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# Swamped with Poverty and Agony: Oil Exploration and Unemployment of the Natives in the Niger Delta

**[1]Uchenna Bartholomew Nwokoma, [2]Kalu Samuel Obasi, & [2]Kenneth N. Dim**
[1]Department of Public Administration and Local Government, University of Nigeria
[2]Social Sciences Unit, School of General Studies, University of Nigeria
Correspondence: kenneth.dim@unn.edu.ng

## Abstract
Oil exploration by multinational oil corporations in Niger Delta host communities has resulted in environmental deterioration with adverse effects for the residents. This degradation accelerated the demise of the ecology and farmlands, which are the indigenous' primary source of income. This has occasioned mass poverty in the midst of plenty in the region. Arising from persistent agitations by the inhabitants of the oil-bearing communities for redress, various intervention measures have been adopted by both the federal government and the oil companies. This paper is an evaluative study of the impact of those measures on the incidences of poverty and unemployment in the region. The study adopted the dependency theory as its framework of analysis. The data were gathered through the documentary method and were analyzed using content analysis based on logical deduction. It found that in spite of the various interventions by the federal government and the oil companies the negative consequences of oil extraction in the Niger Delta, unemployment and high poverty level have continued undiminished. The paper advocated for an integrated community-based approach that would include stakeholders' commitment to enhance their strategies and establish contingency plans to deal with oil spills and follow ecologically friendly safety measures during oil exploration.
**Keywords**: Oil Exploration, environmental deterioration, degradation, oil spills, poverty and unemployment.

## Introduction

Mismanagement of the oil and gas industry in the Niger Delta has resulted in massive land, water, and air pollution over decades. Communities in the Niger Delta are frustrated because they are suffering the worst effects of oil extraction activities while receiving only a tiny portion of the possible benefits. Despite its natural resource richness, the Niger Delta lacks basic amenities such as electricity, sanitation, primary healthcare, education, and gainful employment (SDN, 2020). Oil and gas mismanagement and low development rates in the Niger Delta are linked to high levels of corruption and politically-motivated violence. Since the 1990s, the region has seen numerous outbreaks of conflicts. As diverse groups battle for oil and gas income control, there have been waves of militancy and serious violence during elections. With many unlawful small arms and

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light weapons in circulation in Nigeria, daily violence, including criminal, intercommunal, and other conflicts, is predicted.

While other countries suffer natural disasters, Nigeria is confronted with a slew of technical and human-made dangers. Oil spills have serious short- and long-term cumulative effects on the affected people. As a result, the ecology, arable lands, water supplies, and livelihood structures of Nigeria's immediate oil-producing communities have been impacted. The impact worsens as poverty, crisis, and unrest spread throughout the crude oil-producing area, prompting the formation of various agitation groups calling for environmental justice and livelihood assistance measures (Oshienemen (2018).

Indeed, since the commercial discovery of oil in Oloibiri in Nigeria in 1956, oil exploration and production have proceeded unabated. The sector has been the mainstay of Nigeria's primarily mono-product rentier economy, Humphrey (2015). Nigeria is a gold mine for oil exploration and production and operations in the Niger Delta region. According to Udotong et al. (2017), petroleum exploration and production in Nigeria began in 1903 when the Mineral Survey Company began mineralogical studies in the country, with the first phase of drilling activity being carried out by a German company known as the Nigerian Bitumen Corporation in response to reports by locals of oil seepages along the Eastern part of Lagos. The discovery of crude oil became the backbone of Nigeria's economy, accounting for roughly 85% of the country's foreign exchange profits. Nigeria's daily crude oil production is currently at 2.5 million barrels per day (MBOPD), making it the world's sixth-largest oil-producing country. Oil theft/bunkering and oil leaks, on the other hand, account for a significant amount of Nigerian crude oil losses, which are either not disclosed or grossly under-reported.

It is instructive to note that the certainty of oil production, particularly in a developing country like Nigeria, has made water pollution, which includes the alteration of water properties and the presence of some inorganic, organic, biological, radiological, or physical foreign substance in the water, a commonplace and accepted part of society. According to Narayanan (2017), water contamination decreases its quality and makes it unfit or less fit for all purposes. Water pollution, according to King (2016), makes it less suitable for all or any of the purposes for which it would be ideal in its natural state, whereas Tietenberg (2015) believes that water pollution makes it unusable or dangerous for food, human and animal health, industry, agriculture, fishing, or recreational pursuits. As a result, water pollution limits the amount of pure fresh water available for drinking, cooking, cleaning, and pleasure.

Apart from the damage caused by air pollution and soil degradation, one of the numerous areas hardest harmed by oil production and related activities and operations is water pollution. Water's importance to development can be seen in the critical roles in health and sanitation, education, food production and security, fish farming, diet and livelihood, industrialization, manufacturing and technological advancement, trade and commerce, entrepreneurship, occupational growth and

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production. Furthermore, the importance of water in allowing the ecosystem to execute its tasks, particularly in terms of providing resources for development, cannot be overstated.

This paper emphasizes that oil spills have resulted in not only environmental, ecological, water, and air pollution but also a severe socioeconomic breakdown, including job losses and unrest resulting from the non-payment of monetary and infrastructure compensations to affected host and transit oil communities. In this paper, it is suggested that the environmentally unfriendly actions of multinational oil corporations during exploration have resulted in environmental degradation in the Niger Delta region, which has resulted in severe poverty and unemployment in the area. This study aims to investigate the dynamics of this interconnection.

**Statement of the Problem**

Nigeria joined the club of oil-producing nations on August 3, 1956, when commercial oil was discovered, and is now Africa's biggest oil and gas producer and the world's sixth-largest oil exporter, according to the United Nations (2007). In the past, Nigeria's income was primarily derived from the industrial and manufacturing sectors and agricultural production and exports of cash crops such as groundnut, millets, cocoa, maize, and palm oil. Nigeria currently produces over 2 million barrels of oil per day, with crude oil and gas sales accounting for around 35% of GDP, 90% of export earnings, and 75% of the country's consolidated budgetary revenues, according to the World Bank (2015).

Nigeria's Niger Delta is one of the world's most resource-rich deltas, both in terms of human and material resources. Nonetheless, the region's predicament is exacerbated by the unfavourable method of harnessing these resources over time. Agriculture was the people's primary activity before the discovery of crude oil. In 1956, oil was discovered commercially in Bayelsa State, according to Omofonmwa and Odia (2009). Oil exploration and extraction have persisted since then, resulting in environmental degradation due to multinational firms' lack of care for environmental management in the area. Rural communities dominate the Niger-Delta region, relying solely on the natural environment for livelihood. According to a UNDP (2006) report, more than 70% of people rely on the natural environment for their living and non-living needs. Poor people are vulnerable to environmental dynamics because they have few options for where they reside due to social, political, and economic marginalization, according to Aluko (2004). As a result, they bear the negative consequences of natural disasters, biodiversity loss and forest depletion, pollution, and industrialization's harmful influence on oil exploration.

Oil spill contamination of soil is a widespread environmental hazard in Nigeria's Niger Delta. According to Samina et al. (2001), petroleum hydrocarbons harm plant germination and soil growth, posing a threat to food security. Oil spills harm plants because they create conditions that make vital elements like nitrogen and oxygen unavailable for plant growth, Adam and Duncan (2002). Environmental degradation is a significant source of productivity losses in the Niger Delta; thus, it's a hot topic among residents, Ibaba and Opukri (2008). It is the main reason why the impact

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of oil and gas extraction on the Niger-Delta region cannot be overstated, as the dominant view blames oil production and its consequences for the region's declining productivity, which is primarily based on fisheries and other agricultural activities such as farming, dealing in timber businesses, and so on, Aaron (2006), Okoko (1998), Opukri and Ibaba (2008).

There is little doubt that oil extraction has exacerbated the region's environmental calamities. The importance of ecological sustainability in the Niger Delta cannot be overstated. It is critical to the area's general well-being and development, particularly the well-being of future generations, which is an essential facet of environmental economics. The elasticity of ecological degradation concerning oil production is well known in the region daily. These include, for example, woodland degradation and aquatic fauna depletion. Long-term consequences are also possible, as in the case of affected mangrove wetlands and groundwater. In Eregha and Irughe (2009), the subject of oil-induced environmental disasters and their multiple consequences is terrible. Exploration, extraction, and transportation of crude oil and its processed constituent products worldwide harm the environment.

Oil spills contaminate drinking water sources, fisheries, agricultural farmlands, and farm produce, thereby affecting the health and productivity of agricultural lands; corroding metal roofs, causing permanent damage to vulnerable ecological areas such as mangrove and freshwater swamps, and threatening already endangered ecosystems, have been the most common complaints from the public about oil impacts, according to UNDP (2006). Environmental deterioration is a significant driver of production losses in the region; hence it is a hot topic among residents. As a result, the influence of exploration and exploitation on the area cannot be overstated, as the prevalent perspective blames oil production and its associated consequences for the region's diminishing productivity, which is mainly focused on fisheries and other agricultural activities, Ebegbulem et al. (2013). Therefore, the fundamental problem in this study is to investigate the impact of the activities of the multinational oil corporations on the natives of the oil-producing areas of the Niger Delta.

## Literature Review

Oil extraction causes irreversible damage to environmental resources such as vegetation, soil, water, and air, compromising people's economic survival and livelihood, particularly in rural oil-producing areas where most people rely on the natural environment for subsistence, Ekpebu and Ukpong (2012), Uyigue and Agho (2007) cited in Bhau and Ukpong (2018). Several people have been displaced, and their livelihoods have been harmed in Nigeria due to multiple pipeline networks and explosion events, Azaiki (2009). According to Anifowose et al. (2014), several land and river pipeline crossings in Nigeria are potential oil spill and explosion sites. Oil facilities, such as pipelines used to carry crude oil and gas across the region, have encroached on and displaced possible farms and forests, posing a threat of explosion to environmental resources and human life, according to Anifowose et al. (2012) and Onuoha (2007), the oil and gas business is prone to explosion dangers, frequently impacting environmental resources and persons. Overall, ecological

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hazards have both immediate and long-term effects, according to Benka-Coker and Ekundayo (1995); Osuji et al. (2004), which occur physically and can be easily accounted for, as well as some long-term latent effects on human life and biodiversity, which arise in the future and are often difficult to predict and incorporate into the costs-benefits analysis, Revesz (1999); Ugochukwu & Ertel (2008).

Oil contamination and agricultural output in Nigeria's Niger Delta were studied by Akpokodje and Salau (2015). The study used an empirical analysis based on Ramon Lopez's Cobb Douglas production function model, which yielded a unique estimable production function. According to the findings, growing oil spills and forest loss have a detrimental impact on agricultural output in the Niger Delta, whereas land, labour, and capital has a favourable effect. Ogwu, Badamasuity, and Joseph (2015) use descriptive methodologies to arrive at logical interpretations of the environmental effects of petroleum activities and policy in Nigeria. This study revealed that the actions of oil firms operating in Nigeria had a significant impact on ecosystem health and biodiversity in the region.

Oil spillage is one of the most destructive of all hazards associated with oil and gas extraction, with consequences ranging from economic hardship to social misfortune; this is evidenced by the reported loss of vast swaths of arable land, forests, and water sources in oil-producing areas due to oil spills, Birdsall & Subramanian (2004). As reported in the Gulf of Mexico, the oil leak poses a threat to the ecosystem in terms of natural resource loss and extinction of valuable species and massive wanton devastation of biodiversity, Lin and Mendelssohn (2012); Pezeshki et al. (2001). Fish and other types of seafood are the most sensitive to oil spills in the marine environment, according to Hasle et al. (2009) and Votier et al. (2005).

Ebegbulem, Ekpe, and Adejumo (2013), cited in Olaife and Osuagwu (2017), examine the impact of oil exploration on poverty in Nigeria's Niger Delta. The researchers conducted a thorough study of the literature and drew conclusions based on their findings. The study shows that environmental degradation is the most major negative trend related to oil exploration and development in this region. Kadafa (2012) investigates the ecological consequences of oil exploration and extraction in Nigeria's Niger Delta. Data from secondary sources were tabulated and analyzed by the researcher. The oil sector in this area has made a significant contribution to the country's economic development. Nonetheless, unsustainable oil exploration efforts have made the Niger Delta one of the world's five most petroleum-damaged ecosystems.

**Oil Exploration and Environmental Degradation**

Exploration and extraction of crude oil in the Niger Delta have caused many environmental issues. This section looks at the ecological problems that have arisen due to oil operations in the area. Since 1956, when the oil explorers dug the first oil well in Oloibiri in Bayelsa State, 1,481 oil wells have been developed, with 159 oil fields producing. According to a UNDP (2006) report, more than 13 oil corporations run about 7,000 kilometres of pipelines and flowlines and 275 flow

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stations. The number of operators in the region has a rising number of productive and environmental implications every day. Although the oil sector occupies less than 5% of the region's territory, the negative consequences of its operations are many and spread throughout the region.

The Niger-Delta region is located on Nigeria's coast, and it is a wet environment because more than 80% of the oil-producing areas are near water. Before oil was discovered in the area, it was known for its natural clean long stretches of pure water and healthy water lettuce, which contribute beauty and flavour to the surroundings. According to Bisina (2006), oil activities have resulted in circumstances when children are given downright filthy water. Due to the enormous deep-sea research and exploitation activities, the towns' shorelines have been swept away or destroyed. Oil leakage is one of the most prevalent sources of oil-induced water contamination. Oil spills have increased drastically as oil production has increased. According to available records, there were 6,817 oil spills in the region between 1976 and 2001, resulting in the loss of about three million barrels of oil. According to a UNDP (2006) report, approximately 25% of the water is spilt in marshes, and 69% is spilt off-shore.

Canalization and pollutants released into freshwater wetlands and the sea are additional sources of water contamination and oil spills, Akpofure (2008). Oil companies have built canals to reduce travel time and improve access to oil fields and production facilities. In some cases, this has resulted in saltwater flowing into freshwater zones, destroying freshwater ecological systems. The Niger Delta's vegetation includes vast mangrove forests, brackish swamp forests, and rainforests. According to the Oil Spill Intelligent report (1978), mangrove forests span 5,000 and 8,580 km2 of land. The people of the Niger Delta and the many creatures that occupy these habitats continue to value mangroves. Unfortunately, the colossal mangrove forests in the area have been destroyed due to these oil activities. Apart from the increased access to forests resulting in illegal logging, oil exploitation has depleted biodiversity, particularly near ramp sites, flow stations, and terminals. Oil-induced fires and contamination of the environment have resulted in many lands degradation and forest destruction. Several oil-induced fire outbreaks in the Niger Delta have resulted in deforestation and agriculture loss, such as the Jesse fire incident on October 17, 1998. The sad thing was that the fire destroyed agriculture and the natural ecosystem, killing over 1,000 individuals in the neighbourhood, according to Ofehe (1999). Another fire broke out in Okirika, Rivers State, in September 2004, lasting three days and destroying the vegetation and animals that lived in the area, according to Zabbey (2004). Another fire disaster struck the Ugbomro village, and a study was conducted to determine the impact on the soil. Despite a widespread belief that fire improves bush fallowing for farming, the site was severely impoverished due to the fire and oil spill, Osuji and Ukale (2000). Acid rain from gas flaring is another source of land degradation, biodiversity loss, and forest and crop destruction in the region.

Flaring accounts for around 95% of waste gases from production fields and operations. Gas flaring pollutes the air and is a frequent practice among enterprises in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger-Delta region, posing a threat to the region's ozone layer and contributing to climate change, according to the IPCC (2007). Gas flaring has been practiced in the Niger Delta for more than four

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decades. It is the principal cause of pollution in the environment and the dumping of unprocessed garbage. Today, the region has roughly 123 flaring sites, making Nigeria one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases in Africa, according to Uyigue and Agho (2007). Every day, 45.8 billion kilowatts of heat are released into the Niger Delta's atmosphere from 1.8 billion cubic feet of gas, Aaron (2006).

It is no exaggeration to say that gas flaring is unethical and has significantly contributed to the region's environmental damage. The vegetation may have been transformed due to this approach, with natural vegetation being replaced by tenacious grasses. The presence of these grasses implies that the soil is no longer suitable for crop production. The ozone layer in the region has been impacted by gas flaring, resulting in unfavourable climate change for crop cultivation (IPCC) (2007).

**Oil Exploration and Unemployment of the Natives in Host Communities**

The destruction of the ecosystem and ecological balance in the region caused by oil and gas development has a wide range of consequences for the region's population. The many environmental hazardous issues previously stated, such as air pollution, water pollution, and land degradation, have undoubtedly affected the region's source of income, which has multiple social ramifications for the inhabitants. Timber, pineapple, gin, and fish are all produced in abundance in this region. Cocoa, cashew, rice, yam, and oranges are also produced in significant amounts in the region. And these are, according to Omofonmwan and Odia (2009) cited in Eregha and Irughe (2009), history in the area now. One of the region's economic worries is the increase in unemployment due to the deterioration of the region's principal source of income and productive activity, Okon and Egbon (1999). As mentioned in the preceding section, most farmlands have been ruined, rivers have been contaminated, and fish have died as a result; most farmers and fishers are unsure about their job prospects.

The table below illustrate the region's unemployment and underemployment rate in some Niger Delta states.

**Unemployment Rates in the Niger Delta**

| State | Unemployment | Underemployment |
|---|---|---|
| Delta | 9.3 | 29.2 |
| Imo | 11.3 | 33.7 |
| Rivers | 11.4 | 25.3 |

**Source**: The 2006 UNDP Report on unemployment and underemployment in Niger Delta, cited in Ohakam (2018).

The unemployment rates in the core Niger-Delta states are higher than the national average, as shown in the table and figure above. The region is a considerably more critical and leading oil-producing state in the circumstances mentioned above. In rural areas, where most of the population lives in riverine areas, the situation is significantly worse. And the majority of oil production takes place in these states' rural areas. Following a period of high unemployment follows a period of

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extreme poverty. People are hungry not because there are no foods available but because they cannot afford to purchase them, Eregha (2001). The preceding statement illustrates the relationship between unemployment and poverty as it impacts the region that generates most of the country's foreign exchange revenues. The government will undoubtedly acquire a cold if the oil sector sneezes. It stressed the importance of the Niger-Delta region to Nigeria. In this area, the issue of poverty cannot be overstated. The environment and people's ways of living emphasize and determine the contextual meaning of poverty for a layperson. Poverty is becoming more prevalent in the region, as shown below. Due to economic stagnation, unemployment, starvation, poor quality of life, and the region's toxic environment, poverty has become a way of life.

**Incidence of Poverty in the Niger Delta**

| State | Poverty incidence % | Core poor % | Poverty level | Very poor Self-assessed | Gini |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Delta | 35 | 27 | 66 | 17 | 0.5003 |
| Imo | 20 | 22 | 95 | 62 | 0.4757 |
| Rivers | 42 | 33 | 77 | 22 | 0.5046 |

**Source:** The 2008 Niger Delta Poverty Statistics from UNDP Development Report cited in Ohakam (2018).

A closer look at the table reveals that the region's overall relative poverty rate is concerning and warrants attention. According to the UNDP report (2008), poverty in the area is defined as those who cannot pay school fees for their children or satisfy necessities such as food, lack farmland and cannot produce effectively and do not have a place to live. The study also defines poverty in the region as being sick and unable to see a doctor, among other things, Irughe and Eregha (2009). Because of this form of economic incapacity, residents of the Niger Delta region today suffer from poor health and an environmentally dirty environment, making it challenging to maintain a high level of living. The people of the Niger Delta are frequently destitute and pauperized amid Nigeria's severe poverty, according to Ebegbulem et al. (2013).

## Demography of the Region

The Niger Delta encompasses a massive portion of southern Nigeria. The leading states are rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Akwa Ibom, and Cross River. The Niger Delta region is sometimes defined to comprise the conditions of Edo, Abia, Imo, and Ondo. The area is biodiverse, with mangroves that help to sequester carbon and support a diverse range of plant and animal life and agriculture and fishing, which are essential sources of income for many people in the region, SDN (2020). It also rests atop a large number of hydrocarbon reserves. Oil was discovered in the 1950s, and the business that sprang up around it has become crucial to Nigeria's economic development. It exports high-quality crude oil worldwide, with total daily output averaging over two million barrels per day in 2018, the most recent year for which official numbers are available. Petroleum exports make for around 87 per cent of Nigeria's total exports and, as a result, a significant portion of the

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country's foreign exchange. Even though oil revenue fell below 50% of total government revenue in 2016, this was due to a considerable decline in production quantities due to pipeline bombings and a substantial drop in the oil price. The Nigerian government remains heavily reliant on oil revenue SDN (2020). It means that public spending is highly vulnerable to foreign price fluctuations; the Nigerian government's long-term strategy to remedy this is to diversify the economy away from commodity exports of oil.

## Methodology

The data for this study was gathered from secondary sources. Secondary materials, government documents, a variety of other library and archival materials, technical study findings, conference papers, and newspaper articles were all used by the researcher. Our starting point for this study is a content analysis of documents and self-report techniques to assure the reliability and validity of our data. It is a study method for describing the manifest content objectively, systematically, and quantitatively.

The main goal of content analysis is to translate observed primary occurrences into data that can create a body of knowledge scientifically. The use of content analysis of documents and other secondary data is justified because it allows research where the researcher does not have direct access to the respondents and hence cannot study using different methods. It lets the researcher find relevant factors and propose hypotheses about these variables, among other things. By carefully reading insightful sources, the researcher becomes intimately familiar with the situation under investigation. Furthermore, this strategy is a great way to double-check data gathered from other sources.

## Theoretical Framework

In this study, the researcher will apply the Dependency Theory to understand better the socioeconomic impact of oil exploration in the Niger Delta region and the environmental degradation caused by multinational oil companies' activities in the area. Marxism is the theory's source of inspiration. According to Marxists, a global exploitation process is responsible for nations' wealth and suffering. The idea was that the Third World's underdevelopment is driven by an unequal economic relationship between the rich North and the impoverished South, rather than cultural backwardness or lack of technological development. This is known as "the evolution of underdevelopment," according to Andre Gunder Frank. The issue isn't a lack of technical know-how, development-friendly cultural values, or modern institutions; instead, it lacks political will. Nonetheless, domestic and international special imperialist agencies and the world capitalist system have exploited them. Economists have labelled the situation in the Niger Delta region "growth without development" due to the western capitalist manner of doing business infiltrating developing countries.

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According to Dos Santos, dependency is when the growth and expansion of one economy are constrained by growth and development (1970). In this situation, the dominant economies, often those of industrialized capitalist states, develop and sustain self-sustaining growth. On the other hand, non-industrialized economies can only expand and thrive due to the former's expansion. According to Bath and James (1976), this relationship leads to a "state of underdevelopment". Dependency analysis initially emphasized the importance of these economic elements in defining an impoverished country's relationship with a powerful, industrially developed state. Latin America's weak economies were incorporated into European global mercantilist institutions by colonialism, transforming it into a satellite of metropolitan Europe and, later, the United States. This event marked the beginning of Latin America's historical position as a source of raw materials for growing urban industries and as a consumer of urban produced goods. The municipal prices for manufactured goods were also determined at the same time. Raw material exports, which in most cases consisted of one or two agricultural or mineral products, were typically insufficient to fund factory construction in Latin America.

According to some political scientists, dependency stems from an unequal relationship where the more assertive side controls the weaker. The concept explains why Africa and the developing world are still underdeveloped. According to dependency theorists, capitalism's conquest of Africa has resulted in the development of metropolitan-satellite links. This hypothesis is explained well in Johan Galtung's book "Centre-Periphery." The rich countries are in the centre, while the developing countries are in the Periphery. The centre-periphery paradigm emphasizes the world's impoverished and industrialized countries' interconnectedness. It is said that the underdevelopment of satellite countries contributes to rich countries' current situation.

The bottom line is that exploitation is emphasized in Dependency Theory. The industrial core (centre) and the dependent Periphery of the world capitalist economy, according to Gilpin (1987), have a hierarchical structure of dominance. According to the Dependency Theory's "Centre-Periphery" concept, the Third World is poor due to systemic exploitation. "The Third World's underdevelopment is functionally related to the core's development," says Gilpin, "and the modern world system has allowed the advanced core to drain the periphery of its economic surplus, transferring wealth from the less developed capitalist economy through the mechanism of trade and investment." Although we cannot dismiss the importance of oil multinational corporations in Nigeria's economy, given that the oil sector accounts for nearly 85% of the country's foreign exchange earnings, the Dependency Theory explains the relationship that exists between multinational corporations and the Nigerien host communities in our effort to consider environmental degradation in the Niger Delta as a result of oil multinationals' operations there.

The dependency theory will help us comprehend why multinational oil corporations create so much income for their parent companies from the resources of the Niger Delta region. Despite this, the region is impoverished and degraded. It backs up Rodney's (1972) claim, which

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Ebegbulem (2013) cites, that "there is an exploitation connection that allows capitalism parasites to get fat while impoverishing the dependents."

## Conclusion

This paper explored the environmental devastation caused by decades of oil exploration in the Niger Delta, as well as the significant changes that have harmed local livelihoods and social well-being. It further explored the utility of the various intervention measures adopted by the federal government of Nigeria and the International Oil Companies in addressing the malaise. The paper noted that oil and gas exploration has degraded the ecosystem in the Niger Delta, resulting in air pollution, water pollution, and land degradation as a result of oil spillage, gas flaring, and canalization and these have resulted in monumental environmental damages in the oil-bearing communities and the Niger Delta at large. From our analysis of data, it was found that oil production has undoubtedly supplied key inputs for Nigeria's anticipated development take-off at various levels of government over the decades and that the never-ending search for increased development has also heightened the need for continued exploitation and utilization of the abundant oil resources from the area. This has in turn led to increased devastation of the ecosystem and the resultant impoverishment of the citizens of the area. As a result, the Niger Delta was for a long time in great upheaval, restive, impoverished, and backward in spite of the various interventions by the government, including the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Ministry of the Niger Delta, and even the amnesty programme which was instituted to deal with the restiveness and militancy in the region. Arising from the above, the paper advocate for an integrated intervention approach that is a blend of multiple development methods based on the effects of oil activity in the region. It urges the government, foreign oil firms, and other stakeholders to work together to create a community-based integrated system.

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