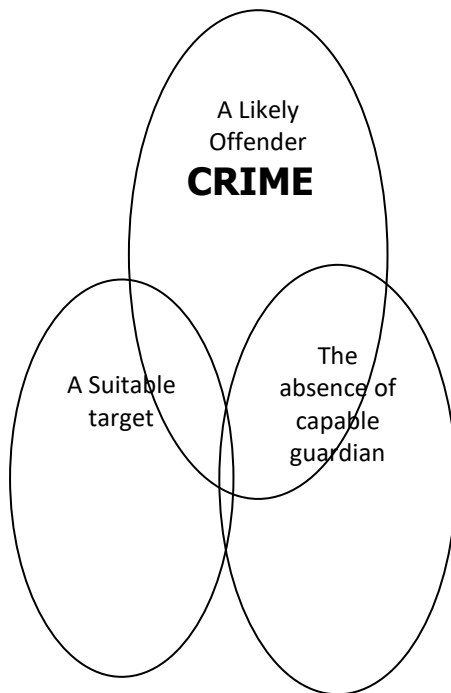
This study adopted Routine Activity Theory to buttress the subject of matter. The Routine Activity Theory (RAT) looks at crime from an Offenders point of view. According to this theory, a crime will be committed if a likely offender thinks that a target is suitable and a capable guardian is absent. In order words, it is the Offenders assessment of a situation which determines whether a crime will eventually take place. This theory however, was first propounded in 1979 by Lawrence E Cohen and Marcus Felson and was afterwards developed by Felson. Consequently, L. S Vygotsky is recognized as the father of the theory owing to the fact that he introduced the idea of the tool-mediated activity as a way of overcoming ongoing psychological ideas which is consistent with stimulus-response or disembodies thinking approach to cognition (Roth, 2014). Coherently, it is considered the outcome of an attempt to make up a psychology that draws on and concretely implements the epistemological principles of materialist dialectics as proposed by Karl Marx (Leont'ev 1978; Vygotsky 1997). Inclusively, the theory asserts that for a crime to have said to have occurred, the following three elements occur co-jointly within any given space and time.

An accessible target

The absence of capable guardians that could intervene.

The presence of a motivated Offender (which is represented in a chart below)

Routine Activity Theory



Source: Ayesh, 2024

Drawing interpretation from the established theoretical framework, it can be deduced that due to the absence of capable guardian which in this instance are the security operatives emanating as a result of the flood disaster gives the criminal offender the courage and motivation to engage in property theft.

5. Methodology

The study employed the survey research design using a multi-stage sampling method. Thus, the simple random sampling technique was adopted to select five communities within Yenagoa city of Bayelsa state. Convenience sampling method was further adopted to draw two hundred and fifty (250) residents across the five communities, and quota sampling technique was adopted to allocate sizes to each of the communities. At the household level, systematic random sampling technique was utilized to select the respondents. The questionnaire seeks to determine the level of property theft during and off-flood seasons in Yenagoa. The data obtained were presented and analyzed using descriptive tools such as simple percentages and frequencies that were presented in tables and bar charts. Thus, while the both the socio-demographic and substantive data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages, they were mostly conveyed in tables and bar charts.

Results

Socio-demographic Data

Table 1: Demographic data of survey respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	136	54.4
	Female	114	45.6
Total		250	100
Age	20 – 29	37	14.8
	30 – 39	87	34.8
	40 – 49	64	25.6
	50 – 59	48	19.2
	60 and above	14	5.6

Total		250	100
Marital status	Single	86	34.4
	Married	159	63.6
	Widow	4	1.6
	Widower	1	0.4
Total		250	100
Educational qualification	Primary	45	18.0
	Secondary	83	33.2
	Tertiary	122	48.8
Total		250	100
Occupation	Farming	24	9.6
	Fishing	15	6.0
	Students	58	23.2
	Civil servants	84	33.6
	Self-employed	69	27.6
Total		250	100

Source: Field work

The table above presents the demographic data of respondents which include gender, age, marital status, educational qualification and occupation. The table shows that majority of the respondents were males, having a total of one hundred and thirty-six (136) with a percentage of 54.4. The remaining one hundred and fourteen (114) were females having a percentage of 45.6.

On age distribution of the respondents, the table reveals that majority of the respondents were within the age bracket of thirty to thirty-nine years consisting of 87 with a percentage of 34.8. Also, sixty-four, having a percentage of 25.6 were between the ages of forty and forty nine. In addition, forty-eight, comprising of 19.2 percent were between the ages of fifty and fifty-nine. Furthermore, thirty-seven with 14.8 percent were between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine. Finally, the table shows that ages sixty and above had the lowest number of respondents having a total of fourteen with a percentage of 5.6.

On marital status, the table shows that majority of the respondents were married comprising a total of one hundred and fifty-nine (159) with a percentage of 63.6. Furthermore, eighty-six (86) with a percentage of 34.4 were single. Four (4) were widows having a percentage of 1.6 while one (1) was a widower with a percentage of 0.4.

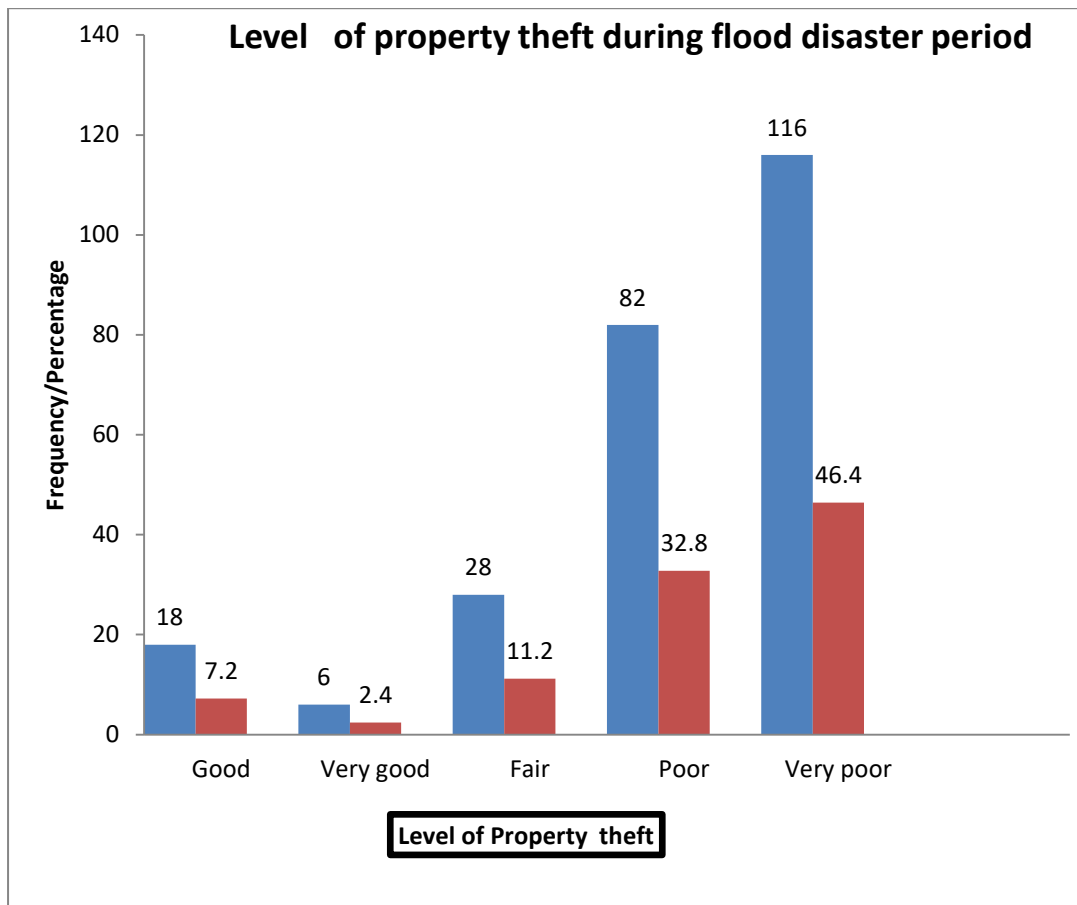
On educational qualification, the table indicates that majority of the respondents had tertiary education consisting of one hundred and twenty-two with a percentage of 48.8. Also, eighty-three (83) with a percentage of 33.2 had secondary education while forty-five had primary education comprising a percentage of 18.0.

Finally, on occupation, the table reveals that majority of the respondents were civil servants with a total of eighty-four and a percentage of 33.6. Also, sixty-nine (69) with a percentage of 27.6 was self-employed. Fifty-eight comprising 23.2 percent were students. In addition, twenty-four (24) were farmers with a percentage of 9.6 while fifteen were fishermen/women with a percentage of 6.0.

Substantial Data

Question 1: what is the level of property theft during flood disaster periods?

Figure 1: Level of property theft during flood disaster period

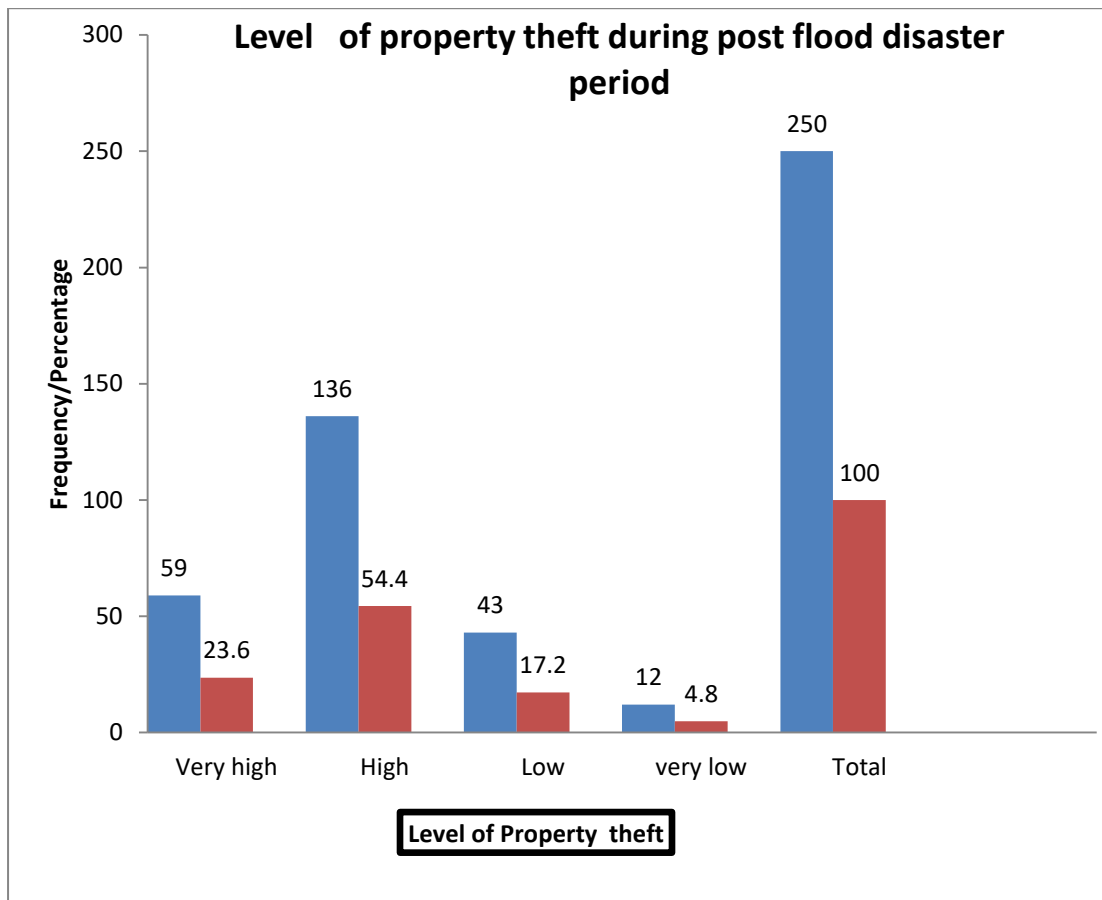


Source: Field work

Figure 1 above presents the level of property theft during flood disaster periods. The figure shows that there is a relatively high level of property theft during flood disaster periods. This was evident as majority of the respondents comprising of one hundred and thirty-six (136) with a percentage of 54.4 stated that the level of property theft during flood disaster periods is high. Furthermore, additional fifty-nine with a percentage of 23.6 said that the level of property theft is very high during flood disaster. However, the table also shows that forty-three (42) respondents with a percentage of 17.2 were of the opinion that the level of property theft during flood disaster periods is low while twelve respondents (12) stated that the level of property theft is very low during flood disaster periods with a percentage of 4.8.

Question 2: What is the level of property theft during post flood period?

Figure 2: Level of property theft during post flood disaster period

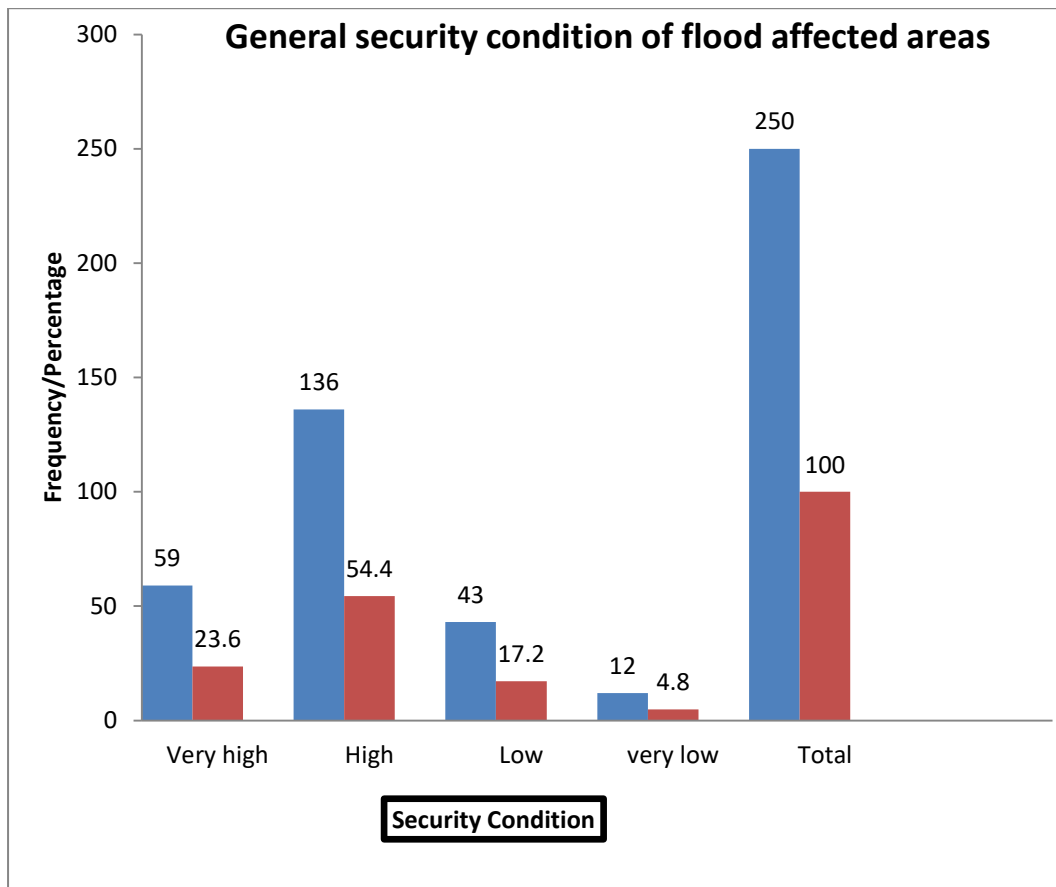


Source: Field work

Figure 2 above shows the level of property theft during post flood seasons. The figure reveals that the level of property theft during post flood seasons is very low as this was the opinion of majority of the respondents. The table shows that one hundred and thirty two (132) out of the two hundred and fifty (250) respondents with a percentage of 52.8 acknowledged that the level of property theft during post flood seasons is very low. Similarly, sixty five (65) with 26.0 percent stated that the level of property theft was low during post flood seasons. However, forty three (43) respondents comprising of 15.2 percent said that the level of property theft was low during post flood seasons. In addition, fifteen (15) respondents with a percentage of 6.0 were of the view that level of property theft was very low during post flood seasons.

Question 3: What is the general security condition in flood affected areas?

Figure 3: General security condition of flood affected areas



Source: Field work

Figure 3 above presents the general condition of security in flood affected areas. The figure reveals that, the general security condition has been very poor in flood affected areas indicating that the government and relevant security agencies have not done much in heightening security measures in flood affected communities. This was evident as majority of the respondents comprising of one hundred and sixteen (116) with 46.4 percent saying that security has been very poor in flood affected places. Similarly, eighty two respondents with a percentage of 32.8 stated that the security condition of flood affected areas have been poor. The table however shows that twenty eight (28) respondents consisting of 11.2 percent were of the opinion that security conditions in flood affected places have been fair. Furthermore, eighteen (18) with a percentage of 7.2 stated that security condition has been good in flood affected areas with six (6) others consisting of 2.4 percent saying security condition has been very good in flood affected places.

6. Discussion of Findings

The study comparatively evaluated the level of property theft during flood disaster and post flood disaster periods in the metropolitan city of Yenagoa, the capital of Bayelsa state of southern Nigeria. The study analyzed data that were obtained from two hundred and fifty (250) residents in the Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa state.

The data revealed that there is a high level of property theft during flood disaster periods within the Yenagoa metropolis. This reflected the views and opinions of one hundred and thirty-six respondents of the study comprising of 54.4 percent of the respondents, with an additional fifty-nine (59) consisting of 23.6

percent stating that there is a very high level of property theft during flood disaster periods within the study area. This finding corroborates the position of Onah, Shabu and Adaaku (2021) who in their study on 'Flood disaster and vulnerability of households to crime in urban areas of Nigeria' posited that natural disasters including flooding results in human loss, destroy economic assets and are usually accompanied by widespread looting and criminal behaviour of many individuals, affecting ambiguously the long-term benefits and costs of committing crime and demand for crime prevention.

Flooding does not only result in human, economic activities and property violent but also property crime in disaster affected places particularly places used as refugee camps or shelter for people who are displaced (Onah et al 2021; George 2019). Muller (2005) opined that, even if property appears to be lost or abandoned as a result of floods or any other natural disaster, individuals other than the owners are not entitled to take it for their personal benefit. However, flood victims who abandon their homes live in constant fear while they are away from their homes due to possible burglary and looting of properties. After the floods, they are often confronted with the problem of replacing properties that were stolen from their homes, which invariably imposes enormous financial burden on them.

Furthermore, the study interestingly, discovered that the level of property theft reduces drastically after flood disaster periods. Indeed, during post-flood seasons, there is a very low level of property theft in the Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa state. This was the view of majority of respondents of the study, comprising of one hundred and thirty-two (132) respondents with a percentage of 52.8. In addition, sixty-five (65) respondents, consisting of 26.0 percent stated that the level of property theft is relatively low in off-flood seasons. Again, this finding is in agreement with Onah, Shabu and Adaaku (2021) who asserted that, flood disaster increased the vulnerability level of households to crime, stating that crime rate increased during flood disaster and decreased significantly after the disaster in urban areas in Nigeria. However, this finding is in contradiction with that of Roy (2010) who argued in his study that there was increase in violent and property crimes during and post disaster periods.

Finally, it was also observed in the study that, there is generally a very poor security condition in flood affected places. This was evident as it represented the views of one hundred and sixteen (116) respondents with a percentage of 46.4 who acknowledged that the general security condition in flood affected places is very poor. Similarly, eighty-two (82) respondents comprising of 32.8 percent said that the security condition of flood ravaged areas is poor, however not very poor. Thus, the study in essence revealed that the general security situation in flood affected areas in Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa state has not been encouraging. Perhaps, this accounts for why Shelly and Peek (2009) posited that flood disaster and other natural disasters weaken agencies of formal and informal social order, resulting in the rise in criminal opportunities and behaviours. Furthermore, this finding corroborates the stance of Wokocha, Ogoro and Obafemi (2023) who in their study, 'Examining flood vulnerability impact on issues of insecurity in the core Niger Delta' highlighted the urgent need for the government through its various security agencies to heighten security measures during flood disaster to ensure that, properties of flood victims who have abandoned their homes for refuge elsewhere are well secured in order to reduce the financial loss of flooding on the victims. In addition, this finding reaffirms the theoretical basis of the study, as the generally poor security condition of flood ravaged areas is an indication of the absence of

capable guidance, granting motivated offenders the opportunity to engage in property theft seeing that there is an accessible target (property in this case).

7. Conclusion

The study comparatively examined the level of property theft during flood disaster and off-flood seasons. Anchored on the Routine Activity Theory (RAT), the study adopted the survey research design. Multi-stage sampling technique was further adopted. The data obtained from two hundred and fifty (250) respondents were analyzed and the data revealed that there is a high level of property theft during flood disaster periods. The study further discovered that the level of property theft during off-flood seasons is very low. Thus, there is a direct link between flood disaster and property theft. Finally, it was also revealed that there is a generally poor security condition in flood affected places within the study area, the Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa state.

Therefore, there is the urgent need for the government both at the federal, state and local government levels to work towards the formulation of policies that will help curtail the annual occurrence of flooding with its antecedent physical and socioeconomic implications. While efforts are geared towards achieving this goal, the government should heighten security measures in flood affected areas by stationing patrol vehicles on a twenty-four-hour basis to help reduce the incident of property theft.

8. Recommendations

Sequel to the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

The government should direct efforts at formulating and implementing policies that are geared towards curtailing the occurrence of flooding with its accompanying effects which has become an annual occurrence in the Yenagoa metropolis of Bayelsa state.

The government through its security agencies such as the police should heighten security measures during flood disaster in order to prevent or reduce the incidents of property theft in flood affected areas.

Community leaders should liaise with relevant government authorities and provide vigilante services in places where police presence is unavailable, so as to bring about the protection of properties of flood victims who may have vacated their homes.

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