

# Influence of Oil Activities on the Socio-Economic and Environmental Health of Host Niger Delta Communities in Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study investigated the influence of oil activities on the socio-economic and environmental health of host communities in Delta-State. The study was motivated by series of observable environmental degradation such as land depletion, pollution occurrence which usually lead to very poor farm yields, low income base, famine and starvation. The bastardization of the social values of the people which has ridiculously pushed some women into dehumanizing and a tabooed business of commercial sex to survive, traceable to the aftermath of oil activities combined with the greed of oil companies and the support of government of Nigeria are of sincere concern. Three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study employing the descriptive survey research design method. The target population was made up of all the inhabitants of the 17 local government area of oil producing communities in the state concentrating on the indigenous inhabitants, few oil workers and health personnel with a sample size of 400 participants selected using the purposive random sampling technique. Self-structured questionnaires was the main instrument employed while data collected were analyzed with % for personal data of respondents and inferential statistics of X<sup>2</sup> set at .05 alpha level for the hypothesized variables. Based on the findings, it was concluded that oil activities in Delta-State have strong negative influence on the variables tested and uncheck- mated too. It was therefore recommended amongst others that oil companies, Federal and state governments embark on compensatory empowerment of all host community members especially the youths and women, free medical care for the elderly and other social services for the entire communities.

**Keywords:** Oil activities, socio-economic, environmental health, degradation.

## 1. Introduction

The genesis of oil location, extraction and processing in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, dates back to the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when little was realized on the future overwhelming economic and commercial potency it would attract to the nation and the globe at large. Similarly, little was also known or envisaged on the accompanied deadly health hazards which could occur at the source of extraction, and the adjoining environments.

To a greater extent, apart from few exploiters who are aliens – branded expertrates, the inhabitants of the host communities were near 100% ignorant at the onset, on the negative health implications of oil companies' activities. This is probably due to the very simple and close to nature type of life, they enjoy. It is also observed and on records too, that local expert operators fail to realize and appreciate the health problems their counterparts in the host communities face alongside their environments to continue to survive in the midst of oil and gas exploration and exploitation. Hence, the ignorant peace loving inhabitants (mostly indigenes) of host communities of oil and gas have been exposed to killer hazards for a very long time which have gradually and sometimes acutely dehumanized the people, their lands and their generations to come without knowing.

Azaiki (2007) reported that the management of natural resources and the blatant abuse of the environment have gone unabated for several decades and that the Nigerian state in collaboration with

multinational oil companies have been carrying out crude oil exploration and exploitation activities in the Niger region while leaving a trail of irresponsibility and destruction that is exacerbated by environmental and ecological disasters, abject poverty, diseases, illiteracy, hunger, unemployment and stagnation. Similarly, Dafinone in Onosode (2003) explained that exploration and exploitation activities of oil prospecting companies open their dedicated land to soil erosion and flooding, oil spillage, marine resources systematically depleted, traditional occupation (farming and fishing) are endangered and communities economically impoverished.

The above experiences, therefore serve as precursor to conflicts and violence in the Niger Delta, sometimes branded as youth restiveness. They are connected to the numerous unhealthy and detrimental environmental degradations rooted in the activities of the multi-national and local oil exploiters especially, the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the Federal Government's obnoxious and anti-host communities' policies, including the oppressive sharing formula of the huge wealth from oil. Both oil and gas prospecting companies and the Federal Government are deeply engaged in the enjoyment of the accruable profits, to the detriment of the host communities as to appreciate and ameliorate the hardships faced by the people in the wealth spot of the nation. Any complaint is confronted with raw brute by the government security agencies.

Oil exploration simply means sourcing for, in order to locate or discover where oil is naturally deposited especially in a quantity which can be meaningfully commercialized. On the other hand, oil exploitation involves the actual extraction through drilling of the explored or discovered reservoir of oil and gas. The dotted oil wells are connected with pipes to central fields referred to as flow stations for further transportation to a larger designated plants such as the refinery for final processing, distribution and utilization by the final consumers.

Processes of oil exploration, exploitation and gas flaring are usually accompanied with such high level of health risks among nearby and far inhabitants where these activities are carried out. Owugha (2008), pointed out, that oil exploration in the Niger Delta has contributed to the destruction of the topography and aquatic lives of the area with the formation of stagnant water and ponds in swamps created by oil exploration and other activities.

Usually oil and gas discoveries in an area in a country, portend good fortune for that nation and better fortune for the host communities because such discovery signifies goodbye to low standards of living, poverty, underdevelopment, illiteracy and all forms of backwardness and sufferings. Oil is probably the most efficient and prized national resource for speedy economic growth and development. It represents buoyancy, economic upliftment, very high standard of living in its entirety, social development (roads, electricity, education, shelter etc) and total happiness and good health for the people. The affected nation becomes a global political giant with pride and impacts felt by other nations; proud of functional industrial and production environments with unhindered capacity to export; Nil or drastically reduced unemployment, total care for the underage, children, the aged, the less privileged and special people such as pregnant women, nursing mothers and the physically challenged. Azaiki (2007) submitted that oil is much more than a natural resource, it is more than just a source of energy, is a major factor in policies, economies and cultures of the nations that possess it. It has acquired global significance as a shaper of nations' destiny and security and that oil nations have used it to achieve economic growth and all round development.

The above positive expressions are only operational in a well articulated system where governance is people based. However, such indications are mere perceptions and day dreaming in the midst of nonchalant, non-people-friendly and bourgeois-oriented economy such as Nigeria, where urge for milking more oil for greater wealth by few individuals from the land supersedes consideration for the lives, health and welfare of the down-trodden host people even when they are dying in large numbers. Obnoxious laws are purposely promulgated to speed up the gagging of the host communities and sometimes deliberately carry out genocide, community cleansing (wipe-out) and direct 'shoot at sight' by security agents as long as there is room for unchallenged tapping of more oil and gas. Definitely, oil influence in Negara is very deep and

pervasive. Its mention connotes power, influence, affluence, greed, selfishness, nepotism and corruption. It is simply a marriage of better for Nigeria government, oil companies and politicians and for worse for the Niger Delta host communities and itsentire environment.

Dafinone (2003) rightly described the Niger Delta region as a paradox. It is the 'richest poorest' region in Nigeria constituting the oil belt and produces the wealth of the nation to transform lives, cities and impose civilization on rural communities. Upholding the above paradox, owners of the land wallow in abject poverty and sadly unaffected by the billions of dollars taken away by both foreign and local aliens. The people live in thatched houses without clean water, electricity, roads and good education. Therefore, the region is laid bared as evident in the large scale of unmet wants, squalor, ignorance, diseases and illnesses – the situation is simply a life of deprivation in the midst of abundance, with more blood spilled for more oil.

Practical evidence abound everywhere (both documented and on the spot physical assessment) in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, of a high significant level of negative influence and consequences of oil companies activities in the lives of the people, their socio-cultural heritages and the environment, unfortunately uncheckmated. Yet our environment as reasoned by Azaiki (2007) is the milieu of our existence; we are influenced by both the seen and the unseen in the air, water and land when interacting with plants and animals, directly or indirectly. Man manipulates nature to suit his purpose. He further stated that, the environment has been steadily degraded through man's economic activities such as farming, fishing, burning, mining, oil and gas exploration and other activities related to modernization - This negatively impact the environment and the inhabitants.

Reports indicate regular deaths as an aftermath of oil activities, outright killing of youths, children, men, women and the elderly by authorized and unauthorized security agents just to protect the tapping of oil and gas. Also, there is common occurrence of dangerous communicable and degenerative diseases, including serious encroaching of famine and starvation which usually accompany the depletion of the land, water, air and all the sources of livelihood of the people.

Arising from the long sufferings of the people of Niger Delta in the hands of their tormentors, made up of international aliens, local foreigners (non-indigenes) and a number of local traitors (indigenes) under the guise of one national government, collaborate to destroy the land and its heritage.

Onosode (2003), painfully submitted that; in consequence, pervasive poverty and acute deprivation, poor health conditions, stagnant agricultural activity, limited urban opportunities, widespread paucity and dilapidation of infractions and tenuous property rights, among others, continuously characterize the region's social environment. This situation was earlier described by one of the major heroes of Niger Delta who was extra judicially murdered, Ken Saro-Wiwa in his book 'Genocide in Nigeria' as an 'ecological war in which no blood is (apparently) spilled, no bones are (seemingly) broken, no one is (assumedly) maimed; but men, women and children die; flora, fauna and fish perish; air, soil and water are poisoned, and finally, the land and its inhabitants die' (Ken Saro-Wiwa, 1992 in Onosode 2003). In response to the alienation of the host communities from their God given resource, peace and harmony became distanced; the hitherto peaceful inhabitants of the region were further forced deep into the forest, swamps and creeks to protect and resist the displacement and extermination of their poor parents, siblings, family members, communities and the entire region. The progressive response by the people especially the brave youths, earned them series of negative stigma such as militants, restive, youths kidnappers etc.

Capital and human development in Niger Delta is near zero there are disturbing and health risks from sound, smokes and land tremor from heavy equipment and machines such as bulldozers, swamp excavators which ironically enter the land of the region labeled 'difficult terrain'. The terrain is quickly described as difficult when it comes to physical development to benefit the people, yet the same terrain is easily penetrated with up-to-date equipment and machines when there is sudden discovery of oil or gas and the accompanied deadly urge to exploit and explore the luxurious minerals at all cost by the same company that finds the terrain too tasking to penetrate and develop.

Onosode (2013), rightly pointed out that the wealth of natural resources garnered from the Niger Delta

region, which forms 90% of foreign exchange earning, 80% of GDP and 95% of the national budget is certainly considerable, but stands out in sharp contrast to the infrastructural underdevelopment which the people with their meager income cannot address, hence it is a social ground for social conflict. He further stated, that though, Niger Delta is an oil rich region, but easy access to oil products such as petrol, gas especially, kerosene is difficult, hence people fall back on traditional source of power from wood fuel in the communities with attendant increase in domestic smoke and thermal pollution accompanied with discomforts and other serious health hazards mostly among women and children. It is not funny to report here, that unemployment rate in the Niger Delta is ridiculously higher than any other parts of the country (Nigeria) in relation to the economic power, values and contributions it represents.

There is no doubt that the abandonment of the older and other existing sources of income in Nigeria prior to oil and gas is dictated by the stupendous total reliance on oil, which makes the economy of the Nigeria state to be monolithic. Oil alone has been carelessly made to constitute over 90% chunk of the accruable revenue, therefore, all levels of government in Nigeria are so much glued to oil revenue to such dangerous state as to rate it more than the precious lives of the host communities as if, there are no other sources of wealth creation in other sectors existing in other geo-political zones of the nation's economy. Yet the environment of the region is abused, neglected and degraded constantly, which results in vicious cycle that threatens the people and their environment with the government paying mere lip service to diversifying the economy despite fact that oil activities have been dastardly carried out in the Niger Delta for over 45 years (Azaiki, 2007).

Niger Delta people have paid direly for no iota of offence committed, other than justifiable demands, that their lives and environments be saved from extermination at the expense of feeding others robust with the same food from their land which they were (and are still) totally denied of by the government, oil companies and security men, least interested in the people, rather the wealth of Niger delta. It is a case of feed the dog with the child's food. In the process of rightful demand by the people, valuable human lives and property which cannot be exhausted were lost. Painful examples of personalities lost included; Isaac Adaka Boro (during the Nigeria civil war) from Kaiama in Bayelsa State, the highly prized environmentalist and the executed President of Movement For the Survival of Ogoni People (Mosop) –Kenule Saro-Wiwa and eight others during the tyrannical rule of late General Sanni Abacha in 1995, including the military Massacre of 80 demonstrators at Umuechem, the slaughtering of Odi men, women and children by President Olusegun Obasanjo's acclaimed civil regime in November 1999 with over 2000 people killed; the Jesse oil spillage and the accompanied deaths of over a thousand persons, the Agadama military destruction, the Warri crisis of 1997 and its numerous deaths, just to mention few. All these tales of woes are traceable to influence of oil companies' activities and instigations. It is on record that Niger Delta is the only region in the entire globe where the inhabitants have to cope with oil spillage while the federal, and state governments provide protection for the oil companies, despite their deliberate refusal to provide social responsibilities.

## **2. Consequences of Oil Activities among Host Communities**

The consequence of oil activities touches virtually every aspect of the people's lives to the distaste of global set health standards dragging back the region to the crude era where beast-like men killed and ate men. The impacts cut across health, the environment, and culture, social and economic spheres of the people. For instance, the Stakeholders Reports (1998) documented that fishing resources are rapidly being depleted by over-exploitation and pollution, timber and non-timber resources, though abundant, are also threatened, the high number of extinct, endangered and threatened flora and fauna is indicative of the fact that conservation is a critical issue in the region. Furthermore, food security is jeopardized with food hazards arising from pathogens, cyanide toxicity, mycotoxins and hydrocarbon contamination. The destruction of the forests denies the region of the over 70% sources of food in the mangrove in form of medicine, dyes, thatching, bush meat, periwinkles, raffia palm wine and fruits, mangoes, land and sea snails. The above, without prejudice

amounts to gradual starvation of the people.

The socio-cultural aspects of the people are not spared as the oil industry is remarkably influencing the teenage girls and the older female youths to engage in commercial sex with these unstable foreign oil workers which usually lead to bearing of illegitimate children and single parenthood, spread of deadly communicable diseases, substance use, smoking, crime which further breed mistrust between elders and youths, disobedience and other misnomer in the society.

Generally, all degradable factors put together (erosion, flooding and pollution) in other parts of Nigeria are not up to that in the Niger Delta which arise from oil. Human and environmental health problems induced by oil activities were clearly presented in the phase one report of the Niger Delta Environmental Survey (NDES, 1998) as:

- a) Deforestation which promotes desertification and accompanied with stronger effects of windstorms, rainstorms and thunder.
- b) Atmospheric pollution arising from industrial emissions, gas flaring, acid rains, solid wastes, fumes from vehicles e.t.c.
- c) Water pollution due to oil spills, industrial wastes, water shield,
- d) Erosion from excavation, poor construction and deforestation.
- e) Soil depletion resulting in very low agricultural yields.
- f) Sedimentation and siltation due to narrowing of creeks.
- g) Bio-diversity depletion arising from urbanization, overexploitation and population increase.
- h) Noise due to seismic operations with damaging effects on the body physiology.

Painfully, the people of the region merely see, but derive very insignificant benefits from the affluence created by oil in their communities. The lifestyles of oil industry workers and contractors vis-à-vis the quality of social amenities around installations so typified, there is the feeling of complete alienation from their resources; hence there is no sense of belonging. It must be realized that if oil proceeds are properly harnessed and distributed with punity, same may act to positively change every sphere of lives and the environment of the host communities as obtainable in civilized parts of the globe such as Venezuela. The problem of the region is man-made and therefore cannot be devoid of solution, if candid concern and human political will are applied. Based on the above premises, it is therefore pertinent to further investigate the hidden influence of oil exploration and exploitation on the health of the host communities in the Niger Delta with focus on Delta-State of Nigeria.

Niger Delta is situated at the lower basin of the merged Rivers Niger and Benue. There are eight major rivers, twenty one estuaries and dense network of tributaries. It empties its numerous bodies of waters and sand into the Atlantic Ocean. Politically, the region is referred to as the South-South geo-political zone with a population of over seven million people. States in the Niger Delta are; Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Edo, Akwa-Ibom and Cross-River. However, the following states were later added because of their status as oil bearing states: parts of Ondo, Abia and Imo. NDES (1998) simply defined Niger Delta as the area which lies within north of Aboh where the Rivers Niger splits into the Nun and Forcados Rivers, West from the Benin River estuary and east to the Imo River estuary.

The first six states are of forest zone and support heavy rainfall, swamps, mangroves, rivers, estuaries, sharp sand and overwhelming oil and gas deposits. There are four distinct ecological zones as follows: coastal ridge barriers, mangroves, fresh water swamp forest and lowland rain forests (Onosode, 2003).

The traditional occupations of the people are farming, fishing, annual and perennial cropping which unfortunately have been dangerously threatened to the point of extermination. The magnitude of wealth of the area has attracted hungry politicians from other parts of the country for political propaganda never to be actualized.

Delta State is one of the major Niger Delta States with 25 local government areas with seventeen as oil producing with concentration around the following communities: Afiesere (Ughelli), Eriemu (Agbarha) Erheike (Kokori, Awirhe and Orogun), Eruemukowhoarien, Ewreni, Utorogu, Out-Jeremi, Ekpan, Oghara, Sapele,

Oleh, Uzere, Aboh, Olomoro, Ogulagha (Forcados), Ogidingben (Escravos), Ajadiabo, Madangho etc. The administrative headquarters is Asaba while the economic, commercial and oil headquarters is Warri. The economic contributions of the oil bearing L.G.As cannot be quantified, likewise their levels of deprivations, revenue stagnation and negative health impact are equally numerous and unbearable, which ironically, not sincerely addressed.

### 3. Statement of the Problem

Motivation for this study was rooted in the physical and scientific revelation of the enormous activities of oil companies in Delta State accompanied with huge profits, but without commensurable plough-back in terms of human, health care and infrastructural developments in spite of the numerous oil man-made healths, economic and social challenges confronting the inhabitants. The purpose was to expose how oil activities influence the lifestyles and the health of the people with the hope of making a proactive submission before all stakeholders in order to provide adequate commensurate and compensatory measure that will promote the health and holistic acceptable global standards of living of the people.

### 4. Research Hypotheses

Three null hypotheses were formulated and tested with the inferential statistics of  $X^2$  set at 0.5 alpha levels as follows:

- 1) There is no significant influence of oil activities on the socio-economic lives of host communities in Delta-State.
- 2) There is no significant influence of oil activities on the environmental health and underdevelopment in the oil producing areas of Delta-State.
- 3) There is no significant influence of oil activities on the occurrence of famine among host communities of oil bearing areas of Delta State.

Results of the tested hypothesized variables may serve to encourage major stakeholders: government and oil companies, to reassess their operation modalities for the positive health and social benefits among exploiters and exploited for amicable co-existence.

### 5. Methodology

The descriptive research survey was adopted with a sample size of 400 participants from the population made up of men, women, resident and indigenes, health workers and oil company workers using simple and purposive stratified random sampling techniques to select from the oil fields, in the seventeen L.G.As in Delta State. Major instrument used was a self-structured questionnaire validated by experts in related fields.

### 6. Analysis of Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 1.1: Sex of respondents

Sex	Male	Female	Total
Freq	250	150	400
%	62.5	37.5	100

Table 2.1: Occupation of Respondents

	Indigenous Workers	Health Workers	Oil Workers	Environmentalists	Total
Freq	320	20	40	20	400
%	80%	5%	10%	5%	100

The demographic data of respondents analyzed above shows that out of the total of 400 respondents, male were 250 which represent 62.55% while the female respondents were 150 which accounts for 37.5% of the total sampled.

Responses by occupation indicate that the indigenous workers (mainly local farmers and fisherman) were three hundred and twenty (320) respondents which forms 80% of the total responses, this was followed by oil workers of different categories accounting for 10% (i.e 40) while health workers and environmentalists were 20 respondents and represent 5% each.

## 7. Testing Of Hypotheses

### Hypothesis One:

There is no significant influence of oil activities on the socio-economic lives of host communities in Delta-State.

**Table 3.1:** X<sup>2</sup> analysis of influence of oil activities on the socio-economic lives of host communities

N/S	Items	Reponses				Total	X <sup>2</sup>	df	Crt.v	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD					
					400					
1	Young girls engage in prostitution due to oil workers display of wealth.	188	108	71	33	400	273.82	9	16.92	Rejected
2	I engage in commercial sex because my means of livelihood has collapsed due to oil activities.	40	66	96	198	400				
3	Oil activities are responsible for the gross fall in my business.	214	98	58	30	400				
4	Oil profits are expended on health care and employment empowerment in Delta-State.	231	119	37	13	400				
<b>Total</b>		673	391	262	274	1,600				
<b>%</b>		42.06%	24.43%	16.38%	17.16%	100				

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\Sigma(f_0 - fe)^2}{fe} = \frac{\Sigma(673 - 400)^2}{400} + \frac{(391 - 400)^2}{400} + \frac{(262 - 400)^2}{400} + \frac{(274 - 400)^2}{400} = 273.82$$

Summary: Cal X<sup>2</sup> = 273.82; df=9; p<.05; crt,v = 16.92; Decision = rejected.

Table 3.1 above reveals that the calculated X<sup>2</sup> of 273.82 is greater than the critical value of 16.92 at degree of freedom of 9. In adherence to the decision rule, the above hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is upheld. Therefore oil activities among the host communities in Delta-State greatly and negatively influence their socio-cultural lives.

### Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant influence of oil activities on the environmental health and under development in the oil producing areas of Delta-State.

**Table 4.1:** X<sup>2</sup> Analysis of Influence of oil activities on the environmental health and underdevelopment of host communities.

N/S	Items	Reponses				Total	X <sup>2</sup>	df	Crt.v	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD					
					400					
5	Deadly pollutions are induced by careless oil activities.	160	210	05	25	400	523.71	9	16.92	Rejected
6	Most of the annual and valuable trees are dying due oil spillage.	198	112	55	35	400				
7	The land is seriously degraded leading to environmental health hazards.	190	141	47	22	400				
8	Numerous old and novel diseases which now affect plants, man and animal are traceable to oil activities.	96	166	88	50	400				
<b>Total</b>		644	629	195	132	1,600				
<b>%</b>		40.25	39.31	12.19	8.25	100				

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\Sigma(f_0 - fe)^2}{fe} = \frac{\Sigma(644 - 400)^2}{400} + \frac{(629 - 400)^2}{400} + \frac{(195 - 400)^2}{400} + \frac{(132 - 400)^2}{400} = 523.71$$

Summary: Cal.  $\chi^2 = 523.71$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $p < .05$ ;  $crt.v = 16.92$ ; Decision = rejected.

From table 4.1, the obtained  $\chi^2$  of 523.71 is far higher than the table value of 16.92. Therefore the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of oil activities on the environmental and underdevelopment in oil producing areas is hereby rejected. This simply means that oil activities in Delta-State negatively impact on the environment and further makes the region to be underdeveloped.

*Hypothesis 3:*

There is no significant influence of oil activities on the occurrence of famine among host communities of oil bearing areas of Delta-State.

**Table 5.1:**  $\chi^2$  analysis of influence of oil activities on the occurrence of famine among communities

N/S	Items	Reponses				Total	$\chi^2$	df	Crt.v	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD					
9	Food crops are stunted with low yields.	101	201	66	32	400	338.08	9	16.92	Rejected
10	Aquatic lives for food and terrestrial animals are dying fast due to oil activities.	202	109	59	30	400				
11	We now buy food items which used to be produced and sold to others.	97	210	57	36	400				
12	More attention has been shifted from farming to oil as source of revenue.	141	99	74	86	400				
<b>Total</b>		541	619	256	184	1,600				
<b>%</b>		33.81	38.69	16.00	11.50	100				

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\Sigma(f_0 - fe)^2}{fe} = \frac{\Sigma(541 - 400)^2}{400} + \frac{(619 - 400)^2}{400} + \frac{(256 - 400)^2}{400} + \frac{(184 - 400)^2}{400} = 338.8$$

Summary: Cal.  $\chi^2 = 338.08$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $p < .05$ ;  $crt.v = 16.92$ ; Decision = rejected.

The analysis above shows that the obtained  $\chi^2$  of 338.08 is greater than the table value of 16.92. Therefore in accordance with rule of taking decision, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis retained. This interprets that oil activities greatly encourage the occurrence of famine and starvation among the host communities in Delta-State.

**8. Discussion of Findings**

This study investigated the influence of oil activities on the socio-economic and environmental health of host communities in Delta-State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that oil activities at every stage greatly have negative influence on the environmental health, social and economic lives of the inhabitants of the oil producing areas. The long established and respectful social values rooted in culture and traditions of the people have been adversely altered. With the arrival of the oil prospectors and their orchestrated superior standard of living openly exhibited, inadvertently entice youths especially girls which usually lead to unhealthy association, not necessarily rooted in intrinsic affection but because their usual means of livelihood have been rendered insignificant due to oil activities. Many women become permanent or part-time commercial sex workers through such practice. The health and social implications are the resultant unwanted pregnancies, unwanted children and unwanted single parenthood, since most of the oil expatriates and other workers are non-indigenes, non-resident, intermittently transferred by their companies, and hence never accept such responsibilities. This is a complete violation of the rights of women by the oil companies.

Furthermore, the traditional sources of income of the people have been eroded and therefore submit



their fate to poverty. Onosode (2003) noted that in terms of economic sustainability, agriculture and fishing which offer most employment are seriously under pressure from declining land and over-fishing. To worsen the situation, the huge money in dollars realized from oil, is never adequately expended on health problems created by oil activities or used to develop infrastructure. Onosode (2003) further buttressed this assertion, when he factually pointed out that the wealth of natural resources garnered from the Niger Delta region which forms 90% of foreign exchange earning, 80% of GDP and 95% of the national budget is certainly considerable, but stands out in sharp contrast to the infrastructural underdevelopment which the people with their meager income cannot address, hence it is a social ground for social conflict. Definitely, the above, when combined may quickly lead to crimes and other anti-social behaviours. This is the plight of the oil producing communities which many stakeholders in oil business refuse to appreciate.

The findings also discovered that oil activities in Delta-State seriously and negatively impact the people and the environment thereby rendering the zone a place polluted, highly infested with all kinds of diseases, destruction of the ecosystem, land depletion against food production, encouragement of erosion, air pollution, water pollution and serious approach of desertification and global warming. The life span of the inhabitants of the entire ecosystem is grossly less than average. In line with this, Stakeholders Report (1998) reported that fishing resources are rapidly being depleted by both over-exploitation and pollution, timber and non-timber resources, though abundant, are also threatened, the high number of extinct endangered and threatened flora and fauna is indicative of the fact that conservation is a critical issue in the region.

Finally, the findings revealed that series of oil activities have brought about famine, threatening the region with starvation. There is no doubt that else-while close to nature feeding life style of the people has drastically deviated to the extent that they can no longer plant with abundance harvest because the land has been rendered barren due to oil activities accompanied with such problems as regular spillages, fire disasters, disease, erosion and flooding. Eaton (1997) reported that agricultural land contaminated with oil spills become dangerous for farming even where they continue to produce any significant yields. Hitherto surplus food items such as fish, sea foods, cassava, garri, yam, plantain and fruits of all kinds used to be produced in abundance and sold cheaply are now ironically forced by oil circumstance to be purchased at exorbitant prices, far outside host communities. Definitely, majority of the people here cannot afford this type of expensive life style to sustain their families. It is a state of dilemma, yet oil companies and their workers, federal government and politicians continue to display affluence from the wealth of the land before the local people. No other region in Nigeria would ever tolerate this type of nonsense.

## **9. Conclusion**

Based on the research findings, it was concluded that oil activities in the oil producing areas of Delta-State negatively influence the entire gamut of the lives of host communities: socially, economically, the environment and their sources of nutrition. This is detrimental to their health and general acceptable global standard of living. Socially, their culture, values (especially women) and tradition have been distastefully altered, with girls and young married women ignominiously engaging in commercial sex to survive. This used to be as serious taboo in the land. The hitherto wealthy people of the region have been forced from their lands and become impoverished because of oil exploration and exploitation. The environment has been drastically changed, which now exposes the people to series of health hazards, diseases and deaths, unchecked.

There is no doubt, famine is now in the land, since crops can no longer yield enough, the people do not have enough money to purchase enough to feed up to 10% of the family. Starvation is looming. With all these, malnutrition, nutritional and other diseases of communicable, non-communicable and degenerative in nature now occur in the area.

Simply summarized, Okpako and Orlu (2012) concluded that inhabitants of host communities in the Niger-Delta have reduced life span because they are always sickly, underfed (sources of livelihood have

been massively destroyed), grossly underdeveloped and living far below global acceptable health standards; morbidity and mortality rates are high due to aggressive oil activities in the Niger-Delta without commensurable care.

## 10. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in line with the research findings;

For positive and satisfactory influence of oil activities among host-communities, all major stakeholders (federal, state government and oil multi-national companies) should embark on meaningfully empowerment in form of free education, sustainable employment, practicable skill acquisition for youths and women including free health care and social services for the elderly.

Since oil which is the major source, that feeds the whole nation, is also responsible for the destruction of the land and other sources of livelihood of the host communities leading to starvation and impoverishment, free food and related items should be regularly supplied and distributed to the oil bearing, but suffering people of the area where oil is produced.

It should be a matter of legislation that government especially oil companies, provide massive construction of ideal housing, good potable water supply, regular electricity and other social amenities to urbanize the rural oil communities.

Abuse of the environment, social and cultural system of the people should be frowned at, while severe punishment should be meted to culprits especially as it affects young girls and women.

Oil companies and government agencies should adopt more cordial and more civilized approaches including the use of modern equipment which are fewer hazards oriented while operating with the communities where oil is extracted.

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