



Research Article:

Interrogating women’s contributions to economic sustainability and state responses in Africa: Nigeria’s Niger Delta area in focus

Emmanuel Osewe Akubor

Department of History, Faculty of Arts,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
oseweakubor@gmail.com

&

Beatrice Amili Akubor

Department of Crop Protection and Production, Faculty of Agriculture,
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
beatriceakubor@yahoo.com

Abstract

Women’s dignity has not often been acknowledged, their prerogatives misrepresented, and they have often been relegated to the margins of society. This has often prevented them from being themselves and achieving their fullest potential. Women have contributed to history as much as men and more often than not, they did so in much difficult conditions. Sadly, very little of women’s achievements in history can be registered by the science of history. This paper is an attempt to examine the role of women in the struggle for economic liberation in the harsh environment of the Niger Delta area of the southern part of Nigeria. It also explores the dangers which they have been exposed to over time. It is the how, why and effect of this, that the paper intends to interrogate. The paper is based on the qualitative research approach with data being obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The study employed an analytical and narrative approach which included historical, descriptive and analytical lens. The research established that while the Niger Delta area has been under serious threat of environmental degradation due to oil spillage and low agricultural production, men have not shown as much concern as women on the implications of the degradation on livelihoods. This has been in a context where women for decades have been shown as being at the helm of the struggle against environmental degradation, resource exploitation and low yields in the agricultural sector.

Keywords: *gender, environment degradation, economic deprivation, Niger Delta.*

1. Introduction

Extant literature has established that the Niger Delta has been a region of intense economic activities. Ogbogbo (2005) specifically noted that by the 15th Century, there were clear indications that a long-distance trade between the people of the Niger Delta and their



neighbours had developed. It was on the trade links already in existence that the European trade was grafted. However, at present, the modern history of the region has often been associated with crisis and struggle over resources and the attempt of a neglected people to survive economically. It is however surprising that unlike other areas of the world, where such agitations should have been led by men, in the case of the Niger Delta area, it is women that are often at the helm. This is because, they are often the ones whose major economic lives are tied to land (agriculture) and as such they usually bear the brunt of oil spillage, gas flaring and erosion which negatively affect their crops. This has been the case since the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta area thereby impacting negatively on the general economy of the area in the last two decades. This is in a context where the area is known for suffering from the crisis of environmental degradation and gross underdevelopment. This position has been brought to the limelight by a Report of the UNDP in its Niger Delta Human Development Report (2006) where it was argued that perceptions of neglect and exclusion were major factors of conflict and insecurity in the region. The Report highlighted that:

The pristine Niger Delta with rich aquatic resources and high biodiversity has over the last five decades been impacted by oil and gas exploration and production and other human activities. The ecologically sensitive fresh-water swamps, mangroves and rainforests that characterize the region had been degraded, while infrastructural underdevelopment and low amenities have helped to create disaffection against the backdrop of the enormous oil and gas resources that provide 90% of the country's export earnings and over 80% of the governments' annual revenue.

From the issues raised above, it is clear that despite the area, its resources and people accounting for a large chunk of the revenue that is used in running the Nigerian government and economy, not much has been done to compensate them for the losses which they have incurred in their forest and aquatic resources as oil and gas have been extracted from their home areas.

2. Conceptual clarification of the Niger-Delta area: Space and time

The Niger Delta area has been part and parcel of Nigerian history. The history of the area and people is often associated with rivers, creeks and the production/sale of palm oil. In describing the area, it has always been classified into two, the upland and the lowland. However, since the attainment of independence in 1960 and the creation of new states, the Niger Delta, is basically described as all of the present Rivers and Bayelsa states and Delta State excluding largely the north senatorial district. Niger Delta is defined as the area bound by the Benin River in the West, Aboh in the North, Imo River in the East and Palm Point Akasa in the South (Dike, 1956:19). The definition subsisted until 1999 (Willink 1958, Akubor 2017). One distinctive element of this defined Niger Delta is that it produces not only the bulk (over 80%) of the nation's oil and gas both onshore and offshore but most communities and production facilities are to be found in waterlogged terrains which pose considerable challenges. For political/economic convenience, the Niger Delta Development Commission



(NDDC) Act of 2000 embraced a far wider coverage encompassing the nine states where oil and gas resources are found, namely: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers states. In this way, the region has been divided into two, that is, those that are considered as the Core Niger Delta and the Peripheral Niger Delta. This politically defined delta covers some 75,000 square kilometres and 185 local government areas, a definition embraced in the UNDP Report (2006). It is noteworthy that the sensitivity of the Niger Delta ecosystem and developmental challenges posed by its peculiar physical terrain have long been of interest from the colonial times. In more recent times, the issue has changed from just the struggle for resource control to the plight of women especially as it relates to the hardships being experienced as a result of either their exclusion or deprivation from the mainstream economy.

3. The Niger Delta area: The people, their economy and the contributions of women

Due to the geographical location, the people are basically agriculturalist and fishermen/women. Generally, agriculture in the rural area is dominated by women whose efforts are often unrecognised or unremunerated. Their activities are not limited to field and caring for livestock, but also include harvesting, post-harvest processing, storage of crops and animal products, seed selection and marketing (Momsen 2010:141).

Scholars (who include Willink 1958, Alagoa 1970, Udo 1980, Akubor 2017) have argued that, women play critical roles in the region's economy especially in rural communities where they are producers of food. They have the responsibility not only for food production but also for processing, fuel, water, health, childcare, sanitation, and the entire range of the survival needs of households and communities. Women also participate in the commercial sector, and local enterprise to generate income to meet the needs of their families. They are strong, resourceful but have been lacking opportunities to fully participate and share in society and development. In the context of the Niger Delta, women constitute a majority of the poor, the uneducated, the marginalized, 'ignorant,' and diseased (Akubor 2010). They are the most affected by the pollution of communal ponds and rivers that supply drinking water. The health hazards from toxic waste and the pollution of drinking water are borne more by women and their children, while young girls have been lured and susceptible to abuse by the thousands of oil workers (Akubor 2010). The result includes rising incidence of female prostitution, teenage pregnancies, very young mothers, and broken homes. Women have also been victims of state security force, harassment and repression. They, however, have played active roles and mediated in the conflict between the oil producing communities, the State and oil companies.



4. The Niger Delta area: Interrogating the present in the eyes of the past

Alagoa (1970), had earlier argued that the topography of the Niger Delta area can be divided into two: basically, the upland and the lowland. In this way, the needs of those who live in the creeks and swamps of the Niger Delta are very different from those of the interior and as such, they produced different crops which they exchanged in the various markets. The position of Alagoa has however been re-echoed by the Anthropological Report of the Colonial administration. In 1958, Willink's Commission recognised the Niger Delta as having peculiar physical and economic developmental needs because of its terrain. This position was made clear in the course of attempts to address the problems of minorities in the southern part of Nigeria. The Report of Sir Henry Willink's Commission of Inquiry (1957-1958) established that the core geographic delta was prone to underdevelopment because of its terrain. The Report specifically noted that:

The needs of those who live in the creeks and swamps of the Niger Delta are very different from those of the interior...the country in which they live is divided by creeks and inlets of the sea and of the Niger into many small inlands, which nowhere rise far above the highest tides and floods: transport by water and the construction of roads or railways will be prohibitively expensive. There is a country which has been neglected and which is unlikely ever to be highly developed.

However, before the discovery of oil in the area, the people were able to manipulate the environment in such a way that they were able to make a living out of it. According to Udo (1980:8-9):

It is hardly necessary to say that the economy of the groups of the Niger Delta has been closely related to and very much limited in scope by the conditions of the physical environment. In this vast low-lying region of swamps and innumerable waterways and creeks, the traditional economy has been largely limited to fishing and salt making from sea water. Transportation has been largely restricted to the use of canoes and lately powered riverine boats. The main routes to early migrations as well as of trade followed navigable waterways which were not silted up. The Niger Delta has always been a region of difficulty which hardly attracted population and its short-lived period of prosperity during the slave trade and later the palm oil trade was made possible by its geographical location, not as a result of the natural wealth of the area.

In the economy of the area, it was actually women who were largely involved in trade and farming activities.

5. Women and economic development: Agriculture

For Henn (1983), women in most parts of Africa have long supplied the bulk of labour required in food production. The position is based on an early survey of 140 sub-Saharan ethnic groups, which revealed that in 85 per cent of the cases, women were responsible for all the work, and



45 per cent women did all the work except for land clearing. In the case of the Niger Delta area, apart from obtaining the land for the purpose of agriculture and making sure it is prepared for cultivation by the men, it is the women and children who do the sowing, weeding, harvesting and processing of food. It is also the responsibility of women in the area to keep and rear small animals for household consumption (Uwake and Uwaegbute 1982, Ezumah 1990; Makinwa-Adebusoye 1985, 1988; Makinwa-Adebusoye and Olawoye 1992). In this way, it has been established that 95 per cent of the rural women are small scale farmers who produce most of the food and bear the burden of day-to-day family subsistence. They perform tasks like clearing, stumping, burning and removal of burnt stakes which were traditionally considered as men's work. It has been noted that while the women work on farms, most of the men in the area are more interested in gambling, marrying more wives and working for the oil firms (Uwaka and Uwaegbute 1982, Ezumah 1990). Emuedo et al (2017:3) wrote that:

Agriculture is the most dominant traditional economic activity in the Niger Delta. Farming and fishing according to FOS (1985) account for about 90% of all forms of economic activities in the region. Indeed, agriculture constitutes the main source of employment and income for rural women. Like other parts of Africa, 80% of agricultural production is from small farmers, who are mostly women. Due to their great efforts in agricultural production, women's production helps to guarantee their self-sustenance. However, agricultural practices in the region have been acutely constricted by the negative impacts of oil activities with dire impacts on women's esteem.

Similarly, FOS (1985) reported that farming and fishing account for about 90 per cent of all forms of women's economic activities in the region. Studies show that outside the home, most women are unemployed as they lack education. Consequently, agricultural activities constitute their main source of income; women "comprise 60-80 per cent of agricultural labour and supply 90 per cent of family food needs. This is confirmed in the case of Ogoni people, who according to Barikor-Wiwa (1997), make provision for such by ensuring that when an Ogoni woman gets married, her husband is required to give her a piece of land to farm. The argument is that it is from this farm that she feeds her family and grows food for sale in order to buy other staples. Accordingly, this tradition also allowed women to enjoy a measure of independence. The fertility of Ogoni soil made it very fruitful for agriculture and producing high yields. The bountiful harvests left time for Ogoni women to invest in cultural activities such as art, dancing, singing, and pottery.

6. Women in palm oil production and trade

Apart from agriculture, it has been established that women in the area also engage in the processing of agricultural materials and trade for survival. In line with this, Udo (1980:8-9) identified one of the economic bases of the Niger Delta area as production and trade in palm oil. However, he failed to mention the source of the palm oil. Research has however established that the pre-colonial oil palm industry in the Niger Delta area witnessed a marked



division of labour, with the women doing most of the work, this contributed to palm oil being produced in the region becoming an export crop in 1558, and by 1830, it had dominated Nigeria's export list for more than 50 years. Since it was considered a taboo for the women to climb a very high tree, it was therefore the responsibility of the adult male to harvest the ripe palm heads. Once this was done, every other activity around processing and trade fell on the women (Akubor and Akubor 2018).

Commenting on the process of production as well as possible benefits of the trade, Northrup (1978) opined that twentieth – century studies of palm-oil production by traditional methods in this area suggest that 300 pounds of palm-fruit (25-30 clusters) were required to produce a 36–pound tin of semi–hard oil. The scholar argued that the labour involved equals three to five person/days per tin, half or more of the work being done by women. In his view, assuming an average of four days labour per tin and 62 tins per ton, the person/days devoted to the production of palm – oil for export from south-eastern Nigeria would have risen from 750,000 in 1819 to 10,000,000 in 1863–4.

Scholars have argued that the growth of the palm oil trade greatly enhanced the economic value of the common oil-palms, leading to important changes in their management. According to Northrup (1975), the production and trade demonstrate the capacity for rapid change and overall economic growth which had developed during the earlier decades of oversea trade. This is because the demand for the product and the fortuitous concentration of palm oil in the area were beyond the control of African traders and producers, but the rapidity and magnitude of their response to new opportunity was possible because of their highly developed commercial skills and institutions. This goes to show, that the trade must have opened opportunities for both the women as well as the development of trade within and outside the region. In addition, it increased the level of development of participation for all. However, what remained the major truth is that even though it was a society which saw men as those in control, the trade was initially in the hands of the women, an indication that the issue of national development was 'dictated' by the women. This is because historical accounts are of the view that apart from the women involvement in the hectic production of palm oil, they were fully involved in the marketing of the product, which brought profit to both the land and the European nations (Ekechi 1981).

The trade network that existed in the area as well as its import on the economic life and intergroup relations in the entire region have been pointed out by scholars, who argued that through agriculture and trade, women were able to not only boost the economy but also integrated the region. Ogbogo (2005) opined thus:

The importance of the Niger Delta lies in its very many rivers, which were waterway trade routes, hence its referral as the Venice of Africa. Bonny and other cities such as Opobo and Brass were acknowledged as major trading state...simply put the Niger Delta was known for its commerce and merchants from within Nigeria and Europe flocked to the Niger Delta states for trade. Apart from goods that were brought into the territory that boost the economy of the region, the Amayanabos collected comey and their citizens participated in the palm oil trade, which replaced slave trade. The economic boom that attended the introduction of the palm oil trade affected their socio-political life in very profound ways...The search for oil



markets meant the intensification of relationship with their Igbo neighbours from whom they received most of their supplies. Such vigorous interaction resulted in marriages and attendance of social and ceremonial functions.

The importance of the above observation is that women in the Niger Delta area had also been pivotal to the development and economic sustainability of the area, before the period of the gradual degradation of the area which led to economic deprivation and the relegation of women to the background.

7. Environmental degradation and economic deprivation: Effects of oil spillage and gas flaring and the toils on women

Despite the efforts by women to make ends meet, they have not been finding it easy as the environment has always frustrated their efforts. With the discovery of oil in the region in the 1950s, the people were completely unaware of the consequences of oil drilling and oil spillage. They had thought that the activities of the operators of the industries would bring the much-needed development to the area and as such, accommodated and embraced the oil industry. As noted earlier, the people produced much of the food that was consumed in the Niger Delta, while those they could not produce were exchanged in trade with people in neighbouring territories. As the operations of the industries began in earnest, it did not take long for the people to see that this was not to be the case. Beyond the fact that the revenues from the oil did not return to the people, the social consequences of the unleashed environmental nightmare have been unbearable. The people of the area saw their farmland being expropriated without compensation for oil extraction and they found themselves without an alternative means of survival. There were (and still are) cases of pipelines crisscrossing valuable farmland and poisonous gases flaring into the atmosphere close to communities. Due to corruption, negligence and inability to properly maintain the facilities, aging oil equipment often failed and leaked oil into the surrounding land without adequate clean-up or compensation. In most cases, the standards of clean-up and maintenance applied by the operating oil firms were completely destructive of the environment (Shell Petroleum Company Report 2003, Odjuvwuederhie et al 2006, Odubo et al 2019). This was particularly disastrous since the people were (and are still) dependent upon the land and rivers for their survival. Those who suffered most were the women and children who, unlike the young men, could not easily migrate and escape to the urban areas. An example is the Akwa Ibom area, where the agricultural production of the women has been devastated by gully erosion in the upland areas, and beach erosion along the coastal areas has attained a high degree of severity and destructiveness. Gullies are now destroying agricultural land and even forest reserves in the northern parts of the state while coastal erosion has resulted in the loss of landmass to communities located on the shorelines. In addition, oil exploration and exploitation constitute major threats to the environment of the coastal areas. Environmental pollution of air, water, soil, crops and recreational facilities are the concomitant effects of petroleum exploitation that have adversely affected the riverine ecosystem of the state. The coastal fisheries have



been extensively depleted through oil spillage. Gas flaring from Mobil and Shell flow stations and oil wells has also been another environmental hazard, which has caused much damage to houses, vegetation and animal life. The major oil producing area in the state is Eastern Obolo Local Government (Sofiri 2018).

In the Isoko area, about 50 per cent of the active labour force is engaged in one form of agricultural activity or another, with yam, cassava, plantain, maize, cocoyam and vegetables as the predominant food crops. Odjuvwuederhie et al (2006) observed that owing to the hydrographic conditions of the State, only a fraction of the land size is cultivated with crops. Cropping patterns are mainly sole, mixed and intercropping, while farming practices are traditional, and the use of crude implements such as hoes and cutlasses predominate. Agricultural production is on a small and subsistence scale, with the women utilising small farm holdings. With this, the women are able to provide some money for themselves as well as taking care of the children since the men most often are in the cities or working as labourers for the oil firms. On the impact of oil spillage on production, Odjuvwuederhie et al (2006) noted that:

The environmental consequences of oil pollution on the inhabitants of Delta State are enormous. Oil spills have degraded most agricultural lands in the State and have turned hitherto productive areas into wastelands. With increasing soil infertility due to the destruction of soil micro-organisms, and dwindling agricultural productivity, farmers have been forced to abandon their land, to seek non-existent alternative means of livelihood. Aquatic life has also been destroyed with the pollution of traditional fishing grounds, exacerbating hunger and poverty in fishing communities.

Similarly, a 1995 study in the Bayelsa, Rivers and Delta states revealed that between 1992 and 1993, land area under food crop production in these states decreased by 41.7 per cent and 15 per cent respectively; due to oil-related land sequestration. According to scholars, this practice, besides constricting women's access, to land, increases land fragmentation leading to decline in crop production, which impacts women's income in these states, land requirement for oil activities, renders women's economic activities unviable, and insignificant (Odubo et al 2019). The Food Agricultural Organisation Report (2011) shows that women bear the heaviest burden of environmental changes because often, they are uneducated and poorer, thus, depend mostly on natural resources for their livelihoods. As such, oil activities have led to a myriad of socio-economic and environmental problems, soil infertility and damages to crops and marine life from pollution (Amadi and Tamuno, 1999). This led to dislocated livelihoods, rural-urban drift, and poor health (Eli 1994, Amadi and Tamuno 1999). However, despite all these, neither the state nor the oil companies have commissioned scientific studies to ascertain the adverse effects of oil activities on the region's environment since 1956. Thus, the people especially women, have continued to bear the brunt of oil operations on the environment, with no hope for alternatives.

According to Ahmadu and Egbodion (2013), studies carried out among 17 selected cassava farming communities, three oil spillage communities (Otor-Udu, Olomoro and Uzere) and three non-oil spillage communities (Egini, Aradhe and Ellu), show that in 2012, the



negative consequences of the oil spillage on both farmland and cassava crop were enormous. This is because oil spillage significantly reduced the farmers' farm size, yield and land productivity by 0.61 ha, 6119 MT and 1447 mt/ha respectively. About 45 per cent of variation in land productivity in cassava production was significantly explained by the farmers' years of farming experience and oil spillage. The effect of oil spills caused a great damage to the oil communities due to the high retention time of oil in the soil occasioned by limited flow. This prevents proper soil aeration and affects soil temperature, structure, nutrient status and pH, and ultimately crops are destroyed (especially cassava). This presents challenges, given that cassava is important and pivotal in agricultural development of the Niger Delta in particular and Nigeria in general. For the people of the Niger Delta, it has been transformed from a minor crop to a major crop, and recently it has become a cash crop for export.

Cassava production, given its potential as a money-spinning venture ought to benefit women. Although Nigeria is the highest producer of cassava in the world, she is also the world's largest consumer, leaving nearly nothing for export. This calls for concerted effort to increase the production of the commodity in the country, including combating the problem of oil spillage which is hampering its production. Lamenting the general effect of this on the women and their income, Ahmadu and Egbodion (2013:1), argued that despite the efforts by women in this area in the area of fishing, crop cultivation, the people have nothing to show for it. This is because before maturity, most of these crops are destroyed by oil spilled from crude oil pipes which criss-cross the farming areas. With this, there is high level of malnutrition, hunger and poverty. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the incidence of poverty in the Niger Delta is alarming, increasing from 15.4 per cent in 1980 to 52.2 per cent in 2004. This is not unconnected with the constant incidence of oil spills which have destroyed the main source of income and productive activities of the region. Over 6,000 oil spills had been recorded in the 40 years of oil exploitation in Nigeria giving an average of 150 spills per annum. A total of 4,647 incidents of oil spills occurred between 1976 and 1996 resulting in the spillage of about 2,369,470 barrels of crude oil and only about 549,060 barrels were recovered 1,820,410 barrels were lost to the ecosystem. Between 2006 and 2012 alone, a total of 127,467.96 barrels of oil were spilled. These statistics are alarming.

The consequences of oil spillage on agricultural production, the environment and humans are enormous. It has been observed the negative effects of oil spillage on agriculture is on the increase, at times occurring daily. In this way, most of the farmlands are destroyed and rivers polluted leading to the death of fish; and most farmers and fishermen are rendered jobless. This is illustrated in Tables 1 and 2. While Table 1, gives an account of the effects of oil pollution on sampled fauna of the Niger Delta; Table 2 focuses on the effects of gas flares and oil spillage on common crops in the Niger Delta.



Table 1: Effects of oil pollution on sampled fauna of the Niger Delta

s/no	Fauna	Description	Nutritional Value	Economic Value	Remark
1	Epepete	A small fresh-water fish found in large schools usually at the beginning of the rain season, caught by people even with ordinary basin.	Source of protein	High market value	It is now virtually extinct as it is hardly found in the markets
2	Igieneba	A small fresh-water fish that moves in a very large school, caught usually in shallow streams and rivers	Source of protein	Of high market value	It is now virtually extinct as it is hardly found in the markets
3	Iseun	A type of small fish that moves in a very large school, caught by fishermen along with Cray fish	Source of protein	Very cheap and affordable to the larger populace	Not as common as it used to be
4	Edible frog (Okerhe)	A dark smooth skinned fresh-water frog found in natural water bodies.	Source of protein and medicinal value	Of high market value	It is now virtually extinct as it is hardly found now
5	Ohorhe fish	Large scaled fresh-water fish.	Source of protein	Of high market value	Becoming extinct in the area (especially since 1980)
6	Catfish	A common fresh and salt-water fish in the region found in natural water bodies.	Source of protein	Of high market value	The freshwater type has been very scarce since the 1990s; now found in commercial fish farms
7	Iku-ewwewe	Tiny reddish freshwater cray fish.	Source of protein	Of high market value especially among the traditional worshippers as it is a common for sacrifice (appeasing spirit of bed wetting)	Decrease in catch noticed in the early 1980s and now, it is virtually extinct
8	Electric fish	A dominant freshwater fish, found mostly in fishponds	Source of protein	High market value	Extinct since the early 1980s

Source: Compiled by authors from various sources (2021)



Table 2: Effects of gas flares and oil spillage on common crops in the Niger Delta

s/no	Crop	Economic Value	Nutritional Value	Space Requirement	Effect of Gas Flaring on Crop
1	Yam (D. rotundata)	Highly valued in the local market	Major staple food widely grown in the region; a main source of carbohydrates	Large acres of land	Gas flare (GF) continuously emitting heat radiation, light and unburnt gas drastically reduces yield, both quantitatively and qualitatively. GF attracts insects, such as variegated grasshopper (<i>Zonocerus variegates</i>) that eats up vines, and yam beetle (<i>Heteroligus</i> spp.) that attacks yam tubers.
2	Cocoyam	Although not as valued as yam, but serve as a supplementary to yam and as such, has high market value	Major staple food widely grown in the region; a main source of carbohydrates	Planted in mixed cropping system and may require large acres of land	Gas flare (GF) continuously emitting heat radiation, light and unburnt gas drastically reduces yield, both quantitatively and qualitatively. GF attracts insects, such as variegated grasshopper (<i>Zonocerus variegates</i>) that eats up vines, and yam beetle (<i>Heteroligus</i> spp.) that attacks yam tubers.
3	Cassava (M. esculenta)	Highly valued as it is used for the production of gari, fufu, starch	Major staple food widely grown in the region; a main source of carbohydrate	Cultivated on large acres of land	Gas flare attracts grasshoppers, which eat up the plants. Crude protein content was reduced by 40%
4	Mango (M. indica)	Sources of income to those who have it as it is not common to everyone	Source of vitamins	Found around home stead, but have been recently cultivated in plantations	Gas flare causes premature ripening of fruits, especially during the dry season months of December-March each year.
5	Sweet orange (C. sinensis)	Sources of income to those who have it as it is not common to everyone	Source of vitamins	Found around homestead, but have been recently cultivated in plantations	Gas flare effect is similar to that of mango. In addition, farmers believe that toxic effluents dispersed by flood water to homes and farms adversely affect the crop
6	Avocado Pear	Sources of income to those who have it as it is not common to everyone	Source of vitamins	Found around homestead, but have been recently cultivated in plantations	Affects production rate
7	Pepper	Sources of income to those who have it	Source of vitamins, potassium, folic acid and fiber.	Found around homestead	Oiled shoot of crop may wilt and die off due to blockage of stomata thereby inhibiting photosynthesis, transpiration and respiration. In fact, germination, growth performance and yield of crops are stifled by oil spillage
8	Tomatoes	Sources of income to those who have it	Source of vitamins	Found around homestead	Oiled shoot of crop may wilt and die off due to blockage of stomata thereby inhibiting photosynthesis, transpiration and respiration. In fact, germination, growth performance and yield of crop stifled by oil spillage
9	Water leaf	Sources of income to	Source of vitamins	Found usually in the forests	Ascorbic acid content of waterleaf was reduced by 36%.



		those who have it	calcium, phosphorus and iron		
	Maize (<i>Zea mays</i> L.)	Sources of income to those who have it	Contains micronutrients like starch, fibre, protein, vitamins and essential minerals.	Found around home stead, but have been recently cultivated in plantations	Crude oil also reduced maize germination and yield by 50% and 92% respectively and acutely impacted height, stem girth, ear height, leaf area and length of primary roots of the plant.
	Common vegetables	Sources of income to those who have it	Contains micronutrients like starch, fibre, protein, vitamins and essential minerals.	Found around homestead	crude oil stunts the growth of most common vegetables

Source: *Compiled by authors from varied sources (2021)*

From the tables above, it is clear that the activities of oil operators and the oil itself has devastating and long-lasting negative impacts on the environment, the people and the local economy. This is more particular to women who are the major drivers of the local economy and the main providers of the family. Unfortunately, the effect of oil pollution on the environment in general and agriculture in the Niger Delta, has made their situation worse. The attempt at making life meaningful even with the neglect of the area by the government have yielded little or no result as oil reduces soil fertility, smothers economic trees and food crops; kills them out-rightly and reduces crop yield. Ordinarily, these would have served as nutritional supplements for the people have been reduced by the effect of oil and pollution. The nutritional value of their farming products is low and have led to various kinds of illnesses, miscarriage and birth of children with deficiencies. For example, the ascorbic acid content of waterleaf was reduced by 36 per cent, while cassava crude protein content was reduced by 40 per cent. Crude oil also reduced maize (*Zea mays* L.) germination and yield by 50 per cent and 92 per cent respectively and acutely impacted height, stem girth, ear height, leaf area and length of primary roots of the plant. Similarly, crude oil stunts the growth of most common vegetables. This has partly been responsible for the fact that the Niger Delta is still enmeshed in an even deeper crisis including armed conflicts in communities. This shows clearly the need for a clearer vision or agenda for regional development and a more committed action and implementation programme that address past failure.

Research has shown that oil impacted areas are unsuitable for farming even after two decades. It has also been revealed that pollution impacts have been more severe, because clean ups are often tardy and limited and in the case of Nigeria, it has become an issue of politics. In 2011, an investigation into the issue of the government’s plan to clean up the mess caused by oil spillage and other related pollution in the Niger Delta area showed that it could take 30 years (see BBC News Report 2011).



8. Impact on the lives of women in the area

Researchers have established that the impact on the lives of the women have been devastating. This has been so since the discovery of oil in the region and the devastating impact of the oil on the economic lives of the people. Adeyemo (2002) has argued that the Urboho community alone lost over 818.08 hectares of land to oil activities, which deprived over 900 women of their farmlands. Usman (2006) opined that the environmental degradation in the area which in turn destroyed livelihoods not only posed economic and political challenges to the society but has the capability of affecting the psyche of the people to the extent of impacting negatively on their behaviour, making them incline towards social vices such as prostitution. This is because since these women have nothing to depend on after destruction of their crops and means of livelihood, (during the colonial period) the female folks were exposed to the colonial workers and officials who lured them into prostitutions in the labour camps, enticing them with money and trinkets. This was specifically the case of some camps in the then Benin Province. Akubor (2005:180), noted that in some these camps in Benin provinces, ladies were seen around colonial quarters and camps especially at night, where they were patronized by camp masters and other officials. The scholar argued that this probably marked the beginning of the loss of women dignity and the beginning of modern-day prostitution referred to as *Italio* in Benin and Delta states (Asenime 2000:221).

Other scholars and experts in the area tend to agree with the views above. For example, Okoko and Ibaba (cited in Okoko 2000), noted that the people of the Niger Delta area with specific reference to women are now giving up the traditional occupation which for centuries have sustained the area. According to the findings, these traditional occupations like farming and fishing have been relegated to the background and abandoned in place of violent criminal activities, because their land and rivers have become their liability with spillages and gas flaring killing their greatest assets. This is considered a serious health and environmental hazard, when seen in the light of the fact that 76 per cent of gas flaring impact on the environment with negative consequences. This is in line with the World Bank Report (cited in Nwogwugwu et al 2012:26) which argued that the Niger Delta region is the most polluted area in the world and the most environmentally fragile in the country (Okoji 2012).

9. Women reactions and state responses

The available evidence among historians have established that the struggle against economic deprivation and environmental degradation in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, have not gone unchallenged by the state. This in turn have for long exposed women to all forms of dehumanizing situations in the hands of the state which have often employed brutal and naked force. It is a well-known fact as established by reports of the various oil firms operating around the area that the exploration and exploitation of oil resources in the Niger Delta has resulted in particular economic and environmental conflicts, with women bearing the brunt of the situation (Obaseki 2001, SPDC Report 2003, Akubor and Akubor 2018). This is because



(as noted earlier) in the area, the women are the ones engaged in the real production of the means of livelihood through farming, while the men are known to always go in pursuit of oil contracts, a condition which started since the discovery of oil at commercial quantity in the area. However, over the years, the pollution caused by both the forceful taking away of farmlands from the women, oil spillage and gas flaring have led to a situation in which crop yields have greatly declined. These lands have been used for laying oil pipelines which criss-cross the area and contaminate it. With this situation, there is acute shortage in arable land for agriculture, hence, the attendant food shortage. The direct impact is that it has led to situation within the region where the already impoverished women must import food from other parts of the country leading to high cost of food. It is also worth noting that despite the agony of these women, 90 per cent of them still rely on the use of other crude implements like cutlasses, hoes, knives to carry out their farming activities (Akubor 2011).

The lives of the women and their children depend largely on this line and any attempt to tamper with it, disturbs their lives. Consequently, women constantly rise up to engage the state and the multinational corporation, making their grievances, especially their economic plight and that of their children known to them. Often, they have sent delegations to both the government and the oil firms, but the response has been negative. It was this nonchalant attitude of the government that have led to the formation of various groups by the women to push forward their grievances. An example is the formation of the Federation of Ogoni Women's Associations (FOWA), an umbrella organization for all women's groups in Ogoni, the oil rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This came into being on the April 25, 1997, out of the frustration experienced by the women in the area and it advocated for a non-violence posture. However, the negative response from the government led to mass protests. Historicizing this as well as commenting on the organisation of the protest, Barikor-Wiwa (1997), wrote:

Women played a key role in organizing that massive protest. FOWA was set up in 1993, along with eight other units which make up the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). MOSOP is the democratic organization which represents the voice of the Ogoni people in the Niger Delta. MOSOP acts as an umbrella organization for a number of Ogoni groups, which together have a total membership of over 250,000 individuals: FOWA; National Youth Council of the Ogoni People (NYCOP); Council of Ogoni Churches (COC); Council of Ogoni Professionals (COP); Council of Ogoni Traditional Rulers (COTRA); National Union of Ogoni Students (NUOS); Ogoni Students Union (OSU); Ogoni Teachers Union (OUT); and Ogoni Central Union (OCU). FOWA, like the rest of the MOSOP units, is independent but guided by MOSOP policies. However, it is widely recognized that FOWA has grown to be the strongest component of the nine existing units of MOSOP.

The available evidence shows that the above action as well as other related ones were made by a well-organized African women's movement. Analysis of women action in the Niger Delta area played a key role in one of the largest non-violent struggles for environmental and social justice in African history. In the case of the Ogoni People, Barikor-Wiwa (1997) opined that



the era of the most intense protests began on January 4th, 1993, when the Ogoni people took their future into their hands and peacefully protested nearly four decades of environmental devastation by the Shell oil company. During this protest, over 300,000 people participated from a total Ogoni population of 500,000 and not a single stone was thrown neither were properties and/or installations destroyed. At the end of the protest, it was resolved that Shell cannot and must not be allowed in Ogoni. According to Barikor-Wiwa (1997) '...we say no to Shell as it remains Persona non grata in Ogoni... This pronouncement, amongst five other resolutions, were made and signed (those who could not sign, thumb printed) by over 300 women leaders in Ogoni who represented FOWA's 57,000 registered members.'

10. State Response: The case of brutality and violence against women in the Niger Delta

Available evidence has established that, the government has always responded with violence against women in their quest for economic freedom. In most cases, various task forces were set up to use force instead of negotiation. This has been the case since the colonial period. Tamuno (1970) had noted that, it was typical of the colonial government, instead of dealing with the issue squarely, they immediately dispatched state force on the women, a situation which aggravated the situation. According to Tamuno (1970:9), this was the case between 1929- 1930, the Abeokuta 'tax disturbances' of 1918 and the 'tax riots' in Warri province between 1927 and 1928, during which the colonial government involved the police and the military in a disturbance affecting mainly women. In all these, there were heavy casualties on the side of the women, who although harmless, were dealt with by the forces. In the case of the oil rich Niger Delta, it is on record that as a way of silencing the well-publicized campaign of the Ogoni for environmental justice, an Internal Security Task Force (ISTF) was set up by the Nigerian dictatorship to terrorize the Ogoni (Barikor-Wiwa 1997).

The earliest example of state response to women protest in the Niger Delta was what led to the women's riots of 1929-30 in parts of Eastern Nigeria (Isichei 1983:401). Although not directly linked to oil spillage and crop destruction, it was still within the space of fight for economic liberation. According to A. E. Afigbo, this was connected with the imposition and collection of direct taxes. An incidence in this direction which shows the inhumanity of the colonial government was the case of 11 December 1929 when two Ngwa women, among a crowd of demonstrators, died from wounds sustained during an accident with a car owned by the expatriate medical officer at Aba. In the cause of airing their grievance, there ensued confrontation between the armed forces and the women in Owerri and Calabar provinces from December 1929 to January 1930, during which female casualties included fifty-five dead and over fifty wounded (Akubor 2016). Closely related to this was the killing of women in 1947 for demanding economic relief. This was during the strike at Burutu in June 1947, in which workers asked for improved working condition of service. When it was not forthcoming, at one stage, women demonstrated peacefully in support of the claims made by



their working husbands. This situation angered the government which then invited the police, leading to the shooting of the men and their wives (Akubor 2016).

In 1984 as a result of constant destruction of their land and crops, women in the area took to a mild protest. This was the first of massive non-violent protests by women from several communities in the Niger Delta. The 1984 Ogharefe Women Protest was against US Pan Ocean. The tactics and determination of the women forced the chevron oil company to send their representatives to negotiate with the women. During the negotiation, the women made clear their position, in which they ask the oil companies to make concrete efforts at improving the economic, environmental and social conditions of the people. However, at the end, no concrete attempt was made by the oil companies, and they did not implement their Memorandum of Understanding. Instead, Pan Ocean Company bluntly refused to pay the people any compensation, despite the series of protest carried out by the Women between 1984 and 1986.

This was also the case of Shell in 1999, which refused to compensate the community despite the protests both in Nigeria and in London particularly against gas flaring. These indeed are glaring manifestation of the rights of the women and outright denial of compensation for taking the source of livelihood and the destruction of the environment. This has been adverse, relegating women in the area to the background despite the immense contribution to the economy of the area especially in the area of food production (Jones 2006, Akubor 2010). This position of subordination, lack of opportunities as well as their exclusion from decision making makes them more vulnerable to poverty; this is apart from the fact that most of these companies have refuse to offer them employment in the firms. Apart from this humiliation, those often sent to keep peace in the area in time of conflict, treat the women as spoils of war, raping them and looting their properties (Azubike 2008). Scholars have noted that in the Ogoni area, women (since the grand protest of January 4th, 1993), women have experienced, first-hand, the violent reprisals instigated by the Nigerian military and their Shell counterparts.

11. Women in the 21st century in the Niger Delta: Any change?

Scholars have argued that apart from the economic deprivations the rural women in the Niger Delta area suffer, those who are able to find their ways to the cities are not faring better. It is embarrassing to state that till now, women in the Niger Delta have been victims of gender based discriminatory practices and the economic crisis. They are underrepresented in the strategic heights of politics, government, economic and educational institutions and employed labour particularly in the oil industry. It is an indisputable fact that society regards women as inferior to men. In the rural areas, even to this day, women are only supposed to be seen and not heard.

From the above analysis, it is clear that women in the Niger Delta area are the main driver of the economy, the pillars of most families as well as the victims of oil exploration and exploitation. In this way, they have been exposed to so many dangers and hazards including



rape, torture and police brutality, yet they have not been so recognised by the society. Apart from the fact that the Ogoni woman (as a wife) is entitled to a piece of land in which to farm, the laws of the land are yet to recognise women as owners of properties. By this, the inheritance laws of most of the groups in the Niger Delta area favour the men against women who are subjected to inhuman widowhood practices and other cultural bias.

It is also important to note that apart from the hostility women experience from the oil firms, within the local setting, despite the efforts by the women, they have always been victims of violent militia and cult-related violence in the region. In time of crises, the human cost of conflicts is high and are borne principally by the “civilian” population especially women and children frequently viewed as targets by warring parties and criminal gangs. In most cases, violence and kidnapping relate to women, the government is often slow to respond, and this is not good for a society where they are the economic backbone. Unfortunately, the few successful women in these communities have become targets of most criminal groups, taking them hostage and demanding for ransom. For example, on Monday, February 22, 2008 Mrs. Oluwatoyin Nkwo, a senior staff of the Elf Petroleum Nigeria limited (EPNL) was kidnapped by gunmen from Port Harcourt and taken to one of the communities in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State. In the early hours of Sunday, April 20, 2008 Margret Idisi, wife of chief Humphrey Idisi, Chairman/Chief Executive of Lonestar Drilling Nigeria Limited (a well-known oil services company) was abducted by a group of kidnapers who invaded the family house of the oil magnate at Rumuokwrushi in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. On the same day at 12:30pm Mrs. Rose Deemor, mother of former caretaker committee chairman of Tai Local Government Area of Rivers State was kidnapped by gunmen in her home. March 27, 2008 was the turn of Delta State as heavily armed gunmen struck the home of Mr. Stanley Oforegbu and kidnapped his pregnant wife.

In line with the above, studies have shown that within the communities, the recent surge in the number of kidnapped children have in one way or the other increased the agonies and affected the productivity of women.

12. Conclusion

From the discourse, it is clear that although women in the Niger Delta area have contributed and are still contributing meaningfully to the economic development of the area, no meaningful attempt is being made by both the government and oil industries to benefit them. The relegation of these women to the background and their quest for survival in what has been described as a male dominated world, women and young girls have devised other means for survival. Although this had been noted earlier, (Akubor 2005, 2021), the new dimension of the survival pattern has been documented by Ahanihu (2000), when discussing the specific case of Eket (Akwa Ibom state). Ahanihu (2000), specifically noted thus:

Prostitution (has) entered the lexicon of the social life in Eket (in Akwa Ibom state). Some of the young school leavers are desperate to survive and nothing can be more alluring than the



whiff of dollars flaunted by oil workers. Being seen in the company of strangers is no longer a taboo as it was in the past. And the society no longer frown at seeing their girls in the company of white men drinking in beer parlour...The result of environmental/ecological degradation is the increasing indulgence in crime and prostitution. A lot of the youth in the area are no longer keen in going to school. Most of them will rather work as helpers in the service companies. Even those with university degrees in the area prefer to do such menial jobs instead of going to the ministries to seek for a career as civil servants.

It is in line with the above that the paper suggests that there is the need for the society to rethink the situation of women in the Niger Delta area, especially in term of being exploited on the one hand and relegated to the background on the other. Some of those obnoxious laws that do not recognise women as those entitled to own properties, land and even economic investments should be reconsidered to make these women develop in their own ways and possible compete with men in the economic arena.

Notes on contributors

Emmanuel Osewe Akubor (PhD, Zaria) teaches in the Department of History, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. He has participated in research in and outside Nigeria. Akubor is a consultant of The Kukah Centre Nigeria, on Intergroup Relations, Conflict Prevention and Management in the Southern Kaduna area of Nigeria and The Catholic Poverty Reduction (the Economy, Minorities and Poverty in Northern Nigeria with specific reference to the Maguzawa and Nigeria citizenship). He has also consulted for Nigerian Erosion and Watershed Management Project (NEWMAN) specifically on Environment and Social Impact Assessment Study of Flood and Erosion, North-eastern Nigeria. He was granted the Institute for Research and Industry, South Korea 2017/2018 Research Grant on Climate Change, Migration and Conflict: Survey of People of Northern Nigeria and their neighbours and is also a recipient of 2020 Research Grant on Plantation Farming and the creation of Capitalist Classed System in Oto-Esan of Benin Province, Southwest Nigeria, University of Lisbon. His latest published book is, Religion, Religious Education and Nation-Building: Nigeria and the World in the 21st Century (2019). Akubor has taken part in so many other publications in addition to some important research related administrative responsibilities at university and community levels.

Beatrice Amili Akubor holds a Master's Degree in Crop Protection and Production from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Although an agriculturist, she has passion for women's rights and women empowerment. She has also done research on minority groups and the rights of the people, with specific focus on some parts of northern and southern Nigeria.



References

- Adeyemo, A. M., 2002. The Oil Industry Extra-Ministerial Institutions and Sustainable Agricultural Development: A Case Study of Okrika LGA of Rivers State. *Nigerian Journal of Oil and Politics*, 2(1), pp. 60-78.
- Ahmadu, J. & Egbodion, J., 2013. Effect of Oil Spillage on Cassava Production in Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. *American Journal of Experimental Agriculture*, 3(4), pp. 914-926.
- Ahanihu, E., 2000. Changing Face of Eket: An Emerging oil City. *The Guardian Newspaper*, October 20 2000, pp.23.
- Akubor, A., 2005. The Impact of Colonialism in Nigeria, 1897-1960. Unpublished MA Thesis, Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University.
- Akubor, B.A & Akubor, E., O. 2018. Women, Agriculture and Development of Palm oil Trade in Southern Nigeria; in Vikram Singh (ed), *Interrogating Women Empowerment: The Global Experience*, pp. 1-22, New Dehli: Satyam Law International.
- Akubor, E., 2017. Minority Rights and State Creation: Willink Commission Revisited. In: U. Uyilawa & B. Ibhawoh, eds. *Contesting Majorities: Minority Rights and the National Question in Nigeria*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Akubor, E. O., 2016. Independence Without Freedom: Lessons of History on State and Civil Relations in Nigeria since 1960. *Historical Yearbook, Journal of N'loga History Institute*, XIII (13), pp. 141-161.
- Akubor, E.O., 2011. The Travail of Women in Crises in the Niger Delta Area. *The Anthropologist*, 13(1), pp. 27-31.
- Alagoa, E. J., 1970. Long-Distance Trade and States in the Niger Delta. *The Journal of African History*, 11(3), pp. 319-329.
- Amadi, S. N. & Tamuno, S. O., 1999. Oil Exploration in Nigeria: Its Socio-Economic Impact on the Oil-Bearing Communities. *Tiber*, 3 (1), pp. 1-5.
- Asenime, J.U, 2000, Social and Economic History of Ebu People C1800 – 1960A.D. Unpublished M.A, Thesis, A.B.U, Zaria.
- Azubike, G., 2008. Counting their Losses. *Newswatch*, 48(10), pp. 12-19.
- Barikor-Wiwa, D., 1997. The Role of Women in the Struggle for Environmental Justice in Ogoni. *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine*.
Available at: <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/role-women-struggle-environmental-justice-ogoni>
- British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)., 2011. Nigeria Ogoniland oil clean-up 'could take 30 years'. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14398659>
- Dike, K., 1956. Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, London: O.U.P.
- Ekechi, F.C., 1981. Aspects of Palm Oil Trade at Oguta (Eastern Nigeria), 1900-1950. African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison. African Economic History, No. 10 (1981), Available at: <http://www.jston.org/satble/3601294>
- Elis G., 1994. Shell in Nigeria: What are the Issues?
Available at: <http://www.essentialaction.org/shell/issues.htm>
- Emuedo, C. O, Aba, M & Oligbi, B., 2017. Environmental Insecurity and Erosion of Women Socio-economic Status in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *International Journal of Science*, 6(9), Available at: <http://www.ijsciences.com/pub/issue/2017-09/> DOI: 10.18483/ijSci.1171; Online ISSN: 2305-3925; Print ISSN: 2410-4477
- Ezumah, N.N., 1990. *Women in Development: The Role of Igbo Rural Women in Agricultural Production*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Ibadan: University of Ibadan.



- FAO (Food and Agriculture organisation of the United Nations)., 2011. The State of Food and Agriculture. Food and Agriculture Organisation Rome.
Available at: www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2082e00.pdf
- Isichei, E., 1983. *A History of Nigeria*. London: Longman
- Jones, P., 2006. Using Women to Get Rid of Poverty. *Punch*, Nigeria.
- Makinwa-Adebusoye, P., 1985. *The Socio-economic Contribution of Nigerian Women to National Development*. A paper presented at the seminar on Nigerian Women and National Development, Institute for African Studies, University of Ibadan.
- Makinwa-Adebusoye, P., 1988. *Labour Migration and Female Headed Household in IUSSP*. A paper presented on the Conference on Women's Position and Demographic Changes in the Course of Development. Oslo: International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (Liege).
- Makinwa-Adebusoye, P. and Olawoye, J., 1992. Gender Issues in the Nexus Between Population Growth, Agricultural Stagnation and Environmental Degradation in Nigeria. A paper prepared for the World Bank.
- Northrup, D., 1978. *Trade Without Rulers in Precolonial Economic Development in South-eastern Nigeria*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nwogwugwu, N., Ngozi, A. O. & Egwuonwu, C., 2012. Militancy and insecurity in the Niger Delta: Impact on the inflow of foreign direct investment to Nigeria. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 2(1), pp. 23-27.
Available at: https://www.arabianjbm.com/pdfs/KD_VOL_2_1/3.pdf
- Odjuvwuederhie, E. I., Douglason, G. O. & Adun, F. N., 2006. The effect of oil spillage on crop yield and farm income in Delta State Nigeria. *Journal of Central European Agriculture*, 7(1), pp. 41-48.
- Odubo, T. V., Obafemi, A. A. & Emenike, G. C., 2019. Participation of rural women in agriculture in selected States in Niger Delta, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Environmental Science (IJRES)*, 5(2), pp. 16-22.
- Ogbogbo, C., 2005. *Nigeria-Niger Delta Relations 1960-1995*, Paper submitted for the First Intergroup Relations in Nigeria Conference on Nigeria in the 21st Century, 8-11 June 2005, Keffi: Nasarawa State University.
- Okoji, O., 2012. Multinational Oil Corporations Corporate Integrity, Ethics and Sustainable Development in Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Development*, 5(10).
Available at: <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/jsd/article/view/21020>
- Okoko, K., 2000. Oil Exploration and Exploitation on the Environment: Implications for the Oil Producing Communities of the Niger Delta Region. In: A. Nsirimovu, ed. *Extractive industries: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. Port-Harcourt: Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (IHRHL).
- Shell Petroleum Development Company., 2003. *Weekly Operational Losses Report*. December 2002-January 2003, s.l.: Shell Company.
- Sofiri J, P, 2018. Survey on Women and Livelihoods in the Niger Delta: An Overview of Women's Economic Activities in Oil Producing Communities in Akwa Bom, Bayelsa and River States. *Africa Portal Roundup Newsletter*, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Nigeria. 13 Jun 2018
- Tamuno, T.N., 1970. *The Police in Modern Nigeria 1861-1965: Origin, Development and Role*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Udo, R., 1980. Environment and Peoples of Nigeria in Obaro Ikime. In: R. Udo, ed. *Groundwork of Nigerian History*. Ibadan: Heinemann Books.
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)., 2006. *Niger Delta Human Development Report*, Abuja: UNDP.



Usman, S. A., 2002. *The Operations of Shell British Petroleum Multinational Corporation and Environmental Degradation in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Niger Delta Region*. B.Sc Long Essay, Anyigba: Political Science Department, Kogi State University.

Uwaka, C.T and Uwaegbute, A.C., 1982. The Role and Contribution of Rural Women to Agricultural Development in Eastern Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Development*, 2(2).

Willink, H., 1958. *Report of the Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Fears of Minorities and the Means of Allaying Them*. London: H.M.S.O.