

THE OPERATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL OIL CORPORATIONS AND WOMEN'S LIVELIHOOD IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND REMEDIAL MEASURES

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Abstract

The Niger Delta region is rich in oil and gas resources and dominated by International Oil Corporations (IOCs) which engages in operations such as exploration, drilling, extraction of crude oil, production of crude oil products, transportation and sales of the crude oil and gas. However, these activities have led to numerous challenges faced by the women that beg for attention. This paper aims at identifying the challenges faced by the women of Ogulagha kingdom of Delta State, Nigeria caused by the operations of International Oil Corporations (IOCs) and examining the relationships that exist. The paper also proffers some remedial measures on how the impact of the operations of IOCs on the livelihood of women in Ogulagha Kingdom can be mitigated. The challenges identified were environmental degradation, pose enormous human health risk from the consumption of contaminated seafoods, loss of sources of livelihood (fishing, farming and trading) particularly among women, loss of arable lands and water pollution thereby making the water to be undrinkable and recommends that the itemized challenges be addressed to serve as a mitigation measures.

Keywords: Development, International Oil Corporations, Niger Delta, Nigeria, Women Livelihood

1. INTRODUCTION

The Niger Delta region is rich in oil and gas resources and is dominated by International Oil Corporations (IOCs) engaged in exploration, refining, crude oil extraction, crude oil products production, crude oil and gas transportation and sales. Nevertheless, a record of non-compliance with the laws and policies governing the operations of the IOCs in relation to gas flaring and oil spillage during the discovery, production and transportation of crude oil has resulted in serious environmental hazards such as air pollution, water pollution and health-related problems that make farming and fishing almost impossible and causal (Elum, Mopipi & Henri-Ukoha, 2016; Zabbey, Sam & Onyebuchi, 2017; Osuagwu & Olaifa, 2018). Over the past two or more decades, IOCs' operations are believed to have adverse effects not only on the climate, but most importantly on people's socio-economic well-being, particularly women, in the region. Women in the Delta of Niger play a key role in the area's sustainable development, working as homemakers, fishermen, fisherwomen and traders (Amadi & Alapiki, 2014; Amadi, Imoh-Itah & Obomanu, 2016). Given the lack of development that has permeates the Niger-Delta region over the years following the inability of the federal government of Nigeria and IOCs to initiate proper developmental structures in the region, the people of the area have resorted to the use of confrontation and agitations against the government and IOCs in order to

draw national and global attention to their plight which have imparted negatively on their livelihood.

The various environmental issues including the utter neglect of the development of the region in terms of provision of infrastructures, employment opportunities for the youths, clean-up exercises of the polluted areas as caused by gas-flaring and oil spillage among others - have led to protests and agitations which have brought about conflicts leading to all forms of violence / killings, arrests and abuse -rape, sexual assault/harassment. The woman from the Niger Delta is also not exempt from domestic violence that is widespread in societies around the world, affecting people across gender, ethnicity, age, social, religious and national boundaries. It is one of the most systematic violations of human rights, denying women justice, protection, dignity, fairness, fundamental freedoms and self-worth (Ajayi & Soyinka-Airewele, 2018). The consequences of these activities are such that women and children suffer the most from the crisis bedeviling the region; particularly the environmental pollution and degradation resulting from the operations of IOCs; the loss of their husbands and children to conflicts (communal or with the federal government forces and IOCs), forceful take-over of their lands, loss of fishing activities due to water pollution and social exclusion in leadership among others led the women of the region to join the struggle for the emancipation of the region from the ills meted to the region as evidenced by their poor living conditions and socio-economic development. This research was therefore aimed at investigating the degree to which IOC operations have affected women's lives in Ogunlaga Kingdom.

2. CHALLENGES POSED BY THE OPERATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL OIL CORPORATIONS ON WOMEN'S LIVELIHOOD IN NIGERIA

One of the major challenges posed by the Operations of International Oil Corporations on Women's Livelihood in Nigeria is the issue of internal displacement. Women have been forced to relocate as a result of the clash between the IOCs, Locals and the government. Sometimes, these fights left their husbands dead and their property ruined, and so on. There are several consequences of internal displacement that occur in various degrees and rates. It exposes people to a high level of insecurity and vulnerability, especially women from their job/ means of living, home, safety. Victims of displacement are at risk of arbitrary detention, forced disappearance, forced recruitment, trafficking in human beings, sexual assault, lack of adequate health care, loss of water, loss of educational opportunities and other cruel consequences of displacement (Olanrewaju, et.al., 2019).

3. METHOD

For this analysis, a descriptive cross-sectional research layout was used. The justification for the use of the cross-sectional-survey is the ability for the independent variable (operation of International Oil Corporation) and the dependent variable (women's livelihood) to be studied without an attempt to control or manipulate the variables. The specific population addressed in this study are women in Ogunlaga Island, Delta State of Nigeria. The Ogunlaga Island, had a population of 15,799 women as at 2006 when the last official census was carried out (National Population Census, 2006). But using the population growth rate of 3.2% as provided by National Population Commission, the population of Ogunlaga Island was projected to 2018 and the result gave projected population of 23,056. The projected population is as shown below:

$$P_{2018} = P_{2006} (1+r)^t$$

P_{2018} is the population of women based on 2006 population census = 15,799, r = population growth rate = 3.2% = 0.032 and t is the number of years = 12 years.

$$P_{2018} = P_{2006} (1+r)^t$$

$$P_{2018} = 15799(1+0.032)^{12} = 15799(1.45934) = 23056$$

A sample size of three hundred and seventy –eight (378) women was estimated using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula as presented below:

$$n = \frac{\chi^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + \chi^2 P(1-P)} \quad (\text{Krejcie and Morgan, 1970})$$

χ^2 = value of Chi- Square at 1 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance = 3.84,

P = population proportion = 0.50 and d = margin of error = 0.05.

$$n = \frac{3.84 \times 23056 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2 (23056-1) + 3.84 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}$$

$$n = \frac{22133.76}{0.0025 \times 23055 + 0.96} = \frac{22133.76}{57.6375 + 0.96}$$

$$n = \frac{22133.76}{58.597} = 377.7 = 378$$

This sample size of 378 was drawn from the localities in Ogulagha Island.

The study was conducted by adopting quantitative method of data collection by administering copies of questionnaire to the study population. Quantitative data was coded and data were entered using Microsoft Excel while data were analyzed using the Social Sciences Statistical System (SPSS version 22). The study of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses at the value rate of 0.05.

The study was conducted in of Ogulagha Island of Delta State, Nigeria. Ogulagha Island is a small town under Burutu Local Government Area of Delta State. The community has a human population of 23,056 inhabitants - Using the population growth rate of 3.2% as provided by National Population Commission based on the 2006 census, the population of Ogulagha Island was projected to 2018 and the result gave projected population of 23,056 predominantly Ijaws with fishing and farming as their main source of livelihood (NPC, 2018). It is home to a major oil terminal called Forcados Sludge Dump where drilled crude oil is stored, transported to other parts of Nigeria and exported to the outside world. The Island experiences intense oil activities due to the presence of several oil fields managed by these IOCs.

4. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between the operations of International Oil Corporations and the challenges encountered by women in Ogulagha Island, Delta State of Nigeria.

Table 1: Relationship between challenges women encountered is related to operations of International Oil Corporations (IOCs) in Ogulagha Island

IOC Operations	Challenges encountered by women	r-value	Nature of the relationship	p-value	Significance
Oil Drilling Operations	Environmental degradation	0.299*	Low Positive Relationship	0.0000	Significant
	health problems	0.281	Low Positive Relationship	0.000	Significant
	Loss of arable lands	0.237	Low Positive Relationship	0.000	Significant
	Water pollution	0.205*	Low Positive Relationship	0.000	Significant
Oil Transportation Operations	Environmental degradation	0.099	Low Negative Relationship	0.706	Not Significant
	health problems	0.057	Low Positive Relationship	0.307	Not Significant

	Loss of arable lands	0.021	Low Positive Relationship	0.702	Not Significant
	Water pollution	0.024	Low Positive Relationship	0.662	Not Significant
Oil Storage	Environmental degradation	0.144*	Low Positive Relationship	0.010	Significant
	health problems	0.138*	Low Positive Relationship	0.013	Significant
	Loss of arable lands	0.186*	Low Positive Relationship	0.001	Significant
	Water pollution	0.250*	Low Positive Relationship	0.000	Significant
IOCs Operations	Challenges encountered by women	0.186*	Low Positive Relationship	0.001	Significant

*significant at $p < 0.05$. **Source: Researcher Computations using SPSS version 22.0**

Table 1 shows the relationship between challenges women encountered and the operations of International Oil Corporations (IOCs) in Ogunlaga Island.

Oil Drilling Operations: Result shows that oil drilling significant low positive relationship with environmental degradation ($r = 0.299$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), significant low positive relationship with health problems ($r = 0.281$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$), significant low positive relationship with loss of arable lands ($r = 0.237$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$) and significant low positive relationship with water pollution ($r = 0.205$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$).

Oil Transportation: Result reveals that oil transportation has insignificant low positive relationship with environmental degradation ($r = 0.099$, $p = 0.706$, $p > 0.05$), insignificant low positive relationship with health problems ($r = 0.057$, $p = 0.307$, $p > 0.05$), insignificant low positive relationship with loss of arable lands ($r = 0.021$, $p = 0.702$, $p > 0.05$) and insignificant low positive relationship with water pollution ($r = 0.024$, $p = 0.662$, $p > 0.05$).

Oil Storage: Result reveals that oil storage has insignificant low positive relationship with environmental degradation ($r = 0.144$, $p = 0.010$, $p < 0.05$), significant low positive relationship with health problems ($r = 0.138$, $p = 0.013$, $p < 0.05$), significant low positive relationship with loss of arable lands ($r = 0.186$, $p = 0.001$, $p < 0.05$) and significant low positive relationship with water pollution ($r = 0.250$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$).

Result also reveals that operations of International Oil Corporation have significant low positive relationship with challenges encountered by women in Ogunlaga Island ($r = 0.186$, $p = 0.001$, $p < 0.05$).

5. CONCLUSION

The paper aims at identifying the challenges faced by the women of Ogunlaga Island of Delta State, Nigeria caused by the operations of International Oil Corporations (IOCs) and examining the relationships that exist between both variables. There has not been any relevant study carried out on women's livelihood as affected by the operations of IOCs in the Niger Delta. The study's importance lies in its identification and appreciation of how the activities and processes of IOCs have influenced the lives of women in Ogunlaga Island. It highlights some of the challenges (environmental degradation, health problems, loss of arable lands and water pollution) confronted by the women of Ogunlaga Island of Delta State, Nigeria caused by the operations of International Oil Corporations (IOCs) and established that there is a significant positive relationship between the operations of International Oil Corporations and the challenges encountered by women in Ogunlaga Island, Delta State of Nigeria.

It is based on these findings that this study recommends the following remedies:

- a. It should be a matter of law that the state in conjunction with oil companies, provide massive housing construction, good drinking water supply, regular and uninterrupted electricity and other social amenities to urbanize rural oil communities.
- b. Abuse of people's climate, social and cultural structures should be frowned upon, while severe punishment should be meted on the guilty, particularly as it affects young girls and women. Oil companies and government agencies should follow more cordial and respectful approaches, including the use of modern equipment that is less hazard-oriented when interacting with the oil-producing communities.
- c. There is a need for regular and proper clean-up exercise of the island. The federal government should put together a framework for the implementation of the recommendation of a United Nations Environmental Program report on environmental clean-up.

The study is not void of some limitations. Although, this study was limited to a portion of the Ogulagha Island in Delta State of Nigeria. Which connote that the findings of the study may not be applicable to the other regions of the Niger Delta. This research does not in any way undermine the analysis as the thesis can serve as a template in the other geographical zones of the world for further studies in the subject area.

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