



ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF SPILLS AND OIL-RELATED POLLUTION IN NIGERIA

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Memory Before Oil Pollution:
A Niger Delta Village in the 1960s

Abstract: Oil-related pollution causes huge damage. In Nigeria, it is caused mainly by spills, flaring, effluent discharge and human error.



Led to environmental, health and socio-economic problems. Concluded that it causes human right issues and played some roles in anti-social behaviour, crises and criminality in the Niger Delta.

Purpose and Goals: This work is to assess the impacts of oil pollution in Nigeria. The goal is to get the stakeholders in Nigeria prevent, prepare, respond and take actions to restore the environment timeously and efficiently to reduce pollution caused by exploration activities and in effect respect rights and make Nigeria safer.

Methodology: Primary and secondary data aimed at understanding the problems and impacts caused by oil-related pollution. Sources of information include legislation, regulations, and manuals, commentaries, official publications, judicial decisions, legal and non-legal literature including books, journal articles, newspaper articles and publications, official websites, and speeches.



THE IMPACTS

Environmental Impacts

Loss of biodiversity and destruction of habitats in the mangrove including sudden and drastic changes to the local environment.



Health Impacts

Cardiovascular problems;
Cancer, respiratory, asthma attacks, kidney and liver problems;
Headaches and dizziness;
Water borne diseases such as E. Coli and hepatitis, neurobehavioral disorders and premature death: see *Gbemre vs Shell*.

Economic Impacts

Farm Lands damage;
Fishery and Wildlife problems;
Source of Livelihoods damage;
Food shortage and hunger;
Inability to access basic goods;
Traditional means of livelihood destruction.

Social Impacts

Traditional Institutions and destruction of culture;
Conflicts and destruction and cultural areas;
Displacements and environmental refugees,
Prostitution and rape;
Vandalism, militancy, terrorism and violence: Yorla oilfield explosion of April 29 2011 caused protest that led to death of Friday Nwiido.



Findings and Assessment

- ❖ Pollution established even as 2011 UNEP Report noted that complete repair entails the world's 'most wide-ranging' that could take up to 30 years after stoppage of pollution;
- ❖ Destruction of lives and property established;
- ❖ Reactive movement caused by pollution established;
- ❖ Breach of human rights such as right to life, health and unpolluted environment, citizenship rights, standards of good behaviour by governments or protection of the rule of law and social, economic and cultural rights established;
- ❖ Nigerian laws, regional and international Treaties breached;
- ❖ Contribution to militancy, kidnaps, vandalism, terrorism and other societal ills also established.

Recommendation

- ❖ Spill and flaring reduction
- ❖ Emergency response, clean-up and remediation improvement in line with best practices.
- ❖ Review response procedure, ensure independent monitoring, and implement the laws and ratified treaties
- ❖ Amend laws, ratify treaties, improve enforcement and clarify institutional roles
- ❖ Review compensation, create insurance fund and initiate a comprehensive audit of polluted environment.
- ❖ Create monitoring committee
- ❖ More tailored solution to Niger Delta issues

References:

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- ❖ UNEP report on Ogoniland 2011
- ❖ Amnesty International, 'the true tragedy: delays and failures in tackling oil spills in the Niger delta' (Amnesty International report, 2009) <<http://www.amnesty.cz/zakazdoucenu/doc/Niger-Delta-True-Tragedy-Report.pdf>> assessed 3.1.17
- ❖ J S Clarke, 'Oil: Arctic explorer Eni averages four spills a week in the Niger Delta (Greenpeace Report, 22 February, 2016) <<http://energydesk.greenpeace.org/2016/02/22/arctic-oil-eni-nigeria-spills/>> assessed 3.1.17